

**Times Gone By:  
Memories of a Man of  
Action**

*VICENTE PÉREZ ROSALES*

**OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS**

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# TIMES GONE BY

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VICENTE PÉREZ ROSALES

*Translated from the Spanish by*

JOHN H. R. POLT

INTRODUCTION AND CHRONOLOGY

BY BRIAN LOVEMAN

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

2003

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford New York

Auckland Bangkok Buenos Aires Cape Town Chennai  
Dar es Salaam Delhi Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi Kolkata  
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai Nairobi  
São Paulo Shanghai Singapore Taipei Tokyo Toronto

and an associated company in Berlin

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Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.  
198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
Pérez Rosales, Vicente, 1807–1886.

[Recuerdos del pasado. English]

Times gone by : memoirs of a man of action /  
by Vicente Pérez Rosales;

translated from the Spanish by John H.R. Polt;  
with an introduction and chronology by Brian Loveman.  
p. cm. — (Library of Latin America)

ISBN 0-19-511760-3 — ISBN 0-19-511761-1 (pbk.)

1. Chile—History—War of Independence, 1810–1824—Anecdotes.

2. Chile—History—1824–1920—Anecdotes.

3. Pérez Rosales, Vicente, 1807–1886.

I. Loveman, Brian. II. Title. III. Series.

F3094 .P4413 2002 983'.04—dc21 2002025115

Photograph of Rosales on p. xii, courtesy of the University of Chile  
Photograph Archive, with special thanks to Jose Moreno Fabbri.

Photographs of drawings on pages 231, 233, 243, 250, courtesy of the  
Chilean National Archives, with special thanks to Mario Monsalve.

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed in the United States of America  
on acid-free paper

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Times Gone By  
VICENTE PÉREZ ROSALES  
*I*

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*Series Editors'*  
*General Introduction*

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**T**he Library of Latin America series makes available in translation major nineteenth-century authors whose work has been neglected in the English-speaking world. The titles for the translations from the Spanish and Portuguese were suggested by an editorial committee that included Jean Franco (general editor responsible for works in Spanish), Richard Graham (series editor responsible for works in Portuguese), Tulio Halperín Donghi (at the University of California, Berkeley), Iván Jaksic (at the University of Notre Dame), Naomi Lindstrom (at the University of Texas at Austin), Eduardo Lozano of the Library at the University of Pittsburgh, and Francine Masiello (at the University of California, Berkeley). The late Antonio Cornejo Polar of the University of California, Berkeley, was also one of the founding members of the committee. The translations have been funded thanks to the generosity of the Lampadia Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

During the period of national formation between 1810 and into the early years of the twentieth century, the new nations of Latin America fashioned their identities, drew up constitutions, engaged in bitter struggles over territory, and debated questions of education, government, ethnicity, and culture. This was a unique period unlike the process of nation formation in Europe and one that should be more familiar than it is to students of comparative politics, history, and literature.



The image of the nation was envisioned by the lettered classes—a minority in countries in which indigenous, mestizo, black, or mulatto peasants and slaves predominated—although there were also alternative nationalisms at the grassroots level. The cultural elite were well educated in European thought and letters, but as statesmen, journalists, poets, and academics, they confronted the problem of the racial and linguistic heterogeneity of the continent and the difficulties of integrating the population into a modern nation-state. Some of the writers whose works will be translated in the Library of Latin America series played leading roles in politics. Fray Servando Teresa de Mier, a friar who translated Rousseau's *The Social Contract* and was one of the most colorful characters of the independence period, was faced with imprisonment and expulsion from Mexico for his heterodox beliefs; on his return, after independence, he was elected to the congress. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, exiled from his native Argentina under the presidency of Rosas, wrote *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie*, a stinging denunciation of that government. He returned after Rosas' overthrow and was elected president in 1868. Andrés Bello was born in Venezuela, lived in London, where he published poetry during the independence period, settled in Chile, where he founded the University, wrote his grammar of the Spanish language, and drew up the country's legal code.

These post-independence intelligentsia were not simply dreaming castles in the air, but vitally contributed to the founding of nations and the shaping of culture. The advantage of hindsight may make us aware of problems they themselves did not foresee, but this should not affect our assessment of their truly astonishing energies and achievements. It is still surprising that the writing of Andrés Bello, who contributed fundamental works to so many different fields, has never been translated into English. Although there is a recent translation of Sarmiento's celebrated *Facundo*, there is no translation of his memoirs, *Recuerdos de provincia* (*Provincial Recollections*). The predominance of memoirs in the Library of Latin America series is no accident—many of these offer entertaining insights into a vast and complex continent.

