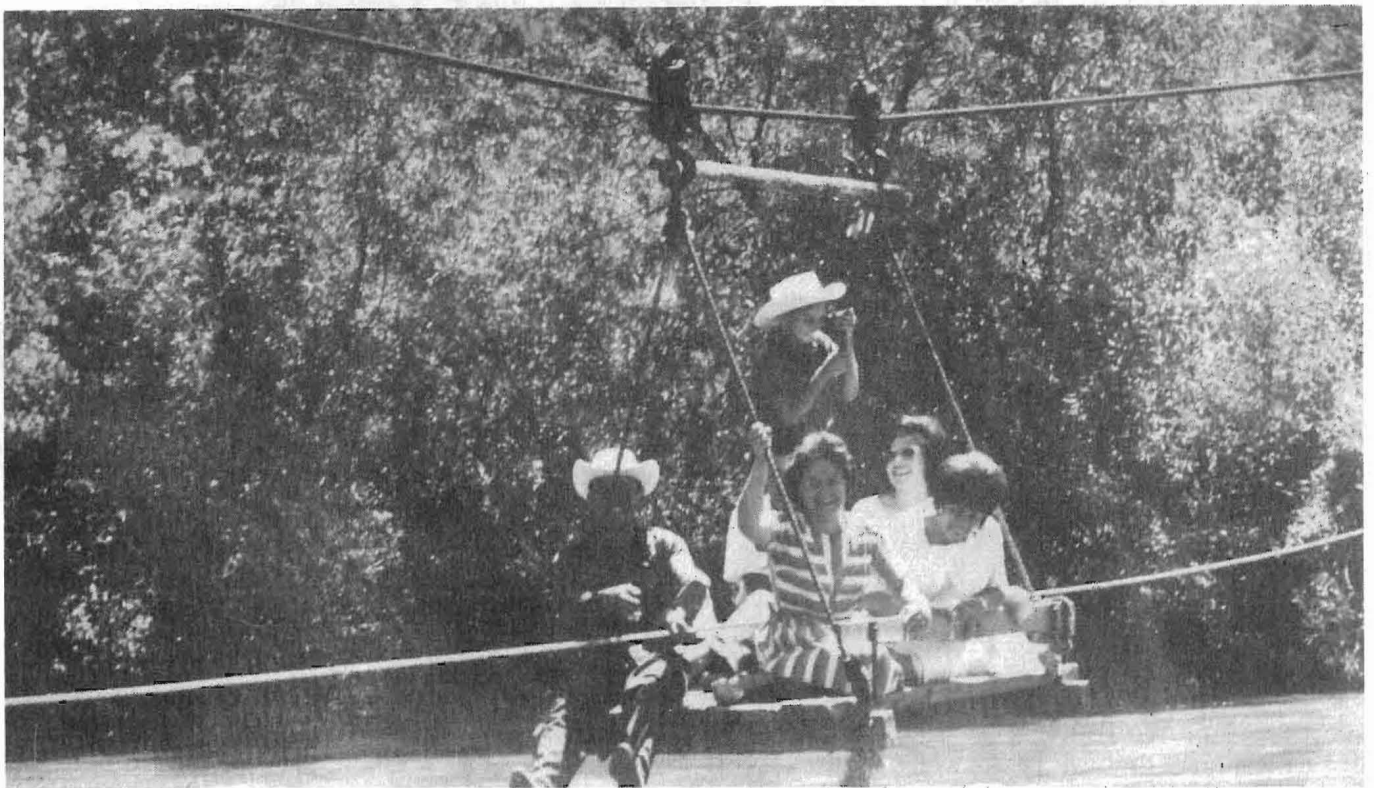


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CONTENTS

Vignette of Huasabas, Sonora

by Francis "Paco" Leyva3

A Special Note About This Issue:The computer used to typeset this issue has no accents or tildes available. So all the words in this issue which should bear these marks do not. A good example is the word Huasabas. It has an accent on the first "a." We hope this omission does not detract from readers' enjoyment of this history of a typical rural Sonoran town.

On The Cover:A group of people enjoyed a Sunday crossing on the Huasabas "canastilla." The canastilla served as a crossing vehicle of the Bavispe River from the 1950s through 1988 when it was replaced by a suspension foot bridge. This June, 1965 photo and all others in this issue are courtesy of Francis Leyva.

