and industrialization in Argentina and Australia, from 1930 to 1960. This occasional paper is a promising development, and the ideas it expresses deserve to be pursued. "Area-centrics," beware.

St. Antony's College, Oxford

D. C. M. PLATT


Surgeon and historical scholar Carlos Chalbaud Zerpa has for years been engaged in writing about the history and folklore of Mérida and the highlands that surround this Venezuelan Andean city. His latest book now recounts the history of Mérida, from the days the early Timoto-Cuicas saw their hamlets become a part of a Spanish town, to the year 1982. The author describes the conquest and colonial years as uneventful and concentrates on independence in reviewing the contribution of the _merideños_ to the cause of Simón Bolívar. Chalbaud Zerpa then surveys the later cultural and material progress of the city (from 1850 to 1982) and analyzes the role played in it by ecclesiastical authorities and by the local university. Since it is his opinion that both church and university provided figures decisive in the development of Mérida, the author makes his book stronger in biographies of illustrious men than in the actual material progress of the city. The book closes with five interesting chapters covering the history of mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada de Mérida (Chalbaud Zerpa is the current president of the Club Andino Venezolano). There are in all 51 chapters (each about eight pages in length), and a bibliography of 295 works published between 1723 and 1982. An adverse remark would be the lack of a name index. The style is functional and direct. It is ironic at times, but may become sarcastic when referring to foreigners who left an ugly imprint on the pages of the local or national history. Generally speaking, the author sees Mérida as having made slow progress until about 1850; from then on the pace quickened, even if stifled under the dictatorships of Juan Vicente Gómez and Marcos Pérez Jiménez. By 1982, Mérida was enjoying the national prosperity which Chalbaud Zerpa jokingly calls the period of "Venezuela Saudita."

The overall impression gained from this book is good. It could be recommended as a model to imitate when writing the biography of any city that may have had a slow first 300 years, a quicker century afterwards, an enlightened church, a civic-minded university, and a range of peaks 5,000 meters high to watch over it.

Colorado State University

Evelio Echevarría