THE MORMON COLONIES IN CHIHUAHUA
AFTER THE 1912 EXODUS

by

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THE MORON COLONIES IN CHIHUAHUA
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CHAPTER I

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.

The early Mormon colonies in Utah, largely agricultural, were distinguished by the efficient organization of the church and by a spirit of cooperation 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 distributed 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.\footnote{H. Gardner, "Cooperation Among the Mormons", \textit{The Quarterly Journal of Economics}, Vol. XXXI, (May, 1917), pp. 461-99.}

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.\footnote{T.C. Romney, \textit{The Mormon Colonies in Mexico}, pp. 38-48.} 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.\footnote{Ibid. pp. 51-52.}

In 1884 the Yaqui River country was visited by a party of Mormons seeking land for settlement.\footnote{Ibid. pp. 54-55.} 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 Ascension
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 Porfirio Díaz and from General Carlos Pacheco, the governor of Chihuahua, approval of Mormon colonization except in the Zona Prohibida (Prohibited Zone).

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 non-profit 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.

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 Chihuahualay to the south and west of Colonia Juárez, in a region of the Sierra Madres which at one

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6 Ibid. pp. 55-59.

7 Ibid. pp. 62-63.
time had been a famous Apache retreat. 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. 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. The valley communities were predominantly agricultural while in the mountain 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,

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.

graduated students, many of whom continued their studies in universities in the United States.

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. 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.

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

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11 Romney, op. cit., pp. 141-142.
12 Ibid., p. 148.
13 Ibid., pp. 71-72.
14 Ibid., p. 147.
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.

Although it was at the old town of Casas Grandes, between Durango 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. 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 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. On the following

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.
17 Statement by Mr. Eli Abegg, personal interview, January, 1950.
days, July 28 and 29, 1912, the women and children from Dublan, Juarez 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. 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.

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.

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 compelled to leave

Mexico by Salazar and the Red Flaggers 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.

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. 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.

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.


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

RESSETLEMENT 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:

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 Juarez 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 Augustin Sanjinez had occupied Casas Grandes, 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

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1 Foreign Relations, 1912, p. 824.
2 Ibid, p. 825
mountain canyons. 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. 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 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.

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. 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.

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4 The Deming Graphic, Vol. X No. 27, August 9, 1912.
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 Ascención, 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

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

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9 Ibid., p. 208-9.
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.

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. 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.

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. From the northern part of the Casas Grandes Valley, in which Colonia Rubén is situated, Pulpito

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10 Statement by Mr. Joel H. Martineau, personal interview, April, 1950.
12 The Mexican Yearbook, 1914, p. 50
13 E. Pinchon, Viva Villa, p. 226
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 Doblán, 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.

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 Grandes 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 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.

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14 Foreign Relations, 1916, p. 512
15 N. Campobello, Anuntes sobre Francisco Villa, p. 43
16 Statement by Mr. Eli Abegg, personal interview, June, 1950.
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, and Colonia Díaz had been destroyed by fire. In Chuichupa federal troops rounded up horses and cattle which were to be distributed to widows and orphans. 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. 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 Constitutionalists, 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. 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.

Because of Huerta's intransigence, President Wilson in a speech to Congress

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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*
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. 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 Constitutionalists in the north; 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. 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. Again the Mormon colonists left their homes in Durlán 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

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22 Ibid, p. 823
23 Ibid, 1914, pp. 447-48
24 New York Times, March 22, 1914
25 S. F. Bemis, Latin American Policy of the United States, p. 178
more like a visit," as one resident of Colonia Juárez described the with-

drawal.

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; 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.

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 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. For three weeks before starting into Sonora, Villa and his army of about six thousand men were encamped in the neighbor-

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27 New York Times, October 17, 1941
28 Ibid, December 7, 1914
29 Statement by Mr. S. Farnsworth, personal interview, April, 1950.
hood of Dublan. 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.

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. 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.

Meanwhile the warnings of the United States Department of State that

31 Bemis, op. cit., p. 178
32 R. J. Reed, op. cit. p. 14-15
all Americans should leave Mexico were 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. 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.

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.

The year 1916 was a critical one for Mexico and for the Mormon colonists

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33 Foreign Relations, 1915, p. 775
34 Statement by Mr. J. H. Martineau, personal interview, April, 1950.
35 Romney, op. cit., p. 242
at Dublán and Juárez. Disorganized bands of Villa's former army were plundering the Chihuahua countryside. In January occurred the Santa Isabel massacre which aroused concern for the safety of other Americans in Chihuahua, particularly those in the Casas Grandes district. 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. 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 Isabel. 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.

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. 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

36 Foreign Relations, 1916, p. 655
38 Foreign Relations, 1916, p. 660-61
send a rescue train to Dublán and requests were being sent to the Mexican government for a military escort, 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 among the Mexicans. 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.

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; another, that he remembered past kindnesses of the

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40 Ibid., 1916, p. 684
41 New York Times, March 11, 1916
42 Reed, op. cit., p. 20-23
43 Romney, op. cit., p. 239
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 Casas Grandes what they knew, and then to meet him in five or six days at Namiquipa. The colonists themselves attributed their deliverance to their earnest prayers. 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 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."

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.

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25. Statement by Mr. E. Abegg, personal interview, January, 1950
26. Romney, op. cit., p. 240
27. Foreign Relations, 1916, p. 498
CHAPTER III

THE COLONIES AND THE PUNITIVE EXPEDITION

From 1912 until the arrival of the United States troops in Colonia Dublán in March, 1916, the Mormon colonists had been subjected to the demands and requisitions of revolutionary bands and Red Flaggers who frequented the region, for the settlements of the thrifty Mormons were a convenient source of supply. There was no established government in the region to which the colonists could appeal for justice or protection. The country was controlled by changing revolutionary leaders to whom taxes were paid and upon whom the Mormons had to rely for a doubtful protection. Thus the presence of the United States troops promised a peace and security unknown in the colonies since the days of Díaz.

On March 15, 1916, when Pershing and his troops crossed the border into Mexico south of Columbus, New Mexico, in pursuit of Villa, several Mormons who had lived in the Mexican colonies were acting as guides. At Pershing's request Mr. P. H. Hurst, the Mormon Bishop in El Paso had recommended as scouts seven Mormons who knew northern Mexico and were familiar with the Mexican people and the Spanish language. Two of these men, Lemuel Spillsbury and Dave Brown, were later cited for their ability and bravery in their service with the American Punitive Expedition.

On his arrival at Dublán on March 18, Pershing was greeted by Bishop Call, who presented him with eggs, cheese and ham from the Mormon farms to supplement the army rations; and together they called on the commander of

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the Carranza garrison at Neuvo Casas Grandes. Joseph C. Bentley, president of the Mormon colonies, expressed to Pershing the gratitude of the Mormon colonists as well as that of Joseph F. Smith, president of the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City. However, when Pershing asked for more Mormon scouts to guide his columns, Bishop Call at first hesitated, fearing that the Mexicans might resent such action, but the pressing need of scouts who knew the country and who spoke Spanish overcame his objections.

The camp of the United States Punitive Expedition, situated on both sides of the Casas Grandes River just north of Colonia Dublán, became the permanent base for the ten thousand troops sent into Mexico to capture Villa. The tents of the soldiers, which were easily blown down by the wind storms of the region, were soon replaced by brush houses or by cooler and more substantial huts made of adobe brick which the Mormons made and sold to the troops. Food and merchandise were sold to the soldiers and Mormons secured licenses to set up stores within the camp. There was a period of prosperity in the colonies, for the Mormons were well paid for their produce. Although liquor was sold to the soldiers, there were no Mormons connected with the traffic. In fact the Mormons were shocked at the behavior of the American troops over whose morals little control was exercised in the first weeks. Conditions improved, however, when a section was set aside for camp followers and medical inspections were required. Bishop Call expressed the anxiety of the Mormons over the behavior of the American troops when he said:

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4 Reed, *op. cit.* pp. 31-33.
We who expect to remain in Mexico after the troops are out are watching this movement and its results. If the American troops leave a good impression on the minds of the Mexicans, we can remain with safety after the soldiers go. We are watching for what we hope they will not do with almost as much interest as things they are accomplishing.

We hope for example that they will not laugh at the Mexicans whom they may see. If they laugh at the Mexicans, especially the Mexican soldiers, we Americans who remain in Mexico will sooner or later in some manner pay for this injury to national pride.

