

Revolutionary Days

A Chronology of the Mexican Revolution

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Ray Acosta

Editorial Mazatlán

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Foreword

As a second-generation Mexican-American, born, raised and educated in Southern California, English is my first language. I never got to ask my grandparents, who I knew came from four different parts of México—San Francisco del Rincon, Guanajuato; Guanajuato, Guanajuato; La Barca, Jalisco; La Paz, Baja Sur California—to the U.S. during the height of the Mexican Revolution, just why each had left that country. This book is my attempt at learning their story...and mine.

An engineer by training and a history buff for pleasure, you might say that this book got started in 1990 with the Ken Burns's TV masterpiece on the American Civil War. I watched that program completely engrossed, and when it came to an end, Ken Burns said something to the effect that the Civil War still has a profound impact on our lives.

"Wait a minute," I said. "None of my relatives had anything to do with the Civil War." I wondered what event in history has had the most impact on me, and the answer was obvious, the Mexican Revolution of 1910. And what did I know about it? Nothing.

By chance, this ignorance was thrown at me again shortly after. As secretary of a club, one of my duties was to prepare a news column for the County Newsletter. The County editor would always have to call me for my column and berate me for being late. One month I was late as usual, and I promised the editor I would have my column by the weekend. "OK," he said, "but I won't be in town this weekend. Give your column to my girlfriend, Michelle Obregón."

"OK," I said, "but how do you spell that last name? O'bree-what?"

The obviously-not-Mexican editor turned a cold stare at me and said, "You're a Mexican-American and you don't know the name Obregón?"

I had heard the name Obregón before, but I had no idea who he was, or what he did. I'd heard of Pancho Villa and Zapata and knew their characters from the movies, but whether they fought together or against each other or what their relation to this Obregón guy was, I didn't know.

That was enough. I decided I was going to have to read my own history.

I started by reading John Reed's *Insurgent Mexico*, but nothing stuck. That's probably not a good book to get started with. If you know nothing about the Mexican Revolution, probably the best place to start is with Anita Brenner's *The Wind that Swept Mexico*; it's a picture book.

Then it was John Womack's *Zapata*, and then Robert Quirk's *The Mexican Revolution, 1914–1915*. There's a wealth of information in these books, too much to absorb in one reading. It was about this time I took notice of General Felipe Ángeles. This is when I started keeping notes, primarily just to try and sort out the facts of Ángeles' life because he seemed like such an interesting character.

Seeing that my notes had a lot of holes, I picked up a copy of Matthew Slattery's *Felipe Ángeles and the Mexican Revolution*, then started seriously keeping notes.

During the 1990s I read a lot of books on the Revolution and kept expanding my notes. Then I noticed that I had contradictory information. One writer would say Pancho Villa was in Durango on a certain date, and another writer would say he was in Chihuahua on that same date. But when I tried to reconcile the conflict, I found I had not sourced my notes, and I had no way to sort out these discrepancies. So as I continued to read and build my notes, I started recording source information.

All this time, I had no intention of ever writing a book; this was just a personal thing to help me keep all the information straight. What started out as a curiosity had turned into a hobby.

I didn't realize how serious I'd become until 1999 when Friedrich Katz released his massive *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*. I paid \$85 for my own copy. This was getting to be a serious hobby now. My notes were over one hundred pages of 12 point print.

It was shortly after this that I discovered a YahooGroup of other people who shared an interest in the Revolution.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MexRevResearchers/>

I joined this group in October 2002 and it has been a wonderful experience. It is a group of wonderful and supportive history buffs. While we are not as active as when we started, it is still a great forum to keep up with the research that's being done in the field.

This book could not have happened without the member support of the Yahoo MexRevResearchers Group. In 2008, postings in the group dropped significantly, and we feared that Yahoo might shut down the group for inactivity. In order to keep the forum active, I started posting my notes on the site. At the beginning of each month, I would post an extract of my notes, "This Month in the History of the Mexican Revolution". I got a lot of positive feedback.

I didn't realize it at the time, but one of the members, Richard Grabman, works for a publishing company in Mexico. In July 2009, after his own book, *Gods, Gachupines and Gringos*, was in print, Richard asked me if I would be interested in publishing my notes in book form. What do you say when someone says your work is good enough to publish?

