

## RACE AND REPORTING: *THE LOS ANGELES TIMES* IN EARLY 1916

The United States entered World War I with considerable reluctance. When the guns of August spoke in 1914, most Americans shared the view of President Wilson that the events in Europe were not a direct concern of the United States. When President Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war in 1917, he was not leading the American public into war, but following it.<sup>1</sup>

The Zimmermann Telegram was one of the proximate causes of American entry into the war against Germany.<sup>2</sup> Somewhat more indirectly, Pancho Villa's 1916 raid on Columbus, New Mexico seems to have also mobilized public opinion against Germany. The relationship between these two events, while clear enough at the time, has been lost in popular consciousness in the intervening decades. These events form an important connection between Mexico, Germany, Japan, and their citizens resident in the United States during and immediately after World War I. The *Los Angeles Times* was already a dominant influence on Los Angeles public opinion by 1916. It is therefore instructive to examine how the *Times* portrayed these events and their connection to residents of Mexican and Japanese ancestry.

Starting in 1906, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany sought an alliance between Japan and Mexico, aimed at neutralizing the United States in any war between Germany and Britain.<sup>3</sup> Beginning in 1911, Japan made overtures towards the Mexican government to buy a naval base in Baja California. This attempt alarmed the United States military, who feared a Mexican-Japanese alliance with aims northward.<sup>4</sup>

The start of World War I enhanced German interests in forging a Mexican-Japanese-German alliance. German goals for this alliance were twofold. First, Germany hoped that such a combination would detach Japan from its alliance with Britain. Japan's interest in such an alliance remains somewhat unclear even today, but there were at least two motives that would explain Japanese diplomatic engagement with Mexico and Germany. Such an alliance, if actually realized, might have offered Japan an opportunity to expand in the Pacific at the expense of the United States. Secondly, by having appeared to be available to other suitors, Britain could not have taken Japan for granted.<sup>5</sup>

Of greater value to Germany was the second goal of a German-Japanese-Mexican alliance:

<sup>1</sup> Generally see Ernest R. May, *The World War and American Isolation, 1914-1917* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959).

<sup>2</sup> May, 417-26; Barbara Tuchman, *The Zimmerman Telegram* (New York: Viking Press, 1958), 184-99.

<sup>3</sup> Tuchman, 30-37, 46-47.

<sup>4</sup> Tuchman, 41-42, 58-62.

<sup>5</sup> Tuchman, 63-65.

keeping the United States out of a European war. Germany hoped to keep the United States military occupied fighting a war with Mexico, if it appeared that America was likely to become a belligerent.<sup>6</sup> German agents also encouraged strikes and paid for sabotage of American industries producing military goods, in the hopes that goods not produced would be unavailable both for a U.S. war with Mexico, and unavailable for export to Germany's enemies in Europe.<sup>7</sup> While not tied specifically to Germany, Angelenos also expressed concern about sabotage associated with the Magon anarchists just before the outbreak of World War I.<sup>8</sup>

German agents also sought to generate ill-will towards the United States among Mexicans and Mexicans resident in the United States.<sup>9</sup> As part of this effort, Germany encouraged Pancho Villa's actions against the United States.<sup>10</sup> There were other raids and acts of sabotage into the United States from Mexico both before and after Villa's spectacular night raid on Columbus for which no direct evidence of German involvement exists<sup>11</sup>— however, on at least one of those sabotage raids, American authorities took prisoners that included a Japanese saboteur and Mexican soldiers apparently operating under orders from the Carranza government.<sup>12</sup>

In the short-term, these border skirmishes did what the German government had hoped. The Army assigned half the mobile armed forces in the continental U.S. to guard the South Texas border.<sup>13</sup> A total of 184,000 soldiers, in Regular Army and National Guard<sup>14</sup> units from every state but Nevada, were moved to the border to prevent further intrusions, consuming equipment and ammunition.<sup>15</sup> In the long run, however, this experience gave both the Regular Army and the National Guard the training it needed the following year to

<sup>6</sup> Tuchman, 66-67, 78-79; Paul J. Vanderwood and Frank N. Samparo, *Border Fury: A Picture Postcard Record of Mexico's Revolution and U.S. War Preparedness, 1910-1917* (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 181-2.

<sup>7</sup> Tuchman, 67, 70, 76, 86.

<sup>8</sup> Colin M. MacLachlan, *Anarchism and the Mexican Revolution: The Political Trials of Ricard Flores Magon in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 73.

<sup>9</sup> Tuchman, 99.

<sup>10</sup> Manuel A. Machado, Jr., *Centaur of the North: Francisco Villa, the Mexican Revolution, and Northern Mexico* (Austin, Tex.: Eakin Press, 1988), 154, 156; Tuchman, 93-96, 182; Herbert Molloy Mason, Jr., *The Great Pursuit* (New York: Random House, 1970), 198.

<sup>11</sup> Mason, 169-72, 200-2, 217; Frank Tompkins, *Chasing Villa: The Story Behind the Story of Pershing's Expedition into Mexico* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Military Service Publishing Co., 1934), 36-40. Col. Tompkins' book is an eyewitness account by a survivor of the Columbus raid, and a member of the Pershing Expedition. It also presents a surprisingly sympathetic portrait of why Villa— in 1915, the most strongly pro-American revolutionary leader— took the actions he did.

<sup>12</sup> Mason, 200.

<sup>13</sup> James A. Sandos, "Pancho Villa and American Security: Woodrow Wilson's Mexican Diplomacy Reconsidered," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 13:2[1981] 295.

<sup>14</sup> Vanderwood and Samponaro, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Murphy Gillette, "'A Small War in a Beer-Drinking Country': The South Dakota National Guard on the Mexican Border," *South Dakota History* 16:1[1986] 43.

mobilize and fight against another, more formidable foe: Germany.<sup>16</sup>

While others have examined in detail the effects of the Columbus raid on U.S. foreign policy, this paper has a more local emphasis. What effect did the border skirmishes have on Angeleno perceptions of residents of Mexican and Japanese citizenship or ancestry? It would be splendid, but surprising, if the Columbus raid did not negatively impact how Angelenos viewed members of both groups. (Of course, there were already nativist sentiments present in the United States as a whole, and in Los Angeles in particular, even before the Mexican Revolution's effects spilled across the border, including the American Federation of Labor's hostility towards Asian workers.)<sup>17</sup>

In 1915, before the Columbus raid, the United States government became aware of the Plan of San Diego. Carranzista officers hatched the plan with the backing of German and Austrian diplomats at Monterrey in Nuevo León. It proposed a revolution to retake the Southwestern states, and establish a republic controlled by Mexicans, Japanese, blacks, and Indians. All Anglo males over sixteen were to be killed. Once successful, the new republic would attach itself to Mexico. The Plan then called for assistance to blacks to similarly take the Southern states out of the United States.<sup>18</sup> While seemingly ludicrous today, there were at least 73 border raids along the Texas border in 1915, “many in the name of the Plan of San Diego”<sup>19</sup>— and a Mexican Army lieutenant colonel loyal to Carranza led at least one of these raids.<sup>20</sup> In Texas, not surprisingly, popular awareness of this plan led both to vigilantism and murder of Hispanics with no apparent connection to the Plan by state and local police,<sup>21</sup> pushing even more Hispanics into supporting the Plan.<sup>22</sup> At least 35,000 residents of the lower Rio Grande Valley relocated to avoid the raids and the revenge that had taken on a distinctly racial nature.<sup>23</sup>