Nor have we neglected the novel. The series includes new translations of the outstanding Brazilian writer Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis' work, including *Dom Casmurro* and *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*. There is no reason why other novels and writers who are not so well known outside Latin America—the Peruvian novelist Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Ases sin nido*, Nataniel Aguirre's *Juan de la Rosa*, José de Alencar's *Iracema*, Juana Manuela Gorriti's short stories—should not be read with as much interest as the political novels of Anthony Trollope.

A series on nineteenth-century Latin America cannot, however, be limited to literary genres such as the novel, the poem, and the short story. The literature of independent Latin America was eclectic and strongly influenced by the periodical press newly liberated from scrutiny by colonial authorities and the Inquisition. Newspapers were miscellanies of fiction, essays, poems, and translations from all manner of European writing. The novels written on the eve of Mexican Independence by José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi included disquisitions on secular education and law, and denunciations of the evils of gaming and idleness. Other works, such as a well-known poem by Andrés Bello, "Ode to Tropical Agriculture," and novels such as *Amalia* by José Mármol and the Bolivian Nataniel Aguirre's *Juan de la Rosa*, were openly partisan. By the end of the century, sophisticated scholars were beginning to address the history of their countries, as did João Capistrano de Abreu in his *Capítulos de história colonial*.

It is often in memoirs such as those by Fray Servando Teresa de Mier or Sarmiento that we find the descriptions of everyday life that in Europe were incorporated into the realist novel. Latin American literature at this time was seen largely as a pedagogical tool, a "light" alternative to speeches, sermons, and philosophical tracts—though, in fact, especially in the early part of the century, even the readership for novels was quite small because of the high rate of illiteracy. Nevertheless, the vigorous orally transmitted culture of the gaucho and the urban underclasses became the linguistic repertoire of some of the most interesting nineteenth-century writers—most notably José Hernández, author of the "gauchesque" poem "Martín Fierro," which enjoyed an unparalleled popularity. But for many writers the task was not to appropriate popular language but to civilize, and their literary works were strongly influenced by the high style of political oratory.

The editorial committee has not attempted to limit its selection to the better-known writers such as Machado de Assis; it has also selected many works that have never appeared in translation or writers whose work has not been translated recently. The series now makes these works available to the English-speaking public.

Because of the preferences of funding organizations, the series initially focuses on writing from Brazil, the Southern Cone, the Andean region, and Mexico. Each of our editions will have an introduction that places the work in its appropriate context and includes explanatory notes.

We owe special thanks to Robert Glynn of the Lampadia Foundation, whose initiative gave the project a jump start, and to Richard Ekman of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which also generously supported

the project. We also thank the Rockefeller Foundation for funding the 1996 symposium "Culture and Nation in Iberoamerica," organized by the editorial board of the Library of Latin America. We received substantial institutional support and personal encouragement from the Institute of Latin American Studies of the University of Texas at Austin. The support of Edward Barry of Oxford University Press has been crucial, as has the advice and help of Ellen Chodosh of Oxford University Press. The first volumes of the series were published after the untimely death, on July 3, 1997, of Maria C. Bulle, who, as an associate of the Lampadia Foundation, supported the idea from its beginning.

