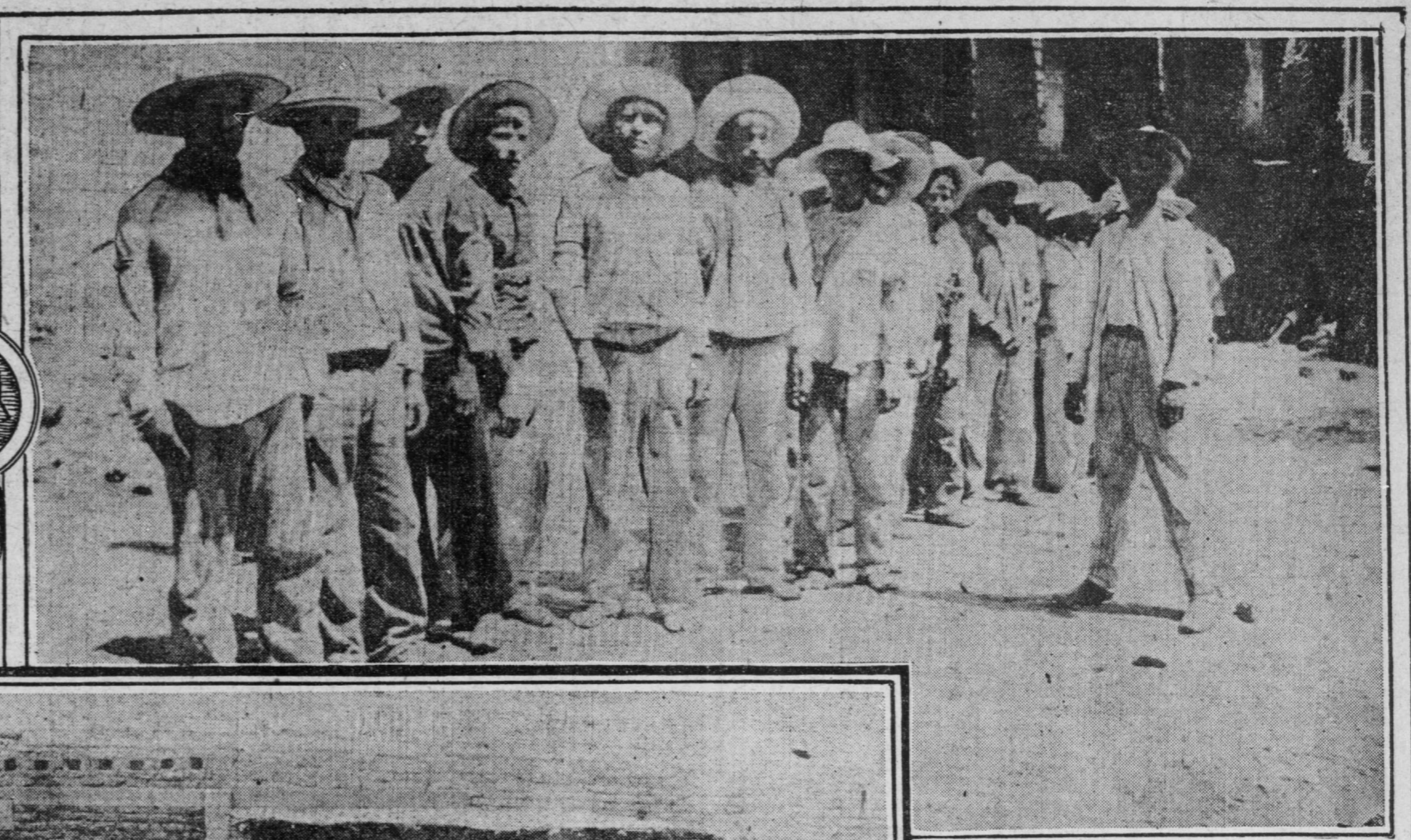


THE YAQUIS---MOST STUBBORN FIGHTERS ON EARTH



Yaqui Women



Yaquis in the Prison Yard at Guaymas.



men were arrested and put in the chain gangs at Hermosillo and the women and children were sent to Yucatan. The warring Indians fiercely resented these cruel wrongs and remembered them when they went into battle.