Some of the Mexican soldiers are small boys. I know of one from here who was only 11 years old. Sometimes these boys do not cut a very good military figure on account of their youth and bare feet. But they do not like to be laughed at by American soldiers, and their commanders object to having fun poked at their men. If the American troops going through Mexico treat the Mexicans with consideration in the small things the first big step will have been made toward establishing cordial relations between the Mexicans and Americans. Without this care for little things our expedition runs the risk of not accomplishing much.

The army officers are trying to get the soldiers to show the Mexicans the consideration which will go so far toward establishing friendly relations in this country. The Americans must also pay their way as they go, which they are doing. An army which pays as it goes will make a deep impression for good on this country. The Mexicans have been accustomed to receiving payment in depreciated money, sometimes no payment at all. When they are paid in American dollars and when they discover the value of such money, they are bound to wish for American money to come back into their country after the army leaves, and that will furnish the American commercial opportunity.

Business men can come into this country after the troops are out if they have left a good impression, as they are trying to do, and will be welcome. The Mexicans will try to seek that market which pays them in the same dollar they received from the American army.

The Mormons of Dublán and Juárez, besides selling their limited produce, found employment with the United States Army, for there was much construction work to be done in establishing the camp while the soldiers were occupied with their training. In addition to the Mormons who were

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living in the colonies, many who had left in 1912 and were living near the border in New Mexico, Arizona and Texas returned to the colonies to work for the army. Others who returned to the colonies at this time were engaged in repair work on the houses and buildings in the Mormon settlements, for rumors that the United States might take over northern Mexico brought renewed interest in the future of the Mormon colonies. As the Carranza government refused to allow the United States army to use the Mexican Northwestern Railroad to ship supplies, all food and equipment for the expeditionary forces had to be trucked into Dublán from Columbus, New Mexico, over more than one hundred miles of rough, sandy road which required constant repair to keep it in condition. In places the road was six feet below the level of the surrounding country, where it had been cut deeper as chuck holes developed, but north of Dublán several miles of the road was improved with a caliche surfacing. Over the washes were constructed wooden bridges which the Mexicans tore out for firewood after the United States troops left. Although the United States army was not officially allowed to use the Mexican Northwestern Railroad, Carranza suggested that supplies be shipped to civilian consignees for the army. Acting as consignees for the United States troops was a

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7 Foreign Relations, 1916, p. 512. Some use of the railroad was made when the United States troops first moved from Colonia Dublán, E.L. Glass, History of the 10th Cavalry, p. 70.
8 Statement by Mr. Eli Abegg, personal interview, June, 1950.
profitable business for the Mormon merchants who took advantage of the opportunity. Warehouses were erected to store supplies for the army, corrals were constructed for the horses of the cavalry, and even a bull ring was built for the recreation of the American soldiers, who, however, were not enthusiastic about the sport. In all these construction, trucking and road building activities the Mormon men were employed while their families attended to the farming.

As the United States troops penetrated farther south in pursuit of Villa, the hostility of the Mexicans of both the Villa and the Carranza factions became more pronounced. There were clashes between the United States troops and the Mexicans, in which casualties on both sides were reported, while the Carranza government requested the withdrawal of American troops. In April United States troops were fired upon at Parral, and a few days later the column led by Major Howze, for whom Dave Brown, a Mormon, acted as scout and interpreter, was warned not to enter the town as anti-American feeling was strong. In June a Negro soldier of the United States forces at Dublán was captured and held prisoner for several hours by the Carranza garrison at Casas Grandes until Pershing

10 Statement by Mr. Eli Abegg, personal interview, June, 1950.
11 Reed, op. cit. pp. 31-32.
13 Ibid, p. 513-14
threatened to attack the town if the prisoner were not released. While Carranza representatives at the conference at New London, Connecticut, were demanding the withdrawal of United States troops from Mexico, the unfriendly attitude of the Casas Grandes garrison of Carranza troops alarmed the Mormon colonists.

Anti-American sentiment was increased by the battle at Carrizal in which the Mormon scout, Lemuel Spillsbury, played a leading part. Although Pershing had been warned by the Mexicans to move his troops only to the north, a column of colored troops was sent east toward Villa Ahumada under the command of Lieutenant Charles T. Boyd with the Mormon, Lemuel Spillsbury, as guide and interpreter. At Carrizal on June 21, the Carranza officer in charge of the garrison informed Boyd that he had orders not to allow American troops to go through the town. Boyd insisted on marching through the town although Spillsbury advised him that the Mexicans would fight and that it would be just as easy to go around the town. When the Americans were drawn up in battle formation, the Mexican troops opened fire. Two of the three American officers, including Boyd and his second in command and seven enlisted men were killed; the third officer with the expedition was seriously wounded. Spillsbury, who then took command, continued toward the town until his men were outflanked, when he ordered a retreat to the horses; but, as the horses had been stampeded and the troopers guarding

15 Reed, op. cit. p. 36.
them had fled, Spillsbury surrendered with his remaining forces. He was able to convince the Mexican commander that he and his men should not be shot, but taken as prisoners. On June 29, 1916, they were released from prison in Chihuahua City where they had been held and sent out to El Paso. From Mexico City came the report of a statement in which Spillsbury criticized the American position, for he was reported to have said that the trouble at Carrizal was due to Boyd's failure to retire as he had been requested to do. Spillsbury was also quoted as having said that he had accepted employment with Pershing to help catch Villa, but when he saw that the Americans were likely to cause trouble with the Mexicans, among whom he had many friends, he tried to leave, but Pershing refused to release him.

During the months that the American soldiers remained at Dublán, relations were cordial between the troops and the Mormon colonists. On Christmas Day, 1916, despite a blinding wind and sand storm, several Mormons from Dublán attended the holiday festivities at the American Headquarters. When the American troops left Dublán the last of January, 1917, Pershing remained until the last refugees had departed, for Villa was reported to be in the neighborhood ready to advance on Casas Grandes and Dublán, and it was thought that the troops sent by General Obregon

18 Reed, op. cit. pp. 33-34.
to augment the garrison at Casas Grandes would not be able to hold out against attacks from Villa. Fear that the Mexican Northwestern Railroad might be set upon between Dublán and Ciudad Juárez by Villista bands prevented many Mormon refugees from fleeing by train; instead they joined the column following the United States Army north to Columbus, New Mexico. Besides the Mormon settlers and other Americans, Mexicans and Chinese, on foot, on horseback or muleback, in cars, in trucks, and in covered wagons formed the line of refugees accompanying the army. By February 5, 1917, the last troops of the Punitive Expedition had left Mexico, but regardless of rumors of the proximity of bands of Villistas, a few of the Mormons who had lived in the colonies during the preceding revolutionary period decided to remain; eight stayed in Colonia Juárez and three in Colonia Dublán.

Family difficulties and separations complicated by earlier Mormon plural marriages occurred at this time; some branches of families remained in Mexico while others migrated to the United States, for though polygamy as an institution had been abolished by the Mormons in Mexico in 1904, the family relationships which resulted had of necessity continued.

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20 The Tucson Citizen, Jan. 31, 1917.
22 Statement by Mr. C. Bowman, letter August, 1950.
24 Reed, op. cit. p. 37.
CHAPTER IV

THE COLONIES AFTER 1917

For almost a year the Mormon colonists had enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity under the protection of the United States troops stationed at Colonia Dublán, but the failure of the Punitive Expedition to capture Villa, in part due to the hostile attitude of the Carranza government, and the prospect of United States participation in the European war led to the recall of the Expedition from Mexico. Again the Mormon colonists were to rely on their own ability to remain at peace with the bands of Villistas who were active in the region.

After the United States troops had withdrawn from Colonia Dublán and northern Mexico, Villista bands were reported to have occupied both Colonia Juárez and Colonia Dublán, but no damage was done in the colonies. A week later near Hachita, New Mexico, three Mormon cowboys, who had left the Mexican colonies in 1912 and were working near the border, were taken from their ranch into Mexico where they were shot by the Mexican raiders.

On February 24, federal troops under General José Carlos Murguiawere sent to reinforce the Casas Grandes garrison when Villistas raided and looted the town of Pearson a few miles south of Colonia Juárez. However, by September of 1917, the Mormons in Dublán felt that rebel and bandit activities had subsided enough to permit the men to go to García, one of the

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1 The Arizona Daily Star, Feb. 9, 1917 and statement of Mr. C. Bowman, letter, August, 1950.
3 Tucson Citizen, Feb. 24, 1917.
mountain colonies, to put in the fall crops. But in 1918, Villa was again on the move and making requisitions on the colonists.

