

THE PRESENT AS PAST:  
Assessing the Value of Julien Bryan's Films as  
Historical Evidence

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*We are no longer two continents but one hemisphere,  
twenty one liberty-loving republics. Americans all!*

With this ringing affirmation, Julien Bryan concluded *Americans All*, his first documentary about Latin America produced under the auspices of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CI-AA) as part of the U.S. government's effort to foster hemispheric solidarity.<sup>1</sup> By 1945 he had completed twenty-two more, including four on Latin America as a region; five on Chile; three each about Peru, Bolivia, and Uruguay; and one each concerning Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, and Paraguay. The CI-AA distributed the films to thousands of U.S. schools, clubs, and organizations during the war.<sup>2</sup> After the conflict was over, they continued to be the standard educational films about Latin America until, by the 1960s, damage or obsolescence forced most prints out of circulation. For the historian, however, "obsolescence" is not an undesirable quality, and a careful screening suggests that these thirty-year old documentaries contain an extraordinary visual record of Spanish South America and provide insight into inter-American relations. The purpose here is to assess the value of Bryan's twenty-three films as historical evidence, based on an analysis of the narration and photography and taking into account the special nature of film as a source material.

Increasingly, historians of the twentieth century are finding motion pictures an indispensable source. As Christopher Roads pointed out in 1966, authenticated film sequences increase our perception of a culture and record uniquely innumerable aspects of the social, economic, administrative, military, and political history of this century.<sup>3</sup> For an appropriate subject such as a revolt or political meeting, films can show the event from the vantage point of a privileged position selected by an expert eye.<sup>4</sup> They may expose the personality of leaders or register experiments in the development of new technological devices. According to E. Bradford Burns, films can highlight trends of the twentieth century and preserve characteristics of society neglected in written sources.<sup>5</sup> John O'Connor suggests that films can be excellent indicators of popular attitudes, and the British historian, Nicholas Pronay, argues that no study involving public opinion after 1930, in even the broadest sense, can be satisfactory without a survey of the newsreels.<sup>6</sup> These scholars do not maintain that film will replace written documents, but agree that, used in conjunction

with them, film can help to recreate the past. Thus the present generation can begin to share the experience of an earlier one in examining contemporary problems.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the demonstrable benefits of film research, hardy souls who attempt it must be prepared to endure the raised eyebrows of their linear-oriented colleagues; as U.S. archivist William Murphy observes, academic skepticism dies hard. Film's traditional association is with entertainment rather than historical fact. Everyone knows about newsreel fakery, and the documentary is bound up with art, interpretation, and causes. The best reply to these attitudes, Murphy continues, is a film methodology that rises above subjective reaction to what appears on the screen. The researcher must examine the kinds of data that the film presents, the accuracy of the footage, the editing and arrangement of material, the sound narration, and their overall relationship. He must consider the producer's position in time and space and the historical forces that would cause built-in biases in the film. Finally, he must take into account the impact that the film may have had on its audience. Murphy concludes that only when historians have produced film studies based on rigorous analysis will scholarly prejudices begin to fade.<sup>8</sup>

Recent publications by E. Bradford Burns, Paul D. Vanderwood, and Allen C. Woll attest to the film interests of Latin Americanists, but much remains to be done.<sup>9</sup> During the 1940s, for example, the U.S. government and private industry produced quantities of movies about Latin America for the war effort. The office of the CI-AA played a key role, making its influence felt in film studios throughout the hemisphere. A description of its work indicates the breadth of film materials that exists for the 1940s and explains the decision of the CI-AA to sponsor the Bryan series.

As entry into the European conflict loomed with growing certainty, the U.S. government sought to revitalize Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy. It promoted multilateral agreements to consolidate hemispheric defense and to help the Latin American republics adjust their economies to wartime conditions.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the government cultivated Latin American support by means of an extensive information and cultural program that stressed the similarities of historical experience and civilizations of the peoples of the Americas. U.S. propaganda emphasized common colonial origins, analogous independence struggles, and the influence of Catholic tradition in California and the Southwestern United States. In a restatement of the "Western Hemisphere Idea," it proclaimed that unlike Europeans, all Americans shared a common aspiration for democracy and by working together to eliminate barriers to understanding they could bring forth a new "American" way of life, a "history with a tomorrow."<sup>11</sup>

In August 1940, President Roosevelt created the office of the CI-AA. One of its functions was to make U.S. life more accessible to Latin Americans and to instill in North Americans appreciation for things south of the border. Under the leadership of Nelson Rockefeller, the CI-AA sent to Latin America archaeological expeditions, art exhibits, and college glee clubs. It facilitated exchanges of journalists, students, and professors; invited Latin Americans to compete in

Atlantic City beauty contests; promoted Latin American interest in New York as a style center and encouraged New York fashion designers to use Latin American motifs. In these and countless other ways it deliberately fostered common feeling among all the peoples of the Americas.<sup>12</sup>

Film played an important part in CI-AA strategy. Its Motion Picture Division (MPD), directed by John Hay Whitney, urged the movie industry to bring accurately and often to the screen Latin American themes, locales, and characters.<sup>13</sup> In Hollywood it helped to organize the Motion Picture Society for the Americas (MPSA), which reviewed finished pictures and scripts to eliminate anything that might be offensive to Latin Americans.<sup>14</sup> Collaboration with the MPSA was the first concerted action by the motion picture industry as a whole to consider film content from the standpoint of international markets.<sup>15</sup> As a result, films about Latin America during the war increased in quality as well as quantity. Woll, from his study of the Latin image in American film, concludes that by 1946 the movie stereotypes of Latins as "greasers" or violent, dirty, and lazy people had been replaced by conceptions of a continent with educated classes and indigenous tribes with authentic cultures. The Latin who appeared in Hollywood films was basically equal to the white Yankee and only slightly different in culture.<sup>16</sup>

The MPD worked constructive change in newsreels. Previously, when dealing with Latin America at all, U.S. producers resorted to a supply of stock shots of fiestas, carnivals, and earthquakes. Newsreels exported for Latin American consumption used material that depicted North Americans as "a nation of flagpole sitters, polar bear bathers, and people who were utterly and completely publicity mad."<sup>17</sup> To broaden coverage and make it more representative of both areas, the MPD encouraged cooperation between U.S. newsreel companies and those of Mexico, Chile, and Brazil. It arranged with a chain of North American newsreel theaters to show special reels of inter-American events at least once every three weeks and to send 16mm editions of the reels to inter-American centers throughout the country.

The MPD also produced 16mm documentary films. Although the documentary, defined as a film having a clear social purpose and dealing with real people and events, had emerged as a distinct genre by 1922, for many years the American government lagged behind the Nazis, Russians, and British in recognizing its possibilities. The critical success of *The Plow* and *The River*, two films made by Pare Lorentz for the Resettlement Administration, shook government agencies out of their lethargy.<sup>18</sup> During World War II, hundreds of documentaries were produced by or under the supervision of U.S. officials and distributed throughout the nation without profit by the motion picture industry. The CI-AA was responsible for making films on inter-American topics available to Latin and Yankee audiences. The MPD's New York office, aided by the Museum of Modern Art, mined existing resources of producing companies to reassemble, reedit, and create new documentaries. Films covering such diverse subjects as life in Old New Orleans, baseball, and victory gardens were dispatched along with projectors and sound trucks to coordinating committees in Latin America.<sup>20</sup> By the end of the war, the MPD had put together for the North Americans seventy

16mm documentaries concerning life, industry, agriculture, geography, and social conditions in the twenty republics to the South.<sup>21</sup>

Many professional film workers offered their services to the MPD in this endeavor. One of them was Julien Bryan. A well-known photographer who specialized in theater travel lectures, Bryan was born in Titusville, Pennsylvania, in 1899. As a teenager he served with the French ambulance service at the European front in 1917. He photographed scenes of the war that he later incorporated into a book, *Ambulance 464*.<sup>22</sup> After graduating from Princeton, he studied for three more years at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University. Eventually his desire to travel with camera in hand overpowered his plans to be a minister. In the next twenty years he visited and photographed peoples in the Orient, Siberia, Soviet Russia, and every part of Europe. Bryan showed these films in theaters throughout the U.S. while lecturing on such topics as "Turkey Reborn," "Poland Today," "Modern Finland," and "Inside Nazi Germany." Despite political tensions toward the end of the 30s, he continued to travel in Europe taking pictures for his lectures, Pathé News, and the March of Time, Inc.<sup>23</sup> In September 1939, finding himself the only photographer left in Warsaw when the Germans began their invasion, he filmed the fall of the city and later produced a documentary, *Siege*, and a book of the same name.<sup>24</sup> His snapshot of a little Polish girl kneeling in a field beside the bloodstained body of her older sister was one of the most widely printed photographs to come from the European war zones.<sup>25</sup>

