

Jose Marti Biographical Sketch

Jose Marti is a national hero of Cuba. He was a political activist, a revolutionary, a poet, a journalist, a college professor of literature, and a consul. His vast experiences and education helped him to be successful in many diverse areas. He was born in Cuba in 1853 when Cuba belonged to Spain. His father was Spanish, and his mother was from the Canary Islands. He was politically involved from the time he was very young and got into trouble with the Spanish government. He had to serve six years doing hard labor, starting when he was 17 years old and then was deported to Spain. He spent most of his life in exile. While he was in Spain, he completed a B.A. in Law and Philosophy. He went to Mexico City where he was reunited with his family and began his literary career.

In 1878 he married, and he and his wife had a son and a daughter. For many years he wrote poems, books, and newspaper articles. At the same time he was politically active. This is why his teaching is so rich for us. He did not stay in any country very long because he kept getting into political trouble. He lived in Cuba, Spain, Guatemala, Venezuela, and New York from 1883 to 1895.

He did not want Cuba annexed to the U.S. In 1892 he founded the Cuban Liberation Party. He fought for the unity of Latin America against U.S. imperialism. In 1895, when he was 42 years old, he helped launch an invasion of Cuba for Cuban independence. He was shot and killed by Spanish forces in one of the first skirmishes of the abortive uprising.

Jose Marti is considered one of the great writers of the Hispanic world. He wrote over 70 books, including poetry, novels, and essays on polemics. He also published a children's magazine, wrote for many newspapers, and wrote political theory. He is important to American readers because the issues he explores are timeless and universal. He devoted his life to ending Spanish colonial rule in Cuba and to prevent Cuba from falling under the control of any country (including the United States) whose political ideologies were unlike the principles he held.

All of his teachings warn against governments that are intolerant of individual freedom and love their own materialistic empowerment. His writings condemn all despotic regimes and the abridgment of human rights. His writings could guide democracies.