
This is a paperback reissue of a book that first appeared as a part of Julian Steward’s three-volume series in Contemporary Change in Traditional Societies, published in 1967. It contains three independent studies by each of the three listed authors, plus an index. There is no attempt to tie them together aside from the very brief foreword by Steward.

“Culture Change in Northwest Mexico” by Charles Erasmus is a comparative study of the contemporary indigenous Yaqui and Mayo Indians, and the non-Indian population (mainly Mexican mestizo, but not exclusively so) who are called yori, in the adjacent coastal regions of Sonora and Sinaloa. Erasmus did work here over a good many years, and so this little monograph contains a good deal of considered analysis and data about the ethnic and economic interrelations among these sectors. Following a brief history of the region, the major body of the essay is a comparison of the three subareas in which the distinctive populations live.

“Hacienda to Plantation in Northern Peru: The Processes of Proletarianization of a Tenant Farmer Society” by Solomon Miller is a comparative study of a highland hacienda and a coastal plantation in northern Peru. As the title indicates, the focus is on the transition from a closed hacienda situation where food was produced for a related mine to a corporately owned cattle hacienda. This is then contrasted with a corporately owned coastal sugar plantation with a clearly emerging proletariat. The major documented shift is in the highland population, from that of tenants to wage labor with the accompanying changes in community power and family structure.

“A History of Agricultural Production and Local Organization in the Chancay Valley, Peru” by Louis C. Faron is a somewhat more sketchy review of the history and contemporary societal types to be found in the Chancay Valley. Of the three, the first two are more satisfactory, the last too hasty and summary to allow much appreciation.

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