Working since August 2009, with Richard and David Bodwell, my editor, we have gone through my sloppy collection of notes and completed an extensive cleanup. We have sourced the items for which we did not have source information, and cleaned up discrepancies and contradictions. This book would not have been possible without the tireless work of these two gentlemen.

— Ray Acosta
Ladera Ranch, California
27 March 2010



Preface

Students and scholars of the Mexican Revolution have been stumped for years by inconsistencies in names, places and titles from one scholar to the next. With the Mexican naming conventions radically different from those in English speaking countries, writers in English—even the most careful of them—have inadvertently caused much confusion over the years by misidentifying important figures and places. Students of Mexican history, especially those working in English, have labored under the difficulty of depending on resources that may have been working from a primary source which misunderstood the Mexican name or title originally.

Mexican names, with some minor exceptions, have three parts. The personal name (*nombre*)—Mexicans may have two or more *nombres*, and may or may not use all of them or even the full first name. The current President of México's *nombre* is “Felipe de Jesús” (after a 17th Century Mexican Saint) but normally called “Felipe” in the press. Mexicans also have two family names—the *apellido paterno* and the *apellido materno*—the first being the family name of one's father (and his father), the second, that of one's mother (and her father). Mexicans do not have “middle names”—although they may have several *nombres*—and English speakers have often mistaken the *apellido paterno* for the “middle name” and written about important figures under their *apellido materno*.

Although both family names are part of a Mexican's formal name, most people commonly drop the *apellido materno* in day-to-day use of their name. However, there are exceptions, and a few well-known figures—generally those having a common enough *apellido paterno* to cause confusion in their own lives—use their *apellido materno*—or both.

An example of the latter would be Mexican political figure Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who uses two *nombres* and both *apellidos* or simply his less common *apellido materno*. Compounding confusion for the English-language scholar, a *nombre* or *apellido* may be several words, e.g., de la O or Cabeza de Baca. Although standardized birth registrations were made legally binding in 1857 (under President **Benito** Pablo Juárez García), 19th century record-keeping and birth registration was often hit or miss.

Extra care has been taken in identifying all participants by their full name (if known). While the commonly used name, except for first reference, is used throughout this work, to assist scholars, a list of all names appearing is in the “Alphabetized List of Names”.

Mexican place names have been a further source of difficulty for scholars. The name of a community in one state may be the name of a community in another state as well. Think of how many Springfields there are in the United States.

Unless it is obvious from the context, both the community and the state are given in all references. All references to place names have been carefully researched and appear in this book exactly as they were in México at the time of the event, or as they are in México today. No English translations of place names are used, even though they may have appeared in that form in the cited references. This should be a great help for students and researchers today and in the future.

In several Mexican states, the state name is same as a city in that state, often, but not always, the capital city of the state. Therefore, this book uses the convention of always referring to such cities as “the city of—”, e.g., the city of Chihuahua or the city of Zacatecas. A reference to Chihuahua or Zacatecas alone refers only to the State. The states having a city of the same name are: Aguascalientes, Campeche, Chihuahua, Colima, Durango, Guanajuato, Oaxaca, Puebla, San Luis Potosí, Tlaxcala, Veracruz and Zacatecas. States without a similarly named city or capital city are referred to as “the State of—” unless it is obvious from the context.

The State of México—which is not to be confused with Mexico City or with the Republic as a whole—is distinguished, as it is in México, by using “*Estado de México*”. Also, the *Distrito Federal* – Federal District – is always referred to as the “*Distrito Federal*”.

To assist scholars, a complete list of all place names is in the “Alphabetized List of Place Names”.

Another source of confusion for scholars is caused by differing translations of government officers and their titles. Some writers—both in Spanish and English—refer to “ministers”, others to “secretaries.” In México, *Ministerio* – minister – is a title used in the judicial, not the executive branch of government. The Mexican executive branch, modeled on the United States, calls a cabinet department a *Secretaría* – translated here as “Secretariat”. The chief executive officer of a *Secretaría* is the *Secretario* – “Secretary”.

