

William Lytle Schurz (1886-1962)

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William Lytle Schurz died in Phoenix, Arizona, July 25, 1962, at the age of 76. He had devoted his years as student, writer, teacher, and government official to Latin American affairs. Educated at the University of California (Ph.D., 1915) he had spent almost two years in research in the Archives of the Indies in Seville, gathering material which resulted in his *Manila Galleon*, published in 1939. After three years of teaching Latin American History at the University of Michigan (1915-1918), he turned to public service. In 1918 he was the adviser on Latin America to Colonel E. M. House. The years 1918-1926 brought him various appointments with the Department of Commerce: from 1920 to 1926, he served as commercial attaché of the American Embassy in Rio de Janeiro. During his stay in Brazil, he headed a field expedition for twenty-one months in the Amazon Valley devoted to a study of the rubber industry, a project which resulted in the Ford Motor Company's plantation project, Fordlandia. His assignments with Commerce also took him on extensive trips into Paraguay and Bolivia; his *Paraguay: A Commercial Handbook* (1920) and *Bolivia: An Industrial Handbook* (1921) were substantial contributions to little-known areas. In 1926-27 he acted as economic adviser to the Government of Cuba, then under the presidency of Gerardo Machado. He then served in various business and editorial posts, all concerned with Latin America. In 1941 he was named as assistant chief of the recently organized Division of Cultural Relations in the Department of State, where for four years he had a distinguished share in shaping that new and imaginative program for the furthering of the Good Neighbor policy. During 1945 and 1946 he served as acting chief of the American Republics division in the State Department. From 1946 until his death in 1962 he was connected with the American Institute for Foreign Trade, part of the time as president, but with the chief responsibility for directing the area programs preparing men and women for service in American business abroad. Devoting himself chiefly to the Latin American area, he was brilliantly successful in preparing leaders who share his

own knowledge of the southern republics and who have caught the infection of his own affection for that area. His books on Latin America have exerted solid influence upon students everywhere. These include *Latin America: A Descriptive Survey* (1941), *The New World: A Study of Latin American Civilization* (1953), and *Brazil: The Infinite Country* (1961).