Did the *Los Angeles Times's* coverage of residents of Mexican and Japanese ancestry or birth change as a result of Pancho Villa's raid on Columbus? A careful examination suggests that for residents of Mexican ancestry or birth, it took a clear turn for the worse in the first week after the raid, perhaps because of highly localized fears of violence.<sup>24</sup> Ugly stereotypes appeared in headline choices, newspaper articles, and editorials. As the danger to the United States generally, and to Los Angeles specifically, declined, and the shock of the Columbus raid wore off, the *Times's* coverage also returned to its pre-raid tone. In spite of

<sup>16</sup> Henry J. Reilly, “The National Guard on the Mexican Border,” in Tompkins, 221-2; Gillette, 37-39; Merle T. Cole, “Marylanders on the Mexican Border, 1916-1917,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 86:2[Summer, 1991] 193; David Niedringhaus, “Dress Rehearsal for World War I: The Ohio National Guard Mobilization of 1916,” *Ohio History* 100 [Winter/Spring 1991] 35-56.

<sup>17</sup> MacLachlan, 9-13.

<sup>18</sup> Mason, 196-200; Tuchman, 96-97; Vanderwood and Samponaro, 121-3; Sandos, 295-299; MacLachlan, 56-57.

<sup>19</sup> Vanderwood and Samponaro, 122.

<sup>20</sup> Mason, 200.

<sup>21</sup> Vanderwood and Samponaro, 121.

<sup>22</sup> Sandos, 296.

<sup>23</sup> Gillette, 42.

<sup>24</sup> The phrase “residents of Mexican ancestry or birth” is very clumsy. “Mexican-American” is ambiguous, since it refers to either a person born a citizen of Mexico who has become an American citizen, or a U.S. citizen of Mexican ancestry. For purposes of this paper, “Mexican-American” will be used to refer to residents of the United States of Mexican birth or ancestry. It is a term never used in the *Times* of this period.

the strong fear of Japanese aggression against the United States that appears in the pages of the *Times* during these three months, there was no equivalent sentiment directed against residents of Japanese ancestry or birth.<sup>25</sup>

In the first six weeks of 1916, the *Times's* coverage of Mexican-Americans and Japanese-Americans is startling free of racist assumptions; indeed, many American newspapers of the 1960s would have a hard time improving on the *Times's* tone, except perhaps for the common abbreviation of Japanese to the now offensive “Jap.” (This was typical of the *Times* approach during this period, with Harry Chandler taking an active part in opposing the 1913 Alien Land Law and attempts to restrict Mexican and Japanese immigration.)<sup>26</sup> This does not mean that there are no statements showing racist assumptions, but when they appear, they are almost always the statements of important politicians expressed as part of great events.

As an example, the *Times's* coverage of Congressional debate about U.S. policy towards Mexico quotes Senator John Sharp Williams in defense of President Wilson: “You can’t legislate a man into a Chinaman or a Chinaman into a nigger. Mexico must be left to work out its own salvation with blood, robbery and horror... .”<sup>27</sup> The article quoted Representative Johnson of Washington in hearings about an immigration bill that “all day long these Russians and Poles and other foreigners have been making speeches to prove to us how superior and how much more desirable the foreigner is than the native-born American citizen. My impression is that they think we should get up and move out, leaving the country to them.”<sup>28</sup>

Aside from quoting politicians, the *Times's* reportage and editorials are astonishingly free of flagrant racism and nativism in January and February. While outside the scope of this paper, it is interesting to see how generous was the *Times* coverage of other ethnic and racial groups— though not necessarily other cultures— during this same period. A few representative samples include: a story concerning a Chinese woman and the advancement of women in China because of Christianity’s influence;<sup>29</sup> a story reporting the formation of a local Filipino-American society;<sup>30</sup> an editorial criticizing an immigration bill that would set quotas based on current national ethnic percentages;<sup>31</sup> and an editorial suggesting that a

<sup>25</sup> The term “Japanese-American” has less ambiguity for this period than “Mexican-American,” since Japanese citizens were not eligible for naturalization until 1952. So that there is no ambiguity, the term “Japanese-American” will be used to refer to residents of the United States of Japanese birth or ancestry.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Gottlieb and Irene Wolt, *Thinking Big: The Story of the Los Angeles Times, Its Publishers and Their Influence on Southern California* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1977), 296. One interpretation of the *Times's* opposition to restrictive immigration might be that cheap immigration meant cheap labor for Harry Chandler’s agricultural holdings, but why then oppose the Alien Land Law? The Alien Land Law would tend to decrease opportunities for immigrant farm labor to become landowners, thus keeping immigrant laborers dependent on American citizens who owned land.

<sup>27</sup> “Ask Facts on Mexico,” *Los Angeles Daily Times* (hereinafter *LAT*) January 7, 1916, 1:1.

<sup>28</sup> “Johnson Turns on Foreigners,” *LAT* January 21, 1916, 1:3.

<sup>29</sup> “Metaphorically: Foot Bandages Cut to Pieces,” *LAT* January 21, 1916, 2:2. Of course, this article portrayed Christianity’s influence on China positively as well— but again, the criticism was of Chinese traditional culture— not Chinese as a race.

<sup>30</sup> “To Form Local Chapter: Philippine Society Appoints Committee and Calls Meeting,” *LAT* January 21, 1916, 2:2.

<sup>31</sup> “An Absurd Immigration Law,” *LAT* January 21, 1916, 2:4.

recent mass lynching should cause orators to replace “darkest Africa” with “darkest Georgia.”<sup>32</sup>

Another article drew a glowing picture of the enormous progress made in Alaska: “Whereas twenty years ago the natives were all savages, today the young generation nearly all live after the manner of their white neighbors, read and write English, attend one or another of the various churches, vote and exercise all their civil rights the same as the whites.”<sup>33</sup> An editorial criticized the well-intentioned effort of Los Angeles High School’s night classes to “Americanize” immigrants. Those who taught the class incorrectly assumed that the aliens were “a benighted collection of freed serfs, illiterate and downtrodden, who have come to this country to escape tyranny, slums, unemployment, and the darkness which only the United States can enlighten.”<sup>34</sup>

A news story about the first blacks accepted as jurors in the federal courts in Los Angeles includes the astonishing—and for the *Times* highly laudatory—description of one of the jurors: “E.H. Buckner, was for several years a Deputy United States Marshal in Denver,... and later served as Sheriff at Albuquerque for eight years, defeating a white Democrat by a large majority. He is a strong Republican.”<sup>35</sup> Another report describes legal proceedings when a black attorney insisted on being served in a “whites-only” saloon in Los Angeles, and how the criminal justice system vindicated his rights.<sup>36</sup>

