

**NOTES ON THE REPUBLIC
OF GUATEMALA, ITS
PROGRESS FROM 1871 TO
1884**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649284023

Notes on the republic of Guatemala, Its Progress from 1871 to 1884 by J. Rufino Barrios

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

J. RUFINO BARRIOS

**NOTES ON THE REPUBLIC
OF GUATEMALA, ITS
PROGRESS FROM 1871 TO
1884**

NOTES



ON THE

REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA.

Its Progress from 1871 to 1884,

UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF

GENERAL J. RUFINO BARRIOS.

Favorable Conditions for the Immigration
of Industrious Foreigners.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

OF

GENERAL J. RUFINO BARRIOS,

CONSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENT

OF THE REPUBLIC.

NEW ORLEANS.

1885.



Notes on the Republic of Guatemala.

ITS PROGRESS FROM 1871 TO 1884 UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF
GENERAL J. RUFINO BARRIOS.

FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR THE IMMIGRATION OF INDUS-
TRIOUS FOREIGNERS.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THE LIFE OF GEN. J. RUFINO BARRIOS,
Constitutional President of the Republic.

The Republic of Guatemala is situated in the most northern part of CENTRAL AMERICA, which is the intermediate point between the two great sections of the American Continent, and forms the Isthmus which unites North and South America.

*
**

The geographical situation of the territory of Guatemala is between $13^{\circ} 42'$ and $17^{\circ} 49'$ latitude North, and $88^{\circ} 10'$ and $92^{\circ} 30'$ longitude west of the meridian of Greenwich.

*
**

Its superficies is 6,400 square leagues (the league of 25 to the degree contains 5000 Spanish yards), and its extent is from South to North, calculated from the Port of San José, on the Pacific, to the point whose meridian crosses parallel $17^{\circ} 49'$, which is the boundary line between us and Mexico, 120 leagues; and from East to West, from the Bar of the Motagua River, on the Atlantic, to the other extremity of its parallel in Guatemalan territory, which is a point at a short distance of the Volcan of Tacaná, on the same boundary line which separates us from Mexico, 130 leagues.

The boundaries are: on the North, the Republic of Mexico; on the East, the colony of British Honduras, the Atlantic Ocean, and the republics of Honduras and Salvador; on the South, the Pacific Ocean; and on the West, the Republic of Mexico.

*
* *

The Republic of Guatemala enjoys an enviable temperature, as is soon discovered by all foreigners who visit her. We have no extremes of cold or heat, and we live here in perpetual spring. The average temperature is about 72° Fahrenheit; and although it rises in the low lands on the Coast, as it decreases in the highlands, still, in both cases, it is always quite supportable. It rains from June to October, and once in a while during the other months of the year; but, even during the rainy season, there are many days clear, and of splendid beauty. In both seasons, rainy and dry, the sun rises, with a few minutes variation, at 6 A. M., and sets at 6 P. M.

The territory of Guatemala is not subject to those dreadful storms and hurricanes which desolate periodically other countries, nor to the danger of inundations.

The phenomenons which occur here, and which sometimes have brought destruction among badly constructed houses, are earthquakes. But it has been observed, during the last ten years, that they become more and more scarce, and that there has been none felt, of any intensity, since 1874.

*
* *

With the exception of the Pacific coast, where, at the beginning and at the end of the rainy season, and caused by the stagnant waters of the sea-shore, some malignant fevers usually appear, especially among persons exposed to the intemperies of the season and careless of their health, the country, in general, is very salubrious; so much so, that even epidemics never cause that disastrous demoralization which occurs in other countries, which is due to the mildness of the climate, to the excellence of the water, and to the good elements of sustenance of life.

Cases of longevity, reaching one hundred and more years, are frequent in Guatemala. We must say that the northern coast is healthy; and that in that locality the products of the natural riches of our soil are most abundant.

*
* *

The population of the Republic of Guatemala, according to the Census of 1880, amounts to 1,278,311 inhabitants; of whom 951,824 belong to the

native race, and the 326,487 remaining, to the white and mixed race.

Comparing the population with the extension of the territory, we find 22 inhabitants per square mile.

* * *

The Republic is divided into 23 departments, and these into 329 municipalities; it contains 11 cities, 32 towns, 286 villages and 2,509 hamlets. Table N^o. 1 shows the number of departments, their respective population, their elevation above the level of the sea, their distance from the capital and the nearest sea-ports. The first group contains the departments of the section named Centre; the second those of the section East, and the third those of the section West,

* * *

The Republic has four principal ports adapted to the wants of commerce: San José of Guatemala, Champerico and the bay of Ocós on the Pacific, and, on the Atlantic, Livingston, which is a port of entry and of deposit for a zone free from Import duties. This port of Livingston will have to transfer this privilege to "Puerto Barrios" on the Bay of Santo Tomás, as soon as the works on the Northern Railroad shall be more advanced.

