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From Laredo to Matamoros: The Constitutionalist Battles Along the Rio Grande 1913-1914

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FROM LAREDO TO MATAMOROS: THE CONSTITUTIONALIST BATTLES ALONG THE RIO GRANDE 1913-1914

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis illustrates the deployment of the Constitutionalist Army after the Plan de Guadalupe. The battles fought to neutralize Huerta's army from Laredo to Matamoros. The thesis includes American and Mexican sources, oral accounts, and archived documents.

The overall purpose of this thesis is to recount the Constitutionalist events based on journals, books, theses, dissertations, and newspapers in order to argue the effects of the Mexican Revolution. The concept of counter memory is exercised throughout historical fragments.

The study covers the years 1913 and 1914, the onset of the Constitutionalist movement up to Huerta's exile. The thesis includes an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, and an appendix of figures and photographs. The conclusion underlines Constitutionalism entrenched in northeast México and the socio-political influences along the border. During the Constitutionalist Revolution, Mexicans near the border were permitted safe crossing to the U.S. The thesis further exemplifies the U.S. humanitarian gesture towards Mexican refugees and wounded soldiers.

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this master's thesis to my wife, Ana Maria, who inspired me to continue in the process of learning. I wish to thank my son, Jesus Erik, for his love and patience. To my parents, Lilia Gutiérrez and Dr. Jesús Ramos, I give thanks for instilling in me the love for history. I thank Lilia and Lucila for being great sisters.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION IN NORTHERN MÉXICO:

The subject matter for this thesis is the Mexican Constitutionalist Revolution in Northeast México, and the resulting events along the South Texas border. The purpose of the thesis lies in featuring the effects of the Mexican Revolution along the Río Grande, from Laredo to Matamoros. The period of study is from 1913 through 1914, and comprises of the Presidency of Francisco I. Madero, Victoriano Huerta's usurpation of the Mexican government, and the deployment of the Constitutionalist Army from its inception in Coahuila until the occupation of Nuevo Laredo in 1914. I argue that the Constitutionalist forces' northeast campaign conquered two of the most important border cities in the area - Nuevo Laredo and Matamoros. During this campaign, people immigrated to the United States and the Mexican border towns remained in Constitutionalist hands until the end of the revolution. One of the most important goals of this thesis is to argue that in spite of the traditional violence at the border and racial confrontations between Anglos and Mexicans, there were acts of humanitarian relief and compassion for Mexican civilians and military alike on American soil.

The Mexican Revolution was the first socio-political movement of Latin America in the twentieth century. It began with local uprisings in Northern México and was, in essence, a revolution where the most important leaders were *norteños*. As winners of battles, these *norteños*

were able to construct México's politics through the twentieth century. The close proximity of Northern México to the United States was a decisive factor in the Revolution based on refugee zone, labor force, intense trade, railroads, political ties, U.S. policies toward revolutionary factions, and ensuring safety along the border towns

The importance of the Mexican Revolution in the North lies in its close geographical contact with the United States, and it became of paramount importance as a refugee zone, international trade of weaponry and merchandise, foreign investments, and railroad communications. A series of uprisings took place and several factions were organized in the North.[1]

The Mexican Revolution was the result of a class conflict—of explosive confrontations between proletarians and capitalists—and the main purpose was to overthrow Porfirio Díaz's dictatorial government. One of the main historiographical questions is whether the Mexican Revolution really produced a significant change for the well-being of its citizens. Historian Ramon Ruiz asserted that México did not experience a Revolution, but a "great Rebellion." This prominent proposition is based on Ruiz's model of a revolution in the twentieth century, similar to Russia's Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.[2] This event changed the basic structure of society and the wealth and patterns of income distribution in Russia and produced substantial changes in the nation's economy and independency on the outside sphere. Ruiz explains that México did not experience a radical conversion Russia did. In México, it was a "rebellion" or a form of "bourgeois" protest at best, which could only provide some changes to an ancient capitalistic

[1] Adolfo Gilly, *The Mexican Revolution* (New York, the New Press, 2005 W.W. Norton and Co), 98.
[2] Alan Knight, "The Mexican Revolution: Bourgeois? Nationalist? Or Just a Great Rebellion*?" Bulletin of Latin American research*,Vol. 4, No. 2 (1985), 1-3.

regime.[3] Ruiz sees the rebellion as a proletarian-social Revolution, which opposed and disputed, but could not overthrow an established bourgeois order.[4]

The Díaz dictatorship was characterized by an absence of democracy, economic underdevelopment for the majority, and a dependency on foreign capital. Díaz's days of heroic resistance and bravery during the Napoleonic invasion of México were ending. Friedrich Katz explains that the Mexican Revolution was part of a trend happening in the rapidly unfolding nations of Latin America, and this tendency was a movement of the ascending middle classes, which began to conquer a place in politics and economic power. The issue of parliamentarism in Argentina and in Brazil prevented social changes without violence and bloodshed.[5] The revolution in México was powerful, and it was necessary to obtain the inclusion of middle classes into the political process—particularly because of the country's violent history and its governance by an autocratic general.

Katz believed in certain distinctive factors converging on the eve of the Revolution, each initiated in the Díaz regime, and its demise as a political power. One of these factors involved the expropriations of communal lands in Central and Southern México, a practice existing since colonial times. The conquerors took the Indians' land and expropriated it into large tracts. This was the birth of the *haciendas* and *hacendados*.

After Mexican Independence and the subsequent weakening of the central government, free citizens made improvements in regards to their economic and political positions. After the construction of the railroads, starting in the 1870's, these tracts of land increased in value, and villagers came under attack and were dispossessed of their lands. The Diaz government pursued

[3] Ibíd., 4.
[4] Ibíd., 4-5.
[5] Friedrich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico* (Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press 1981), 27-29.

a radical agrarian policy joining and strengthening with local *hacendados* with a subsequent grand scale of exploitation, expropriation, and political submission by force. [6]

The campaign became more aggressive in Central México, where the villagers only possessed a minimum amount of land and insignificant political autonomy. There were sporadic skirmishes and unrest which the Federal troops abated. The agrarian policies of the Díaz government antagonized large sections of the population. The agrarian quest was exploited when merged with two distinct and additional elements: the transformation of the northern frontier into the "Border, a land that once had been a lonely region beyond the reach of any country and now, was within the grip of two countries," and the European-American rivalry.[7]

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Mexican northern frontier captured a large influx of capital, especially American capital and investments up to seventy percent, which produced important changes, such as construction of the Mexican railroad system. Díaz and the United States, respectively, imposed political and economic control over the region. After 1885, this region was well integrated into the emerging transnational economy.[8] In other words, the frontier became a border after the railroad arrived, and the economic transformation was chiefly the result of American investments which began streaming into all of México to a considerable extent. The northern military communities (military colonists) that had a strategic and defense function before the end of the nineteenth century, lost not only their lands but also their traditional political right. [9]

During the Díaz regime, the state authorities overlooked—with a few exceptions—the

[6] Ibíd., 7.
[7] Ibíd., 8.
[8] Ibíd., 9.
[9] Ibíd.,

rights and traditions of the northerners, and seized for themselves the privilege of designating officials as the *jefes políticos,* (district administrators) and *presidentes municipales* (mayors) at their own will of power. [10] The loss of land and of autonomy before the revolution precipitated local uprisings (*Cuchillo Parado* and *Bachíniva*) and the birth of the legendary insurgence of sixty men in the village of Tomóchic, where the government lost more than five hundred men in a two-year struggle.[11] Díaz also concentrated his attacks on the Indian population, especially the *Yaquis* in Sonora, to expel them from their ancestral lands. This resulted in a fierce resistance and bloody battles. These two groups of Indians and peasants found themselves helpless in the face of obtrusive assaults until the turn of the century.

In Southern México, peonage had almost degenerated to a level of slavery, while in the North, neither slavery nor serfdom were prominent.[12] Díaz also invited the European countries to invest in México and challenged the American's preeminence, thus provoking an American resentment. For some Americans the Mexican business became an anti-collaborative situation induced by the Mexican government. The Americans saw the possibility of a change in government, which had the potential to produce a substantial gain for both countries.

Under the Díaz regime, the onset of dispossession of lands and property began since colonial times throughout all Mexican governments. The design of the appropriation of land led to form *latifundios*—big, agrarian properties—to create a hoard of workers in precarious conditions.[13] In order to clear a free road for business , capitalism had to destroy the communal lands in Central México, rob the *Yaqui* and *Mayo* Indians of their rich lands in Sonora, and

[10]Ibíd.,
[11]Ibíd., 9-10.
[12] Ibíd., 12.
[13] Gilly, 4, 5.

subjugate men as a free labor force.[14] The modern *latifundio* property, the vertebral column of capitalist enterprise, buried its roots in thievery and constant warfare with the peasant villagers. Through acts of appropriation and spoils, the government and the *hacendados* acquired huge portions of land, snatched by the private militias and the armed bodies of the state, abating all forms of resistance. There were several repressive forces, the federal army—*la federación* as the people called it—and the rural police, or *guardia rural.* The *rurales* were a prominent institution in Porfirian México and a significant instrument of the dictator's power. Almost all histories of the Porfirian era mention the *rurales* and indicate their significance to Diaz's absolute control of the country.[15] The *rurales* consisted of men, and that of them were *bandoleros* pardoned by Diaz, who gave them work, guarding and serving as a repressive force to scout the country in search of bandits. *Rurales* also served landowners, *caciques,* and political bosses.[16]

Historian Adolfo Gilly explains that the first great social movements heralding the Mexican Revolution and exposing the national grievances arose from the proletariat rather than the peasantry. It was not a local peasant uprising, but a great workers' strike waking up national conscience and fermenting the revolt in centers of economic relevance.[17]

At least three major strikes occurred in 1903, 1906, and 1908. They began in San Luis Potosí, and spread to Nuevo León, Aguascalientes and Chihuahua. On June 1, 1906, the Cananea copper miners north of Sonora launched a strike against the American company owning the mine, and the worker's demands incorporated a manifesto which attacked the Díaz government as an ally of foreign employers.

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[14] Ibíd., 6.
[15] John W. Kitchens "Some Considerations on the Rurales of Porfirian Mexico" *Journal of Inter-American Studies* Vol. 9, No. 3 (Jul. 1967), 441.
[16] Gilly, 7.
[17] Ibíd., 48

Fifty-three hundred men were involved in the movement and several guards were killed. Well-armed state troopers and a 275-strong battalion of Arizona "Rangers" crossed the border, called by the Governor of Sonora to intervene. The insurrection was defeated after two days. The instigators received long prison terms and were ultimately freed only by the revolution.[18]

By the end of 1905, Americans had invested heavily in ranches, irrigation projects, and mines, and owned more than 250 businesses in Sonora. These companies enjoyed special privileges from the Mexican government, which provided police support in suppressing strikes and other disturbances. After the Cananea uprising, México allowed American volunteers to enter México and protect the American interests.[19]

Seven months later, a second great iconic strike in the pre-revolutionary period took place in the middle of 1906. The Río Blanco textile workers in Veracruz formed a group called the "*gran círculo de obreros libres"* ("great circle of free workers") and shortly after, other similar groups showed up in Puebla, Querétaro, Jalisco, Oaxaca and the *Distrito Federal*.

The *Centro Industrial de Puebla* was a reactionary organization that prevented any form of active labor unions, and could provoke a number of work stoppages and dismissals. It was not in favor of procuring better living standards for workers.[20] On January 5, 1907, according to historian Susan M. Deeds, President Díaz denied the right of labor organizations *de facto* and ordered the workers to resume their duties. On January 7, five thousand workers gathered in front of the gates to prevent anyone from entering the premises, but the company guards shot and killed one worker. The rioters ransacked and burned the company to the ground and marched

[18] Ibíd., 49
[19] Susan M. Deeds, "José Maria Maytorena and the Mexican Revolution in Sonora" *Arizona and the West Vol. 18, No. 1*, (1976), 23
[20] Gilly, 49.

with their families to the city of Orizaba. The army lay in wait and opened fire on the column, killing men, women, and children indiscriminately.[21]

Groups which supported these strikes and took their leadership were linked to the ideology of the Mexican Liberal Party. The Party's authority was guided by Ricardo Flores Magón, who published a weekly magazine, *Regeneración,* "which became an independent fighting journal" addressing the bad administration of the Department of Justice . *Regeneración* became one of the most influential precursors of the Mexican Revolution. In 1901, the *Regeneración* group had founded the Mexican Liberal Party (PLM) around Ricardo Flores Magón, Camilo Arriaga, Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama, and Juan Sarabia. Their ideology derived from the radical wing of Juárez and liberalism of the Reform years. In 1904, the inner nucleus of the liberal party went into exile in the United States, began publishing *Regeneración*, and sent copies into México. Flores Magón and his comrades established close links with American labor unions and anarchist leaders.[22]

The Mexican Liberal Party represented an alternative, and their new program was published in St. Louis Missouri in July 1906. It called for the overthrow of the dictatorship, for political and social reforms, for free elections, and for a single term presidency. The plan also argued the suppression of local political chieftains, and pushed for mandatory laid education (with better pay for educators), women's rights, the nationalization of church property, a maximum eight-hour workday, and obligatory free Sundays. The plan likewise included banning child labor, employer-funded hygiene and safety standards at work, and workers compensation. They also called for an Agricultural Bank, restitution of village land, redistribution of unexploited

[21] Ibíd., 50.
[22] Ibíd., 51, 52.

farmland, and protection of indigenous people. These radical demands by a nationalist movement emerged later as articles in the Constitution of 1917.[23]

The Democratic Party movement emerged during the same time period as the opposition. This movement, unlike the liberals, did not propose to mobilize the peasants. It was, in essence, a party of the "outs" among México's upper class and had no real intention of changing the country's internal political structure. Its principal endeavor was to replace the old Porfirio Díaz with Bernardo Reyes and to break the power of the *científicos.* Reyes wanted to unify the opposition wing of the upper class with the discontented groups of the middle class.[24] The events of Río Blanco and Cananea radicalized the *Magonista* movement and sounded the alarm for the various factions of the bourgeoisie, completely shaking the political structure of Mexican capitalism.[25] Reyes had been the governor of Nuevo León and a Porfirian politician. His tenure in office comprised of suppressing the liberal movements in Monterrey with savagery.[26] The "Reyista" tendency wanted a certain change in politics, but only within the existing institutional structure.

According to historian John Mason Hart, after years of political rallies and shifting alliances, the alienated groups—starting with the intellectuals provincial elites , and *pequeña burguesía*—found a leader in Francisco I. Madero, the heir of a Coahuila *hacienda*, banking, industrial, mercantile and family mining empire. Madero (1873-1917) was a socially accepted and wealthy man who came from a rich family of landowners. He was inspired with a traditional

[23] Ibíd.,
[24] Katz, 29.
[25] Gilly, 53.
[26] Ibíd., 55.

nineteenth-century *laissez-faire* and liberal-democratic political attitude.[27]

It was Francisco I. Madero who overcame Reyes' indecision. Madero stood against the dictator in the presidential elections; therefore, he won many alliances denied to Reyes. Madero had liberal ideas; he was a spiritual and mystical man whose political goal was to reinstate democratic practices and civilian political liberty—in other words, the rule of law dating back from the Constitution of 1857. The National Democratic Party was created under the slogan "effective suffrage no reelection." Madero was named the "apostle of democracy." In 1909, the *Centro Antireeleccionista* was founded and, in June of the same year, the first article was made public. Madero sold his holdings in Northern México to materialize and pay the expenditures of his journey in order to democratize the country through political meetings.[28]

Susan M. Deeds further argues that Madero had planned an agreement with the regime at the beginning which would have permitted Díaz to withdraw in peace and in a trouble-free manner. However, when Díaz became intransigent, Madero began to call free elections and a single-term presidency. His aim was to contain and propose no bloodshed, which many people considered imminent. Madero wanted to assure a peaceful succession through political reforms.[29] Porfirio Díaz was elected for the last time in June 1910, while the opposition candidate, Madero, was put in prison for rioting and eventually conditionally released. In October 1910, Madero fled to San Antonio, Texas and issued the Plan of San Luis Potosí to overthrow Díaz. He set November 20 as the date for a general uprising. Madero also created a revolutionary *junta* to coordinate troop recruitments, but internally the *junta* was uncoordinated in Sonora, and only sporadic uprisings were held and were promptly suppressed by the

[27] John Mason Hart *Revolutionary México, The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Los Angeles University of California Press, 1987), 221.
[28] Enrique Krauze, *Biografía del poder (México D.F.* Tusques editores México S.A. de C.V. 2002),41-42.
[29] Gilly, 56.

federales.[30]

At first, the Revolutionary Movement appeared triumphant in spite of a harsh authoritarian response, thus creating a counter-revolution and the formation of military and social forces. At the end of the first stage (the triumph of Madero), these forces did not compel to restore peace and order. Numerous factions and military campaigns, as well as competing ideologies, had adverse effects all over the country. The consequence was a bloody upheaval. The main insurrection states were Chihuahua and Morelos, where Madero personally (under the slogan "*effective suffrage-no re-election*") supervised the military actions with men of legendary valor, such as Pascual Orozco and Francisco Villa, at his side. The peasantry of Morelos followed Emiliano Zapata. After Madero's forces had occupied Ciudad Juárez and Zapata's forces had occupied Morelos, Díaz negotiated a truce and exiled himself to Europe. Almost 90% of the voters elected Madero as president of México on October 15, 1911.[31]

Katz explains even though Madero's presidency was short lived, it was a genuine democratic government and had to deal with multiple domestic political factions and opponents—namely, the American government and American business in México. On September 15, 1912, the American government had presented its thorny protest to the Mexican government, in which the latter was accused of discrimination against American companies and citizens (the U.S. cited imposition of a tax in crude oil, the dismissal of several hundred employees of the Mexican National railways system, and a decision against an American cattle company). In addition to these grievances, the U.S. asserted that the Mexican government was

[30] Deeds, 32.
[31] Katz, 90.

incapable of protecting American lives and property.[32]

Krauze argues that Madero in his presidential time endured three major uprisings besides the Zapata dissidence and the political turmoil. Bernardo Reyes, Pascual Orozco, and Félix Díaz headed three rebellions. Reyes returned to México from exile, and after eleven days in Mexican territory, he surrendered in Linares Nuevo León. If this incident had happened with Díaz, he would have sent Reyes to the firing squad. However, Madero—the honest man—, sent him to prison in México City.[33] In March 1912, Orozco took up arms in Chihuahua against Madero. Orozco was disappointed because Madero had managed to destroy all the support Orozco had in Chihuahua, and Orozco was willing to side with the enemy to achieve his political ambitions. He created one of the major crises of Madero's government. Chihuahua, a state that once sided with the revolution, now became another fighting front against Madero's government.[34] General José González Salas (in command of Madero's forces) lost a battle and committed suicide. General Victoriano Huerta replaced him and defeated Orozco in the battles of Rellano, Bachimba, and Ojinaga. Orozco fled to the U.S. border, and an iconic character emerged in the revolutionary scenery—Francisco Villa, an irregular colonel, who escaped being shot by Huerta for stealing a horse. [35]

Madero granted Huerta to the rank of *General de División* in order to appease him. This was another of Madero's mistakes, for he already knew of the earlier acts of treason perpetrated by Huerta. In October 1912, Felix Díaz revolted in Veracruz. The revolt was a short-lived skirmish which ended with Féliz Díaz's imprisonment in México City. Although Madero

[32] Ibid., 93.
[33] Krauze. 62.
[34] Alejandro Quintana *Pancho Villa: a Biography* (Santa Bárbara Ca. ABC-CLIO 2012) , 44.
[35] Krauze, 63

withstood these rebellions, at the end of 1912 he was politically a lonely man according to Cuban Ambassador, Manuel Márquez Sterling.[36]

Katz explains that in January 1913, a new conspiracy unfolded against Madero's government. This collusion included conservative groups, united regardless of their political differences. The most renowned were Porfirian generals Manuel Mondragón, Felix Díaz, and Bernardo Reyes, (who plotted from prison). The conspirators had liaisons to officers in the army—especially with Victoriano Huerta—, influential businesspersons, and to Ambassador Wilson who knew of these plans. At this point, as explained by Katz, there was a clear implication in the plot against Madero's presidency.[37] On February 13, 1913, the Reyes-Díaz (nephew of Porfirio Díaz) revolt began in México City, and Madero ordered Victoriano Huerta to subdue the insurrection. Huerta and Félix Díaz conspired against Madero behind closed doors.

The *Decena Trágica* (February 9 – 19, 1913) began when a group of army officers led the mutinous troops against the democratically elected government of Francisco I. Madero. During the next ten days, México City was under fire; cannonade and bursting shells fell on the city buildings. On the tenth day, Madero's commander-in-chief, Huerta, switched sides and captured President Madero and Vice-President José María Pino Suárez and persuaded them to resign. [38] According to the Constitution of 1857, the minister of foreign relations, Pedro Lascuráin, took office as provisional President, and the only legitimate act during his brief term was to appoint Victoriano Huerta as Minister of the Interior.[39]

Huerta seized power with the support of vested interests such as Henry Lane Wilson, and

[36] Ibíd., 64.
[37] Katz, 95.
[38] Peter V. N. Henderson, "Woodrow Wilson, Victoriano Huerta, and the recognition issue in *México*" *The Americas* Vol. 41, No.2, (1884): 158.
[39] Ibíd., 159.

most of the ranking army officers within the confines of México City. Henry Lane Wilson held the distinguished post of ambassador to México from 1910 to 1913. Wilson received Madero's government with hesitation, based on his ideas that the Mexican people could not achieve a democracy due to their ignorance. Wilson also believed that the elite should educate the masses and not the revolution. The ambassador also represented American economic interests, such as the Guggenheim's, which had conflicting interests with Madero's family.[40] Cumberland, agrees that is possible that *hacendados* and businessmen through their representatives in the senate may have been involved. Madero's death was destined, as one Huertista said, "No one wanted to leave these dangerous propagandists of violence and anarchy alive, and their deaths were considered … a national necessity."[41] On the night of February 21-22, Huerta removed Madero and Vice-President José María Pino Suárez from office and executed them. Huerta's agenda was to kill all of Madero's followers and wipe out democratic principles in México. Huerta exclaimed, "Authorized by the senate, I have assumed the executive power." Days before the Madero assassination, Huerta sent his February 18 message to the state governors as the new Mexican president, some of whom immediately recognized Huerta as a leader, while some did not answer at all; only one state took a categorical negative position.

