Migrations and Connections

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European Migrations to Latin America
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The history of European immigration to Costa Rica dates from the colony’s final occupation by the Spanish in 1561. This initial settlement was limited to Costa Rica’s Central Valley and even today Costa Rica’s population continues to be concentrated in this region. Over four centuries, European immigration to Costa Rica proved quantitatively insignificant. Relatively few outsiders ventured to this remote outpost in Central America. European immigrants, however, have been qualitatively important to Costa Rica. They played important roles in the fields of economic development and politics much greater than their small numbers would portend. This essay will try to present an overview of four centuries of European immigration to Costa Rica and use two case studies to illustrate the importance of European immigrants in Costa Rica.

**Immigration during the Colonial Period 1561–1821**

Peter Boyd-Bowman conducted the most thorough studies of immigration to the New World. His research concentrated on the years between 1492 and 1600. Boyd-Bowman sought to uncover the origins of Iberian immigrants to determine which regions of Spain had the greatest impact on the Spanish language spoken in the New World. Boyd-Bowman’s research showed only about three percent of immigrants to the New World were non-Spanish foreigners.¹

*Origins of Costa Rica’s Conquistadors*

Carlos Meléndez, the dean of Costa Rica’s twentieth-century historians, conducted a study of the men who conquered and settled Costa Rica between 1561 and 1600. He determined the origins of sixty-three of the 478 people he identified as settlers of Costa Rica. Table 1 shows the results of this study. Spaniards accounted for 55 percent of Costa Rica’s early arrivals. Immigrants from other parts of Europe represented 10 percent of these settlers. Men from other areas of the Americas accounted for 35 percent of Costa Rica’s first settlers. The relatively late Spanish settlement of Costa Rica accounts for the high percentage of arrivals from other regions of the Americas.²
One difficulty for the study of immigration during Costa Rica’s colonial period is the lack of census data. Royal authorities made a number of censuses during the eighteenth century, especially after 1775. Only one of these counts provided complete data about immigration. A census made in 1741 showed thirty-eight *españoles nativos de España* which represented less than one percent of the province’s total population of 9,149. The 1741 census mentioned no women of Spanish origin or any foreigners in the province. This census illustrates the fact that immigration to colonial Costa Rica was an almost exclusively male enterprise.

The study of immigration to colonial Costa Rica requires sources other than census materials. Costa Rican Archbishop Victor Sanabria Martínez relied on these other sources, in particular notarial records (wills and dowry contracts) and ecclesiastical records (marriage books), to compile the massive *Genealogías de Cartago hasta 1850*. Sanabria proved able to chronicle the origins of 476 immigrants to Costa Rica over almost three hundred years. Table 2 shows Sanabria’s overall findings roughly approximated Carlos Meléndez’s results. The majority of immigrants (59 percent) arrived from Spain, with substantial numbers coming from other areas of Latin America (31 percent), and about 10 percent were non-Spanish Europeans.

The national origins of Sanabria’s forty-four non-Spanish European immigrants are shown in Table 3. Italians and French comprise the two largest groups of immigrants. The numbers of non-Spanish European immigrants in colonial Costa Rica are somewhat deceptive. Eight of the twelve Italians came from Genoa, a city long dominated by Spain. The two men from Flanders were also Spaniards. Some of the French immigrants may have been Basques or Navarrese born on the other side of the Spanish border. German and U.S. immigration shown here corresponds to the post-independence period.
Antonio Acosta Arevalo presents an interesting case study of a European émigré in seventeenth-century Costa Rica. He was a Greek who served as an artillery officer in the Spanish navy.7 Acosta settled in Costa Rica around 1659.8 It appears Acosta’s first wife received a dowry that included mules and a small newly planted cacao hacienda in Matina on the Caribbean coast.9 Cacao was a newly developing crop in this area in the mid-seventeenth century. This dowry probably served as Acosta Arevalo’s entry into this new industry. We know very little about his involvement in cacao other than the fact that according to surveys made in 1678, 1682 and 1691, Acosta owned Costa Rica’s largest cacao haciendas.10

