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Edited by Leslie Bethell  
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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF  
LATIN AMERICA

VOLUME IV

*c. 1870 to 1930*

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LATIN AMERICA

VOLUME I *Colonial Latin America*

VOLUME II *Colonial Latin America*

VOLUME III *From Independence to c. 1870*

VOLUME IV *c. 1870 to 1930*

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# THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF LATIN AMERICA

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*edited by*

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## GENERAL PREFACE

In the English-speaking and English-reading world the multi-volume Cambridge Histories planned and edited by historians of established reputation, with individual chapters written by leading specialists in their fields, have since the beginning of the century set the highest standards of collaborative international scholarship. *The Cambridge Modern History*, planned by Lord Acton, appeared in sixteen volumes between 1902 and 1912. It was followed by *The Cambridge Ancient History*, *The Cambridge Medieval History* and others. The *Modern History* has now been replaced by *The New Cambridge Modern History* in fourteen volumes, and *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe* has recently been completed. Cambridge Histories of Islam, of Iran and of Africa are published or near completion; in progress are Histories of China and of Judaism, while Japan is soon to join the list.

In the early 1970s Cambridge University Press decided the time was ripe to embark on a Cambridge History of Latin America. Since the Second World War and particularly since 1960 research and writing on Latin American history had been developing, and have continued to develop, at an unprecedented rate – in the United States (by American historians in particular, but also by British, European and Latin American historians resident in the United States), in Europe (especially in Britain and France) and increasingly in Latin America itself (where a new generation of young professional historians, many of them trained in the United States, Britain or Europe, had begun to emerge). Perspectives had changed as political, economic and social realities in Latin America – and Latin America's role in the world – had changed. Methodological innovations and new conceptual models drawn from the social sciences (economics, political science, historical demography, sociology, anthropology) as well as from other fields of historical research were increasingly being adopted by historians of Latin America.

The Latin American Studies monograph series and the *Journal of Latin American Studies* had already been established by the Press and were beginning to publish the results of this new historical thinking and research.

In 1974 Dr Leslie Bethell, Reader in Hispanic American and Brazilian History at University College London, accepted an invitation to edit *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, and he began work on the project two years later. For the first time a single editor was given responsibility for the planning, co-ordination and editing of an entire *History*.

*The Cambridge History of Latin America*, to be published in eight volumes, is the first large-scale, authoritative survey of Latin America's unique historical experience during almost five centuries from the first contacts between the native American Indians and Europeans (and the beginnings of the African slave trade) in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to the present day. (The Press will publish separately a Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas – North, Middle and South – which will give proper consideration to the evolution of the region's peoples, societies and civilizations, in isolation from the rest of the world, during the several millenia before the arrival of the Europeans, as well as a fuller treatment than will be found here of the history of the indigenous peoples of Latin America under European colonial rule and during the national period to the present day.) Latin America is taken to comprise the predominantly Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking areas of continental America south of the United States – Mexico, Central America and South America – together with the Spanish-speaking Caribbean – Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic – and, by convention, Haiti. (The vast territories in North America lost to the United States by treaty and by war, first by Spain, then by Mexico, during the first half of the nineteenth century are for the most part excluded. Neither the British, French and Dutch Caribbean islands nor the Guianas are included even though Jamaica and Trinidad, for example, have early Hispanic antecedents and are now members of the Organisation of American States.) The aim is to produce a high-level synthesis of existing knowledge which will provide historians of Latin America with a solid base for future research, which students of Latin American history will find useful and which will be of interest to historians of other areas of the world. It is also hoped that the *History* will contribute more generally to a deeper understanding of Latin America through its history in the United States and in Europe and, not least, to a greater awareness of its own history in Latin America.

*General preface*

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Contributors have been drawn from the United States and Canada, from Britain and Europe, and from Latin America.

