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**MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN MATAMOROS DURING
THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION, 1910-1915**

A Thesis

by

SONIA HERNÁNDEZ

**Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas-Pan American
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

MASTER OF ARTS

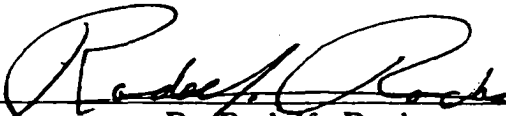
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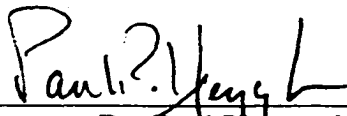
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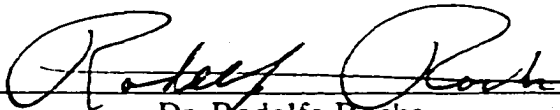
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The 1910 Mexican Revolution is among the bloodiest civil wars of the twentieth century. Throughout Mexico, battles broke out among emerging revolutionary factions. Fighting occurred along Mexico's northern border. Military activity also spilled onto US territory.

Several works have examined the Revolution's effect on American border towns. The impact that the war had on Mexican border towns has been largely overlooked. This thesis will provide a Mexican border perspective of the Mexican Revolution. It traces military activity in Matamoros, Tamaulipas from 1910 to 1915. The study also explores Matamoros' strategic importance to the military factions that fought to achieve control over this border city.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to the Hernández-Véliz family for their love and encouragement and especially to my brother, "Eddie."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank several people who were instrumental in helping me research and write this thesis. Special thanks goes to the staff at the University of Texas-Pan American Resource Learning Center, specifically to Maricela Shayegan, Lower Rio Grande Valley Historical Collection secretary, her assistants and to Rubén Coronado from the Inter-Library Loan Department. I want to thank Ingeniero Clemente Rendón de la Garza, *Cronista de Matamoros* for sharing his knowledge of Matamoros with me. I am grateful to Dr. Paul Henggeler and Dr. Brian McCormack for their patience and assistance in preparing this work. I would also like to thank my family for their understanding when I could not join them in our Sunday cookouts. Last but certainly not least I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Rodolfo Rocha for introducing me to the world of graduate studies. If it were not for him, I would have settled for a Bachelor's and probably be teaching Spanish somewhere.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Porfirio Díaz became Mexico's president in 1876. By 1900 Mexicans had become increasingly discontent with him and in 1910 a civil war erupted. The insurgency began as an ideological movement to unseat Díaz and to improve Mexico's social and political situation. As the Revolution gained momentum, various factions organized attacks on towns.

During this period, the Revolution's major military activity was more pronounced along the border. Numerous military factions emerged. Among those were Francisco Villa. Each of these groups took over vital cities along the Texas-Mexico border. The significance of the border in these military campaigns has not received adequate historical analysis.

Northern Mexico was a geographically remote area in 1910. Most of the border townspeople were accustomed to local rule and independence. The area appealed to revolutionary individuals. The border provided access to war materials from the US and provided individuals a safe haven. Matamoros, the north-easternmost Mexican town and entrance to the Gulf of Mexico consequently was desired for its strategic value.

Despite supposed 'strict' neutrality laws from the United States, individuals frequently crossed arms and ammunition into Mexico during the upheaval. In fact, war

materials were smuggled across the Texas border in great quantities. By late 1910 and early 1911, British newspapers reported this contraband activity.¹

Porfirio Díaz controlled the border town throughout 1910. Following Madero's call for revolution in November 1910, *Maderistas* from Nuevo León and Southern Tamaulipas attempted to take Matamoros several times. They used Brownsville as their base for military operations. In addition, *Maderistas* smuggled war materials for their planned attacks on the town. However, the town was spared such violence by Díaz' resignation. In 1911 Matamorenses held elections and voted for Francisco I. Madero for the presidency. Matamoros escaped bloodshed and the town shifted to Madero's control. While in *Maderista* hands, arms and ammunition were crossed into the Matamoros garrison.

Numerous groups challenged Madero after his election. In the fall of 1911, a counter-revolutionary faction led by General Bernardo Reyes seriously threatened Madero's control of Matamoros. Reyes, a former governor of Nuevo León and a seventy-year old traditional military man, appealed to the Porfirian elite in Mexico. Reyes used San Antonio to plot his revolution. They also used Brownsville to plan and recruit. Moreover, the majority of war munitions coming from other American cities were stored in Brownsville. Reyes planned to control Matamoros to proceed to Mexico City and overthrow Madero. Because Matamoros was closer to the capital than other border towns, Reyes planned to use it as a supply center for his revolution.

Although *Reyistas* kept Matamorenses officials on guard, their plans did not materialize. American officials had arrested him near Laredo for violating the neutrality laws and after paying a fine, Reyes was able to cross into Mexico. Reyes failed to capture Matamoros. He later died in a battle against government troops in Mexico City.

in 1913. The *Reyistas'* Revolution demonstrated the strategic importance of the town. *Reyista* supplies in Brownsville could easily be smuggled into Mexico for attacks on other cities.

President Madero was removed from power and assassinated in February 1913. The coup led by General Victoriano Huerta created a second wave of military activity across the country and brought military activity to Matamoros. General Victoriano Huerta had assumed office following Madero's overthrow. In response, Venustiano Carranza former governor of Coahuila, mobilized a military force known as the Constitutionalist Army that threatened Huerta's control.

Carranza ordered a military campaign in the northeast. Carranza's plans were to capture Matamoros and then move on to Ciudad Victoria, Monterrey, and Tampico to bring the Gulf of Mexico region into his sphere. The rebel force began marching in a west to east direction along the Texas-Tamaulipas border capturing Camargo, Mier, Reynosa, Río Bravo, and finally Matamoros. These events lead to the high point of the *Carrancista* military campaign along the border.

Carrancistas capture of Matamoros in June 1913 helped them provide a springboard for future attacks on cities along the northeast. Their victory also resulted in the first agrarian expropriation of the revolution at the Los Borregos *hacienda*. While in control, *Carrancistas* used Matamoros as their main military center in the northeast, sending telegraphs to other points, transferring troops, and transporting war materials to other areas.

Matamorenses experienced a second military attack in 1915 when the *Villistas*, under General José Rodríguez and Absaul Navarro, threatened *Carrancista* control in March 1915. The *Villistas* like other revolutionary factions needed a northeastern port of entry.

However, *Carrancista* troops successfully defended the town. Matamoros remained under *Carrancista* control for the latter part of the Revolution.

Matamoros connected American and interior cities through the railways. A railway connected Matamoros to San Antonio, Galveston, and New Orleans. More important, Matamoros was connected to Monterrey, via Nuevo Laredo. In addition, there was another link to Ciudad Victoria. Because of its connection to these important areas, military supplies could easily be transported. These provisions aided revolutionaries in subsequent attacks. This was valuable to the factions and explains the high degree of military activity during 1910 to 1915.

By late 1910 *Maderista* activity spread across the border. *Maderistas* planned attacks to capture the town and caused federal soldiers to remain on guard. However, Matamorenses did not witness a military assault by the *Maderistas*. With the defeat of federal troops at Ciudad Juarez and Diaz' resignation, Francisco I. Madero gained popularity and consequently was elected president on October 1911. Matamorenses participated in the presidential elections and supported Madero. Once Madero assumed the presidency various factions grew discontent with his administration and challenged him. Matamoros, like other towns, received threats from factions such as the *Reyistas*. However, the town remained under Madero's control until mid-February 1913.

CHAPTER 2

MADERISTA AND REYISTA DESIGNS ON MATAMOROS, 1910-1912

When Coahuilense intellectual, Francisco I. Madero began his revolution on November 1910, the way for subsequent revolutionary leaders was paved. After being released from jail for challenging President Porfirio Díaz Madero crossed the Río Grande and headed towards Texas. At San Antonio he issued the *Plan De San Luís Potosí*, where he defined his platform against the federal government. Militarily, Madero targeted control of Tamaulipas. He wanted to bring Tamaulipas under his control, specifically the border towns, because their location was strategically valuable. He needed a large supply of arms to overthrow Díaz.¹

In late 1910 and early 1911, *Maderistas* were active in the state of Chihuahua. As the movement gained momentum, it spread to Tamaulipas and Nuevo León. In Tamaulipas, uprisings occurred in the southern region near the state capital, Ciudad Victoria where Professor Alberto Carrera Torres organized a group known as the *Voluntarios de Tamaulipas* to fight Díaz's forces. In the northern sector in Matamoros, citizens gradually received threats from bands of *Maderistas*.

In late 1910, the *Maderistas* began to plan attacks on Matamoros. Rumors reached General Lauro Villar, a Matamorenses in command of the *Huertistas* that a group of *Maderistas* planned to attack the city. General Villar dismissed the reports and stated that he had been informed regarding the tranquility of the vicinity.²

Matamoros officials and citizens became alarmed when a group of *Maderistas* was spotted along the Río Grande in late November 1910. The Reynosa military commander had been keeping a close watch on a band of about 100 mounted men across the river in Hidalgo, Texas. The men attempted to cross to Reynosa but were repelled by the soldiers guarding the garrison. Immediately, the *Maderistas* headed east towards Matamoros. Military officials reacted by sending extra patrols to secure the river and ordered a search near Las Rucias ranch several miles outside Matamoros. After failing to capture any of the men, the patrols headed back to the garrison. Later, two mounted men from Soto la Marina, south of Matamoros, were detained. The men were suspected of being involved with the Reynosa incident because they carried large amounts of ammunition, pistols, and rifles.³

Maderistas continued plotting to take over Matamoros prompting civilians and federal officials to prepare for an assault. In early 1911 word reached Matamoros that armed Mexicans were spotted in Brownsville and other Valley towns recruiting men for the Revolution. To make matters worse, reports of twenty-five mounted Mexicans were spotted in Mercedes on January 25.⁴ US officials detained the individuals but they were released due to insufficient evidence. Moreover, Matamoros authorities received word that 400 Mexicans were preparing to cross into Mexico. Its leader Higinio Tanguma had been a *Magonista*⁵ before the Madero Revolution. He had followers in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Nueces counties. However, Tanguma's plot failed when he was detained in Brownsville on February 17, 1911.⁶

Political rule in Matamoros did not immediately change as *Maderistas* began acquiring more national territory. By early 1911, however, Matamorenses began organizing 'Madero Clubs.' Matamorenses feared change and were unsure if Madero

could lead the nation, thus the shift to *Maderismo* was a gradual one. *Diaista* Mayor Fructuoso Dávila, who knew Madero's capture of Ciudad Juarez would strengthen Madero and perhaps influence Matamorenses, resigned on June 1911. To his surprise, 500 citizens protested his resignation. Dávila left office and Dr. Alfredo Pumarejo replaced him as mayor.⁷

Matamoros officials remained unwilling to accept Madero and continued to suppress any rebel activity in the vicinity. Those suspected of being rebel sympathizers were apprehended. One Mexican citizen, Pedro Barreda, the founder and editor of *El Matamorensense*, was arrested on April 1911 for writing pro-revolutionary propaganda. Along with Barreda, Anarcasis Lara, a *Maderista* was also jailed. However, Lara had succeeded in recruiting several men.⁸

In May, another *Maderista* Pedro Antonio de los Santos prepared to launch an attack on Matamoros. De los Santos had established an anti-Díaz newspaper, *El Reconquistador*, to promote the rebel cause. After he published four editions he was jailed. Having been imprisoned in Matamoros for several weeks, he had escaped and left to Brownsville under the assumed name "Mr. Neshitt." Shortly after, Brownsville officials discovered a large cargo, 350 Mauser rifles and 150,000 cartridges, in the Brownsville Hardware Store. According to the hardware owner the supplies were for "stock." Several weeks later, a "Mr. Neshitt" purchased a large quantity of arms and ammunition at the hardware store. The Brownsville authorities were not able to trace the man who purchased the supplies but they remained suspicious. While in Brownsville, de los Santos recruited close to 400 Mexican men. Apparently, de los Santos was sent by Madero to attack Matamoros. By sending de los Santos to the eastern end of the border, Madero hoped to secure an eastern port of entry. However, a

spy notified the Brownsville captain at Fort Brown who then reported the news to federal officials. Brownsville authorities reacted by ordering American troops to guard the bridge and all accessible river points.⁹

Pedro de los Santos' plan to capture Matamoros failed. The local newspaper printed a story stating that de los Santos had become ill with typhoid fever. Even if de los Santos had attempted to cross into Matamoros, the border was well guarded and a military assault would have been risky.¹⁰

In nearby Nuevo León, rebel activity affected Matamorenses by delaying the train service between Monterrey and Matamoros. Because *Maderistas* were gradually moving east and securing supplies from the US, their attacks on Aldamas as well as other Nuevo León cities pressured government troops in Matamoros to prepare for a *Maderistas* assault. By May, at Aldamas, a band of about 700 *Maderistas* under Colonel Celedonio Villarreal awaited instructions to proceed to Matamoros.¹¹

The disturbances several miles outside of Matamoros affected town activity. General Francisco Estrada, the federal commander of the Matamoros garrison, declared that if Matamoros was attacked his men would respond with a counterattack. After learning that rebels were approaching, Estrada added he would defend the town with his own life.

As Colonel Villarreal advanced farther east Estrada quickly ordered soldiers to prepare a defense for Matamoros on May 25. He contacted Brownsville officials and asked them to keep an eye for violations of neutrality. Brownsville military officials responded by sending soldiers from Fort Brown to patrol the river. Matamoros officials increased their guards at the ferries. Despite the preparations, the 180-men garrison did not experience military activity because Villarreal's attack never developed.

Awaiting the resignation of President Porfirio Díaz, Francisco Madero sent Jesús de los Santos Mendiola to Matamoros to discuss the possibility of a peace agreement to avoid a military confrontation. Madero instructed Mendiola to prevent any attacks on Matamoros as well as other border towns of Tamaulipas. Madero had informed him that during peace talks he would not tolerate rebellious activity. Apparently, Madero wanted to secure territory without a military confrontation. During his stay in the town, Mendiola informed Matamorenses that several hundred *Maderistas* would be transported to Matamoros for their protection from Nuevo León if they accepted Madero. Despite negotiations, Matamoros remained under federal control.¹²

Maderistas exploited the town's location to secure supplies. Throughout the first half of 1911, several shipments were sent to Brownsville en route to Matamoros. These supplies were held in Brownsville because Mexican authorities wanted to prevent *Maderistas* from obtaining them.

