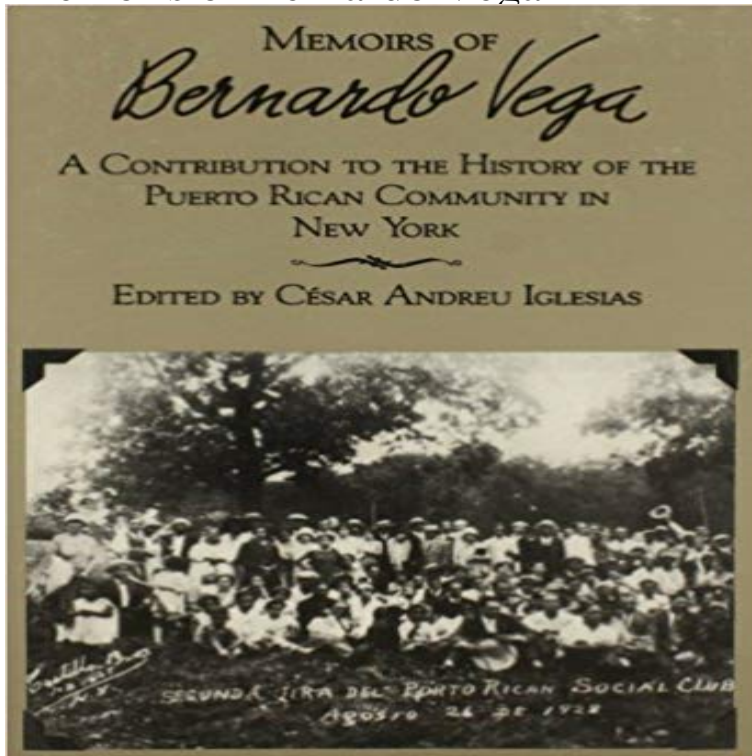


Memoirs of Bernardo Vega



When Bernardo Vega arrived in New York from Puerto Rico in 1916, he was at the forefront of a migrant stream that was soon to become a flood. His memoirs-perceptive, lively, and politically aware-provide us with a unique and often humorous firsthand account of the life of an immigrant, as well as of the concerns and activities of the Puerto Rican community in New York in the period between the wars. A true worker-intellectual, a cigar-maker by trade, Bernardo Vega tells about the difficulties faced by the new immigrants, about their growing involvement in political parties, labor organizations, and socialist movements, and about their vibrant cultural life. He includes the recollections of his uncle, which offer a rare glimpse of Puerto Rican life in New York in the late nineteenth century, during the Cuban and Puerto Rican wars of independence against Spain. Thus the memoirs are not only absorbing reading, but an important contribution to the history of the Puerto Rican community in New York, and to the literature on immigration, ethnic relations, and urban history.

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