From these years of experience Bryan came to believe that the true "documentary" was the "raw stuff of history in the making—beginning where the newsreel flashes off and the travelogue falters, to grope ahead toward recording noteworthy realities."<sup>26</sup> Unlike the theatrical feature film with its reenacted scenes and costuming, the documentary, he argued, must transcribe the natural sequence of events at a speed the average eye can follow and the mind can comprehend. It must record facts that are indisputable and present images in which its audience can trust. For this reason, the "stories" told by documentaries are the narratives implicit in a work-process, a play pattern, the tempo of a city, a day in the life of an individual or group. Its plots are the natural and man-made problems that impel people in the movie to do the things they really do, and the "actors live their parts unaware that they are being photographed."<sup>27</sup> In striving for objectivity, the filmmaker must refuse to yield to prejudice in the selection or omission of certain scenes. He must photograph fragments that taken together tell the whole story, and select scenes that all shades of opinion agree are revealing and significant—even if for conflicting reasons.<sup>28</sup>

Bryan held that documentaries were powerful instruments for promoting international understanding. He wanted his films to show the trials, errors, and misfortunes as well as the progress of the countries in which they were made in order to present cultures as societies of human beings, not political symbols.<sup>29</sup> Convinced that the people of the world were more alike than different, he maintained that when they really knew each other, they would not be so easily misled by politicians or dictators. In 1945 he said: "Show the people of the world

truthfully in their daily lives, and your audience will accept them as friends . . . through mutual understanding lies the only hope for peace and happiness for all mankind."<sup>30</sup>

Bryan's techniques of photographing foreign cultures reflected his faith in the brotherhood of man. He confessed in 1952 that he had learned to take people as he found them, not as he wanted them to be. Before visiting a country he studied its history and customs.<sup>31</sup> He tried to learn what was considered there to be good manners and observe that code, for unobtrusiveness was a secret of successful candid-camera pictures. Genuinely liking people, he found that they returned this feeling. He wrote: "A reputation for fairness and a frank and friendly attitude toward the local authorities have enabled me to get exclusive pictures in places where other photographers, sometimes even natives of the country, were forbidden."<sup>32</sup> When in such places, Bryan took time filming each sequence. Recounting the making of *Siege*, he wrote that he would stay a whole morning in a single neighborhood in order to show not only the members of one family in the pitiful ruins of their home, but also their neighbors, the dogs and cats, the will to survive, the fear written on their faces, the bedclothes, the food, and the ruined little church. By repressing the impulse to dash from spot to spot snapping exciting but unrelated incidents, he felt he could convey what was happening to the people more analytically.<sup>33</sup>

The CI-AA series reflects Bryan's concern for international understanding, for accurate detail, and for recording stories with unity and naturalness. It benefitted as well from his ability to attract talented associates. One of these was Jules Bucher, an able photographer-director who had worked with Bryan in the Soviet Union and did much of the filming in South America. Drawing upon her experience as an assistant to Pare Lorentz, Miriam Bucher wrote several scripts and edited the footage. Other photographers were Francis Thompson, who became a producer in his own right in the 1950s, and William James. Bryan frequently attributed the high quality of his films to the dedication of his staff, and he urged other filmmakers to hire only the best technicians, "for in the end, nothing is more expensive than failure, than dullness and mediocrity."<sup>34</sup>

Although he first visited Mexico in 1938, taking photos for a theater lecture entitled "Colorful Mexico," Bryan became seriously interested in Latin America in 1940. He spent the summer of that year in Venezuela and Colombia accompanied by an assistant, Kenneth Richter.<sup>35</sup> Between July and November, Jules and Miriam Bucher traveled through Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Peru filming for Bryan's lectures, for Pathé News, and for E.R.P.I. (later Encyclopedia Britannica Films). From this material, a number of films were fashioned specifically for the CI-AA. Pathé News edited the first title in the series, *Americans All*, which was released in December 1941. Irving Lerner completed *Schools to the South*. The Buchers edited *Argentine Primer* and *Roads South*, while from the footage shot by Bryan and Richter came *Colombia: Crossroads of the Americas* and *Venezuela Moves Ahead*, all completed in 1942. The success of these first films brought Bryan a new CI-AA contract.<sup>36</sup> He received \$30,000 to film fifteen more documentaries that would "build up a comprehensive and sympathetic picture of Latin American peoples for the United States."<sup>37</sup>

In 1943 Bryan dispatched two film crews to South America. Francis Thompson and William James were assigned to Chile, Paraguay, and Peru, while the Buchers went to Peru, Uruguay, and Bolivia. Bryan coordinated the project traveling from site to site. The photographers worked in pairs, one shooting 35mm B&W film for the CI-AA while the other used 16mm Kodachrome for Bryan's lectures. In each country, American embassies and business people helped to provide contacts. Some films, such as *Lima Family*, *Montevideo Family*, and *Fundo in Chile*, were "staged" in that the people being photographed were fully conscious of what was going on and cooperated in the endeavor. Others, such as *High Plain*, were completely candid, the events being recorded as they were happening. In every case, the scripts for the films developed out of the situations as they were found. While many changes were made, Jules Bucher recalls that the cameramen took great care that the events shown might be culturally accurate.<sup>38</sup>

New York laboratories developed the exposed film into work prints. To pay for the final editing, the CI-AA insisted that Bryan sign a contract with the Museum of Modern Art rather than with the agency itself. This arrangement provoked difficulties between museum personnel and Bryan, but by 1945 all the documentaries were finished.<sup>39</sup> The Buchers did much of the editing. Other writers were Tom Cobb and Forest Izard, and Philip Stapp and Albert Paganeli prepared the maps. Bryan read most of the narrations although José Ferrer, Merce Cunningham, and Tony Kraber contributed. He was especially proud of the background music. The CI-AA had assumed that "canned" music would be used, but Bryan felt the series presented an opportunity for young composers. On his own account he hired Louis Horst (composer-director for the dancer, Martha Graham), Norman Lloyd, and Gene Forrell who completed original scores for eleven films.<sup>40</sup>

The films can be grouped by the year in which they appeared: 1941—*Americans All*; 1942—*Argentine Primer*, *Colombia: Crossroads of the Americas*, *Venezuela Moves Ahead*, *Roads South*, *Schools to the South*, *Children of the Americas*; 1943—*Atacama Desert*, *Housing in Chile*, *Good Neighbor Family*, *Montevideo Family*, *Young Uruguay*, *Central Chile*, *High Plain*, *La Paz*; 1944—*Lima*, *Lima Family*, *Bolivia*; 1945—*Fundo in Chile*, *Paraguay*, *Peru*, *South Chile*, *Uruguay*.<sup>41</sup> It is more useful, however, to class them by approach. Using categories developed by Adamson and Seaton for the American Council on Education in 1944, *Americans All*, *Colombia*, *Argentine Primer*, *Venezuela*, *Uruguay*, *Paraguay*, *Peru*, and the three Chile films—*Atacama Desert*, *Central Chile*, and *South Chile*—are "general orientation" films that offer an overall treatment of a country or region including material on geography, industry, agriculture, rural and urban life, people, history, and education. *Lima*, *La Paz*, *Housing in Chile*, and *Young Uruguay* are "vertical pattern" films that treat in detail a single process or activity. *Roads South*, *Schools to the South*, *Children of the Americas*, and *Good Neighbor Family* are "cross-sectional," focusing on a single institution, group, or activity as it exists in several different countries. Finally, *Montevideo Family*, *Lima Family*, *High Plain*, and *Fundo in Chile* are "life pattern" films showing a pattern of living typical of a

given country or region and identifying individuals and their characteristics sufficiently to create a feeling of acquaintanceship.<sup>42</sup>

The films were geared to audiences ranging from junior high to adults. The New York office of the MPD placed them in more than 150 film distribution libraries throughout the U.S. including universities, inter-American centers, and Y.M.C.A.s. Borrowers paid only a nominal booking fee and transportation costs.<sup>43</sup>

Schools were the largest users of the films reflecting the boom in Latin American studies during the war. In 1942, Marion Quinn reported in *Progressive Education*: "It required a total war to get us to look at our Latin American neighbors but we have discovered that they are well worth studying on their own account."<sup>44</sup> Teachers put together Latin American units to enable their students to gain perspective on their own culture and to become better world citizens. Before the appearance of the CI-AA series, only a few films were available, most of which concerned Mexico. Reviewing the situation in 1943, Adamson and Seaton encountered only one film each on Bolivia, Colombia, and Venezuela and none on Paraguay and Uruguay.<sup>45</sup> Bryan's documentaries filled a need and were shown in classrooms throughout the country.