### Table 2. Origins of Immigrants in Costa Rica 1561–1850

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central America and Mexico</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South American and Caribbean</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Parts Europe/USA</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>476</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 3. Origins of 44 Non-Spanish European Immigrants in Costa Rica 1561–1850

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flanders</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Antonio Acosta Arevalo*

Antonio Acosta Arevalo presents an interesting case study of a European émigré in seventeenth-century Costa Rica. He was a Greek who served as an artillery officer in the Spanish navy.7 Acosta settled in Costa Rica around 1659.8 It appears Acosta’s first wife received a dowry that included mules and a small newly planted cacao hacienda in Matina on the Caribbean coast.9 Cacao was a newly developing crop in this area in the mid-seventeenth century. This dowry probably served as Acosta Arevalo’s entry into this new industry. We know very little about his involvement in cacao other than the fact that according to surveys made in 1678, 1682 and 1691, Acosta owned Costa Rica’s largest cacao haciendas.10
Acosta proved unusual by Costa Rican standards because he was actively involved in legal trade between Costa Rica’s Caribbean ports and Puertobelo. Various records show Acosta owned small vessels (canoas) that carried Costa Rican agricultural products to Panama and returned with textiles, iron and other desperately needed goods. Acosta was probably actively involved in smuggling, which was becoming pervasive along the Caribbean by the late seventeenth century. In the last years of his life, Acosta made one of his sons-in-law, a fellow Greek, a partner in his trade endeavors.

Acosta’s status exposed him to several legal entanglements. The most serious of these occurred in the early 1670s when his success in the cacao industry attracted the jealous attentions of Governor Juan López de la Flor. Governor López used a royal decree banning foreigners from residing in Spanish colonies to expel Acosta from Costa Rica, in spite of his marriage to a local woman and twelve years of residency there. Another cause of his expulsion was Acosta’s alleged illegal contact with English pirates. Witnesses supported Acosta’s claims that he was selected by the people present on the Caribbean coast as a mediator to ensure the peaceful withdrawal of the enemy, because of his knowledge of the English language. It was generally agreed that Acosta received harsh treatment from the English pirates. Acosta traveled to Guatemala and successfully appealed his expulsion to the audiencia, but this appeal forced him to sell some of his holdings.

By Costa Rican standards, Acosta became wealthy, but this did not translate into social prominence. Acosta did not marry into the principal families of Costa Rica. His first wife was the illegitimate daughter (hija natural) of a grandson of one of Costa Rica’s early settlers. Acosta’s second marriage was slightly more prestigious; he married an orphan raised by a poor but noble family that traced its lineage to Costa Rica’s original settlers. Others signs of Acosta’s lack of social prestige are seen in the fact that his principal residence was not in the capital city, Cartago, but located in the ejidos outside the city. Acosta neither sought election to nor purchased a seat on Cartago’s cabildo. Acosta’s entrepreneurial spirit provided one basis of his wealth, but it also proved the cause of his downfall. In 1691, Acosta was lost at sea during a tempest on a voyage to Puertobelo.

Immigration from Independence to 1863

At the dawn of independence, Costa Rica remained a poor marginal region. The nation was not well integrated into the world economy. Major changes were on the horizon. The discovery of gold and silver, to the west of San José, resulted in a small-scale mining boom between the 1820s and 1840s. Interest in some type of inter-oceanic canal across the Central American isthmus brought increased foreign attention to Costa Rica. A new crop began to develop in the Central Valley that would serve as Costa Rica’s entrée into the international market: coffee.
Four Hundred Years of European Immigration to Costa Rica

Between 1820 and 1860, several national censuses were made, but none included information about immigrants. One Costa Rican historian used notarial records to trace the origins of immigrants to the country between 1824 and 1850. He cited a total of 191 immigrants for this period. Table 4 presents the findings of this research. The number of immigrants in Costa Rica appeared to increase during this period and immigration from other Latin American nations, especially neighboring countries, also increased. The portion of Spaniards decreased dramatically, while the number of North Americans and non-Iberian Europeans increased. It is this latter group that played an important role in Costa Rica’s integration into the world market.  