—*Jean Franco*  
—*Richard Graham*

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## *Translator's Note*

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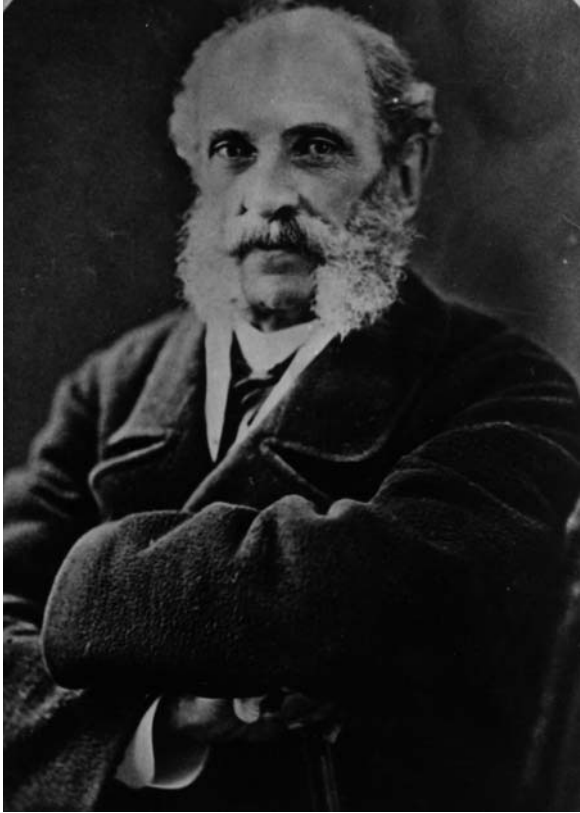
**T**his translation is based on the 1910 edition of *Recuerdos del pasado* (*Biblioteca de escritores de Chile*, vol. 3, Santiago: Imprenta Barcelona). In addition I have consulted the following editions: Santiago: Imprenta Gutenberg, 1886; Buenos Aires: Ángel Estrada y Cía., S.A., 1944, 2 vols. (with preliminary study and notes by Eugenio Orrego Vicuña); Havana: Casa de las Américas, 1972. Unfortunately there are errors, either the author's or his publishers,' that reappear in all of these editions; where I have been able to detect them, I correct them with appropriate annotation. I do not know of any scholarly edition of this book, which richly merits one.

The authorship of the footnotes in this translation is indicated by initials: VPR for notes by Pérez Rosales; EOV for notes that I have adapted from those by Eugenio Orrego Vicuña; and JP for my own contributions. I have not attempted a full annotation of the text, which would require an expertise that I do not possess.

In translating the chapters dealing with the author's stay in California I benefited from being able to consult the version published by my late teachers, colleagues, and friends, Professors Edwin S. Morby and Arturo Torres-Rioseco: *California Adventure* (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1947).

For their assistance, I am grateful to Professor Pilar Álvarez Rubio, Verónica López, and, as always, Beverley Anne Hastings Polt.

—John H. R. Polt



Vicente Pérez Rosales

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## *Chronology of Vicente Pérez Rosales*

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- 1807 April 5. Vicente Pérez Rosales born in Santiago, Chile. Both parents members of the upper crust of Chile's colonial society, wealthy, highly educated, politically involved.
- 1810–1814 Patria Vieja. Initial movement toward independence in Chile; maternal grandfather member of first Junta de Gobierno in Santiago (September 18, 1810). Factional and personal struggles between supporters of Bernardo O'Higgins and Carrera family. Members of both sides visit Pérez household.
- 1814 Spanish defeat proponents of independence at Rancagua; José Miguel Carrera fails to reinforce O'Higgins' forces.
- 1814–1818 Spanish "reconquista." Spain reimposes colonial regime. Pérez Rosales' grandfather and aunt sent to exile on Juan Fernández Island; mother imprisoned by notorious commander of Talavera regiment, Vicente San Bruno.
- 1817 Battle of Chacabuco (February 12); Spanish defeated by San Martín's army. Carrera brothers, Luis and Juan José, arrested in Mendoza by San Martín's forces.
- 1818 Chile declares independence (February 12); Spanish army defeats Chileans at Cancha Rayada near Talca (March 19);

- Battle of Maipú (April 18) seals the independence of the country. Pérez Rosales, at 11 years old, flees to Mendoza as political exile. Participates in youth militia; witnesses execution of Luis and Juan José Carrera April 8, 1818.
- 1818–1821 Studies in best Santiago private school, has private tutors in French and English.
- 1821 Leaves Chile on English ship *Owen Glendower*. Abandoned by captain in Rio de Janeiro. Witnesses Brazilian independence movement (1822).
- 1823 Sails back to Chile on the *Doris*; meets Maria Graham, wife of ship captain.
- 1825 Leaves on the *Moselle* with other young rich Chileans to study in Paris.
- 1825–1830 Studies in Paris at elite school for Latin American and Spanish youth. Meets San Martín, many prominent intellectuals. Enjoys Paris theater, cafes, and city life. Witnesses 1830 revolution in Paris.
- 1830 Returns to Chile.
- 1832–1845 Returns to Chile; experiments at farming, cattleman, herb medicine, shopkeeper, bootlegger, smuggler, journalism. Lives on a farm in Colchagua off and on almost 10 years.
- 1835 Tries journalism; fined for insulting a priest he calls a swindler.
- 1842 Publishes a satirical article ridiculing the private and public responses to a plague of grasshoppers (importing turkeys to eat them).
- 1845–1846 Chile's first immigration law; Pérez Rosales goes to Magallanes on scientific expedition.