VIGNETTE OF HUASABAS, SONORA

By Francis "Paco" Leyva

INTRODUCTION

This is a vignette of the town of Huasabas, Son., and not a rigorous historical text. It is a translation of the Spanish version "Historita Y Estampas De Huasabas."

The Spanish version was written with two objectives: to serve as a token gift for the more generous contributors to the fund for the construction of the town's social center, and so the citizens of the town could have a nutshell account of the town's history.

The work is a compendium of data obtained from published works (see the bibliography) that deal with the early history of the region, of experiences and observations by the author, but in greatest part, data and anecdotes of the citizens of the town.

The parts that address the early history of the town, including the biographical sketch of Father Nentvig, were extracted from "Juan Nentvig's Rudo Ensayo: A Description of Sonora and Arizona in 1764," translated, clarified and annotated by Alberto F. Pradeau and Robert R. Rasmussen, University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1980. The author gratefully thanks the UA Press for permission to use material from "Juan Nentvig's Rudo Ensayo."

Thanks go to all the contributors and especially to then-Municipal President Ricardo Duran Fimbres for his research into the early families of Huasabas and the material he provided. Following is a list of the individuals who contributed in some form to this work:

Placida Acuna Fimbres, Humberto Alday "El Sonde," Maria Luisa Alday Fimbres, Venancio Barcelo Durazo, Socorro Barcelo Fimbres, Father Cordova "Padre Tito," Alfonso Duran Fimbres, Francisca Duran Fimbres "Tia Chica," Venancio Durazo Moreno, Josefa Fimbres Acuna "Chepa," Francisco Fimbres Bartolini "Chinaco," Jorge Fimbres Bartolini, Guadalupe Fimbres Moreno, Juan Bosco Fimbres Ramirez, Maria Jesus Fimbres Moreno "Senorita Chu," Rafael Fimbres Duran, Concepcion Leyva Fimbres "Conchita," Ramona Leyva Fimbres, Jose Pedro Leyva Leyva "Cheperete," Francisco Leyva Leyva "Guchi," Rafael Leyva Leyva "Bachi," Jesus Leyva Suarez "Cantera," Maria Moreno Mella, Mariana Moreno Mella, Ismaela Noriega Fimbres, Manuel Noriega Fimbres "Melo," Jose Ramirez Higuera "El Apache," Agustin Rios Marquez, Maria Urquijo Higuera, Felizardo Valencia Leyva, and Ramona Yanez "La Negra."

I. THE BEGINNINGS

At about nine in the morning of the eighth day, the Creator exclaimed, "Let there be Huasabas!" and Huasabas was made. And upon seeing his

magnificent creation, He rested before continuing with Bashuchi and Basuchon.

The community is situated on the western bank of the Bavispe River about 100 air miles south of Douglas. It's in a valley that extends north to south between two mountain ranges in what once was the heart of Opatá country. The Opatas have long since disappeared and there is little trace of their ethnicity.

