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THE MORMON COLONIES IN CHIHUAHUA AFTER THE 1912 EXODUS *

By ELIZABETH H. MILLS

Introduction

IN the spring of 1846 the Mormons trekked across the plains from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Great Salt Lake Basin, then a part of Mexico, for persecution of the Mormons in Illinois had led to the decision of their leader, Brigham Young, to seek a land where they would be free to practice their religion in peace. Here the Mormons prospered and gradually extended their colonies to the neighboring territories. Their original numbers were augmented by the immigration of converts from Europe and from Great Britain. By 1887 it was estimated that more than 85,000 immigrants had entered the Great Basin as a result of foreign missionary work, one of the strong features of the Mormon religion.¹

The early Mormon colonies in Utah, largely agricultural, were distinguished by the efficient organization of the church and by a spirit of coöperation among the colonists. The first irrigation projects were on a communal basis, water being allotted in proportion to the amount of work done on the irrigation canals, and the land was also dis-

* Chapters one through five of Miss Mills' thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, Department of History, University of Arizona, 1950. Ed.

1. G. O. Larson, "The Story of the Perpetual Emigration Fund," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. XVIII (September, 1931) 184-194.

tributed on an equitable basis. The system of tithes to support the church and to provide educational and recreational facilities likewise tended to equalize the economic status of the colonists. The church was the dominating influence and maintained a closely knit organization which formed a practical theocracy.²

The missionary work of the Mormons extended to Mexico, where missionaries had been sent as early as 1874 to work among the natives, and by 1880 a Mexican mission had been established in Mexico City. Later missions, such as those to Sonora and Chihuahua in 1881 and 1882, were exploratory as well as religious in character, for they were sent out not only to convert the natives but also to find a place suitable for Mormon settlement.³ Rising resentment in Utah against the Mormon practice of plural marriage, a tenet of their faith at that time, and the misunderstandings which followed the passage in 1882 of the Edmunds-Tucker Act which prohibited polygamy, led Mormon leaders to turn again to Mexico for a home for their followers.⁴ In 1884 the Yaqui River country was visited by a party of Mormons seeking land for settlement.⁵ The following January, at the request of church authorities, a party from Saint David, Arizona, explored the Casas Grandes River Valley and the neighboring Sierra Madres in northern Chihuahua and reported favorably on the possibilities of the country for colonization. In February and March of 1885, small groups of Mormons migrated from Arizona and were laying out home sites along the Casas Grandes Valley from Ascención to Casas Grandes. By April the arrival of more than three hundred and fifty colonists had alarmed the local Mexicans who thought that the Mormons had come for conquest. Their expulsion was prevented by the prompt action of the church leaders in Mexico City, who obtained from President Por-

2. H. Gardner, "Cooperation Among the Mormons," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. XXXI (May, 1917) pp. 461-99.

3. T. C. Romney, *The Mormon Colonies in Mexico*, pp. 38-48 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938).

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

firio Díaz and from General Carlos Pacheco, the governor of Chihuahua, approval of Mormon colonization except in the *Zona Prohibida* (Prohibited Zone).⁶

After official sanction of colonization by the Mexican government had been received, Mormon settlement and exploration continued. Land was purchased both by individual colonists and by groups of colonists. In the latter case the land was held in common by a company, the Mexican Colonization and Land Company, which was organized by the church as a nonprofit enterprise to purchase land which was then leased to the colonists. As the company was under the management of the church authorities, settlement was controlled and colonists were carefully selected.⁷