As soon as Governor Venustiano Carranza of Coahuila received the message, he called an emergency session of the state congress and after midnight of the same day, passed a resolution denying Huerta recognition.[42] Alberto García Granados, Huerta's *Ministro de Gobernación*, received orders on February 22, 1913 to obtain an immediate reply from all state

[40] Raymond L. Shoemaker " Henry Lane Wilson and Republican Policy toward Mexico, 1913-1920" *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 76, No. 2 (June 1980): 103.
[41] Charles E. Cumberland *Mexican revolution The Constitutionalist Years* (Austin-London University of Texas Press,1974), 13.
[42] Ibíd., 15.

governors. The governors of Sonora and Chihuahua did not reply at all, while the absence of response by Abraham González, Governor of Chihuahua, cost him his political affiliation and his life.[43]

Carranza's contradictions during the critical days following the *coup d'état* made him a target of bitter criticism, both in México and abroad. According to Cumberland, Carranza was in the process of gaining time, despite his inconsistencies. He even sent a telegram to President William Howard Taft condemning the American government's recognition of Huerta's government as Carranza was informed erroneously of the American decision. Carranza's indecisions provided time for him to make financial arrangements and to re-group some of his loyal partisans. Negotiations with local banks and local representatives were not too obvious of the inevitable uprising. Two weeks later, four banks were involved in the transactions. Huerta was aware of Carranza's affairs and sent him a telegram inquiring as to why he had removed fifty thousand pesos from the banks without Huerta's government's knowledge.[44] The Coahuila governor made his position clear and firm: "I have removed no money from banks you refer; and had I done so, it would not be to you that I should give an accounting." Three days after this telegram of clear intentions, Carranza's forces engaged in a skirmish for the first time with the federals at a place called the *Anhelo.*[45]

Carranza's scattered units lost their first battles and his only plan was to retreat and form a plan of action for future events: the Plan of Guadalupe. The plan was drawn at the *hacienda* of the same name, located approximately sixty miles north of Saltillo, and signed on March 26,

[43] Ibíd., 16.
[44] Ibíd., 20.
[45] Ibíd., 22.

1913, by seventy-one minor military rank revolutionaries grouping around Carranza.[46] The Plan of Guadalupe, the emblem of the constitutionalist movement that it fostered, marked the onset of a long journey, which ended in Querétaro three years and eight months later with the drafting of the Constitution of 1917. The plan simply disavowed Huerta, and the legislative and judicial branches of the federal government, as well as all state governments which adhered to Huerta's spurious presidency. Carranza was designated First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army and was provisionally the depositary of executive power.

As soon Carranza entered México City, he was to hold general elections and hand over the office to anyone who had been elected president. No economic or social issues were included, and the plan was simply a political opposition to the federal government. Carranza advised that social justice would only be obtained after the final victory and not before. Defeating Huerta was the most important objective. Colonel Lucio Blanco served as president and Captain Francisco J. Múgica as secretary, for the signing of the Plan of Guadalupe in an orderly fashion. [47] Niemeyer asserts many branded Carranza as an opportunist in the annals of Mexican history, because he was possibly motivated by power and not by his drive to avenge Madero. However, Carranza at least was determined to denounce Huerta's usurpation and lead an army to restore legality.[48] Huerta's usurpation cancelled the possibility of a democratic government in México which lasted for decades. In this thesis the events depicted during 1913 and 1914 represent the most important, if not the most valid, cause of the revolution after the fall of Diaz.

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[46] Eberhardt Victor Niemeyer *Revolution at Queretaro The Mexican Constitutional Convention of 1916-1917* (Austin, London ,Institute of Latin American studies, University of Texas *Press* 1974*)* ,15.

[47] Ibíd., 16.
[48] Ibíd., 16,17.

After the *Plan de Guadalupe* between March and April 1913, Sonoran revolutionaries controlled the border cities of Nogales, Naco, and Agua Prieta. Carranza, acting as First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army, arrived in Monclova Coahuila, where he delivered war dispatches to several generals and various military units were assigned for combat in different destinations. The forces of Venustiano Carranza took up positions along the border between Coahuila and Texas until October 1913.[49]

Venustiano Carranza appointed Colonel Lucio Blanco in charge of military operations in Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas. Juan Barragán, general and historian (once Chief of Staff with Blanco), argued that the boldest and most sensational acts of war were those of Blanco's encounters with the *federales,* which were widely known throughout the country. Lucio Blanco departed from Monclova with two hundred and fifty men in the first week of April 1913. He was accompanied by the following staff members: Lt. Colonels Cesáreo Castro and Andrés Saucedo, Major M.D. Daniel, Rios Zertuche, Ist. Captains, Gustavo E. Elizondo, Francisco J. Mújica (who was appointed Chief of Staff with ample administrative faculties), Alejo G. González, and Benecio López. [50]

At that time, Lucio Blanco was a distinguished revolutionary of liberal ideas of the Constitutionalist army. Blanco's first encounters with the enemy took place in Cerralvo on April 10, and in Alhaja on April 12. The following day, his army occupied the small towns of Villa de Coss and Villa China in Nuevo León. Blanco's forces then entered Tamaulipas through the village of General Terán and captured the towns of Burgos, Méndez, San Fernando, and

[49] Miguel Plana. "The Mexican Revolution and the U.S. Border: Research Perspectives" *Journal of the Southwest* Vol. 49, No. 4, Winter (2007): 5.

[50] Juan Barragán, *Historia del Ejército y de la Revolución Constitucionalista* (México: Editorial Stylo Antigua Librería Robredo 1946), 35.

Santander Jiménez, on April 22, 23, 24, and 27 respectively.[51]These battles made the enemy flee and take refuge in the state capital Ciudad Victoria, a Huertista stronghold at the time.[52]

The Mexican Revolution caused chaos alongside the Texas-México border. The close proximity of the border towns had resulted in a shared history of conflicts including political instability, economic factors, violence, and social inequality. The United States had to protect their border and civilians, enforce neutrality laws, prevent smuggling, and suppress banditry. Don E. Coerver, in *Texas and the Mexican Revolution*, explains the situation in the United States. The final days of William H. Taft's administration (1909-1913) were of confusion and disunity, and these circumstances persisted with the Woodrow Wilson presidency (1913-1921). The U.S. government had not extended diplomatic recognition to Huerta's government and Wilson's foreign policy often bypassed regular diplomatic channels in favor of operating through his advisors and special agents. Wilson had communication problems, jurisdictional disputes, and federal-state frictions.[53]

Texas Governor Oscar B. Colquitt (1911-1915) concluded that there was no indication of President Wilson intending to pursue a stronger border policy. Wilson's attitude of "wait" and "vigilant watch" of the political elements in México did not please the Texas Governor. The dissimilarity of ideas for guarding the border in Texas was overwhelming. A letter written by Secretary of War, Lindley M. Garrison, to Secretary of State, William J. Bryan, regarded the possibility that American intervention could result in a Mexican invasion. Garrison explained that the U.S. Army had no more than 4,000 troops along the entire U.S.-México border, while

[51] Ibíd., 36.
[52] Ibíd., 37.
[53] Don E. Coerver and Linda B. Hall *Texas and the Mexican Revolution (*San Antonio Texas, Trinity University Press 1984), 62,63.

there were more than 5,000 Huertistas federal troops in the Juarez vicinity alone. [54]

In the meantime, Piedras Negras, Coahuila—with twelve thousand inhabitants—became the temporary headquarters for Carranza's state government and remained under his control until October 1913, when Huerta's federal forces recaptured it. The city became a Constitutionalist stronghold at the end of April 1914. As pointed out by John Mason Hart, local regional elites in the Texas border provided ample support to Carranza's army operating in the north, especially regarding arms and smuggling.[55]

Carranza divided the nation into areas of military operations with the military forces in each area, designated as a corps and commanded by a general. The Northeast Corps, under General Pablo González, operated in the states of Tamaulipas and Nuevo León and throughout Northeast México, the coast, and the Gulf of México. The Northwest Corps, including Sonora, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, and Durango, were commanded by Alvaro Obregón and moved south through the west coast states. Pánfilo Natera commanded the Central Corps, including Zacatecas and southern and eastern states. Historian Adolfo Gilly points out that the main battles of the revolution took place along the Obregón line of military actions in the west and Francisco Villa's forces in the center. Furthermore, Gilly asserts that both armies followed the course of the railway lines: Obregón—the Pacific line, and Villa—the Central Railway system.[56] Villa's division remained subordinate to the Obregon's Northwest army, but Villa did not accept this hierarchical subordination. The *División del Norte* acted as a formation of equal or higher importance than the Northwest Army, which the enemy feared much more compared to any of

[54] Ibíd., 63.
[55] Plana, 606.

[56] Adolfo Gilly *The Mexican Revolution* first published with the title *La Revolución Interrumpida* (New York, the New Press, 2005 W.W. Norton and Company), 98.

the other Constitutionalist forces.[57]

Historian Arnoldo De León argued that even before the Mexican Revolution there was a trans-border migration of many Mexicans to the American side of the Río Grande. These people sought not only the moral and spiritual return of a land which had belonged to them in the past, but also as a refuge of the distressful conditions they faced under the dictatorship of President Díaz.[58] Ambitious land barons forcibly removed the poor off their land to face a life of destitution. During the Mexican Revolution, Mexicans fled to the United States to escape the horror of war, reprisals from contending factions, and the everlasting pursuit of a less precarious way of living. One must consider two major aspects of border crossings. Firstly, México suffered a semi-feudal economic condition in the late nineteenth century, which persisted in spite of Diaz's efforts of modernization. Secondly, in the initial years of the twentieth century, the internal disorder and political instability of a country in arms contributed to the Mexican diaspora to the United States. Historian Irving W. Levinson stressed the importance of the Río Grande Valley border: the river—which today serves as an international boundary—has united the Valley since the Villas del Norte settlements, a colonization project of José de Escandón in 1749. The ethnic junctions thus established on both sides of the river, survived the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo's political division and today, eighty-eight per cent of the U.S. citizens living in the Valley have Hispanic ancestry. This overwhelming fact draws out family structure and a strong sense of multi-generational obligations of the traditional Mexican-Hispanic society pervading in the Río Grande Valley. [59] The 1905 completion of a railroad linking Matamoros to

[57] Ibíd., 99.
[58] Arnoldo de León, *Mexican Americans in Texas: A Brief History* (Wheeling Illinois, Harlan Davidson Inc. 1999), 66.
[59] Irving Levinson "Many Borders in One Place: Twenty-Seven Decades of History In The Valley Of The Rio Bravo" (presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southwest Council of Latin American Studies March,2012.), 7.

Mexican rail lines running through Monterrey, the 1904 completion of a railroad tying Brownsville to the U.S. national railroad system, and a railroad crossing the Río Grande in 1910 gave international access and an important transnational commerce. [60]

The Mexican Revolution affected the lives of most people along the border on both sides of the Río Grande, as historian Esther P. González asserted. Since the second week of April, 1913, immediately after the message was received that the Carrancistas were in route to the city of Mier Tamaulipas and surrounding areas, people locked their homes and headed north across the Río Grande or south to Monterrey. The American government declared the border as a "free zone" to assist the refugees. Old timers narrated the anxiety and fear on all people of Mier. Once the exodus began, they took with them what they could load on wagons and ox carts. The flow continued for days until everyone had evacuated. Luckily, for many, most of the refugees had relatives and friends on the American side of the border and found hospitality at ranches and in towns and cities. [61]

The fighting brought instability along the southern Mexican border. The revolutionaries fought for control of border towns to gain access to duties and import arms and ammunition. Even with the U.S. embargo in 1912, lawlessness was rampant and smuggling proliferated along the border since there was no Mexican central authority present. Presidents William H. Taft and Woodrow Wilson ordered the army to safeguard the international line and to enforce the United States neutrality laws. The infantry guarded border towns and crossings while the cavalry patrolled the long stretches of land from Brownsville, Texas, to San Diego, California.[62]

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[60] Ibíd., 8.
[61] Esther P. González, *Little Known History Of The South Texas Hill Country* (Austin Texas, Morgan Printing Co. 2001), 70.
[62] David K. Work " Enforcing Neutrality: The Tenth U.S. Cavalry on the Mexican Border, 1913-1919"

In 1914, President Wilson lifted the arms embargo, hoping that the flow of weapons into México would allow Carranza to soon overthrow Huerta. The embargo had been enforced and lifted on various occasions according to President Wilson's policy and convenience as the revolution unfolded. The U.S. army aimed to protect border towns between battles of the Mexican Revolution. They also prevented thievery and general banditry. An outstanding action was many officers acting as public relations officials as they tried to calm and help civilians on both sides of the river. It is undeniable that some officers left their highest sense of duty aside, and committed atrocities exploiting their authority [63]

During 1913 and 1914, political developments in Mexico gave birth to substantial changes in the course of the revolution: Madero's presidency and the fledgling democracy, the usurpation of power by General Huerta, and the coalition of revolutionaries under Carranza's Constitutionalist Revolution. These events considerably lengthened the revolutionary process where factional struggles were above ideologies. In this period of about two years, relations between Mexico-United States became more frequent due to its geographical proximity, their common history, and the fragility of the border as a parameter of division and contention. Mexican liberals conceived the ideological bases of the Mexican Revolution in the United States, and the border regions had been the starting point of Mexican insurrections in the past. The border region, with residents on each side, seemed to be an artificial barrier but was geographically unsubstantiated. Anglos, *Mexicanos*, and *Tejanos*—directly or indirectly—participated in the affairs of the largest and bloodiest revolt in Latin America in the twentieth century.

The Western Historical Quarterly , Vol. 40, No. 2 (Summer, 2009): 196.

[63] Ibíd., 198.

Various cultures, transnationalism, ethnic conflicts, and processes of accommodation have shaped the border region since colonial times. Texas independence and the geopolitical boundary after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 gave birth to Mexican nationalism. The year 1848 was especially important in Mexican history. Because of the war, Mexican nationalism began to find form largely through the leadership of Benito Juárez. The dominance of the army, the church, and the *hacendados* began to be questioned.[64] Immigration from México to the United States in the Nineteenth century has been a constant challenge for both countries and has helped construct new identities. The commercial achievements in México's northern states during the *Porfiriato* provided wealth and prosperity for American entrepreneurs. Moreover, the Mexican Revolution of 1910 created havoc, increased smuggling, and a new kind of forced immigration: women, men, and children became refugees. Scholars admit that rivers—instead of being considered limiting and dividing boundaries—unite people. This was possible because people on both sides had family linkages. Therefore, a binational culture arose and constituted the foundation for migrations, commercial interactions, and cultural bridges. For many border residents in the 1910's period, the international line between Texas and México was merely in the realm of the imaginary. This thesis focuses on northeastern México, from Laredo to Matamoros, and the corresponding South Texas border towns. This strip of borderland played an important role during 1913 and1914, as the second phase of the conflict evolved.

The focus lies on the people who witnessed battles, soldiers, refugees, and the people north of the Río Grande. The Mexican Revolution was not confined to the Mexican territory by the mere existence of a line but rather followed the unclear, ill-defined margins of the Río Grande. The disturbance along the border created governmental policies, fear, and anxiety

[64] Richard Griswold del Castillo *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict* (University of Oklahoma Press, Sep 1, 1992),130.

among Texans which culminated in militarizing the border, as historian Miguel Levario has argued. According to Levario, the state of Texas and local communities categorically identified the ethnic Mexican as a threat who must be under surveillance by law enforcement as perceived by many Texans due to unlawful acts of smuggling and banditry. Needless to say, many Mexicans were discriminated against and their rights as citizens were violated.[65] Neutrality laws were not always implemented and smuggling for both Anglos and Mexicans increased. The border was in turmoil in 1913, yet as the events unfolded on the Mexican side of the border, South Texas received refugees and the U.S. government opened the border as a safe haven to many Mexicans escape the revolution.

Not all the events at the border were born out of violence. The Constitutionalist battles from Laredo to Matamoros during 1913 and 1914 were a catalyst for various changes which helped Mexicans living near the border. One such change was humanitarian aid, a determining factor for safeguarding Mexicans who took refuge in American soil. After the three main battles (Reynosa, Matamoros, and Laredo), U.S. doctors and nurses established medical centers to provide aid to the wounded. Another key factor was the increase of the Mexican population in the U.S. during the Mexican Revolution, which doubled in size between 1910 and 1920. Since 1905, the Río Grande Valley area began to experience a dramatic change when the St. Louis, Brownsville, and México railway—financed by a well-connected and ambitious syndicate managed by the St. Louis Trust Company—began to lay tracks through the Río Grande Valley. The railroad connected the region directly to the national market and opened the county to large-scale commercial agriculture. This actively encouraged investment in the area and opened it to a

[65] Miguel Antonio Levario, *Militarizing the Border: When Mexicans Became the Enemy* (Texas A&M University Press, 2012), 3.

new wave of immigrants.[66] Furthermore, many people overlooked the violence affecting both sides of the border as the people of South Texas helped the people of Mexico in their time of need.

[66] John J. Leffler, *Refuge on the Rio Grande A Regional History of Bentsen-Río Grande State Park* (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas State Publications August 2013) , 28.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST ATTACK ON NUEVO LAREDO MARCH 1913

San Agustín de Laredo, a colonial town of New Spain (founded in 1755) was named after a town in the province of Santander in Northern Spain. Nuevo Laredo was born after the Treaty of *Guadalupe Hidalgo* was signed in February of 1848. In the nineteenth century, Laredo displaced Brownsville as the most influential commerce center along the river. This was in part due to the 1881-1883 rail lines connecting Laredo with Corpus Christi, which made Laredo a stopping point for travelers.[67]

Railroads played an important role in the campaigns of the Mexican Revolution. Military strategy was determined by the railway system; since the United States was the source of war materials, the control of border towns with rail communications would be decisive. One of these towns was Nuevo Laredo. The lack of a trunk line in the west was one of the factors to determine that the principal theatre of operations would be east of the Sierra Madre Occidental and south of the Texas border.

The city of Nuevo Laredo was particularly important at the beginning of the twentieth century since it served as a railroad midpoint between Monterrey and Mexico City. There were parts of the Río Grande that were deep and there were parts that were shallow. At the deep points, Texas and Mexico were united by railroads, bridges, footbridges, ferries, and boatmen.

[67] Rodolfo Rocha "The influence of the Mexican Revolution on the Mexico-Texas Border, 1910-1916" (PhD. Dissertation, Texas Tech University 1981), 12.

México and the United States met at the river. The railroads at Nuevo Laredo and Piedras Negras eventually joined the Mexican Central system, which ran between Juárez and Mexico City. The Mexican army used this railroad to move troops.[68]

The Mexican population of the border country was not a homogenous group. A segment of the Mexican-Americans in Texas had achieved a position of affluence. Many owned large estates, reminiscent of the old haciendas. Furthermore, many Mexicans assumed prominent roles in Texas. On the other hand, Mexican immigrants generally shifted back and forth between the United States and México. Differences between these two groups were based on wealth. Many immigrants, dispossessed of their meager properties in México, accepted the revolution and saw it as necessary.[69]

Nuevo Laredo became Huerta's stronghold. After the *decena trágica*, there was a substantial rise in smuggling activities along the border as both pro and anti-Huerta forces fought for control of key smuggling and railroad centers such as Laredo. In the city, pro-Huerta officials—led by army and police authorities—implemented a bloodless takeover of the city. Huerta's followers imprisoned several government employers and named General Andrés Garza Galán as military chief of the city. In addition, Pascual Orozco Sr. (father of the revolutionary general) arrived from San Antonio and took command of the town. Although Orozco and Garza Galán favored the octogenarian general Gerónimo Treviño as Mexican President, they both agreed if General Huerta assumed the presidency and promised peace for México, they would accept him.[70]

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[68] Bryan M. Jenkins "The Border War, A Study in United States-Mexico Relations during the Mexican Revolution 1910-1920" (M.A. thesis University of California, Los Angeles, 1965), 4-5.
[69] Ibíd., 7.
[70] James A. Garza "On the edge of a Storm Laredo and the Mexican Revolution 1910-1917" (M.A. thesis Texas

Since 1897 in Laredo, residents celebrated George Washington's birthday in quite a fashion, which had been the source of envy for much larger cities throughout the country. People came to enjoy the celebrations from near and far. Residents of Monterrey and intermediary points travelled to Laredo, as well as northern people spending the winter months in San Antonio. They all came to appreciate the charm and climate of Laredo.[71] The Laredo Mexicans and Mexican-Americans were also eager to celebrate. Beatriz de la Garza, writer and historian, points out that *fiestas* were part of the Americanization process for receptive audiences. The George Washington birthday celebration begun as an effort to incorporate Laredo into the American way of life; it had become a celebration of the continued interdependence of the two cities and the two countries by 1913.

The democratic and political realities in Laredo compelled Anglos to include Texas Mexicans in city affairs. The meaning of the nation, and what it meant to be American, was partly derived from a localized class and race structure. In Laredo, Mexicans were invited to join the U.S. nation as equal partners due to a significant number of them having political and economic power. This became a celebration of the hybrid way of life on the border. In 1913, George Washington festivities spanned the weekend of February 21, 22, and 23. The greatest event was the parade held on Saturday. One outstanding feature of the parade was being able to see *Pocahontas* (usually portrayed by a young woman of the best Laredo society) and attend a bullfight in Nuevo Laredo the next day.[72] The only setback of the celebration was that the people travelling from Monterrey were not able to arrive at the destination. By February 22, the Mexican National Railroad's train was not running to Laredo. Train service along several routes

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A&M University, August 1996), 27.

[71] Beatriz de la Garza , *A Law for the Lion; A Tale Of Crime And Injustice In The Borderlands* (Austin Texas, University of Texas Press, 2003),84.

