

José Gervasio Artigas



Passion or Profession: Independence Leader

Period: 1764–1850

Artigas was a *gaucho*, or cowboy, in his youth. Later on, he became active in the independence movement against Spain and fought for a decentralized government. He would continue demanding independence while power changed hands between Spain, Argentina, and Brazil. Though Uruguay's independence was not achieved until years after his exile to Paraguay, Artigas is still remembered as "the father of Uruguayan independence." Today, countless public buildings, parks, and statues are dedicated to him throughout Uruguay.