In Chihuahua the colonies were seven in number, three were located in the valleys and four in the mountains. Colonia Díaz near Ascención, the first colony to be formed, and Colonia Dublán, about forty miles to the south, were located in the Casas Grandes Valley. Colonia Juárez, which became the cultural center of the colonies, was established in the Piedras Verdes Valley about fifteen miles west of Colonia Dublán. The mountain colonies of Cave Valley, Pacheco, García and Chuichupa lay to the south and west of Colonia Juárez, in a region of the Sierra Madres which at one time had been a famous Apache retreat.⁸ The Sonoran settlements of Colonia Oaxaca and Colonia Morelos were established in the 1890's on the Bavispe River about fifty miles southeast of Douglas, Arizona.⁹ In each community one-fourth of the land was usually unoccupied, for Mexican law required that twenty-five per cent of the property in each community be reserved for purchase by Mexicans.¹⁰ The valley communities were predominantly agricultural while in the mountain

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-59.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

8. In an interview in Colonia Juárez in April, 1950, Mr. S. Farnsworth stated that the Apaches had driven the Mexicans from the mountain regions in which the Mormons established settlements.

9. Romney, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-127.

10. Moisés T. de la Peña, "Extranjeros y Tarahumares en Chihuahua"—in *Obras Completas*, Miguel Othon de Mendizabal, Vol. I, pp. 225-6 (Mexico, D. F.: Los Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, Tolso y Enrico Martínez, 1947).

colonies the chief activities were stock raising, lumbering and some farming.

The perseverance, industry and thrift of the colonists surmounted the hardships and poverty of the first years and brought prosperity to the colonies. Dams and canals were constructed to irrigate their lands, fruit trees were planted, strains of improved cattle and horses imported, and industries such as saw mills, a tannery, harness shops, mercantile establishments and flour mills supplied many of their needs. Well-built red brick houses were surrounded by vegetable and flower gardens. But the first permanent building to be erected in each community was usually the school-house, which also served as the church and the community recreation center. From the Juárez Stake Academy, founded in 1897 in Colonia Juárez, students graduated, many of whom continued their studies in universities in the United States.¹¹

Politically the colonies were subject to the Mexican municipalities in which they were located, but were practically self-governing with a president, town council and other officials whom they elected.¹² That the Mormons caused the Mexicans little trouble can be seen by the following statement quoted by Romney from the Ciudad Juárez *Revista Internacional*:

The oldest colony is the Colony Díaz which contains nearly a thousand souls, with clean streets, lined with shade trees on either side. Díaz has several industrial establishments, a church, school and drug store, but they have neither a saloon, billiard hall, nor any place whatever where mescal is sold. Consequently they have little need of a jail, nor have they one in any of the colonies. There are seldom any complaints or quarrels and scandals are entirely unknown in any of the colonies.¹³

Socially, the colonists, who numbered about four thousand by 1912, had little intercourse with their Mexican

11. Romney, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-142.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

neighbors. Romney who lived in Colonia Juárez until 1912 explains the Mormon attitude as follows:

Socially the colonists were exclusive and seclusive, having few if any contacts with their neighbors. Occasionally, as a matter of diplomacy or as an expression of good will, government officials would be invited to participate in a national festivity or perchance some other form of entertainment, otherwise these social functions were entirely restricted. . . . This policy inaugurated by the church was not born of a "race superiority" complex, but resulted from a feeling that groups of people having different social standards, resulting from radically different environments, will have more enduring friendships for one another if they do not become too intimate.¹⁴

As factors contributing to the ill-feeling expressed toward the colonists during the Mexican Revolution, Romney cites the difference between the Latin temperament of the Mexicans and the practical, less emotional temperament of the colonists, who were largely of North European extraction; and the contrast of the hopeless peonage of the Mexicans with the comparatively abundant life and economic independence of the Mormons.¹⁵

Although it was at the old town of Casas Grandes, between Dublán and Juárez, that Francisco Madero was defeated in 1910 in the first battle of his rebellion against Díaz, the revolutionists did not make undue demands upon the Mormon colonists. When requisitions were made by the revolutionary leaders, receipts were usually issued for the material taken.¹⁶ However, the Orozco revolt against Madero in 1912 seriously threatened the safety of the colonists, for the rebels camped in the vicinity looted the stores, stole from the gardens, appropriated the horses and butchered the cattle of the colonists. In July the rebel commander of Casas Grandes, General José Inez Salazar, ordered the colonists to surrender their guns and at the same time withdrew his

14. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 150-151. Most of these receipts proved to be of no value, though a few were used in payment of taxes.

guarantee of protection. After consultation the colonists decided to surrender their arms but to send the women and children from the country. Although the Mormons brought in a strange array of old guns to the amusement of the Mexican commander receiving them, they retained their better guns which they thought might be needed later.¹⁷ On the following days, July 28 and 29, 1912, the women and children from Dublán, Juárez and the mountain colonies were put on trains for El Paso with only a few personal possessions, for they expected to return in a short time. The greater number of the men remained behind to protect their homes and property.¹⁸ In Colonia Díaz on July 28, three hours after the decision to leave had been made, the colonists had loaded their goods into wagons and were traveling by wagon and on horseback toward Hachita, New Mexico. A few young men remained behind, only to see the colony ransacked and burned a few hours later by the rebels.¹⁹

As the depredations, the hostility and the numbers of the rebels increased, the men who had stayed behind to protect their property collected the remaining cattle and horses in the Sierra Madres to the west and drove them north to Hachita, New Mexico. By the end of August, 1912, the only Mormons in the Mexican colonies were a few young men who were taking care of cattle hidden in the mountain canyons and who were hoping to harvest the crops which had not been destroyed.²⁰

In the meantime in El Paso, Texas, the women and children, encamped in old lumber sheds, were dependent on the charity of the Mormon Church, of the citizens of El Paso and of the United States government. On July 29, 1912, the Secretary of War of the United States was authorized to supply tents and rations to the four thousand American citizens

17. Statement by Mr. Eli Abegg, personal interview, January, 1950 (at Tucson, Arizona).

18. Romney, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-194.

19. S. C. Richardson, Jr., "Remembering Colonia Díaz," *The Improvement Era*, Vol. XL (May, 1937) pp. 298-300, 322, 331.

20. Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate, *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, Vol. I, p. 1481 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920. 2 vols.).

compelled to leave Mexico by Salazar and the Red Flaggers²¹ in revolt against Madero. The government further aided the refugees by appropriating on August 2, 1912, the sum of one hundred thousand dollars to provide transportation "to such place as each shall select," of this amount twenty thousand dollars was to be used for refugees in Arizona from Sonora.²²

Conditions in Chihuahua resulting from the hostility of the Mexican rebels toward Americans, from the policy of the United States government, and from the desire of the Mormons to remain neutral made the exodus from the Chihuahua colonies in 1912 inevitable. To aid the Madero government which it had recognized in 1912, the United States put an embargo on the shipment of arms to revolutionists in Mexico. It was this embargo which contributed to the ill-feeling of the rebels against all Americans in Chihuahua and which embittered the Orozco rebels and led to their demand for arms from the colonists, only a few of whom were Mexican citizens at the time.²³ As the demands and the hostility of the Orozco rebels were such that the Mormons could no longer remain in Chihuahua without resorting to arms to defend themselves, and as the policy of the church and of the colonists was to remain neutral and to avoid a conflict, a withdrawal from Mexico was the only course open to the colonists.

Resettlement Amidst Revolution

During the remainder of the summer of 1912, the Mormon refugees in El Paso anxiously awaited news that conditions in Casas Grandes were such that they might return to their homes. Consular reports were not optimistic. On July 31, 1912, the American consul in Chihuahua City informed Secretary Knox:¹

21. Mr. J. H. Martineau of Colonia Juárez stated in a personal interview that the Red Flaggers were originally rebels in Orozco's army, but later became unorganized bands who pillaged the countryside (April, 1950, at Colonia Juárez).

22. *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, Vol. II, pp. 3346-47.