Readers in the United States are often confused by the translation of *Secretario de Gobernación* as “Secretary of the Interior”. This officer and the department—*Secretario* and *Secretaría de Gobernación*—are not concerned with natural resources or public lands and parks but are what in the British system is called the “Home Secretary” and “Home Office” with broad responsibilities for national security, crime prevention and prosecution, immigration and other internal affairs. To avoid confusion, the Mexican cabinet officer and the Mexican department have been left untranslated.

In the interest in brevity, citations use a short form fully explained in the “Sources and Bibliography” at the end of the book.

Because the work is intended for English-language scholars, English-language sources were given precedence over Spanish-language ones, except where Spanish-language sources had fuller, or more accurate, details otherwise missed by English-language scholars.



Notable Events pre-Revolution (1829–1909)

24 MARCH 1829

Ignacio **Zaragoza** Seguín is born in Presidio de la Bahía del Espíritu Santo, Coahuila y Tejas (now called Goliad, Texas).
(“Zaragoza, Ignacio Seguín”)

15 SEPTEMBER 1830

José de la Cruz **Porfirio Díaz** Mori is born in the city of Oaxaca.
(Romero, Cap. I, p.1)

23 MARCH 1854

José **Victoriano Huerta** Márquez is born in Colotlán, Jalisco.
(Colotlán)(Meyer, *H*, 2)

29 DECEMBER 1859

Venustiano Carranza Garza is born in Cuatrociénegas, Coahuila into a middle-class ranching family. (Krauze, 335)

5 MAY 1862

The Battle of Puebla. The French Army of Napoleón III invades México. After landing in the city of Veracruz, the army marches to Mexico City. Approximately midway between the city of Veracruz and Mexico City, in the city of Puebla, the Mexican Army awaits in ambush, under the command of Texas-born General Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín.

Thirty-two year old Colonel Porfirio Díaz, in command of the Mexican cavalry, splits the French Cavalry from the main battle force and defeats it. The infantry battle is a success for the Mexicans, and the French are forced to retreat. General Zaragoza and Colonel Porfirio Díaz become national heroes. (Grabman, 180–182)

17 FEBRUARY 1868

Félix Díaz Velasco, Porfirio Díaz' nephew, is born in the State of Oaxaca. (Henderson, 1)

13 JUNE 1868

Felipe Ángeles Ramírez is born in the small town of Zacualtipán, Hidalgo. (Guilpain, 209)

30 OCTOBER 1873

Francisco Ignacio Madero González is born in Parras de la Fuente, Coahuila into one of México's wealthiest *hacendado* – hacienda owning – families. (Krauze, 245)

16 SEPTEMBER 1874

Ricardo **Flores Magón** is born in San Antonio Eloxochitlán, Oaxaca. (Raat)

3 JANUARY 1876

Genovevo **de la O** is born in the town of Santa María Ahuacatitlán, Morelos. (López González, 76)

25 SEPTEMBER 1877

Francisco Plutarco Elías Campuzano (**Plutarco Elías Calles**) is born in Guaymas, Sonora. The illegitimate son of an alcoholic, he was shunted from relation to relation for several years, not having a stable home until he was twelve. (Krauze, 405)

JUNE 1877

Victoriano Huerta graduates from the Mexican Military academy. He is commissioned a second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers. (Meyer, H, 4)

5 JUNE 1878

José **Doroteo Arango** Arámbula (better known as Francisco "**Pancho**" **Villa**) is born to a sharecropper family on the Rancho de Río Grande, now known as the Rancho de la Coyotada, Durango. (Taibo, 16)(Katz, 64)(Krauze, 306)

7 JUNE 1879

President Porfirio Díaz orders a reorganization of the army General Staff. Several junior and senior officers are summoned to Mexico City and asked to submit plans for consideration. Díaz picked the plan drawn up by Victoriano Huerta. For his good work, Huerta is promoted to captain. (Meyer, H, 5)

21 JULY 1879

Lucio Blanco Fuentes is born in the small village of Nadadores, Coahuila into a wealthy family. (Sapia Bosch, 1)

8 AUGUST 1879

Emiliano Zapata Salazar is born in the small village of San Miguel Anenecuilco, Morelos. (Womack, 5)