The majority of the military supplies were shipped by train to other Mexican points. On one occasion, J.M. Nixon, agent of the Mexican National Railroad,¹³ notified Matamoros officials that he had visited several areas between Matamoros and Monterrey where he had consulted with a group of *Maderistas*. Nixon informed authorities that the rebels claimed they would not cause any problems. The discussions between Nixon and *Maderistas*, however, did nothing to ease the officials' worries because there were close to 600 *Maderistas* who had designs on nearby towns.¹⁴

There were rumors in Matamoros that *Maderistas* were using Brownsville as their base of operations. In March, US officials arrested six Mexicans in Brownsville on charges of violation of the neutrality laws.¹⁵ As a response, Matamoros officials decided on a plan of action in case of a possible attack. General Francisco Estrada suggested

that all businessmen in Matamoros donate an equal sum every month to maintain a group of volunteer soldiers. General Estrada argued that in addition to the volunteer group, at least forty to fifty Matamorenses from the different communities should form one group and offer their services once a week, all on a rotation basis.¹⁶

Throughout the month of March and April, to further the defense of the city, town council officials submitted a proposal for telephone services to connect the police station with the international bridge and the checkpoint Santa Cruz. They agreed on the proposal and plans to furnish telephone service in the requested areas were well on their way. Telephone preparation would insure communication between all major points in Matamoros.¹⁷ Government officials also offered 45 pesos a month to volunteers.¹⁸

The garrison continued receiving threats from bands of *Maderistas* throughout those months. A group of individuals armed with 100 rifles and 20,000 rounds of ammunition set up revolutionary *juntas*. The Mexican Consul Alberto Leal, in Rio Grande City, informed Matamoros officials that the *Maderistas* were approaching Camargo.¹⁹

Throughout 1911, detachments of troops from Fort Sam Houston were ordered to Brownsville where they patrolled various points along the river. US troops captured several Mexicans crossing the river. They were arrested and charged them with violating the neutrality laws. The men planned to recruit and attract men to the *Maderista* revolution.²⁰

Despite US attempts to curb violations of its neutrality acts, Americans were sympathetic to revolutionaries. In fact, all revolutionary movements in Matamoros received support from citizens in the US. Border citizens assisted the revolutionary government of Madero. The laxness on the laws strengthened the Madero revolt.²¹

By May, the Matamoros garrison had fifty soldiers from Monterrey, two hundred volunteers, and twenty-five mounted civilians from Matamoros. Several other civilians were armed. Patrols were increased throughout the city as a means of precaution. In addition, the garrison received 30,000 rounds of ammunition from the US.²² Despite federal preparation in Matamoros, Madero's threat to Díaz increased. The victory at Ciudad Juarez on May 10 brought an important border town under *Maderista* control and weakened Díaz' control.

Díaz resigned on May 1911. With his resignation, the *Maderistas* did not attack Matamoros and Matamorenses escaped bloodshed. Matamorenses participated in the presidential elections sending 114 delegates to the electoral congress. On October 1911 Madero was elected president.²³

Since *Maderista* Santos Mendiola had assured Matamorenses peace and security, he requested a large group of *Maderista* soldiers to protect the city. In the summer of 1911, close to 218 men arrived in Matamoros. Although these extra men were to aid the soldiers stationed in Matamoros, US Consul Johnson became irritated with the new Mexican soldiers and the entire situation. He requested help and more US troops to be sent to the border in case hostilities broke out. Because several US troops had been ordered to leave Brownsville, Consul Johnson felt this had a bad effect on the border situation and urged the State Department to send more troops.²⁴

The Matamoros garrison under Madero soon received threats from other revolutionary groups. By late 1911 and early 1912, river crossings and smuggling activities increased as different revolutionary factions, discontent with Madero's administration emerged. Madero had kept many politicians who had worked for the Díaz's government. Liberals felt his government was too conservative while

conservatives felt that he was too liberal. Although Madero had advocated free elections and had improved the *campesinos*' condition by providing loans, individuals demanded immediate implementation of the programs identified in his *Plan de San Luis Potosí*.²⁵ Thus, various factions organized to challenge Madero.

Among the revolutionary leaders that emerged was General Bernardo Reyes. Reyes argued that Madero's government was too radical. Reyes was a strong traditionalist who wished to install a government similar to Don Porfirio's to satisfy the conservative elite in Mexico. Reyes' support predominantly came from Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, and Coahuila.

According to several secret agents of the Bureau of Investigation, General Reyes planned to attack Matamoros. Most of the military supplies smuggled into Mexico on Reyes' orders crossed through Laredo and Brownsville. These smuggling activities resulted in thirty-six indictments involving violations of the neutrality laws.²⁶

As the *Reyista* movement evolved, many Matamorenses crossed to Brownsville and joined the *Reyistas*. Several *Reyistas* in Brownsville awaited shipments of military supplies. According to reports, another group of *Reyistas* purchased 30-30 guns in San Antonio and transported them to Brownsville for their attack on Matamoros.²⁷ Reyes planned to secure the northeastern states and use them as a base of operation to take over other states. Throughout their movement, the *Reyistas* were able to secure military materials from the US and transport them to border towns.

On October of that year, several prominent Mexicans met with General Reyes in San Antonio to plan their military campaign in the Mexican border towns. Milton Ramos met with General Reyes to plan the appointment of commanders for Nuevo León, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas. US officials along the border informed the State

Department that the *Reyista* movement was "at full force" based on reports by secret agents Fred Lancaster and Joe Priest. The two agents had been following General Reyes in his San Antonian headquarters and provided detailed accounts of his revolutionary activities.²⁸

General Rómulo Cuellar, who had been a strong Díaz supporter, planned to launch an attack on Matamoras in favor of the *Reyistas* in November. When Cuellar heard that General Estrada had fully prepared to withstand an attack, he crossed to Brownsville and signed documents with the *Reyistas* offering his support. To Cuellar's misfortune, US officials in Brownsville apprehended him for fomenting another revolution. General Cuellar assured the authorities of his innocence and pleaded to be released. US officials finally released Cuellar and he immediately headed to San Antonio to meet with General Reyes. Several weeks later, Cuellar's nephew, Samuel García Cuellar, confirmed American officials' suspicions and argued that his uncle probably planned to attack Matamoras.²⁹ Although Samuel García Cuellar was General Cuellar's nephew, he had supported the Díaz government and aided the federals in Casas Grandes against the *Maderista* forces and had no interest in the *Reyista* plot.³⁰

Nevertheless, secret agents confirmed General Cuellar's plans, despite his innocent pleas. Agent Chamberlain, who had also been following General Bernardo Reyes' steps closely in San Antonio, reported that Reyes himself had informed him of Cuellar's plans. Reyes had ordered Cuellar chief commander of Tamaulipas, to direct an army to attack Matamoras before the end of the year.

Eugenio Cuellar, General Cuellar's son, had orders from Reyes to attack San Fernando, a small ranching community southwest of Matamoras and then march onward to attack the port city. However, federal officials in San Fernando arrested Eugenio

Cuellar in December 1911 before he could execute his attack. Although *Reyistas* never captured Matamoros, they took advantage of its proximity to the United States. They stored large quantities of arms and ammunition in Brownsville and Laredo.³¹

When General Reyes finally decided to cross into Mexico, he and several of his men, including the Sheriff of Webb County, Amador Sanchez, were quickly apprehended near Laredo. Reyes had received support from Sanchez who had large mining interests in northern Mexico. Several weeks after his arrest, General Reyes was released on bond. By December Reyes had fled to Mexico through Mier. General Reyes claimed that his arrest was based on false evidence and argued that he had not violated the neutrality acts. To prove his innocence, Reyes sent his son, Rodolfo and a group of lawyers to consult with US officials in Washington D.C regarding his case. However, Reyes' good fortune did not last long.³²

In January, another *Reyista*, Ismael Reyes Retana was arrested on Dr. Miguel Barragán, Mexican Consul in Brownsville, request for violating the neutrality acts. Reyes Retana like his brother, David Reyes Retana, planned to assist General Reyes in attacking Matamoros. According to the officer who arrested Reyes Retana, documents were found in his possession pointing to his involvement with General Reyes. Retana was released to Mexican authorities in Matamoros.³³

Throughout the Reyes Revolution, *Maderistas* worried as smuggling along the Río Grande increased. Brownsville Collector of Customs, R.G. Creager, reported a large shipment of boxes arriving from New York via Galveston. The shipment of 100 Mauser rifles and 400,000 cartridges arrived in the local hardware store, which was then purchased by an unidentified man. Creager complained and argued the supplies were probably for revolutionaries, but the man was not questioned and the store allowed him

to purchase the materials. Creager also found that shipments of carloads of ammunition, explosives, and 150 rifle cartons were being delivered every week to several points in southern Texas from New Orleans. The majority of these shipments were sent to Brownsville, where revolutionaries stored them as they plotted to overthrow the Madero government.³⁴

The last *Reyista* attempt to capture Matamoros, involved Antonio Echazarreta in late 1912. A band of *Reyistas* under his command assaulted a train travelling from Monterrey to Matamoros and succeeded to cut off communications. *Reyista* designs on Matamoros never materialized, because of US officials' efforts who closely patrolled the border region.³⁵

Reacting to the *Reyista* movement *Maderista* officials stationed soldiers to patrol the border. To relieve the problem of rebels planning an attack, Madero's *Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores* cooperated with US secret agencies. Agencies also worked towards preventing Mexican nationals from using the US as the base of their operations.³⁶

Conditions remained the same throughout 1912 with sporadic rebel activities in Matamoros. Aside from the *Reyistas*, other revolutionaries disillusioned with Madero's government continued to plague the Texas-Mexico border. In mid 1912, reports reached Matamoros that a group of *Vasquistas*, a Chihuahuan rebel faction supporting Emilio Vásquez Gómez, planned to attack the town. To Matamorenses' luck, the group of *Vasquista* revolutionaries attacked San Fernando instead.³⁷

The *Reyista* Revolution was not successful. By late 1912, Reyes had been jailed in Mexico City. While in jail, he joined Félix Díaz, and launched an attack on President Madero on February 1913. The attack lasted from February 9 to 18, and is referred to

the “Decena Trágica.” Matamorenses General Lauro Villar directed the military campaign against Reyes and Díaz. In this decisive battle, both Reyes and Villar lost their lives. President Madero immediately appointed General Victoriano Huerta to take Villar’s place. General Huerta collaborated with Díaz and the US Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson, and decided to overthrow Madero. Huerta’s betrayal of Madero was followed by his order to assassinate him on February 22.³⁸

Without further delay, General Huerta became Mexico’s president. The people of Matamoros soon experienced Huerta’s harsh way of governing. He ordered the arrest of Matamorenses, Anacársis Lara, Raúl Gárate Legleu, Martín Espinosa, and Miguel Garibay, whom he accused of conspiring against him. However, the men were released and headed to the border where upon their arrival they joined the forces of *Maderista* Venustiano Carranza.³⁹

Only a couple of days before President Francisco I. Madero’s death, uprisings in favor of General Huerta and Félix Díaz occurred in several border towns, including Matamoros. By February 1913, supporters of Felix Díaz in Matamoros took advantage of Madero’s death and pledged allegiance to Díaz and Huerta. Because Major Esteban Ramos, an officer in the military garrison, was a close friend of Felix Díaz, the *Felicista* and *Huertista* “coup was managed without a shot being fired.” Several officers refused to support the Huerta-Díaz faction, among them General Estrada, who sought refuge in the US Consulate.⁴⁰

The take-over of Matamoros occurred on February 17, 1913. The 150 *rurales* and 120 soldiers pledged allegiance to the Díaz-Huerta faction. It was no surprise that *Huertista* and Díaz supporters immediately filled city positions. Those who did not comply were simply jailed. Dr. Miguel Barragán had served as mayor, replaced the

municipal president, Casimiro Sada. In addition, Major Ramos replaced Customs Collector with Antonio Echazarreta, who had supported Reyes and was also in command of the irregulars. Finally, Manuel Reina replaced Rafael González as chief of police. Although the city remained quite calm, officials suspended all activities of the international bridge connecting Matamoros with Brownsville until all positions had been filled. The situation in Matamoros seemed overall quiet with Díaz-Huerta officials now in control.⁴¹

By the end of February 1913, Major Esteban Ramos and the *Huertista* soldiers did not encounter any opposing military activity. This peace was relatively short-lived. The only disturbance in February 1913 occurred in a ranch near Matamoros. A large group of Mexicans in Brownsville had in their possession close to 100,000 rounds of ammunition and plenty of rifles. They crossed into Matamoros and raided a ranch.⁴² The raid probably resulted from their dissatisfaction with the Huerta-Díaz rule. There was a significant number of Matamorenses who had sympathized with Madero and were upset at the way the president had been disposed. It was this group and other ex-*Maderistas* along the border that eventually supported the growing factions that emerged following his assassination.

Beginning with the Porfirio Díaz period, Matamoros resisted revolutionary movements. The military garrison received arms and ammunition, the majority from the US, for defensive purposes. When *Maderistas* threatened Matamoros, they used the town's proximity to US territory to their advantage. *Maderistas* secretly met in Brownsville to plot their attacks on Matamoros. After Madero's entrance to Mexico City in June 1911 and the presidential elections, Matamoros came under Madero's control. *Maderistas* received war materials and this steady supply of arms helped

prepare them from potential confrontations with counter-revolutionaries, such as the *Reyistas*. During the attempted Reyes revolt, *Reyistas* received arms and ammunition from New Orleans and other US points and stored vital supplies for their revolution in Brownsville.

The *Maderista* and *Reyista* activity in Matamoros demonstrate the value of the town. These factions wanted to control Matamoros because of its location. It facilitated the acquisition of arms and ammunition, which strengthened their movements. When the *Maderistas* captured the town, they were able to secure weapons from the US. These supplies were vital in their defense of the town against the *Reyistas*. The *Reyista* attempts to acquire the town resembled the *Maderistas*, but they were not successful in capturing the town, primarily because of US cooperation. Like the *Maderistas* and *Reyistas*, the *Carrancistas* looked towards Matamoros for an eastern port of entry. After President Madero's assassination, *Maderistas* joined Venustiano Carranza in support of his *Plan de Guadalupe*. In 1913 *Carrancistas* brought another wave of military activity to Matamoros.⁴³

CHAPTER 3

HUERTISTA-CONTROLLED MATAMOROS AND CARRANCISTA THREATS: EARLY SPRING 1913

As in 1911 and 1912 the US kept up with the Mexican situation and by April of 1913 the State Department contacted Consul Johnson requesting information on the political and military situation in Matamoros. Consul Johnson replied that Matamoros was quiet. The only disturbance, a minimal one though, was increased traffic due to the *Carrancistas'* attack on nearby Nuevo Laredo. In addition, south of Matamoros, *Carrancistas* destroyed telegraphic lines and vital bridges. Johnson informed Secretary William Jennings Bryan that Matmorenses supported President Huerta and appeared to be quite calm.¹

The *Carrancistas* campaign to capture Matamoros unlike the *Maderistas'* or *Reyistas'* was better organized. Carranza unlike Bernardo Reyes had formed an army, which resembled some of the modern armies of the world. Carranza's stronghold was in the north, primarily in the states of Coahuila, Chihuahua, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas.