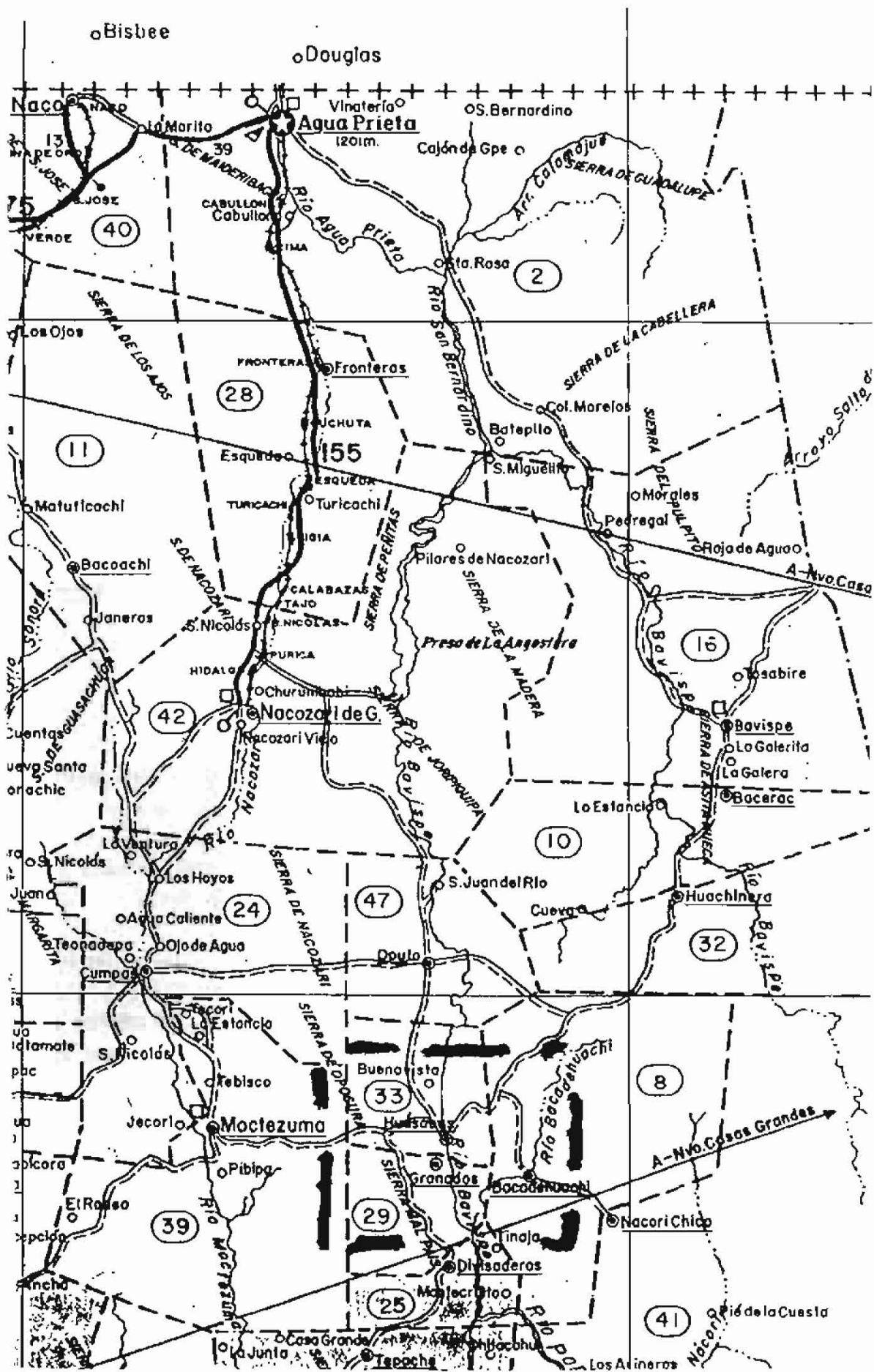
It is a bucolic and tranquil community isolated by the Rio Bavispe and Huasabas Mountain on the east and the Moctezuma Mountains on the west. It had very little contact with the civilization that surrounded it up until the middle of this century. Since the founding of the town, the life style of its people had changed little. While the external civilizations continued with technological advances, social changes, wars and revolutions, Huasabas continued being Huasabas.

It consists of three tiny districts in a terraced row, starting with the district of Basuchon at the extreme northern end, followed by Bashuchi to the south and the town proper of Huasabas at the southern extremity.

In this fertile valley, the inhabitants harvested the basic foodstuffs, raised cattle and domestic animals and were very independent from the rest of the world except for a few articles of necessity such as clothing, coffee, sugar, tools and utensils.



The day dawns on Huasabas. The remains of the old church can be seen at the rear of the existing church. June, 1965 photo.



One can say that the town was founded in March, 1645 when the mission was established by Father Marcos del Rio, giving it the name of La Mision de San Francisco Javier de Guasabas. In reality, the place had been inhabited for hundreds of years by natives.

II. THE MISSIONARIES

In 1642, Fray Juan Suarez, Father Superior of five Franciscans assigned to Sonora, dispatched these priests to go out and establish missions. One went to the area around Fronteras, another to Cucurpe and Opondepe, one to Bavispe, one to Bacerac and one to Huasabas. When the missionary arrived, there were already people of the white race living here. One of these families was a Moreno family.

By 1644, this priest had established a cabecera (the head) in this town. In February, 1645, the Jesuit Cristobal Garcia came to Huasabas and baptized 400 people since the priest assigned to Huasabas was not in town.

The reign of the Franciscans in Sonora lasted no more than five years, being replaced anew by the Jesuit order.

In March, 1645, an intense campaign was initiated to convert Opatas to the Christian faith. Two priests, Marcos del Rio and Egidio de Montefrio, came to the area of Hausabas. They stayed a few months gathering the Opatas and forming four towns: Huasabas, Oputo, Bacadehuachi and Nacori. Cristobal served in Huasabas from 1650 to 1653 and Marcos stayed until this death in 1655.

