

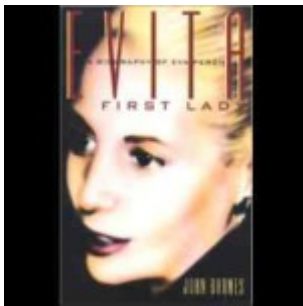
Eva Perón biography portrays a complicated woman

By Kathryn Reed

I decided to stick with my South America themed reading and started in on “Evita: First Lady.” It has been on my bookshelf for years.

It is a biography of Eva Perón written by John Barnes. It was published in 1975. My guess is I picked it up some time shortly after I was in South America in 2001.

Like any book it brought out more details about Perón’s life than what can be portrayed in a play or film.



Many books have been written about the controversial first lady of Argentina. Her life has been made into a musical both on Broadway and in film. The former was an Andrew Lloyd Webber hit that won a Tony for Best Musical. The latter starred Madonna.

My journal did not have much about visiting her burial site in Buenos Aires other than to say her husband was buried elsewhere. And unfortunately I don’t have photos to jar my memory because that roll of film was stolen with my camera. What I remember is Americans being interested in seeing the burial site and Argentines walking on by.

This biography is more complimentary of Evita than critical. While it does not shy away from saying how not everyone was thrilled with the Peróns, it read like a significant part of the story was not being told. But that can happen with biographies. This isn’t billed as an unbiased historical look at that time period.

But the book is interesting as it captures here childhood of poverty, her determination to make something of herself, and her rise to be nearly as powerful as her husband, Juan, who was president.

Evita's crusade to better workers and the unions is well documented, but then is juxtaposed against her spending lavishly on herself from donations that came via the people she said she was helping.

Eva Perón was first lady from 1946 until she died in 1952. She was 43.