As *Carrancistas* moved farther east, military activity increased. During April, rumors surfaced that a twenty-five to thirty *Carrancistas* band was operating near Mier. Approximately one hundred *Huertista* soldiers from the *Matamoros* military garrison headed towards the town. Along the way, a military skirmish occurred two days before Matamorenses soldiers arrived in nearby Guerrero, causing the *Carrancistas* to disperse.² However, on April 11, *Carrancistas* captured Camargo. Shortly after the incident,

Matamorenses' worries escalated due to the surrounding military activity along the border.

Increased *Carrancista* military activity affected transportation to and from Matamoros, forcing railroad operators to cancel daily trains to Monterrey and Mexico City. *Carrancistas* burned the San Juan Bridge near the Tamaulipas-Nuevo León border. This hindered the transportation of military supplies for the *Huertistas* and kept citizens from traveling to Monterrey. Increasingly Matamorenses *Huertistas* skirmished with the *Carrancistas* in several points in southwest Tamaulipas.³

By the spring of 1913, Venustiano Carranza took a more defined course of action. He ordered Coahuilense General Lucio Blanco and his army to lead an attack on Los Aldamas, southwest of Matamoros. *Huertistas* from Matamoros headed to Los Aldamas to aid the 125 soldiers stationed in the Monterrey garrison. The combined force quickly repulsed the *Carrancistas*. A Monterrey train transported the wounded *Huertistas* back to Matamoros for medical attention. Another train arrived in Matamoros carrying soldiers to help repair the destroyed San Juan and Los Aldamas bridge. Fearing a surprise *Carrancista* attack, *Huertista* officials left a regiment of about 200 soldiers to guard the bridges.⁴

Carrancistas did not only skirmish with *Huertistas*. They also raided nearby ranches to obtain weapons and food supplies. In late April, a group of *Carrancistas* raided a ranch that belonged to Colonel Francisco García, a *Huertista* officer. The *Carrancistas* took food, weapons, and several horses. They also threatened to burn the homes of area residents if they did not provide funds for the army. They burned a home belonging to General Rómulo Cuéllar, who had been involved with the *Reyista* movement and was now an outspoken supporter of Félix Díaz. The rebels then proceeded to confiscate

supplies. Rarely did citizens contribute money voluntarily. On one occasion, however, people in San Fernando voluntarily gave 3,000 pesos to Blanco's army. *Carrancistas* continued raiding and burning homes.⁵

That month, a detachment of *Carrancistas* under Colonel José Peña, a former *Maderista* arrived near San Miguel and Camargo. After *Huertista* officials arrested him, the Colonel disguised himself as a priest and escaped crossing the river to US territory. Officers suspected that Colonel Peña planned an attack on the area. Fortunately, for Matamorenses, Peña's attack did not materialize, but he joined General Blanco, who commanded the military campaign in that area as well. By the end of April *Carrancistas* had gained significant territory.⁶

Also, in April, citizens continued to spot *Carrancistas* throughout northeastern Tamaulipas. Blanco's army had attacked the town of Jiménez and citizens reported a group of rebels at Soldaditos. A couple of days after their victory at Jiménez, Colonel Jesús Agustín Castro and his *Cuerpo Rural* joined Blanco. Colonel Castro had skirmished with *Huertistas* near Ciudad Victoria, but had failed to make a serious advance and the capitol remained under *Huertista* control.⁷

In late April, as *Carrancistas* approached Matamoros, railroad operators worried that rail lines would be destroyed by the rebels. *Huertistas* took precautions when they expected trains from Matamoros by requesting more guards. The general agent of the Mexican National Railway in Matamoros refused to cooperate with the officers. He argued that a reliable source had reported five hundred *Carrancistas* in the vicinity planning to prevent the train from reaching Mexico City. Moreover, the general agent claimed that if the rebels seized the train, they could make a quick entry into Matamoros. He argued he would not permit the *Carrancistas* to use his train to capture the city.

Several Mexicans reported that a group of *Carrancistas* in the Río Bravo vicinity was preparing to attack Matamoros. Although citizens claimed the individuals were *Carrancistas*, some authorities claimed they were *Huertista* troops. Nevertheless, the reports worried the citizens and forced officers from Río Bravo and Matamoros to maintain a watchful eye.⁸

A merchant from Reynosa also informed the local newspaper that no major engagements had occurred between the federals and the band of *Carrancistas*. He reported that the few rebels in the Río Bravo vicinity were disarmed. Several *Huertista* detachments were stationed between the town of Mier and Matamoros. They assured the Matamorenses military authorities they would respond to prevent a serious attack if *Carrancistas* threatened any area along the Río Grande. Another captain from Matamoros ordered 120 *Huertistas* to Reynosa and a Monterrey detachment under Captain Aurelio Farfán arrived in Matamoros to augment the number of soldiers.⁹ *Huertistas* were determined to halt Carranza's military campaign that was challenging their authority in the northeast. In less than a month, General Lucio Blanco had taken the towns of Burgos, Méndez, San Fernando, Jiménez, Mier, and Camargo.¹⁰

Major Esteban Ramos prepared his men by requesting one hundred rifles and ammunition from Brownsville city officials. Brownsville authorities responded by asking Ramos to request the military supplies through proper channels. Earlier that month, Secretary Bryan had sent memorandums to all consular officers, including Matamoros prohibiting the exportation of war materials. However, the US exempted shipments intended for the *Huertista* army. Secretary Bryan argued that it was imperative that exportation of these materials continued to prevent a number of industrial enterprises to close, which created unemployment. Secretary Bryan clearly supported US

businessmen who were involved in the exportation of arms. If Bryan had not supported these corporations, this would have seriously hindered Major Ramos' chances of preparing for Blanco's inevitable attack.¹¹

On May 1, General Blanco sent a letter to US newspapers, claiming that many *Tamaulipecos* gladly welcomed Venustiano Carranza as their provisional president.¹² Many citizens believed US officials wanted to take over several states on Mexico's northern border. Anti-American public demonstrations occurred and several anti-American flyers circulated in Brownsville until authorities confiscated the literature. Officials fearing for US lives demanded protection for them in Matamoros.¹³

Tensions rose in Matamoros in early May resulting in the arrest of many US citizens who were suspected of cooperating with the *Carrancistas*. A Matamoros military official arrested William Crafts, a former Brownsville police officer, who was visiting Matamoros and charged him with aiding the *Carrancistas*.¹⁴

Carrancistas attempted to stop telegraphic communication between Monterrey and Matamoros and succeeded in cutting telegraphic lines preventing passenger trains from arriving in Matamoros. As Matamoros officials heard of rebel advances and their preparations, they took measures to augment their supplies. They purchased horses in nearby La Sautena and had them corralled in Soldaditos. To the officials' misfortune and surprise, one of the captains and 35 men from the Matamoros federal garrison picked up the 800 horses and headed towards Matamoros. However, the horses were stolen by a band of *Carrancistas*. The men had no choice but to flee to Matamoros, because the *Carrancistas* outnumbered them.¹⁵

General Blanco's presence near Matamoros caused officials to grow increasingly anxious. Major Esteban Ramos had been waiting for nearly two weeks for military

supplies. By mid-May the military garrison received 83 guns and close to 10,000 rounds of ammunition, which in turn helped him raise the morale of the soldiers. In addition, Ramos secured supplies from Monterrey despite the *Carrancistas* bridge-burning rampage and continuous destruction of the railroad line.¹⁶

Although Matamoros officials experienced some delays in obtaining war materials from Monterrey, US policy permitted military supplies to cross over to Mexico only to the *Huertista* government. Part of the agreement stated that US officials had to oversee that all arms were directed to the *Huertista* government and not to the rebels, which proved difficult to enforce. Despite both the US and Mexican federal government's attempt to keep military supplies from the hands of the *Carrancistas*, they managed to obtain these supplies after they were transported to Matamoros. Once the shipments were directed to other *Huertista*-controlled areas, *Carrancistas* found ways to acquire the materials. *Carrancistas* did everything possible to secure war materials because this was key to controlling the strategic town. Control of the town further facilitated the importation of arms. In areas where there were small *Huertista* garrisons, such as Soto La Marina River (southeast of the Río Grande) *Carrancistas* confiscated these vital supplies.¹⁷

Meanwhile, waiting for the arrival of General Blanco's army, the soldiers at the Matamoros garrison continued their preparations throughout May. Major Esteban Ramos ordered Captains Manuel Hermosillo and Alvarez to inspect all fortifications in the town. Ramos suggested the use of old buildings in an emergency. Matamorenses soldiers, nevertheless, occupied their only real garrison. Soldiers also built makeshift fortifications in the Juarez plaza and prepared for the inevitable attack.¹⁸

Once the garrison was well equipped with two gattling guns and an adequate supply of ammunition, authorities felt confident. Major Ramos updated the Matamorenses on the military preparations in order to secure their support. The federals expected to fight the *Carrancistas* outside the city and then, if necessary, gradually move to the fortified building. Military authorities had enough dirt sacks to create a wall surrounding *La Casa Mata*. They also placed “waste-high” barbed wires charged with 2500 volts around the town. Moreover, officials assured citizens that their military preparations would guarantee them a victory. However, this did not prevent many citizens from fleeing across the river.¹⁹

As *Huertistas* prepared for their defense of the town, Blanco’s forces took border towns west of Matamoros. Before proceeding to Matamoros, 400 *Carrancistas* under Colonel Cesareo Castro headed to Reynosa and attacked the 250-men garrison under Colonel Victor Piña. The engagement lasted four hours and the town fell to the *Carrancistas*. Twenty-one *Huertistas* crossed to Hidalgo and another group headed to Matamoros. Fearing for their lives, most of the inhabitants of Reynosa fled to Hidalgo as well. Hidalgo authorities arrested fourteen of the twenty-one soldiers who fled, while doctors from different Valley towns provided medical attention to the wounded soldiers. One newspaper claimed five dead and fifteen wounded *Huertistas*, while another reported almost 30 dead and approximately 60 wounded. The *Carrancistas* also burned buildings in Reynosa and burned a train. Because Matamorenses followed Reynosa’s events closely, the defeat instilled fear in the city.²⁰

Immediately after their victory in Reynosa, the *Carrancistas* headed towards Río Bravo, east of the town. Almost all of the 500 citizens in Río Bravo fled to the US side. *Carrancistas* moved towards Río Bravo within a short time and destroyed most of the

town. Because Río Bravo's prosperity relied on a prominent seed company, La Compañía Agrícola, whose principal stockholders supported Victoriano Huerta and Félix Díaz, *Carrancistas* quickly destroyed it. A 34-year old employee from the seed company, Juan Alamía, was brutally shot twice in the head and was hung from a water tower. Moreover, a *Carrancista* colonel executed Mayor Exiquio de la Garza.²¹

Meanwhile, Colonel Luis Caballero who would later play a major role in the assault of Matamoros, joined Blanco's army in mid-May. *Carrancista* Colonel José Peña, who had fled to US territory, also joined Blanco. Approximately 500 men under Colonel Peña remained in Río Bravo. In addition, two Mexican doctors crossed the Río Grande to join the general's medical staff.²² The *Carrancistas* now controlled Río Bravo and the Compañía Agrícola. Blanco then sent word to Policarpo Sauto, the seed company general manager who was visiting Matamoros, and urged him to immediately return to Río Bravo. Sauto believed the *Carrancistas* had good intentions, but to his surprise, they arrested him and asked for 25,000 pesos for his release to purchase supplies.²³

The victories at Guerrero, Mier, Reynosa, and Río Bravo, raised the *Carrancista* soldiers' spirits and motivated them as they prepared to march onward to Matamoros where a 300 army awaited them. Although this was quite a large force, it did not match up to the six hundred *Carrancistas*. The *Huertistas*, continued preparing for the assault. They dug out a 40-pound cannon, baptized it with the name of "El Niño," and placed it in the electric plant in the northwestern end of the city. *Huertistas* continued fortifying the fort, main plaza, and the Mercado Juarez. Major Ramos maintained control of the situation especially after more federal soldiers reinforced his garrison. By late May *Huertistas* augmented their arms and supplies. Officials daily received about \$50 worth of bread to feed the men. While Major Ramos prepared to defend the town, General

Blanco commented to *La Prensa*, a San Antonio newspaper, that in commemoration of the Ciudad Juárez victory, his army would attack Matamoros. Blanco's statement forced a large segment of the population to flee from Matamoros. As rumors spread throughout the town of a large group of men coming from the south and another group from the west, many business owners closed their shops and pleaded with Major Ramos to surrender.²⁴

General Blanco, already in the outskirts of Matamoros sent a message to Major Ramos on May 25 urging him to surrender the town to avoid casualties among citizens. Blanco, persistent in his request, gave Ramos ample time and assured him that he had enough men and arms to capture Matamoros. General Blanco added that if the *Huertistas* surrendered all the arms and ammunition, officers could have all types of guarantees, including pardons. General Blanco believed that it was "useless to employ soldiers for the absurdity to defend a traitor and a militaristic dictator." He added that he was willing to accept *Huertistas* into his army. Blanco sent the same message to Consul Johnson, Casimiro Sada García, *Presidente Municipal* and the commander of the irregulars, Antonio Echazarreta.²⁵

General Blanco believed that Matamorenses should not die for a military dictator. His patriotic tone in his warning letter reflected the Constitutionalists' principle and democratic ideals. He argued that the restoration of constitutional government was the foundation of the movement. However, his ideals did not touch Ramos, who responded by stating he was going to fight.²⁶

In the same letter, General Blanco urged Consul Johnson to communicate to all US citizens in Matamoros to immediately evacuate the town and. He also stated that they prohibit *Huertistas* from using their shops. Johnson feared the US businesses could be

shelled and pleaded with the citizens to follow his instructions. Before the *Carrancista* attack, many women, children, and federal soldiers, who deserted the garrison, took refuge in Brownsville. Approximately 5,000 Matamorenses, crossed the border to avoid the clash between the federals and the *Carrancistas*. Wealthy refugees stayed in Brownsville's better hotels, but the majority of the refugees packed charity homes and slept wherever they could. Several Americans who decided to stay in Matamoros placed US flags outside their homes and shops for protection and as a sign of neutrality. As citizens fled and shops closed, schools were forced to postpone classes as well. Reverend Ross of the Mexican Presbyterian Church in Brownsville urged teachers and other citizens to leave Matamoros. Although several teachers did not want to leave Matamoros, they finally did.²⁷

The *Huertistas* continued preparing for the defense of the town with nine heavy guns including the old canon. Surprisingly, a party of Matamorenses *Huertistas* purchased ammunition in Reynosa, which was under *Carrancista* control, to increase the garrison's defense supplies. The garrison also waited to receive *Huertista* reinforcements from Monterrey. However, *Carrancistas* Felix Lozano and Absalón Lozano along with a group of men attacked the train carrying the reinforcements in the "Milpas" train depot preventing their arrival. The *Carrancistas*' activities continued to threaten the stability of the *Huertistas*.²⁸

Venustiano Carranza's efforts to topple Huerta resulted in increased military activity in Matamoros and the surrounding vicinity. *Carrancistas* under General Blanco gradually gained momentum and began their military campaign in the northeast to take control of the Mexican border. Throughout the spring of 1913, *Carrancistas* cut lines of communication, destroyed bridges, and held up trains. Once the *Carrancistas* gained

victories in Jiménez, San Fernando, Mier, and Camargo, federal officials at Matamoros began to worry. When Blanco captured Reynosa and Río Bravo, Major Ramos knew that Matamoros was next, given that the *Carrancistas* had begun a west to east movement along the border.