23. Statement by Mr. J. H. Martineau, personal interview, April, 1950 (at Colonia Juárez).

1. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1912, p. 824 (Department of State, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1948).

I believe Federals will not occupy Casas Grandes district for two or three weeks. Campaign perfectly incompetent and no relief for Americans in northwestern part of the state for a considerable time. Occasional squads of rebels reported but impossible to communicate specific warning of them to Americans. Madera cut off two weeks.

It was not until August 12th that the American consul in Ciudad Juárez reported that the federals had occupied the city, that railroad traffic would be resumed and that refugees would soon return to their homes in the belief that the revolution was over in Chihuahua.

In the Mormon colonies, however, there was still no certainty of safety from rebel attack, for although the federal forces of General Agustín Sanjinez had occupied Casas Grandes,² General Salazar and his rebels had retired to the mountains southwest of Casas Grandes and were in possession of the Mormon mountain colonies. At García the irrigation dam had been destroyed, and at Chuichupa the rebels had looted the town, taken all the horses and killed many of the cattle that had not been driven into the mountain canyons.³ Bands of Red Flaggers seeking horses and ammunition were reported in the neighborhood of Palomas, while quantities of ammunition were shipped to an unknown person in the vicinity of Columbus, New Mexico.⁴ In Colonia Pacheco the Stevens family, trusting for safety in the isolation of their farm in the Sierra Madres, had not left Mexico in the general exodus in July, 1912. The rebels retreating toward García and Chuichupa in mid-August had taken three of the four guns owned by the family, but had demanded no money; their horses and cattle were hidden in a mountain canyon where the boys of the family tended them. Several weeks later Mr. Stevens was killed in a struggle with two Mexicans who had approached his daughters as they were picking berries. The mother and four children then sought refuge in El Paso, but two of the boys remained to take care

2. *Ibid.*, p. 825.

3. *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, Vol. I, pp. 1480-82.

4. *The Deming Graphic*, Vol. X, August 9, 1912.

of the horses and cattle concealed in the mountains and to harvest the crops. It was never known whether or not the Mexicans responsible for Mr. Steven's death were rebels, for they wore no identifying uniforms.⁵

From El Paso the men began to return to the colonies early in August to look after their property, for in a few cases Mexican generals had given local Mexicans permission to take possession of Mormon farms and homes.⁶ In the latter part of August, Junius Romney, the president of the Mexican colonies, and a committee appointed by the refugees in El Paso returned to the colonies to investigate conditions and to estimate the property damage. After conferring with General Sanjinez, the federal commander, and the civil authorities in Casas Grandes, Romney reported:

My best judgment after visiting the colonies and talking with those who visited the mountain colonies, and after consulting with Sanjinez and Blanco and perceiving their manifest indisposition to pursue the rebels and their apparent indifference to the conditions in the colonies, was that it was not safe for the colonists to return with their families at this time.⁷

By the middle of September, 1912, however, it was considered safe for the men to return to the colonies to harvest their crops, to care for their cattle and to look after their property.

The conditions that make the present time seem opportune for this work are that there are apparently few Rebels in that part of the country at present; and but little Rebel activity manifest; while Federal garrisons already occupy the towns of Pearson, Unero, Casas Grandes, La Ascensión, Sabinal, and Guzman, while a detachment of 135 Federals are now on their way from Guzman to Palomas. There are many cattle belonging to the colonists in the district and good offers have been made to buy most of these cattle. There is much lucerne, hay, corn and oats that might be harvested and perhaps sold.⁸

5. *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, Vol. II, p. 2602.

6. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 1482.