A series of missionaries followed Marcos and under their guidance the mission prospered, or more correctly, survived. By 1681 a good church had been erected. It had a domed intersection made of wood with elegant ornaments and silver detailing on the altars. The population of Huasabas at this time was 632.

Father Jose Pallares, a prominent theologian and writer, lent his services to Huasabas from 1696 to 1707. During his tenure in 1697, Father Eusebio Kino passed through this town.

In 1723, it was reported that the church continued in good state with many and very good ornaments purchased by Father Gutierrez. In 1730, it was reported as being a big church of antique construction and very well adorned, with the missionary quarters in good condition. Father Gutierrez went to Oposura and was replaced by Father Tomas Perez de la Busta. He stayed in Huasabas until about 1757. During his stay, the town was in a sad state of affairs with only a few families living in it. This was due to frequent attacks by Apaches.

The successor of Tomas was the most famous citizen of Huasabas, Father Juan Nentvig.

Nentvig was born in what is now Klodzko, Poland on March 28, 1713. He graduated from the Jesuit college of Glatz, Bohemia in 1744 and on June 17, 1750, he came to New Spain.

This priest, thin, dark, high of stature with brown hair, did not wait long to receive his orders to the mission of Tubutama in what is now northwest Sonora. From there he was sent to Saric, a small town north of Tubutama.

In November, 1751, the chief of the Pima Indians incited the Pimas and Seris to a general uprising in Saric with the purpose of ejecting all missionaries, soldiers, ranchers and "people of reason." Jacobo Sedelmayr, the priest at Tubutama, became aware of the plans and sent for Father Nentvig. He went to Tubutama, where the two priests, 14 Christianized Indians, a few mestizos and two Spanish soldiers fended off the Indians for three days. Three defenders died, all the rest were wounded and the two priests managed to escape during the night.

Father Nentvig, after escaping from the insurgents, provided his services in Santa Maria de Suamca and then Tecoripa. On March 15, 1757, he went to Huasabas, where he served continually until the expulsion of the Jesuits from New Spain, which occurred in 1767.

Before his end arrived, Father Nentvig constructed a new church in Huasabas. Father Aguirre, a visitor, reported that it was a beautiful church with fine painting and elegant silver ornaments. This church was constructed in 1764. Father Nentvig installed good altar stones, silver jewelry, candlesticks, etc. and it was considered one of the better churches in Sonora.

In 1784, the church needed repairs but they were not made and as a consequence, the church degenerated to such a degree that it had to be rebuilt in 1790. It is believed that this church, with many repairs and remodeling, lasted until 1954, when it was razed to make way for the present church.

In Father Nentvig's time, there were 33 missions in the province of Sonora grouped under four rectories. In 1767, King Carlos III ordered the expulsion of all Jesuits out of the Spanish Empire.

Father Nentvig was visiting priest and rector when the order arrived. He sent a letter to the 51 Jesuits in Sonora and Sinaloa, telling them to come to Matape, Son., without giving them an explanation. The Jesuits convened and listened to the order of expulsion. Immediately they were placed under armed guard and taken to Guaymas.