For the first time the volumes of a Cambridge History will be published in chronological order: Volumes I and II (Colonial Latin America – with an introductory section on the native American peoples and civilizations on the eve of the European invasion) in 1984; Volume III (from Independence to *c.* 1870) in 1985; Volumes IV and V (*c.* 1870 to 1930) in 1986; and Volumes VI–VIII (1930 to the present) in 1988 or as soon as possible thereafter. Each volume or set of volumes examines a period in the economic, social, political, intellectual and cultural history of Latin America. While recognizing the decisive impact on Latin America of external forces, of developments within what is now called the capitalist world system, and the fundamental importance of its economic, political and cultural ties first with Spain and Portugal, then with Britain, France and, to a lesser extent, Western Europe as a whole, and finally with the United States, the emphasis of the *History* will be upon the evolution of internal structures. Furthermore, the emphasis is clearly on the period since the establishment of all the independent Latin American states except Cuba at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which, compared with the colonial and independence periods, has been relatively neglected by historians of Latin America. The period of Spanish and Portuguese colonial rule from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries is the subject of two of the eight volumes. Six are devoted to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and will consist of a mixture of general, comparative chapters built around major themes in Latin American history and chapters on the individual histories of the twenty independent Latin American countries (plus Puerto Rico), and especially the three major countries – Brazil, Mexico and Argentina. In view of its size, population and distinctive history, Brazil, which has often been neglected in general histories of Latin America, written for the most part by Spanish Americans or Spanish American specialists, will here receive the attention it deserves.

An important feature of the *History* will be the bibliographical essays which accompany each chapter. These will give special emphasis to books and articles published during the past 15–20 years, that is to say, since the publication of Charles C. Griffin (ed.), *Latin America: a guide to the historical literature* (published for the Conference on Latin American History by the University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1971) which was prepared during 1966–9 and included few works published after 1966.

## PREFACE TO VOLUMES IV AND V

Volumes I and II of *The Cambridge History of Latin America* published in 1984 were largely devoted to the economic, social, political, intellectual and cultural history of Latin America during the three centuries of Spanish and (in the case of Brazil) Portuguese colonial rule from the European ‘discovery’, conquest and settlement of the ‘New World’ in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the eve of Latin American independence. Volume III published in 1985 examined the breakdown and overthrow of Spanish and Portuguese colonial rule in Latin America during the first quarter of the nineteenth century and, the main focus of the volume, the economic, social, political and cultural history of the independent Spanish American republics and the independent Empire of Brazil during the half-century from independence to c. 1870. With Volumes IV and V *The Cambridge History of Latin America* moves on to the period from c. 1870 to 1930.

During the first half-century after independence Latin America experienced, at best, only very modest rates of economic growth and, at least in Spanish America, violent political and ideological conflict and considerable political instability. Besides the war between Mexico and the United States (1846–8) and frequent foreign, especially British, interventions in Latin America, there were also at the end of the period two major wars between Latin American states: the Paraguayan War (1865–70) and the War of the Pacific (1879–83). In contrast, the following half-century, and particularly the period up to the First World War, was for most Latin American countries a ‘Golden Age’ of predominantly export-led economic growth, material prosperity (at least for the dominant classes and the urban middle classes), ideological consensus and, with some notable exceptions like Mexico during the

Revolution (1910–20), political stability. Moreover, although there was continued foreign intervention in Latin America – mainly US intervention in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean – throughout the period, there were no major international conflicts in Latin America between the end of the War of the Pacific (1883) and the outbreak of the Chaco War (1932).