For the *Carrancistas*, Matamoros had to be secured. They had not captured an important border town that had access to the sea. In addition, if Matamoros was secured, more arms and ammunition could be acquired. General Blanco had been receiving supplies at his camp near Matamoros, but if his army secured the town, it would guarantee them a steady supply of weapons. Eventually, *Carrancistas* did secure Matamoros and supplies acquired from the US through Matamoros aided them in their military campaigns in other areas.

The low number of recruits, poor strategic planning, and continuing growth of the *Carrancistas*' popularity, contributed to the failure of the *Huertistas* in Matamoros. By the time *Carrancistas* attacked Matamoros, they outnumbered the *Huertistas*. As events unfolded, Matamoros moved a step closer to hosting a full-scale battle, the first major battle of the Revolution in northeastern Mexico.

CHAPTER 4

THE BATTLE FOR MATAMOROS, JUNE 1913

By the end of May General Lucio Blanco's forces had successfully seized Río Bravo and shortly afterwards reports circulated that his 600-man army awaited instructions to march east to Matamoros. Rumors that Blanco expected a reinforcement of another 500 men reached Matamoros causing concern among the *Huertistas*. *Carrancistas* in southern Tamaulipas and in Monterrey destroyed several rail lines preventing communications between Matamoros and the interior of Mexico. In addition, officials urged citizens to evacuate the town immediately.¹

Several *Huertistas* at the Matamoros garrison began to desert. On one occasion, seven armed men under Antonio Echazaretta's command fled the Matamoros garrison. Echazaretta succeeded in capturing three of the escapees intended to join the *Carrancistas* army. In spite of these desertions, Major Esteban Ramos encouraged his men by ensuring them that the town was well fortified with logs, sandbags, and barbed wire trenches.²

Several civilians who refused to take refuge in the US side came to the aid of the *Huertistas*. Well-mounted Matamorenses rancheros, numbering close to fifty, offered their service to Major Ramos. The *Huertistas* not only received help from men, but from women as well. A group of prominent young women headed by Señorita María González decided to form a "corp of defense" to help the military garrison. The properly armed

organization designated several women to "act as Red Cross nurses." With the help of men and women, the morale improved.³

Although General Blanco's army grew to 865 men his strategic plan consisted of executing his attack with at least 2000 men. Blanco claimed his men were all mounted, having secured the 800 horses from rancho Los "Soldaditos" near Reynosa. They were also well equipped with Mauser rifles and Winchester 30-30s. Colonel Jesús Agustín Castro and his 21st Regiment of *Rurales* were already at Blanco's disposition. The General waited for Lieutenant Colonel Porfirio González to arrive with 600 additional soldiers.⁴ Blanco also had 150 men under Lieutenant Colonel Luis Caballero. Raúl Gárate also arrived several days later and brought with him 30,000 rounds of ammunition. Reports also circulated that some 200 *Carrancistas* passed through Camargo and headed to Blanco's camp near Río Bravo.⁵

As news of General Blanco's reinforcements reached the Matamoros federal garrison, Major Ramos still refused to consider surrendering. Ramos stated he would not hesitate to shoot any messenger sent by Blanco and reported that he would not wait for the rebels to attack, but would go out to meet them. However, as events unfolded, the *Huertista* commander never planned an attack on the *Carrancistas*. He also refused to admit that Blanco commanded a large army.⁶

Before the attack, military officials in Matamoros claimed that several Brownsville officials were smuggling military supplies to the *Carrancistas*. Matamoros Mayor Dr. Miguel Barragán accused several members of the Brownsville police force of furnishing or delivering military supplies. Reports circulated that Blanco had received food, arms, and ammunition from US citizens while camped at Río Bravo. Determined to halt any assistance to the *Carrancistas*, Dr. Barragán ordered Mr. Bernatche, a French citizen, and

González Garza arrested and charged with conspiring against the *Huertista* government.⁷ Federal authorities also arrested David de la Fuente, a San Benito doctor on similar charges. Before de la Fuente was interrogated, he quickly “chewed up and swallowed a letter” from Carranza himself. He was shortly released, due to insufficient evidence and joined General Blanco in Río Bravo.⁸

Matamoros officials continued their preparations to defend the town. Major Ramos received 200 rifles and an adequate amount of ammunition from Mexico City. The arms were unloaded from the gunboat *Progreso* off Bagdad beach. The gunboat delivered two guns with twenty men to operate each gun.⁹

General Blanco left Río Bravo in late May and camped several miles southwest of Matamoros at Las Rucias ranch. Shortly afterwards, a 250-man *Carrancista* advance guard left the ranch and headed towards Matamoros. It settled about two miles from the town where 450 men joined them. According to several US citizens, Blanco's men possessed a considerable amount of weapons, many of which had been purchased in Brownsville.¹⁰

Although *Carrancista* preparations for the capture of Matamoros began in early April, the actual attack of the town began on June 2, 1913. General Blanco had three principal flanks. Colonel Luis Caballero and his *Tamaulipecos* headed towards San Fernando to attack Matamoros from the southwest. Colonels Cesareo Castro and Andrés Saucedo would attack the town from the south, entering through the rail station near the checkpoint on the road to Monterrey. Finally, General Blanco would attack Matamoros from the west.

Huertista officials, who were determined to fight and raise their men's morale before engaging in battle, ordered members of the Sixth Cavalry Band to carry out a musical

program with nationalistic songs. As the soldiers prepared to go in the trenches, they heard their national anthem. At the same time they took their positions, they heard the enemy's fire.¹¹

Beginning on June 2, Blanco ordered Colonel Castro to attack the electric plant. From the trenches outside the plant, Major Ramos urged his men to fight. Several hours later he was wounded causing the federals to become "disorganized." Three hours after Ramos had fled, the electric plant fell to the *Carrancistas*. The heavy firing had forced the federals beyond their fortification. The soldiers abandoned the plant fleeing into the interior of the town. Captured informed the location of mines planted around the electric plant. Once the *Carrancistas* took control of the electric plant they cut all wires carrying electric currents to the fences.

Securing the electric plant was an essential victory for the rebels because it was a step closer to seizing the military garrison. Once the electric plant was secured, the *Carrancistas* used it as a hospital. From this point, the rebels prepared to move closer to the main garrison and plaza.¹²

Later that evening, the *Carrancistas* began to move southeast of the electric plant to the interior of the town. Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Luis Caballero, *Carrancistas* immediately attacked the *Huertistas* in the trenches that surrounded the plaza. Some 400 *Carrancistas* that had remained at Las Rucias, headed towards Matamoros. Several men under Colonel Castro, who had previously attacked the electric plant, surprised a group of federals stationed at the Mexican end of the international bridge and secured the Matamoros customhouse.¹³ Another group of *Carrancistas* quickly burned several barracks occupied by *Huertistas*. They immediately proceeded to finish the rest of the *Huertista* army. General Blanco ordered a cannon attack and the fire quickly destroyed

the remaining army barracks and even damaged a cathedral. General Blanco's officer, Emiliano Nafarrate quickly secured the main plaza and forced the volunteers' to surrender.

By the time the *Carrancistas* attacked the main plaza, Major Ramos and most of the regular soldiers had fled to Brownsville leaving only volunteers and several regular soldiers to defend the town. Antonio Echazarreta, along with twenty-three men escaped to Brownsville and turned himself to the US authorities for protection. In fact, approximately 85 federal soldiers managed to cross the Río Grande to safety. Some *Huertistas* who were still in the trenches and fortifications near *La Casa Mata* and plaza Hidalgo fought to the end. Among the remaining officials were Major Crispín G. Medina and Mayor, Dr. Miguel Barragán, who later escaped by swimming across the river.¹⁴

During the battle, a large number of wounded *Huertistas* managed to escape to Brownsville. Eight other soldiers, exhausted by the fighting, also crossed the bridge. Many soldiers sought medical attention in Brownsville.¹⁵

There were twenty-eight *Carrancista* casualties and sixty to sixty-eight federal losses. *La Prensa* reported close to 300 wounded and dead for both sides. Casualty figures are not exact. Many of the bodies were buried in mass graves and some were burned in large lots and were not counted. General Blanco had ordered the bodies burned to avoid an epidemic.¹⁶

After securing the town, the *Carrancistas* equipped themselves with the supplies that the federals left behind. They obtained different caliber guns, ammunition, and close to 150 saddled horses. The military supplies proved helpful to the *Carrancista* soldiers because they used them in their subsequent attacks on other cities. In addition, securing

the *Huertista's* war materials was necessary because of a US embargo on munitions to others than the Huerta government.¹⁷

General Blanco immediately telegraphed Venustiano Carranza in Coahuila on the capture of Matamoros. He followed up with an official report of the battle. The *Carrancistas* held approximately sixty prisoners, including officers, waiting to be either pardoned or executed. Lieutenant Colonel Emiliano Nafarrate and Captain Otilio Falcón executed 19 young volunteers. Antonio Echazarreta, who had managed to escape to Brownsville, returned to Matamoros where he was captured and executed.¹⁸

Blanco was pleased and proud of his soldiers' actions. He informed Carranza that the men had fought courageously leaving the battlefield filled with cadavers. He asked Carranza to promote Lieutenant Colonel Luis Caballero to the rank of Colonel. The General also asked to promote Emiliano Nafarrate to the rank of Colonel.¹⁹

General Blanco promised the Mexican refugees in Brownsville a safe return. However, Matamorenses *Carrancista* sympathizers were slow to cross into Mexican territory. They feared a possible *Huertista* attempt to recapture the city. Blanco also released Casimiro Sada García who had been imprisoned. He reassumed the office of mayor. García had served as mayor after Dr. Alfredo Pumarejo.²⁰

General Blanco also asked a group of musicians from the Sixth Mexican Cavalry band to return. They received a proposition from General Blanco, who along with Captain Isaac Vallejo, asked them to continue as part of the city's band. They promised to pay them their normal salaries. They believed that it would raise the spirits of the wounded in the makeshift hospital of the electric plant. However, Mexican Inspector of Consulates, Arturo Elias, immediately protested the action, because Consul Johnson had delivered the message to the detained musicians in Brownsville. Consul Elias argued

that Johnson had no business meddling in Mexican affairs. Despite *Carrancista* efforts to persuade the band to return, the musicians refused to cross to Matamoros claiming allegiance to President Huerta.²¹

The *Carrancistas* also used this victory to deal with issues relating to land. Agrarian reforms had been part of the revolutionary cries of the Mexican people and played a significant role in the *Carrancistas*' campaign in the northeast. Aside from the importance of Matamoros as a port of entry, the town would historically be known for the first land expropriation of the upheaval. Both Madero and Huerta had failed to fulfill this particular aspect of the 1910 Revolution. However, immediately after the battle of Matamoros, General Blanco moved to confiscate property previously owned by federal officials. Blanco was inspired primarily by one of his officers, Francisco Múgica.²² On August 30, General Blanco distributed Félix Díaz's hacienda, "Los Borregos" to a small group of peasants who had been working the land for many years. The *hacienda* about eight miles south of Matamoros consisted of 1,300 acres. Blanco believed he was fulfilling the agrarian ideals of the revolution. In his proclamation speech during the land redistribution, General Blanco stated that by giving back land to the workers, the Revolution was solving one of the greatest problems ever.²³

Blanco's actions in Los Borregos did not have Venustiano Carranza's approval and consequently transferred Blanco to Sonora. Emiliano Nafarrate, who had been ascended to General, was placed in command of the military garrison. However, before General Blanco took the new assignment in Sonora, he continued his agrarian reform in Río Bravo and in the surrounding area. Because the *Carrancistas* controlled the *Compañía Agrícola* owned by Díaz and Huerta sympathizers, the rebels decided to confiscate the property surrounding the company, including Los Soldaditos. Despite much protest on

behalf of Huerta sympathizers in that town and Consul Johnson's protest, the *Carrancistas* proceeded with their plans. However, Carranza reversed most of the expropriations because he was pressured by US businessmen who had investments in that area.²⁴

After General Blanco's redistribution action in Matamoros, *Carrancista* Pastor Rouaix in the state of Durango, proceeded to do the same in late 1913. The following year other *Carrancistas* in Chihuahua, Sonora, and several states divided *haciendas*.²⁵

These attempts at redistributing lands in Mexico's northeastern region exemplified the agrarian cause of the Mexican Revolution. The agrarian demands propelling the Revolution took shape in Matamoros. By seizing the *hacienda* and dividing it up to the peons, *Carrancistas* strengthened their ties with the citizens, which remained loyal to them. Consequently, this loyalty and support aided the *Carrancistas* the following two years.²⁶

General Blanco had felt very passionate about taking Matamoros, because he sincerely believed in the revolutionary cause. Blanco claimed that he was not fighting battles for the sake of war, but sincerely believed in constitutional principles and this revolutionary spirit reached his men. The General's magnetic personality (and his actions in Los Borregos) inspired his men to have a genuine interest in the revolution.²⁷ Thus, the ideological reasons behind the Mexican Revolution and the importance of the town were evident throughout his campaign to capture Matamoros.²⁸

The success in Matamoros served to rally support for the *Carrancistas* by increasing morale among the men in other Mexican regions.²⁹ Carranza valued Matamoros and made sure that his army in the northeast secured it. Reynosa, Camargo, Mier, Guerrero,

and the entire line of the railway, as far as Pesqueria Chica, were in *Carrancista* hands and they were able to defend and control it wisely.³⁰

In summary, the *Carrancistas* perhaps even more than the *Maderistas* stood out in their Matamoros campaign. Given that the *Carrancistas* had not secured a seaport, Matamoros was perhaps more important than other cities they had captured. Therefore, the *Carrancistas'* eventual victory in Matamoros provided them with a major gate to US territory and access to a body of water. Consequently, the port of entry became the focal point for the importation of arms and ammunition to combat Huerta.³¹

The battle of 1913 is worth analyzing because of its consequences. The battle resulted in the first major northeastern border town to fall into *Carrancista* hands. This is important because Matamoros guaranteed a steady supply of arms and ammunition. The victory further enabled the *Carrancistas* to capture other towns and facilitated the transportation of supplies to other points in Mexico via boat or railroad.

In addition, their victory in Matamoros gave the *Carrancistas* a lead on the revolution in the northeast. By mid to late 1913, the *Huertista* army was in bad shape. Because Huerta lost Matamoros, Carranza's able to take over a major source for weapons. For the remaining of the revolution, Carranza received a constant supply of rifles, guns, and ammunition. *Carrancistas* also used Matamoros as a focal point to transport these weapons and men. Consequently, with the Matamoros victory, the *Huertistas* loose out on a major supplier of arms.