[72] Ibíd., 85.

in México had been interrupted after lines had been blown up by various rebel forces. The *Laredo Times* ran an editorial of the opinion that town talks of a possible attack to Laredo were senseless and unfounded—that they injured the city and its energetic organizations and would ruin the annual *fiesta.* The officials at Nuevo Laredo gave some assurance to the sister city that they would do their best to make a celebration a success.[73]

The *Laredo Times* was reluctant to accept the reality of the coming turmoil. Webb County Sheriff Amador Sánchez cabled Texas Governor Oscar B. Colquitt and detailed the situation at Nuevo Laredo. Sánchez mentioned that a large number of rebels, headed by General Andrés Garza Galan and Pascual Orozco Sr., had taken possession of the city. The garrison composed of about 250 volunteers and 150 federal soldiers, and had joined Garza Galán in addition to proclaiming General Geronimo Treviño as president of México. The rebels took control of public buildings. Sheriff Sánchez requested the rebels not to fire across the border to prevent international complications. General Garza Galán promised they would not fire across the line.[74]

The Nuevo Laredo rebel forces apparently enjoyed their newfound identity. On Sunday afternoon, February 16, troops and a municipal band paraded through the city. The town's citizens, however, had little reason to celebrate. Fearing an attack by local government forces, hundreds of women, children, and old men fled to Laredo. The military command issued a directive prohibiting men between the ages of sixteen and sixty to be conscription.[75]The only difference between the members of the federal army and those of the rural police, known as the *rurales,* was that the former drafted and the latter enlisted due to having acted as enforcers since

[73] Ibíd., 86.
[74] Ibíd., 87.
[75] James., 27.

Diaz's regime.[76]

In Laredo, the Sheriff's office and the commander at Fort McIntosh stationed guards on the American side of the international bridge while the Mexican side of the bridge harbored a large force of soldiers constantly on guard. The National Railways of México had abandoned all train service southward out of Laredo. Employees deserted their posts early in the morning and, according to *Laredo Times* inquiries, most of them had come to the city pending reports of improvement on the situation. The Western Union operators in Nuevo Laredo abandoned their jobs and the men took refuge in Laredo, Texas. The only exception was one worker who was drafted immediately after his capture. [77]

The Huertistas encountered some resistance from the local population. On the morning of February 19, 1913, four large dynamite bombs were found hidden in hotel rooms occupied by Pascual Orozco, Sr. and General Garza Galán, and both took up residence in a private home. Since the incident occurred at the same time of the traditional Washington Birthday Celebration, Laredo officials grew concerned that Nuevo Laredo's government would not participate in the festivities. Despite the assurances given to the American authorities, Mexican officials cancelled the traditional bullfight.[78]

The sudden flow of refugees from Nuevo Laredo made lodging accessibility difficult in Laredo, with the refugees having taken up the rooms, beds, and cots initially intended to house the visitors arriving later that week for Washington's celebration. Justo S. Penn, editor of the *Laredo Daily Times*, announced under the February 20 headline in 1913 that conditions in Nuevo Laredo were peaceful, most probably in a last desperate effort to reassure prospective visitors to

[76] Jenkins,11.
[77] De La Garza, 88.
[78] James, 28.

the annual celebration. On Friday, February 21, all news of the Mexican Revolution vanished from the headlines of the *Laredo Times*. The newspaper included only a few notes from the Associated Press regarding the Mexican conflict, assuring that Madero's fate under a fair trial would, at worst, be exile.[79]

The stories of revolutionary México were not allowed to stain the merry descriptions of Washington's celebration during that weekend. However, by Monday, February 24, the bad news could not be camouflaged. The headline of the front page announced *Murdered Madero and Pino Suárez*. On February 25, Justo S. Penn wrote an ardent editorial under the headline *A Willful Murder*: "There is no characterization for the slayings of Francisco I. Madero and José María Pino Suárez …whatever the outcome of the present movement, there can be no doubt in the minds of any that this assassination has indelibly stained the present government."

Penn wrote very clear opinions on the undemocratic action of Huerta: that a government founded upon assassination has the seeds of an approaching dissolution within itself. Even Madero's enemies could wish a kinder fate for the late President of México.[80] The words of editor Penn turned prophetic for the seven years of revolution México was still awaiting. After Madero's assassination, Huertistas occupied all border customs, especially in Nuevo Laredo.

After Carranza began his campaign in the north, his troops destroyed four bridges between Nuevo Laredo and Monterrey on the night of March 3, 1913. During a second attack on March 6, another bridge was destroyed. Constitutionalist forces hoped to disrupt trade between Nuevo Laredo and the rest of the Huerta-ruled México. With both rails and telegraphs destroyed,

[79] De La Garza, 89.
[80] Ibíd., 90.

Laredo natives wanting to send wires to México City had to communicate through Galveston.[81]

On March 18th, 1913, three hundred Constitutionalists troops assaulted Nuevo Laredo, which was harboring 14,000 inhabitants at the time. The attack did not come as a surprise since the Huertistas militias received an ultimatum demanding surrender. Instead, women and children were sent to Laredo and a federal reconnaissance force probed the surrounding area. The party ran into the Constitutionalist forces near the city cemetery, leaving one soldier dead after a brief skirmish. The Constitutionalists, led by a flag-waving *soldadera,* attacked the 250-man garrison the next morning. They were aided by several armed citizens. A woman was killed as she approached the federal lines, angering the Constitutionalists and intensifying the clash.[82]

The *San Francisco Call* depicted the battle. The headline read, "Mexican Woman Leader Killed at Head of Troops: Carrancistas repulsed in an attempt to take Nuevo Laredo from federals—Fierce fight between both forces on each side with losses about equal—Rebel wounded are shot by regulars." Defeated after their first attempt to capture Nuevo Laredo, the band of Carrancistas encamped in the hills several miles to the south at night, evidently to wait for the arrival of reinforcements before attacking again. It was reported that more troops were hurrying to the aid of both contending forces. A renewal of the battle began at daybreak. The rebel attack was vigorous. It was marked by the death of a woman who led one of the fiercest assaults in spectaculars fashion at the head of the band of insurrects. The woman identified as a relative of Garza Rivas, a rebel leader. She was killed as she charged towards the federals, waving a red flag and shouting words of encouragement for her men. [83]

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[81] James,30.
[82] Ibid., 31.
[83] "Mexican Woman Leader Killed at Head of Troops" *The San Francisco Call.* (San Francisco Calif. 18 March 1913.), 1.

Twenty rebels and fifteens federals were known to have been killed. About forty wounded were being cared for at an improvised hospital. They were taken care of by American Physicians and women from Laredo who had crossed the border immediately after firing ceased and had volunteered their services, acting as nurses. A number of rebels were shot to death by the *federales*. It was said that an accurate estimate of the casualties was not possible until a more complete exploration of the streets and alleys through which the battle raged was made. A few bullets fell on the United States side of the Río Grande, but no one was hurt and only one house in Laredo was struck. The fourteenth United States Cavalry patrolled the border and the police force at Laredo increased their vigilance preventing the assembling of crowds near the boundary.[84] *The Washington Times* reported on March 18, 1913; "the casualties in yesterday's battle in Nuevo Laredo, as reported to the State Department, are twenty one killed and seventeen wounded." Carranza's forces withdrew, leaving the city in the hands of the federal army. Neither mail services nor telegraphic communication was available through Nuevo Laredo from the interior parts of México.[85]

The *New York Times* also commented on Laredo sending humanitarian assistance; after the battle, the American Consul at Nuevo Laredo requested American physicians to cross into the Mexican town to care for the wounded. That afternoon (March 18), an Associated Press correspondent saw twenty dead bodies in the municipal palace at Nuevo Laredo. In the hospital, doctors were treating eighteen wounded soldiers. Nuevo Laredo was almost deserted.[86]

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[84] Ibíd.,

[85] "Casualties in yesterday's battle in Nuevo Laredo "*The Washington Times*: (Washington D.C.) March 18, 1913),1.

[86]"Federals Repulse Rebel night Attack Constitutionalist Raid" *The New York Times* March 13, 1918. .1.

A courageous woman, Leonor Villegas de Magnón, participated in the Mexican Revolution through outstanding fashion: she used liberal ideas and remarkable humanitarian aid to play her part well. "On March 17, 1913 when I heard the firing, I dressed quickly," Magnón wrote. "I called several people with no answer, and rushed out into the street and stopped a new car driven by a chauffeur. I directed him to drive to the office of *El Progreso* and telephoned friends; telling them the plans to cross to México and help take care of the wounded and I needed volunteers." With a faithful friend, Jovita Idar (a writer and activist for *El Progreso*), Leonor encouraged four other young women to join them to offer immediate help.[87] Don Flavio Vargas, a local pharmacist, gave Leonor a basket of first-aid supplies which she carefully placed in a towel behind her seat. As the car neared the bridge, Leonor leaned out of the car waving the white towel, and the car was allowed to cross into Nuevo Laredo unharmed. To assure a better organized assistance and to secure medical supplies, Leonor formed and financed *La Cruz Blanca*, the White Cross, which Carranza recognized on June 8, 1914 and determined that it should have national offices.[88]

Clashes between *federales* and Carrancistas as well as rumors of possible attacks frequently caused many Mexicans to flee their homes for the safety of Laredo. This attack signaled a new revolutionary phase as Constitutionalists forces—aware that control of the border increased access to smuggled weapons and supplies—began to concentrate their forces within the Laredo region. This led to more clashes and incidents in the area. Political meetings in support of the Constitutionalist cause also became common. In a meeting held in central Laredo on April 26, 1913, one thousand and five hundred Constitutionalist sympathizers heard several speakers supporting Venustiano Carranza, including Clemente Idar (owner of *La Crónica*) and

[87] Leonor Villegas de Magnón. *The Rebel* (Arte Público Press. Houston Texas, University of Houston, 1993), 85.
[88] Ibíd, 86.

Manuel García Vigil (editor of *El Progreso*). U.S. Federal officials closely watched the mass meetings in case the speakers broke neutrality laws and started exhorting the gathered crowd to fuel the revolution openly.[89]

The town of Guerrero, 60 miles downriver from Nuevo Laredo, was attacked by Constitutionalist forces. On April 7, 1913, about twenty-five Constitutionalist soldiers attacked the small town, but found close to one hundred armed residents resisting them. Only one Carrancista soldier was killed. The *Laredo Times* reported on April 8 that the rebels had been repulsed by brave citizens of Guerrero (*Antigua Revilla*). The story read, "Advices received here convey that a big battle between rebels and citizens of Guerrero, seventy miles down the river from this city (Laredo) took place last night." The newspaper further explained that there are no Mexican federal soldiers at that place [:] consequently, the only protection the town had been through its own citizenry." The brave citizens of Guerrero who repulsed the anti-Huerta rebels on their own apparently did so without help of their mayor, Sinecio Gutiérrez, for he had resigned the same day the rebels had arrived. Another attack took place on June 1, in the small town of Colombia, 25 miles upriver.[90]

A force of 300 federal cavalry attacked 150 Constitutionalist soldiers encamped at the small village. Battles like this proved disastrous to the small town foraging soldiers constantly looted, forcing most of the population to flee for extensive periods of time. There were ominous and abhorrent deaths of civilians in both federal and Carrancista campaigns, with no military justification. The *federales* killed an old Indian named *Longori*a, cut off his long locks, and—as a souvenir—showed them off in a parade in the streets of Nuevo Laredo during which young

[89] James, 30-31.

[90] Beatriz de la Garza, *From The Republic Of The Rio Grande: A Personal History Of The Land And The* People (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2013) , 94.

women threw bouquets of flowers to the victorious *federales*. The Constitutionalists near the Río Grande killed Pancho, a Kickapoo Indian who did not respond to "*Quién vive?*" ("Who lives?"). Pancho did not respond with the expected shout—"*Carranza!*"—and was promptly shot and hung from a telegraph post.[91]

Violence escalated in the Nuevo Laredo area and the demand for arms and ammunition for carrying on the attacks revived the old border practice of smuggling. Since México was under an arms embargo of the United States, both *federales* and Constitutionalists had to smuggle weapons. American officials brought many men into custody for smuggling weapons in different modus operandi, such as by car, mule, and train. With a sharp incidence increase in smuggling, the commanding officers at Fort McIntosh dispatched troops to several sites along the river.[92]

Another incident which violated the neutrality statutes took place on August 6, 1913, when federal agents raided the offices of *El Progreso,* a local newspaper, and found military uniforms. The large number of seizures in Laredo led to tighter security at the bridge by Mexican officials.[93] In October 1913, the Mexican military commander issued an order requiring all persons entering Nuevo Laredo to carry a pass with a photograph.[94] Mexican immigration officials would then match the picture with one on file to identify the document holder. Consul Garrett reported that passes had to be signed by the mayor of Nuevo Laredo along with the military commander. This system permitted Nuevo Laredo officials to identify Carranza's spies. At this time, there were few border crossings resulting in complaints of Laredo's local merchants. Furthermore, frequent suspension in train services south of Nuevo Laredo paralyzed

[91] Ibíd., 32.
[92] Ibíd., 33.
[93] Ibíd.,
[94] Ibíd., 34.

the export-import commerce.[95]

Deteriorating conditions in México brought a legion of refugees to the Laredo area. During December alone, four hundred refugees—mostly wealthy Mexicans—arrived at Nuevo Laredo and crossed to the American side. Mexicans of less wealth were also crossing in great numbers, afraid to be caught in Nuevo Laredo during an attack. These movements left Nuevo Laredo depopulated while the streets of Laredo were swarmed by refugees. Many people were forced to find shelter in barns or storerooms since rooming houses and hotels were generally booked and expensive. Americans also fled to American soil which was not always in perfect conditions. Consul Alonso B. Garrett protested to the State Department in Washington to obtain the release of an American Vice-consul retained by Mexican authorities so that he may return to Laredo.[96]

Panic increased as hostilities and uncertainty continued along the Río Grande while the Mexican economy collapsed. This led to rumors that Laredo would be under attack. American commerce in Laredo came to a halt as the revolution reached Nuevo Laredo, which seriously affected local trade. The American town of Laredo felt the first effects of the Mexican Revolution at its doorstep and waited for the approaching storm that would alter the life of the border towns.[97] In March 1913, Texas Governor Oscar B. Colquitt instructed State Attorney General B.F. Looney to draft a bill addressing the protection of persons and property in the border counties. The bill would have imposed martial law along the border. Although never proposed as a law, this lay the foundation for the attitude of Colquitt's administration towards security issues. During the spring of 1913, the rebellion increased in intensity south of the

[95] Ibíd., 35.
[96] Ibíd., 36.
[97] Ibíd,. 37.

border. Carranza's Constitutionalists were concerned with smuggling arms and being involved with pockets of resistance along the Rio Grande; they began a sweeping campaign of the border. Skirmishes occurred between Constitutionalists and *federales* at Minera on May 31, 1913, and at Piedras Negras on June 28.[98] These battles destroyed millions of dollars' worth of mines, smelters, railroad facilities, and ranches. General Pablo Gonzalez looked forward to take Nuevo Laredo and Monterrey, two very important cities in northern Mexico, but this campaign had to wait until the beginning of 1914.[99]

In April of 1913, within a few days of Carranza having finished drafting the *Plan de Guadalupe*, revolutionaries from distant states wanted to consolidate the rebellious groups. Dr. Samuel Navarro of the Chihuahua legislature (he had escaped General Antonio Rábago's takeover of the Chihuahua government), suggested to Carranza that he establish a formal union among revolutionary forces. Consequently, the delegates from Coahuila, Sonora, and Chihuahua met in Monclova on April 19 with Carranza and signed a statement of cooperation.[100] This document specified that legal representatives of each of the three states' governments in partnership accepted the *Plan de Guadalupe* as a basis of operation. The document designated Roberto V. Pesqueira of Sonora, an elective member of the National Chamber of Deputies, as the confidential agent of the Constitutionalist government, who was to work for recognition by the United States.[101]

After the first failed battle of Nuevo Laredo on March 1913, the Northeastern Constitutional Army commander, Pablo González began moving his forces to take strategic

[98] John A. Adams *Conflict And Commerce On The Rio Grande, :Laredo 1755-1955 (*College Station, Texas A&M University Press 2008), 148.
[99] Ibíd., 149.
[100] Cumberland, 71.
[101] Ibíd.,72.

cities along the border and the capitals of Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. Pablo González had served as Governor Carranza's Chief Lieutenant in the Coahuila irregulars during Pascual Orozco's rebellion in 1913. His unwise military decisions and defeats earned him the blatant title of "the general who never won a victory." His attempts during the previous months at a feint attack on Monterrey had, in fact, alerted Huerta's forces rather than deceived them. His forces also failed to destroy a bridge between Nuevo Laredo and Sabinas Hidalgo in Nuevo León.[102] This military blunder happened when González's forces attempted to take the bridge under the cover of the night. From opposite ends, they exchanged friendly fire and literally decimated each other without taking the bridge. If they had succeeded, the taking of the bridge would have served as an interruptions between Nuevo Laredo and Monterrey communication. The failure of these maneuvers gave Huerta's forces time and opportunity to reinforce the garrison in Nuevo Laredo with men and artillery, with an advantage in position and firing power.[103]

On April 4, 1913, General Fernando Trucy Aubert ordered reinforcements to Nuevo Laredo after the previous attack on March 18. His troops were unable to travel in a military train due to destruction of the railroad between Villaldama and Lampazos. Because of this, Colonel Guardiola Aguirre, with a fraction of the first Infantry Battalion, was sent to cut off the retreat of the bulk of the Constitutionalist troops. From Lampazos, General Trucy Aubert assigned a cavalry unit to engage the Constitutionalists prowling the towns of Sabinas Hidalgo and Cerralvo under the command of Col. Lucio Blanco whose column moved into Tamaulipas.[104] The Constitutionalists Nuevo Laredo attackers—Ramírez Quintanilla, Pablo Santos, and Juan Manuel

[102] John E. Klingeman and Gerald Raun, "A Tale of Two Fronts Constitutionalists Campaigns During Mexico's Revolution of 1910 and the results of Those actions along the United States Border 1913-1914" (*Journal of Big Bend Studies* Vol. 24, 2012), 98.
[103] Cumberland, 176.
[104] Barragán, 66.

Lozano and approximately 150 mounted men—traveled southeast along the Rio Bravo after the failed intent to take Nuevo Laredo. On April 21, 1913, they attacked the small town of Mier.[105]

The federal garrison consisted of 20 men of the 10th corps of the *Rurales* Regiment under corporals Melquiades Núñez and Rafael Tamayo. It also included 21 men of the fiscal gendarmerie, 12 men from the city customs, and two immigration officers. Some civilians participated, offering assistance to repel the rebels. In spite of the small and disproportionate federal garrison, they fought for four hours until the remaining defenders dispersed and the Constitutionalists occupied the town. Beatriz de la Garza writes in her book, *From the Republic of the Rio Grande,* that Mier's self-defense consisted of 600 *rurales*. This number proved to be inconsistent with the data derived from the military and city archives. The Constitutionalists were unable to hold the town and abandoned it the same day due to the sudden approach of 30 men sent from Camargo to assist the federal garrison. Before heading to Las Blancas the Constitutionalist rebels ransacked stores, slaughtered cattle, and stole horses. According to the federal military communiqué, during the battle the customs director Enrique Del Villar died. Additional fatalities included two customs officers, three *rurales*, and several civilians—a total of eleven people. The rebels accounted 10 soldiers dead and 15 wounded.[106] As stated in the information received from Enrique Maldonado (chronicler of Mier), Isidro Saldaña was the city mayor in April of 1913 with Antonio R. Canales as his secretary. Dead civilians included Refugio Ambriz, Pedro de León, and Manuel Barrera Guerra, a civilian who died defending his family.[107]

At the beginning of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, many Americans saw this revolt as

[105] Ibíd,. 6.7
[106] Ibíd., 67-68.
[107] Enrique Maldonado Chronicler of Mier, *Document of the battle of Mier* on April 24,1913, letter

a lawless event where military intervention by the United States could stabilize the outcome and safeguard the American border, the people, and American interests. The United States enjoyed good diplomatic relations with the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship due to American investments held in México. However, in 1910, the United States had a revolution very close to American soil. In 1912, the United States imposed an arms embargo to control arms smuggling. This measure gave a considerable surge of smuggling activities west of El Paso *per se,* where there were almost nonexistent control barriers.[108]

In his policies towards Mexico, President Taft had left a series of three precepts which seemed to continue under Woodrow Wilson's term. The first was not to break relations with México or intervene militarily. The second was to locate naval forces in the Gulf of México in case of an impending intervention, adopted by the new U.S. Government. The third was to commence diplomatic negotiations tending towards the recognition of the Huerta government on certain conditions. In general, there was a tendency expected to rely on mediatory approaches rather than interventionist policies.[109]

In an effort to protect the U.S., President William Howard Taft ordered the Army to patrol the international line and enforce United States neutrality laws, a policy continued by Woodrow Wilson after his inauguration on March 4, 1913. Both presidents also realized that the army could intervene in México to protect foreign lives and property if necessary. Both presidents hoped to avoid the use of force. The policies of President Taft toward the border region were initially aimed at preventing subversive actions from originating from U.S. territory; the policies also aimed to prevent the exportation of weapons to rebellious groups and to

[108] Work, 181.

[109] Peter Calvert *The Mexican Revolution,1910-1914* The Diplomacy of Anglo-American conflict (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968),148.

intensify border surveillance by U.S. forces. Beginning in 1913, the Constitutionalists tried to establish liaisons with Mexicans in the U.S. to fight against Huerta.[110]

President Taft favored Madero as next best choice for the Mexican presidency. Due to this, Washington was able to influence the outcome of the Mexican Revolution as well as satisfy American interests. After Madero assumed the Mexican presidency, American officials moved against Madero's opponents within the United States. The *Reyistas* and the *Magonistas* became prime targets of this policy.[111]

In early 1912, when Pascual Orozco rebelled against the Madero government, President Taft decided upon request of Mexican Ambassador Gilberto Crespo to enforce a selective arms embargo which would deprive the rebels of weapons. The 1898 arms statute was revised, and on March 14, 1912, Congress approved a joint resolution prohibiting the exportation of arms and ammunition to any American country where conditions of internal violence reign. The same day that Taft proclaimed México a country where unstable conditions existed was the same day the arms supply was closed off. During the next two years, the United States government continued to enforce an arms embargo on México. The border, nevertheless, was never quite entirely secured.[112]

The sympathy of the border towns with the rebel cause resulted in large-scale smuggling operations across the border. American law officials encountered numerous problems while enacting the embargo: the length of the border, very few men being assigned to the task, and the urgent need for the rebels to acquire arms and ammunition. This frustrated the administration as

[110] Plana, 603.
[111] Luz María Hernández Sáenz, "Smuggling for the Revolution: Illegal Traffic of Arms on the Arizona-Sonora Border, 1912-1914" *Arizona and the West* , Vol. 28, No. 4 (Winter, 1986) : 358
[112] Ibíd., 359.

it tried to enforce the embargo.[113]

American merchants delivered arms to the revolutionaries. These merchants had accomplices and used evasive measures, which in turn debilitated the U.S. efforts to control gun smuggling. Neutrality laws forbade selling arms to foreign countries with domestic upheaval, but Laredo's historic ties to México made it difficult for *Tejanos* to consider their neighboring country as a "foreign nation." Buyers could still purchase arms illegally. Thus, unless officers discovered a conspiracy plan or discovered people in the very act of smuggling, there was no case against them. It was to be expected that arms smugglers would exploit and take advantage of this weakness.

