

HispanoFilipinos Must Also Celebrate the "Cinco de Mayo" - MabuhayRadio

Written by Bobby Reyes (As Updated on May 5, 2008)

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oday is the "Cinco de Mayo" festivity of the Mexican-American community and of the Mexican people. The Philippines and Mexico share some common historical denominators, as both of them were former Spanish colonies ruled by a common Spanish viceroy in Mexico City. Filipinos, especially Filipino Americans, should celebrate with their Mexican brethren the "Cinco de Mayo" because it marks a great victory of a former European colony over a European power. After all, many of the people of the Philippines are HispanoFilipinos. To read my essays about the Hispanic profile of the Filipinos, please click on or copy and paste to your browser these links:

[Rediscovering the "Missing Latinos in America": The HispanoAsians and the ñ-Filipinos](#)

http://www.pinoyonboard.com/2004/0229_latinofilipino.html

The "Cinco de Mayo" has become a celebration of Mexico's multiethnic culture and its rich natural heritage. To learn more about the great victory of the Mexicans over the French Army, please read on . . .

The Battle of Puebla, Mexico on May 5, 1862, was one of the few victories of the Mexican people over the occupying French Army. Gen. Charles Ferdinand Latrille de Lorencez

commanded the French Army in Mexico. He greatly underestimated the Mexican army because he had great contempt for the Mexican people, so much so that he believed he could control the whole country like puppets with his army of 6,000 men.

The 33-year-old Mexican Commander, Gen. Ignacio Zaragoza Seguin, led the Mexican army. Zaragoza fell back to Alcuizingo Pass, where he and his army were badly beaten in a skirmish with Lorencez's aggressive forces on April 28.

Zaragoza retreated to Puebla, which was heavily fortified. Puebla had been held by the Mexican government since the Wars of Reform in 1860. To its north lie the forts Loreto and Guadalupe on opposite hilltops. Zaragoza had a trench joining the forts via the saddle.

Lorencez heard that the people of Puebla were friendly to the French, and that the Mexican Republican garrison which kept the people in line would be overrun by the population once he made a show of force. This would prove to be a serious miscalculation on Lorencez's part.

The Cinco de Mayo's Historical Significance

On May 5th, against all advice, Lorencez decided to attack Puebla from the north. Unfortunately, he started his attack a little too late in the day. Just before noon, he started using his artillery. By noon he ordered his infantry to advance, which by the third attack needed the full engagement of all its reserves. The French artillery had run out of ammunition, so the third attack went unsupported.

The Mexican forces and the Republican Garrison both put up a stout defense and even took to the field to defend the positions between the hilltop forts. The right and left while the troops concealed along the road pivoted out to flank them badly.

By 3:00 p.m. the daily rains had started, making a slippery mess of the battlefield. Lorencez withdrew to distant positions, counting 462 of his men killed against only 83 of the Mexicans. He waited a couple of days for Zaragoza to attack again, but Zaragoza held his ground.

Lorencez then completely withdrew to Orizaba. The political repercussions were overwhelming; the outnumbered Mexicans used what courage and determination they could to repel the ominous French Army. When news of the defeat reached France, Napoleon III sent 29,000 additional troops to Mexico.

The reinforced French troops eventually overran Puebla, but the legendary battle had created a Mexican moral victory that is celebrated today as Cinco de Mayo. (Data picked up from several Mexican-American documents.) # # #

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