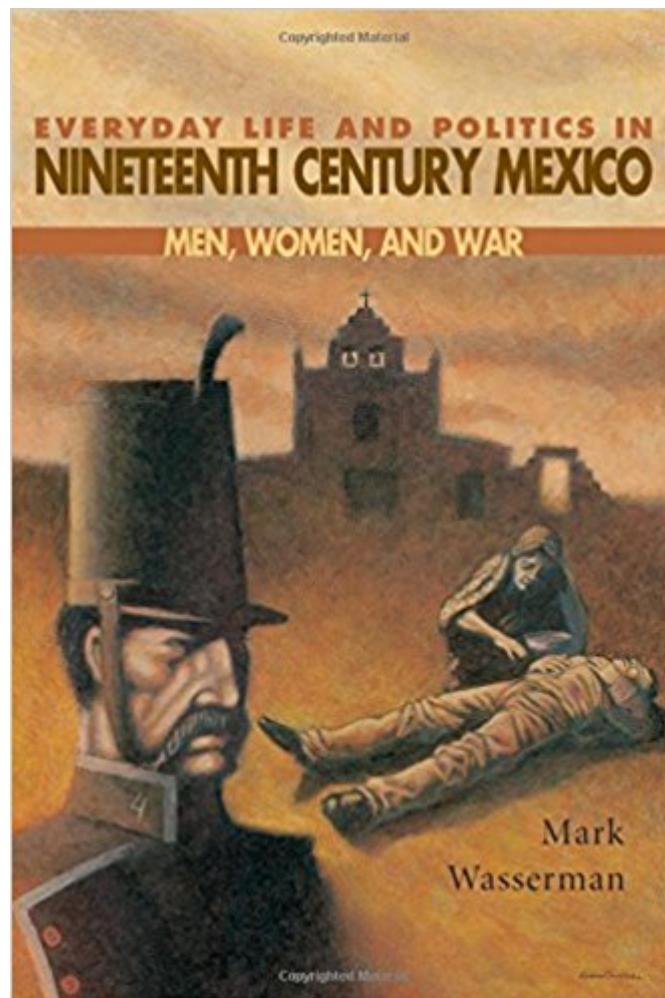




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Everyday Life And Politics In Nineteenth Century Mexico : Men, Women, And War



Synopsis

In this new and masterful synthesis, Wasserman shows the link between ordinary men and women-preoccupied with the demands of feeding, clothing, and providing shelter-and the elites' desire for a stable political order and an expanding economy. The three key figures of nineteenth-century Mexico-Antonio Lpez de Santa Ana, Benito Jurez, and Porfirio Daz-are engagingly reinterpreted. But the emphasis in this book is on the struggle of the common people to retain control over their everyday lives. Concerns central to village life were the appointment of police officials, imposition of taxes on Indians, the trustworthiness of local priests, and changes in land ownership. Communities often followed their leaders into one political camp or another-and even into war-out of loyalty. Excesses in partisan politics and regional antagonisms gave rise to nearly eighty years of war, resulting in the nation's economic stagnation between 1821 and 1880 and the mass migration of women from the countryside to the city. The industrialization of urban employment forever altered gender relations. During wartime, women acted as the supply, transportation, and medical corps of the Mexican armies. Moreover, with greater frequency than has been known, women fought as soldiers in the nineteenth century. This account of Mexico from Independence to the Revolution combines lively explanations of social history, political and economic change, and gender relations. Wasserman offers a well-written, thoughtful, and original history of Mexico's nineteenth century that will appeal to students and specialists alike."At long last, a clear-headed, non-romanticized, and non-adversarial analysis of everyday life and politics across the vast sweep of a century of change and rebirth. This is a first-rate book, expert and highly accessible."—Professor Timothy E. Anna, University of Manitoba

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For all its historical riches, the nineteenth century, particularly the first half, is a period in Mexican history neglected by historians for far too long. Almost forty years ago, Nettie Lee Benson lamented the lacunae when she stated that much was yet to be learned about what actually happened during the period between 1810-1857. Fifteen years ago the refrain was much the same when Eric Van Young called this early national period a "hueco." Four years later, Josefina Zoraida Vázquez focused on the lack of attention to nineteenth century Mexico when she characterized this period the "forgotten years." As late as eight years ago, Professor Vázquez exhorted the historical community to apply social and economic histories to clarify who the actors were and what role they played in the political life of nineteenth-century Mexico instead of shrouding the political realities behind the themes of foreign aggressors and pronunciamientos. It would be misleading, however, to interpret the introductory paragraph on this review as characterizing a complete void in historical studies of the period in question-much has been done in the last forty years. Seemingly as a response to Professor Vázquez, Mark Wasserman, whose book is the subject of this review, masterfully synthesized a suite of extant historical works-books and articles-which previously had to be consulted collectively to order and place in perspective this neglected period of Mexican history known erroneously for its chaos and disorder.

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