There were extreme cases of arms vendors such Manuel Guerra & Son Co. in Roma, Texas, who engaged in extensive gun dealing, knowing these weapons supplied the revolutionary cause. Arms orders in Laredo increased as local merchants became international gun dealers. Hardware stores became small armories where legitimate businessmen became outfitters and traded arms for money, such as Joseph Netzer of Laredo. It was quite common to sell 30-30 shells, seven-millimeter rounds, and Remington rifles.[114] No matter what the law said, locals customarily did not see selling smuggled arms as a punishable crime.[115] The presidential proclamation in Washington lifted the U.S. arms embargo on México on January 31st, 1914. This action opened the border and ports to arms and munitions, giving tacit support to the Constitutionalist revolutionaries.[116]

Carranza's forces continued attacking small towns along the Texas border, leaving

[113] Ibíd.,
[114] De León, 282.
[115] Ibíd., 283.
[116] Adams, 152.

behind a trail of death and thievery. The northeast corps of the Constitutionalist army envisioned the city of Matamoros as their ultimate goal to control the Mexican side of the south Texas border. Matamoros had suffered political upheavals since February 1913. The garrison of regulars at H. Matamoros had renounced allegiance to Madero. The Félix Díaz partisans then assumed control of the city government and *Maderistas* were imprisoned. Major Esteban Ramos and Maj. Francisco Alvarez, in command of federal forces, appealed to the citizens of Matamoros for loans to pay off the troops. They also asked for a loan from Americans in Matamoros and asserted that unless they would extend the courtesy of providing such loans, it would be necessary to send the cavalry out of town for pasturing. The ominous possibility of the forces being out of control hung in the air as an intimidating argument.[117]

During the afternoon of February 24, 1913, the County judge and Sheriff of Cameron County in Brownsville, Texas, communicated to Governor Oscar B. Colquitt that the American Consul at Matamoros had appealed to them for aid, alleging that the Mexicans were about to start a reign of pillage. On the morning of February 25, 1913, a telegram sent by Governor Colquitt read, "Units of the State Militia were then entraining and would arrive at Brownsville during that day." At about 6 a.m. on February 26, 1913, Company C, 3rd Texas Infantry from Corpus Christi, Texas, Company A 3rd Texas Infantry, Company A, Texas State Cavalry, from Houston, Texas, and Company C, Texas State Cavalry from Austin, Texas, arrived at Brownsville. Company M, 14th U.S. Cavalry arrived on the same day with Capt. Kirby Walker and Captain Sanders in command, along with eight State Texas Rangers. The four Texas

[117] Frank Cushman Pierce *A Brief History of the Rio Grande Valley (* Edinburg Texas, Second Edition revised New Santander Press 1998) , 78.

companies remained in Brownsville until July 28, 1913, when they returned to their homes.[118]

By this time in March 1913, destruction of property, murder, and cattle-thievery had reached a new level all over México. Border crossing was intense and U.S. authorities were unable to control it. Community members in La Grulla—a small Starr county settlement on the Río Grande River—had seen a great number of men at the Santo Domingo Plantation on March 31, and believed that these men were revolutionary units heading to México. A group of scouts under John R. Peavey followed their trail and found them near the river. Some of these men were crossing in small boats. Peavey said, "They all appeared to be well armed. One of the Mexicans who stayed behind told us, that the group was under the command of their *jefe,* Lucio Blanco"—he also mentioned that there were about six hundred of these men.[119] As is evident from consulting various sources, there is no definite indication of Blanco's crossing from the Texas side in March of 1913. It seems possible that Peavey's encounter with armed men at La Grulla could had been Constitutionalist forces in demand of war provisions and supplies which later joined Blanco's column.

Blanco departed Monclova on April 5th with a force of 250 men and officers (as mentioned on page 12). On April 8th, Blanco's column crossed the Monterrey-Nuevo Laredo railroad line at a point 12 kilometers north of the town of Salinas Victoria Nuevo León. Blanco's forces took the town of Cerralvo on April 10th without opposition since the town had no federal garrison. General Cesáreo Castro stayed and continued into Tamaulipas to reunite with the 21st Corps of *Rurales*. On April 13th, Blanco occupied the small towns of General Bravo and Doctor Coss N.L. and was joined by the revolutionary Porfirio G. González with 150 mounted men. The

[118] Ibíd., 79.
[119] John R. Peavey, Echoes *From The Rio Grande* (Brownsville Texas, Springman-King Company 1963), 76.

following day he captured China N.L. and moved South with the intent of capturing Montemorelos. On April 17th, a more serious engagement took place in the town of General Terán between Col. Blanco's forces of 450 men and the 17th Cavalry Regiment commanded by federal Lt. Col. Luebbert. The Constitutionalist forces retreated due to the enemy's better fortification and battle plans, leaving 20 men dead and war material in federal possession.[120]

Thereafter, Blanco's forces turned east into Tamaulipas and between April 22nd and 27th, they drove federal troops from the towns of Burgos, Méndez, San Fernando, and Santander Jiménez. The federal forces of these towns took refuge in the larger federal garrison at Ciudad Victoria, the state capital, which Blanco was not strong enough to attack.[121] In less than three weeks, Blanco and his men had cleared the *federales* out from a considerable portion of the two states he had been assigned. In favor of this eastern campaign, whose destiny was to establish a Constitutional stronghold in Matamoros, Blanco's captivating personality was probably the most important factor for winning battles through comradeship and creating high morale amongst his troops.[122]

Lucio Blanco moved his forces in the direction of Reynosa, while Capt. Miguel M. Navarrete substituted Col. J. Agustín Castro. Col. Castro led a force of 400 men to attack Victoria on April 22, 1913. At 5 a.m., Cavalry Col. Luis Garza defended the state capital with 300 men, and was killed in the first few minutes after the initial shots were fired. Capt. F. Salazar, in substitution of the dead colonel, charged with 60 dragoons of the 28th Cavalry Regiment and the *rurales* of the 10th Corps. Capt. Salazar won the battle and routed the rebels. The Constitutionalists lost 35 men,

[120] Barragán, p.82.
[121] Alfonso Sapia-Bosch, "The role of General Lucio Blanco in the Mexican Revolution ,1913-1922" (Georgetown University Ph.Diss.,1977), 21.
[122] Ibíd., 22.

three of whom were officers, and six men were wounded. The *federales* lost 8 men and had 11 wounded. The remaining force escaped toward El Encinal to meet with Col. Castro and Lucio Blanco.[123]

In the political arena in the United States, Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson pressured President Wilson as he had Taft to grant recognition to Victoriano Huerta and "save México from national ruin." The other major nations with embassies in México City—including Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and Japan—had extended their support to Huerta. U.S. State Department specialists also favored recognition and preferred that E.N. Brown, president of the National Railways of México, join the petition along with American businessmen with important investments. President Wilson remained disinclined to grant recognition to Huerta based on the fact that he came to power by means of a *coup d'état* and assassination. Both Wilson and State Secretary William Jennings Bryan were convinced that Huerta's unconstitutional and undemocratic regime could be followed by similar *coup d'états* in the Western Hemisphere. They were also of the mindset that Huerta would deprive the Mexican people of a democratic government.[124]

President Wilson also faced the eruption of the Constitutionalist Revolution under Venustiano Carranza, who planned to conquer all of México and then return to a constitutional government. Along with Emiliano Zapata in the state of Morelos and Francisco Villa in the north, both factions threw the country into a violent civil war in which American lives and property fell victim to the disorder, especially near the border—and sometimes across the

[123] Ciro de La Garza Treviño, *La Revolución Mexicana en el Estado de Tamaulipas* (México D.F. Editorial Porrúa S.A. 2007),162.

[124] Livveun R. Snow, *The Texas response to the Mexican Revolution Texans' involvement with U.S. foreign policies toward México during the Wilson administration,*.(University of North Texas M.A. Thesis 1994), 16.

border.[125]Wilson's cabinet met on various occasions after the accidental deaths of American citizens on the Texas side of the Rio Grande. Postmaster General Burleson and Wilson agreed a policy of non-intervention would be the best way to deal with the situation. Wilson cautioned that military action by the United States might jeopardize American citizens living in México.[126] As April wore on, conditions along the border were deteriorating and this caused Governor Colquitt to become more involved with the Wilson administration's on Mexican policy. After Wilson's inauguration as president, Colquitt expected the new Democratic presidency to respond to his requests for action. However, his optimism promptly disappeared after witnessing Wilson's inactivity while the situation along the border deteriorated and Colquitt threatened to use the National Guard to protect the citizens of the state. When the U.S. federal government transported a group of refugee Huertistas who had fled from rebel forces in Arizona and interned them at Fort Bliss near El Paso, Colquitt protested energetically to Wilson's Secretary of War Lindley Garrison and Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan. He complained about the scantiness of federal cooperation to support Texas in struggling with the Mexican revolution.[127]

He concluded that there was no indication that President Wilson intended to pursue a stronger border policy and Wilson's attitude of "wait" and "vigilant watch" in México did not please the Texas Governor. The U.S. government's indifference insofar as guarding the border in Texas was overwhelming—this was evident in a letter written by Secretary of War Garrison to Secretary of State William J. Bryan. The letter spoke of the possibility that American intervention could result in a Mexican invasion, and Garrison's fears were relevant to the safety of those who lived along the Texas-Mexican border. Garrison explained that the U.S. Army had

[125] Ibíd., 17.
[126] Ibíd., 18.
[127] Ibíd., 19.

no more than 4,000 troops along the entire U.S.-México border, while there were more than 5,000 Huertistas federal troops in the vicinity at Juarez alone.[128]

In the following months, President Wilson took a more decisive approach to the Mexican policy based on economic reasons, the protection of American interests, and proposals from his advisers and emissaries sent to México. Meanwhile in northeastern México, the Constitutionalist campaigns had established a military advance displacing *federales* from border towns on their route to take Matamoros.

Carranza, unable to take Saltillo in April 1913, moved to the northwest and installed his interim government in Hermosillo Sonora. Carranza's generals—Álvaro Obregón, Plutarco Elías Calles, Manuel M. Diéguez, Salvador Alvarado, and Benjamín Hill—had taken the towns of Nogales, Cananea, Naco, Santa Rosa and Estación Ortiz by force of arms. Francisco Villa, Rosalío Hernández, Maclovio Herrera, Manuel Chao, Tomás Urbina, and Pánfilo Natera were fighting and taking over Chihuahua. The campaign in Tamaulipas under Lucio Blanco seemed promising for the triumph of Constitutionalism. Military incursions in Nuevo León and Coahuila were under way by generals Pablo González, Francisco Murguía, Antonio I. Villarreal, and Eulalio Gutiérrez. In Michoacán, Gertrudis Sánchez, Joaquín Amaro, Juan Espinoza, Martín Castrejón and Héctor F. López. Saturnino Cedillo and Alberto Carrera Torres were in charge in San Luis Potosí. In the south, Emiliano Zapata captured Iguala without joining militarily with the Constitutionalists.[129]

Mexican politicians and revolutionaries took care not to cause any harm to American

[128] Don E. Coerver, and Linda B. Hall *Texas and the Mexican Revolution (*San Antonio Texas, Trinity University Press 1984), 62,63.
[129] Berta Ulloa, *La Revolución Intervenida* (México D.F. El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Históricos 1976),108.

citizens living in México during the first year of the revolt. Their property and wellbeing were respected. Unfortunately, lives were still lost. Tamaulipas caused concern to U.S. authorities because of the American oil companies established at the Gulf of México.[130]

In May 1913, Huerta made an announcement to the press in México City. He declared the government's defensive attitude thus far maintained would be abandoned by the end of the week, and anything having the appearance of a rebel organization would be broken within 30 days. Huerta admitted that the task of running down isolated bands of rebels would remain to be dealt with. President Huerta and the war minister, General Manuel Mondragón—as well as their counselors—seemed confident that the forces of Venustiano Carranza, the rebel governor of Coahuila, and the rebel forces in Sonora would soon be rendered practically harmless. Huerta sent General Joaquín Téllez to replace F. Trucy Aubert in Monterrey and promised a hard campaign against Carranza.[131] Evidently Huerta made a mistake in his evaluation of the revolutionary forces. Because of this, he was losing federal military posts at the northeast border with Texas.

The Revolution in Tamaulipas disrupted the lives of many border residents, especially on the Mexican side. Mexican towns suffered large-scale depopulation due to destruction of property in the fighting, crop shortages, hunger, and disease. The American towns, with numerous Mexican refugees and economic ties to their twin counterpart communities, fared only slightly better. Border towns also experienced waves of migration moving back and forth across the border, further destabilizing the local population. Schools closed, religious rites diminished, and a large fraction of the Mexican population ended up as refugees on the Texan side. Reynosa was almost

[130] Ibíd., 111.
[131] "Huerta Promises To End Revolt" *El Paso Herald* (El Paso, Tex.), Ed. 1, Monday, May 5, 1913. .1.

completely depopulated due to sackings and thievery. Hundreds of families left Nuevo Laredo and many of them resettled their business and a better life in Laredo.[132]

After taking a town, the Constitutionalists supplanted the former well-organized but authoritarian system of local governments that the Porfiriato had so carefully constructed. Before the arrival of Carranza's forces, the local governments were closely supervised by the military attaché in charge of the federal garrison and a mayor was appointed to run civil affairs. Needless to say, the mayor had to be obedient and work in accordance with Huerta's designation. In the case of Matamoros, Major Estéban Ramos announced his allegiance to the counterrevolutionary movement after Madero was overthrown, and took control of the city. In spite of Mayor Casimiro Sada's vain protests, Esteban Ramos promptly put him in jail. His opponent in the recent election, Dr. Miguel F. Barragán, was given Sada's post due to his allegiance to Huerta instead of democratic principles.[133] Reynosa had a strong pro-Madero democratic political movement at the *Club Político la Unión*, but after the occupation of Blanco's forces, the Mayor was executed and a new civil officer took his post.

Similar to what was happening in Reynosa, Nuevo Laredo experienced a strong pro-Madero movement by the *Club Antireeleccionista* (founded by Lic. Pedro González). When the federal and rebel forces fought for control of the city, the inhabitants fled to the other side of the river. In the period 1913-1914, it was common practice to oust men and entire administrations due to political affiliations depending on which military force gained control of the city, a practice that prevailed until the 1920s.[134]

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[132] Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp *Border Cuates A history of the U.S.-Mexican Twin Cities* (Austin Texas Eakin Press 1995) ,183.
[133] Ibíd., 190.
[134] Ibíd., 191.

Changes in population on the Mexican side of the border due to the revolution have challenged demographic studies of the Mexican-U.S. border region. The border between these two countries is complex and certainly one of the unique borders in the world. It is a site of different cultures and languages, which shared a common history and a long border. The enormous difference that exists in the accumulation of wealth in both countries explains why there has always been a great permeability in this border compared to other international divisions. However, during the Mexican Revolution, to cross to the other side of the river was a matter of life or death.[135]

Historians have recognized that the Mexican immigration to the United States was significant and occurred between 1890 and 1914. Heavy northward migration of Mexican laborers began with the construction of railroads connecting U.S. border towns with Mexico City, and greatly increased when México's national railroad connected to the border in the 1880s. By 1900, the Mexican population in dozens of southwestern cities had doubled.[136] During the decade of the Mexican Revolution, from 1910 to 1920, twice as many Mexicans entered the United States than had in the previous decade. An analysis made in 1912 by journalist Samuel Bryan emphasized immigration from México was due to expansion in transport. Moisés González Navarro, a Mexican historian, wrote that the United States acted as a safety valve for México, especially in times of social and political unrest, and thousands fled across the border into the U.S., even though Bryan reasoned the migration of Mexicans was in search for work as

[135] Marie –Laure Coubés," Demografía Fronteriza: Cambios en las perspectivas de Análisis de la Frontera Estados Unidos-México" *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* , Vol. 62, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 2000) : 13.

[136] Michael Raúl Ornelas, *Beyond 1848 Readings in the Modern Chicano Historical Experience* (Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1993), 116.

southwestern industries expanded.[137]

As the military actions intensified at the border towns, movements across the border took on new dimensions. Thousands of panic-stricken Mexican civilians crossed the border, fleeing from the impending battles. More than 5,000 refugees from Matamoros fled to Brownsville in June 1913. The Department of Labor (1914) reported that 8,000 refugees entered Eagle Pass a few hours before the battle of Piedras Negras. The high loss of men through battle casualties and deserters who fled to the American side was common in the Mexican armies.[138]

During the years that many Mexicans fled to the U.S. as war refugees, thousands of others left because of social and economic unruliness. Different from the seasonal laborers, these refugees came from the middle and upper classes of México and planned to stay in the U.S. for a longer period. J.B. Gwin, an officer from the Red Cross, observed that these middle- and upper-class Mexicans were very healthy, the men and women had polite manners and were educated; they did not appear as if they were half-starved or originating from a miserable, desolate land. These refugees probably portrayed farmers or businesspersons who took no part in the revolution.[139]

American and Mexican families from the east coast and the Gulf of México decided to flee from México by sea. Such is the case of the Mexican steamer, Beryl, which made several trips to Tampico and Veracruz under the command of Capt. Nesbitt, superintendent of the Pearson's Company. Parties of people were desperate to take the trip to Galveston and flee from the revolutionary forces, described by them as "simply bandits" who apparently looted and robbed without any responsible head or organization. The steamer was at the disposal of the

[137] Ibid., 117.
[138] Ibid., 118.
[139] Ibíd.,

Pearson's Co. employees and was offered to families without charges.[140] Among the arrivals of the Beryl was Dr. Charles F. Campbell who served as a Surgeon in México. He stated, "There are more states in open rebellion today than during any period during Madero's administration. American lives are being taken and heinous crimes committed against this country's subjects. The rebels are cutting all lines of travel and the only means of escape is through Galveston from southern coast towns." There were approximately 400 people in Tampico trying to reach their home country and many were using tank steamers or any available means of transportation.[141]

On May 4th, 1913, Lucio Blanco left El Encinal ranch and on May 5th, he arrived at San Fernando and engaged a small federal force which fled as the first shots were fired. He then proceeded to take Reynosa. This city was the first town along the Texas border alerting Matamoros and Laredo to the imminent battles that were to come in order to fight off Huerta's *federales*. In May 1913, the federal garrison was still in command of border towns the Constitutionalists needed to gain access to weapons, railroad communications, and give Huerta's government a sharp blow by taking over the cities that served him as strongholds. Before the battle of Reynosa, most of the population fled to the United States simply by fording the river or in numerous rowboat crossings at the small town of Hidalgo. American authorities along the border, aware of the danger that awaited them in Mexico, opened their doors to Mexican refugees as long as danger existed.

[140] "Stories told by refugees arriving at Galveston" *The Abilene Daily Reporter* May 4, 1913. p.1.
[141] Ibíd., 2.

CHAPTER III

THE BATTLE OF REYNOSA

Blanco's forces (*Los Libres Del Norte*) re-assembled at La Ciénega Rancho. A column of 500 men destroyed the railroad between Reynosa and Camargo. Reynosa was one of the *Villas del Norte* founded in 1749 by Captain Carlos Cantú under orders of Don José de Escandón. The city was under the defense of Colonel Victor Piña and Lieutenant Severiano Cervantes of the 27th regiment of the Federal army, along with 80 volunteers and some members of the 1st corps of *Rurales* and Fiscal police. Rafael Quintanilla was the Mayor in 1913.[142] The census of 1910 in Tamaulipas enumerated 249,641 inhabitants with 6,748 for the municipality of Reynosa, including ranches in the vicinity.[143] The corps of *Rurales* of the federal garrison in Reynosa, much like other other corps, became institutionalized after the 1880's and evolved into the mainstay of Porfirian era. The majority of these enlisted men were of peasant origin and modeled after Spain's *Guardia Civil*. During the Porfiriato, the *Rurales'* function was to enforce domestic order. Since their inception, they served as a counterbalance to the army, but were not completely trusted politically.[144]

Lucio Blanco sent a telegram to the garrison commander with instructions to surrender

[142] Octavio Herrera *Monografía de Reynosa* Instituto Tamaulipeco de Cultura, Gobierno del Estado de Tamaulipas (1989), 106.
[143] H. Ayuntamiento de Reynosa, Visión Histórica 2010. Censo de Población
[144] Paul J. Vanderwood Mexico's Rurales: Image of a Society in Transition *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Feb., 1981) : 52.

the town. A copy was also delivered to the mayor, who advised civil authorities to let non-combatant citizens and their families take refuge across the river on the American side and not be part of the dangerous situation. A day before the Battle of Reynosa, the local authorities notified the U.S. customs in Hidalgo, Texas, to facilitate refugees' crossing to the United States. Local American authorities granted these refugees access to come to the United States. It was estimated that 2,500 people from the municipality of Reynosa sought refuge in Hidalgo. At the riverside, there were three rowboats, the *Chalán*, and a fifth boat on the American side of the river, crossing back and forth with no repose. Those who fled were poor and wealthy.[145] A few hours before the battle, the city of Reynosa was quiet and few people ventured into the dark streets. The *Palacio Municipal* and the Church closed its doors, and stores were secured with heavy bars at their entrances. A daunting silence fell upon the village.

