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## THROUGH OLD MEXICO.

COLONIA DIAZ, State of Chihuahua, Mexico, March 28, 1894.

On Thursday, March 22nd, after seeing Apostles Young, Smith and Teasdale and Elder Robert S. Watson leave Deming, New Mexico, by train for Salt Lake City, I started for the "Mormon" colonies in Mexico, traveling from Deming in a lumber wagon, with Elder Charles Matthews, of Colonia Diaz, as teamster. After advancing ten miles in a southern direction we encamped for the night on a mesquit flat.

The next day, March 23rd, we continued our journey, and after traveling twenty-six miles, following the grade of the "future Mormon" railroad most of the way, and passing the Florita mountains on the left and what is known as the "Three Sisters" (the three mountain peaks) on the right, we arrived at the prospective town of Columbia, which is situated on the boundary line between the United States and the Republic of Mexico. This particular locality was boomed a few years ago, when the prospects were promising of pushing the new railway into Mexico at once; but owing to the repeated delays in building said road the town has been almost deserted, and there are only two or three families living there at present. Immediately south of the townsite is the boundary line between the two Republics. In the winter of 1892-93, through a co-operation on the part of both governments, large iron pillars were placed, one mile apart, along the line. Each of these pillars, or posts, is a foot square and seven feet high, weighs 800 pounds, is painted white so that it can be seen a long distance off, and rests in a square rock socket buried in the ground. On the north side of each of these pillars is the following inscription in large, raised letters: "Boundary of the United States. Treaty of 1853. Reestablished by treaties of 1882-1889." On the south side we read: "Limite de la Republica Mexicana. Tratado de 1853. Restablecido por Tratados de 1882-1889."

Four miles south of the boundary line is situated the little Mexican town of Palomas, where a custom house until quite recently was situated, but where there is now only a guard stationed to watch the boundary line and prevent goods from being smuggled into the country. All dutiable goods which formerly passed in from Deming have now to be shipped in by way of El Paso, Texas, which is quite a detriment to our Mexican colonies; and petitions have recently been presented to the Mexican government praying for the re-establishment of the custom house at Palomas.

The main cause of closing the custom house was a recent robbery committed at Palomas by the Temochics, the modern rebels of Mexico, who also killed a number of the line guards a short time ago.

Having passed a satisfactory examination, and no dutiable goods being found in our wagon, we were permitted to travel on, and after going three miles beyond Palomas, which is 40 miles south of Deming, we encamped for the night about a mile west of the south end of Palomas lake, a fine sheet of water fed by springs which rise and form a beautiful stream at the point where the custom house town stands.

Continuing our journey on the 24th, we reached the Casas Grandes river (here also known as the Boca Grande, which means "big mouth," thus named after a wide opening in a chain of mountains through which the river passes). We found no running water in the river bed, this being the dry part of the year; but during the rainy part of the season it sometimes overflows its banks and covers the flat country through which it flows for miles on both sides of the channel. This river rises in the mountains about 200 miles inland, takes a serpentine course through the large valleys of northern Chihuahua with only a very little fall, and disappears in lakes situated southeast of Palomas. In times of very high water these lakes are said to overflow their banks and some of the Casas Grandes waters then escape into Rio Grande del Norte. All the Mormon settlements in Chihuahua, Mexico, are situated on the Casas Grandes and its tributaries. It runs through a succession of very extensive valleys which are very fertile and productive; but the river water is inadequate to water more than a small portion of the lands. The facilities for raising cattle here are most excellent; I never saw a finer grazing country in all my travels, nor did I ever see fatter cattle than those I have beheld grazing in the great valleys of the Casas Grandes, since I came into Mexico. Were it not for the heavy duties proscribed on horned stock by our U. S. legislators, these cattle could be exported with great profit to their owners into the United States. The Mexicans don't like the McKinley bill one bit. Having crossed a part of one of the lower valleys of the Casas Grandes somewhat diagonally, and crossed a low mountain chain, we encamped for the night in a grassy little valley 13 miles east of Colonia Diaz.

On Sunday morning the 25th we traveled 7 miles and crossed the dry bed of the Casas Grandes a second time; thence passed on 6 miles further to Colonia Diaz, the most northern Mor-

mon settlement in Mexico, where I spent the remainder of the Sabbath day, speaking to the Saints twice.

Colonia Diaz, thus named in honor of Porfirio Diaz, the president of the Mexican republic, is situated in a fine open country; it can scarcely be called a valley, as there are no mountains within a radius of 12 or 15 miles from the settlement. The great Sierra Madre chain, the summits of which form the boundary line between the States of Chihuahua and Sonora, are distant westward about 50 miles. If it is an immense district of flat, fertile country in which Colonia Diaz is located is to be termed a valley, it is about 70 miles long from north to south, with an average width of nearly twenty-five miles. The Casas Grandes enters the valley from the southwest and after passing through it, in a southeasterly direction, leaves the same at Boca Grande.

Colonia Diaz is situated 90 miles south west of Deming, New Mexico, 40 miles in an air line due south of the boundary line between the United States and Mexico, but only 18 miles from the nearest point of said boundary, where the line makes a square angle. From that point westward the United States takes in a strip of country nearly twenty five miles wide of what was once Mexican territory more than from that point eastward. Colonia Diaz is only four miles north of the Mexican town of La Ascension; it is about 200 miles southwest of El Paso, Texas, nearly 250 miles north northwest of the city of Chihuahua, the State capital, and 70 miles north of Juarez, the present headquarters of the Mexican Mission. There are at present 80 families of Latter-day Saints at Colonia Diaz, or 660 souls, Wm. D. Johnson, junior, is Bishop, and Joseph Henry James and Charles Richens are his counselors. The townsite consists of 144 blocks, each of which is 27 rods square, sub-divided into four lots. The streets are six rods wide. Only a small portion of the townsite is occupied as yet, the other lots waiting to make homes for more settlers. So far, nearly all the houses in the colony are built of Mexican adobes, common size of which is 18x12x6 inches, making a clump of clay of considerable weight. Most of the houses have no rock foundation to stand upon, but in regular Mexican fashion the adobe walls rest upon mother earth itself. The meeting house, which has been enlarged a number of times, is built of the same material as the dwelling houses; a number of the fences enclosing the lots are also built of adobes. Elevated far above the tops of the houses of the settlement there are nearly twenty windmills which are busily engaged on windy days pumping up water from a depth of from 10 to 15