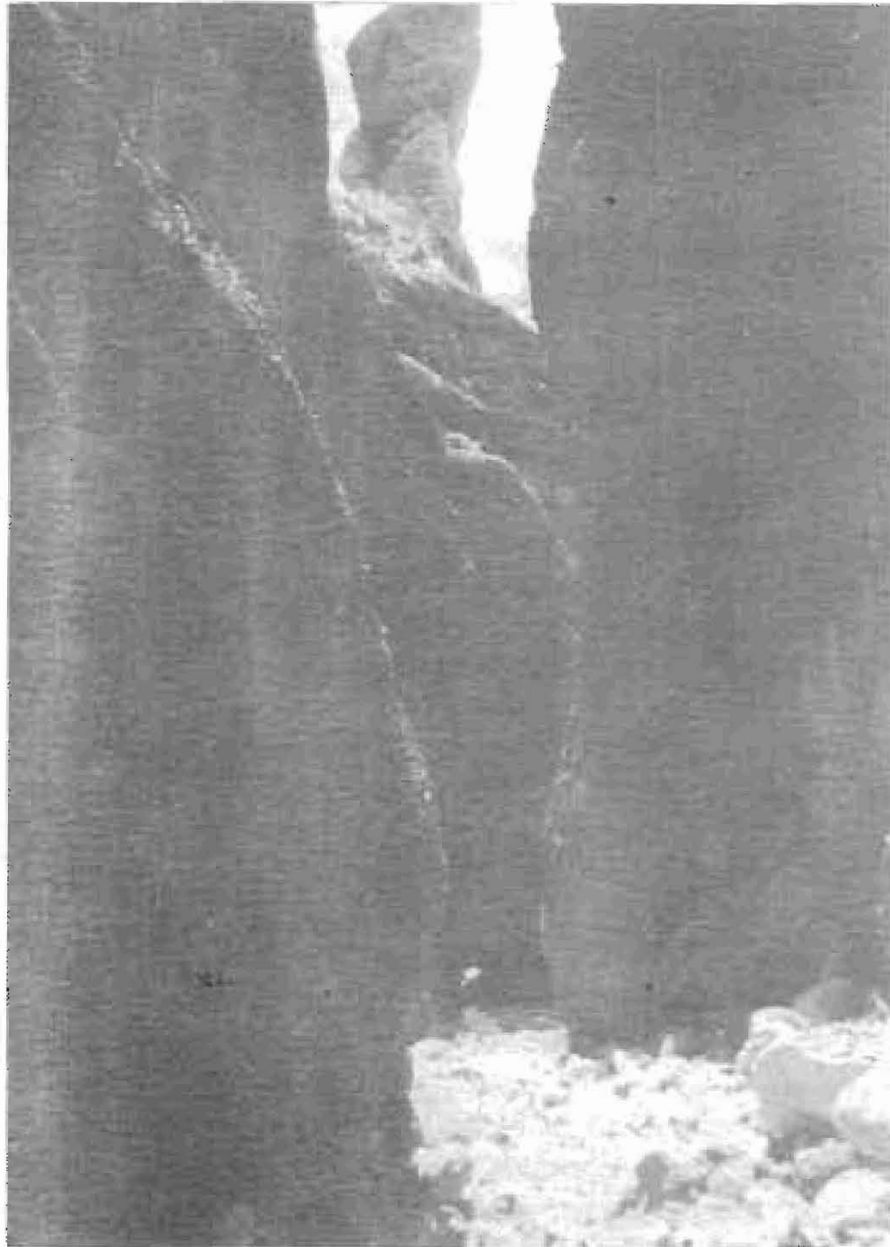
Father Nentvig was among them. After a wait of nearly nine months, they went by sea to San Blas and from there overland to Veracruz. Juan Nentvig died on the road on Sept. 11, 1768 in the small town of Ixtlan and was buried in Jala, Nayarit.

The fame of Father Nentvig is due to the fact that he wrote the essay, "Rudo Ensayo: A Description of Sonora and Arizona." This is probably the most important historical document of that era and this region and it was written during his stay in Huasabas.

It should be noted that this document, in addition to the text, contained a map of the region and it was made with extreme sacrifice, since the priest was almost blind. He did not receive a remedy until his predecessor, Father Tomas, passed away in Sahuaripa and his glasses were sent to Father Nentvig.

In his essay, the priest describes the Opata as a relatively docile tribe that accepted Christianity and European customs readily. This tribe was concentrated in the area of Huasabas, Oposura and Oputo because of the ever-present threat of Apaches and Seris. During his era, Huasabas and surrounding towns were frequently attacked by Apaches. As a result, Huasabas was walled in, although no traces are left of those walls.

In "Rudo Ensayo," Father Nentvig says the Alamo Ranch southwest of town belonged to the Huasabas mission and it was fertile and productive. Moreover, it had deposits of gold, but the property lay in abandon because of



"Cajon de los Pilares" is a miniature Grand Canyon at the foot of "Cerro de Huasabas." It's a 45-minute walk from the center of town. During the rainy season, it has a spectacular waterfall at the upper end. June, 1965 photo.

the danger presented by the Apaches and wild animals. The same was true of the mine of La Culebrilla and the ones in the Cerro de Huasabas.

The Rio Bavispe provided water for irrigation. But it was very unpredictable, remaining dry from May through July. Then the rainy season would arrive and the rampaging waters would destroy irrigation ditches and primitive dams.