On the morning of May 10th, people were still crossing the river to Hidalgo, Texas. Merchants and entire families gathered at the railroad station to wait for the *Tren Directo*, inaugurated that day with a new railway branch-line, Matamoros-Reynosa-Monterrey. In the southern portion of Reynosa on an open esplanade, people caught sight of a cavalry column approaching from the direction of *Charco Escondido*, a ranch founded in 1846. Meanwhile, those gathered at the train station returned to the village in a desperate run searching for refuge.[146] The revolutionaries (Félix and Absalón Lozano) seized the train en route to Reynosa-Matamoros at a place named *Las Milpas.* Therefore, when the train arrived at the Reynosa station, the Constitutionalists already had captured it.[147]

A Reynosa family took the parochial archive to Brownsville, and throughout the years,

[145] Minerva Morales, *A la orillita del Río* Ayuntamiento de Reynosa Press. (México 2007), 62.
[146] Ibíd., 63.
[147] Ibíd., 65.

only a few records have been retrieved to the Reynosa church. José Villarreal was the priest at the time. Three mayors served in the Reynosa municipality in 1913—Medardo González, Rafael M. Quintanilla, and Felipe Alanís Garza. The more prominent business owners left the city and took refuge in Hidalgo, and the federal defenders took cover in the Guadalupe Church located north of the main plaza. Before the assault on the town, Carranza's rebels burned a freight engine, 100 freight cars, and the Reynosa depot—including a passenger train of the Mexican railroad —after all passengers had been forced to leave. The most important factor in the Battle of Reynosa was the destruction of the railroad tracks with dynamite, thus interrupting reinforcements from Matamoros and securing a supply line for the Constitutionalists.[148]

Lucio Blanco's forces began the hostilities by noon on May 10th in the outskirts of Reynosa, at the city cemetery. The Reynosa cotton mill was destroyed, and the troops began firing at the intersection of Porfirio Díaz and Guerrero streets, where eight *federales* were killed on the rooftop of a store building. A few citizens left behind remained in their houses behind closed doors. The rebels traversed the city market and arrived at the main plaza, where another rebel force joined in from Juárez Street, shooting in the direction of the church where the Reynosa garrison made their last stand. Several soldiers were killed. Some surrendered. Five *federales* lay dead at the roof of the municipal palace. The mayor was deposed and a new mayor was instituted—Felipe Alanís Garza, a revolution sympathizer. Several soldiers were killed after dispersing from the church and their corpses lay in close vicinity to the main plaza. The Constitutionalists announced their possession of the town by having Blanco's buglers play a "*Diana"* (a military call of attention). A stray bullet injured a woman (Otila Zavala), while she was crossing the river in one of the last boats leaving Reynosa. When she arrived at Hidalgo, an

[148] Octavio Herrera *Reynosa Ciudad del Futuro* Grupo Editorial Milenio (2007), 161.

American physician promptly treated her, extracting the bullet without anesthesia.[149]

Captain Walk of the U.S 14th Cavalry was in charge of the U.S. customs house in Hidalgo, Texas. Walk took thirty prisoners of the Reynosa federal army—men who had escaped from the battle. Eight soldiers had drowned while swimming across the Rio Grande.[150]

Blanco's forces ransacked unoccupied house and stores. Blanco established the military headquarters downtown, adjacent to the city market. The *Galveston Daily News* published the following note on Monday, May 12, 1913: "The rebels are advancing in the direction of Matamoros. Late reports of the results of yesterday's battle of Reynosa give the number killed at twenty-three, with sixty or more wounded. Eight federal soldiers drowned while trying to cross the stream of the Rio Grande to the American side. United States soldiers arrested twenty-one federals that crossed."[151]

"Rebels now numbering at seven hundred were burning railroad property and destroying bridges as they advanced toward Matamoros. Nearly five thousand people from Matamoros took refuge in Brownsville and custom officials brought all official records for safekeeping. Major Esteban Ramos, commander of the Matamoros Garrison had three hundred men and four machine guns and declared he will defend the city. Two freight cars valued at a quarter of a million dollars were removed from Matamoros to Brownsville today."[152]

On May 13th, 1913, the Mexican Consul in Brownsville received a letter from agent De La Garza informing him of the outcome and minutia of the Battle of Reynosa. In an official document No. 357, the headline read: "*Revolución y Régimen Constitucionalista*: The attack on

[149] Morales., 64.
[150] Ibíd., 65.
[151] "Rebels are Moving Toward Matamoros" (*Galveston Daily News* 13 May 1913), 1.
[152] Ibíd.,

the city of Reynosa on May 10, 1913 by commanders; Lucio Blanco, Dr. Ríos Zertuche, Andrés Sauceda and Abelardo Guerra is part of a military plan to unite Blanco's forces with the armies of Luis Caballero and Porfirio González and move toward Matamoros". Reynosa, De la Garza further informed, was attacked by cavalry soldiers whose armament consisted of Mausers and 30-30 Carbines. The attack began at a place denominated *Laguna Seca,* with the soldiers fighting their way to the main plaza by dividing the cavalry in two columns. The federal garrison was overpowered and the municipal building taken. The federal force consisted of 50 men of the 27th Regiment. In addition, it included 97 federal soldiers that had arrived from Matamoros and the chief of Police with a small group of guards. The rebels looted and pillaged several houses and destroyed stretches of railroad in the direction of Matamoros.[153]

The importance of this report is that an American document provided first account information of the battle by the survivors who had deserted the circumstances. The Battle of Reynosa, less important compared to Laredo and Matamoros by the number of fatalities, and Reynosa, a less strategically important military point, exemplifies the close relationship between the events on Mexican side and the effects on the American side regarding refugees, taking prisoners and humanitarian aid .

Some fatalities within the group of federal officers included Lt. Luis Girón, Antonio Valero and Darío G. Gallegos. Soldier casualties included Pablo Sánchez and Feliciano Lara, Apolonio Reyes, Abundio Castillo, Francisco Méndez, and Crispín Báez—all from the 27th irregulars, and Trinidad Rodríguez from the 10th *rurales* corps. Wounded Constitutionalist officers included Jesús Rodríguez, Manuel Velázquez, Juan Cortés, Luis Tabares, Jesús Rivero,

[153] Isidro Fabela Documentos Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana XIV. Fundador: Isidro Fabela Revolución y Régimen Constitucionalista Volumen 2° del Tomo Editados por la Comisión de Investigaciones Históricas de la Revolución Mexicana bajo la dirección de Josefina E. de Fabela Editorial JUS,.A.(México, 1968), 222.

and Maj. Alejo Garza.[154]

At 7.30 p.m. on May 12, 1913, a Blanco detachment moved to Río Bravo. The rear guard column turned back to Reynosa as federal troops were marching from Aldamas N.L. in aid of the federal garrison, but this engagement did not take place because the federal forces retreated to their post before arriving to Reynosa. At 8:10 p.m., several people on the Mexican side of the river made hand signals to the Hidalgo Customs officers where the skiff was moored and asked that a boat be sent to Reynosa once again in spite of it having crossed all day. The Hidalgo immigration officer thought that there were more families in need of help and without hesitating, the skiff was on its way to the other shore. When the boat arrived at the Mexican side, the Carrancistas took the runner prisoner and forced him to cross the river, taking with him several Carrancista soldiers who were defecting from Reynosa. At their arrival in Hidalgo, customs officials apprehended them and sent them to the local jail. Agent de la Garza requested a permit to speak with the detainees, which was granted by local authorities. [155]

The detainees informed Agent de la Garza that 500 mounted men had attacked Reynosa under Lucio Blanco's leadership, and that a military meeting was going to take place at Río Bravo between Blanco and Porfirio González, who had a force of 200 men. Luis Caballero, who would also join Blanco's forces, would be present, commanding 150 soldiers from Cerralvo. These merging forces would then attack Matamoros simultaneously at "whatever the cost," to quote Lucio Blanco. The soldiers also explained that they were deserting the Constitutionalists because they wanted to work in the United States and asked to be relieved from army duty but received a negative response. The refugees argued against their low, two-peso per day salary and

[154] Ibíd.
[155] Ibíd.

only received a promissory note which indicated that half of their salary would be awarded at the end of the conflict. The leader of the detainees, José Peña—now in prison—was sent to Brownsville.[156]

The mayor of Reynosa, Medardo González, escaped to Hidalgo escorted by the Chief of Police and three officers. He was allowed to care for the wounded federal soldiers, and served as a mediator with American authorities for the relief and the supply of primary needs to Mexican families. González declared to agent de La Garza that the funds of the municipal treasury of 2,494 pesos were safe on the American side. González abandoned the city because of the many death threats received by the rebels. De La Garza reported that a number of houses and buildings were ransacked in downtown Reynosa from observations by an emissary sent across the river, who received a payment of 10 dollars for the difficult and dangerous inquiry.[157]

Other reports of the battle published in American newspapers had varied figures for casualties and number of refugees. There were about twenty to thirty dead soldiers according to the *Brownsville Herald* on May 12, 1913: "It was believed that other bodies lay hidden and not accounted for." Many of the wounded, both federal and rebels, were cared for by Mexican physicians and American doctors who arrived from McAllen and Brownsville. The rebels, before burning the passenger train, permitted the passengers to get off the train (Pullman cars) and allowed them to cross the river for safety. Sergeant Burgess and four men of Troop M 14th U.S. cavalry disarmed several federal soldiers who crossed the river and returned them to México. [158]

Captain Lovell of the F Troop, commanding the 14th cavalry stationed at Sam Fordyce, arrived at Hidalgo Saturday night at 9:45 p.m. and took charge of the federal prisoners during the

[156] Ibíd., 223.
[157] Ibíd.,
[158] "Aftermath of Reynosa Battle" *Brownsville Daily Herald* (May, 12, 1913 ,1.

time they were held on American soil. He also arrested José Peña, formerly an officer of the Mexican *rurales* and an alleged Constitutionalist sympathizer. The rebels left Reynosa Sunday morning in the direction of Rio Bravo, where the last column arrived in the late afternoon.[159] The town of Hidalgo was the scene of the greatest activity in its history, and the little main street was crowded with onlookers and refugees. Captain Kirby Walker of Troop M 14th cavalry, who was stationed at Brownsville, arrived at Hidalgo Sunday morning with Captain George J. Head of the Brownsville militia.[160]

Dr. W.S. Dougherty, a special Herald reporter who visited the scene as soon the battle was over, provided medical assistance to the wounded. Dr. Dougherty also gave oral accounts of what happened in Reynosa as he questioned the refugees. The garrison was reinforced in Reynosa on May 10th with soldiers of the Matamoros regiments (*rurales*, volunteers, and regular soldiers) under the command of Luis Cerón. The local garrison under Lt. Cervantes and his fifty-one men went out of town to engage the Constitutionalists. Six *federales* were killed, and fifteen were wounded in this preliminary fight. They soon found themselves outnumbered and began retreating to downtown Reynosa. In the meantime, the reinforcements from Matamoros were on the house roofs and covered the retreat with gunfire. The Constitutionalists followed closely and the *federales* soon realized that there were hundreds of enemy soldiers against a mere hundred and fifty of their own forces. Heavy fighting ensued and left the town houses riddled with bullets. The *federales* kept up the fight for three and a half hours and eventually retreated. Some crossed the river but most of them fled down the railroad toward Matamoros.[161]

As per Dougherty's account, about twenty or thirty federales swam across to Hidalgo.

[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibíd.
[161] Ibíd.

Later the citizens began bringing the wounded across to Hidalgo, but only a few of the worst cases were brought in for medical care. Doctors who attended to the wounded were Dr. C.W. Harrison of Hidalgo, Dr. Frank E. Osborne from McAllen, and Dr. W.S. Dougherty of Brownsville. There were about fourteen wounded brought to Hidalgo. Dr. Dougherty conservatively estimated twenty-five men dead, possibly more who died in the city outskirts, and not more than fifty or sixty wounded. No violent acts occurred in the city toward the citizenry and no one was harassed. Some stores were broken into, supplies were taken, and cash registers and safes were opened. However, the citizens had been warned well ahead of time before the arrival of the Constitutionalists and so, they had taken most of their valuables and cash to the American side. The rebels looted two houses but the general appreciation of the events was that the Constitutionalists, who were well disciplined, conducted their fighting well within the lines of civilized warfare.[162]

At the same time, food and supplies of all kinds were becoming very scarce in México because of the revolution. Those people living in towns in the Mexican side along the border bought nearly all their food on the Texas side of the river. During this period, there were all kinds of supplies piled high on the Texas bank of the river between Hidalgo and Las Rucias Ranch near Matamoros, waiting to be crossed over. 1913 was a very dry year, and few crops were raised. Therefore, Lucio Blanco sent agents to the Texas side near Hidalgo and all the way down to San Benito to buy alfalfa hay, for which he paid handsomely when delivered on the bank of the river. According to John Peavey, several farmers and merchants in the Rio Grande Valley did very well financially trading with the revolutionaries. [163]

[162] Ibíd.
[163] Peavey., 76.

Just like Laredo, revolutionary leaders and their agents were smuggling guns and armament since 1912 in the Rio Grande Valley in spite of the embargo imposed by President Taft. The hardware stores handled Winchester rifles and ammunition, which they put on sale. People simply crossed the river and bought these goods. The embargo did not stop the selling guns and such illegal transactions continued to this day. The guns buying-selling system generally implied that the Mexican revolutionaries coming to the Texas side of the border made deals with storekeepers to bring a certain amount of guns to the valley; the revolutionaries bought the guns paid for in cash. Lucio Blanco had many friends on Texas soil. One of them was Frank Rabb, who supported both Carranza and Blanco. The support of Mexican leaders or revolutionary chiefs on the American side depended on personal friendship, business transactions, and if the faction under their support would win the revolution so their partnership could result in benefit for both parties. Before the U.S. army's arrival to the border, there were only fifteen agents to enforce the law from the Rio Grande to Brownsville.[164]

According to his brother Victor, Lucio Blanco wrote letters as a young man in Múzquiz, Coahuila, to Ricardo Flores Magón between the years 1900-1906. In a place named *Las Vacas* (Acuña, Coahuila) in 1906, Blanco and a few friends made contact with *Magonistas* who were in the process of organizing attacks on border towns. Blanco had to return to his ranch and because of a so-called Magonista who betrayed the group and warned the authorities, *federales* attacked and dispersed Blanco's small group. Atilano Barrera, a fervent and talkative man of revolutionary ideas who later authorized the decree of Carranza's non-recognition of Victoriano Huerta, served Blanco as his mentor. Barrera taught Blanco revolutionary ideology as

[164] John R. Peavey Texas Ranger, Army Scout and Law *Officer day by day oral accounts from 1906-1941, 1981 interviewed by Hubert J. Miller and Rodolfo Rocha UTPA interview special collection.*

vindication for the Mexican people. [165]

Blanco's relatives gave oral accounts of Blanco and Madero's correspondence. After Madero's proclamation of the revolution in 1910, Blanco and a close friend, Luis Alberto Guajardo, organized a group of young men who took a leap into the revolution and served in the irregular army until the treaty of Ciudad Juárez, where the revolution had apparently ended. After Pascual Orozco and José Inés Salazar's uprisings, Madero re-organized his troops and Blanco took up arms to defend Maderismo once again. Blanco fought with tenacity and because of his military achievements in 1911, he obtained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.[166]

Lucio organized the Mexican army's cavalry branch with other military companions: Capt. Francisco Murguía (Carranza's most loyal soldier in the course of the revolution), and Capt. José Luis Guajardo, and with1st Lieutenants Benecio López, Miguel Acosta, Gustavo Elizondo, and Abelardo Menchaca, among others. Blanco's cavalry engaged Pascual Orozco forces in combat in Durango and in La Laguna, Coahuila. During Madero's presidency, Venustiano Carranza had authorization to form irregular forces in case they needed to break down rebellions, and Lucio Blanco was part of these forces under the command of Col. Guajardo. Other officers included Cesáreo Castro, Fortunato Zuazua, Santos Dávila, Manuel López, Francisco Sánchez, Simón Reyes, and Francisco Cárdenas.[167] After the assassination of Madero and Pino Suárez and Huerta's treason, Lucio Blanco was one of the first to follow Carranza. After the Battle of Reynosa, Blanco was a seasoned cavalry commander on the move to secure Matamoros.

[165] Armando Campos y de María, *La Vida del General Lucio Blanco* (México Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana - (INEHRM) 1963), 19.
[166] Ibíd., 20.
[167] Ibíd., 21.

The Constitutionalists produced fear along the border towns, especially in Brownsville, which was opposite Matamoros. After the victory in Reynosa, around 5,000 residents of Matamoros crossed the river in search of refuge, while the federal garrison in Matamoros promised to defend the city with a vigorous resistance.[168] In the Rio Grande Valley, Lucio Blanco was perceived as a revolutionary leader, a *caudillo*, but some argued that he also wanted political power to gain la *presidencia.* If Blanco had control in Tamaulipas as a *caudillo*, the central Mexican government would have had to deal with him in dealing with all the issues pertaining to the state. Furthermore, the same would have happened with all the others chieftains who controlled portions of the Mexican territory.[169]

Smuggling was a problem especially during the Mexican revolution. Many merchants and traders who in the past had enjoyed good profits and had changed business locations quickly learned that the river could be crossed unobtrusively and with ease. The country on both sides of the Rio Grande was covered by thick chaparral, which offered excellent places to hide. A smuggler emerging from this natural cover could cross to the other side in a matter of minutes. Brownsville, Roma, and Edinburg were just shantytowns during the second half of the nineteenth century which flourished under these circumstances.[170]

Political shifts in México after 1857 also created illegality and smuggling. Ramón Guerra, the interim governor of Tamaulipas in 1858, issued a decree that had far-reaching consequences. Sensitive to the problems at the Rio Grande, he established a *Zona libre* (a free zone where goods could be sold without duty or tariff) along the northern frontier. Guerra's idea

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[168] "Matamoros faces Attack by Rebels" *El Paso Herald* (El Paso, Tex.), Ed. 1, Monday, May 12, 1913.p.1.
[169] Peavey, tape III.
[170] Samuel E. Bell, and James M. Smallwood "Zona Libre: Trade & Diplomacy on the Mexican Border 1858-1905" *Arizona and the West*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (summer, 1982): 124.

was to provide favorable trade privileges on the right bank of the Rio Grande and prevent depopulation of the Mexican border towns, whose residents emigrated constantly to the American side. Governor Guerra simply stretched out trade privileges to the six border towns of Matamoros, Reynosa, Camargo, Mier, Guerrero, and Nuevo Laredo. This duty free zone boldly encouraged smuggling. The goods could be stored in México, disposed of illegally and sold outside the limits of the free zone. Thus illicit trade was carried out openly.[171]

American citizens also suffered losses and theft on Mexican soil. Such was the case of Beulah Cupp King, who rented a freight car in the Reynosa Depot to transport her household items to Monterrey. A few days before the Battle of Reynosa, Mexican armed forces stole the contents of the freight, valued at several thousand dollars. Mrs. King complained to the Mexican Foreign Ministry and an investigation inquiry took effect at a local level with no results or refund for the claimant.[172]

The Constitutionalist detachment at Reynosa, on October 26th, 1913, ordered the execution of Don Hesiquio de la Garza by firing squad. De la Garza was a former mayor of Reynosa who served four terms (1905, 1908, 1910, and 1913). The ex-city mayor, a sympathizer who served under Victoriano Huerta's government, was found guilty. In addition, Lt. Col. Francisco Artigas, commander of the Reynosa garrison, carried out the execution with the approval of Lucio Blanco and staff. Mr. de la Garza's family, by a judiciary act in 1914, obtained a death certificate *a posteriori.*[173] The summary execution of individuals gave the Mexican Revolution one of the most pernicious characteristics. Even before the assembly of the

[171] Ibíd.,124.
[172] AMR *Archivo Municipal de Reynosa* Oficio No. 391 Procuraduría General de Justicia de Tamaulipas Abril, 19 1913 Expediente No.3103
[173] AMR *Archivo Municipal de Reynosa* Juicio presentado por Amelia de Garza, julio 28, 1914Villa de Reynosa Oficio No.8 Juzgado Civil, 4 fojas.

Constitutionalist forces, Carranza put a Benito Juárez decree of 1862 into effect on May 14, 1913. According to this decree, which was enacted during the French occupation, anyone guilty of rebellion against constitutional authority, against established political institutions, and/or attack on the life of the president was to be subjected to the death penalty.[174] Put into practice, this meant summary execution of prisoners of war since all members of the *federales* were, in Carranza's rigid concept of the law, rebelling against a constitutional order. Unfortunately, in many cases, the death penalty was not based upon on an investigation, and many innocent men were shot simply by presumption.[175]

Lucio Blanco's forces attacked the border towns with some five hundred men. He had doubled his forces in less than two months due to his success in a number of engagements with the *federales*.[176] Blanco sent his forces to destroy railroad tracks of the Matamoros-Monterrey branch to prevent reinforcements bound to Matamoros from the federal army stationed in Monterrey. The small town of Camargo was attacked on May 14th, 1913, at 1 a.m. by a small rebel force of about thirty men of the 10th *rurales* corps. These were the same men who had defected the previous weeks from the Mier federal garrison.[177] At the middle of May 1913, Blanco controlled the Rio Grande from Guerrero to Reynosa and moved his forces to Colombres (Río Bravo).

Colombres (Río Bravo) was a small town in 1913 which was of paramount importance to Blanco and his entourage, not only for taking the city, but also for resupplying the troops, seizing the Matamoros-Monterrey railroad, and taking over the *Hacienda la Sauteña*, a remnant of the

[174] Cumberland, 74.
[175] Ibíd.,74.
[176] Sapia-Bosch, 24.
[177] Camargo archives Oficio no. 310. Libro Borrador de oficios del Juzgado.

capitalistic enterprise of the Porfirian era. The *hacienda* would become a center of industrial and agricultural development with thousands of hectares, livestock, irrigation systems, and foreign capital. To take over the *hacienda* also meant a triumph of the new Constitutionalist order.