7. Romney, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

8. Romney, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

As a result of this report several men returned to look after their interests, and before the end of the year a few families had followed them. Conditions, however, were still unsettled, for the camp of some Mormons rounding up cattle in the mountains was looted, the men themselves disarmed, and one of their number was held for ransom.⁹ It is interesting to note that Joel H. Martineau, a Mormon colonist who had become a Mexican citizen in 1897, remained in the colonies during the revolution, except for a period of two weeks, yet never carried a gun nor had occasion to use one.¹⁰

As the winter of 1912 approached and it was still considered unsafe for families to return to the colonies, many of the refugees in El Paso, despairing of peaceful conditions in Mexico, scattered to other parts of the United States and even to Canada to start life anew. Others took up homesteads in southern Arizona and New Mexico or settled in El Paso, Texas, Douglas, Arizona, and other towns near the Mexican border. The more optimistic found work on ranches or in the border towns to tide them over the winter until they could return to Mexico in the spring to plant their crops.¹¹ There was no employment to be had near their homes in Mexico, for the lumbering companies near Pearson and Madera, with which the Mormons had previously found employment, had ceased operations because of the rebel activities in the neighborhood.¹²

The location of the Mormon colonies in northwestern Chihuahua accounts for many of the depredations to which they were subjected, for they were surrounded by the Terrazas range lands stocked with fine cattle and horses which fed and provided mounts for many a rebel band.¹³ From the northern part of the Casas Grandes Valley, in

9. *Ibid.*, p. 208-9.

10. Statement by Mr. Joel H. Martineau, personal interview, April, 1950.

11. Romney, *op. cit.*, p. 211-12.

12. *The Mexican Yearbook*, 1914, p. 50. (Issued under the Auspices of the Department of Finance, Mexico City, New York, London: published by McCorquodale and Co., Ltd., London).

13. Edgcomb Pinchon, *Viva Villa*, p. 226 (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1933).

which Colonia Dublán is situated, Pulpito Pass leading to northern Sonora was an easier route for mounted or marching armies than that over the Sierra Madres; while the mountains themselves formed a safe refuge for defeated rebel bands, or Red Flaggers. From Ciudad Juárez, opposite El Paso, Texas, the Mexican Northwestern Railroad ran west to Corralitos in the Casas Grandes Valley and thence south through Colonia Dublán, Nuevo Casas Grandes, and the lumber shipping points of Pearson and Madera to Chihuahua City. Though strategically not as important as the Mexican Central Railroad, it was used in military maneuvers by Mexican commanders in northwest Chihuahua, and the denial of its use to General John J. Pershing by Carranza in 1916 hampered the movements of the expedition to capture Francisco Villa.¹⁴

The murder of President Madero in February, 1913, and the refusal of the United States to recognize Victoriano Huerta as president of Mexico affected the political scene in northwest Chihuahua. The former rebel General Salazar then became the federal commander in the Casas Grandes district and Francisco Villa began to assemble his army on the pretext of avenging Madero's death. Early in the campaign Villa defeated Salazar at Casas Grandes¹⁵ and soon controlled all of northwest Chihuahua. The cattle and horses of Don Luis Terrazas, who owned thousands of acres of range land in the region, fed, provided mounts for and equipped Villa's army; for not only were many of Terrazas' cattle sold to American buyers on the border, but a brisk business was also done in hides, many of which were sold to Mormon traders.¹⁶

At this time only two of the Mormon colonies, Juárez and Dublán, were being resettled, as the mountain colonies were still unsafe because of roving bands of Red Flaggers,

14. *Foreign Relations*, 1916, p. 512.

15. N. Campobello, *Apuntes sobre la vida militar de Francisco Villa*, p. 43 (Mexico: Edición y Distribución Ibero-Americano de Publicaciones, S. A., 1940).

