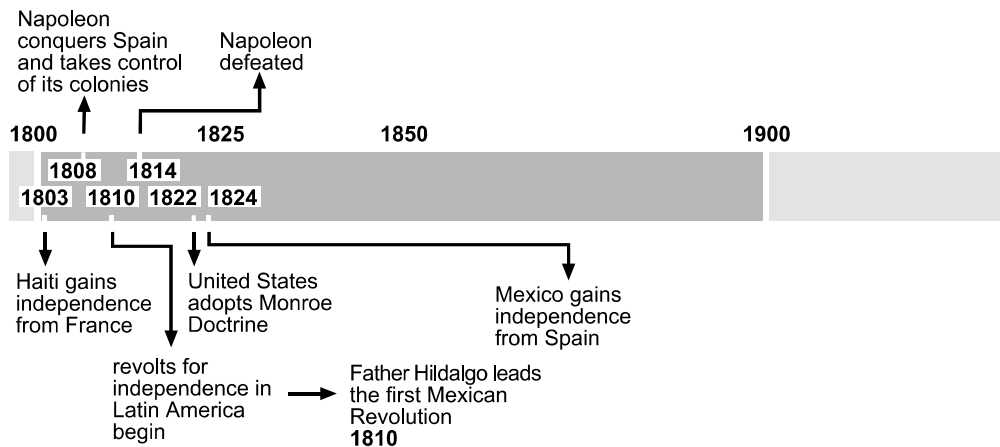


## The Revolutionary Spirit Reaches Latin America (1800s)

### The Beginnings of the Revolution in Latin America

One of the important results of the French Revolution was that it gave people in many parts of the world the **courage** to challenge the unfair practices of their governments. This was especially true in Latin America. Latin America is located south of the United States. Latin America includes Mexico, the countries in Central and South America, as well as some of the Caribbean Islands (see map page 503).

#### Timeline of the Revolutionary Spirit Reaches Latin America



### Spanish, Portuguese, and French Rule in Latin America

Spanish explorers, settlers, and missionaries followed Columbus to the Americas in the early 1500s. (The Americas include the lands of North, Central, and South America.) The Spanish then began conquering and colonizing most of Latin America. Portugal, meanwhile, **colonized** Brazil, and the French colonized Haiti, an island in the Caribbean Sea.

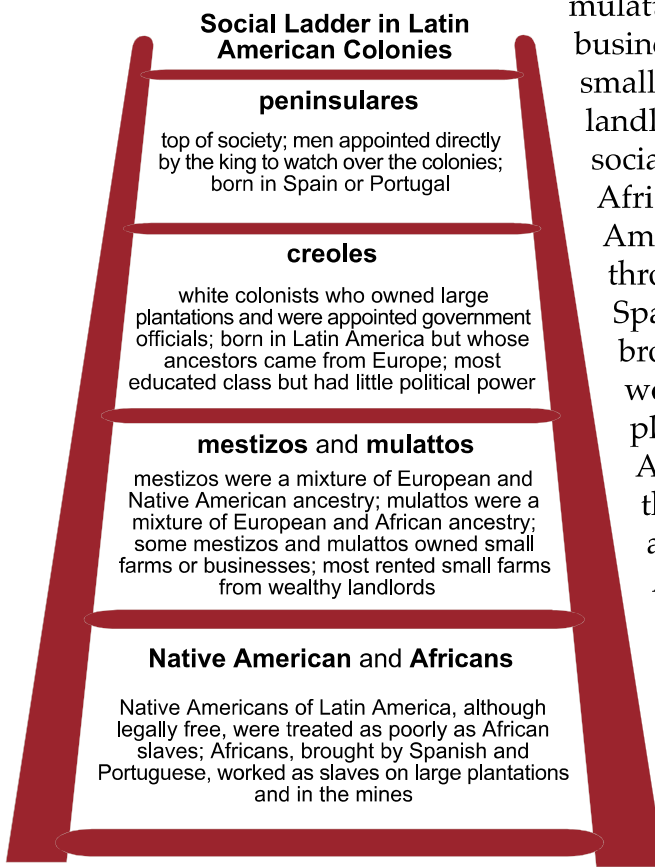
The people of Latin America were ruled with an iron hand by their masters in Spain, Portugal, and France. During the period of exploration and colonization, Spanish, Portuguese, and French conquerors took whatever they could from the Native American population, the original inhabitants of the area. This included gold, silver, and other precious metals. The **natives** themselves were forced into slavery by their conquerors. Natives in the Americas were forced to work long hours in the cornfields, sugar **plantations**, and silver mines.