CHAPTER IV

LUCIO BLANCO IMPASSE AT RÍO BRAVO

A few days after Blanco took Reynosa, people at *Hacienda La Sauteña* became panic-stricken, and the news of Blanco's approaching cavalry spread like wildfire because the city of Río Bravo was to be taken next by the Constitutionalists. The chief administrators of the *hacienda* fled and crossed the Rio Grande into the United States, taking archives and documents of the *hacienda* with them. Employees became confused concerning what to expect since 100 men and six hacienda guard officers had been demobilized a few months earlier. A Spaniard by the name of Sancho de Luna remained in charge of the installations, and was left behind in the *hacienda* as the administrator to deal with the revolutionaries. An uprising of the *peones* was in the minds of the employees who stayed, and only a small civil force employed by Don Iñigo Noriega remained to guard the city. This small guard, however, decided to act only as scouts of fleeing citizens.[178] A few sympathizers remained in town. It was a common rumor that Blanco would attack with a force surpassing 300 cavalrymen well-armed with ample supplies. The officers that accompanied Blanco were Lt. Col. Cesáreo Castro, Maj. M.D. Daniel Ríos Zertuche, and Captains Alejo G. González, Francisco J. Múgica, Otilio Falcón, and Benecio López.[179]

On May 11th, 1913, the city was forsaken. It was a desolated town—empty, with few

[178] José María García Báez, *Compilación Histórica Riobravense* (México: Conaculta, 2006) ,78.
[179] Ibíd.,78.

peons and their families so poor that they had no choice but to stay. A well-armed cavalry unit made its way into the city from the west on the *Camino Real,* followed by a swarm of horse-drawn carriages, infantry, equipment, and supplies. General Lucio Blanco took the town as a stronghold without firing a shot and did not face any military resistance.[180] The Constitutionalist forces used the main building of La Sauteña as a citadel. Three hundred peons welcomed Blanco's arrival. Unfortunately, there was indiscriminate pillaging and plundering going on throughout the city. Several revolutionaries joined Blanco's column in *Colombres.* Meanwhile, his Joint of Staff planned the assault on Matamoros.[181]

Before he began to advance his forces on Matamoros, Blanco decided that he had to rest, re-equip his tired troops, and recruit additional men. During his encampment at Río Bravo, several men who had been in exile in the U.S. joined his forces. At least two of these men, Francisco Cosío Robelo and Fortunato Zuazua, were to have long careers in the revolutionary ranks. On the U.S. side of the river, troops kept a close watch on the rebels.[182]

The fortification of *La Sauteña* served as Blanco's headquarters and the solid brick construction was a formidable *cuartel general* where a large chunk of the planning took place. During the days spent at Río Bravo, Blanco armed his troops with supplies bought from the American side and designated a new brigade bearing his name (Brigade Lucio Blanco), and a whole army totaling close to 1000 soldiers.[183] Additional forces included the 21st regiment with a hundred men, and the *Patriotas de Tamaulipas* under Lt. Col. Manuel Caballero.[184] During his respite, Blanco reported his military actions to the First Chief of the Constitutionalists,

[180] Ibíd., 82.
[181] Ibíd.
[182] Sapia-Bosch, 24.
[183] Barragán., 90.
[184] Ibíd., 91.

Venustiano Carranza. This communication appeared in the Constitutionalist government's official newspaper, *El Demócrata*. The article recounted the victories that Blanco had gained, and reported his astonishment to Carranza regarding the large debt-peonage conditions. Blanco visited large ranches during the course of his campaign. He found a "semi-slavery" peonage system and gave the peons immediate liberty under his authority as commander of military operations in the area.[185] The actions taken by Blanco regarding land distribution to small ranchers would cause Carranza's disapproval and eventually disaffection. During the war, Lucio Blanco had developed a strong feeling of support for the poor, especially peons. He wanted to improve their lives through agrarian reforms. Together with his ally, Francisco J. Múgica, he condemned the wealthy, the bourgeoisie, and the clergy as predisposing factors. This act eventually led to Blanco's removal from his military post in Matamoros.[186]

When Blanco's forces arrived, they took several federal prisoners captured in Reynosa. These prisoners had declined to join the Constitutionalists. Blanco ordered a dozen of them executed. There was an American among them—Juan Alamía, a citizen who had apparently sided with the *federales*. A man named Amado Stevens had accused him of being a spy. Alamía explained that he had just crossed the river to round up some horses he had pastured, but Blanco mistrusted him, thinking him to be a spy. As a result, Alamía was shot and hung.[187] He had been an American ex-soldier, having served with Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders in the American-Spanish war in 1898. He was also the brother of the Hidalgo County tax collector.[188]

The goal of the Constitutionalist campaigns in the northeast was to capture Matamoros and

[185] Sapia-Bosch, p. 25.
[186] Frank Samponaro, & Paul J. Vanderwood *War Scare on the Rio Grande* (Austin, Texas State Historical Association 1992), 44.
[187] Ibíd., 45.
[188] Mary Margaret McAllen Amberson, et al., *I Would Rather Sleep in Texas* (Denton Texas State Historical Association 2003), 464.

Nuevo Laredo. It was of utmost importance to seize the cities because they represented an important access to the United States. The aim was to establish a supply center—a strategic position, and to have a strong media impact. The occupation of Río Bravo represented a milestone for the rebel forces: the troops rested, gained access to supplies and encampment facilities, and acquired ample time for military planning in the following weeks. The Texas press became interested. A Brownsville journalist, as well as a filmmaker, arrived at Rio Bravo. They interviewed and filmed Lucio Blanco and Francisco J. Múgica.[189] A banquet was held to celebrate previous conquests.

Blanco's cavalry's stay at the Rio Bravo *hacienda* had important implications. It fortified the troops, but the local consequences proved disastrous. The halt to investments ruined the city economy and ended important projects such as planning and construction of irrigation channels. It also stopped an immigration project which would have incorporated 3,000 foreign nationals under a Mexican migratory status to cultivate the land. The cattle export project was also terminated. Ultimately, the possibility of development of an industrial city in Rio Bravo, which would have helped the city to flourish, was also abated. In 1913, Rio Bravo had excellent railroad, telephone, and telegraph communications which otherwise would have been ideal to fulfill the aforementioned projects. After the Carrancistas left, Rio Bravo stagnated for the next forty years until the cotton boom in the forties activated the economy.[190]

Carranza, in his Constitutionalist campaign, wanted to undermine the interests of *La Sauteña.* In 1909, an audacious project was designed by Iñigo Noriega and his partners—this project would link them with Texas economic and political elites. They entered a contract

[189] "A Cien Años de la Ocupación" *El Mañana Río Bravo* Domingo 12 de mayo de 2013, Tamaulipas(Cronista de la Ciudad José M. Báez), 5.
[190] Ibíd.,

between the company and the consortium A.C. Swanson, E.R. Brooks, and E.F. Rowson. Through this document, Texans had the exclusive concession to promote in the U.S. and in Europe to sell the land of the *hacienda,* where many ranches were located within its boundaries. This Texan group belonged to a wider network whose junction was the Texas Company, an oil company representing American expansionism in México. Porfirio Diaz decided to make business with some American and Europeans companies. Historian John Mason Hart argued that the Texas Company acquired a great economic and political success, unlike any other company.[191]The principle of the dictatorial regime excluding a great majority of Mexicans was represented in this capitalistic venture, a corporation capable to sign contracts with financial corporations and develop plans. Both Blanco and Múgica, with their liberal ideology, had to think otherwise.

La Sauteña (a northern term for *El Sauto),* the Porfirian style edifice (the brick house) in which Lucio Blanco and his staff planned the attack on Matamoros, was the principal building of a capitalistic enterprise built during the Porfiriato in the nineteenth century. In 1913, it functioned as Blanco's headquarters. Somewhere near its surroundings, the troops bivouacked. This huge tract of land was the result of the *autos de la real visita* allocation of land by Juan Fernando de Palacio in 1767. In 1781, a gigantic portion of land of 658 *sitios de ganado mayor* was allocated at *El Sauto,* north of Nuevo Santander. The first concessionary was *Don Antonio de Irizar,* whose grandiose amount of land meant a distinction among the colonial elite. This land belonged to the Spanish Crown and was one of biggest colonial properties. It measured 810,000 hectares from the Río Bravo to the Conchos, and to the limits of Nuevo Santander to the Gulf of México. Baltazar Del Sauto became the second proprietary and the land came to be owned by a

[191] Octavio Herrera , "Del señorío a la posrevolución. Evolución histórica de una hacienda en el noreste de México: el caso de La Sauteña" Historia Mexicana, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Jul. - Sep., 1993:7.

third generation of the Del Conde Family whose descendants sold the *hacienda* to Iñigo Noriega, partner in business with Porfirio Díaz.[192]

At the end of May, Blanco's forces again stepped up momentum. The vanguard of Blanco's forces approached Matamoros on May 24th. A short battle took place near the city. Major Esteban Ramos, the federal commander of the garrison, ordered that trenches be dug around the military buildings and that all streets be mined. By the end of the month, the commander of the U.S. garrison at Brownsville, at the other side of the river of Matamoros, reported to his headquarters that Blanco's forces were estimated to be between four hundred and nine hundred men. In addition, the commander reported that Blanco had one or two detachments close to Matamoros and that a small force stayed in Reynosa.[193]

The American commander also stated that Lucio Blanco, now with the rank of Brigadier General, did not have much military experience, and his army lacked in drills or other military exercises for his forces. The commander further commented that Blanco had received many recruits along the Río Bravo. The U.S. commander seemed to be unwilling to accept the idea of Blanco lacking military expertise, considering that his force continued to win battles and that he was widely liked by his troops and entourage.[194]

The federal forces either abandoned the small towns or, in the case of Mier, went over to the Constitutionalists. As Blanco's forces advanced and captured town after town, most federales fled their positions and sought some refuge in the United States. The bivouac at Río Bravo proved most successful to the troops. It infused camaraderie and on May 20th, General Lucio

[192] Ibid., 8.
[193] Saphia-Bosch ,27.
[194] Ibíd.,

Blanco demanded the surrender of the city of Matamoros. [195] He informed American Consul Jesse H. Johnson that all foreigners should leave the city and not allow their houses or businesses to be used by the federales because they would be in danger of destruction. The consul was also asked to supervise the evacuation of noncombatants from the city of Matamoros.[196]

In the United States, Edward M. White, the most important foreign policy advisor and Woodrow Wilson's close friend, presented a plan for México proposed by Delbert J. Haff of Kansas City, offering a practical solution. Important American companies with significant investments in México including Southern Pacific Railroad Co., Dodge Co., the Green Cananea Copper Co., and E. Mexican Oil Co. backed the plan. This plan called for the U.S. recognition of Huerta if he agreed to hold democratic elections by October 1913, a date he had previously agreed to in the areas of México under federal control. It also required the Constitutionalists to agree to suspend hostilities and hold elections in the areas under their influence by October. The optimal outcome of this plan was that both parties would agree to recognize a person chosen by the election to become president.[197]

President Wilson, although impressed by the plan, had reservations about Huerta's regime and had a note drafted to Henry L. Wilson. The note was never sent because the president no longer believed in H. L. Wilson's honesty. In late May, the proposed plan no longer mentioned Huerta's recognition and the new revised plan asked the U.S. government to use its good offices to mediate between the two factions, while calling for and supervising free elections in México. President Wilson, before reaching a final decision, sent William Bayard Hale, a

[195] Rocha,148.
[196] Rocha,149.
[197] Snow, 20.

journalist, as a special agent to México.[198] Hale's dispatches of late spring 1913 convinced the president that Huerta's tyrannical and untrusted government would eventually lead to chaos and economic problems for México, thus forcing a possible intervention.[199]

On May 14th, 1913 in México City, letters from the great European powers (Austria, Spain, Great Britain, and France) recognized Huerta's government. Recognition was still withheld by the United States.[200]

The occupation of Rio Bravo by Constitutionalist forces had important effects that strengthened the revolutionaries. From the military point of view, Blanco and his staff had enough time to prepare their advance toward Matamoros and flee to the south in case *federales* had attacked. In the interim, Blanco received valuable information regarding the number of federal forces in Matamoros from a revolution-sympathizing spy-network in Brownsville. Blanco and his entourage also established ties and exchanged intelligence reports with their supporters in Texas through *La Junta Revolucionaria de Brownsville.* Lucio Blanco received journalists from the media and advantageously made propaganda of the revolution. The fall of the estate *La Sauteña,* after the arrival of the revolutionaries, began an immediate decline and the colonization projects of the industrial city of Río Bravo—along with the great irrigation plan and livestock development—ceased as the flow of money stopped. Blanco also made business with the sale of livestock owned by the company, and traded for war materials besides the imposition of forced loans to wealthy ranchers. Lucio Blanco met supporters during the occupation at Rio Bravo, many of whom contributed with money, weapons, and supplies. At Río Bravo, the revolution overthrew the business empire.

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[198] Ibíd, 22.
[199] Ibíd., 23.
[200] "Recognition of Huerta's Government" *El Paso Herald* (El Paso, Tex., Wednesday, May 14, 1913). 1.

CHAPTER V

THE FALL OF MATAMOROS

On July 12 1686, Capt. Alonso de León arrived where Matamoros is now located. The famous explorer came from the *Nuevo Reino de León,* accompanied by soldiers and adventurers, seeking new places to explore. Even though Indian settlements were allocated at the site, an important factor De León pointed out was the river's ease in being navigated. He posted his discovery to the government of New Spain. The Rio Bravo del Norte could serve well for communications and the need of a seaport was no less important.[201] In 1774, a group of settlers from Camargo and Reynosa (whose native provenance was Nuevo León), decided to buy 113 *sitios de ganado mayor* and establish a new place to live. These settlers, under the leadership of Capt. Anastacio de Ayala, named the settlement *San Juan de los Esteros Hermosos*. In 1793, the name was changed to *Congregación de Nuestra Señora Del Refugio de los Esteros Hermosos,* proposed by the missionaries of the *Colegio Apostólico de Zacatecas*.[202] In 1826, the town changed its name in honor of the illustrious insurgent, D. Mariano Matamoros by decree from the State Congress.[203]

Since Madero's time there had been plots to take the city of Matamoros. General Bernardo Reyes, a traditionalist, wished to install a government similar to the Díaz dictatorship to gratify the Mexican elite. Reyes wanted to secure the city and the northeastern states, and

[201] José Raúl Canseco, *Historia de Matamoros* (Cd. Victoria Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas 1981), 16.
[202] Ibíd., 16.
[203] Ibíd., 17.

launch a military attack on other states from Matamoros. A number of indictments for violation of neutrality laws and smuggling cases against Reyes were followed closely, leading to the arrest of Reyes' sympathizers. The Reyista movement never materialized. The old general who did not approve of Madero's government was jailed in México City by late 1912. He died at the frontispiece of the Mexican National Palace during the "*Decena Trágica*."[204]

Various groups realized the value of conquering Matamoros. Its strategic importance relied on the following characteristics: its proximity of to the United States, its use of supplying guns and ammunition, and its role as an important seaport of entry. In early spring 1913, Matamoros was apparently in a tense calm, and when the State Department contacted Consul Johnson asking about the state of local affairs, the consul replied that Matamoros was quiet, but worried that the skirmish at Nuevo Laredo on March 18th had ended with the *federales* still controlling the city. Consul Johnson informed Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan that the people of Matamoros supported Huerta and appeared calm.[205] Because of the completion of the St. Louis, Brownsville, and México Railway in 1904 and the introduction of widespread irrigation in 1912, the area had begun to experience an increase in population and growth in commerce and agriculture for both Brownsville-Matamoros.[206] As Carrancistas were winning battles along the border towns, the people of Matamoros became very concerned about an impending attack on the city.

The Nuevo Laredo branch had communication with Monterrey, and Saltillo, with Matamoros, being the farthest northeast terminal. The railroad had branches via Río Bravo-

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[204] Sonia Hernández, *Military activities in Matamoros during the Mexican Revolution,1910-1915 (*M.A. Thesis U.T.P.A. 2001),15-16.

[205] Ibíd., 20.

[206] Linda Peterson, "From Commerce to History: Robert Runyon's Postcards of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and Brownsville, 1910-1926 "*The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 102, No. 2 (Oct., 1998) :212.

Reynosa- Camargo to Monterrey and from Monterrey to Central México.[207] Matamoros had played a significant role as a crossroad and transportation destination with rail linkages—thus leading to the importance of destroying railroad tracks to interrupt supplies and transportation of troops.

The federal garrison at Matamoros was under the command of cavalry Major Esteban Ramos with a force of 407 men, most of them untrained soldiers. Major Ramos, in February 1913, had sided with Félix Díaz, but after Huerta's usurpation, he had put himself under the new government orders. The federal troops consisted of the 6º cavalry regiment, 37º Irreg. Battalion, 10º *rurales* corps, guards from the Fiscal Gendarmerie, police troopers and special units.[208]

The basic line of defense was designed to defend the east, west, and south of the city, since the north side lies beside the river. This defensive line planned by Maj. Ramos, consisted of a long and continuous trench barrier, with several fortified key points: La Casamata, La Garita de San Fernando, the cemetery, the electric plant, and the railroad depot. The defensive line was electrified to function as an obstacle and the main plaza in downtown Matamoros served as the final barricade, which lodged the command center. Barricades and trenches made of barbed wire, rocks, and stones, were set up to contain a much superior force at the plaza and its environs. No reserve troops were employed since the defensive line was too long and there were not enough troops to cover it.[209] The garrison pretended victory or death until the end.

The Mayor of Matamoros, Dr. Miguel F. Barragán, directed the building of fortification lines. The old buildings that dated back from the French Intervention were reinforced. The

[207] Javier Gorostiza, *Los Ferrocarriles en la Revolución Mexicana* (México D.F. Siglo XXI Editores S.A. de C.V. 2010) , 161.
[208] Ibíd., 93.
[209] Ibíd., 94.

Mayor also enlisted good sharpshooters into the ranks, men with deer hunting experience in the region, and even installed an old relic of cannon that exploded when ignited at four o'clock in the afternoon, killing all three gunners. According to witnesses, the second bag of five pounds of powder loaded into the cannon was dynamite instead of a normal gunpowder load. Dr. Barragán was spotted among the multitude of refugees carried by two swimmers to the other side of the river.[210]

Approximately 5,000 Matamoros refugees crossed the border to avoid the fight between Carrancistas and *federales* forces. The wealthy stayed in Brownsville with better accommodations and good hotels, but a great majority looked for refuge in charity houses or in other places they could find. American citizens, who stayed in Matamoros, placed U.S. flags outside their home or businesses as a sign of nonpartisanship. [211]Along with most of Matamoros citizens fleeing to Brownsville, the Presbyterian School and teachers and students were taken into Brownsville.[212] The Presbyterian missionaries had churches and schools in Tula, Victoria, and Montemorelos, where they took solace in their ministry, Christian education, and spiritual relief.

The Constitutionalists army corps was divided in the following regiments: *carabineros de Nuevo León* under the command of Lt. Col. Porfirio González, *Regionales de Coahuila* under the command of Lt. Col. Cesáreo Castro, *Patriotas de Tamaulipas* commanded by Lt. Col. Luis G. Caballero, a piquet of 10 men of the 21º *rurales* corps (renamed as 21°regiment under Major Emiliano P. Nafarrate), 2º *cuerpo de carabineros de San Luis Potosí* under Col. Andrés Saucedo, and *Libres del Norte* under Major Gustavo Elizondo. Colonels Cosío Robelo and Santos served

[210] Samponaro,47.
[211] Hernández, 28.
[212] William.A. Ross, "Missionary Survey" *The Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and abroad* (Richmond VA.) ,769

as assistant officers.[213]

General Blanco moved his vanguard to *Las Rucias* ranch and bivouacked on June 2nd, 1913. The battle plan consisted of attacking the city on three fronts simultaneously so that a swift victory would be achievable in less time. The sappers' train, medical corps, and demolition engineers in charge readied themselves. Col. Luis Caballero and the *Tamaulipeco*s were to attack from the southwest. Colonels Cesáreo Castro and Andrés Saucedo would advance from the south, and Blanco from the west. A fusillade began from the *federales* at the moment when the Constitutionalist soldiers took combat positions, while the headquarters were established at *la Laguna*, south of the city. All officers in General Blanco's vanguard attacked en masse with zeal and vigor. Blanco led the 2nd Column in a shooters file formation that spanned three kilometers long from east to west, starting at *La Garita de San Fernando*, to *La Garita de Monterrey*. After the sound of the bugle, announcing "*adelante*" (to advance) and *fuego a discreción* (fire at will), the Constitutionalists faced a well-protected federal army dug in their trenches.[214] At 9:30 a.m., Colonel Cesáreo Castro and Major Emiliano P. Nafarrate marched ahead of the 1st column and attacked the power and light plant, in spite of the enemy's strong fusillade and fire from cannon, which had been set up in the coal depository of the railroad depot. After the power plant was in rebel hands, it served as a medical facility to treat wounded soldiers. The battle spread across the south and western fronts. A few minutes before 11 a.m., Blanco's army put in retreat the *federales* who had previously occupied the trenches, and who then withdrew to the center of the city. Chief of Staff Maj. Francisco J. Múgica reinforced Col. Castro's column with his

[213] Ciro R. de la Garza *La Revolución Mexicana en el estado de Tamaulipas: Cronología (1855-1913)* México Editorial Porrúa 1973) ,85.
[214] Ibíd.,

detachment, an action that made the *federales* retreat to the river and to the main plaza. [215]

At noon, the Constitutionalists were in control of the power plant and the bullring was set on fire. The *federales* at the western front and the defenders at the cemetery retreated to their headquarters (the electrified fence was put out of commission by the rebel's dynamite bombs and the old cannon became useless and burst after a few rounds). Only the eastern sector showed some resistance. Major Ramos, apparently injured, crossed the river to Brownsville, surrendering his arms to American authorities after the power plant was in Constitutionalist hands.[216]

Near 4 p.m., Lt. Col .Garza Rivas took command of the federal forces since Major Ramos was nowhere to be found. Garza ordered the troops (Echazarreta and Felix Díaz corps) to fall back to the plaza and engage the attackers during all of the afternoon. At 6 p.m., the bugle sounded "retreat" and after 8 p.m., federal troops started abandoning the central nucleus through *la garita de puertas verdes.* Some forces simply waded across the river to become prisoners of war at Brownsville.[*217*] The City of Brownsville helped the refugees as best it could. Local residents, such as Dr. W.F. Cole, urged patience and charity to the people who sought refuge under the exigency of war. Many Brownsville citizens promoted hospitality for the refugees.[218]

The federal army had failed to maintain the city as a Huertista stronghold. This was attributed to various factors other than the face that the Constitutionalist forces acted with valor, thrust, and decision.

First of all, the garrison had no reinforcements and no troops available for the support of such an important city. The *federales* suffered from an inability to transport troops from

[215] Ibíd., 85.
[216] Barragán.94.
[217] Barragán, 95.
[218] Samponaro, 47.