16. Statement by Mr. Eli Abegg, personal interview, June, 1950.

and Colonia Díaz had been destroyed by fire.¹⁷ In Chuichupa federal troops rounded up horses and cattle which were to be distributed to widows and orphans.¹⁸ Occasional groups of armed horsemen would ride into Juárez or Dublán demanding arms, food, clothing and money. The colonists acquiesced in their demands when necessary, but generally tried to maintain an attitude of impartial neutrality.¹⁹ Anti-American feeling was not as strong in rebel or Constitutionalist Chihuahua as it was farther south where the Lind Mission had aroused the antagonism of Huerta and his followers in Mexico City. In the north Venustiano Carranza, the leader of the Constitutionals, had promised payment on all claims for damages caused by the Madero and Constitutionalist revolutions and had ordered that looting and seizure of foreign property should therefore cease.²⁰ In July, 1913, the American consul in Ciudad Juárez reported:

Americans in Chihuahua are less than one-third original number, and there are very few families. American enterprise is correspondingly reduced, and the interest in Mexican affairs is greatly diminished during the past few months.²¹

Because of Huerta's intransigence, President Wilson in a speech to Congress in August urged all Americans who were able to do so to leave Mexico, for only the Mexican authorities would be responsible for the safety of Americans unable to leave the country; he also recommended that an embargo be placed on arms to all factions in Mexico.²² Despite this warning, the approximately three hundred Mormon colonists who had returned to Chihuahua decided not to abandon their homes.

The year 1914 brought no improvement in the relations between President Huerta and the United States government. On February third President Wilson lifted the embargo on arms to Mexico in order to aid the Constitution-

17. Romney, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

18. *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, Vol. I, p. 1483.

19. Statement by Mr. J. H. Martineau, personal interview, April, 1950.

20. *Foreign Relations*, 1913, p. 955.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 816.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 823.

alists in the north;²³ and in March Carranza was reported to have rebuked strongly the Mexican residents of Colonia Morelos in Sonora, who had petitioned him to apportion among them the farms, houses and other property of the Mormons who had fled from the country because of raids the previous year.²⁴ The Tampico incident and the occupation of Vera Cruz by United States troops in April, however, brought a change in Carranza's attitude toward the "colossus of the north" and resulted in a strong anti-American sentiment throughout Mexico.²⁵ Again the Mormon colonists left their homes in Dublán and Juárez, the only colonies which had been resettled, and sought safety in the United States. This time the colonists were away for only a short time. "It was more like a visit," as one resident of Colonia Juárez described the withdrawal.²⁶

Huerta's resignation in July, 1914, did not bring peace to Mexico, for Villa and Zapata refused to recognize Carranza as the leader of the Constitutionalist forces, yet were not strong enough to overcome his forces. Although Chihuahua was controlled by Villa, conditions were unsettled in the Casas Grandes district where it was reported in October that the federal General Herrera was attacking the Villa garrison;²⁷ and in December, Salazar, the former federal commander of the Casas Grandes garrison, who had recently escaped from prison in the United States, was said to be near Ascención recruiting an army for the purpose of restoring land to the people.²⁸

The defeat of Villa at Celaya in April, 1915, forced him to retreat into Durango and Chihuahua where he rested his men and prepared to gather and equip new recruits for his campaign into Sonora. It was at this time that demands on the colonists for horses for Villa's army led the Mormons

23. *Ibid.*, 1914, pp. 447-48.

24. *New York Times*, March 22, 1914.

25. S. F. Bemis, *The Latin American Policy of the United States*, p. 178 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1943).

26. Statement by Mrs. Enos Wood, of Colonia Juárez, personal interview, June, 1950 (at Tucson, Arizona).

27. *New York Times*, October 17, 1914.