## Social Classes

In Latin America, colonial **society** sharply divided its people into social classes based on birth. Social class in the Spanish and Portuguese Latin American colonies was very important. Class determined a person's education, job, and rights. At the *top* of society were the men appointed directly by the king to watch over the colonies. These people were called **peninsulares**. They were people who had been born in Spain or Portugal. They held the most important positions in colonial government and the Roman Catholic Church. Next on the social ladder were the white colonists, known as **creoles**, who owned large plantations and were appointed government officials. Creoles were people who were born in Latin America but whose ancestors came from Europe.

On the third rung of the social ladder were the common people, who included **mestizos** and **mulattos**. Mestizos were a mixture of European and Native American ancestry. Mulattos were of European and African

ancestry. Some mestizos and mulattos owned small farms or businesses. However, most rented small farms from wealthy landlords. At the bottom of the social ladder were people of African descent and Native Americans. From the 16<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Spanish and Portuguese brought people from Africa to work as slaves on large plantations. Although Native Americans were legally free, they were treated as poorly as the African slaves. Native Americans, Africans, and their American-born descendants were treated cruelly while working on the plantations and in the mines. Cruelty and disease killed hundreds of thousands of slaves.



## The Colonists Dream of a Better Life

The creoles were the most educated class but had little political power. By reading books from the Age of Enlightenment, they learned that all people had rights, including the right to participate in government. The creoles watched as their American neighbors to the north revolted against the English government in 1776 in order to gain political rights. This revolt was, of course, the American Revolution. In 1789 the creoles learned that the French people had revolted against their king in the French Revolution.

Burning with the desire to free themselves from their European conquerors, the Latin American colonists—creoles, mestizos, mulattos, Native Americans, and African descendants—sought independence. They were also encouraged to revolt because Napoleon's victories over Spain and Portugal had left those countries in disorder. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Latin American revolution had begun.



## Revolution in Haiti

The first Latin American country to fight for independence was Haiti, a French colony in the Caribbean Sea on the island of Hispaniola. Their leader was a self-educated former slave named Francois Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture (Tu-san lu-ver-tur). In 1802 Toussaint and the people of Haiti drove French forces from the island to gain independence from France. During a truce, Toussaint was taken prisoner and sent to France, where he died in prison in 1803. However, the French were unable to retake the island, and Toussaint's followers set up the independent country of Haiti in 1804.

### Francois Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture

Francois Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743-1803), black revolutionary leader and ex-slave, drove the French forces from the island of Haiti. Toussaint was born into slavery in Haiti but his father was from African nobility and taught him to take pride in his African heritage. Toussaint spoke both the African language of his ancestors and French. He also could read, and he read the stories of slave revolts in ancient Rome and the works of French philosophers who spoke of slaves gaining their freedom.

In 1791 when Toussaint was nearly 50, he led an uprising which marked the beginning of the struggle for freedom for the Haitian people. Although untrained, Toussaint was a brilliant general and inspiring commander. After a period of fighting, Toussaint achieved his goal of freeing the Haitian slaves and took control of most of the island.

In 1802 Napoleon sent a large army to the island and tried to take back the island and reimpose slavery. Toussaint again took up arms to fight for full independence, but he was captured by the French during a truce and sent to France where he died in prison. The French could not retake the island, and Toussaint's followers set up the independent country of Haiti in 1804. Finally, in 1820, Haiti became a republic, the only nonslave nation in the Western Hemisphere.

## Revolution Spreads throughout Latin America

Elsewhere in Latin America, creoles led the movement for independence. The Latin American revolts began when France's emperor, Napoleon, conquered Spain in 1808 and took control of Spain's colonies in Latin America. However, the Spanish colonists in Latin America would not accept French rule and began the revolution in South America. By 1810



fighting had broken out in many parts of Latin America. From Argentina in the south to Mexico in the north, colonists were beginning to gain their freedom. By the time of Napoleon's defeat in 1814, the Spanish Empire in Latin America had crumbled.