Only several weeks after the capture of the city, official reports circulated that the government had postponed any plans to retake the city. *Huertista* forces, nonetheless, harassed a *Carrancista* site near the Rio Grande. *Carrancista* forces remained ready for

any possible attack and a guard patrol remained in Bagdad beach to report any military activity in the vicinity.³²

After the victory at Matamoras, *Carrancistas* defeated *Huertista* forces at Ciudad Victoria on November. *Huertista* forces, nonetheless, threatened to recapture Matamoras. *Carrancista* forces remained ready for any possible attack and a guard patrol remained in Bagdad beach to report any military activity in the vicinity.³³ However, as the *Huertista* threat diminished, a large portion of Carranza's followers would split and join Francisco Villa's "*División del Norte*." Residents of Matamoras would witness military activity in their town one final time.³⁴

CHAPTER 5

HUERTISTA THREATS AND THE VILLISTA ASSAULT, 1914-1915

Matamoros continued its role as a military storehouse and a supply link in 1914 and 1915. Thus, their victory over Matamoros in 1913 was of extreme importance. Matamorenses *Carrancistas* supplied Tamaulipas cities with valuable military provisions. As early as January 1914 General Pablo González, commander of Constitutionalist forces in Tamaulipas and Nuevo León, used military supplies from Matamoros in his attack on Nuevo Laredo. In fact, González requested military supplies from Matamoros numerous times throughout the latter part of the Mexican Revolution to aid in the Carrancista military campaign in other areas.¹

In 1914 and 1915 every *Carrancista*-controlled town in Tamaulipas and Nuevo León was in direct contact with Matamoros. General González reported that Matamoros was the directing headquarters of an army of over 100,000 men.² Telegraphs were sent daily at every hour of the day from different Tamaulipas towns through Matamoros, especially Sonora. Within a few moments a force of ten thousand men could be given orders to move against any point desired.³

Whether or not the United States had an embargo on arms and ammunition, *Carrancistas* managed to obtain them. United States policy towards Mexico determined much of the arms exchange activity in the country. Military authorities in northeastern border town like Matamoros depended on a favorable US policy regarding arms and

ammunition. For example, during the 1913 battle, President Huerta's forces received arms and ammunition from the US and other countries. In early 1914, however, President Woodrow Wilson placed an embargo on weapons to the Huerta government. The embargo seriously weakened *Huertista* forces.

Nevertheless, armed parties attempted to smuggle weapons into Mexico. In late January, Fort Brown officials reported a 149,000-rounds shipment of ammunition awaiting delivery to another point on the Texas border. Of the large shipment, a cart with twenty boxes of ammunition was confiscated near the river. Officials suspected pro-*Carrancista* US residents had attempted to cross the shipment.⁴

However, President Wilson decided to lift the embargo on February 1914. Reports that Japan supplied Huerta with arms and ammunition, politicians argued, made an embargo unnecessary. Because Wilson's relation with the Huerta government had not been favorable, lifting the embargo aided the *Carrancistas* and increased their chances of succeeding over Huerta.⁵

When the US lifted the embargo, it demonstrated support for Carranza. Immediately after lifting the embargo, hundreds of arms and ammunition already packaged in New Orleans warehouses made their way to Matamoros. In addition, war materials that had been previously seized by US customs were released.⁶ After Wilson lifted the embargo, in one day alone one million rounds of ammunition crossed into Matamoros. In addition, every movable vehicle was rented in Brownsville and Matamoros to transport ammunition and other war supplies out of Matamoros. In February 9,216 khaki uniforms, 1500 blasting caps, 1006 cartridge belts, and 2000 pounds of dynamite made their way to Matamoros. Many of these supplies headed to other *Carrancista*-controlled points from Matamoros.⁷

Throughout the first part of 1914, *Huertistas* threatened to recapture Matamoros. In late January to early February 1914, newspapers reported a thousand federals had begun to march to Matamoros. Officers responded by ordering Matamorenses troops, weapons, and medical provisions to points south of Matamoros. They planned to attack them several miles outside the town. However, the *Huertistas* did not attack.⁸

Probably the most serious threat came from *Huertista* General Gustavo Guardiola y Aguirre. The General had captured Guerrero with 700 to 800 men in early March and had then proceeded to take Mier. *Carrancista* General Jesús Carranza prepared to defend Mier. However, General Pablo González realized that the *Huertistas'* intentions were to recapture Matamoros after seizing Mier. He responded by ordering two artillery batteries from Matamoros. Colonel Carlos Prieto also transported two cannons to Mier. The *Carrancistas* in Los Ramones and El Peine, two smaller garrisons in the outskirts of Monterrey were ordered to march to Mier.⁹

On March 23, Carranza and Antonio I. Villarreal waited for Guardiola y Aguirre's army, but he never arrived. The *Carrancista* Generals proceeded to march towards Guerrero and attack the *Huertista* army. However, as Carranza and Villarreal entered Guerrero, the *Huertista* army retreated towards Monterrey.¹⁰

Carrancistas received reports of alleged armed *Huertista* parties attempting to cross into Mexico from South Texas. In March, US troops stationed along the river spotted various armed individuals who crossed between Reynosa and Camargo. *Carrancistas* arrested three men at Río Bravo and brought them to Matamoros where they were jailed. Elsewhere *Carrancistas* killed one of the twenty *Huertistas* crossing near Brownsville. Matamoros officials believed the armed party to be relatives of Antonio Echazarreta.

Despite heavy US patrols, continued threats of armed individuals attempting to cross into Matamoros plagued the *Carrancistas* throughout the month.¹¹

The Matamoros garrison received shipments of military supplies. Each week in March, at least 200,000 rounds of ammunition were transported into Matamoros. The customhouse in Brownsville reported 2,909,150 rounds of ammunition, 4,267 rifles, and 1,000-artillery ammunition.¹²

In April, many of the veterans of the 1913 battle for Matamoros were ordered to defend Monterrey. General Pablo González also ordered several hundred rounds of ammunition from Matamoros to Monterrey. With the help of weapons and soldiers of Matamoros, *Carrancistas* managed to capture Monterrey.¹³

President Wilson's meddling in Mexican affairs in April of that same year tremendously helped the *Carrancistas* in removing the Huerta threat in Matamoros. *Huertista* authorities in Tampico arrested a group of US sailors. Consequently, Wilson ordered the military occupation of Veracruz. Wilson broke diplomatic relations with President Huerta and permitted *Carrancistas* to acquire arms and ammunition.

Carrancistas' good fortune came to an abrupt end. Shortly after Huerta went into exile and Carranza entered Mexico City, Francisco Villa split with him provoking another round of revolutionary violence and bloodshed. Villa was Carranza's general commanding the northern district. Villa challenged Carranza's government. He attempted to take important border towns to extend his control beyond the state of Chihuahua. Villa realized the northern border had to be controlled in order to secure military supplies from the US. Matamoros because it geographically positioned in that area.¹⁴

The US attempted to prevent anti-*Carrancistas* from crossing weapons to Mexico. The customs inspector at Brownsville, Frank Rabb, was instrumental in preventing anti-*Carrancistas* from receiving supplies. Rabb supervised the transportation of materials and at one point facilitated the crossing of a \$600,000 shipment to *Carrancistas* in Matamoros.¹⁵

US officials continued to stay alert for any violations of the neutrality laws. Although it was legal to sell arms to Mexicans, using these supplies in US territory to foment a revolution was illegal. The Bureau of Investigation and customs officials almost always failed to find sufficient evidence to charge individuals with violations of neutrality.¹⁶

The majority of military supplies that made their way into Mexico were coming from points outside of Texas such as New Orleans. The Bureau of Investigation frequently investigated groups of individuals residing in New Orleans that were said to be actively engaged in fomenting trouble in Mexico. The Supervising Officer constantly kept in touch with the Commissioner of Immigration in New Orleans. Officials suspected these individuals as acting as middlemen to secure supplies to the revolutionaries in Northern Mexico. Individuals conducting these activities supplied the anti-*Carrancista* movement along the border.¹⁷

Aside the *Villista* threats, the *Huertistas'* chances to recapture Matamoros declined by mid-1914. There was little money to pay soldiers, which explained the fact that 300 men had crossed into the US to work in the fields. *Carrancistas* had captured San Ygnacio, south of Nuevo Laredo which ultimately forced *Huertistas* to disperse. More important, *Huertistas* decided to abandon Nuevo Laredo. General Jesus Caranza entered

the city on May 15, 1914. The majority of the Nuevo Laredo garrison supplies left behind were retrieved by *Carrancistas*.¹⁸

The end of 1914 was marked by *Villista* threats in nearby Reynosa. Developments in Reynosa were important for Matamorenses because in 1913, *Carrancistas* had seized Reynosa before attempting to march on Matamoros. In late November through early December, a band of approximately 150 anti-*Carrancistas* threatened to cross through Hidalgo to Reynosa. Reports indicated these men were all ex-*Huertista* officers who had now claimed allegiance to Villa. Colonel A.P. Blockson headed towards Hidalgo from Brownsville with a cavalry troop.¹⁹ The men were captured and detained in the Hidalgo County jail.²⁰

Military activity continued in Matamoros throughout 1915. *Villistas* planned a comprehensive military campaign throughout northeastern Mexico. The *Villista* campaign included capturing Matamoros, Tampico, and Nuevo Laredo. Only forty miles from Matamoros a group of *Carrancistas* had already skirmished with several individuals claiming allegiance to Villa. Matamorenses kept up with the news of pro-Villa groups near Reynosa and other neighboring border towns.²¹

In early January 1915 rumors constantly circulated that groups of pro-Villa Mexicans residing on the north bank of the river prepared to cross into Mexico. Deodoro Guerra and other prominent McAllen residents planned to attack Reynosa for Villa. Andrés Villarreal, a doctor from Monterrey, contributed money for the *Villista* movement in McAllen. Villarreal became a Colonel in Villa's army and commanded a hospital train. Villarreal along with Villa supporters harassed the Texas-Tamaulipas border. In Matamoros, *Carrancistas* worried that the 40-man garrison would not be able to defend Reynosa. Major Velasco, who commanded the garrison, ordered his men

to dig trenches in case of an attack.²² Although the *Villista* attack on Reynosa was delayed, Matamorenses officials took precautions. They acquired 226,000 30-30 cartridges and 30 rifles.²³

Local American authorities continued aiding the *Carrancista* forces by facilitating the crossing of military supplies. In one week, 390,000 cartridges for 30-30 guns were shipped across the river. Obtaining these supplies was that often times Mexican officials treated custom officials with utmost respect and went the extra mile to maintain cordial relations.²⁴

Rumors of an attack on Reynosa persisted throughout January 1915. Authorities remained on top of the situation especially when rumors circulated that an attack was planned for January 22. In addition, Matamorenses became alarmed when reports reached the town that Carranza's forces from Reynosa hung two *Villista* sympathizers Gustavo Fernández and Francisco Yturria.²⁵

Villista activity was not limited to Reynosa before the Matamoros assault. Opposite the Mercedes Pumping Plant, near Río Bravo about 100 *Villistas* attacked a *Carrancista* patrol killing *Carrancista* officers. A couple of days later, a fight broke out in Río Bravo, which caused many Mexican citizens to flee to Hidalgo. There was a constant movement of troops between Matamoros and Monterrey. This prompted authorities to remain on guard.

In addition, the garrison received ten field guns and at least 346,000 rounds of ammunition along with 500 saddle pads. The garrison continued receiving military supplies from the US throughout January and February.²⁶

Matamoros officials began to feel pressured when *Carrancista* troops evacuated Monterrey following *Villistas* attack on the town. Consul Alonzo Garrett notified the

State Department that Monterrey officials planned to seek refuge in the Matamoros garrison. The American General Consul in Monterrey further confirmed Garrett's report and notified officials that most of the *Carrancista* troops had gone north to Matamoros. The movement of troops disrupted the town and caused citizens of Matamoros to flee.²⁷

Matamorenses officials remained on guard after a manifesto condemning Anglo Americans was discovered. The Plan de San Diego formulated by several *Tejanos* caused tension among citizens in South Texas and Northern Mexico. The plan called for the execution of all Anglo American males over the age of sixteen. In addition, the lands lost after the War of 1846 were to be restored. The plan sparked even more distrust towards Mexicans living in South Texas and caused concern among the military authorities in the Mexican towns.²⁸

Although Nafarrate supported the plan, when Mexican citizens heard firing across the river near Mercedes, Texas, he complained to Consul Johnson. Nafarrate believed that US officials were covering up *Villista* activity. However, US military officers informed the General that they would look into it and send patrols to Mercedes. Because many residents of South Texas sympathized with the *Villistas*, there was some truth to Nafarrate's suspicions.²⁹

By late February, because of *Villista* threats the number of troops in the Matamoros garrison decreased because *Carrancistas* were ordered to the state capitol and Tampico to augment the number of soldiers there. The following month, General Nafarrate received reports that *Villista* troops approached Matamoros.³⁰

To keep military supplies secure and out of *Villista* hands, Nafarrate ordered three machine guns and close to six million cartridges stored in Brownsville warehouses. The Brownsville Collector of Customs, accepted Nafarrate's plan to move the materials.³¹

Aside Nafarrate's worries that rebels could seize supplies, he was also concerned over reports that 200 men had crossed into Mexican territory near Río Bravo. The band sought to join the *Villista* army. They included seventeen African Americans and three Japanese. Throughout March, Nafarrate urged his men to remain on guard and ready to repel any rebels.³²

General Nafarrate, nonetheless, had some difficulty in controlling his men. Before the actual attack from the *Villistas*, several officers abandoned their positions in the *Carrancista* army. Officers like José Celay and others claimed they had received an invitation from Nuevo Laredo *Carrancista* authorities to join them.³³ Moreover, often rumors circulated that many soldiers were deserting the army. Secretary Bryan even sent out telegraphs to foreign officials suggesting *Carrancistas* would evacuate Matamoros and accept a *Villista* victory without a fight. This only caused confusion among the citizens and confidence in the soldiers diminished. Nafarrate, continued preparing for a *Villista* assault. Several Matamoros authorities believed that Carranza's plan included the evacuation of Matamoros to defend Ciudad Victoria and Tampico. Carranza might have planned such a move, because of the rich oil supply in Tampico. Officials, however, could not substantiate their suspicions.³⁴

Seven days before the *Villista* attack materialized José Garza, the *Carrancista* Consul in Brownsville notified General Nafarrate of reports that *Villistas* had captured Camargo and Mier. Consul Garza had received a notice from the *Villista* Consul in Brownsville that Villa forces had orders to march onward to Matamoros, which would give *Villistas* practical control of the border from Brownsville to El Paso.³⁵ General Nafarrate acknowledged Camargo and Mier's defeat and publicly announced that he would defend Matamoros. He informed citizens that General Cesar López de Lara had

reached the city with a 1,000-man force.³⁶ In addition, General Nafarrate obligated all capable men to defend the town.³⁷

