

enment, he subscribed to *El Mercurio Peruano* and joined the Economic Society, yet he acquired a noble title and joined a military order. His activities remained within a mercantilistic framework rather than reflecting an incipient capitalism. He was averse to risk, he depended on family connections in strategic locales (a brother in Buenos Aires, a son in Cádiz), and he never invested in production.

Based on Peruvian trade records and notarial documents, supplemented by documents from the Archivo General de Indias and the National Archives of Buenos Aires, this is a thorough study. Most useful, perhaps, are several tables that clearly demonstrate Lavalle's importance in Lima's merchant community and give a sense of who formed the major houses.

The book has some bothersome aspects, however. It does not firmly establish how much Lavalle was typical in comparison with other merchants and other creoles, so that the precise value of this case study is uncertain. Although the focus here is on a single merchant, it does not glimpse much of Lavalle as a person, one of the putative benefits of this kind of approach. And while the text offers a sketch of his forbears and some of his early political positions, Lavalle's life before he moved to Lima (in his 40s) is not treated in any depth. What of his commercial activities (if any) before 1777? Finally, a fuller picture of the Lima business community before free trade would have clarified the meaning of the new order.

RICHMOND F. BROWN, University of South Alabama

Peopling the Purple Land: A Historical Geography of Rural Uruguay, 1500–1915. By JAN M. G. KLEINPENNING. Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1995. Maps. Graphs. Tables. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. xv, 355 pp. Paper. \$32.00.

Little has been added to the saga of rural landscape building in Uruguay since the pioneering work of W. H. Hudson, *The Purple Land* (1885)—the title an allusion to the spring fields dotted with *flor morada*. Today, the dominant urban population of the country seems to have forgotten the rural roots of its ancestry, which gave flavor and character to this nation before the European immigration. The cattle ranches of the *pampa ondulada*, the sheep farms of the *central Cuchilla*, the dairy farms along the estuary, the packing plants on the banks of the Uruguay River, and the wheat estancias on the Río de la Plata frontage furnished the agricultural products that made this country rich and turned it into a rival of Buenos Aires in opulence and cosmopolitan splendor.

Portraying the phases through which Uruguay made its transition from agrarian to urban society is an exciting and rewarding endeavor, considering not only the attractiveness of the subject but also the rich array of documentary sources. Uruguay represents the best example in Latin America of a country that overcame a hostile environment and colonial relegation to become one of the most progressive republics of the New World.

Jan Kleinpenning's treatment of this fascinating process is rather conventional,

overly formal, and lacking in vivacity. The author proceeds in a thematic and chronological sequence, which does not make it easy to understand the special geographical and historical circumstances that caused the formation of a frontier society at the southern margins of the Spanish Empire. Uruguay began as a Spanish outpost in *una tierra de ningún provecho*, constantly threatened by the belligerent Charrúa Indians and by the expansionist drives of the Portuguese into the Río de la Plata estuary, conditions that imprinted a special character on the Uruguayans. Add to this the free spirit that developed among lonesome herdsmen and rugged frontier soldiers during colonial times, and it is clear why, after gaining independence from Spain, the rural dwellers of the Banda Oriental did not enthusiastically endorse the formation of a confederation of provinces under the hegemony of Buenos Aires. Freedom, marginality, and uniqueness nurtured the pride and independence typical of the Uruguayan national soul. All these traits were born in a rural environment and were transmitted to the thousands of immigrants who arrived in the country after 1860.

Internal anarchy beset the Banda Oriental—in a similar fashion as in Argentina—just after the liberation from Brazil in 1828, preventing political, institutional, or economic stability. Disputable land titles in the wake of the *Guerra Grande* fostered chaos and rapine in the countryside as triumphant landlords increased their properties and speculators seized the opportunity to sell cheaply acquired land to European immigrants. In this manner, a latifundist landed aristocracy wielded political and economic power and whetted the appetite for power and wealth among the enterprising newcomers. The inflow of British, German, and French livestock farmers fostered the development of an export-oriented meat industry that brought modernization to outdated modalities of cattle raising.

Crop farming—not a favorite among traditional landowners, denigrated as an activity only for impoverished immigrants from the Canary Islands—received an invigorating boost with the arrival of colonists from Switzerland, Germany, France, northern Italy, Spain, and Russia. Arable land for this activity increased remarkably in the fertile fields adjacent to the Río de la Plata estuary, enhancing Montevideo's economic power. On these farms and newly established cattle estancias, artificial pastures, steam plows, threshing and mowing machines, and seed drills signaled the advent of modern systems of agriculture and livestock raising that contributed to Uruguay's prosperity at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The interweaving of these developments in the countryside, and the emergence of an urbanized and extremely bureaucratized society in the Uruguayan welfare state, is unfortunately omitted from Kleinpenning's work. This is perhaps why, in his epilogue, the author, probably noticing that many loose ends remain after his chronological analysis, attempts to summarize the keynotes presented in each of the 11 chapters. But this effort is still not enough to add coherence to the relationship of rural and urban environments. One misses an integrated view of the linkages between agrarian and urban activities, and a better treatment of how rural forms of livelihood differed from, but supported, the urban masses of Montevideo.

In this sense, the articulation of the rural landscape with its urban correlative is

absent, and the whole work takes on the form of a collection of individual links that never become a chain. The author had, indeed, a great opportunity to produce an interpretive work on the historical geography of Uruguay; but in its present format, this book is little more than an ordered and through catalogue of events and data.

CÉSAR N. CAVIEDES, University of Florida

National Period

Descripción geográfica y estadística del distrito de Tulacingo, 1825. By FRANCISCO ORTEGA. Edited by RENE GARCÍA CASTRO. Mexico City: CIESAS, 1995. Maps. Tables. Notes. Index. 79 pp. Paper.

This little document provides an interesting and valuable view of one corner of early republican Mexico. The district of Tulacingo, today the southeastern section of the state of Hidalgo, which includes the state capital, Pachuca, was part of the great state of Mexico in 1825. Francisco Ortega, the political prefect of the district, compiled this compendium of facts on topography, water, climate, minerals, plants, animals, population, agriculture, industry, commerce, public instruction, taxes, the civic militia, and industrial plants. He clearly aspired to be the local Humboldt, and he produced a report that is unpretentious and trustworthy. René García Castro rescued this document from the archive of the state of Mexico, deciphered the script, converted it to typescript, and wrote an excellent, brief introduction.

One learns that the lengthy struggle for independence damaged the mining industry (silver production in 1825 was less than one-quarter of the output before 1810) and reduced the district's population. The revival of the mining economy was under way, thanks to foreign companies. Because most of the population was Indian and peasant and consumed most of what it produced, the nonmining economy was close to nonexistent. The creole attitude toward Indians was undisguised; the reader is informed that *la clase indígena* lived in ignorance, was dominated by the vice of drunkenness, and was so attached to backward customs that it did not know what was good for it.

This is the third document of this type that Ediciones de Casa Chata has published, and more are promised. CIESAS, the most fecund academic press in Mexico, should be congratulated for initiating this important series and strongly encouraged to bring to light more reports like this one.

THOMAS BENJAMIN, Central Michigan University