A few representative examples of news coverage in the *Times* provides the best method of establishing tone concerning Mexican-Americans. A Mexican was arrested for the robbery and murder of an Elsinore shopkeeper. The victim’s son and daughter, witnesses to the crime, positively identified the jailed Mexican as the criminal. “A lynching seems imminent and the officers are on the lookout for trouble. Anger of many citizens is growing.” The reporter tied this anger to “many crimes... committed in this vicinity... by renegades from across the border, mostly Villa men... .”<sup>37</sup> The next day the details of the story were expanded, and the suspect, Ramariz, was reported “lodged in jail and there were rumblings of a lynching but cooler heads thought it best to wait till all the facts were brought out as there might possibly be a double somewhere answering the description... .”<sup>38</sup> Ramariz’s claims of innocence were vindicated a few days later, when San Bernadino’s police chief identified Ramariz as an occupant of his jail on the night of the murder. The headline of this article certainly captures the concerns of the previous article: “Suppose They’d Lynched Him?”<sup>39</sup>

While the *Times* brought certain assumptions of American *cultural* superiority to its news coverage and editorials, there was, with the singular exception of American Indians, no assumption of *racial* superiority. To modern sensibilities, increasingly sensitive to charges of “cultural genocide,” this may seem like a meaningless distinction. The distinction was

<sup>32</sup> “Out of Proportion,” *LAT* January 22, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>33</sup> “Tales of Progress from Frozen North,” *LAT* March 5, 1916, 2:2.

<sup>34</sup> “Uplifting the Alien,” *LAT* February 13, 1916, 2:6.

<sup>35</sup> “Equality: Negroes on Jury,” *LAT* March 8, 1916, 2:1.

<sup>36</sup> “Discrimination: Finds Color Line Drawn in Saloon,” *LAT* March 25, 1916, 1:2.

<sup>37</sup> “Elsinore Mob is Murmuring,” *LAT* January 3, 1916, 2:6.

<sup>38</sup> “Identified Bandit Held on Murder Charge,” *LAT* January 4, 1916, 1:6.

<sup>39</sup> “Suppose They’d Lynched Him?” *LAT* January 7, 1916, 2:7.

important at that time, however, distinguishing true racists (those who believed in a genetic, inherited inferiority) from American chauvinism. A Chinese, Mexican, Pole, or African could move to America and by abandoning his culture, become an American. The immigrant's children, growing up in our culture, would be fully American, with nothing shameful about their race, in the eyes of the American chauvinist. A true racist, however, would never accept the immigrant or his children, because their race forever branded them inferior.

There are a number of examples that demonstrate the *Times's* view of the difference between race and culture, showing that culture mattered, but race (with one interesting exception) did not. One astonishing article's subheading argues that the "Ideal American Springs from Puritan and Latin. Racial Differences Blend in Helpful Combination." This article by Robert H. Willson gives examples of "a happy combination of the best Spanish blood of Southern California with old Mayflower stock"<sup>40</sup> then residing in Los Angeles.

An article on the opinion page by Eliseo Garcia, "Chief of Mexican Student Teachers in the United States" claims that President Carranza's goal was to establish an American style school system in Mexico. The result of such a system would be universal literacy that would alleviate the "idleness and the dissatisfaction which, under existing industrial conditions, have been the prime incentives to disorder."<sup>41</sup> Mexico's problems were not intrinsic to the Mexican "race," but rather a consequence of not having an American style school system.

There was certainly great hostility towards Mexicans-Americans in other parts of the United States at the time. After the Santa Ysabel murders of eighteen American mining engineers by Villistas, there were ugly incidents in border cities like El Paso, reported by the *Times* in a tone that was by no means approving:

Early in the evening four soldiers "cleaned out" a Mexican saloon, in their search for Villa adherents. Later a squad of fifty soldiers started through El Paso street, one of the main thoroughfares, "looking for Mexicans."

Police at the hotels sought out Mexicans and advised them for their own protection to leave.<sup>42</sup>

There was an unsurprising reaction across the border in Juarez, and the *Times* left no doubt what caused it:

Irritation was manifested tonight in the Mexican town of Juarez, opposite here, as a result of the rioting in El Paso last night. Americans were not permitted to cross the international bridge. Several were ordered off train cars bound for that place.<sup>43</sup>

An editorial on January 16 is more explicit. While acknowledging, "El Paso is nearer the scene of Mexican outrages upon Americans than other American cities," it also pointed out that its location "offers dangerous opportunities for resentment and vengeance. Nothing is less desirable at this time than hectic action prompted by the spirit of revenge, and nothing

<sup>40</sup> "Splendid Race Cradled Here," *LAT* January 9, 1916, 2:14.

<sup>41</sup> "Our School System for Mexico," *LAT* January 11, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>42</sup> "Rush of Ambulances for Victims of Riot," *LAT* January 14, 1916, 1:1.

<sup>43</sup> "Refugees From Mexico Arrive at El Paso," *LAT* January 15, 1916, 1:1.

can do so little good, in the face of this crisis, as the violence of a mob.”<sup>44</sup>

There are references to “Mexican bandits” in attacks on border ranches and towns, but these references are purely identification and adjectival in nature,<sup>45</sup> unlike some of the articles that appear after the Columbus raid. Articles about threats to Americans in Mexico are careful to distinguish the various factions, quoting one set of “malcontents” as threatening death to Carranzistas and Americans alike, since “Americans and Carranza men looked alike.”<sup>46</sup> A late January article about the death of Francisco Perez, shot by a U.S. Customs inspector, shows great care with accusations (at least in the body of the article), referring to him as “an alleged cattle thief... .”<sup>47</sup>

Yet scattered among positive remarks about the ingenuity of Mexican soldiers,<sup>48</sup> and even the courage with which Mexican bandits faced firing squads<sup>49</sup> are remarks that suggest the *Times* had a rather fierce fear and hatred of Indians, especially the Yaqui Indians. After suggesting that Carranza should “extend the privilege of killing” Villa’s outlaws to not only Mexicans, but also to American citizens, a *Times* editorial suggested that “Texans and Arizonians... would... clean Chihuahua and Sonora of bandits, and furnish every Yaqui Indian with a short-order funeral.”<sup>50</sup> Reports that the Hopi Indians in Arizona “were threatening to go on the ‘warpath’” received significant attention, and were treated as a very serious matter.<sup>51</sup>

Another editorial concerning the Yaqui Indians shows the most clear-cut racist statements from the *Times* during this period, and even it shows some sympathy for the Yaquis, intermixed with racist assumptions:

As a general proposition, the Indian is a hopeless critter, but the Yaqui is not a general proposition. He is a law unto himself. He is not so good as the Spaniard, but he is often better than the mixture of Spaniard and Indian. He is a short, stout, brown man with plenty of muscle, a great deal of energy and a fair amount of intelligence. His valley has long been coveted and he has fought bitterly to retain it. If his own country could be surrendered to him as a reservation, he would remain within its limits and be satisfied. So long as it is contested, he is certain to fight with all the cunning and the cruelty that is in the Indian nature.<sup>52</sup>

But along with these hostile and fearful attitudes towards Indians, the *Times* carried many articles that showed a different perspective. The front page of the editorial section carried a

<sup>44</sup> “Not Conclusive,” *LAT* January 16, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>45</sup> “Raid of Bandits at Doyle’s Wells,” *LAT* January 21, 1916, 1:2; “Bandits Rob Ranch,” *LAT* February 27, 1916, 1:3.