Volume IV, the first of these two volumes on the period *c.* 1870 to 1930, consists of twelve general chapters on the economic, social, political, intellectual and cultural history of Latin America as a whole. Two chapters examine the growth of the Latin American economies, the first in the period 1870–1914, the second in the period from the First World War to the eve of the World Depression of the 1930s. This growth was largely a result of the greatly accelerated incorporation of the Latin American economies as primary producers into the expanding international economy and significant inflows of foreign capital, particularly from Britain and, in the twentieth century, from the United States. At the same time domestic markets and domestic capital accumulation are not neglected. Latin America's political relations with the major European powers and, above all in Central America and the Caribbean, with the increasingly expansionist United States receive separate treatment. Another chapter analyses the growth of Latin America's population (from 30 million in 1850 to 105 million in 1930), in part the result of mass European immigration especially in Argentina and Brazil. The profound impact of capitalist penetration of the countryside is the subject of two chapters, one concentrating on the traditional highland areas of Mexico, Central America and the Andes, the other on the Spanish Caribbean. The first of these, while claiming that rural economies and societies underwent greater change in the period 1870–1930 than in any previous period except the Conquest, also seeks to show that in many rural areas, especially in the Andes, the forces of change were resisted and pre-capitalist structures survived. Urban society also experienced rapid change in this period, and there are separate chapters on the growth of Latin American cities, especially primary cities like Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and Mexico City, all of which had between one and two million inhabitants by 1930 and rivalled the major cities of Europe and the United States; on the beginnings of industry, especially in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Mexico; and on the emergence of an urban working class as a significant force in many republics and the history of the early Latin American labour movements. Two chapters

*Preface to Volumes IV and V*

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treat separately the evolution of political and social ideas in Latin America in this period (and in particular the adaptation of liberalism to highly stratified societies with under-developed economies and an authoritarian political tradition, and the influence of positivism on the governing and intellectual elites), and major movements and notable individual achievements in Latin American literature, music and art (as well as the early days of the cinema in Latin America). Finally, the volume concludes with a chapter which examines how the Catholic Church in Latin America adjusted to the decline in its power and privileges in a secular age while retaining the adherence of the vast majority of Latin Americans.

Volume V consists of twenty-one chapters on the economic, social and, above all, political history of the various Latin American countries from c. 1870 to 1930. Part One deals in some detail with the history of Mexico in this period. There are chapters on the Porfiriato (the thirty-five-year dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, 1876–1911), on the Mexican Revolution and on reconstruction under the ‘Sonoran dynasty’ during the 1920s. Part Two, ‘Central America and the Caribbean’, has a single chapter on the five republics of Central America and separate chapters on Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Part Three, ‘The River Plate Republics’, has four chapters on the economic, social and political evolution of Argentina, which had become in many respects Latin America’s most advanced nation by 1930, as well as chapters on Uruguay and Paraguay. Part Four, ‘The Andean Republics’, has separate chapters on Chile, Bolivia and Peru in the half-century following the War of the Pacific and a single chapter on Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela. Finally, Part Five is devoted to Brazil. There are chapters on Brazil’s coffee-dominated economy in this period, on the political system and the politics of reform during the late Empire (1870–89) and on the social and political structure of the First Republic (1889–1930).

Many of the historians who contributed chapters to these two volumes – twelve of them North American, eight Latin American (three from Brazil, two each from Argentina and Cuba and one from Uruguay), eight British, four continental European and one Puerto Rican – also read and commented on the chapters of their colleagues. I am especially grateful in this respect to Malcolm Deas, Ezequiel Gallo and Colin Lewis. In addition, Christopher Abel, Alan Knight and Rory Miller provided critical assessments of more than one of these chapters. A number of



Latin American historians and historians of Latin America have given valuable advice and encouragement from the very beginning of this project. I would like to take the opportunity here to thank, in particular, John Lynch, Richard Morse and John Womack.

At the Cambridge University Press Elizabeth Wetton was the editor responsible for these volumes of *The Cambridge History of Latin America*. Cynthia Postan was the subeditor of Volume IV, Elizabeth O'Beirne-Ranelagh of Volume V. The index to Volume IV was prepared by Hilda Pearson, the index to Volume V by Ann Hudson. As in the case of the three volumes of the *History* already published Nazneen Razwi at University College London gave invaluable secretarial assistance.



Latin America in 1900