

at San Hipólito was part of broader Bourbon-era social control initiatives. Feigned madness, followed by escape from the hospital, appeared to be a common outcome. San Hipólito's facilities and staff were simply not equipped to do what the state was asking them to do at this time.

Battered by the upheavals of the nineteenth century, San Hipólito was secularized during the Liberal Reform era, and it managed to survive until Mexico's first fully modern psychiatric facility opened in the early twentieth century. Even though the author summarizes events of post-independence history in the book's conclusion, these events are addressed only briefly, as they lie beyond the well-chosen focus of the study.

Among the book's strengths is the detailed exploration of a number of cases, including women and indigenous persons, from both the inquisition and criminal court records. The inclusion of illustrations drawn by one of the accused is particularly evocative of the challenges posed by these cases. The author's skillful synthesis of how this work addresses multiple scholarly debates will also be much appreciated by readers.

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## INDEPENDENCE ERA IN COSTA RICA

*Cortar una espiga más. Estudios sobre Costa Rica en la época de la independencia.* By Iván Molina Jiménez. San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 2021. Pp. xix, 233. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$6.00 paper; \$6.00 e-book.  
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Costa Rica separated from Spain in 1821, along with most former Spanish colonies in the Americas. The act was peaceful and followed the leads of Costa Rica's Mexican and Central American neighbors. Debates ensued about whether Costa Rica would become part of the Mexican empire declared by Agustín de Iturbide that year or join a Central American Federation based in Guatemala. A brief civil war in 1823 confirmed that Costa Ricans preferred the latter path, as did other Central Americans. Iván Molina Jiménez traces independence back to policies enacted under the Bourbon Reforms and the Constitution of Cádiz in 1812.

Molina Jiménez examines some unusual aspects of the country's path toward final independence in 1838. Here he knits together six previously published articles with introductions, transitions, and conclusions, and the result broadens readers' understanding of Costa Rica's exceptionalism. He uses dense archival data and socioeconomic analysis to tease out conclusions about the evolving culture, society, and economy. Rather than offer a straightforward political account of independence, Molina

Jiménez asks probing questions about literacy, changing landholding patterns, the spread of novel-reading, the formation of a merchant marine, the extraordinary activities of Gregorio José Ramírez, and how subsequent generations have interpreted the brief but seminal civil war of April 5, 1923. As he addresses these issues, readers gain a fine-grained view of the origins of Costa Rican self-determination and democracy.

Molina Jiménez dug through archives and used statistical tools to arrive at conclusions about these issues. Literacy spread through the establishment of public and private schools, which numbered 14 in the 1810s and 50 by 1827, and literacy led to a growing proportion of marriage applications to which people signed their names. Land records show that the gradual shift from public ownership to private (both individual and communal) gave rise to disputes over titles, access to water, grazing rights, and debt erasure. Campesinos, spurred by lucrative prices for coffee and other exports, learned to advocate for their interests in public forums; in so doing they exercised local self-government. Molina Jiménez's account of the growing consumption of novels reveals the impacts of schooling, a printing press (1830), a bookstore (1856), and, of course, literacy itself. In the 1830s, early newspapers began to serialize novels.

Costa Rican ships ventured from the port of Puntarenas up and down the Pacific Coast after the late 1700s. Shipowners formed a merchant marine that enabled the emergence of the coffee economy that sustained Costa Rica well into the twentieth century. One of these shipmasters, Gregorio José Ramírez, suffered capture by the corsair William Brown of Buenos Aires and left a fascinating account (Anexo 5) of Brown making off with treasure seized in Chocó, Colombia. During independence, Ramírez rose to prominence in San José society and commanded pro-Federation troops to victory in the 1823 civil war, confirming that city's role as capital and replacing Cartago. Ramírez succumbed to illness that same year, at the age of 27.

Finally, this book traces the historiography of that civil war down to the present, in an even-handed analysis. This reviewer believes that Molina Jiménez's accounting is balanced, documented, and dependable. This is socioeconomic history at its best.

Molina Jiménez's conclusion looks at the presidency of Juan Mora Fernández, who served from 1824 to 1833 and set the tone for his nation's transition to independence. A conciliator and problem-solver, Mora ended his 1828 report to congress with the hope that his people be "happy to be at peace, strengthened by unity, and hopeful that each day their sons would cut one more stalk of wheat and cry one less tear." That phrase gave rise to the book's title, *Cortar una espiga más*.

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