<sup>46</sup> “Rioters: Americans Threatened By Torreon Malcontents,” *LAT* January 21, 1916, 1:2.

<sup>47</sup> “Sure Aim: Mexican Cattle Thief Shot Dead by American,” *LAT* January 29, 1916, 1:5.

<sup>48</sup> “Resourceful: Build Fires on Cars; Mexicans Foil the Cold,” *LAT* January 16, 1916, 1:1.

<sup>49</sup> “Akers’ Slayers are Executed,” *LAT* January 24, 1916, 1:5.

<sup>50</sup> “Outlawing the Santa Isabel Murderers,” *LAT* January 19, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>51</sup> “Border Days: Hopis Angered, Threaten War,” *LAT* February 8, 1916, 1:4; “Posse to Stop Hopi Outbreak,” *LAT* February 9, 1916, 1:4; “Belligerent: War Dances by Navajoes,” *LAT* February 11, 1916, 1:5. Harry Chandler arrived in Los Angeles by walking cross country in the 1880s. This peculiar hatred and fear of the Indians raises some interesting questions about Chandler’s experiences and fears on this jaunt through then only recently pacified “Indian country.”

<sup>52</sup> “Eliminating the Yaquis,” *LAT* February 15, 1916, 2:4.

long article about General R. H. Pratt's speech before the First Congregational Church in Pasadena criticizing American policy towards the Indians. It was "a serious indictment against the American nation as the guardian of the Indians of this country and pointed out where the government has failed in its stewardship... ." <sup>53</sup>

Even with respect to Villistas living in Los Angeles, *Times* coverage before the Columbus raid was very careful not to express anything that could be interpreted as either anti-Mexican sentiment, or to take sides between President Carranza and Villa's supporters. When the Mexican Consul in Los Angeles asked the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate the presence of so many prominent Villistas in Los Angeles, the *Times* reported the Consul's suspicions in an unbiased form: "Many of these men are known to be members of a certain local Mexican organization, supposedly a social club with no political affiliations. It has been noted by [the Mexican Consul] that as yet no local Mexican known to have been in sympathy with Gen. Carranza has declared his membership of this organization." <sup>54</sup>

Later coverage of this concentration maintains this balance between the Carranzista consul and the Villistas— with one singular exception: "The notorious Magon brothers of Los Angeles are known all over the country as anarchists of the first water, and have lately finished serving Federal sentences for neutrality violations." After describing their brother Jose Flores Magon as being "on a slightly higher plane" from his siblings, the article returns to its otherwise very non-judgmental description of the Villistas. At no point does the article descend into any generalized comments on Mexican-Americans; the article is careful to name names and identify them as associates of Villa. <sup>55</sup> Coverage of the Magon brothers arrest two weeks later described them as having "an unsavory international record as anarchistic disturbers," yet only indirectly mentions their native country. <sup>56</sup>

Before the Columbus raid, the *Times* still seems to have regarded the situation in Mexico with a detached bemusement, while still acknowledging that circumstances were very bad for both American residents and Mexican citizens. Two brief editorial comments of January 23, 1916, capture this sardonic view:

NOT NEW IN THE LEAST.

"Death to all Americans!" is now the cry among the bandits of Mexico. There is as little news to this statement as to the announcement that young Gen. Diaz is about to foment, inaugurate and precipitate a fresh revolution by the overthrow of Carranza....

Reports from Mexico are to the effect that "conditions are nearly normal." So they are in Hades, if

<sup>53</sup> "Criticism: Soldier Flays Indian Policy," *LAT* March 6, 1916, 2:1.

<sup>54</sup> "Looks Askance at Villa's Men," *LAT* January 23, 1916, 1:11.

<sup>55</sup> "Police Investigation of 'Junta' Ordered," *LAT* February 6, 1916, 2:1; MacLachlan, 64, however reports that the Magon brothers were quite definitely *not* Villistas, regarding Villa as "just another parasite on the main body of the social revolution... ."

<sup>56</sup> "Red Agitators in Cells Again," *LAT* February 19, 1916, 2:1. Hostility towards the Magon brothers was doubtless influenced by their involvement in the attempt to create an anarchist society in Baja, where Harry Chandler, then the *Times's* publisher, had extensive land holdings.

latest reports are worth anything, but nobody is hankering for the trip.<sup>57</sup>

Even headlines with a dark edge to them still maintain something of this almost humorous tone, such as a story about more murders of Americans in Mexico headlined: “Habit. Mexicans Kill Five Americans.”<sup>58</sup> An article about Villa and his bandit raids that reported that he was simultaneously in many different places was titled, “Gen. Villa is a Big Man. Is Seen in Three Different Places at One Time.”<sup>59</sup>

The editorials, however, start to treat the bloodshed in Mexico with a little more weariness by late January, decrying the Carranza government’s willingness to execute Mexicans for murdering Americans, even when their guilt was unclear.<sup>60</sup> Other stories show an increasing level of fury at the crimes committed against Americans, and racially motivated crimes against Chinese residents of Mexico.<sup>61</sup> An opinion piece on the editorial page by Charles M. Pepper, “Former Trade Advisor, United States Department of State,” is subtitled, “How the Slaughter of Americans may be Stopped and Anarchy ended.”<sup>62</sup> The *Times* gave substantial space to a report from the Secretary of State listing Americans killed in the Mexican Revolution.<sup>63</sup> Surprisingly, considering the financial interests in Mexico held by the *Times*’ owners, an editorial on February 8 emphasized the importance of agrarian reform as the key to stabilizing Mexico. It criticized Diaz because “he never encouraged the enactment of an agrarian law, or attempted to disestablish peonage, or relieve the people from their mental bondage to the priesthood and their material bondage to the holders of the vast landed estates.”<sup>64</sup>

Even though the situation in Mexico was drawing hostile comments by the end of January, there is no evidence from the *Times*’ coverage that this hostility spilled over into articles about Mexican-Americans. A February 1 article about looting near San Diego, after the collapse of a dam in the Otay Valley, refers to “armed Mexicans” who participated in the looting, but also mentions, at the top of the article, “four white men” arrested for looting.<sup>65</sup> An article about efforts to “Americanize” Mexicans living in San Gabriel was a mixture of paternalism and positive discussion of the part that Mexican residents themselves were playing in their education into American culture.<sup>66</sup>

Villa’s raid on Columbus was apparently a complete surprise to the *Times*. In the days before the raid, the *Times* carried articles that, in retrospect, should have suggested that Villa was about to attack the United States. On March 4, the headlines reported, “Villa Headed Toward Border. Outlaw Chief May Try to Enter United States.” But the article still

<sup>57</sup> “Not New in the Least,” *LAT* January 23, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>58</sup> “Habit: Mexicans Kill Five Americans,” *LAT* January 26, 1916, 1:5.

<sup>59</sup> “Gen. Villa is a Big Man,” *LAT* February 7, 1916, 1:5.

<sup>60</sup> “Cure as Evil as the Malady,” *LAT* January 26, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>61</sup> “Hostility: Reports Confirm Mexican Outrage,” “Victim of Bandits is Mining Official,” *LAT* March 2, 1916, 1:5..

