



Bandit King: Lampiao of Brazil

By Billy Jaynes Chandler

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What Jesse James was to the United States, Lampião was to Brazil, and then some. With a band that at times numbered a hundred or more, this notorious bandit confronted state armies on more than equal terms and cowed political bosses, virtually dominating large sections of his native northeastern backlands during the 1920s and 1930s. Although Lampião was often brutal and merciless, his occasional acts of compassion, together with his exploits, have made him a folk figure in Brazil.

Based on contemporary news accounts, archival materials, and extensive interviews by the author, this book presents the first systematic and reliable account of the famed desperado.

Examining Lampião's career from his boyhood in Pernambuco to his death at Angicos, Chandler sorts fact from fiction and places the bandit in the context of the backlands, where in the early part of this century becoming a *cangaceiro* (bandit) was as natural and attractive to the son of a tenant or small farmer as taking a degree in law or medicine was for the sons of the Recife or Salvador elite. Chandler sees Lampião and other *cangaceiros* as the inevitable products of a lawless society in which frontier conditions reminiscent of the American West persisted far into the twentieth century.

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Bandit King: Lampiao of Brazil By Billy Jaynes Chandler Bibliography

- Rank: #2272109 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Texas AnM University Press
- Published on: 2000-06-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .65" w x 5.98" l, .95 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 276 pages

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