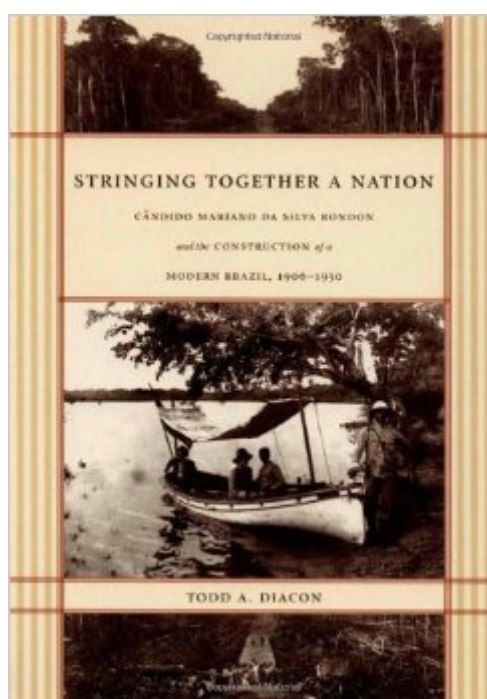


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Stringing Together A Nation: Cândido Mariano Da Silva Rondon And The Construction Of A Modern Brazil, 1906–1930



Synopsis

Focusing on one of the most fascinating and debated figures in the history of modern Brazil, *Stringing Together a Nation* is the first full-length study of the life and career of Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon (1865–1958) to be published in English. In the early twentieth century, Rondon, a military engineer, led what became known as the Rondon Commission in a massive undertaking: the building of telegraph lines and roads connecting Brazil's vast interior with its coast. Todd A. Diacon describes how, in stringing together a nation with telegraph wire, Rondon attempted to create a unified community of "Brazilians" from a population whose loyalties and identities were much more local and regional in scope. He reveals the work of the Rondon Commission as a crucial exemplar of the issues and intricacies involved in the expansion of central state authority in Brazil and in the construction of a particular kind of Brazilian nation. Using an impressive array of archival and documentary sources, Diacon chronicles the Rondon Commission's arduous construction of telegraph lines across more than eight hundred miles of the Basin; its exploration, surveying, and mapping of vast areas of northwest Brazil; and its implementation of policies governing relations between the Brazilian state and indigenous groups. He considers the importance of Positivist philosophy to Rondon's thought, and he highlights the Rondon Commission's significant public relations work on behalf of nation-building efforts. He reflects on the discussions "both contemporaneous and historiographical" that have made Rondon such a fundamental and controversial figure in Brazilian cultural history.

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Customer Reviews

Though in modern Brazil the name Rondon is very well known, even with a state (Rondonia) named after him, few people know the reason for his fame and the particulars that drove him to be Brazil's greatest native explorer. Rondon's name is attached to the telegraph service and Indian protection. In this book, the author explores the history of the telegraph commission led by Rondon, from its humble beginnings after the Paraguay war to the great nation building plan to occupy the . It describes the successes and the organization that was put together to build the telegraph and then moved on to occupation of lands after the end of telegraph building. There is a special chapter on the Rondon and Roosevelt expedition which uncovered the route of the Rio da Mãe d'Água, later renamed Rio Roosevelt. In it the conflicts between the Americans (Roosevelt, his son and a few scientists) and the Brazilians are clear, as Rondon seeks to map correctly the route as they are running out of food and getting dangerously sick. An important section of the book is also devoted to Rondon's positivism and an explanation of the routes and beliefs of positivists in Brazil. Rondon was influenced during his military training and kept the beliefs of positivism as a religion to the end of his life. It guided much of his relationships with Indians, seeking to bring them into an enlightened society and avoiding their contact with the church, which would be a strong nemesis of his throughout his life. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the life of Rondon or the history of nation building in Brazil. You will come out with a good understanding of the roots of the Brazilian republic and perhaps the reasons why Brazil has not faced as many internal fissures as most of its neighbors.

The attempt to write a script for film making is not good. For the same subject, there are many other much more valuable sources of information, including the memories of Cândido Rondon, recently published in Brazil.

got this book for a Brazilian history class. started out very slow and I was dreading the required read. once you get into it (chapter 2) the characters come alive. a lot of pathos and disappointment of Brazil's major players in the communications industry. if not required, I would have read it anyway....

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