19 FEBRUARY 1880

Álvaro Obregón Salido is born at the Hacienda de Siquisiva, Alamos, Sonora. His father dies later that same year. (Hall, 19)

28 JANUARY 1882

Pascual Orozco Vázquez is born at the Hacienda de Santa Inés near San Isidro, Guerrero, Chihuahua. (Meyer, *MR*, 15)(Kohout)

25 JUNE 1882

Manuel Peláez Gorrochotegui is born in Temapache, Veracruz. (Menéndez, 2)

SEPTEMBER 1883

Felipe Ángeles and Félix Díaz enter the military academy at Chapultepec, *Distrito Federal*. (Slattery, 9)(Jackson, 16)(Hanrahan, 196)

1890

Victoriano Huerta is promoted to colonel. He serves on the General Staff in Mexico City. (Meyer, *H*, 6)(Hanrahan, 173)

President Porfirio Díaz orders the dissolution of the communal farm plots – *ejidos* – ostensibly to encourage individual private ownership. (Slattery, 12)

24 JUNE 1891

Juan **Andreu Almazán** is born in Olinalá, Guerrero. (Johnson, 285)(Werner, 40)

OCTOBER 1893

Colonel Victoriano Huerta participates in the Federal army's action to crush a rebellion by General **Canuto Alejo Neri** in the State of Guerrero. On his own initiative, Huerta executes the captured rebels. (Meyer, *H*, 6–7)

NOVEMBER 1895

Victoriano Huerta is appointed commander of the government forces in Chilpancingo, Guerrero. He holds this post for two years. (Meyer, *H*, 7)

DECEMBER 1900

Colonel Victoriano Huerta, in command of an infantry battalion, is sent to the State of Sonora to subdue a Yaqui rebellion. (Meyer, *H*, 7)

8 MARCH 1901

Doroteo Arango ("Pancho" Villa) is arrested for assault and robbery. For this he is drafted into the army. (Katz, 64)

3 APRIL 1901

In Monterrey, Nuevo León, **General Bernardo Reyes** orders his soldiers to disperse a political parade. Twenty-seven-year-old Francisco I. Madero witnesses this attack, and it sparks his interest in politics. (Krauze, 248)(McLynn, 27)

14 APRIL 1901

Secretary of War, General Bernardo Reyes orders Colonel Victoriano Huerta to the State of Guerrero to suppress a rebellion. The campaign becomes five months of cruel warfare. (Meyer, *H*, 9)

27 MAY 1901

Victoriano Huerta is promoted to brigadier general. (Meyer, *H*, 9)

24 JUNE 1901

General Victoriano Huerta reports that the rebellion in the State of Guerrero has been crushed. (Meyer, *H*, 9)

16 SEPTEMBER 1901

Captain Felipe Ángeles leaves his teaching position at the military academy and assumes a position as inspector of purchased artillery in France. (Slattery, 18)(Jackson, 19)

OCTOBER 1901

General Reyes orders General Huerta to the Yucatán peninsula. He is to be second in command in a campaign to quell a rebellion by the Maya. (Meyer, *H*, 11)

4 MARCH 1902

General Huerta writes to General Reyes that the Yucatán campaign is being incorrectly conducted and offers suggestions on how the campaign might be conducted. As a result, Huerta's superior is recalled, and Huerta is put in command. (Meyer, *H*, 12-13)

22 MARCH 1902

Doroteo Arango deserts the army and moves to Hidalgo del Parral, Chihuahua. He changes his name to Francisco Villa and takes work as a mason. (Katz, 64, 67)

4 JUNE 1902

Porfirio Díaz allows three candidates to run for governor in his home state of Oaxaca; one of them is his nephew Félix Díaz. (Henderson, 8)

14 JUNE 1902

Porfirio Díaz orders the *jefes políticos* – political bosses – to work against his nephew's political campaign. (Henderson, 8)

OCTOBER 1902

General Huerta reports that the Yucatán is pacified. He returns to Mexico City highly regarded by the military but in poor health. In the Yucatán he developed a cataract condition in his eyes which plagued him for the rest of his life. (Meyer, H, 14)