Before setting up camp in Las Rucias on March 23, the *Villistas* proceeded to capture Reynosa. The few *Carrancista* soldiers in the garrison retreated to Matamoros. While in Reynosa, the *Villistas* waited for supplies and reinforcements; however, General Rodríguez decided to leave to Las Rucias before they arrived. A group of forty men was left in the town.³⁸

As the *Villistas* closed in, General Nafarrate informed Brownsville authorities that he would not evacuate Matamoros, but would fight outside the town. *Carrancista* troops proceeded to go into trenches located near the electric plant. Nafarrate also ordered a group of men to dig small dams along the southern bank of the Río Grande. The soldiers had placed barbed wire near the electric plant and other buildings charged with electricity, just like Major Ramos had done in 1913.³⁹

Equipped with arms and plenty of ammunition, the *Carrancistas*, in their trenches, awaited the *Villistas*. Because many men had deserted the garrison when news of the occupation of Camargo and Reynosa reached Matamoros, *Carrancistas* numbered 1300. Despite General Nafarrate's proclamation to Matamorenses to cooperate with the defense of the city, there was no response from citizens to join the fight.⁴⁰ General Nafarrate placed sixteen machine guns throughout the west and southern area of the town.⁴¹

On March 25, 1915 *Villista* Generals, José Rodríguez and Absaúl Navarro left Reynosa.⁴² The *Villista* attack came at 11 a.m on March 27 through the southwestern end of the town. The *Villistas* launched a cavalry assault, but the flooding halted the majority of the men. *Carrancistas*, stationed at different points in the outskirts of the

town fired at several hundred *Villistas* who managed to cross through the flooding. That day, the *Villistas* had launched three cavalry charges. The cavalry charges cost the *Villistas* almost 900 men. Several hundred *Villistas* approached the electric plant where they encountered *Carrancistas* equipped with machine guns. After heavy short-distance firing, groups of *Carrancistas* retreated and joined the others in the trenches and continued fighting there. The fighting diminished at night. That evening, General Nafarrate telegraphed Venustiano Carranza in Faros, Veracruz informing him that Matamoros continued in *Carrancista* hands. Many wounded from both factions crossed over to Brownsville to seek aid. The *Villista* generals waited for several field guns and reinforcements from Reynosa.⁴³

The infantry and several field guns that were en route from Reynosa never arrived. After several days of light attacks, *Villista* troops retreated to the outskirts of Matamoros to their camp at Las Rucias. The *Villistas* managed to receive some small shipments, while *Carrancistas* arrived through the port of Bagdad to augment the number of soldiers in the garrison. They also received hundreds of 30-30 guns and plenty of ammunition. Both the *Carrancista* and *Villista* army received a monoplane. In fact, General Rodríguez had secured a US pilot, H.M. Rhinehart, to fly the plane and conduct an aerial attack on Matamoros. However, Rhinehart left the *Villista* camp and headed to Houston.⁴⁴

The next three days, several skirmishes between the *Carrancistas* and *Villistas* occurred near La Rosita ranch several miles from Las Rucias. *Villistas* had lost at least half of their men from the start of their attack on Matamoros. General Rodríguez wrote General Villa that he was obligated to retreat to his camp, but would attempt to regain his position.⁴⁵ *Villista* forces nevertheless resumed their efforts to seize the town.

By April 1 the chances of *Villistas* taking the city had grown slim. Exportation of all supplies except in very small quantities to the *Villistas* at Las Rucias were stopped. US Customs authorities reported they had orders from General Frederick Funston to prevent the shipments, because Las Rucias was not considered a port of entry. *Carrancistas* on the other hand, continued to benefit from Matamoros' proximity to the US and its support. Supplies of all kinds went across to the *Carrancistas* at the bridges and ferries.⁴⁶ The following week the *Carrancistas* received over 10,000 rounds of ammunition and 30-30 rifles through Brownsville.⁴⁷

On April 12, firing continued throughout the night in front of the western trenches. On April 13 *Villistas* proceeded near their camp to launch an artillery assault. However, the Matamoros garrison had received 400 Juchitecos reinforcements. The *Carrancistas* managed to resist the *Villista*'s last attempt and took fifteen prisoners.⁴⁸

At the end of the assault, *Villistas* had suffered terrible losses. General Absaúl Navarro and over 2000 *Villistas* died, 300 to 500 were wounded. Navarro crossed the river at an unpatrolled point and sought medical attention. The majority of the wounded men also crossed into American territory. American doctors had also previously visited the *Villista* camp to tend the wounded.⁴⁹

On April 17, General Villa ordered General Rodríguez to abandon the region and head toward Monterrey. *Villistas* headed to Reynosa, where trains would transport them to Monterrey. By April 19, all *Villistas* had left Reynosa and the *Carrancistas* re-occupied the town.⁵⁰

The *Villista* loss in Matamoros was followed by several major losses throughout Mexico. In the northeast, the *Villistas* lost Nuevo Laredo, Tampico, and Monterrey. The loss at Celaya on April of that year significantly weakened the *Villista* campaign as

well as the defeat at Aguascalientes on July. Beginning with the defeat at Matamoros, the *Villista* revolution began to lose force and Villa was not much of a threat to Carranza. If *Villistas* Rodríguez and Navarro's attack on Matamoros had been successful, Villa could have brought into his power a huge storehouse and consequently have had an advantage at Celaya and Aguascalientes.

Matamoros remained quiet during the summer of 1915, with one exception. *Carrancista* Colonel Teodilo Ramírez had been placed in command of the Camargo garrison west of Matamoros. In June, when General Nafarrate heard of *Villistas* approaching Camargo, he immediately ordered Ramírez to pursue them to prevent any possible attacks on Matamoros. On June 2, *Carrancistas* captured fourteen *Villistas* under General Eugenio Aguirre Benavides and ordered all prisoners executed.⁵¹

Despite the decrease in military activity by late 1915, *Carrancistas* took up land reforms again throughout Tamaulipas. Following Carranza's rigorous anti-foreign stance, *Carrancistas* harassed foreigners who had large landholdings. Complaints were directed to Carranza's administration from the Monterrey Spanish Vice-consul that in Matamoros, Spanish citizens were being kicked out of their properties. In addition, the consul argued that *Carrancistas* were confiscating Spanish-owned companies. Carranza seemed to ignore not only the vice-consul's pleas but other complaints as well. In many cases, the armies were responsible for the sacking of *haciendas* or even seizing them. It is possible that Blanco's actions in Los Borregos in 1913 could have influenced other *Carrancistas* to take up land issues. General Nafarrate witnessed the expropriation of the *hacienda* and could have permitted and encouraged the seizures to gain popularity. Moreover, Nafarrate was an advocate of Carranza's anti-foreign platform, which might

have contributed to his support and/or participation of the land confiscations. After 1915, land seizures by *Carrancista* in Tamaulipas decreased.⁵²

The *Villista* campaign overall demonstrates the strategic value of Matamoros. Like the *Carrancistas*, the *Villistas* needed a port of entry to secure arms and ammunition. Their failure in Matamoros perhaps set the stage for their later defeats like Celaya and Aguascalientes. If Villa could have secured Matamoros a great deal of supplies could have been used to combat Carranza in these larger battles. It is safe to argue that Matamoros was in fact the decisive battle. General Rodríguez's army remained in Matamoros for more than a week. He attempted to regain his position, but failed.

Carranza was able to maintain control of Matamoros. Throughout the Revolution and especially during the *Carrancista* period, Matamoros was in constant communication with other points in the country, including Nuevo León, San Luis Potosí, Sonora, and Mexico City. The town also served as an enormous storehouse with heavy guns, rifles of various sizes, and plenty of ammunition. In addition, it was in Matamoros that supplies and even uniforms arrived for Venustiano Carranza's army. Thus, for the *Carrancistas* and other revolutionary factions Matamoros was a "prized possession" of the Revolution in northeastern Mexico.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Matamoros was strategically valuable for three main reasons. First, revolutionaries had a guaranteed supply of war materials across the Río Grande. Second, Matamoros' access to a body of water, not characteristic of all border towns, and rail lines to and from Galveston, San Antonio, Monterrey, and Ciudad Victoria facilitated the transportation of supplies to further strengthen revolutionaries' movements. Last, Matamoros was geographically remote. Located far from central Mexico and close to the US, it was an easy location to launch a revolution. Thus, Matamoros lent itself to the military intrigue. This explains the high degree of military activity that took place in Matamoros and underscores its strategic uniqueness. Furthermore, looking at a particular region and highlighting its military events throughout the first five years of the Revolution offers a new perspective to understanding the larger history of the Mexican Revolution.¹

Early in the Revolution, individuals attempted to capture Matamoros to secure a port of entry. Beginning with the *Maderistas*, revolutionaries were active in the northern border. They gradually moved towards other major points along the US-Mexico border. *Insurrectos* attempted to seize Matamoros by using American cities such as Brownsville, Laredo, and San Antonio as their base of operations. *Maderistas* first broke the peace in Matamoros. After Francisco I. Madero assumed the presidency, Matamoros officials pledged allegiance to him. *Maderista* officials kept

a close eye on Matamoros as discontent grew with the Madero administration. Among the men who refused to accept Madero's presidency was the former *Diaista* general, Bernardo Reyes. He sought to launch an anti-Madero movement from US territory. *Reyistas* kept the *Maderistas* on guard attempting to recruit men. Their military operations in Matamoros failed. Despite *Maderista* success in halting counter-revolutionaries, General Victoriano Huerta removed President Madero. He then assumed the presidency. Now Huerta controlled most of the border with the exception of the Texas-Chihuahua region.

A major battle did not take place during the *Huertista*-Díaz take over in Matamoros. The military commander of the garrison, Major Esteban Ramos, pledged his loyalty to Díaz and Huerta. Consequently, when Huerta disposed of Madero, Ramos gladly welcomed the new government.

Matamoros remained under *Huertista* control until June 1913. By the spring of that year, *Carrancistas* had gained territory in northern Mexico as well as in other parts of the country. The *Carrancistas* looked at Matamoros as a vital port of entry to the Gulf of Mexico. They carefully planned their campaign and managed to seize Matamoros in June 1913. Their victory played a vital role in their success because it transformed Matamoros into a major supply center. In August 1913, the *Carrancistas* implemented their first agrarian reform of the Revolution. The battle for control of the city between Huerta and Carranza's forces was the first major battle fought in northeastern Mexico. Hostilities between Venustiano Carranza and General Francisco Villa brought another wave of military activities to Matamoros.

In March 1915, Matamorenses experienced a new round of military activity from Villa's forces. Villa's assault failed and the *Carrancistas* managed to control the town until the end of the Revolution. Despite the *Villistas*' unsuccessful attempt to seize Matamoros, they exploited the town's proximity to the US and acquired supplies for their attack.

Events in Matamoros not only contributed to the Revolution along the border, but also had effects in other parts of the republic. For example, the *Carrancistas*' control in Matamoros in mid-1913 aided Carranza's army in Veracruz. *Carrancistas* constantly secured a steady supply of arms from the US, especially in the Matamoros-Brownsville area. A large shipment of war supplies was transported to Veracruz from Matamoros, which aided the *Carrancistas* victory.

The town's strategic value is also demonstrated in several other ways. The large shipments of arms ordered by General Pablo González for the *Carrancista* attack on Monterrey in 1914 came from Matamoros. Throughout 1914, *Carrancistas* fully exploited Matamoros by using it as an intermediate point. Telegraphs were sent on a daily basis to other *Carrancista*-controlled areas. Carranza was able to exploit Matamoros' strategic location to its fullest until the end of the Revolution.

During the first five years of the Revolution, large amounts of war supplies made its way to Mexico through Matamoros, both legally and illegally. More than 27 million rounds of ammunition, several hundred thousand rifles, 25 heavy field guns, 500 saddle pads, dynamite and uniforms crossed into Matamoros. In fact, these figures are conservative. These figures only represent war materials counted by the Brownsville

Customs Collector. There were hundreds, perhaps thousands more arms and ammunition smuggled into Mexico through Matamoros.

The *Maderistas*, *Reyistas*, *Huertistas*, *Carrancistas*, and *Villistas* regarded Matamoros as a highly strategic valuable town. Because controlling Matamoros was so advantageous, it became a primary objective for revolutionary leaders.

The military phase of the Revolution ended with Venustiano Carranza's victory. Carranza received *de facto* recognition from the US in October 1915. Carranza's forces then controlled the northeast as well as other areas of the country. Matamoros had been one of Carranza's objectives. To further demonstrate his interest in the city, he entered Matamoros in late 1915 and delivered his famous "Carranza Doctrine," which marked the end of the Revolution in Matamoros. Carranza concluded his speech stating that Matamoros was "the first border town captured by Constitutionalist forces" and proudly expressed his satisfaction of controlling it.ⁱ

ENDNOTES

Chapter 1

¹ "Why Europe looks for American Intervention in Mexico," *Current Opinion* 54 (January-June 1913): 107.

Chapter 2

¹ José Raúl Canseco, *Historia de Matamoros* 2a edición. (Cd. Victoria: Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1975), 202; "Crisis in affairs of Matamoros," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, June, 21, 1911; Department of State, *Records Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1910-1929* (Washington D.C: National Archives Microfilm Publication, Microcopy n.o. 274) hereafter cited as RDS, Philander C. Knox to Jesse Johnson, 812.00/1141, 0816; Rodolfo Rocha, "The influence of the Mexican Revolution on the Mexico-Texas Border, 1910-1916," Ph.D. Diss., Texas Tech University, 1981, 68-9; Milo Kearny and Anthony Knopp, *Border Cuates: A History of the US-Mexico Twin Cities* (Austin: Eaking Press, 1995), 153.

² "Rumor of attack on Matamoros," *Brownsville Herald*, November 25, 1910.

³ "Tried to Cross Rio Near Reynosa," *Brownsville Herald*, November 26, 1910; The commander of the Reynosa garrison was Major Zubieta.

⁴ Rocha, 63-4.

⁵ *Magonistas* is the term used to refer to sympathizers and/or followers of the Flores Magón brothers.

⁶ Rocha, 67; Héctor Jaime Treviño Villarreal, *La Revolución Maderista en Nuevo León, 1910-1911*. (Nuevo León: Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo León: Centro de Información de Historia Regional, 1988), 7-8.

⁷ "Sensational arrests in Matamoros," and "Government secures recruits," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, April 28, 1911; Rocha, 70-3.

⁸ "Maderistas plan to control border," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 17, 1911; "Was under assumed name," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 27, 1911.

⁹ "Carried on secretly by General de los Santos," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 27, 1911.

¹⁰ Rocha, 95; "San Juan Bridge was blown up," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 6, 1911; "Insurrectos lying in wait for national train," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 8, 1911; "Tula sacked," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 25, 1911.