<sup>62</sup> “Punitive Expedition for Mexico,” *LAT* January 30, 1916, 2:20.

<sup>63</sup> “Roll Call: Scores of Americans Killed by the Mexicans and Indians,” *LAT* February 18, 1916, 1:2.

<sup>64</sup> “Land Reform in Mexico,” *LAT* February 8, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>65</sup> “Marines Guard Against Looting,” *LAT* February 1, 1916, 2:10.

<sup>66</sup> “San Gabriel: Americanizing Mexicans Living in San Gabriel,” *LAT* March 4, 1916, 1:7.

referred to Villa with the fairly neutral phrase, “outlawed chieftain.”<sup>67</sup> On March 6, “Villa Marches on the Border... The Villa contingent was said to number from 400 to 700 men.... About twenty-two Americans employed at El Tigre [in Sonora] have prepared to flee to the border in automobiles the instant the Villa soldiers are sighted... .”<sup>68</sup> The article continues:

Villa Near Border.... Francisco Villa is within six miles of the United States border en route to Washington, where he will seek an interview with President Wilson, according to a message received tonight by Gen. Gabriel Gavira, commandant at Juarez.... .

Gen. Gavira’s advices stated that Villa would seek to exonerate himself of blame in connection with the Santa Isabel massacre, in which eighteen foreigners were killed last January... . The message said that Villa was camped a few miles south of Columbus, N.M.<sup>69</sup>

On both March 8 and 9, the *Times* carried articles that showed that Villa, a “Rebel Leader” was taking American and Mexican civilians prisoner just south of the border and that he was only ten miles from Columbus.<sup>70</sup>

When the *Times* published the first accounts of Villa’s raid on Columbus on March 10, the language shows that the fury with which the *Times* regarded it. The story referred to the attack as the “wanton assault” by “Villa’s bandits.” “Official Washington was deeply stirred by the outrage perpetrated by Villa... .”<sup>71</sup> A wire service article called Villa the “outlawed Mexican bandit.” The subtitle of the article reports “Cries of ‘Death to the Gringos’ in Columbus N.M.”<sup>72</sup> Accompanying artwork shows a smiling Villa as a Colossus astride the border:

<sup>67</sup> “Villa Head Toward Border,” *LAT* March 4, 1916, 1:5.

<sup>68</sup> “Villa Marches on the Border,” *LAT* March 6, 1916, 1:5.

<sup>69</sup> “Villa Near Border,” *LAT* March 7, 1916, 1:1.

<sup>70</sup> “Await Villa on the Border,” *LAT* March 8, 1916, 1:5; “Contiguity: Villa Reaches Palomas Ranch,” *LAT* March 9, 1916, 1:5.

<sup>71</sup> Carranza Consents to American Tactics,” *LAT* March 10, 1916, 1:1.

<sup>72</sup> “Murder, Arson, Theft, by Villa in America,” *LAT* March 10, 1916, 1:1.



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Other articles in the same issue include a terrifying interview with Mrs. Maud Wright, an American living in Mexico, describing her kidnapping by Villa's forces. Villa's men took her baby and gave it to a Mexican family, and she believed that the Villistas murdered her husband before they forced her along on the raid into Columbus. Serventes, one of Villa's officers, ordered her to take up arms as part of the raid, but she threatened to shoot Serventes first if given a rifle.<sup>74</sup> An adjoining article discussed the many prior raids across the border, "Five Americans Have been Killed and Many Wounded Previous to the Columbus Outbreak— Outlawry Began in 1910 and has Involved the Whole Texas Front." Unlike previous articles, where "Mexican" almost always preceded "bandit," here the subtitle simplified and generalized the problem: "Mexicans Have Crossed Line Over a Dozen Times."<sup>75</sup>

Yet news accounts the *Times* carries on the same day remain careful to distinguish Villa and his actions from Mexican-Americans and Mexicans living in border towns. In a wire service story about General Pershing suspending streetcar service between El Paso and Juarez as a precaution "against the possibility of an attack by Villa," it is also reported, "The large Mexican element in El Paso does not seem to be excited by the news [of the raid], and no incidents have occurred to show that Villa sympathizers are active on this side of the river.

<sup>73</sup> *LAT* March 10, 1916, 1:1.

<sup>74</sup> "Held Captive Nine Days; Sees Dash on Border," *LAT* March 10, 1916, 1:2, 1:5.

<sup>75</sup> "About Enough: Numerous Raids by Border Bandits," *LAT* March 10, 1916, 1:2.

Juarez likewise seems to be taking the news calmly.”<sup>76</sup>

The next day’s editorials, however, show a dramatic change in attitude towards Mexico. The editorial attacked Villa as “the vilest kind of ruffian, in addition to being grossly ignorant. He can neither read nor write.... In 1910 he personally tortured a woman to death at Batopil, Chihuahua... .” The editorial then moved from attacking Villa to attacking the Mexican population:

Villa is very popular among a large class of Mexicans. He has won battles. He has given his followers loot and women. And if the United States makes war with Villa, even with the sanction of the provisional President, Carranza, we must expect to see the Mexican people rally around Villa with the cry of “To hell with the gringos.”

Practically all of the uneducated people in Mexico, and that means 85 per cent of them (only 15 per cent can read and write) hate the United States and are in such a primitive state of ignorance that they cannot recognize the inequalities between the military efficiency of America and Mexico.<sup>77</sup>

The editorial of March 14 is even more intemperate in its language. After arguing that it “may take a billion dollars and a quarter of a million men to solve the Mexican problem,” the editorialist described the problem not in terms of Villa, or wounded national pride, but in the most uncomplimentary terms towards the Mexican people:

Villa is busy arousing against us the savagery and ferocity and greed of all Northern Mexico, and that comprises nine-tenths of the adult male population. It is not patriotic devotion to the Mexican eagle... , and it is not memory of Cerro Gordo that inspires the enthusiasm of the Mexican peon today, but it is the hope of being able to loot El Paso and Deming and set fire to Nogales and Calexico and possibly to ravage San Diego and to steal all the cattle and horses on 1000 miles of frontier that will cause the Villistas and the Carranzistas and the Obregonistas and the Yaqui Indians to join— not in repelling intervention, for they don’t know what intervention means— but in a combination raid to rob and murder “gringos.”<sup>78</sup>

The rage shows, not only in the intemperate language, but in the poor sentence structure. Editorial cartoons were even more ferocious in their anti-Mexican content, such as this one, likening Mexico (and arguably, Mexicans) to “Anarchy Revolution Murder”:

<sup>76</sup> “Calm: Juarez Not Excited Over the Villa Raid,” *LAT* March 10, 1916, 1:6.

<sup>77</sup> “Preparedness and Mexico,” *LAT* March 11, 1916, 2:4. In spite of the *Times* long standing support for intervention in Mexico, the editorial goes on to suggest that such intervention should not happen “without the co-operation or concurrence of the Latin-American countries.... [W]e of the United States must admit that Latin-American blood and understanding can do some things in Mexico which we can’t.”

<sup>78</sup> “Strike Hard and Strike Quickly,” *LAT* March 14, 1916, 2:4.