## **Revolutionary Leaders in Latin America**

The South American wars of independence produced two great generals whose leadership was responsible for the success of the wars for independence. The colonists were led by Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín. Bolívar led the revolts in the northern part of South America in Colombia and Venezuela and then moved into Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. San Martín led the revolts in the southern part of South America in Argentina and Chile. Together, these two men led the South Americans' victorious fight for independence.

### **Simón Bolívar**

Simón Bolívar (1783-1830) was a South American soldier, statesman, and liberator. He was an educated creole from a wealthy Venezuelan family. Bolívar studied in Europe and was influenced by the work of Rousseau. In 1807 he returned to South America and was convinced that the Spanish colonies were ready to fight for independence. He successfully liberated Venezuela in 1821 and became the president of Gran Colombia (Venezuela, New Granada, and Quito).

In 1824 Simón Bolívar liberated Peru, and in 1825 he formed the republic of Bolivia from Upper Peru. Simón Bolívar envisioned a united South America, but Bolivia and Peru turned against him. In 1829 Venezuela seceded from Gran Colombia, and in the following year, Bolívar resigned as president and eventually died of tuberculosis.

### **José de San Martín**

José de San Martín (1778-1850) was also a creole. He was born in Argentina and went to Europe for military training. In 1816 he helped Argentina win freedom from Spain. San Martín also joined the independence struggle in other areas and defeated the Spanish in Chile before moving into Peru to fight against colonial rule. Bolívar and Martín tried to work together, but their views were too different. San Martín stepped aside in 1822, allowing Bolívar's men to win the final victories against Spain.

The first outbreak of the Mexican Revolution came in 1810. Father Miguel Hidalgo led the Native Americans in their struggle against Spain. He declared an end to slavery and called for other reforms including spreading land and wealth among the peasants. Although many creoles supported the idea of independence, they were not willing to support taxation of the wealthy and distribution of land to the peasants. Therefore, the creoles joined the Spanish army against Hidalgo's army. Hidalgo was captured and executed. However, the fight for independence continued. In 1820 a revolution in Spain put a new government in power. Creoles, fearing that the new Spanish government would take away their privileges, then joined in Mexico's fight against Spain. In 1821, Mexico gained its independence.

### **Father Miguel Hidalgo**

Father Miguel Hidalgo (1753-1811) led the people in their struggle against Spain and is known as "the father of Mexican independence." Father Hidalgo was a priest in the small mountain village of Dolores; he was poor but well-educated.

On September 16, 1810, he called on the peasants of his parish to rebel against the Spanish. They began a 200-mile march toward Mexico City, armed with sickles, clubs, and stones. As they marched southward, they picked up thousands of new recruits. Father Hidalgo soon had an army of 60,000 men. However, in Mexico City, the creoles joined forces with the main Spanish army, and his initial success was suppressed in 1811. Father Hidalgo was then betrayed by one of his officers and was captured. He was executed, but the anniversary of his famous call to fight, grito (cry) de Delores, on September 16 is celebrated as Mexico's Independence Day.

### **Further Revolution Ends**

When Napoleon was defeated in Europe, many of the kings and queens he had replaced returned to lead their countries once again. The Spanish king wanted to rebuild the Spanish Empire in Latin America. It was too late. The Europeans had lost their strong foothold in America. When they tried to restore the old system of government in Latin America, Great Britain and the United States opposed their plan for the reconquest of Latin America. The British had established a profitable trade with the independent Latin American countries.



*Napoleon*

## The Monroe Doctrine

In 1823 United States President James Monroe signed the *Monroe Doctrine*. The Monroe Doctrine stated that the United States would not allow new colonization of the American continents in the Western **Hemisphere** by any European power. The Europeans, afraid of another war, took President Monroe seriously. The Monroe Doctrine remains today as the key to United States policy in Latin America.



*President James Monroe*

## Review

For 300 years, the Spanish and French empires in Latin America had colonized the countries in Latin America. Spain forced many of the peoples living in their colonies to farm and mine the land for the benefit of the Spanish Empire. The creole population, however, grew angry at the interference from the governments in Europe. The success of the American Revolution and French Revolution inspired Latin Americans to revolt against France and Spain. Like most revolutions, the revolts in Latin America took time to carry out and were often violent. Great leaders such as Toussaint L'Ouverture, Simón Bolívar, José de San Martín, and Father Hidalgo were the founding fathers of Latin American nations.



In 1823 President James Monroe issued the Monroe Doctrine. It stated that the American continents in the Western Hemisphere would be closed to future colonization by any European power.