28 NOVEMBER 1902

Porfirio Díaz has his nephew Félix Díaz posted to Santiago, Chile as consul general. (Henderson, 9)

MARCH 1903

Felipe Ángeles returns from France. He is promoted to major and takes a teaching position at the military academy. (Slattery, 18)

28 OCTOBER 1903

Porfirio Díaz allows his nephew Félix Díaz to return from Santiago, Chile. (Henderson, 10)

1 DECEMBER 1903

Félix Díaz is appointed chief of police for Mexico City. (Henderson, 10)

AUGUST 1904

Felipe Ángeles accompanies a study group to the U.S. to evaluate a new gun powder. He clashes with procurement officials because he tells the inventor and his group that the powder had not been adequately tested. Subsequent tests reveal deficiencies, and the powder is rejected. (Katz, 272)(Slattery, 19)(Jackson, 20)

4 MARCH 1905

Felipe Ángeles is promoted to lieutenant colonel of artillery. (Slattery, 19)(Jackson, 21)

MAY 1906

Ongoing discontent flares up at the Cananea copper mine in northern Sonora state because of job discrimination that favors American employees over Mexicans. (Camín & Meyer, 7)

1 JUNE 1906

The start of the Cananea mine strike. Leader of the striking miners was **Manuel** Macario **Diéguez** Lara, who later became a Carranza general. (McLynn, 21)(McCreary, 11)

2–4 JUNE 1906

The strike at the Cananea mine becomes violent. There are three days of riots, looting and fires, resulting in ten dead and one hundred arrested. The governor of Sonora calls on the Mexican army and the Arizona Rangers (U.S.) to put down the strike. (Camín & Meyer, 7)

1907

General Huerta requests an indefinite leave of absence from the army for reasons of health. It is approved, and he moves to Monterrey, Nuevo León, to be close to his mentor, General Reyes. For the next two years he will work as a practicing engineer. (Meyer, *H*, 15–16)

7–9 JANUARY 1907

After a protracted conflict with the factory owners over working conditions, the workers at the Río Blanco textile factory in the city of Veracruz reject a finding by a presidential committee that favors the company. The workers refuse to go back to their jobs and block the entrance, preventing anyone from entering the factory.

Agitation begins with cheers from the workers and jeers against the Spanish and French owners. The rally continues in a store next to the factory where a management employee, inflamed by the passions, shoots and kills a worker. The store is looted and burned by the striking employees.

The police arrive and are resisted. The *Rurales* – Federal rural police – lead a machete charge but are turned back. The turmoil spreads.

The following morning, excited and provisioned by looting, the strikers free all the prisoners in the local jail and march to the nearby town of Nogales, Veracruz. There they loot the municipal building and free more prisoners. The festival atmosphere will end abruptly early the next morning.

At 1:30 A.M., the morning of the ninth, two companies of the 24th Army Battalion attack. During the day and the following

night, soldiers comb the streets, beating and arresting suspected strikers—effectively breaking the strike. Of the seven thousand workers, only five thousand five hundred return to work, the remaining one thousand five hundred either escape or are jailed, injured or killed. (Camín & Meyer, 8)(McCreary, 11)

OCTOBER 1907

The Cananea copper mine in the State of Sonora, site of a violent strike in June 1906, closes. Hundreds of workers—an economic collapse had already seen most of the five thousand workers laid off—are let go. (Camín & Meyer, 8)

JANUARY 1908

Felipe Ángeles is promoted to colonel and named director of the gunnery school. (Slattery, 22)(Jackson, 22)

Emiliano Zapata helps himself to hacienda hay; hay that was scheduled to be burned. Classified as a trouble maker, he is drafted into the army. He is assigned to the 9th Cavalry Regiment in Cuernavaca, Morelos. (Johnson, 81)

FEBRUARY 1908

President Porfirio Díaz announces to James Creelman of *Person's Magazine*, that he probably will not run for president in 1910, and that opposition candidates should feel free to run against him if he does run. The Mexico City press republishes the article without comment from the Díaz government. (McCreary, 11)(Johnson, 41) (Krauze, 205–206)

3 MARCH 1908

James Creelman's article on President Díaz is published in *Person's Magazine*. (Krauze, 205, 232)(Womack, 11)(Slattery, 15)

APRIL 1908

The Cananea copper mine in the State of Sonora reopens but does not become profitable until 1911. (Camín & Meyer, 8)

OCTOBER 1908

Wealthy Sonoran rancher **José María Maytorena** Tapia has an audience with President Díaz to request a change in policy in the Yaqui war in Sonora. Local government officials are arresting peaceful Yaqui laborers, selling them into slavery and pocketing the profits.

