

SYNOPSIS

Cinco de Mayo festival commemorates the victory of the Mexican forces, led by General Ignacio Zaragoza, born in Goliad, Texas, over the French forces led by the Count of Lorencez, in Puebla on May 5, 1862. Although the final victory of the Mexicans over the forces of Archduke Maximilian and Empress Carlota, sponsored by Napoleon III of France, did not occur until 1867 under the leadership of President Benito Juárez, the initial Mexican victory gave the Mexican liberal forces inspiration to continue fighting against the foreign invaders that were aided by Mexican conservative forces.

It is in this context that President Benito Juárez uttered his famous declaration proclaiming, “ENTRE LOS PUEBLOS COMO ENTRE LOS INDIVIDUOS, EL RESPETO AL DERECHO AJENO ES LA PAZ.” (Respect for the rights of others as constituting the basic ingredient for peace among nations as well as among individuals.)

Today, Cinco de Mayo festival is a symbol of the celebration of the Mexican-American heritage in our midst, which is an integral part of the rich, cultural diversity of the fabric of American society, as well as a celebration of the human spirit seeking to preserve its intrinsic freedom.

ESPAÑOL

El Festival de Cinco de Mayo conmemora la victoria de las fuerzas mexicanas, dirigidas por el General Ignacio Zaragoza (nacido en Goliad, Texas), sobre las fuerzas francesas, dirigidas por el Conde de Lorencez, en Puebla el cinco de mayo de 1862. Aunque la victoria final de los mexicanos sobre las fuerzas del Archiduque Maximiliano y la Emperatriz Carlota (patrocinados por Napoleon III de Francia), no ocurrió hasta 1867 bajo la dirección del Presidente Benito Juárez, la victoria inicial en el Cinco de Mayo, 1862 inspiró a las fuerzas mexicanas liberales a continuar luchando contra el invasor extranjero quienes eran ayudados por fuerzas mexicanas conservadoras.

Fue en esta contexto que el Presidente Benito Juárez hizo su famosa declaración proclamando el respeto por los derechos de otros como ingrediente básico para la paz entre naciones e individuos: “ENTRE LOS PUEBLOS COMO ENTRE LOS INDIVIDUOS, EL RESPETO AL DERECHO AJENO ES LA PAZ.”

Hoy día, el Festival de Cinco de Mayo es un símbolo de la celebración de la herencia de los americanos de descendencia mexicana que viven en nuestro medio (lo cual es una parte íntegra de la rica diversidad cultural de la sociedad americana), también es una celebración del espíritu humano que busca preservar su libertad intrínseca.

College of the Mainland®

50TH ANNIVERSARY

CINCO de Mayo CELEBRATION 1974-2024

MAY 2 NOON – 1:30 P.M.
CONFERENCE CENTER



THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CINCO DE MAYO

by Manuel Urbina II, Ph.D.

The significance of the Mexican victory over the French troops of Napoleon III in the Battle of Cinco de Mayo fought at the Loreto Fort in Puebla, Mexico, on May 5, 1862, remains, to this day, a symbol of Mexico's struggle against foreign intervention, as well as a reaffirmation of the desire of all peoples to control their own destiny.

Preceding the French intervention of 1862, Mexico had suffered a prior intervention by France in 1839 to collect by force some debts owed by Mexico to individual French citizens. Mexico had also suffered the loss of more than half of its territory to the United States as a result of the Mexican War, 1846-48, (known in Mexico as the "North American invasion"). This was interpreted by Mexico as the intervention of a foreign power into a matter of purely domestic discord (i.e., the secession of Mexican Texas from the Mexican Union and Mexico's subsequent attempt to bring Texas back into the Union).

The French intervention of 1862 represented: (1) an attempt by France to collect the interest owed by Mexico on its foreign debt to France, Spain, and England. Initially it started out as an invasion by these three European powers. Spain and England withdrew their forces when Mexico assured all three powers that the Mexican debt would be paid; (2) an attempt by Napoleon III to extend his domain to Latin America, which contained the added ingredient of implied cultural superiority of the French; and (3) an attempt by the conservative elements of Mexico to triumph over the liberal policies of President Benito Juárez.

The polemic between the conservative and liberal ideologies had been a continuous

struggle in Mexico since its inception as an independent entity: 1821-1823 conservative Emperor Iturbide; liberal Constitution of 1824; conservative Constitution of 1836; conservative dictatorship of 1843; liberal Constitution of 1847; conservative dictatorship of 1853; liberal Constitution of 1857; and Leyes de Reforma (Laws of Reform) of 1859 subsequently incorporated into the Constitution of 1857.

The liberal Constitution of 1857 was the basis which President Benito Juárez instigated his liberal reforms, such as separation of church and state, civil registry (births, marriage), civil burials, freedom of religious worship, transfer of church property to the nation, and limitations of privileges for the military. The conservative military elements rebelled against Juárez's liberal government and invited Maximiliano de Habsburgo and his wife Carlota to come to Mexico, with the backing of Napoleon III's troops, to establish a monarchy under the conservative banner.

Prior to the arrival of Maximiliano and Carlota in May 1864, the Mexican liberal forces had won the Battle of Cinco de Mayo against the French at Puebla on May 5, 1862. This victory provided the inspiration to continue fighting against foreign invaders and their conservative supporters. The final victory of the liberal forces under President Juárez over the French and the Mexican conservatives came in June 19, 1867, when Maximiliano and the conservative generals Miguel Miramón and Tomás Mejía were executed at the Cerro de las Campanas in Querétaro.

EVENT PROGRAM

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Sonia Kukuch, Admissions

ENTERTAINMENT AND FOOD

Mariachi music will accompany the serving of Mexican food

MEXICAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

Melissa Carrillo-Gaytan,
COM Voice Major

Deborah Lewis, COM Vocal Arts
Accompanist

OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Warren Nichols, President

MEXICAN BALLADS

Mariachi Los Gallitos

OFFICIAL WELCOME

Dr. Helen Brewer, Executive
Vice President of Academic and
Student Affairs

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Dr. Manuel Urbina II, Ph. D., J. D.,
Historian, Legal Scholar, and Former
COM Professor

BALLET FOLKLÓRICO

Oppe Elementary School Dance Team

CLOSING REMARKS

Rafael Naranjo, Faculty

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TRIO Student Volunteers
Cinco de Mayo Multicultural Committee
Building and Grounds Personnel

From its inception in 1974, the objective of the Cinco de Mayo celebration was to provide a dynamic link between the college and the Mexican American community.