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Articles about Mexican-Americans after the Columbus raid also show a more inflammatory use of “Mexican.” “Juan Maria and Rosindo Harrera, Mexicans, were found guilty in criminal court here last night of the murder of Eugene Smith last October... .” While the headline for the article describes them as “Mexican Murderers Sentenced to Hang,” the opening sentence gives the impression that “Mexican” was a job title (and a disreputable one at that), as “Mexican bandit” has been in the preceding weeks.<sup>80</sup>

An article that discusses the reaction of American troops to the raid— and the negotiations between Washington and Carranza about sending U.S. troops into Mexico— contains a number of loaded phrases that show the heightened emotions brought on by the raid:

Outraged by the murder of their comrades and countrymen, about 50,000 American troops are waiting orders on the border of Mexico to avenge the spilling of American blood on American

<sup>79</sup> “To Stamp It Out,” *LAT* March 15, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>80</sup> “Mexican Murders Sentenced to Hang,” *LAT* March 13, 1916, 1:2. Similarly, see “Mexicans Accused of Robbing Rancher” (an incident in Los Angeles County), *LAT* March 14, 1916, 2:7.

soil.... Mexicans have become so insolent that it has been no mean task for the officers of the army to control the enlisted men. If the army is sent into Mexico, every soldier will be inspired with a desire to punish the bandits that have been raiding the border.<sup>81</sup>

Another article that day, "Troops on the Border Watch for Night Raid," emphasized that the Columbus raid was not a one-time event, but a matter of future concern as well.<sup>82</sup> Nor was this concern entirely in the imagination of fearful soldiers or *Times* editorialists. News reports from Calexico describe a "deliberate short-circuiting of the telephone system here last night,"<sup>83</sup> and the Navy stationed Marine guards at the two naval radio stations in San Diego.<sup>84</sup>

Finally, on March 14, the *Times* reported on actions taken with respect to Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles that perhaps explains even more so than the Columbus raid why the *Times'* coverage had taken on such a fearful and racist tone:

Acting under orders from Chief Snively, the police department yesterday took drastic action to prevent any local outburst on the part of Villa sympathizers. The cordon of officers thrown about the Mexican quarter was extended and reinforced and the embargo against the sale of arms and liquor to Mexicans amplified and made general.<sup>85</sup>

What prompted these actions? The fear was not just because of the Columbus raid:

Three admitted anarchists, priding themselves upon being disciples of the Magon brothers and all heavily armed, were taken into custody on charges of carrying concealed weapons and were given sixty-day sentences by Police Judge White....<sup>86</sup>

This must have been a city or county ordinance prohibiting carrying concealed weapons, since California had no state law on the subject until 1917.<sup>87</sup> The article continues:

W.V. Nicovich, charged with having attempted to incite Mexicans to attack Americans, was arrested at the Plaza and held for further investigation.

The Mayor received an anonymous communication purporting to be from someone on the "inside" of a plot by local Villa men to dynamite the Federal building, the Courthouse, the power plants and the different newspaper buildings. This letter, which its author does not sign because he says to do so would be to cause his own immediate death, was turned over to Chief Snively by the Mayor. Neither official is inclined to take it very seriously, but a sharp watch on the activities of all Mexicans known to be aligned with the bandit chief will be kept.<sup>88</sup>

The article described the measures taken as being "for the benefit of Mexicans who have

<sup>81</sup> "Army Awaits the Word to Move Against Villa," *LAT* March 10, 1916, 1:2.

<sup>82</sup> "Vigilant: Troops on the Border Watch for Night Raid," *LAT* March 10, 1916, 1:5.

<sup>83</sup> "On the Job: People of Calexico Ask for More Troops," *LAT* March 14, 1916, 1:5.

<sup>84</sup> "Cautious: San Diego Radio Station is Placed Under Guard," *LAT* March 14, 1916, 1:5.

<sup>85</sup> "Draw Teeth of War Breeders," *LAT* March 14, 1916, 2:1.

<sup>86</sup> "Draw Teeth of War Breeders," *LAT* March 14, 1916, 2:1.

<sup>87</sup> Assembly Office of Research, *Smoking Gun: The Case For Concealed Weapon Permit Reform* (Sacramento, State of California: 1986), 6-8; *Statutes of California Passed At The Forty-Second Legislature* (San Francisco, Bancroft-Whitney: 1917), 221.

<sup>88</sup> "Draw Teeth of War Breeders," *LAT* March 14, 1916, 2:1.

become excited over the action of the Federal government against Villa and who have made threats of vengeance and violence... .”:

No liquor will be sold to Mexicans showing the least sign of intoxication.

No guns can be sold to Mexicans and all dealers who have used guns for window displays have been ordered to take them from the windows and to show them to no Mexican until the embargo is lifted.<sup>89</sup>

The *Times* article claimed that “Mexican agitation around the Plaza and deeper in Sonoratown have assumed serious proportions several times,” but that experienced policemen such as officer Pautz were “able to quell the most mutinous Mexican by merely looking at him. Yesterday afternoon he dispersed fifty Mexicans who had become excited in making tirades against this country.” The ban on sales of firearms was because “of the great number of weapons being bought by Mexicans recently. The entire stock of several second-hand stores were exhausted Saturday, heavy revolvers being the most popular guns.”<sup>90</sup>

While the police chief saw this sudden demand for firearms as evidence of some sort of potential insurrection, another explanation might be self-defense. There was a similar emptying of gun stores in El Paso, where the white population was arming itself for defense against another border incursion.<sup>91</sup> The *Times* reported— once the crisis had passed in Los Angeles— that Mexicans in Nogales had been buying arms, “though as individuals, probably in fear of harm from the Americans in the event of war.”<sup>92</sup> Especially since the guns purchased in Los Angeles were “heavy revolvers,” far better suited to defense than offense, and the Columbus raid inflamed sentiments against Mexicans, self-defense is at least as plausible an explanation for Mexican-Americans buying guns as as insurrection.

The risk to Americans in Mexico and along the Mexican border seemed to be worsening, judged by the *Times* articles, with a dispatch from Monterrey, Mexico published on March 16 that claimed:

the masses of the Mexican people believe that armed intervention on the part of the United States in the affairs of this country has actually occurred [and therefore] that an upheaval of resistance of the invasion is threatened to occur at any moment. When it comes, the massacre of most of the comparatively few Americans remaining in Mexico and the destruction of much American-owned property is believed to be inevitable....

The mere fact that American soldiers are on Mexican soil is sufficient to arouse to white heat his latent hatred of the white race that took from his people Texas and what now comprises a rich part of the Southwest and West.

Many Mexicans of the better class who know the temper of the Indian element of this country when aroused to fury, prefer to risk their lives in the United States rather than in their own land in this

<sup>89</sup> “Draw Teeth of War Breeders,” *LAT* March 14, 1916, 2:1.

<sup>90</sup> “Draw Teeth of War Breeders,” *LAT* March 14, 1916, 2:1, 2:2

<sup>91</sup> “Advance Guard into Mexico May Leave in a Few Hours,” *LAT* March 15, 1916, 1:1.