¹¹ "Nuevo León awaits attack," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 5, 1911; "Rumor of attack on Matamoros," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 25, 1911; *US Department of State, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Part II Mexican Immigration, 1906-1930* (Bethesda, Md: University Publications of America), hereafter cited as *INS Records*, Reel 3 Frame 0823, Casefile 53108/71B; Rocha, 70; By March 1911, President Howard Taft had ordered 25,000 troops to the US-Mexico border.

¹² "Madero envoy in Matamoros," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 27, 1911; "Former rebel troops to Matamoros," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 30, 1911; "Peace envoy leaves Matamoros," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, June 2, 1911.

¹³ Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México (Mexican National Railroad) was constructed and financed by American investors. In fact, "with a few exceptions Americans built them all...they are American in engineering and construction. Practically all the engineers, conductors, and trainmen were Americans," as quoted in "Mexico, The Land of Concessions," *World's Work* 27 (January 1914): 291.

¹⁴ "Mexican traffic moving again," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 25, 1911.

¹⁵ Rocha, 66.

¹⁶ "Actas de Cabildo," Matamoros town council meeting minutes, March 18, 1912, *Archivo Histórico de Matamoros*; Rocha, 66.

¹⁷ "Actas de Cabildo," Matamoros town council meeting minutes, March 30, 1912.

¹⁸ Rocha, 70.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 75-9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 64-8.

²¹ Edward J. Berbusse, "Neutrality-Diplomacy of the United States and Mexico, 1910-1911," *Americas* 12 (January 1956), 265; "Mexican Rebels not aided by Americans," *Current Opinion* 54 (January-June 1913).

²² Berbusse, 265.

²³ "Mexican Rebels not aided by Americans," *Current Opinion* 54 (January-June 1913): 107; Rocha, 84-5; "Politics Waxed," *Brownsville Herald*, September 23, 1911;

"Madero Elected: Election Orderly," *Brownsville Herald*, September 30, 1911;
 "Madero's Vote Was Unanimous," *Brownsville Herald*, October 16, 1911.

²⁴ Consul Alonzo Garrett to Secretary of State, March 26, 1911, RDS, 812.00/1066;
 Consul Alonzo Garrett to Secretary of State, April 6, 1911, RDS, 812.00/1227; Consul
 Jesse Johnson to Secretary of State, July 25, 1911, RDS, 812.00/2249; Bertha Ulloa,
 "Las Relaciones Mexicano-Norteamericanas, 1910-1911," *Historia Mexicana* 25, n.1.
 (July-September, 1965): 25-46, 28-9, *INS Records*, Reel 3, Frame 0831 Casefile
 53108/71C.

²⁵ J. Lee Stambaugh and Lillian J. Stambaugh, *The Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas: Its Colonization and Industrialization, 1518-1953* (Austin: Jenkins Publishing Co. San Felipe Press, 1974), 208; Rocha, 87-8; For their border revolution, *Reyistas* were able to purchase arms in San Antonio, which was facilitated by Francisco Chapa, an influential San Antonian. Chapa was a politician who had close ties with Texas Governor O.B. Colquitt and was a personal friend of Reyes.

²⁶ *INS Records*, Reel 3 Frame 0850, Casefile 53108/71C, Frame 0841, Casefile 53108/71C; Enrique Krauze. Trans. Hank Heifetz, *Mexico: Biography of Power* (New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1997), 263; "Díaz and Huerta in Combination against Madero," *Current Opinion* 54 (January-June 1913): 276; "Madero Surprised by a Díaz in Arms," *Current Opinion* 54 (January-June 1913): 180; "The Next Step in Mexico," *World's Work* 22 (May-October 1911): 14551-52

²⁷ Vic Niemeyer, "Frustrated Invasion: The Revolutionary Attempt of General Bernardo Reyes from San Antonio in 1911," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 67 (October 1963), 216; "New Year Finds Numerous Gifts...F.A. Chapa," *San Antonio Daily Express*, January 1, 1911; Consul Garrett to Secretary of State, and Consul Johnson to Secretary of State, November 10, 1911, RDS 812.00/2496, 812.00/2509; Rocha, 116.

²⁸ Bureau of Investigation report enclosed in RDS 812.00/2463; Consul Garrett to Secretary of State, November 1, 1911, RDS 812.00/2455, RDS, 812.00/2485.

²⁹ Enclosure of newspaper clippings: "Los Generales Cuellar y Reyes" *ProPatria*, November 16, 1911; RDS, 812.00/2508, RDS, 812.00/2553, RDS 812.00/2485.

³⁰ Eliseo Paredes Manzano. *La Casa Mata y Fortificaciones de la Heroica Matamoros, Tamaulipas* (Matamoros: H. Ayuntamiento de Matamoros, 1974), 64.

³¹ Bureau of Investigation reports enclosed, November 18, 1911, RDS 812.00/2461; Ciro de la Garza-Trevino, *Historia de Tamaulipas, Anales y Efemerides* (Ciudad Victoria: Universidad de Tamaulipas, 1956), 186.

³² Consul Jesse Johnson to Secretary of State, RDS, 812.00/2511, 2506, 2548; Consul Garrett to Secretary of State, December 19, 1911; RDS 812.00/2657, *INS Records*, Reel 3 Frame 0831, 0832, Casefile, 53108/71C, Kearny and Knopp, 187.

³³ Collector of Customs at Brownsville to General Duncan at San Antonio, April 13, 1911, RDS, 812.00/1100; "Widespread plot against Mexico," *Brownsville Herald*, January 4, 1912.

³⁴ Ibid; "The Situation in Old Mexico," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, November 28, 1910.

³⁵ Consul Johnson to Secretary of State, RDS, 812.00/2622; de la Garza-Trevino, 187.

³⁶ Secret agencies were employed such as "Furlong's Secret Service."

³⁷ Rocha, 78-9; Berbusse, 271-72.

³⁸ Rocha, 96.

³⁹ Paredes Manzano, 64-66; James Alex Garza, "On The Edge of a Storm; Laredo and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1917," Master's Thesis, Texas A&M International University, 1996, 27; *Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office) hereafter cited as *Papers Foreign Relations*, 812.00/6951A, Henry Lane Wilson to Secretary of State, February 9, 1913.

⁴⁰ Paredes Manzano, 65; Charles C. Cumberland, *Genesis Under Madero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1952), 233-35; "Las Calles de la Ciudad de los Palacios han sido teatro de sangrientas escenas; El General Reyes fue la Primera Victima," *La Prensa*, February 13, 1913; "Madero no es ya Presidente de la República," *La Prensa*, February 20, 1913; *Matamoras: Un Estudio Regional Actualizado* (Matamoras: R. Ayuntamiento de Matamoras, 1998), 62.

⁴¹ Rocha, 96-7

⁴² Consul Jesse Johnson to Secretary of State, RDS, 812.00/6248; Paredes Manzano, 65; "Toma del Puerto de Matamoras," *La Prensa* February 17, 1913; Canseco, 202; Kearny and Knopp, 190.

⁴³ Rocha, 113.

Chapter 3

¹ "Huerta's Mexico no Better than Madero's," *Current Opinion* 55 (July-December 1913): 12.

² "Los Carrancistas Operan en Texas," and "Empeora la Situación en Tampico," *La Prensa*, April 24, 1913 ; "Lying in wait to catch train," and "Soldiers at Río Bravo," and "No Rebels at Río Bravo," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, April 16, 1913.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "Burn of Home of General Rómulo Cuellar," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, April 8, 1913.

⁶ "Ranch Raided," and; "Carrancista Movement; Band under Colonel Jose Peña at Camargo Marching Toward Río Bravo and Reynosa," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, April 28, 1913.

⁷ Consul Garrett to State Department, April 24, 1913, RDS, 812.00/7252; Canseco, 203; Cumberland, 46; Jimenez, Tamaulipas was captured on April 17, 1913.

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⁹ "Troop Train Moves West," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, April 22, 1913; "Repair Aldamas Bridge," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, April 23, 1913.

¹⁰ Rocha, 145; "Lopez in Coahuila," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, April 28, 1913.

¹¹ "Only six miles away," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, April 30, 1913; "Combates en Tamaulipas," *La Prensa*, May 1, 1913.

¹² "Aceptarán a Carranza de Presidente," *La Prensa*, May 1, 1913.

¹³ "Manifiestos anti-Americanos," *La Prensa*, May 1, 1913; "Mexico's Fear of Secession," "Mexico Being Given Her Last Trial," *Current Opinion* 54 (January-June 1913): 274; There were many Americans who had large investments that supported American intervention in Mexico. William Randolph Hearst, a well-known journalist of the time, "demanded active intervention" in his writings largely because he had invested in a large mining property.

¹⁴ *Papers Foreign Relations* 812.00/6075, 812.00/6180, Henry Lane Wilson to Secretary of State, February 10, 1913; Rocha, 147; "Indictment Dismissed," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 13, 1913.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "Rurales Turn Against Huerta," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, April 21, 1913; "Another Bridge Burned," and "Arms for Matamoros," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 5, 1913; "Arms for Huerta," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 7, 1913; "Constitutionalist Raid," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 8, 1913; "Rebels March on Río Bravo," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 10, 1913.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *Hidalgo County Historical Museum Photo Archives*, hereafter cited as *HCHM Photo Archives*, #81.66.5t, "Street in Matamoros, Mex.," ca. 1913; *Sociedad Tamaulipeca de Historia, Geografía y Estadística*, unpublished pamphlet, mayo de 1994, 1,7; Consul Johnson to Secretary of State, RDS, 812.00/7572.

¹⁹ "Attack Imminent," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 8, 1913; "Ready for Defense," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 9, 1913; "Matamoros in suspense all day," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 12, 1913; "Barb wire for defense," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 26, 1913.

²⁰ Isidro Fabela, *Documentos Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana; Revolución y Régimen Constitucionalista* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1960), hereafter cited as DHRM, 43; Canseco, 203; "Aftermath of Reynosa Battle," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 12, 1913; "Son derrotadas en Reynosa las fuerzas del gobierno," *La Prensa*, May 15, 1913; Rocha, 146-7; Paredes Manzano, 66; Ciro R. De La Garza Treviño, 192; *HCHM Photo Archives*, Roll 2, Item 13, "A Mexican Train," ca. 1913.

²¹ Paredes Manzano, 66; "Rebels March on Río Bravo," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 10, 1913; De La Garza Treviño, 192; "Río Bravo: Cronología de Hechos Históricos," in *Los Municipios de Tamaulipas* (Ciudad Victoria: Secretaría de Gobernación y Gobierno, 1998), 156; "Juan Alamía is killed" *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 14, 1913; "Was Citizen of United States," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 17, 1913; The Compañía Agrícola was situated in La Sauteña Tract, which was owned by Inigo Noriega and American investors.

²² Pablo González Salazar, *El General Don Luis Caballero se Rebela*, diario escrito por el señor Pablo González Salazar (Cd. Victoria: Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas, 1976), 61, "Colonel Peña joins General Blanco," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 14, 1913.

²³ "A Ultima Hora; Los Rebeldes Decidieron no Atacar Matamoros," *La Prensa*, May 15, 1913.

²⁴ Paredes Manzano, 66; Rocha, 146-48; RDS, 812.00/7471; "Threaten to attack Matamoros at once," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 20, 1913; "Gatling guns for Matamoros," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 21, 1913; DHRM, 63; As quoted in "Otro Episodio Heroico Frente A La Casa Mata, Trincheras y Fortines de la H. Matamoros," in *La Casa Mata*, Paredes Manzano, 66; General Blanco's statement in

Spanish was: lo inútil de inmolar hombres fuertes para el trabajo con el sólo objeto de sostener a un hombre traidor y a un regimen, el militarismo que no puede ser tolerado ya por el pueblo mexicano; "Nota Del General Lucio Blanco, Al Mayor Esteban Ramos," de la Garza-Trevino, *Revolución en Tamaulipas* v. 2 (México: Librería de Manuel Porrúa, S.A, 1975), 413.

²⁵ "Matamoros in Suspense All Day," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 12, "Celebrarán la toma de Juárez con la de Matamoros," *La Prensa*, May 15, 1913; Canseco, 204; "Will not Attack For Several days," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 15, 1913.

²⁶ Canseco, 204; "Matamoros in Suspense All Day," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 12, 1913; "Matamoros is deserted," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 12, 1913; "The Robert Runyon Collection Online; Conflict in Matamoros," <http://lib.utexas.edu/conflict.html> p.3 of 6; "Nota Del General Lucio Blanco Al Consul De Los Estados Unidos," de la Garza-Trevino, 414.

²⁷ Several teachers who remained in Matamoros included Eduviges Celay de González Gascue. Another teacher, Esther Salinas González, who had transferred to the *Escuela Oficial para las Niñas*, left and headed to San Diego, Texas, where she founded a Spanish school, and did not return until 1918, "Eduviges Celay de González Gascue" & "Esther Salinas González," unpublished biographies of Sra. González and Sra. Gascue provided by Sra. Rosaura Dávila de Cuellar, archivist of the *Archivo Histórico de Matamoros*; De La Garza-Trevino, *Historia de Tamaulipas*, 192; De la Garza-Trevino, *Revolución en Tamaulipas* v.1, 170-1.

²⁸ "May attack together," and "Fighting at New Laredo," and "Blanco at Río Bravo," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 13, 1913; Consul Jesse Johnson to Secretary of State, RDS, May 15, 1913, 812.00/7504; "Matamoros is Barricaded," and "Consul Johnson wires," and "Consul Johnson at post," and "Major Ramos will hold the fort," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 14, 1913; "Will not attack for several days," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 15, 1913.

Chapter 4

¹ "May attack together," and "Fighting at New Laredo," and "Blanco at Río Bravo," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 13, 1913; Consul Jesse Johnson to Secretary of State, RDS, May 15, 1913, 812.00/7504; "Matamoros is Barricaded," and "Consul Johnson wires," and "Consul Johnson at post," and "Major Ramos will hold the fort," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 14, 1913; "Will not attack for several days," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 15, 1913.

² "The Robert Runyon Online Collection; Conflict in Matamoros," 6; "Defection of Echazaretta Deserters," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 16, 1913; HCHM Photo

Archives, #81.66.5t, "Makeshift Fortifications in the main plaza of Matamoros," ca. 1913.

³ "Defection of Echazaretta Deserters," and "Brave Matamoros Girls," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 16, 1913; "Interesting story of a Mexico Battle," *The Record Republic*, June 8, 1913; *Rancheros* supported the conservative group in Matamoros, which in turn supported the Félix Díaz-Victoriano Huerta faction.

⁴ The *Rurales* had been the official police during the Porfiriato but had rebelled during the assassination of President Francisco I. Madero and now supported Carranza; "A última hora; los rebeldes decidieron no atacar Matamoros," "Atacarán el puerto de Matamoros," *La Prensa*, May 15, 1913; De La Garza, *Historia de Tamaulipas: Anales y Efemerides* (Cd. Victoria: Universidad de Tamaulipas, 1956), 192.

