

Becoming Brazilians

This book traces the rise and decline of Gilberto Freyre's vision of racial and cultural mixture (*mestiçagem* – or race mixing) as the defining feature of Brazilian culture in the twentieth century. Eakin traces how *mestiçagem* moved from a conversation among a small group of intellectuals to become the dominant feature of Brazilian national identity, demonstrating how diverse Brazilians embraced *mestiçagem*, via popular music, film and television, literature, soccer, and protest movements. The Freyrean vision of the unity of Brazilians built on *mestiçagem* begins a gradual decline in the 1980s with the emergence of an identity politics stressing racial differences and multiculturalism. The book combines intellectual history, sociological and anthropological field work, political science, and cultural studies for a wide-ranging analysis of how Brazilians – across social classes – became Brazilians.

Marshall C. Eakin is Professor of History at Vanderbilt University. A specialist in modern Brazilian history, he is the author of four books including *The History of Latin America: Collision of Cultures*. He coedited *Envisioning Brazil: A Guide to Brazilian Studies in the United States*, with Paulo Roberto de Almeida.

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Becoming Brazilians

*Race and National Identity in
Twentieth-Century Brazil*

MARSHALL C. EAKIN

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Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-17576-1 — Becoming Brazilians
Marshall C. Eakin
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107175761
DOI: 10.1017/9781316800058

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First published 2017

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-107-17576-1 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-316-62600-9 Paperback

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aos meus amigos brasileiros e brasilianistas

*Every Brazilian, even the light-skinned fair-haired one, carries with him in his soul, when not in body and soul . . . the shadow, or at least the birthmark, of the Indian or the Negro.*¹

Gilberto Freyre

NOTE

1. “Todo brasileiro, mesmo o alvo, de cabelo louro, traz na alma, quando não na alma e no corpo . . . a sombra ou pelo menos a pinta, do indígena ou do negro.” Gilberto Freyre, *Casa-grande e senzala: formação da família brasileira sob o regime da economia patriarcal*, 49^a. edn. (São Paulo: Global Editora, 2003), 343. The translation is mine, slightly altered from Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves [Casa-grande e senzala]: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*, trans. Samuel Putnam, 2nd edn. rev. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 278. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

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Acknowledgments

This book has had a very long gestation, and it has been nurtured along the way by numerous people across several continents, many of them without knowing it. The first book I ever read about Brazil was Gilberto Freyre's *The Masters and the Slaves*. I vividly remember reading Freyre one scorching summer (1972) in a tiny one-room apartment (without air-conditioning) in Lawrence, Kansas, in between my freshman and sophomore years in college. Little did I realize that summer in the middle of North America that this thick volume was one of the most important books about Brazil, and that it would become one of the most important in my life. Enthralled, during those torrid Kansas summer days I slowly sweated my way through this brilliant, eccentric essay. Looking back, I realize that I barely had begun to understand what Freyre was saying. My lack of comprehension was countered by the enthusiasm the book generated in me for this “new world in the tropics.” Although I would take a very indirect path (through Central America), over the next decade I gradually became a historian of Brazil. Although my first writing and publications were on race and identity in early twentieth-century Brazil, for more than twenty years – from the 1970s to the 1990s – I studied and wrote primarily about the economic history of Brazil. Periodically, I would come back to my ruminations about Freyre and Brazilian culture, but it was not until recently that I finally returned to where I began. Over the years, as I researched, taught, and lectured about Brazil, I became intrigued at how the ideas and work of Gilberto Freyre became the central mythology that propelled the formation of Brazilian national identity in the twentieth century.

Long ago and far away in Kansas, Betsy Kuznesof helped get me started as a historian of Brazil. In Los Angeles, Brad Burns taught me to see the big picture and to try to speak beyond the narrow confines of academia. Many years in Belo Horizonte and my good friends in Minas Gerais persuaded me to see Brazil from inside out and not from the coast inward. In 1983, at a time when my academic career appeared to be stillborn, the History Department at Vanderbilt University took a chance on me, changing the trajectory of my life. I will be forever grateful to my colleagues in the department, then and now. I have benefited enormously by working at an outstanding university with even more outstanding programs in Brazilian and Latin American studies.

I am very fortunate to have received generous funding from a Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Abroad Award (2009–2010) and a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship (2015) to spend long periods writing intensely while living in Brazil. Sabbaticals are one of the great privileges and luxuries of the life of a professor at a major research university. Longstanding and ongoing financial support from Vanderbilt University has been crucial throughout my career and especially in the work on this project over the past eight years. I am particularly grateful to former provost Richard McCarty for his support. Eight years ago he asked me to become the faculty director of the Ingram Scholarship Program. I began writing the first pages of this book at the same moment I joined the program, and I am writing the closing lines as I finish my time as director. In many ways unrelated to Brazil and Gilberto Freyre, the socially and civically engaged students in the program have pushed me to think deeply about my own worldview, beliefs, and assumptions. They have taught me a great deal, and this book and the Ingram Scholars have been equally important focal points in my life for the past eight years. I am especially indebted to my two exceptional program coordinators, Anne Gordon and Bryn Sierra, for all their support and for helping me balance my teaching, research, and administrative work.