<sup>92</sup> “State Troops Ready for War,” *LAT* March 27, 1916, 1:9.

time of crisis.<sup>93</sup>

It is unsurprising that an editorial of March 16 addressed the concern about internal security, and the status of Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles:

For The Safety of Los Angeles

We have living in the city of Los Angeles 35,000 Mexicans, the majority of whom we are glad to believe are law-abiding citizens. But at least 10 per cent of them are known to the police to be rabid sympathizers with the outlaw, Villa, and many others constitute inflammable material that agitators, given a free hand could stir up to fighting frenzy.<sup>94</sup>

After explaining that the combination of the current international disturbances and the local Mexican population might lead to “riot and anarchy,” the editorial explained that:

Chief Snively has provided 2000 cards to be forwarded to eligible citizens, so as to form a force of special police officers, ready to serve the city if called upon. This is a duty that every loyal American citizen will be ready to undertake. Moreover the knowledge that such a force has been provided to handle any dangerous situation that local agitators may attempt to bring about is the surest safeguard against such a dangerous situation materializing.

We have confidence in the good intentions of the majority of Mexicans who have found work and safety under the Stars and Stripes, denied them by the anarchy and impoverishment of their own country. But the firebrands— and they are not few— must be watched and snuffed out...<sup>95</sup>

The following day, March 17, the *Times* reported that “more than two score Villa adherents have fled from Los Angeles to New Orleans en route to Cuba.” Apparently the agreement between Carranza and the U.S. government allowing for cross-border pursuit of bandits gave the Villistas in Los Angeles reason to fear arrest. This apparently reduced “the threatening conditions here among the Mexican population.” The special provisions relating to alcohol and firearms sales to Mexicans, however, remained in effect.<sup>96</sup>

Also starting on March 17 there is a noticeable change in the *Times*' tone with respect to Mexico and Mexican-Americans. One possible explanation is that the Carranza government had come to an accommodation with the United States concerning the Pershing expedition into Mexico. While there are still reports that suggest a lack of cooperation from representatives of the Carranza government, there are also indications that the *Times* had an increasingly positive attitude towards Carranza. One is a cartoon showing Uncle Sam and Carranza jointly chasing down a bandit labeled “Villa,” with the caption, “Why Not?”<sup>97</sup> Another article describes how Villa's men killed Jose Pereyra, the Mexican Consul at Columbus while he was trying to save the lives of two American women staying in the same

<sup>93</sup> “Invasion in Intervention, Fixed Idea in Mexico,” *LAT* March 16, 1916, 1:1; “United States Citizens Insulted in Juarez,” *LAT* March 16, 1916, 1:2; “Americans at Presidio Arming for Protection” (describing preparations at Presidio, Texas), *LAT* March 16, 1916, 1:3.

<sup>94</sup> “For the Safety of Los Angeles,” *LAT* March 16, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>95</sup> “For the Safety of Los Angeles,” *LAT* March 16, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>96</sup> “Villa Leaders Flee the City,” *LAT* March 17, 1916, 2:1.

<sup>97</sup> “Why Not?,” *LAT* March 17, 1916, 2:4.

hotel.<sup>98</sup> An editorial on March 19 returns to the pre-raid view of the Mexican masses: “no one who looks into the sad, hopeless and often pitifully ignorant faces of the poor peons down there can fail to feel a great sorrow that a ruffian and murderer like Villa could lead them into their present peril.”<sup>99</sup> An editorial of March 23 criticizes Sonora’s Governor Calles for his anti-Chinese and anticlerical orders, but the criticism is gently phrased.<sup>100</sup>

As the crisis in Los Angeles receded, something of the old bemused tone of the pre-raid days returned to the editorial section. The regular (and false) reports of Villa’s capture and death led the *Times* to observe: “We don’t mind having Villa located now and then. It is this constant trapping and routing of Villa which seems so cruel and unnecessary to us. No man should be trapped and routed in the afternoon newspapers in more than three editions on any one day.”<sup>101</sup>

While there are still news reports of conflict between Mexican-Americans and non-Hispanic Americans, their tone is much more subdued than in the days immediately following the Columbus raid.<sup>102</sup> Even the editorial concerns about “the masses in Mexico” now admit the possibility that Carranza will stand with the United States against Villa.<sup>103</sup> Reports of disarming Mexican-Americans are also more neutral.<sup>104</sup> The obituary for Felix Martinez, a resident of Los Angeles, though nominally a citizen of New Mexico, mentions that the “leading Democratic papers of New Mexico have been urging him to enter the race” for governor or U.S. Senator.<sup>105</sup> Luis Terrazas, an Angeleno, celebrated his father’s great victory against Maximilian fifty years before, and the *Times* reported the story in a very positive light.<sup>106</sup> Judge Y. Sepulveda, first elected to the Los Angeles Superior Court in 1879, is quoted, “There are very good people in Mexico and they are not all of the character painted by the newspapers. When a stable government is established in Mexico, these very good people will be there to greet you.”<sup>107</sup>

The *Times*’ coverage shows unsurprising change from amicable and positive coverage of Mexican-Americans before the Columbus raid, to open hostility in the week afterwards. Once local tensions receded (and probably for that reason), the *Times* returned to a positive coverage of Mexican-Americans again.

The situation for Japanese-Americans was a bit different. There were no battles going on 200 miles from Los Angeles involving Japanese revolutionaries. But based on the *Times*’ coverage of Japanese imperial ambitions directed at the United States, they would seem a strong second in the pantheon of worrisome nations. There are *many* indications of specific

<sup>98</sup> “Brave: Carranza Consul Slain Trying to Save Women,” *LAT* March 18, 1916, 1:1.

<sup>99</sup> “Misfortunes of Ignorance,” *LAT* March 19, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>100</sup> “An Arbitrary Governor,” *LAT* March 23, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>101</sup> “More Conservative,” *LAT* March 27, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>102</sup> “Mexican Stabs an American,” “Nogales Demands Army to Guard Border,” *LAT* March 18, 1916, 1:2.

<sup>103</sup> “Not Under Control,” *LAT* March 18, 1916, 2:4.

<sup>104</sup> “Bryn Mawr Officer Disarms Mexicans,” *LAT* March 19, 1916, 1:13.

<sup>105</sup> “Felix Martinez is Dead,” *LAT* March 23, 1916, 1:6. Presumably the Democratic newspapers stopped urging him to run, now that he was dead.

<sup>106</sup> “Thrice Rejoiced: Noted Family’s Memorable Day,” *LAT* March 26, 1916, 2:12.