By Bailey Millard.
WHAT little the dollar loving American has done in prying and peeping into the great natural treasure houses of Sonora convinced him years ago that that Western Mexican province was a country well worth exploiting.

But now the good news is flashed over the wires that the long drawn Yaqui war is at an end and that a treaty favorable to the Indians is being negotiated, so that soon there will be such an influx of greedy gringos, as the Mexicans call us, into Sonora as has never been seen there before.

It is characteristic of our commercial age that the chief interest of the white people in the Yaqui uprisings has not been a humane but a financial one.

Not that the Americans have been essentially hostile to the Yaquis, for many guns and much ammunition have been taken over the border to aid them in their desperate fight, but that when Diaz has seen fit to parcel off a comfortable section of Yaqui land here and there to an enterprising Yankee for a consideration it has been only natural that Yaqui and Yank should have become embroiled at times.

"The Yaqui Indians are the most stubborn fighters on earth," said President Diaz of Mexico eight years ago, "and if ever we are to put them down we must strike at the root of their race—we must exile their women and children."

So, month by month, since then thousands of the little brown women of the Yaqui nation in Sonora have been torn from their homes on reservations and elsewhere, rounded up at Guaymas, the west coast of Mexico, and, with their children, deported to San Blas and thence across country to the far fewer lands of Yucatan, where many of them have died.

This means of subduing a race that has been in almost constant warfare against the Mexican government for more than thirty years has at last been effective, although it has been necessary at the same time to keep from two thousand to five thousand troops in readiness or in the field to fight the diminishing band of Yaquis, who have proved themselves as valiant and as unyielding as the Boers.

The last two stands of the Yaquis have recently been reported in the despatches. One of these was in a mountain cañon just north of Altar, where the Mexicans and Papagos lured the Yaquis into ambush and killed a large number of them.

So many other events have been taking place on this populous planet, and the affairs of Sonora enter so little into the consideration of the people on this rim of the continent, with the exception of those American capitalists who have longed to unearth the mining treasures of that rich gold and silver country, that we have been more interested in college football contests than in this terrible warfare that has been going on within five days' railway journey of New York for the last three decades and even longer.

For, as a matter of fact, the Yaquis have never been at peace with their hereditary foe since the conquest of Mexico by the Spanish in 1519, and from an estimated population in 1620 of 200,000 the race has steadily declined, chiefly because of its almost incessant warfare, to about forty thousand at the present day.

Having regarded the Yaqui at close range and having studied him and marked what manner of man he is, I may be excused for an admiration of him that surpasses my appreciation of any other of the native races of North America. Assuredly these people are the most industrious and most civilized of all Indian tribes, being for the most part farmers, miners

and craftsmen and far superior to the average Sonoran of the haciendas and villages, who will not work while he has a peso in his pocket and while mescal can be had at the cantina, and who, when he enters the army, is generally sent there from jail.

As for the Yaqui as a fighter, he has proved himself a better man even than the Apache, while resorting to few, if any, of the Apache's bloodthirsty tricks of warfare. The Yaqui army has been regularly organized up to the last year, has been well drilled in the use of the rifle, has had its generals and colonels and captains, and has given such a good account of itself that it has kept three thousand Mexican troops under General Torres busy all the while in a warfare that has not been that of savages—has, in fact, been fully as humane as that of its foemen.

It is not necessary to go back any further than 1878 to get a good idea of what the Yaquis have been doing in trying to hold their own against the people of Spanish descent in Mexico. In that year, because of trespass upon their lands and because the Mexicans had taken large numbers of them to work upon their ranches in practical slavery, these tremendously tenacious fighters resumed hostilities after a short period of peace. General Cajemi, their Governor, took command and for seven years held the passes and strongholds against five thousand troops under General Pesquiera.

Although the Yaquis gave a good account of themselves, they lost many men and General Cajemi was captured and shot. Still the defensive war was continued, and when at last the Mexicans drove them out of their strongholds and captured their mines there came a period during which only desultory raids upon the haciendas were made. During that period the Yaqui women and boys and some of the non-combatant men of the tribe went out to earn money in the mines, ranches and fisheries to buy arms and ammunition to carry on the fight.