European Immigrants in Mining

Immigrants played very important roles in the development of Costa Rica’s mining industry. Richard Trevithick, an English mining engineer who arrived from Peru in 1822, developed a modified steam engine for use in the mines and introduced other innovations to improve Costa Rica’s extremely primitive mining technology. Juan Mair Gerard, an Englishman representing at least two London firms, invested large sums in purchasing mines. During the 1830s Juan Bardh (Johan Barth), a German immigrant from Freiberg, Saxony, served first as a mine supervisor and later as Superintendent of Mines for the Anglo-Costa Rican Economical Mining Company. Barth finally left mining and served as Director of the Casa de Moneda.

European Immigrants in Coffee

Foreigners also played an important role in the rise of coffee. Significant coffee cultivation began in the 1810s. The subsequent decade witnessed active governmental encouragement of coffee planting, but the crop needed a market. In 1832, George Stiepel, a merchant and agent for English capital from Hanover who arrived in Costa Rica from Peru, arranged for the shipment of coffee to Valparaíso, Chile where it was processed and then shipped to England. Buenaventura Espinach, a Catalan merchant and planter, built the

Table 4. Origins of Immigrants in Costa Rica 1824–1850

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central America and Panama</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America and Non-Iberian Europe</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America and Mexico</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

first patios to dry coffee beans and used the first system to process coffee with water by 1838.26

Immigrants came to dominate coffee exports in the early years. In 1839, two Spaniards (Francisco Giralt and Vicente Fábrega) exported 49 percent of the total value of the goods shipped from the port of Puntarenas and two Germans (George Stiepel and Eduardo Wallerstein) accounted for another 42 percent of the value of goods exported from that port.27 In 1842, a company formed by two Catalan merchants (Francisco Giralt and Buenaventura Espinach) exported 37 percent of Costa Rica’s coffee while two Germans (George Stiepel and Eduardo Wallerstein) accounted for another 41 percent of coffee exports.28 In 1843, William LeLacheur, an English ship’s captain, took a consignment of coffee to Britain and returned to Costa Rica with the profits in 1845. This opened direct shipments of coffee from Costa Rica to Britain.29

Colonization Schemes

Costa Rica and many other Latin America nations sought to attract foreign immigrants. Some Latin American nations sought European immigration to whiten and civilize their populations.30 Travel accounts of the era describe Costa Rica as a “nearly all white” society31 or having “a larger proportion of pure Spanish blood” and less racially mixed than other nations.32 In Costa Rica’s case, the whitening issue may have been less pronounced and immigration viewed more as a means to populate the frontier regions and supply desperately needed agricultural labor.33

Costa Rican governments actively encouraged colonization projects to bring immigrants to the country. John Hale, an Englishman, signed one of the first colonization contracts with Costa Rica’s government in 1825. Hale promised to bring one hundred English and American families to settle on the frontier. He penned a laudatory account of his experiences in Costa Rica to attract settlers.34

In the late 1840s and early 1850s, E.G. Squier cited failed colonization schemes by the French and English, as well as an attempt to bring thousands of German agricultural colonists to Costa Rica.35 Another source documents at least eight proposed colonization projects by Europeans in Costa Rica between 1825 and 1860.36 For the most part, the above-mentioned and many subsequent attempts to establish foreign colonies in Costa Rica failed because they were located in isolated regions that lacked communications and basic transport. Foreign immigrants were confronted by jungles, and unhealthy tropical climates.37

Costa Rica established a Junta Protectora de Colonias in 1850 to encourage contracts of colonization, and to mediate between the contractors and colonists, but this junta disappeared after failing to achieve any major successes.38 Costa Rican governments lacked the ability to make substantial monetary commitments to support colonization schemes. Although Costa Rica sought
immigration, the country later explicitly preferred white Europeans. In 1862, the country prohibited colonization of the “African and Chinese races,” and gave the government the right to limit and control this immigration if it became indispensable. 39

**Immigration after 1863**

After 1863, there is substantial data about immigration to Costa Rica again. Censuses taken in 1864, 1883, 1888 and 1892 provide detailed information about the origins of immigrants and show where they settled in Costa Rica. Table 5 shows the results of these four national censuses and the regional origins of foreign immigrants. Table 6 reveals the origins of Costa Rica’s European immigrants.