"Most people feel the pincers of the tax collector once a year but the Mormon colonists in Chihuahua, Mexico, not only pay the federal government the regular tax, but hand over any available surplus to Villa and his band of expert and lawless collectors now and then. When Villa needs more money he swoops down on the defenseless colonists and takes it. If the money is not forthcoming hekidnaps some wealthy and influential citizen and holds him for ransom. If the amount is not secured in time, he kills the citizen by way of warning for the future."

Though no Mormons were killed by Villa bands, in October 1918, two Mormon colonists were taken prisoners near Villa Ahumada and held one week for ransom. In 1919 the United States Department of State requested the Mexican government to rescue two Mormons who had been captured by Villistas.

As dissatisfaction with Carranza's policies throughout Mexico increased, rebels and Villistas became more active in Chihuahua. In June of 1919 the federal commander at Casas Grandes advised the withdrawal of the six hundred and thirty Mormons in the district until federal troops could be sent to protect them, but the Mormons did not consider the danger great enough to force them to leave their homes. At the request of the United States Department of State additional federal troops were sent to Casas Grandes to insure the protection of the Mormon colonists. However,

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4 T. C. Romney, Mormon Colonies in Mexico, p. 246.
with the election of Obregón to the presidency in 1920 and Villa's retirement from banditry to become an hacendado, peace and prosperity returned to Chihuahua and the Mormon colonies, although Colonia Díaz had been permanently abandoned. In 1921, the five colonies of Chuichupa, García, Pacheco, Juárez, and Dublán with a total population of eight hundred and sixteen Mormons were again prospering, crops were good and the colonists were hopeful for the future. In 1924 the first cheese factory was established in Colonia Dublán, and the apple crop was becoming increasingly important.

In 1929 the Escobar revolution, allied with the Cristero movement, had little effect on the Mormon colonies, although General José Escobar's army, defeated at Jiménez, retreated northward through Casas Grandes and Pulpito Pass to Sonora, pursued by General Jesús M. Almazán and his federal troops. Near the Dublán a minor engagement took place at Mal País, but no damage was done in the colonies. However, an award of twenty thousand dollars was made to Jesse J. Simpson, a ranch owner near Casas Grandes and Dublán, by the American Claims Commission for horses and livestock destroyed or carried away by federal forces.

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10. The Escobar revolution was an unsuccessful attempt by discontented generals to contest the election of Pascual Ortiz Rubio as president. Cristero support was gained by promising repeal of Calles' religious laws. Nathaniel and Sylvia Weyl, The Reconquest of Mexico, pp. 87-94.
The depression of the early 1930's did not adversely affect the
Mormon colonists, who were largely self-sufficient, for, as one colonist
remarked, times had always been hard in the Mormon colonies. In 1938
the colonies were enjoying a period of prosperity as Romney indicates.

At the present time the colonies are at peace and the people
abiding there are enjoying a period of prosperity perhaps not excelled
since the evacuation in 1912. Five of the original colonies in
Chihuahua have been re-occupied... The total population of all the
settlements amounts to slightly over twelve hundred. The principal
sources for a livelihood are to be found in the soil and the live-
stock, though some manufacturing is carried on, such as lumber and
shingles, canning and leather goods and cheese. Several splendid
mercantile establishments are owned and operated by efficient
business men of the several colonies.

With the coming of World War II, the younger Mormons who were American
citizens returned to the United States to register for the draft. Seventy
young men served in the United States forces, while others with families
worked in essential industries. After the war some families returned to
the colonies, but more remained in the United States, largely due to economic
conditions, with the result that the number of colonists declined from the
one thousand reported in 1945 to an estimated six hundred and fifty in
1950. The population of the colonies fluctuates as colonists come to the
United States to work for a year or two on highway or construction projects,
and return to the colonies when the project is finished. Others who have
land planted in orchards which are not yet bearing, find employment in the

14 Statement by Mr. M.I. Turley, personal interview, April, 1950.
15 Romney, op. cit. p. 257.
16 Henry A. Smith, "Visiting About with the Church Editor", The Church
17 T.C. Romney, "Latter-day Saint Colonization in Mexico", The
United States until such time as their land will support them. In practically every family more of the second generation are living in the United States than in the colonies, so that there is a preponderance of older people who own most of the property and control the affairs of the colonies. The Mormon colonies today resemble small American communities of retired farmers, in which a few of the younger generation have remained to carry on the farm work or the small trade of the community.

Since 1920, the history of the Mormon colonies in Mexico has been largely one of adaptation to the changes in Mexico resulting from the provisions of the Querétaro Constitution of 1917 and from the laws passed to implement it. Changes have been necessary in both the church and the school organization of the Mormon colonies.

The campaign against Church interference in the political affairs of Mexico waged by the Calles regime was obviously a blow aimed at the dominance of the Catholic Church in Mexico. Legislative enactment, however, as applied to clergymen, Church schools, etc., must react upon all churches alike ...

The law of August 21, 1926, requiring all religious teachers to be native born, was meticulously complied with by the Latter-day Saints in Mexico, as set forth in a report of President Joseph C. Bentley to the Presiding Bishopric of the Church. To meet the requirements of the law it became necessary to supplant the older existing bishops in the various colonies with young men born in Mexico, in the conduct of all religious meetings ...

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Statement by Mr. J. Farnsworth, personal interview, August, 1950.
The schools of the Latter-day Saints in the State of Chihuahua were closed for one day under the order of government officials, but following an explanation submitted by President Anthony W. Ivins, President Calles ordered their re-opening. The explanation made by President Ivins was in effect that anyone may send his children to the Latter-day Saint's schools in Mexico by paying a tuition fee. The Mormon schools are not religious schools in the meaning of the Mexican constitution and therefore do not come under the category of the schools which the Mexican officials are attempting to close. From that time to the present there has been perfect accord between the Mormons in Mexico and the officials of that Government with respect to these religious matters.

Economically the colonists have also had to adapt themselves to the changed conditions brought about by the Constitution of 1917, to the agrarian laws regulating ownership of land, to government regulation of irrigation systems and of industry, and to new conservation policies. However, as the Mormons are known for the development, not the exploitation of land and natural resources, and as co-operative undertakings are a part of their way of life, compliance with the principles of the Mexican Constitution has not proved difficult.

Romney, op. cit. p. 256.
CHAPTER VII

CLAIMS AND PROPERTY

The settlement of claims for damages sustained by the Mormons colonists in Mexico during the Revolutionary period was prolonged until 1938 by negotiations between the United States government and the Mexican government. To the Special Claims Commission, created by the Special Claims Convention between the United States Government and the Mexican Government in September, 1923, were referred the Mormon claims which were classified as those which arose during the revolution and the disturbed conditions which existed in Mexico covering the period from November 20, 1910, to May 31, 1920, inclusive, and were due to any act by the following forces:

1. By forces of a Government de jure or de facto.
2. By revolutionary forces as a result of the triumph of whose cause governments de facto or de jure have been established, or by revolutionary forces opposed to them.
3. By forces arising from the disjunction of the forces mentioned in the next preceding paragraph up to the time when the government de jure established itself as a result of a particular revolution.
4. By federal forces that were disbanded, and
5. By mutinies or mobs, or insurrectionary forces other than those referred to under subdivisions (2), (3) and (4) above, or by bandits, provided in any case it be established that the appropriate authorities omitted to take reasonable measures to suppress insurrectionists, mobs, or bandits, or treated them with leniency or were in fault in other particulars.

Within two years from the date of its first meeting, all claims were to be filed with the Commission composed of three members, one American, one Mexican and one neutral. The commission was allowed five years in which
to decide all claims. However, in the period between 1923 and 1931 only eighteen cases were decided, none of which was allowed. Nothing further was accomplished until 1934 when, largely due to the efforts of J. Reuben Clark, Jr., a prominent Mormon and United States Ambassador to Mexico from 1930 to 1933, a convention was signed between the United States and Mexico providing for the en bloc settlement of the claims which had been presented by the Government of the United States to the Special Claims Commission. According to the Convention signed in 1934, the United States government was to be paid proportionally the same amount as the total sum for similar claims agreed upon during the years 1924-1930 between Mexico and the governments of Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Spain. The sum agreed upon, $5,448,020.14, representing 2.6 per cent of the total amount claimed by the United States, was to be paid in dollars of the United States at the rate of $500,000.00 per year beginning on January 1, 1935. An Act of Congress on April 10, 1935, established the Special Mexican Claims Commission of three members which in a period of three years was to review and decide upon all the Special Claims filed against the Mexican Government and to distribute among the claimants the funds agreed upon in the Convention of 1934. In August of 1937 a Joint

Resolution of Congress extended the life of the Commission for one year and amended the Act of 1935 to make available to the claimants the full sum of $5,448,020.14, regardless of additional claims which might later be classified as Special Claims.