Father Nentvig wrote the Valley of Huasabas is so narrow and deep that one barely manages to see a strip of sky above. This is probably true if one looks up from Cajon de los Pilares, east of town.

He speaks of round rocks located about five leagues north of town near the road to Oputo. These stones had a hollow center lined with crystallized rock. Many Huasabenos, including the author, have visited this site. According to Nentvig's description, today's road to Oputo is exactly the same this priest walked about 200 years ago!

He also wrote about hot water springs north of town and one west of town. The agua caliente north of town is a site frequently visited by Huasabenos because of its attractive cliffs and the hot water springs. For centuries, women of Huasabas have gone to do their laundry there.

After expulsion of the Jesuits, the system of missions began to degenerate. The Franciscans that replaced the Jesuits were fewer and did not demonstrate the same ambition or ability to administer the mission that their predecessors had. The mission were later secularized and passed on to parish priests.

During the first quarter of the last century, the Mexican people revolted against Spain and were victorious. By 1836, the new Mexican government had taken possession of many Spanish missions. And here, one can say, was the end of the missionary movement in North America.

III. THE EARLY STOCK

Little is known about the early origins of the families of Huasabas, but there are five families who have knowledge of their ancestry from the 19th century.

Of these, the Mella family is probably the earliest but the smallest. The Leyva family is one of the largest; easily comprising about 50 percent of the population. The two Fimbres families are next in size, and if earlier genealogical data were available, we would undoubtedly find a link between them. The last of the five is the Durazo family which is really a Granados family but because of its history and infusion into Huasabas is included in this account.

THE MELLA FAMILY

Juan de Mella y Hernandez was born in Galicia, Spain. As a young man, he served as a lieutenant to the king and managed to accumulate a small fortune. With money in his pocket, his adventurous spirit pushed him to the New World. He traveled to Oposura (now Moctezuma) and married Josefa Montano, who passed away shortly but not before leaving a son, Juan de Mella y Montano. Don Juan moved to Huasabas where he met Manuela Noriega,

whom he subsequently married. This matrimony yielded six daughters and two or three other children who died in infancy.

A man of great initiative, Don Juan bought the properties of El Rancho Seco and La Casita from the Ortiz family of Moctezuma. In addition, he owned grazing lands which he inherited from his first wife.

In 1839, he drew up an agreement between himself and the aborigines of the town which stated that the lands south and west of town belonging to the mission of Huasabas be ceded to him and that in return he would develop them at his own risk and cost for the mutual benefit of the community and himself.

He had a dam built, which resulted in successful production of grain and grapes. Don Juan constructed a flour mill at the southeast corner of town that was known as El Molino de la Mision.

On Sept. 19, 1852, Don Juan passed on, leaving a Huasabas in much better condition than the Huasabas he encountered when he first entered town.

His son, Juan de Mella Jr. married Guadalupe Acuna and had two daughters by her; one of whom died at age three. The surviving daughter married don Policarpo Moreno and of this marriage there remain two daughters, the last to carry the name of Mella. Marianita Moreno Mella still lives in Huasabas, while her sister, Maria, is a resident of Tucson.

After his father's death, Juan de Mella Jr. established production of wool at El Rancho San Gabriel. He was a successful businessman owning a team of 70 mules to transport goods to Guaymas, Hermosillo and Tucson.

An altruistic gentleman, he invited the Grande family of Curcurpe, to move to Huasabas to educate the populace. The family, consisting of three sisters and one brother, Manuel, accepted the invitation and in this way the educational system of Huasabas took root. Although the lineage of the Mellas was truncated due to the lack of males, they left a rich heritage.