Their popularity endured for fifteen years after the war. When the CI-AA was abolished in 1945, the National Archives acquired ownership of its films. In 1949, the U.S. Office of Education re-released twenty titles of the Bryan series that commercial companies distributed. Educational specialists continued to recommend them for teaching, and a review of several university film catalogs indicates that many were in circulation throughout the 1950s.<sup>46</sup> In 1973, Julien Bryan postulated that his CI-AA documentaries had "influenced millions of American children, and college students as well, to acquire a better understanding of South America."<sup>47</sup>

By the 1960s the prints began to disappear, some damaged beyond repair, others traded for newer films or relegated to dead storage. Today the UCLA Media Center, with its collection of ten Bryan films, is the only rental library that continues to offer several of the documentaries for teaching. However, scholars can consult all but four (*Central Chile*, *Lima Family*, *South Chile*, and *Venezuela Moves Ahead*) at the Audiovisual Archives Division of the National Archives and Records Service.<sup>48</sup>

After the CI-AA series, Bryan went on to other projects. In 1944 and 1945 he made five films for the State Department on facets of American small-town life: the primary school, the factory worker, the doctor, election day, and the county agent.<sup>49</sup> The Davella Mills Foundation selected him as director of its new nonprofit organization, the International Film Foundation (IFF), established to produce documentaries for the promotion of world understanding. In 1947, IFF films *Boundary Lines* and *Picture in Your Minds* were among the first educational films about racial prejudice.<sup>50</sup> Bryan released *Amazon Family* in 1961, and a year later *South America*, both edited from footage shot for the CI-AA. He pioneered as well in the use of unnarrated films as a means of arousing students to discover ideas through a total visual experience. His documentaries won many

awards. Bryan died on 20 October 1974 only weeks after he had received medals from the Polish Cultural Ministry and the Mayor of Warsaw on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the siege of Warsaw.<sup>51</sup>

Wartime Good Neighbor propaganda, the CI-AA's energetic use of film, and the methodology of the filmmaker himself are significant considerations in evaluating the Bryan series. Equally important is a content analysis of the narration and photography, for if the films are to be regarded as a genuine source for historians, it must be shown that they contain data that cannot be found in more accessible written sources. Time and space limitations prohibit a full appraisal of each film individually, but an approach to the series as a whole, acknowledging some obvious limitations, suggests that scholars who view the films will gain some insight on inter-American relations of the 1940s.

Narration flaws are perhaps the most noticeable weakness of the series. Following documentary conventions of the times, the first films particularly have didactic scripts. Torrents of words explain to the audience the visual images on the screen.<sup>52</sup> Occasionally the narrator lapses into irrelevant or facetious statements. Remarks such as "Colombia is the only country named for Christopher Columbus" (C-CA), or "This little chap is out to earn his Y on the chess team" (AA), jar the listener's ear and detract from the film's credibility.<sup>53</sup> Having a similar effect is the inclusion of over-sympathetic remarks to correct for what are perceived as existing prejudices. For example, to illustrate that South America is not all jungle, scenes of cities in each film are accompanied by the narrator's surprised intonations that the given country too has modern cities! The declarations, "These capitals with their tall buildings and crowded boulevards are as cosmopolitan as those of other continents" (RS), and "Buenos Aires has smart shops, as fine as those of London or New York and expensive too" (AP), unintentionally convey an attitude of condescension.

The five films dealing with Latin America as a unit unavoidably gloss over great differences between countries. Simplistic generalizations increase this tendency. Statements such as "Our neighbors to the South probably appreciate the value of recreation more than we do" (AA), "Latin America sees it [the airplane] as the immediate answer to its transportation problems" (RS), or "It never occurs to the children to complain of their father's authority" (GNF), limit the ability of the films to impart a realistic idea of Latin American diversity.

Throughout the series, the commentaries are optimistic regarding rapid solution of chronic problems. The issues most frequently cited are lack of education, health and housing facilities, and geographic barriers; but the narrator is always quick to point out that the governments are making great progress in correcting these conditions—e.g., "Today the theory of public schools has been so enthusiastically adopted that even the most remote kindergarten schools are crowded with youngsters and their pets" (SS); or, referring to Venezuela, "In every way the government is helping to improve the standards of farming" (VMA). *Housing in Chile* illustrates well this naive approach to problem solving. In its description of government action to construct new housing for Santiago's slum inhabitants, the script minimizes political and economic obstacles and implies that better housing alone will automatically transform the lot of a poor



Chilean family: "We can be sure that thanks to their new home, their future life can be one of health and happiness." Unfortunately, the evidence presented does not warrant the film's confident conclusion: "The tenements are gradually disappearing. . . . Good housing, Chile believes, is a permanent social investment which pays dividends in healthy and happier people."<sup>54</sup>

The photographic quality of the documentaries varies considerably. In cross-sectional films Bryan used footage from many unidentified sources so that visual integrity is not complete.<sup>55</sup> The photography does not always support the commentary; for example, in many films, while the narration extolls the growth of middle classes and large cities, the camera focuses primarily on peasant communities, and without visual evidence, the words become patronizing.<sup>56</sup>

But if inadequate narration and episodic photography impair some films, others achieve the highest standards of documentary art. In the films last to be released, Bryan limited the commentaries to necessary description, permitting the viewer to give fuller attention to the images on the screen. Imaginative camera work and thoughtful narrative blend together well in the life-pattern format and especially in *High Plain*—the study of the Aymará Indians—to produce realistic, sensitive, deeply-moving visual essays.

From the scholar's point of view, even the artistically weak films have something to offer. The verbose narrations disclose much about inter-American relations during the 1940s and especially Yankee attitudes toward Latin America. The rationale of the series was to develop North American appreciation for Latin civilization in order to bolster hemispheric defense and to make the Good Neighbor Policy a reality. An underlying assumption implicit in the films is that, in contrast to Latins who are already avid consumers of U.S. books, music, and movies, the average North American is woefully ignorant about his neighbors to the South; and since he imagines them to be headhunters and gauchos inhabiting a vast jungle, he is incapable of being a Good Neighbor.

To counteract such misconceptions, the films enumerate historical, geographical, cultural, and political similarities between the two regions. Noting that both regions were colonized by Europeans and fought wars of independence, Bryan asserts: "These nations have a history as proud as our own" (AA). He describes the geography of central Chile as being like that of California, "a wide-open valley, a natural cornucopia of cereal, truck and fruit crops" (CC). Uruguay reminds one of Ohio (U), and the Andes Mountains are similar to the Rockies but seven thousand feet higher (AA). Analogies point up cultural resemblances: "Main Street Chile doesn't look too different than Main Street U.S.A. except that it is usually wider" (CC); "In many ways the whole fiesta is very like a county fair" (C-CA); and "The people of Argentina are much like us. . . . aggressive, energetic, proud of their heritage and their personal accomplishments" (AP). Concerning politics, Bryan reminds his audience of a shared democratic tradition: "The Declaration of Independence influenced Bolívar profoundly" (UMA); "Argentina's government is modeled on that of the U.S." (AP); and "Chile, like the U.S., has chosen to battle with nature rather than nations to win for its people, land, work and opportunity" (CC).

Bryan adopts two approaches to explain differences in Latin American

life. When addressing chronic problems of underdevelopment—lack of education, poverty, and disease—he insists that the U.S. also faces these conditions in slums and backwoods areas. Emphasizing constructive measures being taken by governments to overcome them, he expresses faith that future generations will bring about a better world. On the other hand, Bryan felt that some aspects of Latin culture might well be emulated by North Americans. Positing that Latins practice greater racial and social tolerance, have more respect for scholarship, enjoy closer family ties, and are better able to subordinate making a living to the process of living, he argues that much can be learned from a study of these attitudes.