**Europeans in the National Censuses of 1864, 1883, 1888 and 1892**

These censuses revealed that immigrants accounted for slightly more than 2 percent of Costa Rica’s total population in each count. European immigrants increased in numbers from 392 in 1864, to 1,190 in 1883, reaching 3,005 in 1888 before declining to 2,339 by 1892. European immigrants increased their proportion of the total number of foreign immigrants in Costa Rica from 15 percent in 1864, reaching 25 percent of the total in 1883, peaking at 44 percent in 1888 and comprising 38 percent of all foreign immigrants in 1892. This decline in the number of immigrants will be examined later in this paper. 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1864</th>
<th>1883</th>
<th>1888</th>
<th>1892</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>120,499</td>
<td>183,073</td>
<td>205,731</td>
<td>243,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Immigrants</td>
<td>2,653</td>
<td>4,556</td>
<td>6,856</td>
<td>6,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central America</td>
<td>1,434</td>
<td>1,427</td>
<td>1,665</td>
<td>1,689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America (includes Panama)</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Indies</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>1,190</td>
<td>3,005</td>
<td>2,339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa, Asia, Oceania</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sources: Censo de población 1864 (San José: Dirección General de Estadísticas y Censos, 1964), 63–67; Censo de población 1883 (San José: Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Comercio, Dirección General de Estadísticas y Censos, 1975), 63–67; Censo de población 1892 (San José: Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Comercio, Dirección General de Estadísticas y Censos, 1975), CXVI–CXXI; La población de Costa Rica (San José: Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica, 1976), 52 and Los alemanes y estado cafetalero (San José: Editorial Universidad Estatal a Distancia), 1988, 102.*
German, French, and English immigrants represented the three largest groups of Europeans in the 1864 census. Spaniards, Germans, and the French comprised the largest groups of Europeans in Costa Rica in the 1883 census. Italians, Spaniards, and Germans were the three largest groups in 1888 and were again the most numerous groups of European immigrants in 1892. The four national censuses also showed that European immigrants tended to settle in and around the national capital, San José. About 60 percent of all European immigrants settled within the province of San José in 1864. This figure rose to 70 percent in the 1883 and 1892 censuses.
Non-Europeans in the National Censuses 1864–1892

One understudied fact of national history is that people from Latin America accounted for large proportions of immigrants to Costa Rica after 1863.47 These people came mainly from the Central American nations, in particular Nicaragua, as well as from Colombia (at the time of the censuses, Panama remained a province of that nation). Latin Americans accounted for 80 percent of Costa Rica’s immigrants in 1864.48 This figure declined to 43 percent of all immigrants in 1883, fell to a low of 34 percent in 1888, before raising to 40 percent of total immigrants by 1892.49

Despite legal prohibitions against people of African descent, they still found their way to Costa Rica. Jamaicans constituted only 1 percent of Costa Rica’s immigrants in 1864.50 After 1870, Jamaican labor was brought to Central America to help construct a railway between San José and the Caribbean coast, provide workers for the banana plantations developing in the region, and to work on the French effort to construct an inter-oceanic canal.51 By 1883, Jamaicans comprised 20 percent of the number of immigrants in Costa Rica.52 This figure fell to roughly 13–14 percent of the total number of immigrants by 1888.53 After the completion of the railway in 1890, Jamaicans comprised only 10 percent of Costa Rican immigrants in the 1892 census.54 Many Jamaicans were contract laborers who returned to the island while others remained as laborers on the banana plantations.55

Colonization Schemes after 1863

Costa Rica’s interest in promoting European immigration by colonization contracts continued. Between 1863 and 1913, at least ten projects to bring Europeans as either settlers or contract laborers to Costa Rica were planned.56 Construction of the final segment of the railway to the Caribbean in the 1880s again increased interest in colonization schemes.