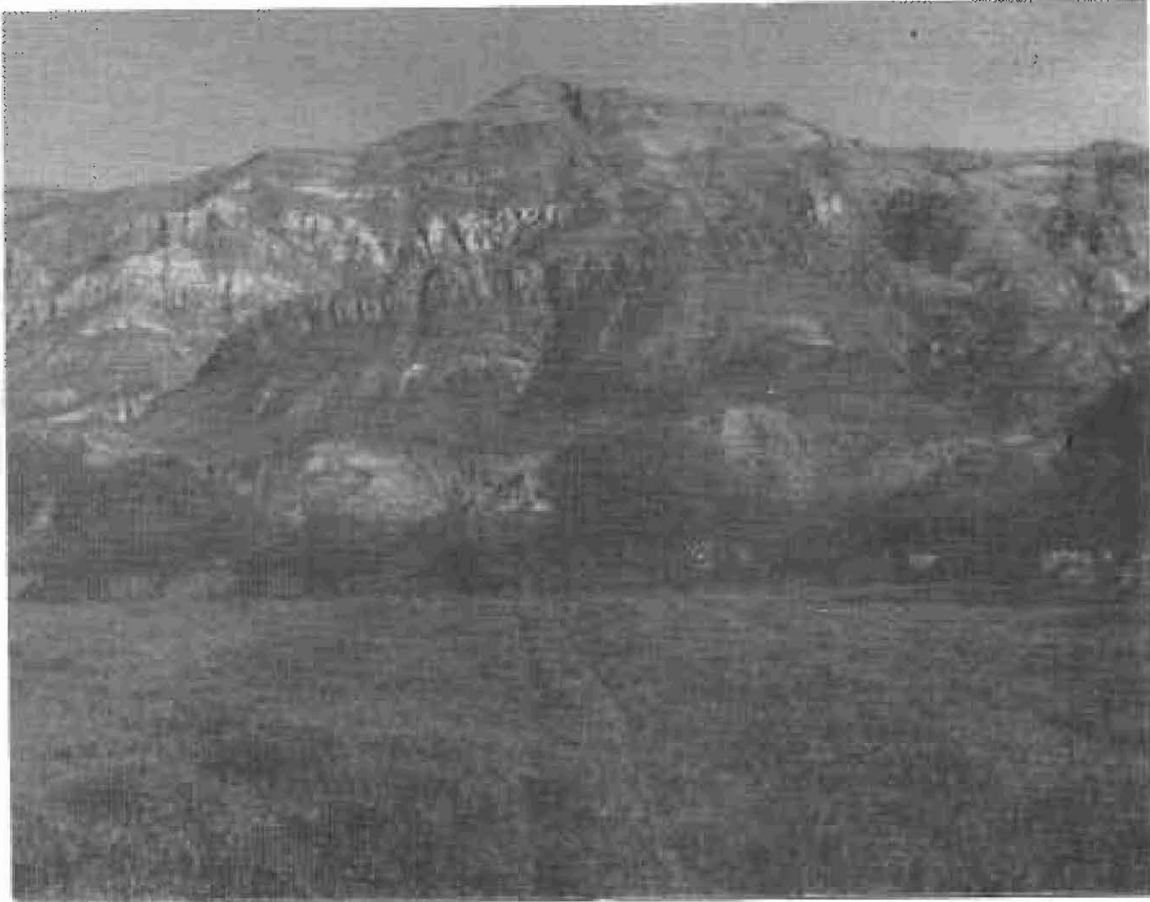
THE LEYVA FAMILY

The patriarch of the Leyva families of Huasabas was Don Luis Gonzaga Leyba who is believed to have been a Yaqui Indian originally from the northern part of Sinaloa. He arrived in Huasabas about the middle of the last century.

He was born between 1810 and 1820. As a young man he came to Huasabas and married Ramona Rios. From this matrimony resulted six daughters and six sons. From three of these (Encarnacion, Eduardo and Cecilio) descended the three most prolific branches of the Leyvas of Huasabas.

The first branch started with Encarnacion and his wife, Rosa Moreno. During the uprising of Mexico against the French empire, they emigrated to Silver City, N.M.

In Silver City, Encarnacion worked as a wagon driver transporting minerals to Santa Fe and on the return trip, merchandise in general. After a while, he went to Duncan, Ariz., where he built a hut on the banks of the Gila River. He lived there alone while he cleared the land to cultivate it.



The picturesque "Cerro de Huasabas" is the sentinel that guards the town on its eastern flank. At the foot of the mountain is the Bavispe River. The mountain has several canyons which are ideal picnic spots with cool shade and running water (sometimes). August, 1986 photo.

At his hut one evening, he found himself face to face with two Americans who stopped him in his tracks with guns in hand. "Get off our land! Go back to Mexico!" they ordered.

Encarnacion realized he had no other alternative but to make half a turn and go back to Silver City. Once there he talked to his neighbor, an American, who offered to accompany him to Duncan to recover his property. They armed themselves and returned to Duncan.

They arrived at his property, entered the vacant hut and waited for the two usurpers to arrive. Upon their arrival, they halted them in their tracks and ran them off.