Throughout the series, U.S. influence in Latin America is regarded as a positive force. Bryan maintains that economically North American enterprise has added scope for Latin American ingenuity and manpower (*RS*), and Latins value the presence of American business firms (*C-CA*). Foreign mining and petroleum companies have developed resources that Latins could not have utilized on their own. The royalties from these operations have aided them to balance their national budgets. Recounting the history of U.S. investment in Venezuelan oil, Bryan concludes “that the companies have helped make Venezuela one of the richest countries per capita in the world” (*UMA*). Bryan frequently refers to U.S. financial aid that is generously given for the improvement of medical facilities and disease eradication. He states in nearly every film that the Latins are fond of Hollywood movies and “have taken our movies and magazines for granted most of their lives” (*YU*). Far from resenting “cultural imperialism,” Bryan asserted that the Latin Americans welcomed these Yankee contributions as a way to enrich their civilization.

Inter-American cooperation for defense is an important theme in *Americans All*, *Schools to the South*, *Colombia: Crossroads of the Americas*, and *Venezuela Moves Ahead*. These films include sections on German immigration, the impact of Nazi propaganda, and the efforts of governments to expel the Nazis. To show that defense is a joint effort, *Americans All* reports that the Latin Americans asked the U.S. Army to train their officers, “an honor once accorded mainly to Europeans,” and that their militaries now have up-to-date fighting material—“arsenals like ours dedicated to the defense of the twenty-one American republics.” In the same vein, after discussing the efforts of Latin Americans to learn about the U.S., *Schools South* makes a plea for North American cooperation: “Let us not fail them . . . all of us in this hemisphere, men, women, and children are moving toward new wisdom, new strength, and new unity.”

In its exposition of hemispheric similarities, understanding, and collaboration, the series presents a vivid statement of Good Neighbor ideology as endorsed by the State Department, propagated by the CI-AA, and reiterated in many textbooks of the era. Bryan consciously tried to replace negative stereotypes about Latin America with positive notions capable of subsuming the geographic and cultural diversity of the continent, the richness of the civilization, and the strong historic ties with the U.S. He fashioned portraits of individual nations that would win Yankee respect. For example, he summed up Uruguay as “a modern dynamic, progressive country,” outstandingly democratic, with a

utopian but workable social welfare system, little inequality, and no censorship (*U*). After examining Paraguay's recurring difficulties, Bryan conceded that success had eluded this country in the past, but he predicted that "if the people and the land are properly developed and strongly directed, Paraguay has every chance to realize a sound and lasting prosperity" (*P*). Bryan's Colombia was "the most democratic republic of South America where people enjoyed free speech," and "the right to vote is real"<sup>57</sup> (*C-CA*).

Events of the last thirty years expose the inadequacy of these assessments. Seeing the films will remind the historian of the transience of academic interpretation and of the pitfalls in summarizing accurately Latin American complexities to the general public. If the tenets of Good Neighborism seem obsolete today, how will contemporary faith in Third World separatism, the tensions between Americas, and the evils of U.S. economic and cultural imperialism appear in 2007? Moreover, granting that the films did influence some portion of the persons who saw them over two decades, we may assume that many North Americans, while recognizing that Latin America was not just jungle, believed in all honesty that it was made up of countries which were basically less successful models of U.S. democracy and filled with populations who had been for years grateful recipients of U.S. technology, culture, and financial largess. Reliving this particular mindset by screening the films, we can better understand why the American public was outraged by massive Yankee-go-home demonstrations in the late 1950s and puzzled by the breakdown of "democracy" in countries such as Colombia and Uruguay.

The films also supply broad photographic coverage of Spanish South America, excluding only Ecuador. While they do not contain material on current events, political figures, elections, or revolutions, they are a treasury of geographic, social, economic, and cultural data.

Each general orientation film examines the physical regions of the country. By comparing the jungles, plains, and mountains, it shows the topographical barriers to rapid transportation, communication, and national integration. We see how people within a region adapt to the demands of their environment and how their lifestyle alters in accordance with their location in the highlands or in the tropics. Much attention is given to Indians, peasants, and the blending of European and Indian heritages. The camera records clearly housing types, village organization, methods of labor, male and female roles, socialization of children, and, above all, the strong faces of the people.

Material on larger towns and cities is less comprehensive but not devoid of interest. Usually shown are the downtown areas—plaza, cathedral, capital, stores—supplemented by scenes of residential neighborhoods, cemeteries, and soccer stadiums. Trolleys, late model cars, and ongoing construction attest to the impact of modernization. The commentary makes much of the rising middle class, and *Montevideo Family* examines the life of a woolbroker and his family; but beyond some scenes of Indians working in Bolivian factories, the urban poor are largely ignored (*Bolivia, GNF*). Contemporary fashions of the city dwellers are contrasted with traditional costumes of the rural population. Those who

have traveled recently to South American capitals will regretfully observe the absence of pollution and relative tranquility of even the largest cities.

The films make a major contribution by documenting the processing of raw materials. They show in detail the collection of rubber, mahogany, and fish, and the production of bananas, cacao, and chocolate. *Atacama Desert* explains both traditional and modern methods of nitrate and copper mining; *Peru* and *Bolivia* do the same for silver and tin; *Colombia* and *Venezuela* show the exploitation of oil by foreign companies; *South Chile*, *Argentina*, and *Uruguay* follow the preparation of meat and wool for export from the grazing of cattle and sheep to the slaughterhouse and shearing shed. Nearly all include sequences on agricultural methods. The sight of a three-horse team harvesting wheat on the Argentine pampa or ten burros yoked together to thresh grain in Peru is unforgettable (*AP, Peru*).

Many films discuss transportation, and *Roads South* is entirely devoted to this subject. Scenes of river traffic show dugout canoes alongside steamships; travel by burro coexists with trucks, cars, railroads, and planes. There are some interesting details from the 1940s—pilots traveling between Buenos Aires and Santiago use oxygen tubes while crossing the Andes, cars going up to Caracas from the coastal plain are sprayed with DDT to prevent disease, and in Uruguay cars are equipped with devices to convert charcoal into fuel.

To awaken North American appreciation for Latin American culture, Bryan introduced in his films such outstanding artists or intellectuals as Molina Campos, Portinari, Vila-Lobos, Domingo Santa Cruz, Alfonso López, and Eduardo Santos. He illustrates how Latin Americans continue to draw on European as well as creole customs by juxtaposing ballroom dancing scenes with native dances; and soccer, swimming, horseracing, and volley ball with ostrich hunting, *pato*, bull fights, *asados*, and *bolos*.

Verbally and visually the Bryan series furnishes a unique perspective on four Latin American institutions in the 1940s: the church, school, rural estate, and family. The films show the omnipresence of the Roman Catholic Church in most countries with many scenes of cathedrals, chapels, parochial schools, and clergy. Commentaries discuss the role of the church in history, politics, and society, while scenes of people praying, attending mass, giving alms, walking in processions, and celebrating fiestas manifest the involvement of aristocracy and masses. Bryan's approach is sympathetic, and represented by his comment about the faith of the Indians in *Good Neighbor Family*: "A few rapid phrases can hardly do justice to the religious feeling of a simple Indian family or the satisfaction and security which faith gives to these people. Their ancient traditions have been given a new expression and a new meaning by the spiritual forces that came from Europe."

Bryan emphatically believed that education was the key to development. He says, in *Americans All*: "In any civilized country progress depends on three things: reading, writing, and arithmetic." A corollary attitude was his faith that young people had the courage, talent, and will to conquer the problems besetting their countries if they could be properly trained (*Peru*). Schools received coverage in all the films and are the principal subject for *Schools to the South*,

*Young Uruguay*, and *Children of the Americas*. Bryan examines all levels of instruction—kindergarten to university, public and private, urban and rural—showing children in classes and on playgrounds. He includes interesting sections on universities in Chile, Peru, Colombia, and Uruguay, and in *Young Uruguay*, he explores the youth culture of Montevideo. Lamentably, despite the amount of footage dealing with education, the effort to emphasize the positive results is superficial, glosses over the severe dilemmas faced by public instruction, and basks in the assurance that “while it is still true that some Latin American children have never seen the inside of a school, it will not be true for long” (SS).