Monterrey mainly because the railroads had been destroyed and were under the control of the Constitutionalists. Secondly, Minister of War, Manuel Mondragón, and President Huerta underestimated the strength and number of the Constitutionalists, and even though Matamoros had been besieged, the central government in México City did not envision a possible triumph for Blanco's forces. Thirdly, the ineptitude of Major Ramos, who had been in charge since 1878, was not the optimal choice for the defense. A younger officer may have been more active and may have had more rational military judgment in comparison to the older soldier. Lauro Villar, when in charge of the 3rd military zone, expressed this about him: "He is an old soldier with poor military instruction, and out-of-date ideas, and although he tries to do the task, unfortunately his age does not help him."[219]

The battle continued until late at night and at early morning, firing began again. All the *federales* had surrendered, except about twenty-five men who were entrenched near the main plaza. General Blanco ordered a cannonade at the *federales*'s last stand, and the fire destroyed the remaining fortifications, causing damage to the cathedral. Major Nafarrate's orders included securing the plaza and forcing the remaining *federales* to surrender.[220] These men surrendered early in the morning, giving the Constitutionalists complete control of Matamoros. A message was sent to the citizens of Brownsville at once, informing them that the Constitutionalists occupied the city and that entrance to the city was allowed. Among the first to enter were the representatives of the Red Cross society, some of them representatives of the Presbyterian mission. The mission was used as a Red Cross Hospital, and during the day and night, thirty wounded men were taken to the school for medical attention. Some men were brought to the American side for treatment. Many of the federal officers left their men and fled, but many of

[219] Barragán, 95.
[220] Hernández, 34.

their comrades made a last stand until they were forced to give up their arms and surrender to a greater force. The majority of the wounded soldiers received treatment at the Presbyterian School.[221] The federal prisoners and political refugees were held in custody at the Fort Brown Commissary and Guardhouse in Brownsville.[222]

At the beginning of the battle, the federal regulars and musicians from the sixth regiment passed over to Brownsville and surrendered to American soldiers who promptly disarmed them and held them in accordance with orders from General Parker. In the early morning of June 4th, defenders that had not been killed or become prisoners escaped following the river shore. They later showed up six miles west of Brownsville on the Mexican side and were not allowed to cross into Texas.[223]

Physicians and surgeons who attended the wounded at the electric plant were delayed in their work by discovering that primary care goods such as bandages and antiseptics were not available in Matamoros. Dr. Ríos Zertuche (of Blanco's forces) sent soldiers to Brownsville to obtain dressings and first aid supplies to care for the wounded since all drug stores had closed down and the pharmacists had fled to Brownsville. Ríos told a reporter that looting and pillaging by the troops was strictly forbidden.[224]

Colonel Echazarreta was captured two days after the battle and was executed by a firing squad the following morning. He died with gallantry and poise. His last words were an exclamation: "Too bad I only can die once!" Major E. P. Nafarrate and Capt. O. Falcón had

[221] Ross, 769.
[222] T.H. Fehrenbach and Juan Fidel Zorrilla A shared Experience: The History, Architecture and Historic Designations of the Lower Rio Grande Corridor (Austin, Texas. Los Caminos del Río Project and the Texas Historical Commission, II Edition 1994) , 122.
[223] Cushman , 82.
[224] " 170 Bodies in a Funeral Pyre*" Brownsville Herald* June 5, 1913 *170 Bodies in a Funeral Pyre* p.1.

twenty-five federal prisoners executed publicly, including several teenage boys who had volunteered to defend the city—a senseless dictum of war. Blanco had to stop the pointless acts and reprimand both officers.[225]

The death toll for the Constitutionalists of the Battle of Matamoros is as follows: twenty-eight dead (two officers) and 27 wounded, while the *federales* had more than 150 dead and many wounded. Close to 130 *federales* crossed to the American side while some dispersed in Mexican soil. The federal garrison in Matamoros ceased to exist, even though Huerta promised to retake the city (but never did). Constitutionalists secured 200 carbines, 30,000 cartridges, and 150 saddled horses. Most importantly, Blanco's forces gained a border city with excellent communications, a point where supplies could be brought for the revolutionary cause, and managed to humiliate Huerta in the process.[226] After the Battle for Matamoros, the Constitutionalists controlled the northern and central portions of Tamaulipas. The only city still in federal hands was Nuevo Laredo.

U.S. diaries reported two funeral pyres where more than one hundred bodies of those who took part in the battle were burned. No funeral services of any kind had been held, there was no tolling of bells or gathering of friends and relatives, and no attempt was made to bury either friends or enemies. It was also reported that the Constitutionalists had sixty *federales* in custody, soon to be tried by officers in a military hearing with the presence of Consul Jesse Johnson at his request. Dr. Daniel Ríos Zertuche, Chief Surgeon in Blanco's army, thanked the various physicians of Brownsville who aided so well in caring for the wounded in Matamoros. This included Dr. William Dougherty, Dr. H. K. Loew, Dr. J. L. Rentfro, Dr. H. L. D. Kirkham, Dr.

[225] Samponaro, 47.
[226] Barragán, 96.

B. O. Works, and others. Nurses were also thanked and included Mrs. Pategnat, Miss Kelly, and others. Reverend W. M. Ross was deeply appreciated for letting the Presbyterian school be used as a hospital. Five hospitals were installed in Matamoros after the battle (Civil Hospital, Military Hospital, an improvised hospital at the convent, the Presbyterian mission, and the electric plant).[227]

Blanco made friends with Americans, especially with the director at the customs house, Frank Rabb, who assured Blanco of a steady supply of war material for the Carrancistas. General James Parker, who had watched the attack from Brownsville, congratulated Blanco for his stratagem at the battle. Mexican citizens slowly returned to their Matamoros homes and American observers and reporters alike visited sites in which the battle was fought. Blanco engaged in social life, protected American interests, and had meetings with American businessmen in a cordial atmosphere. Casimiro Sada, the Maderista ex-mayor, was re-installed within the municipal government. The American consul Jesse Johnson reported that the Constitutionalists conducted themselves with discipline and respect for civilians and that the city was in much better order than it had been under the Huertista administration, especially now that the private property of foreigners was protected. Blanco restored order and stated that he would punish anyone who attempted to stain the honor of the Matamorenses. The general perspective on Lucio Blanco from both sides of the river was excellent. Above all, he vowed to redistribute wealth and land for the poor.[228]

Matamoros developed into a depot and staging area for Constitutionalist activities in northern México. Tons of war materials and food passed through the city for distribution to other

[227]"170 Hundreds killed in Battle" *Brownsville Herald,* Brownsville Texas, Friday June 6 1913.(Vol. XX No, 287), 2

[228] Samponaro, 49.

sectors in northern México and many soldiers came to the city to regroup and continued with campaigns along the border. The city was not disturbed politically or militarily for the remainder of Huerta's government until later, when Villistas tried—unsuccessfully—to retake the city from Carrancista forces in March of 1915.[229]

Huerta's government hardly had probable reasons for the loss of Matamoros. Meanwhile, there was another equally serious event to explain. Pánfilo Natera, with an audacious military action, took Zacatecas on June 7, 1913. The loss of Zacatecas (the northern gateway to the Bajío region), Matamoros, and other towns demoralized the federal army after three months of fighting. The Huertistas had not been able to obtain victories while the Carrancistas, with a large number of successes, were putting Huerta and his entourage in dismay. Manuel Mondragón was dismissed from the war ministry and became a scapegoat of the furious Huerta, who blamed him for not succeeding. Aureliano Blanquet, the old Porfirian general, became the new war minister.[230]

Lucio Blanco spent days full of joy and festivities in Matamoros, celebrating the major battles won by the Constitutionalists until that moment. He enjoyed fame as a revolutionary general even though his public image was under scrutiny. On August 1913, Blanco hired topographers under the supervision of Ing. Manuel Urquidi to trace out and subdivide portions of land formerly owned by Félix Díaz at la *Hacienda Los Borregos.*[231] The property consisted of 1,300 acres eight miles south of Matamoros. The legality of Blanco's land distribution was based upon the ill-defined articles of the Plan of Guadalupe, which many revolutionaries had different

[229] Rocha, 50.
[230] Cumberland, 41.
[231] Clemente Rendón de la Garza, *Vidas Ilustres: En la Historia y la Cultura de la Heroica Matamoros* (Monterrey N.L. 1994), 177.

opinions about. For Blanco, land distribution meant giving land to peasants to maintain their families with dignity. Pastor Rouaix in Durango formulated a similar decree of expropriation of haciendas, and another sporadic land distribution took place in Agua Prieta, Sonora.[232] Carranza was pleased with Blanco's military successes but did not approve of Blanco's caudillism and independence as it related to following his orders. Carranza demanded complete obedience in both political and military matters. When the Constitutionalists formed the Army of the Northeast, Carranza chose one of his favorites, Pablo González, to lead the new command. Blanco, with bitter disappointment, refused to cooperate with González as he felt he had been treated unjustly.[233] Lucio Blanco was sent to Sonora and served under Alvaro Obregon in October, 1913.When the news of land distribution arrived in Paris, the newspaper *L'humanité* wrote, "It seems that the Mexican revolution in México is worth something."[234]

Carranza, in a panoramic vision in 1914, issued a decree that came to be known as the additions to the Plan de Guadalupe. These amendments related to the dispositions, laws, and means to lead the way in promoting well-being and satisfaction to the economic, social, and political demands of the nation. Carranza put emphasis on the creation of an independent peasantry and apparently favored popular demands in a set of articles without objective clarity.[235]

The importance of taking Matamoros was to have a Constitutionalist stronghold, to establish their legitimacy, and gain a port of entry for war supplies. Its close geographical location to the United States would allow access to supplies essential for strengthening

[232] Cumberland, 231.
[233] Saphia-Bosch, 52.
[234] Ibid., 230.
[235] Ibíd., 233.

Constitutionalist forces scattered throughout México. Huerta's forces never recovered the city. After civil and military order was established, the Constitutionalists began implementing executive measures to meet social changes that had been considered a core in the revolutionary movement. Under orders from General Lucio Blanco, the first act of land distribution started. This action served as a precedent of how to end the unjust exploitation of the land, thus the first land distribution was granted to eleven farmers in the region and took place at *la hacienda de los Borregos*. Although the social repercussions of the event were important, Carranza disapproved the land reform and Gen. Blanco received orders to suspend further land distribution. Carranza sent General Blanco to Sinaloa under the command of General Obregón and replaced him in command by General Pablo González.

A disillusioned and humiliated Gen. Blanco continued fighting in the west. After his dissension with both Carranza and Obregón, he became Secretary of State under the provisional presidency of Eulalio Gutiérrez in 1914. Carranza had different political view to the national problems that he faced but regarding the agrarian question, the *hacienda de los Borregos* land distribution was considered the forerunner of the Agrarian Decree of January 1, 1915. Due to Villa and Zapata's triumphant armies, Carranza acceded to the wishes of some of his more radical supporters and promised to provide land for those in need of it.[236] Matamoros had most certainly been the starting point.

[236] Laura Randall *Reforming Mexico's Agrarian Reform* (New York M.E. Sharp Inc. April 1996), 36.

CHAPTER VI

NUEVO LAREDO IS BURNING

Nuevo Laredo began a rapid growth parallel to that of Laredo, Texas, which had experienced a substantial transformation with the arrival of the railroad in the 1900s. Laredo had long complained of taking second place in terms of importance, as compared to Matamoros and Brownsville. Laredo had the opportunity to break forward with a head start on the new rail branches from Monterrey and México City to Texas's major cities in 1881. The first vehicle bridge followed in 1889. A railroad bridge was built over the Río Grande in 1910. A great deal of freight and new jobs were diverted from Brownsville to Laredo.[237]

During the summer of 1913, Nuevo Laredo experienced little revolutionary action in spite of popular reports. The Constitutionalists avoided Nuevo Laredo because of the great federal force concentrated in the city beginning in mid-June.[238] Gen. Joaquín Téllez, with 1,500 federal troops, arrived at Nuevo Laredo from Monterrey to reinforce the garrison in anticipation of a rebel attack. He reported he had had engaged eight Constitutionalists bands in battle en route from Monterrey. [239]

Nuevo Laredo had excellent rail communications and connections with the United States as well as north and central México. Nuevo Laredo was a pivotal strategic point for the

[237] Kearney,125.
[238] Rocha, 154.
[239] "Federals Reinforce Nuevo Laredo Force" (*El Paso Herald* June 15, 1913) ,1.

Constitutionalists because of its excellent access to industrial centers in the United States. The taking of Nuevo Laredo would be a definite triumph over Huertismo. Since the beginnings of the Huerta government, this important border city became one of the major ports of entry for the *federales*. Aside from several futile attempts to disrupt and cut the railroad lines, Nuevo Laredo remained a Huerta stronghold until the end of 1913. The previous skirmish on March 18th, 1913, left the city almost intact.[240] The Constitutionalists in battle actions never took Nuevo Laredo. Instead, the city was occupied by the revolutionaries only after the *federales* fled and burned the city.

After both Piedras Negras and Ciudad Júarez fell to Constitutionalist armies, Carranza sent General Pablo González's army to capture Nuevo Laredo. General González's plan of attack failed as he unsuccessfully tried to lure the federal garrison from Nuevo Laredo by feigning an attack on Monterrey. This allowed the *federales* to have plenty of time to prepare defenses throughout the city. On January 1st, 1914, General González demanded the surrender of Nuevo Laredo, and after Colonel Gustavo Guardiola rebuffed his demands, González moved his 2,700 men from San Ygnacio and bivouacked near the city. Early the next morning, Constitutionalist and *federales* forces exchanged intermittent fire. At 7:45 a.m., the real fighting began on two fronts—south and west of the city.[241] The Constitutionalists met a well-positioned 2000-man federal army, most of them inside trenches and behind a line of railroad cars. Artillery fire and machine guns erupted while Constitutionalist reinforcements numbering 300 men stormed a hilltop west of the city. Federal fire almost decimated this attack and by mid-morning, the

[240] Cumberland, 113.
[241] James, 38.

Constitutionalists retreated.[242]

On January 1st, several U.S. army officers had gathered at the international bridge to observe the battle unfold. Captain William H. Winters of the 3rd cavalry, whose forces were stationed in the area, stood as a spectator and watched the Constitutionalists make several attacks to break federal lines only to be repulsed. According to U.S. military dispatches, the early morning attack had failed. At 9 a.m., the Constitutionalists concentrated on the western line of federal defenses. U.S. army officers witnessed an estimated 300-man rebel force riding over a hill, dismounting and then proceeding on foot along the riverbank. At 1,250 meters from the federal lines, a powerful fire barrage stopped the Constitutionalists' advance. The remainder of the day consisted of intermittent fire coming from the federal lines with machine guns and rifles until dark.[243]

On January 2nd, 1914, the battle continued as ferociously as it had been on the first day. Carranza's forces were constantly supplied with ammunition provided by the *Junta Carrancista* in Laredo, which had smuggled weapons for the Constitutionalists since one month before the battle. In the afternoon of the second day of battle, once again the Constitutionalists began to retreat in spite of the assistance. General Teodoro Quintana's arrival reinforced the federal garrison and held Nuevo Laredo, but the casualties compared with the battle of Matamoros were much higher.[244]

At one point, a group of fifty Constitutionalists maneuvered toward the trenches, only to be stopped short about 500 meters from the lines by intense fire. A small detachment broke away and got as close as seventy five meters, but the *federales* maneuvered them and killed all of

[242] "Rebel Forces Still Threatening Nuevo Laredo and Retain Ground" *Laredo Weekly Times* (Jan. 4 1914) ,1.
[243] Klingeman, 199.
[244] James, 39.

them. Capt. W.A. Austin, from the 3rd cavalry, observed and wrote in his report: "All wounded were shot to death," and the few remaining Constitutionalists fled the scene toward the hill overlooking the city.[245] Federal troops also hung the wounded from telegraph poles and many were bayoneted on sight. Federal soldiers also cleared the trenches of obstacles, tying ropes around the feet of the fallen, pulling corpses out with horses, and then dragging them to the funeral pyres. Stray bullets killed civilians in Laredo and wounded others, as reported by the U.S. military.[246]

On January 3rd, 1914, the day began with federal soldiers patrolling the city with both infantry and cavalry in search of Constitutionalists. However, the scouts found no one. The Constitutionalists evidently had disappeared during the night, having failed to take Nuevo Laredo. This battle, along with the battle of Ojinaga, Chihuahua, competed for the headlines in U.S. newspapers. The battle of Nuevo Laredo ended in a setback for the Constitutionalist forces seeking to oust Huerta. By contrast, the battle of Ojinaga was a triumph for the Constitutionalists and allowed Francisco Villa's *División Del Norte* to solidify an important sector in the north.[247]

Casualties during two days of battle were at least seven hundred dead, seventy-five per cent of whom were Constitutionalists. The scene after the battle was of horrific proportions. Hundreds of wounded lay on the ground and funeral pyres crowned the landscape as the remaining survivors promptly burned the bodies of dead soldiers in an atmosphere of despair and smells of death. Pablo Gonzalez and his defeated Carrancistas retreated to Matamoros.[248]

In anticipating the battle casualties, Surgeon Hiram A. Phillips of the Post Hospital for

[245] Klingeman, 200.
[246] James, 39.
[247] Ibíd., 190.
[248] Ibid., 39.

Fort McIntosh established two emergency hospitals to treat the wounded, whether *federales* or Constitutionalists. These improvised centers consisted of an old school building with a ward measuring 10 x 15 meters and an automobile garage situated on the other side of the street. The entire staff was made up by Dr. Lowry, eleven assistants, and about twenty volunteer nurses. The American Red Cross Society provided the great majority of medical supplies. According to Dr. Hiram Phillips' report, most of the nurses encountered problems due to lack of experience, but they improved in the course of treating patients. The hospital treated fifty wounded soldiers, a great number of them wounded by 30-30 rifles.[249]

According to Dr. Hiram Phillips' report to the Military Journal, the people from Laredo furnished cots, clothing, and contributions for medical supplies. Mrs. Leonor Villegas de Magnón, with a formidable humanitarian disposition, assumed charge and invited young girls as assistant nurses. Twenty-four volunteered. Mrs. Magnón labeled this group the "White Cross" and instituted the nurse force, while Dr. Lowry instituted the Medical force with ten physicians. A surgical unit was prepared at a corner of the improvised hospital. Cots were assembled and, even though space was limited, every foot of space was utilized. Some walked in, wounded. They were admitted to the dressing room, their names were taken, and each man was tagged and assigned to a bed. Starting from the first day, order and discipline became an essential part of their work.[250]

The doctors examined the patients at their arrival and applied dressings in each particular case. In some cases, one dressing application sufficed. Some patients simply walked in and some were brought from a ten-mile distance from Nuevo Laredo. There were fourteen

[249] Klingeman, 203.
[250] Hiram Phillips M.C. U.S.A. The Military Surgeon, Journal of the Association of military Surgeons of the United States (Chicago Vol. XXXIV 1914) , 442.

penetrating abdominal wounds, two of which lead to death after surgery. The remaining patients all lived. Most of the wounds came from 30-30 caliber sharp nose bullets. Only four came from shrapnel wounds. The total number of deaths in the hospital was six. American doctors thought of the Mexican soldier as fearless, with no regard for his own life—someone who would expose himself to fire merely to shout "*Viva Carranza!*" The wounded Mexican soldiers acted with indifference. An excellent recovery rate was observed overall and the vast majority of the wounded had an impressive vitality.[251]

U.S. Army observers noted the lack of direction, mediocre command, and poor tactics on the part of General Pablo González. Scattered units and individuals tried to approach the well-constructed defensive positions in a frontal attack in vain, but they were unable to penetrate the defense. At Nuevo Laredo, the *federales* used artillery effectively, causing great chaos while the Constitutionalist infantry advanced without artillery support. Before the battle, Colonel Augustus P. Blocksom, commander of Fort McIntosh, took steps to limit accidental fatalities by establishing a danger zone while American officers prohibited the presence of spectators and limited the influx of immigration.[252]

At the international level forty-five days before the battle for Laredo, President Woodrow Wilson sent William B. Hale to negotiate an agreement with Carranza, providing support for the Constitutionalists if they agreed to American mediation and guaranteed protection of property and the lives of foreigners in the areas they controlled. These negotiations failed when Carranza refused to be dependent on the United States and allowed for it to meddle in México's internal affairs. Carranza thought of the possible adverse national reactions and

[251] Ibíd,. 445.
[252] Klingeman, 204.

considered how foreign mediation could restrict his leadership.[253] By late November, Huerta was without international support and the Constitutionalists gained momentum forward to occupy México City. President Wilson returned to his policy of "watchful waiting," an idea rejected by Texas Governor O. B. Colquitt, who demanded that the U.S. hold the government and Mexicans responsible for violation of American civil and property rights in México.[254]

On late January 1914, after conferring with Special Agent John Lind and Colonel Edward M. House, President Wilson came to believe that the Constitutionalist cause was lost unless he lifted the arms embargo or decisively invaded México. Afterwards, Luis Cabrera, Carranza's agent in Washington, promised the State Department in late January that Carranza would respect property rights and spurn anarchy. Wilson revoked the embargo on February 3rd, 1914.[255]

When President Wilson lifted the embargo, Carranza's forces were winning battles across the north that hastened the *federales'* collapse. In early April, Pablo González besieged Monterrey. The city fell on April 24th, 1914, and the federal garrison at Laredo fled their positions simultaneously. [256] The Huertista government was coming to its end in 1914, and many federal soldiers deserted and took off to the American side of the river. The evacuation and burning of Laredo, the most striking event of the border towns during the revolution, marked a climax in border warfare. On April 21st, 1914, the United States Marines disembarked at Veracruz. Tension grew higher along the border while American patrols along the Rio Grande

[253] Snow, 27.
[254] Ibíd., 33.
[255] Ibíd., 34.
[256] James, 42.

remained on constant vigil for possible retaliation.[257]

We may never know the identity of the person responsible for ordering the burning of the city. Consul Garrett stated in his dispatches that the order came from México City, while other sources indicated that General Teodoro Quintana was responsible. Nonetheless, the *Laredo Times* laid responsibility on General Guardiola, recently promoted after the battle of Nuevo Laredo.[258]