Besides, the Republic possesses landings or minor ports, as "Barra de los Esclavos" "Tecojeté," and "San Luis," on the Pacific, and "Panzos" on the river Polochic (Alta Verapaz) which falls into the lake of Izabal, and Gualan, on the river Montagua which falls into the Atlantic.

* * *

As a consequence of its various elevations above the level of the sea, the territory of Guatemala, being for the most part extremely fertile, is adapted to the cultivation of all kinds of natural products.

* * *

On account of its favorable geographical position, and of the variety and fecundity of her soil, Guatemala is destined to develop large agricultural interests, in preference to the industrial pursuits of her merchants.

* * *

There are immense zones of vacant lands, adapted to all kinds of culture, and honorable and industrious immigrants can obtain them free. Besides, they are exempt from the payment of taxes and duties on all kinds of machinery and tools needed for their work, and on the products of their lands for the space of ten years. Hands are furnished them (at current wages), and they are protected and treated so as to procure them all neces-

sary facilities for their establishment in the country, and for the development of the work they may undertake.

* * *

Wages here are very low: labor is obtained by the day or by contract; one hand receives from 25 to 50 cents per day; in contracts, the compensation is conventional, and depends upon the importance of the work to be performed. A day's work is from 6 A. M. to 6 P. M., allowing the laborer one hour for breakfast and one hour for dinner (9 to 10 A. M., and 1 to 2 P. M.)

Laborers can be obtained also by the month, with a deduction of the value of food.

* * *

The inhabitants of the Republic, even those who belong to the native race, are, in general, of an affable and officious disposition, and know how to treat foreigners with sympathy and attention.

In Guatemala, charity is an universal quality; and, as well in the government institutions of benevolence, as through the feelings of individuals, the deserving, who are in want, find abundant services and assistance.

In Guatemala, no one perishes by hunger, nor is abandoned in his misfortune. The disabled find succor in the philanthropy of the people; and those who make any effort and exercise any perseverance in work, will obtain good salaries and proportionate profits.

* * *

Provisions are cheap, wholesome, and abundant. The principal are:

Beef, Pork, Mutton.....	from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per arroba (25 lbs)
Fowls: Chickens of good size cost.....	from 37 to 62 cents
and in that proportion can be obtained Ducks, Pigeons, &c;	
Flour.....	from \$8.00 to \$9.00 per quintal (100 lbs).
Rice.....	from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per arroba.
Corn.....	\$1.50 to \$3.00 per fanega [400 ears]
Beans, black or white.....	from \$4.00 to \$6.00 per quintal.
Potatoes, large Beans, Yucas and other various roots, and a great variety of vegetables, at moderate prices.	
Eggs, at 1½ cents; Milk, 6 cents per bottle; Cheese of different kinds, from 12 to 25 cts per \mathcal{P} lb; Butter, at 62 cts \mathcal{P} lb.	

Tortillas [pan-cake] of corn-meal, and black beans form the basis of the nourishment of the native classes.

Although fish could be obtained from the sea, from the rivers and from the lakes, and their quality and flavor are exquisite, it is not an article of food of general use in this country, because there is no regular enterprise to supply the market. And it is a singular fact that this article is imported in preserves from North America, France and Spain, and is sold at prices so high that it is out of reach of the poor.

The Guatemalian cooking has always received praises from foreigners on account of the peculiarity and the flavor of its seasoning.

Fruits are most abundant, varied, and very cheap. Among them must be named first the plantain, which is found of large and small sizes; it constitutes the principal article of food for poor classes, and is found as desert on the table of the rich. It is pleasant, salubrious and nutritious.

There are, in Guatemala, Hotels and Boarding Houses, where, for a daily expense which varies from 40 cents to \$2.00 [or more, according to the refinement or luxury of the service], a person can live comfortably. The wines are imported; and cost, according to quality, from one to four dollars per bottle. Beer made in the country is good and very cheap. Ice is artificial, and its consumption is increasing every day.

As for the branches of Industry, we have stated already that, in Guatemala, agriculture is the most important, although the importation of foreign goods is also quite large, and considerable capital has been raised to carry it on in this city and in other cities of the departments.

The basis of National prosperity, at present, is the cultivation of coffee; there are in the Republic 60 million trees, and their product is worth over five millions dollars. Next to this is the sugar cane which supplies home consumption. Its cultivation is destined to receive a great impetus as soon circumstances will be more favorable for the exportation of sugar by the Atlantic. Indeed, with the realization of better conditions, our northern coast will soon be covered with sugar plantations, which will be able to compete with the West Indies product, when they will be able to secure reduced freights, which they cannot obtain at present by the way of the Pacific.

On the coast of the Pacific, in the departments of Amatitlan, Escuintla, Sololá, Mazatenango, Retalhuleu, Quezaltenango, and San Marcos, are many valuable and well equipped plantations of sugar and coffee. Some