28. *Ibid.*, December 7, 1914.

to drive most of their horses, which had not already been taken, to Blue Mesa in the Sierra Madres where for the next two years men from the colonies were detailed to guard them.²⁹ For three weeks before starting into Sonora, Villa and his army of about six thousand men were encamped in the neighborhood of Dublán. Although the Mormons were completely at the mercy of Villa's troops, there was comparatively little damage to property, and only occasional thefts and threats of violence were committed by individual soldiers, for Villa was still hoping for recognition from the United States. Demands were made upon the Mormons for horses and for equipment which could not be obtained from the Mexicans themselves or taken from the neighboring ranches.³⁰

When Villa left Casas Grandes on October 14, 1915, to cross into Sonora, three Mormons, James Whipple, Lynn Hatch and Charles Turley, accompanied his army to look after their horses and wagons which had been requisitioned by Villa. Four days later the United States officially recognized Carranza as the Chief Executive of the *de facto* government and placed an embargo on arms and ammunition to all factions in Mexico except the *de facto* government.³¹ On October 31, 1915, when his army was drawn up ready for the attack on Agua Prieta, Villa learned that the United States had recognized the Carranza faction, yet his resentment against Americans did not include the three Mormons who were with his troops. During the battle at Agua Prieta the Mormons with their teams hauled ammunition to Villa's men, but fled over the border to safety in Arizona after the rout of Villa's army.³²

Meanwhile the warnings of the United States Department of State that all Americans should leave Mexico were

29. Statement by Mr. S. Farnsworth, personal interview, April, 1950 (at Colonia Juárez).

30. Raymond J. Reed, *The Mormons in Chihuahua: Their Relations with Villa and the Pershing Punitive Expedition, 1910-1917*, p. 13 (Master of Arts thesis, Department of History, University of New Mexico).

31. Bemis, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

32. R. J. Reed, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

unheeded by the Mormons who had learned to live among Mexican revolutionists and decided to remain in their homes regardless of the anti-American sentiment prevalent in the country.³³ Resentment, however, was strong among the remnants of Villa's army who after Agua Prieta straggled back across the Sierra Madres to join the garrison which had remained at Casas Grandes, for they felt that American aid to the *de facto* forces had caused their defeat. There was looting in the colonies despite the fact that from their depleted stores the Mormons provided blankets for the wounded and half-frozen men and helped to feed and care for them.³⁴

Villa was not with them at this time, he having gone into Guerrero, and a number of his officers whom he had left in command declared their intention of going over to the cause of Carranza. Confusion reigned and the soldiers assumed a threatening attitude toward the helpless colonists. Toward midnight the army broke up into small squads and passing from house to house threatened, robbed, looted and burned. Truly it was a night of terror for the defenseless people, but when morning came the rabble had disappeared. Many of the Saints had narrowly escaped with their lives, shots had been fired into houses where people were, and fires started in several of the homes. The house of Bishop Samuel J. Robinson had been looted and burned and his life was sought by the looters. . . . The home of P. S. Williams was broken into and robbed and a band of marauders visited the ranch of James Skousen situated a short distance from the old town of Casas Grandes. Mr. Skousen being away from home the women folks fled to a neighbor's leaving the bandits to plunder the homesteads.³⁵

The year 1916 was a critical one for Mexico and for the Mormon colonists at Dublán and Juárez. Disorganized bands of Villa's former army were plundering the Chihuahua countryside. In January occurred the Santa Ysabel massacre which aroused concern for the safety of other Americans in Chihuahua, particularly those in the Casas Grandes dis-

33. *Foreign Relations*, 1915, p. 775.

34. Statement by Mr. J. H. Martineau, personal interview, April, 1950.

35. Romney, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

trict.³⁶ All Americans were warned to seek safety in the United States, but the five hundred Mormons of Dublán and Juárez refused to leave their homes in Mexico and decided to trust to the protection of the Carranza garrisons in Casas Grandes and Pearson.³⁷ On January 17, 1916, the American consul at Ciudad Juárez made the following report on conditions in northwest Chihuahua:

First passenger train in ten days arrived from Casas Grandes, Pearson and the Mormon Colony district at 10:00 last night bringing about 25 Americans among whom were dozen women and children. They report have been fully informed in due time of the massacre at Santa Ysabel. A number who arrived came on business and expect to return. They report conditions to them unalarming as they consider the garrisons at towns mentioned sufficient to protect their people. This consul will, however, insist on their sending their women and children to place of safety. The garrison at Casas Grandes number 400 and Pearson 300. These figures are given by Americans of Madera. Little is known that is reliable but nothing of an unalarming nature reported.³⁸