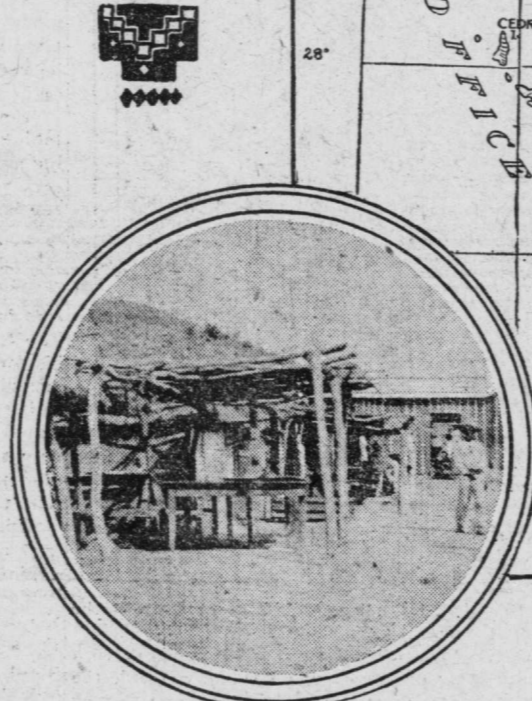
A number of American miners who had been unable peaceably to work their mines brought about the peace of Ortiz in May, 1897. The government then began to take Yaqui boys from the reservations and send them to Vera Cruz, on the other side of the continent, to make soldiers of them. These boys were as good if not better sharpshooters than the Boer youth, and the Yaquis saw that in thus depriving them of what would be a great source of reliance in future battle they would eventually have to give up all hope of ever holding their own. So that the peace of Ortiz only lasted a few months before there was another uprising and more fighting, chiefly of a guerrilla nature, which continued for several years.

Meantime every cent that the non-combatants of the tribe could earn and save was handed over to the chiefs, who bought with this money enough Mauser rifles and mountain howitzers to equip very decently an army of five thousand men, under General Tetaviate, who, in April, 1899, took the field after having made this statement:—

"We Yaquis are a peaceful and industrious people. When the Mexicans want workers for their mines or factories they come to us. We do not want war. We have never wanted it, but we want our rights. We made a treaty of peace with the Mexican government, our hereditary foe, in May, 1897, after a long series of wars, the last of which was more than ten years in duration. We intended to keep faith with the government of Mexico, but it has pursued a course of cruel encroachment and menace. We are now ready to fight it again, and all the battles of the past will be as nothing compared with the bloodshed that will follow our entry into the field."

General Tetaviate began operations in the lower valley of the Rio Yaqui, where his men drove out the white settlers upon Yaqui lands. They cut the telegraph wires and destroyed other means of communication, and it was some time before the hastily summoned Fifth cavalry and Eleventh and Twelfth infantry companies could be marched against them. Then followed a series of battles which generally concluded unsatisfactorily for the Mexicans, though

Yaqui Women and Children in Prison Yard at Guaymas, Ready for Deportation to Yucatan.