⁵ Jesse Johnson to Secretary of State, May 16, 1913, RDS, 812.00/7511; De La Garza-Treviño, *Historia de Tamaulipas*, 192; "Hour of battle drawing near," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 16, 1913; "Caballero joins Blanco," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 23, 1913.

⁶ "Threaten to attack Matamoros at once," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 20, 1913.

⁷ "Charge Unfounded," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 21, 1913.

⁸ "De la Fuente a Carrancista," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 22, 1913.

⁹ "Gatling guns for Matamoros," and "Bernatche released," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 21, 1913; "Blanco recibe refuerzos," *La Prensa*, May 22, 1913; "No new developments," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, May 22, 1913.

¹⁰ "Surrender of plaza demanded," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, June 2, 1913; De La Garza Trevino, 192; Canseco, 204; Paredes Manzano, 66-7; "Surrender of Plaza Demanded," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, June 2, 1913; "Rebels are near city," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, June 2, 1913.

¹¹ Jesse Johnson to Secretary of State, June 3, 1913, RDS, 812.00/7686; De La Garza Trevino, 193; "Battle rages most of day round Matamoros," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, June 3, 1913; Report from General Lucio Blanco to Venustiano Carranza, in *Tamaulipas Heroico* (Ciudad Victoria: Instituto Tamaulipeco de Cultura, 1991), 2; Alfonso F. Sapia-Bosch, "The Role of General Lucio Blanco in the Mexican Revolution, 1913-1922," Ph.D Diss., Georgetown University 1977, 30; "Harlingen Chamber of Commerce Collection" in the *Rio Grande Valley Historical Collection* (Learning Resource Center, University of Texas Pan American) "Dead at the Light Plant after the Battle of Matamoros, Mexico, June 4, 1913); "Blanco takes heroic city," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, June 4, 1913.

¹² Paredes Manzano, 66-7; "Battle rages most of day round Matamoros," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, June 3, 1913; "Interesting story of a Mexico battle" *The Record Republic*, June 8, 1913

¹³ Kearny and Knopp, 160, 190.

¹⁴ Paredes Manzano, 66-7, De La Garza Trevino, 192-3, RDS, 812.00/7679; "Muerte del Dr. Barragán," *La Prensa*, June 5, 1913; HCHM Photo Archives, "Defenders of Matamoros"; *Tamaulipas Heroico*, 160; "Who Governs Mexico, Answer: Nobody," *Current Opinion* 55 (July-December 1913): 147.

¹⁵ DHRM, 70, 77; "Battle rages most of day round Matamoros" *Brownsville Daily Herald*, June 3, 1913; "Interesting story of a Mexico battle" *The Record Republic*, June 8, 1913.

¹⁶ Sapia-Bosch, 36; "Fueron quemados los cadáveres de las víctimas de Matamoros," *La Prensa*, June, 12, 1913; According to Frank Pierce, 250-400 *Carrancistas* were killed. *A Brief History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley* (Menasha: George Banta Publishing Co., 1917), 81.

¹⁷ Sapia-Bosch, 36; "Fueron quemados los cadáveres de las víctimas de Matamoros," *La Prensa*, June, 12, 1913; Canseco, 24-7; The Robert Runyon Online Collection, "Conflict in Matamoros," 5-6, the Mercado Juárez is still located on 9th Street and Matamoros Street in Matamoros.

¹⁸ *Tamaulipas Heroico*, 159.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ RDS, 812.00/7723; "Matamorenses moving over," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, June 7, 1913.

²¹ "Blanco trata de confiscar las propiedades de la Sauteña," and "Fusilamiento de Echazarreta," *La Prensa*, June 12, 1913; "Tratase de catequizar a los filarmónicos," *La Prensa*, June 12, 1913; "Consul Elias will protest," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, June 10, 1913; Octavio Herrera Pérez. *Historia Gráfica de la Revolución Mexicana en Tamaulipas*, (Instituto Tamaulipeco de Cultura, 1989), 298.

²² Francisco Mújica was also a PLM organizer. (Partido Liberal Mexicano). Mújica influenced General Lucio Blanco's actions at Los Borregos.

²³ Excerpt from General Lucio Blanco's proclamation in "Los Borregos," on August 4, 1913, Translated from the Spanish version found in *Tamaulipas Heroico*, "El primer reparto de tierras del constitucionalismo," 165; Rocha, 143; *Matamoros: Un Estudio*, 62.

²⁴ Sapia-Bosch, 22-27.

²⁵ Although Lucio Blanco redistributed the first lands in Mexico, Pastor Rouaix was appointed to Fomento, Carranza's land division. Blanco might have had this position, however he switched to the Convencionistas during the Convention of Aguascalientes, Richmond W Douglas, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist Struggle, 1893-1920*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 48-50.

²⁶ "Blanco trata de confiscar las propiedades de la Sauteña," *La Prensa*, August 10, 1913; *Matamoros: Un Estudio*, 62.

²⁷ Sapia-Bosch, 22.

²⁸ The land expropriations by Lucio Blanco and several of his officers were not necessarily the "*Carrancistas*" or Venustiano Carranza's main concern. Blanco's redistributions with the exception of "Hacienda Los Borregos" were reversed, see Richmond, 46-50 and John M. Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 280-287.

²⁹ *Tamaulipas Heroico*, 159; DHRM, 76; Jesse Johnson to Secretary of State, RDS 812.00/7705.

³⁰ Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, v.2 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), see map of railways in northeastern Mexico, xxii.

³¹ "A Mexican Estimate of Huerta's Position," *Current Opinion* 55 (July-December 1913): 149-50; Rocha, 139, 148-9.

³² "Prisoners are still held," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, June 7, 1913; Claim only 46 dead," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, June 10, 1913; "Matamoros no será pronto atacado," *La Prensa*, June, 12 1913; Rocha, 149'

³³ "The Theater of War in the Mexican Oil-Fields," *Current Opinion* 56 (January-June 1914): 6.

Chapter 5

¹ "Rebels camped below Laredo reinforced," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, January 3, 1914.

² "Brownsville and Matamoros line of telegraph," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, January 30, 1914.

³ General Gonzalez invites attack." *Brownsville Daily Herald*, January 21, 1914; "Brownsville and Matamoros line of telegraph," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, January 30,

1914; "Villa as a Greater Peril to Mexico than Huerta," *Current Opinion* 56 (January-June 1914): 98.

⁴ "Soldiers seize war ammunition," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, January 28, 1914.

⁵ "Why embargo should lift," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, January 28, 1914; "President Wilson issues a Proclamation and Pancho Villa Shouts for Joy; Raising the Embargo on Arms to Mexican Troops," *Current Opinion* 56 (January-June 1914): 168, *Los Angeles Times*, as quoted in the same article in *Current Opinion*.

⁶ Rocha, 139.

⁷ "400 killed in recent fight," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, January 30, 1914, "New Orleans to ship," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, February 4, 1914; RDS Weekly Military Report for week ending February 3, 1914, 812.00/11507; Rocha, 139.

⁸ "Matamoros to be attacked," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, January 19, 1914, "Federal leave Laredo," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, January 20, 1914, "Movements are now under way," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, February 2, 1914.

⁹ Ciro de la Garza-Trevino. *La Revolución Mexicana en el Estado de Tamaulipas*, v. II. (México: Librería de Manuel Porrúa, 1949), 23.

¹⁰ Ibid, 24.

¹¹ "Matamoros or Nuevo Laredo hand in balance," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, March 23, 1914; Garza, 42-4; de la Garza-Trevino, 24; Rocha, 155-57; Victoriano Huerta left Mexico and remained in Spain until the spring of 1915. German officials offered him money to return to Mexico and provoke a war with the United States, to keep the country out of WWI. German officials visited the border, including Brownsville to deposit money and ordered war materials for Huerta. However, Huerta and Pascual Orozco (who planned to aid Huerta) were arrested in the summer, Graduate Paper by Annie L. Webb, "A Study of Mexican Revolutionary Activities Affecting Texas and the United States, 1915," University of Texas Pan American, Lower Rio Grande Valley Historical Collection.

¹² "Bands reported crossing river," *Brownsville Daily Herald*, March 20, 1914.

¹³ To Secretary of State from Jesse Johnson, April 12, 1914, RDS 812.00/11507.

¹⁴ To Secretary of State from William P. Blocker, April 22, 1914, RDS 812.00/11624

¹⁵ Hart, 298.

¹⁶ To Secretary of State from Consul General Hanna, June 17, 1914, RDS 812.00/12277.

¹⁷ *INS Records*, Reel 5, Frame 0088, Casefile, 53108/71M.

²⁰ "Attack on Reynosa may occur early Wednesday," *Brownsville Herald*, November 30, 1914; "Band of filibusterers cross river at Hidalgo," *Brownsville Herald*, December 1, 1914; "Situation quiet at Reynosa, but fight expected," *Brownsville Herald*, December 2, 1914.

²¹ Ibid.

²² "Cavalrymen are captors of nine filibusters," and "Expedition against Reynosa a failure" *Brownsville Herald*, December 3, 1914.

²³ To State Department from J.W. Heard, Department Adjutant in absence of Tasker Bliss, RDS Weekly Military Report for week ending January 2, 1915, 812.00/14197, Circular to all military commanders of the Constitutionalist Army from Venustiano Carranza, February 15, 1915, found in RDS Records.

²⁴ To State Department from J.W. Heard, Department Adjutant in absence of Tasker Bliss, RDS Weekly Military Report for week ending January 9, 1915, 812.00/14241; "Villa," *World's Work* 28 (May-October 1914): 269-284. Dr. Andres Villarreal was the chief of the *Villista* Medical Corps. He was a graduate of Johns Hopkins University.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ RDS, Weekly Military Reports for week ending January 23, 1915, 812.00/14319, To John E. Osborne, First Assistant Secretary of the State, February 8, 1915, RDS 812.00/14377.

²⁷ To State Department from Tasker Bliss, RDS Weekly Military Report for week ending January 23, 1915, 812.00/14319.

²⁸ To State Department from J.W. Heard Department Adjutant in absence of Tasker Bliss, RDS Weekly Military Report for week ending January 16, 1915, 812.00/14278.

²⁹ To State Department from Tasker Bliss, RDS Weekly Military Reports for week ending February 20, 1915, 812.00/14470; James A. Sandos. *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 117; Rocha, 345-7.

³⁰ To State Department from Major General Frederick Funston, RDS Weekly Military Report for week ending February 20, 1915, 812.00/14470.

³¹ To State Department from Tasker Bliss, RDS Weekly Military Report for week ending February 27, 1915, 812.00/14526; To Secretary of the Navy (Division of Operations) from Captain, Senior Officer from U.S.S Delaware, Vera Cruz, Mexico.

February 24, 1915, RDS 812.00/14524, To State Department from Tasker Bliss, RDS Weekly Military Report for week ending February 27, 1915, 812.00/14526.

³² "Una partida de gente armada logró internarse en territorio mexicano," *La Prensa*, March 25, 1915.

³³ "Llegaron a Laredo algunos empleados *Carrancistas* de Matamoras," *La Prensa*, March 25, 1915.

³⁴ "Nafarrate Evacuo," *La Prensa* March 25, 1915; To Brazilian Minister in Mexico City from Secretary William J. Bryan, March 23, 1915, RDS 812.00/14664.

³⁵ "Villistas claim to have Camargo and Mier, Mexico," *Brownsville Herald*, March 20, 1915.

³⁶ "Matamoras is reinforced; 1200 troops from the south," *Brownsville Herald*, March 24, 1915; de la Garza-Trevino, 152.

³⁷ "Rodríguez, Cabra, Castro, Navarro, y Payno avanzan sobre Matamoras," *La Prensa*, March 25, 1915.

³⁸ Canseco, 213; Rocha, 209; "Tower above the eastern Mexican," *Brownsville Herald*, March 27, 1915; Weekly Military Report week ending April 3, 1915, RDS 812.00/14866.

³⁹ To Secretary of State from H.C. Harrison, March 23, 1915, RDS 812.00/14672; According to Matamoras Historian, Ing. Clemente Rendon de la Garza, the *Carrancistas*' success was partly due to the flooding of this extensive area. Interview with Mr. Rendon on December 28, 2000, Brownsville Historical Commission, notetaking.

⁴⁰ To Secretary of State from Tasker Bliss, Weekly Military Report for week ending March 27, 1915, RDS 812.00/14791.

⁴¹ Ciro de la Garza-Trevino, 223.

⁴² To Agwar from Funston, March 27, 1915, RDS 812.00/14726; de la Garza-Trevino, 223; de la Garza-Trevino, 156; *Matamoras: Un Estudio*, 64-5.

⁴³ To Department of State from Frederick Funston, RDS Weekly Military Report for week ending April 3, 1915, 812.00/14866.

⁴⁴ De la Garza-Trevino, 155; Rocha, 211.

⁴⁵ Weekly Military Report for week ending April 3, 1915, RDS 812.00/14866.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ José Raul Canseco, 215-6; Rocha, 210-11; de la Garza-Trevino, 156; To Agwar from Funston, RDS 812.00/14842; *Matamoros: Un Estudio*, 64-5.

⁴⁸ Secretary of State from Duval West, Section: "Interview with Francisco Villa," February 10, 1915, RDS 812.00/14623; Ciro de la Garza-Trevino, *Anales y Efemerides*, 221.

⁴⁹ To Consul Jesse Johnson from Secretary of State William J. Bryans, March 27, 1915, RDS 812.00/14726; To Funston from McCain, March 27, 1915, RDS 812.00/14725.

To Department of State from Tasker Bliss, RDS Weekly Military Report for week ending May 1, 1915 report from Harlingen patrols submitted on April 25, 1915.

⁵⁰ To Department of State from Tasker Bliss, Weekly Military Report for week ending May 1, 1915, RDS 812.00/ ; To Agwar from General Funston, April 21, 1915, RDS 812.00/14906, To Agwar from Commander at Fort Brown, Brownsville, April 17, 1915, RDS 812.00/14878; Weekly Military Report for week ending February 3, 1914, 812.00/11507.

⁵¹ To Department of State from Tasker Bliss, RDS Weekly Military Report for week ending May 1, 1915 report from Harlingen patrols submitted on April 25, 1915; Ernesto Garza Sáenz. "Rurales de Camargo Fusilaron al General Eugenio Aguirre Benavides" in *Crónicas de Camargo*. (Cd. Victoria: Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1994), 148.

⁵² Richmond, 68-70; In 1910 the northern states, including Tamaulipas, 'accounted for 90% of all foreign capital invested in Mexico.' In Nuevo León, 2.2% accounted for foreign investments, Ramón Ruíz, *The Great Rebellion: Mexico 1905-1924*. (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1980), 110, 334.

Chapter 6

¹ Factions obtained supplies from the United States, when an embargo had been placed, individuals turned to smuggling.

² Rocha, 250-1; Hart, 298.

³ *Carrancistas* actually captured other smaller border towns before moving on to Matamoros in 1913.

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