More sophisticated are Bryan's studies of large estates—*Fundo in Chile* and *High Plain*.<sup>58</sup> The former contrasts traditional and modern farming methods on two sections of a *fundo*, while the latter observes life on a Bolivian potato hacienda located two hours from La Paz. Both films remarkably portray the characteristics of these self-contained communities. They explore the living conditions of the workers and owners and the interaction of the two in an atmosphere of paternalism. The narration—free from hyperbole—describes the interworkings of the estate and its ties with the national economy. In *High Plain*, the commentary verges on sheer poetry to convey the essence of Indian life. Unlike many textbooks of the time, which saw the Bolivians as miserable, degraded Indians, *High Plain* recognizes their material poverty and primitive working conditions but captures as well the spiritual strength of the Aymará culture. In Bryan's eyes the Indians are victors not victims, “quiet people straight in their lives, melancholy even in their pleasures, faithful to their work, strong with the strength this land demands for those who would live upon it.”<sup>59</sup>

Three films examine South American families. *Good Neighbor Family* deals to some extent with the upper and middle sectors but it is largely a compilation study of poor rural family life. Citing its scenes of humble working-class dwellings and of the impact that migration to the city has on the family as an institution, Burns has called this film, “the best essay written or filmed on the basic Latin American institution—the family.”<sup>60</sup> In *Montevideo Family*, Bryan pictures a day in the life of the Guarditas—middle-class Uruguayans. In this family the father is a woolbroker; the mother, a daughter of Italian immigrants. Two young children attend school and the grandmother lives next door. The film shows how the Guarditas interact with each other and with the outside community. The same spirit of realism pervades *Lima Family*—a study of a Peruvian doctor's family. To convey what it means to be part of Lima aristocracy, Bryan shows the gracious residence, the importance of tradition, the authority of the doctor in his home, the family dining and playing together. In addition he considers at length the roles of women. After describing the mother's position in the household, he goes on to compare the lives of two teenage cousins—one firmly within tradition, the other rebelling and asserting more freedom. On the position of women in 1944 Bryan reaches the following, sobering conclusion: “Although society is slowly changing, the women still have no vote, cannot own property, cannot obtain a divorce. Their daughters may walk out in a different world one day, but most of the old rules have not yet been broken” (LF).

In their reflection of hemispheric relations and of Yankee attitudes toward Latin America during World War II, in their visual record of South American life, and in their examination of social institutions, the Bryan films are a window to the past. By the magic of the camera we become part of the Latin America of thirty years ago. In this experience we recognize many aspects of life that are unchanged and we see the beginning of trends—such as increasing U.S. influence, industrialization, improvements in transportation and medicine, and urban migration—that passing decades have intensified. The value of the films as a teaching aid for Latin American history courses is self-evident. It is tragic that so few prints remain in circulation. Nevertheless, as the appendix shows, public and private archives continue to make the documentaries available to researchers. The scholar who is willing to travel, to brave the skepticism of his colleagues and the challenge of film research, will be richly rewarded for his trouble.

## APPENDIX

### AN ANNOTATED GUIDE TO FILMS PRODUCED BY JULIEN BRYAN FOR THE COORDINATOR OF INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

#### *Locating the Films*

Among the major film collections in the United States, the National Archives (NA) makes the Bryan CI-AA series most accessible to researchers. The Motion Picture Section of the Library of Congress owns 16mm prints of many of the films but reports that they are in poor condition and too shrunken to go through a viewing machine. The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) has only *Americans All* and *High Plain* in 16mm, and *Housing in Chile* and *Uruguay* in 35 mm. In contrast, the Motion Pictures Sound Recording Branch of the National Archives has nineteen films, lacking only *Central Chile*, *Lima Family*, *South Chile*, and *Venezuela Moves Ahead*. The International Film Foundation (IFF) has copies of the entire series but only limited accommodations for researchers.

The National Archives welcomes film research from any quarter. Its facilities are open without charge. It does not rent films but will sell new 16mm copies at the rate of \$6 per minute of running time. The National Audio-Visual Center, which is the central distribution, information, and salespoint for current government films, does rent *Good Neighbor Family* for \$10 and sells new prints of *La Paz* for \$36.50. An excellent introduction to the film services of the National Archives and the National Audio-Visual Center is found in William Murphy, "The National Archives and the Historian's Use of Films," *The History Teacher* 6 (November 1972): 119–34.

With regard to college film collections, the researcher's best bet is Indiana University (IU), followed by UCLA. Still circulating *Atacama Desert*, IU's audio-visual center has placed nine Bryan films (*Fundo in Chile*, *Good Neighbor Family*, *High Plain*, *La Paz*, *Lima*, *Peru*, *Schools to the South*, and *Young Uruguay*) in its archive where those interested may come to view them. UCLA circulates ten films (*Atacama Desert*, *Bolivia*, *Good Neighbor Family*, *High Plain*, *La Paz*, *Lima*, *Montevideo Family*, *Peru*, *Uruguay*, and *Young Uruguay*) although Burns notes that the prints are in rather bad condition and require patience in viewing them. In

addition, the Visual Aids Service of the University of Illinois rents *High Plain* and *Uruguay*.

#### *Explanation of Annotated Entries*

In the filmography below, each entry begins with the title and the name of the country with which it deals in parentheses, when that is not evident from the title. The second line indicates whether the film is black and white or color, running time in minutes, date of release, type of film under the Adamson-Seaton system, and Library of Congress call number. The third line lists the people who collaborated with Bryan, when credits were noted in the film. Next is an assessment of the value of the film from an historian's perspective. The location line lists archives that own the film; the final line gives libraries where the film may be rented. The full names of the associates of Julien Bryan and the addresses of film libraries and archives completes the appendix.

#### *The Adamson-Seaton Film Classifications*

*Travelog*: A more or less complete compilation of scenes of a foreign country or countries as they would be seen by the average tourist.

*General Orientation*: A general over-all treatment of a country that includes material on physical features, industries, agriculture, rural and urban life, people, history, education, religion.

*Vertical Pattern*: A comparatively detailed treatment of a single process or activity that contains peripheral material only to the extent necessary to develop the central theme.

*Cross-Sectional Pattern*: A general treatment of one institution, group, or activity as it exists in a number of different regions or countries.

*Records of Expeditions*: A photographic record of an expedition organized only as a chronological report.

*Life Pattern*: A film that interprets a pattern of living that is typical of a given country or region. The term is applied to any photographic treatment that identifies individuals and their characteristics sufficiently to create a feeling of understanding and acquaintanceship.

Keith Adamson and Helen Hardt Seaton, "Educational Films on Latin America," in *Latin America in School and College Teaching Materials* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1944), p. 397.

#### *Filmography*

AMERICANS ALL (Latin America)

B&W, 20 min., 1941. *General Orientation*. LC 917.

*Narrator*: Bryan. *Edited by* Pathé News

As the first film chronologically in the CI-AA Series, AA introduces many themes that are further developed in the others and stresses the importance of the Good Neighbor Policy and Western Hemisphere cooperation in the face of

Europe's disintegration. The first half is an historical summary of Latin America. Postulating that youth will build a new world, the last half considers youth at work, youth at school, health conditions, defense, and ends with a plea for American solidarity. The commentary is useful for its expression of U.S. propaganda and the work of the CI-AA. It also recalls aspects of U.S. culture in the 1940s. Visually the film is not very exciting, consisting of unidentifiable bits and pieces of film footage.

*Location:* MOMA, NA, IFF

**ARGENTINE PRIMER**

*B&W, 23 min., 1942. General Orientation.*

*Photo:* J. Bucher, March of Time; *Script:* M. Bucher; *Music:* Lloyd; *Narrator:* Bryan

An overview of Argentina designed to foster North American understanding of a potential friend or bitter rival of the U.S. in Western Hemisphere affairs. The intense narration makes questionable historical judgments but visually the film offers excellent scenes of people, parts of Buenos Aires, recreation, and dancing. About one third of the film is devoted to agriculture on the pampas. It follows the production of cattle from grazing on the *estancia* to meat processing in the packing houses.

*Location:* NA, IFF

**ATACAMA DESERT (Chile)**

*B&W, 17 min., 1943. General Orientation. LC 918.31.*

*Photo:* Bryan, James; *Graphics:* Stapp; *Script:* Cobb; *Music:* Horst; *Narrator:* Bryan

Presents life and industry in the Atacama Desert of Northern Chile showing traditional and modern methods of mining copper, nitrate, and iron; desert nomads; and the towns of Chiuchiu, Andacoya, Antofagasta, and Tocopilla. There is a study of the Chuquicamata mining community. The photography shows the barrenness of the desert and of the lives of the miners. Especially striking are scenes of an Andacoya Christmas fiesta with an Indian juggler and poet on stilts, and of men playing golf on the sand dunes.

*Location:* NA, IFF

*Libraries:* IU-Circulating, UCLA

**BOLIVIA**

*B&W, 20 min., 1944. General Orientation.*

*Photo:* J. Bucher, James, Thompson; *Graphics:* Stapp; *Script:* Izard; *Music:* Forrell;

*Narrator:* Ferrer

This survey of the jungle lowlands, *yungas*, and altiplano points out that there are really "three Bolivias" each "with its offering to the country's destiny." Shows processing of rubber, chinchona, coca; agricultural methods; silver and tin mining. Other high points are scenes of the mountain roads, Indian factory workers in La Paz, and the Cochabamba trolley. Narration describes the people in a positive way without becoming patronizing. The photography is striking



and Forrell's music incorporates Indian themes. Among the best of the Bryan productions.