In accordance with the regulation established by the Special Mexican Claims Commission the Mormon claims were reviewed as a group as stated in the report of the Commission, dated May 31, 1938.

In connection with the above-mentioned rapid survey of claims it was found that one large group of 390 claims presented questions which were considered to be particularly appropriate for independent investigation. The claims in this group originated in 10 neighboring colonies in the States of Chihuahua and Sonora. It was clear from the historical data in the possession of the Commission, as well as from the evidence submitted by the claimants, that members of these colonies had suffered considerable loss and damage through depredations of armed forces. The records were not clear, however, as to the title to lands in the colonies, the respective rights of individuals in community pastures and other common lands, and the value of real and personal property. The sources of information on these matters being concentrated in Salt Lake City and the vicinity, the expenditure of time and money incident to an independent investigation was relatively small. The Commission, therefore, authorized one of its members to conduct such an investigation, and it was made with the assistance of one of the attorneys of the Commission. It was confined to general matters such as those suggested, and no effort was made either to establish or to improve the merits of any of the individual claims. Similar investigations were made later in Mexico, by two members of the Commission, assisted by three members of the staff, in connection with several groups of claims as to which there were questions of fact not susceptible of satisfactory determination on the basis of the existing records. Numerous files were made available to the Commission by the Mexican Foreign Office. A special research assistant was, moreover, appointed for a period of two months to examine and report on certain pertinent files in the possession of former Senator Fall of New Mexico. The total cost of the independent investigations of the Commission, including the compensation of the special research assistant, was $3,628.50. The Commission believes that these investigations contributed materially to the just and equitable determination of the claims affected by them.

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6 Ibid, pp. 685-87.
7 Ibid, pp. 8-9.
Of the 382 Mormon claims reviewed by the Special Claims Commission, 309 were allowed while 73 were disallowed because of "failure to prove citizenship, ownership of personal property, the right to the use and enjoyment of realty, or actual loss". Of the total amount of $4,657,567.99 claimed, $620,143.03 was awarded to the individual claimants. As explained in their report, the bases on which the Commission made the awards were the loss of the use of property and the forced absence of the colonists for one-half of the 1912-1920 period.

In arriving at a proper measure of damages, the Commission has given due weight to the consideration that, after having been obliged to leave their homes because of the acts of forces, colonists should have mitigated the damages flowing from their actual or constructive eviction by returning to their homes and continuing their normal pursuits as soon as conditions would allow. Accordingly, the conditions existing in the vicinity from 1912 to 1920 have been examined with a view to determining for what period those conditions were such as to make it unreasonable to expect claimants to return to their homes. The conclusion reached by the Commission is that the absence of the claimants from the colonies for approximately one-half of the period of eight years between the date of the abandonment and May 31, 1920, can be properly attributed to acts of forces creating Mexican liability under the Convention.

The claims insofar as they relate to real estate, are essentially claims for the loss of use of property as distinguished from the loss of property. In each case involving claim for the loss of use of realty the Commission has evaluated such property upon the basis of written evidence in the various files, and upon the basis of testimony received as a result of the Commission's own investigation. Awards have been made on the basis of the loss of the use of such property for a period of four years.

Two other claims agreements which related to the Mormon colonies were the agreement of 1933 covering agrarian claims filed before July 1, 1939, and the Claims Convention of 1941 by which Mexico agreed to pay to the United States Government forty million dollars in full settlement of

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8 Ibid., pp. 37-42.
all claims of American citizens up to October 7, 1940. By an Act of Congress in 1942, the American Mexican Claims Commission composed of three members was established to review the claims covered by the 1941 Convention. Among these claims were several relating to Mormon colonists in Mexico. To the widow and eight of the children of Joshua Stevens, killed in Pacheco in 1912, the sum of $12,000.00 was awarded. However, two claims based on the loss of the use of property in Colonia Díaz due to the failure of the Mexican government to provide protection from squatters on the land were disallowed as no proceedings had been instituted in Mexican courts by the claimants to evict the squatters. In a case involving the Escobar revolution of 1929, approximately one half of the amount claimed was awarded on the basis that that proportion of loss had been caused by federal troops.

Payments on the claims were made to the colonists whose claims were allowed by the Special Mexican Claims Commission by the United States Treasury in installments as the moneys were received from the Mexican Government, according to the provisions of the Act of Congress approved April 10, 1935. By 1950 all claims filed with and allowed by the Special Mexican Claims Commission had been paid to the claimants.

9 American Mexican Claims Commission, pp. 72-73.
10 Ibid, pp. 348-49.
11 American Mexican Claims Commission, pp. 553-55.
12 Ibid, pp. 556 and 622.
13 Special Mexican Claims Commission, pp. 681-84.
but, as one recipient stated, only two and one-half per cent of the amount claimed was paid, and of that twenty-five per cent went to lawyer's fees.

Many of the colonists who did not return to Mexico sustained losses of property because of their failure to pay the taxes on the land. All former colonists possessing lands in Mexico were urged "to pay the delinquent taxes lest the owners lose unoccupied lands in the Mexican colonies". Colonia Díaz, situated within the 100 kilometer frontier zone in which the direct ownership of lands by foreigners was prohibited by the Mexican Constitution of 1917, reverted to the Mexican government and later became an ejido. Indications of the former prosperity of the Mormon colony were noted by the American Punitive Expedition in 1916. Colonia Díaz stood out in the midst of desert, fifty miles from the border - although abandoned for some years, it was a veritable oasis. Houses in good repair stretched along streets lined with magnificent shade trees. The houses were surrounded by green fields and flowers in profusion.

Colonia Chuichupa, which became an ejido in 1931 and was renamed La Mortena in 1941, also made an impression on the invading Americans who were caught in a snow storm on the 23rd of March while they were camped in the neighborhood.

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15 T. C. Romney, Mormon Colonies in Mexico, p. 238.
18 Almada, op. cit., p. 522. Mr. C. Bowman stated that no Mormon lands were included in the ejido. Letter, August, 1950.
Chuichupa, the word meaning smoke in Yaqui Indian language, proved to be an old American Mormon settlement, at one time probably having 500 to 600 inhabitants but now abandoned, since five years ago it was sacked by the "Red Flaggers" as the revolutionists are called who sprang up all over the country when the iron grip of Díaz began to relax. The town is located on a rolling fertile plain surrounded by pine forests in which wild turkey and deer abound. The inhabitants were evidently thrifty farmers and cattle men. Their homes were well built of frame, brick and adobe in the American fashion, which is always a pleasing contrast to the squat adobe or log houses which the Mexicans affect. Now the houses and fences are falling down, acequias, gardens and fruit trees gone to ruin.

Romney points out that the Mexican government encouraged the return of the colonists in the statement made by the President of Casas Grandes to citizen Joel H. Martineau of Colonia Pacheco that, "all lands that have been for years abandoned may be settled on by any American citizen. If the owner comes back later and pays all back taxes and expenses we will let him have his property back".  

Likewise one of the leading Mormons in the colonies, Joseph C. Bentley, who represented the colonists in their property interests in northern Mexico, in an article dated October 3, 1921 stated that the Mexican government was willing that Mexicans should cultivate unoccupied lands of the colonists, that they would cultivate the land for three years without rent, but that they could receive no title and if, after three years they continued to use the land, they must settle with the owners for rental.

There were also Mormon colonists who failed to return to their homes in Mexico because they felt that conditions there did not offer

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19 Tompkins, op. cit., p. 104-5.
20 Romney, op. cit., p. 288.
21 Ibid. p. 288.
sufficient security to warrant their return. Others became discouraged waiting for conditions to improve and found homes elsewhere. Their attitude is explained by Romney.

Notwithstanding the favorable attitude of the Government for the return of lands to the colonists, but few have availed themselves of the opportunity to re-possess them. Several factors have entered in to create this lack of desire. In the first place, the disturbed conditions in Mexico were of such extended duration that many of the refugees, in the meantime, had purchased homes and other property in various localities of the United States, and an attachment had grown up for their relatively new environment that held them fast. Then, there were others who still had a longing to return to Mexico, even after a lapse of many years, but who were fearful to return lest another political upheaval should send them scurrying from the country again. Some there were whose properties had so depreciated in value through the permanent withdrawal of the population from the regions where located as to render them almost valueless and, finally, there were a number of instances in which the older members of the family had a desire to return but the younger members thereof had no such desire, they having been born since the exodus or being too immature at the time of the exodus to retain any fond memories of the land of their birth.

