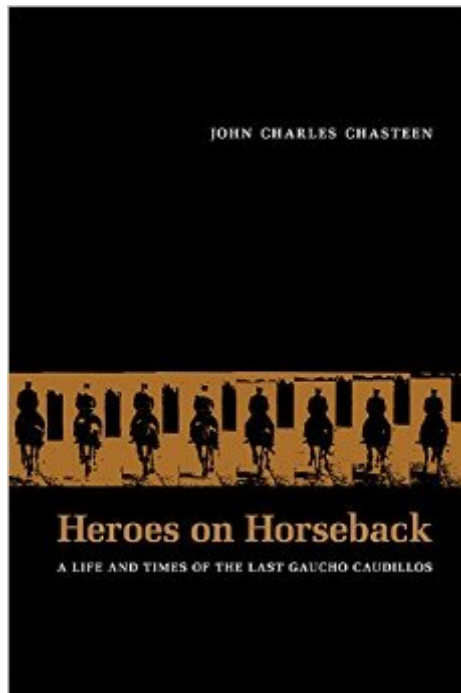


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# Heroes On Horseback: A Life And Times Of The Last Gaucho Caudillos (Diálogos Series)



## Synopsis

*Heroes on Horseback* takes a new look at a topic that will not go away: the charismatic leadership known as caudillismo that has characterized so much of South American history. Why were there so many Spanish American caudillos and so few in Brazil? Where did caudillos get their power? Answers emerge in John Charles Chasteen's account of the short careers of two back-country caudillos, Gumerindo and Aparicio Saravia, sons of a Brazilian immigrant family in northern Uruguay. Their story is set in the borderland where Brazil and Spanish America met and mingled in the nineteenth century. Rather by accident, they became the last of the gaucho caudillos when, in the 1890s, they led hopeless revolts of mounted lancers against modern armies equipped with Mausers and Krupp artillery. Chasteen braids a powerful narrative out of an unusual variety of sources, from short stories to census data, from partisan oratory to private letters, from folklore to probate inventories and criminal case records. Explored are topics as varied as myth, gender, material life, political culture, state formation, charismatic leadership, and the search for national identity. The resulting multifaceted book is socio-political history at its best.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In "*Heroes on Horseback*," John Charles Chasteen varies his narrative by alternating chapters following the story of two Brazilian caudillos with those examining the political environment of the Uruguay-Brazil borderland in the late 19th century. While a little slow in parts, it does explore the conceptions of identities among those in the borderland, particularly for the numerous Brazilian

immigrants living in Uruguay. It also provides a closer look at the lives of two brothers, Gumercindo and Aparicio Saravia, as they lead their militia in hopes of bringing revolution to Brazil. Most interesting, however, is Chasteen's inquiry into the phenomenon of caudillismo itself and how the charisma of the leaders inspired the borderland residents to enlist their support. Overall, a worthwhile look at a unique area of Latin American political history.

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For those who like history it's a very interesting book. Tells a lot about history and culture of South Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.

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