*Locations:* NA, IFF

*Libraries:* UCLA.

**CENTRAL CHILE**

*B&W, 20 min., 1943? General Orientation.*

*Photo:* James, Thompson; *Script:* Wolff; *Narrator:* Cunningham

Survey of rural and urban life in Chile's Central Valley pointing out similarities with the United States. Scenes of the towns of Los Andes, Valparaiso, and Santiago; a *fundo*; and dancing the *cuenca*. Also shows Jorge Delano Coque, editor of *Topaze* and composer, Domingo Santa Cruz. The narration emphasizes progress and modernity—an example of the Good Neighbor approach.

*Location:* IFF

**CHILDREN OF THE AMERICAS (Latin America)**

*B&W, 10 min., 1942? Cross-Sectional.*

*Photo:* Bryan, J. Bucher, Thompson; *Music:* Lloyd; *Script:* Wolff; *Narrator:* Bracken

A compilation study of Latin American children at home, school, work, and play. Designed for elementary school audiences, the narration is juvenile. Negligible value for researcher.

*Location:* NA, IFF

**COLOMBIA: CROSSROADS OF THE AMERICAS**

*B&W, 27 min., 1942. General Orientation. LC 918.61.*

*Photo:* Bryan, Richter; *Music:* Lloyd; *Narrator:* Bryan

An introduction to Colombia that highlights her importance to the U.S. in terms of military defense, trade, and democratic progress. Emphasis on the significance of the church and some discussion of the political system showing Eduardo Santos and Alfonso López and the infiltration of Nazi propaganda. Many scenes of Bogotá featuring a party of notables in El Chico, the rural highlands, a sugar estate, and Barranquilla. There is a long section on U.S. development of the El Barco oil concession as a triumph of Yankee engineering. Useful as a record of Colombia before the Bogotazo and of U.S. attitudes about Colombia during World War II.

*Location:* NA, IFF

**FUNDO IN CHILE**

*B&W, 20 min., 1945. Life Pattern. LC 630.383.*

*Photo:* James, Thompson; *Script:* Tomlinson; *Narrator:* Bryan

Partially dramatized story of the Santa Rosa fundo which, at the owner's death, is divided between his two sons. The eldest brother revitalizes his portion by introducing new technology and improving the living conditions of the workers while the youngest plays absentee, letting his portion stagnate. There is a careful look at the life style of owners and workers. Scenes of laborers, carts driven by three-horse teams, plowing with oxen, children attending the fundo school, mass on Sunday, and the manor houses provide a vivid introduction to the social and economic community of the estate.

*Location:* IU-Archives, NA, IFF

**GOOD NEIGHBOR FAMILY (Latin America)**

*B&W, 20 min., 1943. Cross-Sectional. LC 918.*

*Photo: Bryan, J. Bucher, Richter; Music: Lloyd; Narrator: Bryan*

Asserting that a study of family life is the key to understanding Latin American culture, this film summarizes characteristics of aristocratic and poor families and makes comparisons with the United States. The film shows that on the large estate and the small farm, the family rather than the individual is the laboring unit. Exploring the roles of each member, the film stresses family pride and self-sufficiency. It also discusses the impact on rural family life caused by migration to the city. The photography is compiled from many sources but it is skillfully edited to hold attention. Burns has called this film "the best study written or filmed on the basic Latin American institution—the family."

*Location: IU-Archives, NA, IFF*

*Libraries: NAC, UCLA*

**HIGH PLAIN (Bolivia)**

*B&W, 20 min., 1943. Life Pattern. LC 980.4.*

*Photo: J. Bucher; Script: M. Bucher; Graphics: Stapp; Music: Lloyd; Narrator: Kraber*

Records the life of the Aymará workers at the Petaca potato hacienda on the Bolivian altiplano. Scenes of fishing in Lake Titicaca; women in mourning shawls, spinning wool, weaving; children tending sheep; planting and harvesting potatoes; praying to Christian and Indian gods. The owner, paternalistic but progressive, brings the first tractors to Petaca, plants barley, introduces firing of lime and cutting peat to improve economic production. The narration has a poetic quality and argues that Aymará culture over centuries has given the people the strength they need to endure their poverty. For its insight into the hacienda community and Indian life, this film is an extraordinary achievement.

*Location: IU-Archives, MOMA, NA, IFF*

*Libraries: UI, UCLA*

**HOUSING IN CHILE**

*B&W, 19 min., 1943. Vertical Pattern. LC 331.833.*

*Photo: Bryan, James, Thompson; Script: Cobb; Music: Horst; Narrator: Bryan*

Explains how the Chilean government is solving the housing crisis in Santiago by dramatizing the experience of the Manuel Blanco family who through government aid exchange their *conventillo* dwelling for residence in a new housing project. The film documents the process by which the Blancos receive their new home and provides some insight into popular lifestyle. The Blancos, however, seem more middle class than poor, and the staging of their story is not convincing. The film fails to express the magnitude of problems caused by population pressure in Santiago or of obstacles to improving housing.

*Location: MOMA, NA*

**LA PAZ (Bolivia)**

*B&W, 18 min., 1943. Vertical Pattern. LC 918.41.*

*Photo: J. Bucher; Script: M. Bucher; Narrator: Bryan*

A study of Bolivia's capital city stressing its high altitude, blend of Indian and Spanish culture, problems facing industrialization, and government efforts

to modernize the city. Scenes of Plaza Morillo, government buildings, cathedral, market days, the Alacitas festival, a christening, soccer stadium, paper and textile factories, and residential areas of the city. There is a long dance sequence accompanied by native music. The narrative is marred by patronizing remarks and fails to make clear the distinction between *cholo* and Indian. A useful film if seen with *Bolivia* to complete the survey of the country before the Revolution of 1952.

*Location:* IU-Archives, NA, IFF

*Libraries:* UCLA

#### LIMA (Peru)

*B&W, 17 min., 1944. Vertical Pattern. LC 918.5.*

*Photo:* J. Bucher; *Graphics:* Stapp; *Script:* M. Bucher; *Narrator:* Bryan

Study of Peru's capital city showing survival of past traditions and impact of modernization. Scenes of downtown area, race track, housing projects, hospital, and university. Also shows the shutting of stores for a long lunch hour and crowds watching an animated creche at Christmas. The photography conveys a sense of the city's 1940s *ambiente*.

*Location:* IU-Archives, NA, IFF

*Libraries:* UCLA

#### LIMA FAMILY (Peru)

*B&W, 18 min., 1944. Life Pattern. LC 918.52.*

*Photo:* J. Bucher; *Script:* M. Bucher; *Narrator:* Bryan

Depicts life of the extended family of a wealthy Lima surgeon. Presents the elegant house on a quiet Lima street, the taste and wealth of furnishings. Members of the family are introduced; the doctor is shown to be master of the house while the mother devotes herself to the home. In the afternoon women go to roll bandages as guests of Peru's first lady, or attend the country club. Men attend separate clubs. The film points out that family loyalty is not an emotional loyalty to an individual but a broader fidelity to a group or clan. The film shows how girls in the family are socialized into the system. It contrasts the rebellious attitude of one young woman, who taught ballet in a school run by North American nuns, with that of her cousin, who spends her days in leisure on the beach and is engaged to be married. The film shows the family dining together and dancing afterward. It is a brilliant visual and verbal essay on the aristocracy of the 1940s.

*Location:* IFF

#### MONTEVIDEO FAMILY (Uruguay)

*B&W, 16 min., 1943. Life Pattern. LC 918.951.*

*Photo:* J. Bucher; *Script:* M. Bucher; *Music:* Lloyd; *Narrator:* Bryan

After some introductory scenes of quiet streets and buildings of Montevideo, this film focuses on the life of the Guarditas family as representatives of Uruguay's middle class. The film shows their house; the father, Manuel, leaving for his work as a woolbroker; the boy at school; the girl doing her homework; the maid cleaning the house; and the mother working in the garden. It follows each member's activities through the day and ends with a family picnic. With its concern for the ordinary rather than the bizarre, this documentary gives a very

good impression of what middle-class life was like in Montevideo in the 1940s and is one of the best films in the series.