Many of these former refugees sold their property in Mexico to the colonists who had remained for a fraction of its value, with the result that some of the colonists have become very well-to-do. Moisés T. de la Peña points out that in place of the former Arcadia with neither rich nor poor, which the Mormon colonies had represented, some of the colonists have become rich and own much land while others are poor and have little land. The prosperous colonists of Dublán he classes as small latifundistas because of the fact that six hundred and twenty-three hectares of irrigated land are owned by twenty-five people. Romney attributes the resultant inequity to individual initiative.

22 Ibid. p. 289.
A few of the Mormons who have returned to the colonies have fared well financially at the expense of those who, for various reasons, refuse to return to their homes. These adventurous spirits endowed with unusual business acumen have monopolized for the most part the orchards and farm lands as well as the industrial facilities of certain of the colonies. This was made possible by the inordinate eagerness of many of the refugees to dispose of their holdings if for nothing more than a mere pittance. Others of the returned exiles have benefited by having the free use of range and irrigable lands whose titles are held by those indifferent to the uses being made of them.24

According to the Mexican Constitution of 1917, the right to own land and to acquire concessions to exploit the natural resources of the country are limited to native born or to naturalized citizens, who, however, must obey the laws of the country, regulating the ownership of land and the exploitation of its resources. The same property rights are granted to foreigners who agree before the Mexican Department of Foreign Affairs "to be considered Mexicans in respect to the same, under penalty, in case of breach, of forfeiture to the Nation of property so acquired". The Constitution further states that private property shall not be expropriated except for reasons of public utility and by means of indemnification. Thus both the Mormons who became naturalized Mexican citizens and those who retained their United States citizenship but conformed to all the constitutional and legal requirements for foreign property owners were protected by the Mexican Constitution and the laws of the country as regards the ownership and the expropriation of property. The Constitution also forbids the direct ownership by foreigners of any land within a one hundred

24 Romney, op. cit., p. 291.
kilometer zone of the frontier, thus land owned by American Mormons within the frontier zone can be held only indirectly through Mexican corporations or companies.

The right to the use of water of streams for irrigation is also regulated by Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution which states:

Any other stream of water not comprised within the foregoing enumeration shall be considered as an integral part of the private property through which it flows; but the development of the waters when they pass from one landed property to another shall be considered of public utility and shall be subject to the provisions prescribed by the States.28

As the agricultural economy of the Mormon colonies is dependent upon irrigation, they are directly affected by this provision. In the Casas Grandes Valley the state of Chihuahua has as yet no official plan for the use of the water of the river according to Señor Almada who further states that in the Casas Grandes region only the Mormons of Colonia Dublán have regulated the use of the waters by means of storage basins or lakes.29

When the Mormons first came to settle Dublán in 1888, they noted the remains of an ancient irrigation system, visible in traces of a canal leading from the Casas Grandes River to several large depressions, apparently ancient reservoirs, near the foothills in the eastern part of the valley. Very probably this irrigation system was a part of the ancient civilization which occupied the Casas Grandes Valley, the ruins of which near the village of Casas Grandes are thought by some to be the third abode

27 Ibid., p. 7.
28 Ibid., p. 7.
29 Almada, op. cit., p. 270.
30 Romney, op. cit., p. 64.
of the Aztec peoples in their migration from Aztlan, their place of origin, to the Valley of Mexico. The Mormons, taking advantage of the ancient system, dug a canal from the Casas Grandes River some ten miles across the valley to the natural depressions near the foothills to form two lakes known as the Dublán Lakes. Here the water which comes from the mountains in the rainy season is stored and later used to irrigate the crops as needed. In recent years in conformance with the Mexican agrarian policy and to assure an equitable distribution of water for irrigation, the Mormons have shared their irrigation systems and water with the Mexicans who have acquired farms in the neighborhood of the colonies. In Colonia Dublán the Mormons signed a contract with the Mexican ejidatarios whereby one of the Dublán Lakes, known as Long Lake, was given to the ejidatarios who in return agreed to enlarge the canal from the Casas Grandes River and to add to the cement dam in the river in order to increase the capacity of the lakes. However, only a part of the work agreed upon has been done. In Colonia Juárez, the waters of the Piedras Verdes River, after watering the Mormon fields up-stream, are utilized in the power-plant to generate electricity, and at night irrigate the fields of the Cuauhtemoc ejidatarios.

Thus as a result of the Mexican revolution some Mormon lands in the colonies, lost mainly through failure of the Mormon owners to pay

31 Almada, op. cit., p. 94.
32 Romney, op. cit., p. 97.
33 Letter from Mr. C. Bowman, Colonia Dublán, August 8, 1950.
34 Statement by Mr. J. Farnsworth, personal interview, August, 1950.
delinquent taxes, have been acquired by individual Mexicans or by 
audios, and water from the irrigation systems built by the Mormons has 
been shared with the Mexican farmers. However, the right of the Mormons 
to own and inherit property as regulated by the constitution and the law 
of the land, and the titles to their lands on which taxes have continued 
to be paid have not been questioned.
CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

The Mormon belief in the value of recreation assumes added importance in the Mormon colonies in Chihuahua because of their isolated location. Here the Mormons must depend upon their own efforts to provide recreation, for no ready-made commercial entertainment is at hand. Both the church and school share in promoting cultural and recreational programs which appeal to all ages. Theatrical productions, ranging from Shakespearean tragedy to operettas, band concerts and choral singing are important aspects of their community life as well as dances, picnics and athletic contests.

The social life of the Mormon colonies centers about the church and the school which occupy one and the same building. Each colony maintains a primary school for its children who are sent to the Juarez Stake Academy for their secondary education. Here the instruction is comparable to that of any good high school in the United States. The schools are also the centers of recreational and social activities, here plays and concerts are presented, and dances and sports events take place. The community church services are held in the school on Sunday and during the year church conferences convene in the school building.

As has previously been states changes were necessary in the Mormon Church and schools to comply with the educational and religious provisions of the Mexican Constitution of 1917. Article 27 of the

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1 Interviews with various citizens of Colonia Juárez, April, 1950.
Constitution states:

Episcopal residences, rectories, seminaries, orphan asylums or collegiate establishments of religious associations, convents or any other buildings built or designed for the administration, propaganda, or teaching the tenets of any religious sect shall forthwith vest as of full right, directly in the Nation, to be used exclusively for the public services of the Federation or of the States, within their respective jurisdictions...

Public and private charitable institutions for the sick and needy, for scientific research, or for the diffusion of knowledge, mutual aid societies, or organizations formed for any other lawful purpose shall in no case acquire any but the real property indispensable for their own said purpose being directly destined to the same... In no case shall institutions of this character be under the patronage, direction, administration, charge or supervision of religious corporations or institutions, nor of ministers of any religious sect or of their dependents, even though either the former or the latter shall not be in service.

To remove the Mormon schools from the category of religious schools the pictures of church leaders were removed from the school rooms and the teaching of religion was eliminated from the course of study. The Mormon schools in the Mexican colonies are supported by a portion of the tithes collected from the colonists and by an annual appropriation from the Mormon Church. However, as they are considered community centers and operated by the communities, the schools remain the property of the Mormon colonists, despite the clause in the Mexican Constitution which states:

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2 Constitution of the United States of Mexico, p. 8.
3 Statement by Mrs. J. Farnsworth, personal interview, July, 1950.
4 Statement by Mr. C. Bowman, letter, August 8, 1950.
The religious associations known as churches, irrespective of creed, shall in no case have legal capacity to acquire, hold or administer real property or loans made on such real property; all such real property or loans as may be at present held by the said religious associations either on their own behalf, or through third parties, shall vest in the Nation, and any one shall have the right to denounce property so held. Presumptive proof shall be sufficient to declare the denunciation well-founded. Places of public worship are the property of the Nation; as represented by the Federal Government, which shall determine, which of them may continue to be devoted to their present purpose.

The fact that the Mormon schools have continued to function with little government interference is an indication of the high regard accorded them by the Mexican Government. In an interview with Mormon Church leaders, President Camacho expressed his appreciation of the work which the Mormons were doing in Mexico and particularly in the Chihuahua colonies. Both Moisés T. de la Peña and Francisco R. Almada commended the Mormon schools.

