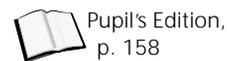




José Bernardo Maximiliano Gutiérrez de Lara

Mexican Revolutionary and Diplomat

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José Bernardo Maximiliano Gutiérrez de Lara (1774–1841) played a significant part in the Mexican war of independence against the Spanish.

Born in Revilla in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas on August 20, 1774, Gutiérrez grew up in Mexico with his parents, Santiago Gutiérrez de Lara and María Uribe. He settled in Revilla with his wife, Josefa Uribe, and bought land. He worked as a blacksmith and merchant.

Supporting Father Hidalgo The Mexican revolt against Spain began in 1810, led by Father Miguel Hidalgo y Castillo. Gutiérrez and his brother took an active role in recruiting support for the revolution in towns such as Nuevo Santander. Hidalgo recognized Gutiérrez's skill with speeches and sent him to the Rio Grande to recruit more support. After the Las Casas Revolt in 1811, Hidalgo commissioned Gutiérrez to approach the United States for support.

In March of 1811, he returned to Revilla to gather supplies before heading to the United States. In late March, Father Hidalgo was captured by the Spanish. Despite this, Gutiérrez went on with his orders and in August 1811 arrived in Natchitoches, Louisiana. He spent a few months there and then continued to Washington, D.C., arriving there on December 11, 1811.

Meetings in Washington, D.C. In Washington, Gutiérrez presented his cause to Secretary of State James Monroe. He proposed that a Republican government be established in Texas to be used as a base in the efforts to liberate Mexico. To plan the expedition, Gutiérrez was paired with José Álvarez de Toledo y Dubois, a Cuban revolutionary who was already receiving U.S. support. They laid plans to set up a provisional government in San Antonio, and Gutiérrez headed back south to Louisiana. There, he was joined by an agent of the U.S. government, William Shaler.

Both Toledo and Shaler had noted that while Gutiérrez was very dedicated to the Mexican cause, he ignored American interests in Texas and Mexico. The two launched a propaganda campaign against Gutiérrez, slandering him and weakening his public support in the United States and Texas.

Betrayed in Politics In early April 1813, Gutiérrez became president protector of the provisional government in Texas. However, the slanderous campaign against him had broken down his support. When Toledo arrived in Texas, Gutiérrez was asked to resign his position. He resigned on August 4, 1813, and took his family back to Natchitoches two days later. Toledo took over the presidential title but was defeated in Texas in April 1814.

Gutiérrez headed to New Orleans, Louisiana, to work with another liberation movement. He fought in the Battle of New Orleans in 1815. He later returned to Natchitoches and joined James Long on expeditions aimed at conquering Texas in 1819 and 1820. These expeditions ultimately failed. Although James Long was imprisoned by Mexican officials, Gutiérrez was recognized for his previous revolutionary efforts in Mexico and was not punished.

In 1824 Gutiérrez was elected governor of Tamaulipas. Although he resigned in early 1825, he was quickly made commandant general in March 1825. He resigned from that post in late 1826. Gutiérrez continued to voice his opinions and to offer support to various political activities in Mexico and Texas. He died in Santiago on May 13, 1841.

Review Questions

1. What skill did Gutiérrez have that helped the revolution?
2. Why was Gutiérrez sent to Washington, D.C.?
3. Why did Gutiérrez make the U.S. government nervous?

Critical Thinking

4. **Analyzing** Why do you think a slanderous campaign against Gutiérrez worked?