- 1846 Partner in a newspaper, *El Mosaico*, published in Santiago for 12 issues; prominent authors include Andrés Bello, Manuel Silvela, Juan García del Río; goes to Copiapó and *norte chico* mining districts on the steamship (August 1846).
- 1848 Leaves for California from Valparaíso (December 1848). Tries mining, running a restaurant, and other jobs with Chilean companions. Restaurant destroyed in San Francisco fire.
- 1850 Returns to Chile; named colonization agent in southern provinces (October 11, 1850). Helps settle first German immigrants at Valdivia.
- 1852 Publishes *Memoria sobre la colonización de Valdivia*.
- 1853 Participates in founding of Puerto Montt (February 12, 1853; date chosen to honor Battle of Chacabuco).
- 1854 Publishes *Memoria sobre emigración*.
- 1855 Intendente of colonization territory of Llanquihue.
- 1855–56 Travels overland to Buenos Aires, then sails to England and Hamburg as Chilean colonization agent and consul general. Meets Argentine ex-dictator Juan Manuel Rosas in Southampton.
- 1857 Published *Ensayo sobre Chile* (in French) to describe Chilean geography, customs, and opportunities for immigrants.
- 1858 Publishes *Manual del ganadero chileno* (written in Denmark after visiting a livestock exposition).
- 1859 Returns to Chile on the *Nueva Granada*. Appointed Intendente of Concepción. Translation of *Ensayo sobre Chile* published in Santiago.



- 1861 Pérez Rosales' cousin, José Joaquín Pérez, takes office as president. Marries wealthy widow, Antonia Urrutia, in Concepción; Pérez Rosales elected deputy in *Cámara de Diputados* (Lower House of Congress). Experiences poor health.
- 1870 Publishes "La colonia de Llanquihue, su origen, estado actual y medios de impulsar su progreso."
- 1875–1882 Publishes in *La Revista Chilena* and *Los Lunes* (Supplement to *La Epoca*); articles later collected in *Diccionario de 'El Entrometido* (Dictionary of a Busybody) (1946).
- 1876–1881 Senator of the Republic for the Province of Llanquihue.
- 1880 Member of National Manufacturers Association (*Sociedad de Fomento Fabril* [SFF]).
- 1882 Publishes *Recuerdos del Pasado* (much of which had been written earlier).
- 1884 President of SFF.
- 1885 Pérez's wife, Antonia Urrutia, dies.
- 1886 Pérez Rosales dies September 6 in Santiago.
- 1949 On the hundredth anniversary of the gold rush, his "Diary of a Trip to California" (*Diario de un viaje a California*) published in Santiago.

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## *Introduction*

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Vicente Pérez Rosales died September 6, 1886, at the age of seventy-nine. His life and careers spanned the dawning of Chile's independence, its early nationhood, two foreign wars, two civil wars, the arrival of steamships, railroads, telegraph, the southern and northern expansion of the country's territory, the arrival of European, North African, Latin American, and North American immigrants. Pérez Rosales' life—he was born in 1807—took him from the alternating dusty and muddy rusticity of early nineteenth-century Santiago, a town without a printing press before 1812, to Rio de Janeiro, Paris, and California for the 1849 gold rush, to his country's far south, its northern mines, and to Germany as a diplomatic emissary and colonization recruiting agent for his country in the 1850s. At the end of the 1850s he returned to Chile, first as a provincial intendant (*intendente*) in 1859, and then was elected to Congress and later to the Senate in the 1870s.

Pérez Rosales' family belonged to the "political class" of aristocrats and pseudo-aristocrats that ruled South America's most "stable" nation in the nineteenth century. But he also belonged to Europe's and the Western Hemisphere's age of exhilarating technological, commercial, and political transformation. He was part of a world responding to the American revolution of 1776, the French Revolution of 1789, the philosophical "age of reason," the political age of upheaval, the attack on monarchy and the *ancien régime*, the struggle to create republics—and an age in which millions of Europeans left their homelands to resettle in the Western Hemisphere. In retrospect, the modernization that characterized the nineteenth century meant profound social volatility,

unprecedented global movement of peoples, information, and commodities, a big step toward the networked globalization of the late twentieth century.