<sup>107</sup> “Hopeful: Says Grievance Was Very Great,” *LAT* March 26, 1916, 2:12.

fear of Japanese invasion in the *Times* during this same period,<sup>108</sup> and a belief that “a more powerful Japan is inimical to the interests of the white race.”<sup>109</sup> Yet the *Times* showed no animosity towards Japanese-Americans, almost all of whom were citizens of Japan, not the United States. Many articles either portray Japanese-Americans in very positive terms, or used loaded language to describe opponents of Japanese immigration to the United States. As an example, in reporting on “Congressman E.A. Hayes of San Jose” and his bill to exclude Japanese immigration, the *Times* reported that Hayes “brings up this question nearly every session. This was his annual outburst.” The House Immigration Committee decided to drop the matter into the Secretary of State’s lap, by asking him if such a law “would be likely to endanger the peace of the United States. They might as well refer to him the question as to whether water is wet.”<sup>110</sup>

Other articles that directly involve Japanese-Americans are either neutral or positive. The *Times*’ coverage of the first test of the 1913 California law prohibiting aliens from acquiring land is scrupulously even-handed in its discussion of the facts and political consequences of the impending decision.<sup>111</sup> Even an article detailing a criminal matter involving two Japanese-Americans who dueled “for the Hand of a Pretty Maid of Nippon” is quite neutral in tone. The reporter limited his account to the facts of the incident, with nothing that could be interpreted negatively with respect to either race or culture. Indeed, there is almost a romantic tone to this duel to the death over a woman that both wished to marry.<sup>112</sup>

Another article described what happened when the San Dimas Lemon Association asked for white workers to pick fruit. While seventeen whites showed up, “Fourteen of them wanted to be foreman, nothing else, while three were willing as second choice to pick fruit.” Instead, “a gang of Japanese is busy today picking fruit in the company’s groves.”<sup>113</sup>

Another article describes a petition to the courts from a childless Japanese couple seeking to adopt the youngest child of another Japanese family, one blessed with more children than fortune. The article describes the high financial status of the couple seeking to adopt and the “good home, education and heirship” that the baby would receive. The tone of the article is as positive as can be imagined towards all participants.<sup>114</sup>

The most positive articles concerned the recent death of Masuji Miyakawa, described as the

<sup>108</sup> “Coast at Mercy of Enemy Army,” *LAT* January 20, 1916, 1:3; “Calls on Congress to Arm the Entire Coast,” *LAT* January 20, 1916, 2:1; “Turtle Bay’: Report Jap Camp Below the Border,” *LAT* January 21, 1916, 1:5; “Exploded: Denies Report of Armed Japs,” *LAT* January 22, 1916, 1:5; “Admits Japs are in Sonora,” *LAT* January 29, 1916, 1:5; “Safeguard: Coast Preparedness,” *LAT* February 4, 1916, 1:11; “Mexico: Villa-Jap Plot is Discredited,” *LAT* February 8, 1916, 1:5; “Washington: Revives Report of Turtle Bay,” *LAT* February 9, 1916, 1:4; “Stalwart: Mayors Demand Preparedness,” *LAT* March 5, 1916, 1:6; “Ambition: Japs’ Intention Orient Mystery,” *LAT* March 5, 1916, 4:14.

<sup>109</sup> “Limelight: New Plot Revealed,” *LAT* February 8, 1916, 1:1; “Gamble: Japanese Are Embarked on Desperate Venture,” “Nipponese Consul Denies Designs Against the Islands,” *LAT* March 5, 1916, 1:2; “Japanese? Sees Greater Trouble in Mexican Situation” (discussing fears of Japanese invasion of the Philippine Islands), *LAT* March 14, 1916, 1:2.

<sup>110</sup> “Jap Exclusion Broached Again,” *LAT* January 23, 1916, 1:6.

<sup>111</sup> “Santa Barbara: Supreme Court May Decide It,” *LAT* February 8, 1916, 2:9.

<sup>112</sup> “Can’t Do It: Duelists’ Agreement,” *LAT* March 8, 1916, 2:10.

<sup>113</sup> “Work-Hunters All Foremen,” *LAT* February 9, 1916, 2:7.

<sup>114</sup> “At the Courthouse: Japanese Petition to Adopt a Child,” *LAT* March 1, 1916, 2:10.

first Japanese lawyer admitted to the American bar. His death and funeral were the subject of a series of stories, increasingly detailed and laudatory in tone over the course of several days.<sup>115</sup> The final account includes a picture of Miyakawa that described how he moved to San Francisco, first working as a court interpreter, then studied law:

He was admitted to the practice of law in the State courts and before the United States Supreme Court.... Dr. Miyakawa not only had the distinction of being the first and only one of his race to be admitted to the American bar, but had conferred upon him the academic and honorary degrees from American institutions of learning the following: A.B., St. Joseph's College; LL.D., State University of Indiana; LL.M., University of Washington, D.C.; D.C.L., Illinois College; LL.D., St. Mary's College; LL.D., University of the South, and LL.D., Illinois College. He had held the chair of comparative constitutional law in the Illinois College and the State University of Indiana.

Dr. Miyakawa was a deep scholar, a talented speaker and prolific writer.... He was the author of several books of wide sale, among them being "Power of American People," "Political Life of Japan" and "Social Life of Japan." His books on Japanese economic subjects are considered standard works.<sup>116</sup>

Most amazing is that all three articles reported that Dr. Miyakawa was a *naturalized* American citizen!

Even in such emotionally charged areas as interracial sex, the *Times* is astonishingly careful to avoid criticism of Japanese-Americans. The authorities arrested a Japanese immigrant named Joe Matsuno for using a gun to threaten the life of his employer, Dr. E. L. Colburn, "after having written several love notes" to Dr. Colburn's wife. The Colburns now requested that all charges be dropped against Matsuno. It seems that Matsuno had been "intoxicated on several occasions and made violent love to Mrs. Colburn." Dr. Colburn found out about the affair, and asked a friend to get Matsuno, who lived in the Colburn home, out of the house. Dr. Colburn's friend apparently decided that getting Matsuno deported would even be better, and arranged for his arrest on trumped-up charges. The district attorney dropped all criminal charges against Matsuno— and there was nothing in the article that was even slightly negative towards Matsuno for his adulterous affair apparently with a white woman.<sup>117</sup>

Another article discusses how the San Francisco Board of Police Commissioners decided to refuse issuance of a saloon license as part of a strategy for driving Japanese residents out of "Little Japan." While the remarks quoted by one of the commissioners are certainly negative towards Japanese-Americans, asserting that "The influx of the Japanese into this neighborhood simply destroyed it," there is nothing in the article that presents any bias for or against Japanese-Americans.<sup>118</sup>

Obviously, there is nothing equivalent to the Columbus raid involving Japanese, and so it would be tempting to conclude that the restrained tone of the *Times* throughout this period with respect to Japanese-Americans relative to Mexican-Americans simply reflects the fear

<sup>115</sup> "Jap Lawyer is Dead," *LAT* March 5, 1916, 4:13; "Alone in Death," *LAT* March 6, 1916, 2:5.

<sup>116</sup> "Sincerely: Many to Mourn Loss of Leader," *LAT* March 9, 1916, 2:3.

<sup>117</sup> "Settled: Drop Serious Charge," *LAT* February 1, 1916, 2:10.

<sup>118</sup> "Boomerang: Driving Japs Out," *LAT* February 4, 1916, 1:4.

that the Columbus raid induced. It is, however, at least as likely that the *Times'* loss of perspective about Mexican-Americans may reflect the fear that the problems of Columbus, because of Villista and Magon involvement in the Los Angeles Mexican-American community, could have turned violent, lighting a tinderbox of resentment among Mexican-Americans already in Los Angeles. There was no similar concentration of Japanese anarchists and revolutionaries to frighten the *Times*.

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