

IN MEMORIAM

CARLOS EDUARDO CASTANEDA

1896-1958

The passing on April 3, 1958 of Carlos E. Castañeda, at the age of 62, terminated the career of one of our most distinguished and productive scholars and teachers in the field of Latin American history. Although his knowledge and competence in the whole area of Latin America was remarkable, it was in the history of Mexico, colonial and republican, that Dr. Castañeda revealed his exceptional talents in historical research and in graduate instruction. His influence will long continue, both through the medium of his voluminous publications and through the activities of his many graduate students who were privileged to share his dedicated enthusiasm for his subject.

Carlos Eduardo Castañeda was born in Camargo, Tamaulipas, Mexico, on November 11, 1896. He came to the United States in 1908 and was graduated from the Brownsville, Texas High School in 1916. When he entered the University of Texas he chose engineering as his future profession, but after he had completed three years in the Engineering School he changed to history. He received his A.B. in 1921, made Phi Beta Kappa, and later was granted the degrees of M.A. (1923) and Ph.D. (1932), also at the University of Texas. The subject of his doctoral dissertation, written under the late Dr. Eugene C. Barker, was Father Morfi's History of Texas. The original Morfi manuscript was Castañeda's own discovery in a dusty Mexican archive. Its translation and annotation gave him a familiarity with the source materials for the Spanish period of Texas history, which was to prove invaluable in his later, undertakings.

Dr. Castañeda started his teaching career in the secondary schools of Texas: Beaumont High School (1921) and the San Antonio Brackenridge High School (1922-1923). Then from 1923 to 1927 he was associate professor of Spanish at William and Mary College. In 1927 Castañeda returned to the University of Texas to become, until 1946, librarian of the Latin American Collection. During World War II he was granted leave of absence to serve as regional director of the Fair Employment Practices Commission. From 1936-1946 he was part-time associate professor of history and, since 1946, professor of Latin American history. He also taught, during various summers, at the University of New Mexico, the National University of Mexico, Our Lady of the Lake College, and the Catholic University of America.

A devout Catholic, Castañeda found much in the history of the Church in Spanish America to inspire his scholarly interest. Consequently a large part of his writing is concerned with Church activities. His principal contribution, sponsored by the Texas Historical Commission of the Knights of Columbus, is a seven-volume work on Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936. The seventh volume is now in press.

In recognition of his contributions to Church history in Spanish America, Castañeda was the recipient of many honors, among them: President of the American Catholic Historical Association (1939), Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem by Pope Pius XII, October, 1941, Knight Commander of the Order of Isabel the Catholic of Spain, the Berra Award of the Americas for 1951, and the degree of LL.D. by the Catholic University of America.

Realizing that the strength of a center for Latin American studies is dependent upon its library resources, Dr. Castañeda was ever alert to opportunities for the acquisition of research materials. To him belongs the principal credit for the acquisition by the University of Texas of the incomparable García Icazbalceta Collection. His account of how he discovered the availability of the collection and facilitated its acquisition lends high drama to a presumed musty and dull profession. Castañeda was a bibliophile, and knew the thrills experienced only by collectors of books and manuscripts. He once remarked: "I came to love old books, to caress the crumbling paper of manuscripts yellowed with age, to feel a sort of reverence for unpublished records."

In 1921 he married Elisa Rios, who survives him, as do their two daughters.

The passing of Carlos Castañeda will be deeply regretted by the fellow of Latin American historians and librarians in this country and abroad. In Mexico, the country of his birth, and toward which he always manifested a close and affectionate attachment, his loss will be felt for he was generally regarded as one of their own leading historians. But it will be those members of the Institute of Latin American Studies at the University of Texas who were Dr. Castañeda's intimate co-workers over the years who will be most aware of his absence. They are in the best position to appreciate, despite occasional differences of opinion, his fine qualities as a scholar, teacher, and affable colleague, and know how important he was to the progress of the Institute. The stimulation of his boundless enthusiasm and energy, and the profitable employment of his extensive acquaintance with Latin American scholars will be greatly missed.

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