One particularly ambitious project was the failed contract Costa Rica signed with Esteban Perera in 1881. Perera promised to bring a minimum of eighty-five hundred white immigrants capable of agricultural labor to settle in newly opened regions along the rail line. The contract did not require governmental subsidies to aid the passage or settlement of the immigrants and implied Perera was a semi-feudal lord who controlled a large tract of land. Costa Rica’s government saw this contract as accomplishing two purposes: counteracting the increased numbers of Jamaicans in the Caribbean region and providing European laborers for the banana industry.57

Italian Immigration in Costa Rica 1887–1888

Labor needs on the Caribbean resulted in a sudden influx of Europeans in late 1880s. By 1884, Minor Cooper Keith, the American businessman, successfully renegotiated his contract with the government and obtained financing to complete the final leg of the Caribbean railway between San José and the port
of Limón. To meet the project’s labor needs, Keith contracted two groups of 1,433 Italian workers. They arrived in Costa Rica in late 1887 and mid-1888. This was the largest group of Europeans to arrive in Costa Rica at one time. The Italian laborers suffered in the tropical climate. In October 1888, they fled the work camps and launched a strike, complaining of the lack of medical care, the unhealthy nature of labor camps and Keith’s failure to pay them for more than a month. Most laborers demanded they be paid and allowed to return to Italy. The strike slowly fizzled out. In March 1889, a shipload of 850 Italians returned to their homeland while about 520 immigrants chose to remain in Costa Rica, mainly settling in and around central San José.  

**Spanish Immigration to Costa Rica 1863–1910**

Spain provided the greatest number of European immigrants to Costa Rica throughout the colonial period. Spanish immigration declined for a number of years during the nineteenth century following Independence. Spain did not grant diplomatic recognition to its former colony until 1850. The 1864 census showed only forty Spaniards in the country. By 1883, there were 460 Spaniards in Costa Rica, the largest group of Europeans. The number of Spaniards reached 648 in 1888, surpassed in numbers only by the influx of Italian laborers. By 1892, the 831 Spaniards represented the largest group of European immigrants once again. Over five hundred Spanish emigrants arrived in Costa Rica in 1893 due to a colonization contract signed in the 1880s.

A municipal census of San José made in 1904 reveals some characteristics of Spanish emigrants in Costa Rica. Males comprised 75 percent of the group. Over 80 percent were between the ages of fifteen to fifty-five, and roughly half were married. Of the men just under 40 percent were engaged in activities linked to commerce, while almost two-thirds of the women were employed as domestics. The Spaniards living in San José tended to come from the northeast (Asturias and Galicia), the Canary Islands and Catalonia.

**The 1927 National Census**

The period between 1880 and 1930 became known as the “Great Migration” with millions of people immigrating from the Old World to the Western Hemisphere. A census taken in 1927 showed that Costa Rica received few of these immigrants, as seen in Table 7. By 1927, almost 10 percent of Costa Rica’s population was foreign born, a significant increase from 2.5 percent in 1892. Available figures show Jamaicans, Nicaraguans, Panamanians and Colombians accounted for 73 percent of these numbers. Costa Rica failed to attract large-scale European immigration, despite over a century of attempts. Europeans accounted for less than 20 percent of the total number of immigrants in 1927. Yet the absolute numbers of Europeans in Costa Rica more than doubled since the 1892 census. The numbers of French immigrants increased more than threefold and the numbers of Italians in the
country doubled. The Spanish community almost tripled in size. A member of this Spanish community would become twentieth-century Costa Rica’s most influential politician.  

José Figueres Ferrer

Mariano Figueres, a Catalan physician, and Francisca Ferrer, his wife, a teacher, set out for Costa Rica from Barcelona in June 1906. Don Mariano was presented to Costa Rican President Cleto González Víquez who offered him the position of doctor in San Ramón, a town located seventy miles west of San José. Shortly after their arrival in San Ramón, on September 25, 1906, this couple’s first son, José Figueres Ferrer, was born.  