The exodus in Nuevo Laredo had begun a few days earlier on April 23rd, 1914, when the federal troops knew that Monterrey had fallen to Constitutionalist forces. The order to evacuate was mandatory. At half past one in the afternoon, people were flocking to Laredo, Texas, taking their furniture and all they could otherwise carry with them. For six hours, the international bridge was a mass of humanity, hogs, mules, and carts with goods. The exodus continued after the next day, when at 1 P.M., Texans permitted the refugees to camp in plazas and gardens. At this time in Nuevo Laredo, freedom was given to all prisoners, political or criminal, and the jail closed its doors. In the meantime, several trains were loaded with families, along with merchandise, stolen or pillaged from the stores the night before.[259] The five trains headed for Lampazos, Nuevo León, except for one that carried twenty steel coal cars loaded with families. The cars had no roof. The people were forced to spend a day in the blazing sun because the train was abandoned due to locomotive engine failure. This exodus caused disarray and fear. Two infants died due to heat stroke. This was forced immigration, with dire effects for families. Some relief and order was put back into effect when the Constitutionalist forces arrived at Nuevo

[257] James,43.
[258] James, 44.
[259] Felix J. Koch *Border Railroading in Mexican War Time(* Brotherhood of Railroad trainmen, published monthly (Cleveland Ohio Vol. XXXI 1914) ,569

Laredo.[260]

The Nuevo Laredo fire started at 1:30 p.m. on April 24th, 1914. A detail of federal soldiers led by an officer set fire on buildings, as instructed by the federal commander. All buildings useful to advancing the Constitutionalists were burned, including the Post Office, the Customs House, the American Consulate, and several downtown buildings. Strong winds spurred the fire that started in the afternoon and lasted into the night. Huertista saboteurs damaged the water hydrants to make things worse.[261] Mexican authorities closed the bridge on the 24th and the fleeing *federales* tried set dynamite on the international and railroad bridges. U.S. Army sharpshooters fired at the would-be saboteurs. In one instance, a man was shot while rolling a barrel of explosives toward the bridge. Gunfire exchange occurred between U.S. militia and Mexican *federales* stationed along the riverbanks[262]

A newspaper reported the following on the 26th of April: "The thriving town opposite Laredo, Texas was in ruins tonight, devastated by dynamite and fire set by Mexican federal soldiers who late today began an orgy of destruction, which did not end until they were forced to flee southward before the guns of the American Border patrol." The newspaper column also reported the deaths of two Mexican soldiers killed by the United States troops from a gun platoon from Fort McIntosh. Several skirmishes followed between Americans and Mexicans after an indiscriminate fire broke out at the international boundary as federals fled in trains from the burning city. No American troops were injured and no American property was destroyed. [263]

When the fire ended, Melquiades Garcia, the Carrancista consul in Laredo, crossed the

[260] Ibíd., 570.
[261] James, 42.
[262] James, 43.
[263] "Federals ravage town of Laredo and routed by American troopers" *The Atlanta Constitution*,.(Atlanta GA. Saturday April 26, 1914) .1.

river to claim Nuevo Laredo for the Constitutionalist cause. A few days later, Constitutionalist Major Jesús Soto occupied the city on May 2nd, 1914, and kept on the alert since *federales* had encamped eight miles south of the city. The Constitutionalists re-opened the international bridge and permitted people from Laredo to visit the ruined city. A disorderly celebration took place during the first night as soldiers drank heavily and shot repeatedly into the air.[264]

Major Soto handed over Nuevo Laredo on May 15th, 1914 to General Jesús Carranza. A parade and ovations were given to the general by bystanders lined along the streets, while Venustiano Carranza's brother advanced to his headquarters with a swarm of soldiers at his side. The military hosted a big fiesta in his honor. Thousands attended at the Hidalgo Plaza—brightly lit for the occasion with power provided by the Laredo Electric and Railroad Co.[265]

At the same time, American newspapers wrote of Huerta's possible resignation from his presidency, with rumors of plots and Huerta's health deterioration. "The man whose hand was never before known to tremble is now a nervous wreck." Huerta kept himself alive by means of drinking high quantities of brandy, which he was addicted to before the usurpation. No one opposed him openly or reasoned with him.[266]

Carranza's government in Nuevo Laredo, without any fear of a renewed attack by *federales*, returned a state of normality to the town during the summer months. Nuevo Laredo attracted tourists and the merchants recuperated from disastrous economic times. Major Soto had fled the city with a trainload of loot. Not all military officers proved themselves devoid of thievery, and it creates the impression that the *Colegio Militar* seemed to have lacked adequate breadth for developing a very well rounded professional officer. Many federal soldiers who

[264] "Huerta Promises to end Revolt" *Laredo Weekly Times* (May, 3 1914) ,3.
[265] James, 44
[266] "The iron Man of México is now a complete wreck" (*New York Herald* May 3 1914) ,1

theoretically had been educated, still required a solid cultural background, and most of the young officers who were admitted in the military had limited opportunities of intellectual growth.[267] Violence against a population during the Mexican Revolution can be associated with certain armed groups which acted violently against their own communities' or ethnic groups in response to a perceived lack of support for their actions. Warring between factions in México, violence, and abusiveness has been a constant factor in violence against unarmed civilians.[268]

Consul Garrett reopened the consulate in Nuevo Laredo in August since the arson. After May of 1914, all roads to central México were open to the Constitutionalist forces, and the Huerta regime was on the brink of total collapse. Two major developments retarded Huerta's agonizing fall: the U.S. occupation of Veracruz and the insubordination in Carranza's forces, which slowed his armies. Villa accused Carranza of defrauding the hopes of the poor through a dictatorial attitude, and of removing any man of power who is not under Carranza's total authority.[269] Villa further accused the First Chief of instigating disunion and blunders in international relations.[270] On June 19th, 1913, Villa moved his division to Zacatecas and on June 23rd, he inflicted the crucial defeat upon Carranza at the battle of Zacatecas.

By early July, Huerta and his entourage began taking steps to flee the country. Several of his generals went to Europe on special "missions." The Supreme Court president, Francisco Carbajal, was designated as minister of foreign relations in an obvious feint to take over the government. On July 15th, Huerta resigned and Carbajal became acting president and the

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[267] James R. Kelley "The Education and Training of Porfirian Officers: Success or Failure?" *Military Affairs* , Vol. 39, No. 3 (Oct., 1975), 126.
[268] Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein "Handling and Manhandling Civilians in Civil War" *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 100, No. 3 (Aug. 2006) , 429.
[269] Cumberland, 136
[270] Ibíd.,

remnants of Huerta's cabinet abandoned their posts.[271]

Laredo was not free of perils after Huerta's resignation. Secretive pro-Huerta groups began conspiring seditiously. General Geronimo Treviño smuggled ammunitions in support of Huerta. Pedro González, Amador Sánchez, José Sánchez, and Bernardo Mendiola were also involved. Intelligence reports showed that 600 Huertistas were concentrated in Laredo. To prevent any military problems from arising from these factions, the U.S. military stationed close to 1,500 troops in Laredo by late November.[272]

In México City, Francisco Carbajal negotiated a surrender agreement. On August 11th, 1914, in the town of Teoloyucan, Carbajal delivered the government of the city over to Eduardo Iturbide, now the governor of the Federal District. Subsequently, Carbajal went into exile along with most of Huerta's cabinet. [273]

The foreign diplomatic delegations made arrangements for the peaceful entry of the Constitutionalist Army to México City. Upon the return of the diplomats' special train from Teoloyucan, the Brazilian embassy received and released information testifying to the signing of two important agreements: the delivery of the capital and the dissolution of the federal army. General Alvaro Obregón and Governor Eduardo Iturbide signed the former agreement, and Constitutionalist Generals Alvaro Obregón, Lucio Blanco, federal general Gustavo A. Salas, and Vice-admiral Othón P. Blanco cosigned the latter agreement.[274]

Under these terms, Obregón entered México City with six thousand men on August 15th. The remainder of his troops and many of those of the northeast forces were sent directly to

[271] Ibíd., 143.
[272] James, 45
[273] Cumberland, 149
[274] Tiempo de México Secretaría de Educación Pública (México D.F. 1983) , 2.

outlying garrisons. Zapata decided not to contest the situation, and Venustiano Carranza made his entry to the city on August 20th, at the head of a column of troops flanked by some of his illustrious military leaders. The revolution against Victoriano Huerta had triumphed, soon followed by another revolutionary disruption of conflicts and interests. Meanwhile, border towns had an apparent peace and at the South Texas border, many Mexicans who crossed the river during the revolution never returned to México and started *del otro lado.*

Most of the Mexicans who came to Texas were economically motivated, including those individuals and their families who fled the revolution. Historian William Madsen has argued that the Mexican middle class appeared in the Rio Grande Valley with the arrival of groups of refugees who had salvaged enough money to establish themselves as tradesmen and farmers.[275]

By 1903, work on the first major railroad that linked the Rio Grande Valley with the rest of the United States opened the way for large-scale agricultural production. By 1910, land investment companies had been formed and major projects were underway to clear and irrigate the land. The immigration of Mexicans from the south was parallel to the influx of Anglo land purchasers from the north and the Midwest.[276]

According to historian Manuel P. Servín, an excess of a million Mexican immigrants came to the United States in the period from 1900 to 1930. Of the post-1900 immigrants, nine-tenths settled in the borderlands. Texas, for the most part, surpassed in number of Mexican nationals as compared with other border states and the population of the Rio Grande Valley

[275] William Madsen *The Mexican Americans in South Texas* (San Francisco, Holt, Rinehart and Winton, Inc. University of California 1973), 8.
[276] Ibid.,

nearly doubled between 1900 and 1920, with the greatest increase after 1910.[277]

[277] Manuel P. Servín, *The Mexican-Americans, an Awakening Minority* (London, Glencoe Press 1970),31.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The second phase of the Mexican Revolution started in February of 1913, following the murder of President Francisco I. Madero and the rise to power of General Victoriano Huerta. This thesis explores the years 1913-1914 and the Mexican response to the call to arms in order to establish a legitimate and democratic government. Venustiano Carranza founded The Constitutionalist Army under the Plan of Guadalupe. The main objective was to oust Huerta from his illegitimate presidency and restore constitutional order and free elections. The battles from Laredo to Matamoros resulted in victory for the Constitutionalists. A steady flow of war supplies was established and Huerta lost a major port of entry in armament.

The great wave of Mexican immigration brought to the Southwest included nearly ten percent of the total population of Mexico. In the Border States, Texas had the greatest number of immigrants as follows; 1900 (71,062), 1910 (125,016), 1920 (251,827).[278] In each decade, the numbers almost doubled and these figures include refugees of the Mexican Revolution who swelled the files of Mexicans crossing the river. A greater increase of Mexican immigrants was observed during the 1910-1920 decade, both fleeing from the revolution and looking for work.

The thirteenth census of the United States of 1910 showed the population of Hidalgo County: 13,728; Cameron Co.: 27,158; Starr Co.: 11,151; Webb Co.: 22,503; Zapata Co.: 3,809.

[278] Madsen, 32.

Laredo's population was 14,555 inhabitants, whereas Brownsville had 10,517 inhabitants.[279]

The census of 1920 showed Hidalgo Co.: 38,110; Cameron Co.: 36, 602; Starr Co.: 11,059; Zapata Co.: 2,929; and Webb Co.: 29,152 inhabitants. The only county with no increase in population was Starr County.[280] These data show a non-specific population which does not include Mexicans who fled from the revolution, or those that had only the demand-pull factor to immigrate to the U.S. in search of work and a better life. Those who crossed the border in 1913-1914 made it through Nuevo Laredo with its first real International Bridge built in 1889: the Puente International Porfirio Díaz. Some of them also crossed from Matamoros' International Bridge which opened for traffic on December 12, 1910. The Reynosa-Hidalgo River crossing prior to 1926 was a primitive ferry service existing between the cities via rowboat.

The Rio Grande shared its borderlands on both banks with families and traditions entrenched since colonial New Spain. Over time, individuals were able to establish a confluence space, to share memories, and be subject to social transformations at a border that was readily accessible with a similar undivided history. During the Mexican Revolution, those who opposed the fighting or the danger took their families and fled north. Others crossed the river due to the economic disaster and social anarchy. Immigration from the Mexican border towns to the American side was usually temporary and when the town regained its peace again, citizens returned to their homes. The three most important cities on the Mexican side of strategic importance for Blanco's forces were Matamoros, Nuevo Laredo, and Reynosa, which had 13,000, 8,804, and 6,000 inhabitants respectively in 1910. Matamoros and Nuevo Laredo were

[279] Charles Swift S. Estimates *of Population of the United States, 1910* (United States. Bureau of the Census U.S. Government Printing Office 1918) , 36.
[280] William C. Hunt *fourteenth census of the United States taken in the year 1920* (Washington Government Printing Office 1921) ,40.

coveted by the Constitutionalist forces as being the most important geographical locations.[281]

After the railroad arrived in Hidalgo County, new towns appeared along the rails and were established by visionary developers for the Rio Grande Valley. At the time of the Constitutionalist incursions along the border, these small settlements were sparsely populated. Donna, one of the first towns, was developed in 1904. It was soon followed by McAllen in the same year. Mission was founded in 1905, Mercedes in 1906, Pharr in 1911, and Chapin in 1908. The county seat was moved to Chapin in 1909. After the railroad spur reached the new town, it was renamed Edinburg.[282] During the Mexican Constitutionalist battles, only the small town of Hidalgo was important after the battle of Reynosa for receiving the wounded and deserters of the fleeing federal garrison.

The casualties after the battles are not wholly accurate during the Constitutionalist campaigns along the Rio Grande from Laredo to Matamoros. Figures are estimates from newspapers and of secondary sources. According to the sources, thirty-one deaths occurred in the Battle of Reynosa. In the Battle of Matamoros, *federales* had a greater loss of men and the figures estimated a total death toll of one hundred for both contending armies, while newspapers reported a much higher figure. Nuevo Laredo was never taken by force of arms by the Constitutionalists who lost both battles in April 1913, and in January 1914. The overall death toll of the battles at Nuevo Laredo was somewhere around seven hundred. Considering other dead soldiers in small towns' skirmishes, in the route to Matamoros, only approximate figures can be drawn of the whole campaign losses at 1,500 to 2,000 dead.

The importance of securing the border towns for the Constitutionalists served as a bastion

[281] Secretaría de Industria y Fomento *Dirección de Estadística*, (Tercer Censo de población de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 27 de Octubre de 1910 Cap. I Territorio y Población) , 382
[282] Leffler, 28.

to continue supplying the revolutionary army through railroads, a seaport, and several bridges to maintain communication with the United States. Matamoros remained a goal for the Constitutionalist cause since Blanco had departed from Coahuila. Matamoros excelled in its geographical position with outstanding communications by sea, river, and land, which proved to be of utmost strategic importance. The railroad system in Matamoros had an exceptional starting point, enabling rail displacements to and from the United States and Mexico City. This ultimately helped strengthen the revolution. Matamoros had been a city of capital military significance since Madero's time.

The city of Rio Bravo was important for the Constitutionalist Revolution in three aspects: from the strategic point of view—General Blanco strengthened his army in Rio Bravo by gathering a larger number of troops and planned the assault to Matamoros. Blanco obtained information about the *federales* troops and military movements in Matamoros from sympathizers. Rio Bravo served to propagandize the revolution through the American media. The main consequence in Río Bravo was the fall of the great empire of the *La Sauteña* after being taken by the revolutionaries. It began an immediate decline and the colonization projects stopped, thus cancelling the formation of an industrial emporium overthrown by the revolution.

Nuevo Laredo had been a favorite and important stronghold for Huerta's government. It had to be sheltered from Carrancistas. Smuggling and covert activities were important to the usurpation of the government, even though this activity did not stop after Nuevo Laredo changed civil authorities. Even espionage continued to prevail through the revolution. The railroad line to and from U.S. cities Laredo, Nuevo Laredo and Mexico City was instrumental in the revolutionary struggle and behold its importance until the revolution officially ended in 1920.

Violence is not all that was happening in the borderland. The word violence is so intimately related to the history of the U.S-Mexico border that it should also allow the presence of humanitarian actions to be recognized and viewed in perspective. While going into discussion about the Laredo to Matamoros campaigns, I place emphasis upon the humanitarian aid provided by physicians, nurses and common people toward soldiers of both armies and civilians injured at the battles. Local and army physicians attended to the wounded regardless of affiliation, and performed lifesaving surgical procedures. It is important to remember the many women who also responded to the call for help during the revolution.

Lucio Blanco was an important general at this stage of the revolution. The taking of Matamoros is attributed to Blanco, after all. However, after his land distribution in August of 1913, this act of insubordination that Carranza disapproved of originated Blanco's removal from his command and his active participation in the north ended. The Constitutionalists triumph was largely because of Matamoros as the most important port of entry of war supplies in the northeast.

American authorities allowed revolution refugees to cross to the American side of the river. They were given temporary asylum, especially the refugees in peril. The U.S. Army Cavalry, immigration officials, and other police officers stood in a vigilant watch throughout the battles. This open border policy, I argue, is to be considered as purely humanitarian.

The northeast campaign did not end the revolution, but gave impulse to the Constitutionalist in supplies lines and important victories. Throughout the revolution, there was never a single revolutionary movement. Madero, Zapata, Villa, and Carranza are different expressions of the revolution. *Caudillismo* played an important role, delaying the consolidation

of revolutionary and democratic principles for decades mainly due to personal interests and factional struggles. In the Mexican Revolution, the political struggle is - quoting León Trotsky - "in its essence a struggle of interest and forces, and not of arguments"[283] The new Constitution of Querétaro laid some groundwork and laws for the future of México, with the guidelines subject to change indefinitely. One hundred and one years later, social justice and democracy—the cornerstones of the revolutionary impulses—remain unquestionably unresolved in the national reality.

[283] León Trotsky *The Revolution Betrayed* (new York, Pathfinder Press 1937) ,96.

GLOSSARY

Adelante: to march forward.

Bandoleros: bandit.

Caciques: political boss.

Camino Real: an old Spanish-Mexican road with special status.

Carabineros: carabineer, rifleman.

Caudillo: a chief, a military leader.

Centro antireeleccionista: opponents to the reelection of President Diaz.

Chalán: a ferry.

Científicos: elite political group during the Diaz regime.

Club Político la Unión: “The Union”, a political society.

Colegio Militar: military academy.

Colombres: Río Bravo Tamaulipas.

Cuartel general: Military headquarters.

Decena trágica: armed movement which took place from February 9 to February 18, 1913 to overthrow Francisco I. Madero.

Del otro lado: in the other side (river).

Diana: a military call of attention.

División del Norte: Northern Division.

Federacion: federation.

Federales: soldiers of the usurpation government.

Fiesta: a party.

General de División: Major-General.

Guardia civil: the first national law enforcement agency established in Spain in 1844.

Guardia rural: rural police.

Hacendado: large estate owner.

Hacienda: country estate or property.

Jefes políticos: district bosses.

Junta: assembly, meeting.

La Sauteña: the Hacienda del Sauto or "The Sauteña".

Latifundio: large estate.

Los Libres del Norte: Lucio Blanco’s cavalry regiment.

Maderistas: Madero’s followers.

Magonista movement: a liberal school of thought and a precursor of the Mexican Revolution.

Mayo indian: indigenous tribe in western México.

Ministro de Gobernación: Secretary of State.

Norteños: northerners.

Patriotas de Tamaulipas: a Constitutionalist cavalry regiment.

Plan de Guadalupe: military plan to oust Victoriano Huerta from power.

Presidencia: presidency.

Presidente municipal: city mayor.

Regeneración: Regeneration , a political newspaper 1910.

Reyista: in relation to Bernardo Reyes.

Rurales: rural police.

Sitios de Ganado Mayor: a unit of land area used in making land grants that measured approximately 17.5 square kilometers.

Soldadera: camp follower.

Viva Carranza: long live Carranza!

Yaqui indian: indigenous tribe in Sonora México.

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El Mañana de Río Bravo

Tiempo de México

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

1)Río Grande 1912-1913. People crossed the river from Reynosa to Hidalgo Texas at this site . Personal collection of the author.

2) Venustiano Carranza after the Constitutionalists triumph visited Reynosa Nov. 1915, Personal collection of the author.

3) Venustiano Carranza reception at the municipal palace, Reynosa, 1915 Personal collection of the author

4) Carrancistas dressed in military outfit
1913- 1914
Personal collection of the Author.

5) Makeshift fortifications in the streets of Matamoros in defense against Carrancista General Lucio Blanco, June 1913
Courtesy of Margaret H. McAllen Memorial Archives Museum of South Texas History

6) The rebel hospital of the Matamoros Electric Light and Power plant after they captured It. Battle of Matamoros, June 1913. Courtesy of Margaret H. McAllen Memorial Archives Museum of South Texas History.

7) A Mexican train being held up by revolutionists near Reynosa, May 1913
Courtesy of Margaret H. McAllen Memorial Archives Museum of South Texas History

8) Caring for the wounded after the Battle of Reynosa in 1913.
Courtesy of Margaret H. McAllen, Memorial Archives Museum of South Texas History.

9) Constitutionalist Soldier at Matamoros .

Courtesy of Margaret H. McAllen Memorial Archives Museum of South Texas History.

10) Prisoners Federal Soldiers in Brownsville June 19 Courtesy of Margaret H. McAllen Memorial Archives Museum of South Texas History.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jesús Ramos was born in Brownsville, Texas. During his childhood, he lived in Mexico. He obtained a medical degree from the University of Nuevo León and became a certified OBGYN. He obtained a postgraduate sub-specialty in Madrid, Spain at the Ciudad Sanitaria Provincial de Madrid Hospital under a Scholarship granted by the University of Nuevo León. He conducted postgraduate research, writing a Monograph of Ultrasonography in Obstetrics and Gynecology in Madrid in 1981, which was a comprehensive book of High Risk Obstetrics and Gynecological Pathology. He earned teaching positions at the Faculty of Nursing and the School of Medicine of the U.A.N.L. in Monterrey. He practiced medicine for more than twenty-five years and worked in Spain, México, and with the Hidalgo County Health Dept. from 1985-1997. He wrote “Recuerdo Fotográfico del Reynosa de Ayer,” a Photographic History of Reynosa México, 1861-1949 based on history excerpts and photographic analysis. In 2011, he enrolled in U.T.P.A. Master’s program in the History Dept. which he completed in 2014.