This policy is causing a severe labor shortage in the region. Díaz issues instructions for the local authorities to stop this practice, but

the orders are ignored. Maytorena becomes disillusioned with the Díaz regime. (McCreary, 12)

NOVEMBER 1908

Francisco I. Madero, grandson of a wealthy land owner in the State of Coahuila, finishes his book, *The Presidential Succession of 1910*, detailing how power might be peaceably transferred.

Madero's grandfather, Evaristo Madero Elizondo owns some million and a half acres in cotton, lumber, rubber and cattle, plus mines and smelters, distilleries, banks and other real estate.

The book circulates privately before its general release the following March. (Beezley, 19)(Benner, 21)

DECEMBER 1908

Political clubs supporting General Bernardo Reyes for vice president begin organizing. Reyes' followers come from middle-class professionals and disenchanted traditionalists who resent the *científico's* – Díaz' intellectual advisors – hold on political affairs. (Henderson, 24)(McLynn, 24)

15 DECEMBER 1908

Manuel Alarcón, governor of Morelos, dies in office. For years, he had been able to curb some of the worst excesses of the hacienda owners. (McLynn, 44)(Womack, 12)

3 JANUARY 1909

President Díaz proposes that **Pablo Escandón** y Barrón become the next governor of Morelos. Escandón has a reputation as being a worthless playboy. (McLynn, 45)(Womack, 17)

FEBRUARY 1909

Madero sends a copy of his book to President Díaz with a personal note telling him that his place in history would be secured as the one who restored democracy to México, if he were to step down. (McLynn, 29)

Obregón invents a mechanical seeder that he mass produces on an assembly line; becoming a fairly prosperous member of his community. (Hall, 24)

7 FEBRUARY 1909

In Morelos, there is an election for governor. When it appears that the Díaz candidate, Pablo Escandón, will not win, supporters of the opposition candidate are jailed. If the important village leaders,

such as Genovevo de la O in Santa María Ahuacatlán cannot be found, the police hold family members as hostages. (Womack, 35)

MARCH 1909

Francisco I. Madero's book, *The Presidential Succession of 1910*, is released to the public. He does not put himself forward as a candidate but suggests that the time is right for a new president. The book is a success, and he is invited to speak at various functions. (Beezley, 19)

Colonel Felipe Ángeles accepts a commission to France to study methods of artillery application at Fontainebleau, France. (Slattery, 22) (Katz, 273)

The intellectual clique—Díaz' intellectual advisors the *científicos*—holds a convention and nominates Díaz for another term. Then they nominate **Ramón Corral** Verdugo for Vice President. (Meyer, *MR*, 12)

15 MARCH 1909

In Morelos, Pablo Escandón wins election as governor and is sworn in. (McLynn, 46)

APRIL 1909

There is growing support in northern México for General Bernardo Reyes to be the next vice president. The general is regarded as an honest, fearless man of good intentions. His military and public record is free of graft and corruption. (McCreary, 16)

MAY 1909

Madero sells much of his property to raise cash to form Anti-Reelection committees all over México; these committees become the basis of the Madero Party. From Mexico City, the committee announces that Madero will actively campaign for the presidency. (McLynn, 29)(Beezley, 20)

Lucio Blanco, a family friend of Madero, joins the Anti-Reelection party. (Sapia Bosch, 5)

Carranza obtains permission from Díaz to run for Governor of Coahuila. (Krauze, 336)

18 MAY 1909

Police reports indicate that Pascual Orozco and José Inés Salazar are purchasing arms and ammunition in the U.S. and bringing them into México. (Meyer, *MR*, 17)