

Introduction to the volume

Tom L. Martinson

*Department of Geography
Auburn University
Auburn, AL 36849*

A. Richard Longwell

*Department of Geography
Western Illinois University
Macomb, IL 61455*

William M. Denevan

*Department of Geography
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Madison, WI 53706*

CLAG's enviable international reputation rests on its members' ability to observe, analyze, and interpret the spatial dimensions of the Latin American experience. This volume illustrates that our members remain equal to the task.

Terry Jordan's paper, "A Gabled Folk House Type of the Mexico-Texas Borderland," follows a long tradition in cultural geography and border studies. His central thesis that distinctive local characteristics make the borderland more than an "overlap" zone is supported by ample evidence drawn from settlement history and folk architecture. The issue of the parapet gable in the borderland may now be resolved as the influence of Father Kevalum, an early priest-architect from Celtic Brittany.

Robert Voeks and Sergio da Vinha probe a puzzle regarding fire and the palm: Why do rainforest palms survive and even thrive after burning? Their paper, "Fire Management of the Piassava Fiber Palm in Eastern Brazil," concludes that the sprouting of young palms after burning represents the regrowth of previously existing, subterranean seedlings and juveniles.

"American Crop Plants in Asia Prior to European Contact," by Carl Johannessen and Anne Parker, broaches a controversial topic: pre-European contact with the New World. Evidence for such contact has always been scant, but these two authors provide indications that American crop plants may have been present in Asia before Columbus. Their work is based on early art depicting plants and on translations of ancient manuscripts.

A technique for identifying and mapping agricultural terraces in Peru is identified and discussed by William Denevan in "Measurement of Abandoned Terracing from Air Photos: Colca Valley, Peru." Denevan believes the maps, data, and procedures used in this study may be as useful in other similar studies as they were here.

Daniel Gade, in "Cultural Geography as a Research Agenda for Peru," relates Carl Sauer's contributions to the understanding of Peru's cultural and environmental diversity. Especially important are Sauer's perceptive observations of people-environment interrelationships and the resulting material culture. Many of Sauer's research initiatives remain to be fulfilled.

Robert Thomas and Don Hoy have collaborated to produce an expanded view of El Salvador's current

situation in light of its population growth in "A Demographic Perspective to El Salvador's Internal Struggle." They believe that population history unlocks many clues to the understanding of current events in this troubled country.

The largest periodic market in Ecuador is the subject of Christoph Stadel and Luz de Alba Moya's paper "Plazas and Ferias of Ambato, Ecuador." This study outlines the four different types of traders and three attributes of plazas: their location, physical structure, and functional specialization.

This volume is the product of many hands. Judith Gunn laid its foundations, assisted by reviewers George Lovell, Bernard Gellner, and Gregory Knapp as well as the present editors. Professor David Clawson of the University of New Orleans offered invaluable counsel on the design and production of this *Yearbook*. Professor William Davidson and the staff of Geoscience Publications at Louisiana State University under the direction of Esther Wilcox managed the technical editing and printing.