

José María Morelos

(1765-1815)



Hero of Mexican Independence

FIRST PHASE OF MORELOS' LIFE

- 1765 José María Morelos y Pavón was born in Valladolid, México. The town is now called Moreloselia. His father, Manuel Morelos, was a carpenter from Spain. His mother was Juana Pavón. She was also from Spain. As you can see in this chronology of his life, very little is known about the first 25 years of his life.
- 1790 Morelos attended the Colegio de San Nicolás in Valladolid. The director or headmaster of this school was none other than Miguel Hidalgo.
- 1795 Morelos went to Mexico City in order to complete his studies for a bachelors (*bachillerato*) degree in arts.
- 1795-1797 He studied religion and was ordained a subdeacon, deacon, and presbyter. He then earned his living as a teacher or tutor and as a parish priest.
- 1798 As an interim parish rector he supported his mother and sister.
- 1798-1810 He lived as the parish priest and rector in San Agustín Carácuaró.

SECOND PHASE OF MORELOS' LIFE

- 1810-1815 Morelos led four campaigns at the head of the rebel Mexican army.
- 1810 Shortly after Hidalgo's "Gritos de Dolores" (16 September), Morelos heard about Hidalgo's proclamation of independence. On October 20, 1810, Hidalgo commissioned Morelos as lieutenant in the army of the south.
- 1810-1812 Years of Morelos' first campaign. He recruits 3,000 men at arms dedicated to fight for independence, and they engage in several battles. At the end of this campaign he conquers Acapulco, and he unites the various independence fighters under one command.
- 1811 He engages in many battles with his companions and with Hermenegildo Galeana. Together they achieve a string of victories: they defeat the

- royalist forces in París, Cosío, and Fuentes, thereby controlling the entire state of Guerrero.
- 1812 Years of Morelos' second campaign
The Spanish viceroy Venegas concentrates the Spanish army in Puebla, México.
Meanwhile Morelos' forces occupy Cuernavaca, not far from Puebla.
Then Morelos attacks the royalist troops in Cuautla with a 1,000 foot soldiers, 2,000 on horseback, three brigades each led by Galeana, Bravo, and Matamorelos, 300 *criollos* from Zitácuaro, and 1,000 Indians "for support activities". The royalist forces win this battle, and Morelos and a few of his troops succeed in escaping alive.
- 1812-1813 Years of Morelos' third campaign
Morelos reorganizes his army with 5,000 men, and he marches on Oaxaca, which he captures in November, 1812.
The next year he reoccupies Acapulco.
In 1813, the National Constitutional Congress (Congreso Nacional Constituyente) meets in Acapulco; Morelos is named *gereneralísimo* and he is given the title of *alteza* (highness), but Morelos rejects such a title. He prefers the title of Servant of the Nation (Siervo de la Nación).
On November 6, 1813, Morelos signs the Acta Solemne de la Declaración de Independencia de América Septentrional (Declaration of Independence of North America).
- 1813-1815 Years of Morelos' fourth and last campaign.
- 1813 Morelos arrives at Valladolid with a force of 5,000 men, but Agustín de Iturbide, the general in charge of the Spanish royal forces, attacks Morelos' encampment and defeats Morelos' insurgent army.
- 1814 Morelos' brigade commander, Matamoros, is seized by the Spanish forces.
Meanwhile, Morelos flees with the Spanish royalists hard on his trail.
During Morelos' flight he kills all his royalist prisoners.
Late this year Morelos attends the insurrectionist congress in order to complete the constitutional degree declaring freedom for "Mexican America" (la América mexicana).
- 1815 (May) Morelos once again flees from Iturbide.
(September) The freedom fighters escape to Tehuacán.
(November 3) Morelos is captured by Iturbide's forces.
(December) Morelos, as a priest, is jailed by the Inquisition in Mexico City. After reviewing the Inquisition's report on Morelos, the Catholic Church condemns him as a heretic; he is defrocked; and he is ordered sent into exile to Africa. Then the Church hands him over to the civil authorities for sentencing by Viceroy Venegas.
(December 22) Morelos is executed by the Spanish troops under the viceroy's authority. Morelos is interred in the **Catedral Metropolitana** at the heart of Mexico City.

Morelos is considered by Mexicans and by Mexican historians as one of the two main heroes of Mexican independence.