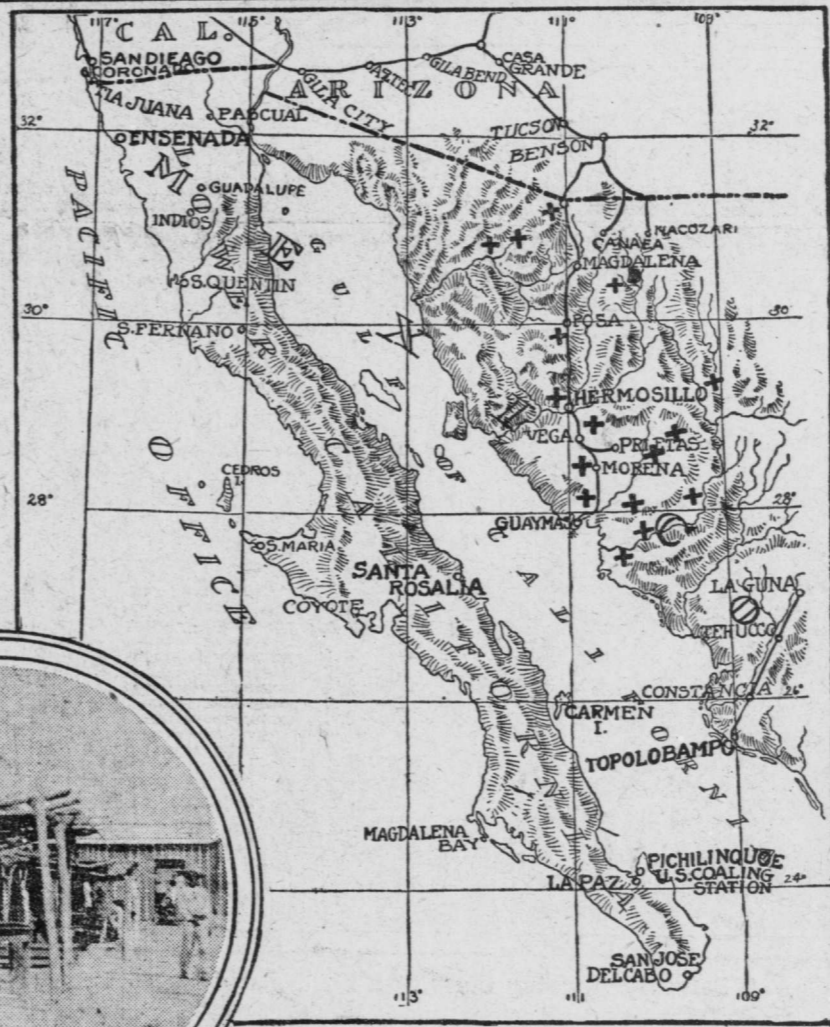


Yaqui Cabins and Bowers Near Hermosillo

there was an occasional rounding up of the rebels in which large numbers of them were slaughtered. On the approach of the troops the Indians usually took up strong positions in the mountain fastnesses. One large band fortified itself in the Bacatete Range, between the Yaqui and Matopo rivers, and another in the Sahuaripa Mountains. Efforts were made to keep these two bands apart, but the working Yaquis all over Sonora and in California and Arizona were constantly coming in and joining with their brethren and the depredations upon the ranches and villages were widespread.

Meantime the Mexicans gathered in the women and children of their foemen for deportation to Yucatan, following the demand of Diaz to "exterminate the Yaquis." Maddened by this and by the reports that the women and children were not merely deported, but that they were taken out into the Gulf of California and thrown overboard from the troop ship Oaxaca, the desperate Indians attacked the haciendas and also threatened the "target towns." Terror mad, the citizens of Nogales fled from their homes, and for a time martial law was proclaimed over the fear-stricken city of Hermosillo, the capital of Sonora. I was in Hermosillo during the height of the excitement, when troops were coming in bringing women and children for deportation, and also an occasional band of Yaqui soldiers, who were generally thrust into prison over night and in the morning taken out, lined up and shot.

One of the most terrible slaughters during the last war upon the Yaquis occurred in June, 1902. One evening three hundred armed Yaquis descended upon four haciendas near Hermosillo and took away six hundred of their tribe, including women and children, who were there employed. The band marched



Map Showing Fighting Grounds of Mexicans and Yaquis Indicated by

toward Ures, reached Mazatan Mountain, and while waiting for the Mexican soldiers made bows, arrows and spears for those who were unarmed.

On June 15 nine hundred Mexican soldiers came around the mountains, surprised the Yaquis, chased the armed warriors down the mountain, killing many of them and taking all the hacienda folk prisoners. Soon after the skirmish Ales Hrdlicka, representing the American Museum, found in a little ravine on the mountain side the bodies of sixty-four of the Indians, including a number of women, a little girl and a baby. The skulls of nearly all the victims were so shattered by Mauser bullets as to be of no use for the museum for which Hrdlicka was collecting.

I was told that in the hospital at Hermosillo in 1902 there were as many as twelve wounded women and a girl of seven with three bullet wounds in her body.

As another example of brave Mexican warfare I learned that three hundred women and children who were captured near the Rancho Viejo were kept in a corral under guard for two days, during which time they were given nothing to eat but two and one-half bushels of raw corn, on which they subsisted until night, when they were marched to Hermosillo, thirty-five miles away.

In July, 1902, an attempt was made by the Mexicans to surround two hundred Yaquis in the San Mateo foothills, but the Indians learned of what was afoot, slipped into a side valley before the advance of the troops, and in the night strangled the sentries and, proceeding over to the sleeping soldiers, slew the whole column in the darkness and bound the officers to the trees, where they were found when relief came.