Pérez Rosales witnessed and participated in these amazing changes in the life of humankind. Unlike most people, he also wrote about them. And the stories he tells are fascinating, inspiring, and often hilarious. They put the reader “on the ground,” experiencing the repugnant slave corrals in Rio de Janeiro in 1822, a shipwreck near Cape Horn, the mining camps of California, and the spectacular growth of San Francisco during the 1849 gold rush.<sup>1</sup> His journal with notes on his adventures in California, which he illustrated with humorous drawings, later served as a source for part of *Recuerdos del Pasado* (*Times Gone By*).

In *Recuerdos del Pasado*, the reader follows Pérez Rosales in Chile from north to south, from countryside to mining camps, to the far southern forests—for half a century. *Times Gone By* is a gift for historians of western Europe, California, and Chile. And its folksy, matter-of-fact, humorous and satirical style makes it a joy to read. The book is a treasure.

Literary critics put *Times Gone By* into a category called “*costumbrista*,” a genre dedicated to customs and folkways, a description of popular culture and ways of life. But it is much more, for it takes the reader from the best Parisian schools of the 1820s, the theater and salons of the elite in Europe and Santiago, to the rough-and-tumble gold fields of California. It describes the sea voyages of three and four months between Chile and Europe and also North America. It relates, frequently firsthand, the operations of the first railroads in England and the lives of cattle rustlers and smugglers in the high Andes passes between Chile and Argentina.

It is almost impossible to read this book and not wonder how Pérez Rosales survived to write it. In the introduction to the third edition (1886), the editor, Luis Montt, remarked that “there would have been profound shock, had an astrologer predicted the great ups and downs in fortune to be experienced by this child born in 1807, in a town whose residents usually only traveled as far as their nearby farms in the summer.”

1. Guillermo Feliú Cruz tells us in the introduction to the 1946 edition of *Diccionario del Entrometido* that the original pages of notes of Pérez Rosales’ trip to California “are illustrated by Pérez Rosales’ pen, and these drawings are famous for their obscenities. Today they are in the Archivo Histórico Nacional.” Facsimiles are reproduced on pages 231, 233, 243, and 250; by today’s standards there is little if anything obscene in them. Nevertheless one of the drawings (p. 41 of the manuscript), originally of a nude, was defaced by an anonymous reader with blue stripes to approximately the figure’s waist.

*Times Gone By* is Pérez Rosales' best known and most celebrated book. He wrote many of its chapters long before the collected "memories" were first published together in 1882. Some had been published in newspapers and magazines in the 1870s. Before agreeing to publish *Times Gone By*, four years before his death, he had published various sorts of writing in Chile and Europe. He tried his hand at journalism in the 1830s and 1840s, founding the literary and philosophical "magazine" *El Mosaico* in 1846. With compatriots who had shared his time in Paris, he used *El Mosaico* to ridicule the Argentine "know-it-all" Carlos Tejedor and his colleagues, such as Domingo Sarmiento. Between 1850 and 1870 he wrote more serious essays and short monographs, among them several works on German colonization in southern Chile, a manual for cattle ranchers (*Manual del ganadero chileno*, 1858), and a popular geography (in French) to describe the country for potential immigrants (translated into Spanish a year later as *Ensayo sobre Chile*, 1857). These latter writings, erudite and didactic, were part of his "official life," intended to be of practical use for government officials, immigrants, farmers, and livestock breeders.

After 1870, Pérez Rosales gave license to his jovial skepticism, his acerbic secularism, and his anti-Spanish and anticolonial sentiments. Most of all he gave free rein to his biting sense of humor. Scattered articles and essays, some published in newspapers and later collected as *El Diccionario del Entrometido* (*Dictionary of a Busybody*), provide "definitions" of everything from "mines" to "political revolution" that departed considerably from those found in the Real Academia Española's authoritative *Diccionario de la lengua española*. As he tells the reader in the introduction, "Usually, what is said is less surprising than the ways in which it is said; people share most ideas, they are within everyone's reach. The difference is in the way that they are expressed and in style. Style makes singular the most common things, it strengthens the weakest, it gives grandeur to the simplest." Pérez Rosales' style exemplifies this notion in his short essay-definitions of such terms as "the alphabet," "irrigation," and "weather forecasting": "What predicts weather in one country may not be able to predict weather in another; what accurately predicts weather in one part of a country may be erroneous in other parts." This commonsense assertion is followed by a "learned" and facetious discussion of the variables (moon, sun, wind, atmospheric currents, etc.) that the ancients (Pliny, Galileo, Copernicus, and Descartes) and moderns used to predict the weather in Greece, Rome, England, and Italy.