

# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



Peter Carr. *Censos, Padrones y Matriculas de la Poblacion de Cuba, Siglos 16, 17 y 18*. San Bernardino, Calif.: Cuban Index, 1993. 100 pp. \$25.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-9631209-3-9.

Reviewed by Sherry Johnson (Florida International University)

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Genealogist Peter Carr has produced a companion volume to his first work, *Guide to Cuban Genealogical Research: Records and Sources* (Chicago: Adams Press, 1991). Carr's second book clearly bears the mark of a genealogist and will appeal to aficionados interested in searching for their ancestors in Cuba in the remote colonial past. This slim volume, barely a hundred pages, is comprised of lists of names selected from widely scattered sources. Most of the primary documents are reproduced from the Archivo General de Indias, but the author also reprints lists of names appearing in nineteenth-century printed works and in more contemporary volumes such as those of the late Levi Marrero. Sadly, this book will be of little use to historians since it contains neither thesis nor argument; it simply is a collection of list after list. Worse still, its price makes it impractical even as a tool in a quantitative methods course or in a seminar specializing in local history. Even serious scholars of Cuban history will find this book of limited use as its scant one hundred pages cannot begin to scratch the surface of the voluminous material in the archives in Seville, and even less so within its three-hundred-year chronological scope, 1509-1797.

The limited nature of this book will, unfortunately, cause many to dismiss Carr's work as frivolous, an unfair conclusion and a serious mistake. This book was not written for a scholarly audience and should not be judged as such. Moreover, it was preceded by an excellent volume, *Guide to Cuban Genealogical Research*, which is simply the most comprehensive English-language publication of Cuban source materials to date. In his first book, Carr presents neophyte historians of Cuba with an explanation of repositories on the island and guides them to source materials available outside of Cuba on microfilm, such as U.S. Department of State Records, French and Spanish Consular Records, and Cuban Church registers filmed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons). Thus, these works should be consulted in tandem and with the caveat that the author was writing for an audience other than the academic community. With that in mind, professional historians may discover documentary treasures in the most unexpected places.

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