Today only two primary schools are maintained by the Mormons, one in Colonia Juárez, the other in Colonia Díaz for the Mormon families have, with few exceptions, left the mountain colonies. The Juárez Academy is the only high school. The schools are attended by both Mormon and Mexican children. Many of the Mexican pupils are the children of Mexican converts to the Mormon faith. As the schools are supported by the church members, approximately twenty per cent of the children who are not Mormons are charged a tuition fee. A school bus transports the older children from Dublán, Nuevo Casas Grandes and Casas Grandes to and from the Academy in Juárez.

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5 Constitution of the United States of Mexico, pp. 7-8.
Francisco R. Almada, Geografía del Estado de Chihuahua, pp. 433, 326.
The two primary schools are staffed by ten teachers, a very few of whom are Mexican Mormons who have qualified for and want the work. In each primary school is a special teacher who teaches English to the Mexican children in the first grade. There is also a special teacher in the Academy to teach English to the older Mexican students who come not only from the neighborhood but from distant parts of Mexico. The Mexican students usually spend five years at the Academy, the additional year being necessary to master the English language in which instruction is given. In the year 1949-50 the Academy had a staff of six teachers for sixty-two students. In conformance with Mexican law Spanish is taught in every grade of primary school as well as in the Academy so that the Mormon children learn to speak Spanish as well as they do English. Mexican history, civics and geography are also required subjects. In addition to academic and vocational subjects much attention is given to recreation and music. Plays, operettas, and band concerts are presented and choruses organized. Sports are also emphasized.

The pride of the colonies is the Juárez Academy which, besides offering regular high school work and preparing students for colleges in the United States, has classes in woodworking, home economics, agriculture and commercial subjects. In the large gymnasium of the Academy, which is in a separate building, basketball is popular, and the adjacent athletic field provides facilities for track and baseball. The lower floor of the

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8 Statement by Mr. C. Bowman, letter, August 8, 1950.
9 Statement by Mrs. J. Farnsworth, personal interview, July, 1950.
gymnasium, in addition to dressing rooms and showers, houses the home economics department, one room of which is equipped with sewing machines and work tables, while the other is a large airy kitchen with individual stoves and cupboards. Here also is the well equipped chemistry laboratory. A separate building contains the wood-working shop where both boys and girls become proficient in the use of tools.

Many graduates of the Juárez Academy have gone on to universities in the United States. Some return to the colonies, accompanied by their husbands or their wives, thus bringing new blood into the colonies. More remain to work in the United States. Both the Mexican and the Mormon graduates of the Academy often go on church missions to other parts of Mexico. A number of graduates have become leaders in their chosen fields. A former president of Brigham Young University was a graduate of the Juárez Academy as is the head of the physics and mathematics department of the same university. One graduate of the Academy, after attending Brigham Young University, earned his degree in medicine at the National University of Mexico and returned to Colonia Juárez to practice his profession, as the only Mormon doctor in the colonies.

Inasmuch as the Mormon colonists have no separate church buildings, there has been no confiscation of church property as such, though the schools serving also as churches might well be considered church property. That no such alienation of church property has not taken place speaks well for Mormon diplomacy and co-operation with the Mexican authorities.

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10 Romney, op. cit., pp. 275-78.
11 Statement by Mrs. E. Woods, personal interview, June, 1950.
But in order to comply with the constitutional provision that "only a Mexican by birth may be a minister of any religious creed in Mexico", young Mormons born in Mexico were appointed ward bishops of the Mormon Church in the colonies. The Mormons in the colonies are respected for their high moral principles, the simplicity of their life, and for their tolerance toward other religions. Even Moisés de la Peña, who is somewhat critical of the richer Mormons whom he describes as exploiters of Mexican hand labor and of poor Mormons, states that they are hard working, respect the laws and live an orderly life, and that their love of high culture has been of service to the region.

The relations between the Mormons and Mexicans have gradually changed over the years as conditions within Mexico itself have altered. When the Mormons first settled in the Casas Grandes Valley most of the Mexicans were poor, landless peons working on large estates owned by absentee landlords. With the carrying out of the agrarian reforms after the Mexican revolution, the Mexicans became landowners themselves. Mormon encouragement and aid have helped the Mexicans to acquire land and to form ejidos. It was the suggestion of a Mormon of Colonia Juárez to his Mexican cowboy that led to the organization of the ejido of Cuauhtemoc just across the

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15 An ejido is a community organized on the basis of both individual and communal ownership of land. An ejidatario is a member of an ejido.
river from Colonia Juárez. One young Mormon was allowed to become a member of the Cuauhtemoc ejido. Profiting by the example of the Mormons, these Mexican ejidatarios are becoming prosperous farmers. As the need for Mexican markets for their surplus products grew, the Mormons also became associated with the Mexicans in commercial enterprises. Mormons are stockholders in the meat-packing factory and in the bank of Nuevo Casas Grandes, and Mexicans have become part owners in several Mormon enterprises. Colonia Dublán and Nuevo Casas Grandes co-operated to purchase three graders in order to keep the roads in condition. Half of the membership of the Rotary Club of Casas Grandes is Mormon.

The policy of the Mormons is to preserve their identity by no intermarriage with the Mexicans because of the differences in their cultural and religious backgrounds, but mixed marriages have taken place. It is usually the Mormon men who have married Mexican women, though there have been a few cases of Mormon girls marrying Mexicans. The presence of Mexican children in the Mormon schools has also tended to break the barrier between the two peoples. The gaining of a number of Mexican converts to the Mormon faith is removing the religious difference between the Mormons and the Mexicans in the colonies. Although the Mexican branches of the church hold separate services in Spanish, both the American and Mexican Mormons join one another in games and sports which are an important part

16 Statement by Mr. J. Farnsworth, personal interview, July, 1950.
17 Statement by Mr. K. Bowman, personal interview, April, 1950.
18 Statement by Mr. M. I. Turley, personal interview, April, 1950.
of the church's recreational program. In Colonia Dublán their social events are likewise enjoyed together.

The attitude of the Mormons toward Mexican citizenship has also changed with the years for today the Mormon Church leaders are urging the Mexican colonists to become citizens of the country. The viewpoint of many of the earlier Mormon colonists is indicated by Romney as he wrote of the troubled times of 1912.

I remember with a deep sense of gratitude to my father's memory that he refused to become citizenized lest revolution should again raise its head and his sons would be conscripted to fight side by side with the down-trodden peon. This was long before the outbreak of the series of revolutions which ultimately resulted in the movement of the Mormon colonists from Mexico. I was not ignorant of the fact, to be sure, that for a period of more than a quarter of a century Mexico was comparatively peaceful but this tranquillity was founded on the military prowess of one man. With his overthrow what hope could one have for the future stability of the country? When again would a genius arise like unto Porfirio Díaz who could quiet and hold in check the seething millions of dark-skinned sons of Moctezuma whose equilibrium had been greatly disturbed.

It is interesting to note that the present attitude toward Mexican citizenship was foreshadowed by an unsuccessful attempt five or six years after the first settlement in Mexico to naturalize the Mormon colonists as a group. Though not all the colonists are at present Mexican citizens, it is estimated that eighty per cent are either native-born or naturalized

19 Statement by Mr. K. Bowman, personal interview, April, 1950.
20 Romney, op. cit., p. 309.
21 Ibid, p. 233.
22 Almada, op. cit., p. 124.
citizens of Mexico. The Mormon colonists who have retained their American citizenship are open to criticism because of their divided allegiance. Regardless of the sterling qualities of the Mormon colonists and their many contributions to the material and cultural development of the region, the failure of the Mormon colonists who have earned their living and made their homes in Mexico for years to become Mexican citizens, as well as their tendency to remain in exclusive and self-contained communities is objected to by a Mexican writer who favors the immigration of groups who are more easily assimilated. 

The Mormon colonists take no active part in local Mexican politics, and seldom appeal to Mexican legal authorities to settle their disputes. Within the Mormon colonies any disagreements are usually settled by the church authorities. It is considered a disgrace for a Mormon to resort to a law court to settle a dispute. There are no Mormon lawyers in the colonies, legal affairs generally being taken care of by those Mormons who are friends of Mexican government officials. In each community is a Mexican official, the comisario policia, whose duties of preserving law and order and of performing marriages are similar to those of a justice of the peace in the United States. The comisario policia is appointed by the administrative officials of the municipio in which the community is located. Colonia Juárez, Pacheco and García are under the administration of the municipio of Casas Grandes, Colonia Dublan is under that of the municipio.

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23 Statement by Mr. C. Bowman, letter, August 8, 1950.
25 A municipio is similar to a county in the United States.
municipio of Nuevo Casas Grandes, and Chuichupa under that of the municipio of Madera. The municipios of Casas Grandes and Nuevo Casas Grandes are a part of the judicial district of Galeana with its administrative offices in Casas Grandes. All legal matters such as the registration of titles to property and real estate transactions are under the jurisdiction of the officials of the judicial district.