One reason why the last ten years' war has been more bloody than any that preceded it was that the Mexican government decreed that every Yaqui living on the pueblos or working on ranches or anywhere else was to be treated as a prisoner of war. The

So long did the recent war last—it has been about ten years since the outbreak in the lower Rio Yaqui Valley—and in such determined fashion was it carried on that the government became tired of sending new recruits from the City of Mexico to Hermosillo and began to lose interest in the operations. To the officials at the Mexican capital Sonora was a sparsely settled frontier State in which fighting was always likely to be going on, if not with the Yaquis, then with the Seris or some other tribe. What the officials at the capital needed was a picturesque little object lesson, and one day it was given to them. After repeated and unavailing requests for reinforcements to make up for the many men who had gone down before the Yaqui Mausers, General Torres had eleven hundred uniform caps boxed up and shipped to the head of the War Department at the City of Mexico, accompanied by this brief but meaningful note:—

"Please fill these caps with soldiers."

This was the best appeal he could have made, and the men were sent to him forthwith.

Throughout Sonora "the war of extermination," as it was called after Diaz issued his famous deportation of women decree, assumed the nature of a very ghastly joke, albeit a joke that was more appreciated by those sitting at the actual seat of warfare than at Nogales and Guaymas, though both those towns have had their "Indian scares." Men have been shot down on the very outskirts of Guaymas, while the Yaquis once had virtual possession of Nogales.

In 1904 an expedition of three hundred Mexicans, under General Rafael Ysabel, Governor of Sonora, went out in pursuit of a Yaqui band fifty miles north of Guaymas and barely escaped ambush and slaughter. Near the Sonora Railway in the same year the Indians made a successful raid upon a wagon train that was going from Carpio to the Sultana Mine. Just as the teamsters were trying to get away, the train was halted by a howling band of fifty Yaquis descended upon them. The teamsters were captured and the wagons were looted of \$5,000 in silver and then burned. There were many other attacks by marauding bands, chiefly for the purpose of obtaining food and means to carry on the war. But the Mexicans have made onslaught upon the foragers, killing many of them on sight and stringing others up to the telegraph poles, so that Pullman passengers along the line have been treated to some strange and ghastly sights.

But these have been only individual and casual bloodlettings in the great war in which the Mexican watchword has been "Exterminate the Yaquis!" The history of ambush, of night attack and wholesale slaughter has been a dark one, reflecting the truth be known but little credit on either side, if we accept the Yaquis as something more than savage fighters and Mexico as a fully civilized nation.

There has been nothing by way of decisive battle in any of the great fights made by the Mexicans with the Yaquis. Even when, soon after the attempted occupation of Nogales by the Yaquis, General Torres, with three thousand soldiers marched against a force of twenty-five hundred Yaquis he failed to engage them, as the Indians quickly scattered about as sharpshooters, hung about the Mexican camp at night and picked off man after man without suffering any loss whatever. When, as was uncommon, a mass movement of the Indians was made the tactics pursued were the quick rushing in of the main body of warriors, the firing of several volleys and the hasty scattering in all directions, when, behind a mesquit shrub or a stone, the sharpshooters would bang away and do deadly work.

Like the subjugation of the brave Boers, the war, so far as the Yaquis have been concerned, has been one of erosion. By the gradual wearing away of their forces they have come down from a great, strong race to a mere handful. After the order by which they were all to be treated as prisoners of war wherever they dared not go to work to earn money on the ranches or in the mines, and so their resources diminished from year to year, they have been in a half starved condition. Then, too, the Mexicans have managed to stir up the Papagos against them. These Indians really gave the finishing touches to the work of conquest.

And so a brave race has gone down almost to extermination. The pity of it all is that this tribal declination means the loss to Mexico of her very ablest industrial class. Any American in Mexico will tell you that a Yaqui is worth as a laborer on the railroad or in the mines any two other native workmen. But when the sorrowful, subdued remnant of the tribe return home after all these long years of warfare they will not find their women there. Fatherhood, the upbringing of children and the perpetuation of their race are denied to them. Forty years from now they will be extinct as a tribe and "finis" will be written after the history of as brave a people as ever lived upon the earth.