*Location:* NA

*Libraries:* UCLA

**PARAGUAY**

*B&W, 18 min., 1945. General Orientation. LC 918.92.*

*Photo:* Bryan, James, Thompson; *Graphics:* Stapp; *Music:* Forrell; *Narrator:* Bryan

Perhaps the first documentary ever made about Paraguay, this film is an overview of the geographic regions and peoples. Scenes of the Makka and Itaquá Indians, and Asunción's docks, business district, and monuments. The commentary discusses the importance of the Paraguay River, the reliance on agriculture, and the problems posed by the Gran Chaco. The narration is flawed by an overoptimistic attitude about future possibilities. Its avoidance of political questions results in an unrealistic picture of the country's situation. The photography is very good.

*Location:* NA

**PERU**

*B&W, 20 min., 1945. General Orientation. LC 918.5.*

*Photo:* Bransby, Bryan, J. Bucher, Thompson; *Graphics:* Stapp; *Script:* Izard; *Narrator:* Kraber

The strength of this film is the first-rate photography. It begins with the Inca ruins at Machu Picchu and a highland village fiesta. Scenes of the coastal region show the barrenness of the northern desert, Arequipa, the Chiclín hacienda where sugar and cotton are raised, and the Talara petroleum deposits. The Altiplano section shows the raising of wheat, corn, barley, and oats and threshing with a team of ten burros. Lowland scenes include Iquitos, Amazon River traffic, and jungle farming. Commentary argues that Peru is a nation of independent farmers who control the welfare of their country.

*Location:* IU-Archives, NA, IFF

*Libraries:* UCLA

**ROADS SOUTH (Latin America)**

*B&W, 17 min., 1942. Cross-Sectional. LC 385.*

*Photo:* Bryan, J. Bucher, Richter; *Script:* M. Bucher; *Narrator:* Bryan

This film compares modes of transportation in Latin America to explain the growing importance of the airplane. There are scenes of river and ocean traffic, railroads, trucks and cars, airlines, and the Pan-American Highway. The compilation photography draws largely on footage from Brazil and Mexico and includes some interesting scenes of railroads on sugar plantations, an electric train in Mexico, and an avalanche in Chile. Generalizations in the commentary are too broad and optimistic implying that within a few years Latin America will have solved all transportation problems.

*Location:* NA, IFF

**SCHOOLS TO THE SOUTH (Latin America)**

*B&W, 27 min., 1942. Cross-Sectional. LC 370.98.*

*Photo:* Bryan, J. Bucher, Richter; *Music:* Lloyd; *Narrator:* Bryan

Compilation photography surveys schools at all levels throughout Latin

America. Much Mexican footage is used with a scene of Cárdenas awarding diplomas at a rural school. The narration fails to do justice to the complex issue of education but is valuable as an example of U.S. Good Neighborism during World War II.

*Location:* IU-Archives, NA, IFF

#### SOUTH CHILE

*B&W, 18 min., 1945. General Orientation. LC 918.27.*

*Photo:* Bryan, James; *Graphics:* Stapp; *Script:* Izard; *Narrator:* Bryan

This film presents the southern third of Chile as a uniquely beautiful but largely unexplored frontierland. There are scenes of contemporary Araucanians, the lake district, the port of Castro on Chiloe Island, Punta Arenas, Straits of Magellan, and Chilean Patagonia. The last half shows the raising of sheep for meat and wool on enormous estancias, giving much insight into the life of the workers and management by British nationals. The photography aptly conveys the grandeur of this region.

*Location:* IU-Archives, IFF

#### URUGUAY

*B&W, 20 min., 1945. General Orientation. LC 918.95.*

*Photo:* Bryan, J. Bucher; *Script:* Cobb, Izard; *Narrator:* Bryan

Introduces "dynamic, progressive Uruguay" as being similar in many ways to the U.S. Scenes of Montevideo; farmers raising barley, oats, wheat and corn, sheep and cattle. The camera shows a cattle round up, the livestock market outside Montevideo, the processing of meat and hides for export. The commentary praises Uruguay's advanced social legislation but suggests that lack of resources are a problem for industrialization. There is a scene of an automobile powered by a charcoal burner. The film dramatizes the economic and political stability enjoyed by Uruguay during the 1940s and sets the stage for understanding the turmoil of the more recent period.

*Location:* MOMA, NA, IFF

*Libraries:* UI, UCLA

#### VENEZUELA MOVES AHEAD

*Color, 40 min., 1942. General Orientation. LC 918.7.*

*Photo:* Bryan, Richter; *Graphics:* Paganelli; *Script:* Cobb; *Narrator:* Bryan

The only color film in the series, *VMA* begins with a discussion of Bolívar's role in the winning of independence. Scenes of the coastal plain show La Guaira, coconut and cacao plantations. The section on the Llanos includes scenes of the plainsmen fishing. The best part is a long sequence on life of the people of the highland village of Mucuchíes. The camera shows men and women participating in a fiesta. Much attention is given to oil production showing methods of exploration, the company towns, role of foreign investment, refining of oil on Curaçao. Travel hazards are shown in flooded dirt roads and spraying of cars against malarial mosquitos. Scenes of Caracas include streets, trolley cars, colonial buildings, plazas, new housing projects, military school, and Central University. The narration is very wordy. Ten minutes could have been edited out of the film without detracting from it.

*Location:* IFF

YOUNG URUGUAY

*B&W, 19 min., 1943. Vertical Pattern. LC 918.95.*

*Photo: J. Bucher; Script: M. Bucher; Music: Lloyd; Narrator: Bryan*

This film pictures the young people of Uruguay in school and play, highlighting the progressive steps being taken in education since the days of Batlle y Ordóñez. There are scenes of primary schools and fresh air schools for tuberculosis-prone children. A section on rural education states that there is still need for improvement in this sphere. After showing some secondary schools, the film considers the university and the lifestyle of the students. The young people are seen attending classes and listening to records in a private home properly chaperoned. They also hear on the radio an interview with Marisa Lucy Arden, director of a school for crippled children. The narration ends with a confident affirmation about the ability of Uruguay's youth to protect the future of the country. This is the only film in the series to have a piano musical score rather than orchestra.

*Location: IU-Archives, NA, IFF*

*Libraries: UCLA*

*Julien Bryan's Associates in the Production of the CI-AA Series*

Photographers: John Bransby, Jules Bucher, William James, Kenneth Richter, Francis Thompson

Graphics: Albert Paganelli, Philip Stapp

Research: Lester Dix, Kuna Dolch, Marion Quinn, Robert Sonkin

Scripts: Miriam Bucher, Tom Cobb, Forrest Iazard, Harry Tomlinson

Music: Gene Forrell, Louis Horst, Norman Lloyd

Narrators: Ann Bracken, Merce Cunningham, José Ferrer, Tony Kraber

*Addresses of Film Archives*

*IFF*

Mr. Sam Bryan  
International Film Foundation  
Room 916, 475 5th Avenue  
New York, NY 10017

*MOMA*

Mr. Charles Silver  
Film Study Center  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 West 53 Street  
New York, NY 10019

*IU-Archives*

Audio-Visual Center  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, IN 47401  
(Films can be consulted only  
at the A-V Center)

*NA*

Mr. William T. Murphy  
Motion Pictures Sound Recording Branch  
Audiovisual Archives Division  
National Archives and Records Service  
Washington, D.C. 20418

*Addresses of Film Lending Libraries*

IU-Circulating  
 Audio-Visual Center  
 Indiana University  
 Bloomington, IN 47401

UCLA  
 UCLA Media Library  
 University of California-Los Angeles  
 Los Angeles, CA 90024

NAC  
 National Audiovisual Center<sup>1</sup>  
 National Archives and Records Service  
 Washington, D.C. 20408

UI  
 Visual Aids Service  
 University of Illinois  
 1325 South Oak Street  
 Champaign, IL 61820