Like many Americans who avoid politics in the United States, the Mormon colonists seem to feel that the less they have to do with the mordida of Mexican politics the better, although they find annoying such revenue collecting devices as the recent regulation requiring the re-registration of all cattle brands. The graft in Mexican politics is an aspect of life in Mexico which discourages the Mormon colonists. It must be taken into account in their relations with Mexican government officials, and tends to create a feeling of instability and even of resentment, particularly among the Mormons unable to pay the mordida. There are discriminatory local regulations and taxes, which, though applying to all citizens, in reality affect only the more prosperous Mormon farmers, ranchers and lumbermen.

In addition to disliking the graft in Mexican politics, the colonists have refrained from taking part in political affairs because

26 Almada, op. cit., pp. 61-5.
27 Mordida is a Mexican term for graft.
28 Statements by Mr. and Mrs. J. Farnsworth, personal interview, July, 1950.
of the non-political policy of the Mormon Church in Mexico.

Better would it be for all concerned and in the interests of peace and prosperity in Mexico, if both church and state would learn each its proper places and in a Christlike spirit, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's."

This is the spirit that has actuated the Latter-day Saints from the beginning of their settlement in Mexico. They have played fair with the Government and at no time in their history have they attempted to usurp political authority that did not belong to them, nor have they meddled in affairs of no concern to them. At the same time they have upheld and sustained in a spirit of loyalty the laws and institutions of the land to a marked degree. Such a policy continued will do more than anything else toward insuring them against political irritations and vouchsafing to them permanent peace and prosperity in the land of their adoption.29

It would seem, however, that it is the civic duty of the Mormon colonists who are Mexican citizens to participate in local Mexican politics, but as citizens of the country, not as members of a church.

29 Romney, op. cit., p. 299.
CHAPTER VII

ECONOMIC ASPECTS

As was stated in a previous chapter the Mormon colonists who migrated to Mexico to establish the Mormon colonies were a "chosen people". Many were motivated by religious principles, and others were chosen because of their pioneering and organizing ability or for their technical skills. For twelve years from 1885 until 1897 when the railroad from Ciudad Juárez was extended to Nuevo Casas Grandes, the Mormon colonists were isolated and dependent entirely upon their own resources. All supplies, farm implements and tools had to be freighted in by teams and wagons from Deming, New Mexico, ninety miles north of Colonia Díaz over desert country. Wood for building houses, for only mesquite and cottonwood grew in the valley, was brought in from Deming, New Mexico or from the sawmills established by the colonists in the Sierra Madres, some seventy to one hundred miles distant. The red bricks, which are a distinguishing feature of many homes in the Mormon colonies, were made by the colonists from local materials.

The economy of the colonies was based on agriculture and cattle raising, but some industry developed to utilize the products of the farms and the ranches. Grist mills were established to grind the wheat

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1 T. C. Romney, Mormon Colonies in Mexico, p. 76.
2 Statement by Mr. E. Abegg, personal interview, Jan. 1950.
and corn grown on the farms. Hides were treated in a tannery and made into saddles, harness, and shoes. Saw mills established in the mountain colonies were a source of income. Mercantile establishments handled a large part of the trade in the colonies. In Colonia Díaz a bank was organized to serve the region. In the 1890's plans were made to construct a railroad from Deming, New Mexico to the colonies in Mexico. A prominent colonist of Colonia Díaz was made general manager of the proposed railroad, the Mexican Northern Pacific, and in 1894 went to England to further the interests of the company. Nothing came of the plans, but in 1897 the Rio Grande, Sierra Madre and Pacific Railroad reached the Colonia Dublán from Ciudad Juárez. In 1912 the connection was made with the line from Chihuahua City and the system was renamed the Mexican Northwestern Railroad. Thus the colonies were accessible by rail from both Chihuahua City and Ciudad Juárez (El Paso).

The Mexican Revolution and the exodus of the colonists in 1912 halted the prosperous development of the colonies. By 1919 conditions had improved in Mexico but the population of the Mormon colonies had

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3 Romney, op. cit., p. 92-93.
6 Francisco R. Almada, Geografía del Estado de Chihuahua, p. 332.
declined to about five hundred people as contrasted with the four thousand or more in 1912. After 1919 there began a gradual movement back to the colonies. In 1945 the population was reported as one thousand, but by 1950 it had again declined to an estimated six hundred and fifty. The decrease in population is accounted for by the limited amount of arable land so that the younger generation had little opportunity to acquire farms. However, plans are now under way to bring more of the valley under cultivation by sinking wells to supply water for irrigation. It is reported that Mormons are now buying up these lands with the prospect of their future development. Many of the industries which had flourished in the colonies before 1912 were not re-established by the returning colonists so that younger people found it difficult to find employment, and the low wages prevailing in the colonies made it almost impossible for a wage earner to support a family.

As the Mormon population has decreased, the Mexican population has increased and the economic status of the Mexican has improved. The Mexicans are no longer peons but have gained a certain measure of economic independence, as small farmers, as tradesmen or as hired laborers. Mexican labor is protected by clauses in the constitution which guarantee an eight hour day, legalize the right to strike, and set a minimum wage sufficient to support a laborer and his family in the section of the

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9 Statement by Mr. K. Bowman, personal interview, April, 1950.
country in which he lives. As a result of this protection the Mexican laborer has become conscious of his rights and demands his pay at the prevailing wage scale. To avoid misunderstandings or arguments with Mexican laborers, the Mormon colonists make definite agreements as to the wages to be paid. These wages may be paid in money or, if the laborer so specifies, in an equivalent amount of food or clothing. If no agreement concerning wages has been made beforehand, the laborer, if he feels that he has been underpaid, may take his complaint to the local comisario who decides the case.

According to the constitution Mexicans must be given preference in employment. Hence, as long as the Mormon colonists regard themselves as foreigners and retain their United States citizenship, they are at a disadvantage theoretically as regards employment in Mexico. At present the superior educational and technical qualifications of the Mormon colonists who are United States citizens working for corporations in Mexico give them an advantage over the Mexicans in professional work and in the management of business enterprises, but that advantage will disappear as more of the Mexican people gain an education and as a class of skilled laborers, engineers and agricultural experts is developed.

Today with the exception of a few families in the mountain colonies the Mormon colonists are living in Colonia Juárez or in Colonia Dublán.

10 The Constitution of the United States of Mexico, pp. 28-29.
11 Statement by Mr. J. Farnsworth, personal interview, August, 1950.
12 The Constitution of the United States of Mexico, p. 11.
On their farms, which are outside the communities or near the mountain colonies, wheat, corn, oats and alfalfa are the main crops — the Mormons are credited with having introduced the cultivation of oats into the state. Large quantities of potatoes are also grown; beans and some peanuts. In their orchards apples are the main cash crop, though other fruits are grown for their own use. The chief markets for their crops, other than the local markets in which much of their produce is sold, are Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua City. Almost without exception each family in the colonies has a vegetable garden, a cow, and a few chickens so that they are practically self-sufficient as regards food. Fruit, vegetables and meat are canned for winter use, and large supplies are also set aside for the Welfare Fund to help those in need.

In Colonia Juárez and in Pacheco the main source of income is the apple orchards. In 1949 their crop was sold for 250,000 pesos. In Colonia Dublán a nursery supplies young stone fruit and apple stock for new orchards. The Foreign Agricultural Report, 1944, states that the lack of competition in Mexican markets for apples from the Mormon colonies led to a deterioration in their produce. Within the last few years, however, more efficient methods of pest control have been adopted.

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13 Almada, op. cit., p. 326
15 Statement by Mr. J. H. Martineau, personal interview, April, 1950.
to improve the orchards and the fruit, and several growers are concentrating on the cultivation of Stark's Delicious. In addition to the nursery stock grown in Dublán, which supplies young trees to both Mexican and Mormon fruit growers, nursery stock is imported from California. The old red brick harness shop in Colonia Juárez is now used for sorting and packing apples.

Cheese, first produced commercially in the colonies in the 1920s, is also an important product of the Mormon colonies. A young Mormon colonist who had studied cheese making processes at Ames, Iowa, and had worked in American cheese factories, returned to the Mormon colonies in the 1930s to reorganize the cheese industry. Different cheeses were developed under his guidance and improved methods of making cheeses were adopted in the factories. The offer of a more lucrative position brought the young man back to the United States, but the four cheese factories in Colonia Dublán and the one in Juárez with their sales office in Chihuahua City have continued the making of cheeses which are popular in Mexican markets.