The first week in March news that Villa was in the mountains west of Casas Grandes, that he had murdered an American rancher named Wright and had taken his wife prisoner, caused alarm among the Mormon colonists.³⁹ Their anxiety was increased when word reached them of Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico, and of his retreat south toward the Mormon colonies. While preparations were being made by the church authorities in El Paso to send a rescue train to Dublán and requests were being sent to the Mexican government for a military escort,⁴⁰ reports appeared in American newspapers to the effect that the Carranza garrisons were inadequate to protect the Mormons, and that Villa had agreed to drive the Mormons and other Americans from the country, to confiscate their property and to distribute it

36. *Foreign Relations*, 1916, p. 655.

37. *New York Times*, Jan. 16, 1916.

38. *Foreign Relations*, 1916, pp. 660-61.

39. *Ibid.*, 1916, p. 478.

40. *Ibid.*, 1916, p. 684.

among the Mexicans.⁴¹ On the second day following the Columbus attack, Villa's men shot the Mexican caretakers of an American owned ranch at Corralitos about twenty miles north of Dublán. Here they were encamped along the railroad by which the Mormon women and children were to have been sent to El Paso. From his camp at Corralitos Villa sent a messenger to Casas Grandes to urge the Carranza garrison to join his forces, and the following day moved his army south to within a few miles of Dublán. Bishop Anson B. Call summoned a meeting of the Mormon leaders to determine the course they should follow. Some felt they should not leave as Villa had not harmed them before, some advised going to Colonia Juárez or into the mountains, others thought they should seek the protection of the garrison at Casas Grandes, but the advice of those who advocated going home to pray and to bed prevailed. That night Villa broke camp and passed to the east of Dublán.⁴²

Various versions were given for Villa's turning aside and sparing the Mormon colonies. One was that he thought the Casas Grandes garrison had been strengthened;⁴³ another, that he remembered past kindnesses of the colonists and therefore did not attack them, was borne out by the account that he instructed one of his men to ride south from Palomas to learn from the "gringo" ranchers at Casa Grandes what they knew, and then to meet him in five or six days at Namiquipa.⁴⁴ The colonists themselves attributed their deliverance to their earnest prayers.⁴⁵ Still another version is given in a letter written by Theodore Martineau, a resident of the colonies, in which he stated:

It was Villa's intention to slaughter the people of Dublán as he had slaughtered people at Columbus a few days before. While camped east of Dublán he called his officers together to decide upon the best method of attack. Some of the officers

41. *New York Times*, March 11, 1916.

42. Reed, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-23.

43. Romney, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

44. R. F. Muñoz, *Vámonos con Pancho Villa*, pp. 198-99 (Madrid: Talleres Espasa-Calpe, 1931).

45. Statement by Mr. E. Abegg, personal interview, January, 1950.

wanted a repetition of the Columbus affair while others remembering the kind treatment of the colonists when they had some time before come into the colony hungry, wanted to pass them by. Villa was determined to make the attack, thereby hoping to bring on intervention. "He went for a walk at night," said Martineau, "and returned with a changed heart." His secretary later informed one of the colonists why he changed his mind. "He told me," said the secretary, "that while he had been away alone trying to decide as to the destruction of the colonies, some unseen power had impressed him with the conviction that any such act upon his part would bring upon himself the vengeance of a just God."⁴⁶

On March 18, 1916, after his arrival at Dublán, General John J. Pershing wired his commander, General Frederick Funston, at Fort Sam Houston that the natives in Casas Grandes seemed friendly and that the Mormons considered the American troops as rescuers.⁴⁷

46. Romney, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

47. *Foreign Relations*, 1916, p. 498.

(To be continued)