NOTES

1. The author expresses appreciation to Sam Bryan of the International Film Foundation who made copies of the CI-AA films available for screening and gave generously of his time to answer questions concerning his father's career. Special thanks also go to Jules and Miriam Bucher whose letter to the author (25 August 1976) provided invaluable information about the filming and editing of the Bryan series. A brief version of this study was presented at the meetings of the American Historical Association, December 1976.
2. Oscar E. Sams Jr., "We Learn about South America," *Nation's Schools* 35 (Jan. 1945): 50.
3. Christopher H. Roads, "Film as Historical Evidence," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 3 (Oct. 1966): 183.
4. Nicholas Pronay, "Why Should Historians Use Newsreels?," Paper presented at the National Archives Conference on the Use of Audiovisual Archives as Original Source Materials, 9 November 1972, p. 7.
5. E. Bradford Burns, *Latin American Cinema: Film and History* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center, 1975), p. 5.
6. Martin A. Jackson and John O'Connor, *Teaching History with Film* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1974), p. 36; Pronay, "Why Should Historians," p. 9.
7. Roads, "Film as Historical Evidence," p. 187.
8. William T. Murphy, "The National Archives and the Historian's Use of Film," *The History Teacher* 6 (Nov. 1972): 131.
9. In addition to the book cited above, Burns has completed several articles. See "The Latin American Film, Realism and the Historian," *History Teacher* 6 (Aug. 1973): 569-74; "National Identity in Argentine Films," *Américas* 27 (Nov. 1975): 4-10; "Visual History," *Américas* 26 (Aug. 1974): 5-12; and "'Los Gauchos judíos' (The Jewish Gauchos) Shown in Buenos Aires," *Nation* 221 (16 Aug., 1975): 126. For studies by Paul D. Vanderwood, see "Hollywood and History: Does Film Make the Connection?," *Proceedings of PCCLAS* 2 (1973), pp. 53-59, and "Latin America in Ferment: The Vision of Saul Landau," *Film & History* 5 (Feb. 1975): 1-7; 23. Allen C. Woll has written two articles on Hollywood films and the Good Neighbor Policy—

- "Hollywood's Good Neighbor Policy: The Latin Image in American Film, 1939–1946," *Journal of Popular Film* 3 (Fall 1974): 278–93, and "The Dilemma of Juárez," *Film & History* 5 (Feb. 1975): 15–17.
10. William Lytle Schurz, *Latin America* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1964), p. 274.
  11. Donald Marquand Dozer, *Are We Good Neighbors?* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1961), pp. 82–83. See also Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Western Hemisphere Idea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964).
  12. *Ibid.*
  13. Donald W. Rowland, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of InterAmerican Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), p. 67.
  14. Walter Wanger, "Film Phenomena: The Film World Looks to Latin America," *Saturday Review of Literature* 22 (17 April 1943): 42.
  15. Dorothy Jones, *The Portrayal of China and India on the American Screen, 1896–1955* (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for International Studies, MIT, 1955), p. 7.
  16. Woll, "Hollywood's Good Neighbor Policy," p. 291.
  17. Rowland, *History of the Office*, p. 74.
  18. In the 1930s most American documentary filmmakers worked independently and depended on their own resources, counting on only occasional support of progressive groups, unions, and educational foundations. Some government agencies were producing documentaries, but the Pare Lorentz films were the first aimed at the general public. For a more detailed history of the American documentary, see Lewis Jacobs, *The Documentary Tradition: From Nanook to Woodstock* (New York: Hopkinson & Blake, Pubs., 1971).
  19. Jacobs, *The Documentary Tradition*, p. 182.
  20. Dozer, *Are We Good Neighbors?*, p. 115.
  21. Rowland, *History of the Office*, p. 174.
  22. Julien Hequembourg Bryan, *Ambulance 464 encore des blessés* (New York: MacMillan, 1918).
  23. Begun as a radio program in 1931, by 1935 The March of Time, Inc. developed into a "newsreel" consisting of actuality footage, interviews, and staged scenes. Sponsored and heavily influenced by *Time Magazine*, it was shown every month in theaters across America.
  24. Julien Hequembourg Bryan, *Siege* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1940).
  25. *Current Biography 1940* (New York: H. W. Wilson), p. 114.
  26. International Film Foundation (hereafter cited as IFF), "Julien Bryan and his Documentary Motion Pictures," n.d.
  27. *Ibid.*
  28. *Ibid.*
  29. Julien Bryan, "War Is, Was and Always Will Be, Hell," in Jacobs, *The Documentary Tradition*, p. 167.
  30. "The International Film Foundation, Inc.," *School and Society* 62 (29 December 1945): 423.
  31. IFF Catalog, 1952.
  32. IFF, "Julien Bryan."
  33. Bryan, "War Is," pp. 168–69.
  34. Julien Bryan, "The 1958 Kenneth Edwards Memorial Address," *University Film Producers Association Journal* 2 (Fall 1958): 5.
  35. *New York Times*, 21 October 1974.
  36. Letter, Jules Bucher to Jane Loy, 25 August 1976.
  37. Bryan, "The 1958 Kenneth Edwards Memorial Address," p. 6. "Julien Bryan Teaching Films Produced for the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs" (New York, n.d.).
  38. Bucher to Loy, 25 August 1976.
  39. Bryan discussed these problems in detail at the National Archives Government Filmmaker's Symposium, 15 October 1973. A tape of his presentation, "#64–94 Film Makers' Perspectives" (Reel), can be purchased by writing to the Cashier, National Archives, Washington, D.C. 20408.



40. Julien Bryan, "Lecture at the Imperial War College" (London: n.p., Spring 1974). The CI-AA films were the work of many people. Bryan as producer supervised their efforts and endorsed the verbal and photographic content of each title. For the purpose of this analysis he will be regarded as the "author" of the series.
41. The exact dating of the films is difficult because of discrepancies in the catalog listings. Eight of the films were available by November 1943 because they were reviewed by Keith Adamson and Helen Hardt Seaton in their article, "Educational Films on Latin America" in *Latin America in School and College Teaching Materials* (Washington, D.C., 1944) published by the American Council on Education. The Library of Congress has printed cards showing dates for nineteen of the films in its *Film Catalog 1948-52* (vol. 24). None of the sources lists dates for *Central Chile* or *Children of the Americas* although they must have been made at approximately the same time as the other CI-AA films.
42. Adamson and Seaton, "Educational Films," p. 397.
43. "The Inter-American Cultural Film Program," in *The Educational Screen and AudioVisual Guide* (Feb. 1942):60.
44. Marion Quinn, "Why Not Study All America?" *Progressive Education* 19 (Nov. 1942):379-83.
45. Adamson and Seaton, "Educational Films," p. 386.
46. Walter Wittich, "The Curriculum Clinic: Enter the American Nations," *The Educational Screen* 24 (March 1945):106-7. Universities whose film libraries lent the films in the 1950s include University of Illinois, Indiana University, University of Massachusetts, New York University, and UCLA.
47. Bryan, "#64-94 Film Makers' Perspectives," reel 1.
48. For complete location information see appendix.
49. Bryan, "Lecture to the Imperial War College."
50. Jacobs, *The Documentary Tradition*, p. 182.
51. *New York Times*, 21 October 1974.
52. During the 1940s educators seem to have favored these intensive narrations. Jules Bucher notes that the teacher consultants to the CI-AA series objected to any part of the film running without commentary as a waste of time and vetoed long or unusual words in the script as unsuitable for the elementary school mentality.
53. Hereafter the source of direct quotations from a film used in the text will be indicated by the initials of the title.
54. In his National Archives talk, Bryan admitted that *Housing in Chile* was a "kind of rigged bit of filming." He also said that the poor family selected as the film's subject probably, as a result, got into their new apartment two or three years earlier than it would have normally taken them.
55. In addition to his own materials, Bryan had access to March of Time archives and may have purchased film from local Mexican or Brazilian studios.
56. Adamson and Seaton, "Educational Films," p. 398.
57. In addition to Dozer and Schurz, see Hubert Herring, *Good Neighbors: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and 17 Other Countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942); Samuel Guy Inman, *Latin America: Its Place in World Life* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1942); A. Curtis Wilgus, *The Development of Hispanic America* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941). The film portrayals of individual countries was in agreement with what scholars were saying at the time. Herring, in *Good Neighbors*, extolls the democratic tradition in Colombia and Uruguay, and Russell H. Fitzgibbon reflected the economic and political euphoria in the latter nation in his study, *Uruguay: Portrait of a Democracy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1954).
58. In addition, *Argentine Primer* and *Uruguay* present the cattle estancia; *Peru*, a sugar hacienda; *South Chile*, a sheep estancia; and *Venezuela Moves Ahead*, coconut and cacao plantations.
59. Compare this statement with the following made by Hubert Herring in *A History of Latin America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1955) and left unchanged in the 1968 third edition: "The Indian of the altiplano farms the exhausted soil, herds a few ani-

mals, lives in a stone or mud hut, eats dried potatoes, parched corn, and fried beans, and dulls his appetite by chewing coca leaves. Ignorant and lethargic, the Indian counts for little in the life of the nation" (p. 524).

60. Burns, *Latin American Cinema*, p. 10.