Cattle raising has retained its importance in the colonies despite recent restrictions on the sale of Mexican cattle in the United States. In Nuevo Casas Grandes which adjoins Colonia Dublán is a meat packing establishment owned by Mormon ranchers and American and Mexican cattlemen. In addition to supplying canned beef for the Mexican markets, the

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17 Romney, op. cit., p. 254.
18 Statement by Mr. E. Abegg, personal interview, July, 1950.
19 Statement by Mr. M. I. Turley, personal interview, April, 1950.
company has a contract with the United States government to supply
canned meat to the Armed Forces. The harness shop in Dublán utilizes
hides in making saddles, bridles and shoes.

The poultry industry is now being developed by the Mormon colonists,
under the guidance of young Mr. Martineau who studied the poultry busi-
ness in the United States. A co-operative organization was set up, each
colonist in the organization subscribing a definite amount to purchase
the number of chickens which he could handle. The chickens, mostly
white leghorns, are obtained from a company near San Francisco, Cali-
ifornia, and shipped in either by plane or by truck. With eggs selling
at twenty-five centavos each in Mexico City, the colonists hope to
develop a profitable egg business.

The only flour mill now operated by the colonists is located in
Colonia Dublán. In 1949 the 130,000 tons of flour produced by the
mill were consumed locally. In addition to milling the wheat and corn
raised in the valley, chicken feed is now being made to supply the grow-
ing poultry business.

The mountain colonies of García, Pacheco and Chuichupa are now
almost deserted by the Mormon colonists who have moved to Colonia Juárez
or Colonia Dublán. Those who own property in the mountain colonies

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20 Statement by Mr. K. Bowman, personal interview, April, 1950.
21 Statement by Mr. J. H. Martineau, personal interview, April, 1950.
22 Statement by Mr. K. Bowman, personal interview, April, 1950.
23 Statement by Mrs. F. Farnsworth, personal interview, July, 1950.
make occasional trips to the mountains to supervise their farms and 24 ranches which are worked by Mexicans. Much of the cattle of the colonists is kept on the grazing lands of the mountain colonies. Especially important in the mountain colonies is the lumber industry. Several Mormon colonists own timber lands and operate saw mills near García, Chuichupa and Pacheco. The lumber, white pine, is hauled by truck to Nuevo Casas Grandes, Madera or Pearson whence it is shipped by rail to other parts of Mexico or to the United States. Whereas previously there was indiscriminate cutting of timber in the mountains, particularly near the railroad, a conservation program is now enforced, whereby twenty per cent of the big trees are left for seed and the young saplings are protected. A forestal or forest ranger supervises the cutting of timber and imposes fines for the destruction of saplings.

A few of the Mormon colonists capitalized on their ability as expert guides and hunters and on their knowledge of the country by taking hunting parties into the Sierra Madres where bear, deer, mountain lion and wild turkey were to be found, and where fish were plentiful in the mountain streams. At the time of the second World War the business of guiding hunting parties declined, and little professional guiding is now done. The cutting of timber in the neighborhood of the mountain colonies has also tended to drive the game farther.

24 Statement by Mr. J.H. Martineau, personal interview, April, 1950.
25 Almada, op. cit., p. 280.
26 Statement by Mr. J. Farnsworth, personal interview, July, 1950.
Nogales and Mexico City make daily stops, and where El Paso Mormons with timber interests in the region land their planes in preference to driving over the unimproved roads or taking the train. In fact, Dublán is more accessible by plane than by any other means of transport. Three times a week the Mexican Northwestern train comes chugging into Nuevo Casas Grandes bringing passengers and freight. As yet no improved highways connect Dublán and Nuevo Casas Grandes with the outside world, though in the near future a highway, which is to connect Villa Ahumada on the Chihuahua City highway with El Valle, will pass through Dublán and Nuevo Casas Grandes. An improved road connecting Deming, New Mexico with the Mormon Colonies is also under consideration. The only road
in the region, which might be classed as improved, is the five mile
stretch connecting Nuevo Casas Grandes with Casas Grandes, and even
that has large, dangerous, unmarked holes where the tile of irrigation
culverts has been broken through. Good roads would aid in the develop­
ment of the region.

It is interesting to note that many of the enterprises which
were formerly entirely owned and operated by Mormons are now partially
owned by outsiders. Mexicans have bought into the cheese business.
The flour mill at Dublán is no longer exclusively Mormon, though Mormons
own the controlling interest. In the apple business developed by the
colonists, are Mexican farmers who are growing fruit for the Mexican
markets from trees supplied by the Mormon nursery. Thus commercial
and agricultural interests are tending to bring the two peoples together.

31 The Mennonite colonies near Cuauhtemoc are also producing
cheese and growing apples for the Mexican markets.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In the Casas Grandes region of Chihuahua, the Mormons have made valuable contributions both to the social and the economic development of the region. Their schools are known throughout the region for the excellence of their instruction and attract Mexican as well as Mormon students. From the Mormons the Mexicans have learned the rudiments of health and sanitation. They have demonstrated to the Mexicans the value of industry and thrift, and have been an example of peaceful and law-abiding citizens in a country where for years, strife and military prowess rather than law and order were the ruling forces. Their co-operation and fair dealing have in general won the respect of both the common man and the official in Mexico.

Economically the Mormons have developed the country, and in the process have taught the Mexicans the value of improved agricultural methods, and of good breeds of livestock. No longer are forked sticks used as plows, and irrigation systems have been extended and improved. Mormon encouragement brought about the organization of Guauhtemoc as an ejido, making it possible for a number of Mexican agricultural laborers in the region to become owners of their own farms. Mormon development of the agricultural resources of the country has not only given employment to Mexican laborers but has taught them improved techniques and made them familiar with modern agricultural machinery and with motors. Mormon business men are active in both the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club of Nuevo Casas Grandes, and are doing much to...
encourage common civic enterprises and undertakings. Ownership in several commercial establishments is shared by both Mormons and Mexicans.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the Mormon colonies in Chihuahua has been their persistence, for, though few in number, the Mormons remained in Chihuahua while other colonizing groups left Mexico at the time of the revolutions and never returned. Their record as peaceful and law-abiding citizens is also unusual, for the Mormons took no part in the revolutions which were going on about them in Mexico except as they were obliged to furnish equipment and supplies to rebel bands. In the sixty-five years that the Mormons have been in the colonies, Mexico has experienced a prolonged political and social revolution, yet throughout the period only sixteen Mormons have met violent deaths, which were usually attributed to motives of robbery or theft, rather than to revolutionary activities. In the colonies today are living many of the Mormons who were children when the settlements were first made with the result that there is a preponderance of older people, particularly in Colonia Juárez, who are enjoying the peaceful years following the revolution, and are content with the progress which has been made.

The future of the colonies as a distinctly Anglo-Mormon community seems doubtful. It would seem inconsistent on the part of the Mormons to seek Mexican converts, but to fail to regard the Mexicans as equals. As the Mexicans achieve economic independence and education is possible for all, the economic and cultural differences between the peoples will

1 Statement by Mr. J. H. Martineau, personal interview, April, 1950.
gradually disappear. In Colonia Dublán common commercial interests with the Mexicans of Nuevo Casas Grandes and a large Mexican branch of the Mormon Church are already bringing the two peoples together. In Colonia Juárez, which represents a more conservative agricultural type of community and is more withdrawn from the paths of commerce, the process will be slower, despite the common use of the waters of the Piedras Verdes for irrigation, Mormon co-operation with Mexican farmers, and the ability displayed by Mexican students in the Mormon schools.

The economic future of the colonies seems assured, provided the Mexican government does not pursue a policy of expropriation of lands or of taxation which would adversely affect the Mormon colonists. The prospect of the development of more agricultural land in the valley by the sinking of wells to tap underground water should attract either private capital or government aid to the region and encourage the return of the younger generation of Mormons who are now earning a living elsewhere. The future of the Mormons in the region seems also to be linked to Mexican citizenship, for should the development of the Casas Grandes Valley become a Mexican government project, it would be for the benefit of Mexican citizens, not for citizens of the United States. The fact that approximately eighty per cent of the Mormon colonists have become Mexican citizens indicates their belief in the future of the country and in their ability to develop the region. With Mormon initiative and energy as the driving force and with the Mormons and Mexicans working together to further their common interests, the Casas Grandes Valley should become one of the model agricultural regions of Mexico.
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