The Figueres family moved to San José in 1917 and José attended the religious run Colegio Seminario. Between 1924 and 1928, Figueres lived in the United States studying in Boston and New York. Upon his return to Costa Rica, Figueres established a farm, La Lucha Sin Fin, on the agricultural frontier to the south of San José. Over the next years Figueres, known as Don Pepe, became a successful farmer, engineer, manufacturer, and a self-described renaissance man. One source states that Figueres’ parents taught him to write and speak Catalan “to perfection” and he remained a Spaniard until 1938 when

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>17,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>10,658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>2,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>2,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>1,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Nations</td>
<td>6,497</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

he opted for Costa Rican citizenship. Don Pepe’s Spanish origins led his opponents to label him a Catalan and argue that “his ideas and values were alien to the Costa Rican nationality and spirit.”

Figueres initially showed little interest in Costa Rican politics. This changed in July 1942 when a German submarine sank a ship in Limón harbor, triggering riots that destroyed a number of European-owned businesses. Don Pepe made a radio speech denouncing the Costa Rican government’s responsibility for the riots. He was arrested, jailed and deported. A two-year exile allowed Figueres to make connections with various armed Caribbean exile groups. Figueres returned to Costa Rica in 1944. His exile convinced him Costa Rica required a revolution but the country’s political situation did not permit such an action for another four years.

Figueres launched his revolution in 1948, after the national Congress annulled the presidential election won by the opposition candidate, Otilio Ulate. With the aid of his Caribbean exile allies, Figueres triumphed after a brief armed conflict. Don Pepe presided over an eighteen-month provisional junta that dissolved the national army, nationalized Costa Rica’s banks, consolidated the electric and phone systems into a single public company, and created a significantly more powerful tribunal to monitor elections. At the end of its tenure, Figueres’ junta turned power over to the legitimately elected Otilio Ulate.

Figueres and his supporters founded the Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN) in 1950. Observers view the PLN as one of the most successful social democratic political parties in Latin America. Costa Rica’s voters elected Don Pepe president in his own right in 1953 and again in 1970. Figueres was noted for his commitment to democracy and opposition to dictatorship in Latin America. He died in 1990 at the age of eighty-three.

Conclusions

This paper has attempted to present a brief overview of four centuries of European immigration to Costa Rica. During the colonial period, small numbers of almost exclusively male immigrants arrived in this remote Central American outpost. After independence from Spain in 1821, immigration to Costa Rica increased. Costa Rican governments attempted to attract European immigrants by colonization schemes, but lacked the financial resources to support these elaborate plans. Overall, the nation proved unsuccessful in attracting large-scale European immigration. One understudied part of Costa Rican history remains the significant numbers of immigrants who settled there from other parts of the Americas. Despite their limited numbers, European immigrants played extremely important roles during the colonial and national periods in trade, mining, the commercialization of coffee, and shaping the nation’s twentieth-century political system and institutions.
NOTES

6. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., 337.
15. Ibid.
17. ANCR, Protocolos de Cartago, Legajo 825, (March 26, 1678) folio 100.
18. ANCR, Mortuales coloniales, Cartago 428 (1692).
28. Ibid., 164.


38. Soto, “Discursos y políticas,” 120.

39. Alvarenga, “Foreign Immigration.”


41. *Censo de población 1864*, 64–68.

42. *Censo de población 1883*, 64–67.


44. *Censo de población, 1892*, CXVII–CXXI.

45. *Censo de población 1864*, 64–68.

46. *Censo de población 1883*, 64–67 and *Censo de población 1892*, CXVII–CXXI.

47. For purposes of this paper, immigrants from Latin America are defined as those coming only from Central America and South America.


49. *Censo de población 1883*, 64–67; *La población de Costa Rica*, 52 and *Censo de población 1892*, CXVII–CXXI.

50. *Censo de población 1864*, 64–68.


54. *Censo de población 1892*, CXVII–CXXI.


60. *Censo de población 1864*, 64–68.


63. *Censo de población 1892*, CXVII–CXXI.


66. Ibid., 102.


73. Ibid., 67–91.