I have been very fortunate to have worked at Vanderbilt University for more than three decades with a wonderful group of colleagues. The Center for Latin American Studies and the History Department are vibrant intellectual communities that have shaped my life as a scholar and teacher. The strength of the Brazilian studies program has constantly enriched my life and made it possible for me to grow. The late Alex Severino, Margo Milleret, Earl Fitz, Emanuelle Oliveira-Monte, Ben Legg, and Marcio Bahia all in their own ways helped me think and rethink *cultura brasileira*. Our program in Latin American history

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includes a truly wonderful and collegial group, including more than thirty graduate students over the last two decades. Jane Landers, Eddie Wright-Rios, Celso Castilho, Frank Robinson, and the late Simon Collier have been exceptional colleagues and friends. A special thanks to Joel Harrington for his support over the years, at home and abroad.

While I mentored Courtney Campbell, Max Pendergraph, Tiago Maranhão, and David LaFevor in their graduate training they also pushed me to think harder about my notions of nationalism, regionalism, and identity. Graduate and undergraduate students from various departments and programs took my classes on Latin America and seminars on race, nationalism, and nation-building, and they made me think more about the comparative picture, and even read and critiqued parts of my manuscript. Yoshi Igarashi, Gary Gerstle, Paul Kramer, Michael Bess, and Helmut Smith shared their own writing and research on nationalism and national identity with the seminars on nationalism. The graduate students in the interdisciplinary Brazilian Studies Reading Group also gave me valuable criticisms of the manuscript. From 2001 to 2015, Jane Landers, Celso Castilho, and I codirected a series of FIPSE-CAPSE student exchange grants on race and inequalities in Brazil and the United States in collaboration with the Universidade de São Paulo, the Universidade Federal da Bahia, the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Howard University, Fisk University, and the University of Florida. The three dozen students from Vanderbilt who attended our Brazilian partner institutions and the three dozen undergraduate students from Brazil who spent a semester at Vanderbilt, in many different ways, made me reflect often on the complexities of race and national identity.

A special thanks to Paula Covington, the incredible Latin American bibliographer at Vanderbilt. Due to Paula's work and that of her predecessors we have one of the great collections on Brazil in our library. For many years Paula has helped me with my research and taught me to be a better researcher. Mona Frederick has made enormous contributions to the intellectual life of Vanderbilt as the executive director of the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities. I spent much of my last sabbatical at the Warren Center in a year-long seminar on public scholarship with a great group of fellow faculty and had the enormous luxury of a beautiful office where I could hide, read, write, and move this book closer to completion. Thank you, Mona.

As will be evident in the text, but especially in the endnotes, I could not have written this book without the vast and excellent scholarship across

many disciplines, especially among those who study Brazil. For seven years (2004–2011) I served as the executive director of the Brazilian Studies Association and organized three international congresses for BRASA during that period. I cannot imagine what this book would look like, if it would even exist, had I not spent so much time collaborating in so many ways with Brazilians and Brazilianists during my time with BRASA. *Um obrigado muito especial* for my hardworking colleagues in leadership and support roles during those years, especially Jim Green, Tim Power, Jan French, Ken Serbin, Susan Quinlan, Peggy Sharpe, Jon Tolman, Cecilia Grespan, and Carolina Castellanos. A special thanks to Paulo Roberto de Almeida for asking me to coedit a survey of Brazilian studies in the United States that educated me extensively and resulted in two books.

Talks at a number of institutions helped me formulate, reformulate, and sharpen my arguments. Thanks to Mariza Soares at the Universidade Federal Fluminense; Jurandir Malerba and the Department of History at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica, Rio Grande do Sul; Ondina Fachel Leal and the Department of Anthropology at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul; the Fundação Casa Rui Barbosa; Paula Barreto, the Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais and the Universidade Federal da Bahia; colleagues at the Universidade de São Paulo in the departments of history, economics, and business; Parry Scott and the Department of Anthropology at the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco; Russell Walker and his students at the Kellogg School at Northwestern University; the Race Relations Institute at Fisk University; my colleagues and their students at the Owen Graduate School of Management, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Vanderbilt University. Some of my colleagues have been kind enough to read and comment on parts of this manuscript including Scott Ickes, Roger Kittleson, Jason Borge, and Bianca Freire-Medeiros. Chris Dunn, Bryan McCann, and Celso Castilho read the entire manuscript and provided me with very valuable feedback, helping make this a better book than it was in manuscript form. Over the past two years I have benefited from working with Liz Zechmeister, Tim Sterling, Fred Pereira, Heather Ewing, and Guilherme Russo on a healthcare study in Rio de Janeiro funded by Vanderbilt University. My colleagues in Brazil and at Vanderbilt in the project on “Building a Multi-disciplinary Approach to the Assessment of the Quality of Healthcare in Brazil” have provided me entirely new angles on race and national identity in Brazil. Kara

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Schultz and Jeff Crosby facilitated the cover art, and my editorial team at Cambridge University Press skillfully guided me through the production process.

Finally, thank you Michelle for putting up with my long absences in Brazil and in Nashville hiding in my office working on this book. I could not have done this without your understanding, love, and support. *Um obrigado muito especial para o grande amor da minha vida.*

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-17576-1 — Becoming Brazilians
Marshall C. Eakin
Frontmatter
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MAP 1 Map of Brazil and Its Regions
Source: Beth Robertson, Mapping Specialists Limited