

## **Revolt in Mexico**

Beginning in 1810, Mexico also experienced a revolt. The first real hero of Mexican independence was Miguel Hidalgo. A parish priest, Hidalgo lived in a village about 100 miles from Mexico City.

Hidalgo had studied the French Revolution. He roused the local Native Americans and mestizos (a person of mixed European and Native American descent) to free themselves from the Spanish: "Will you be free? Will you make the effort to recover from the hated Spaniards the lands stolen from your forefathers, three hundred years ago?"

On September 16, 1810, Hidalgo led this ill-equipped army of thousands of Native Americans and mestizos in an attack against the Spaniards. His forces were soon crushed, and a military court later sentenced Hidalgo to death. However, his memory lives on even today. In fact, September 16, the first day of the uprising, is Mexico's Independence Day.

The role of Native Americans and mestizos in Mexico's revolt against Spanish control frightened the creoles (descendants of Europeans who had permanently moved to Mexico) and the peninsulares (born in Spain/Portugal and only in Mexico to gain political/economic benefits, then moved back to Spain). Afraid of the masses, they cooperated in defeating the revolutionary forces. Creoles and peninsulares then decided to overthrow Spanish rule.

These conservative elites wanted an independent nation ruled by a monarch. They selected a creole military leader, Agustin de Iturbide, to set up a new government. In 1821 Mexico declared its independence from Spain. Iturbide named himself emperor in 1822 but was deposed in 1823. Mexico then became a republic.

Guiding Questions:

1. Create a timeline with five events that detail Mexico's Independence.
2. Why do you believe Mexico began its independence with a monarch?
3. Why challenges do you believe the Mexican people faced in creating a republic?