Having secured his land, Encarnacion brought his family, Ramona, Mercedes, Jose Luis and Jose Maria, to live there. During the 20 years the family lived in Duncan, they made annual trips to Huasabas in a wagon pulled by four mules. They traveled from Duncan to Tombstone, then south.

Encarnacion stayed alone at his farm in Duncan while the family made its trips to Huasabas. While there on one trip, the family received news that En-

carnacion had died; probably strangled because the people who discovered him found him in a sitting position with his back against a pole and his money belt torn up.

Jose Luis and a cousin disposed of the property. They filled their hats to the brim with silver dollars and returned to Huasabas where the family remained the rest of their lives.

The other son, Jose Maria, married his cousin, Carmen Leyva, by whom he had five sons and three daughters. He dedicated himself to various occupations. Like almost every Huasabeno, he raised cattle and delved into agriculture on a small scale with his sons as helpers. He had his "milpa" (plot of land) about a mile north of town on the west bank of the river.

In the backyard, he had a shed consisting of three adobe walls and a front wall made from slats taken from soap boxes. Here he dedicated himself to carpentry. On the north side, he had a primitive blacksmith shop where he forged utensils and tools for his business and for clients.

As a mason, he constructed many of the concrete works of the town—sidewalks, pools, mills, wellheads and the brick wall of the old church. He assisted in construction and installation of the great irrigation wheel at the northwest corner of the plaza. The wheel was powered by the current of the irrigation ditch that ran along the western fence of the plaza. Buckets fastened around the periphery of the wheel lifted water from the ditch to the level of the plaza for watering orange trees.

As a small businessman, he opened up a store at the southeastern corner of his house and also operated his house as room and board for travelers.

He bought, in company with Don Francisquito Fimbres, a flour mill south of town where they ground the wheat they harvested as well as wheat brought in by local farmers.

He provided a local transportation service in his wagon. Sacks of wheat, sand and stone for construction were normally moved within the town on wagons. Motor vehicles were still pretty scarce.

Since he had one of the two or three typewriters in town, he also offered typing service. This last occupation didn't generate much revenue since nobody had any use for documentation of any kind except now and then someone might need a certificate filled out.

Of the eight offspring, only the oldest daughter remained in Huasabas. The oldest son late in life moved to Ciudad Obregon, and the rest to the U.S.

The other prolific branch of the Leyva family comes from Eduardo, who married Concepcion Durazo.

Like his brother, he died violently. One night, suspecting an Apache raid, he decided to sleep in the corral to defend the animals. The following day his family found him with his skull crushed by a big rock that an Apache had dropped on him.

From the matrimony of Eduardo-I and Concepcion, there were four sons and five daughters.

The third branch of the Leyva family was that of Cecilio. A large part of his family continues to live in Huasabas and part moved to Hermosillo and the U.S.

THE FIMBRES FAMILIES

There are two distinct Fimbres families which arrived in Huasabas in the late 1800s.

The patriarch of the first is Don Guillermo Fimbres who married Dona Felicitas Moreno. His ancestors were from Tonabavi, a small town that existed about 15 miles east of Moctezuma. It is believed that the family is from the Basque area of Spain. The surname "Fimbres" is the Mexicanized version of the Basque surname "Fimbrau."

Don Guillermo was very well known in the region. He founded the Fimbres flour mill about half a mile south of Huasabas and he owned land from La Cruz to the southern edge of town. he also had a team of mules which he used on his trips to Alamos to purchase merchandise to bring to Huasabas. Additionally, he had a rudimentary blanket factory.

The second Fimbres family had its origins in Oputo, but it is believed that earlier generations came from Moctezuma. The patriarch is Don Francisco Xavier Fimbres who married three times and had prolific progeny from all three marriages.

THE DURAZO FAMILY

It is believed that the Durazo family of Huasabas had its origins in Italy and that men of nobility of the Durazzi family migrated to Spain and served in the Spanish militia and later traveled to the New World. This occurred in the late 1700s.

The Durazos who established themselves at Topahue were Don Miguel Durazo and Dona Josefa Montano and their sons. Upon the death of Don Miguel, Dona Josefa moved to Oposura (now Moctezuma) with her sons.

In 1816, the Moreno family, well established in Oposura and with huge properties just west of Huasabas, invited the sons of Dona Josefa to develop the land south of Huasabas. The seven brothers accepted. In 1828, they founded Granados.

One of the brothers, Don Francisco Durazo Tao, married Dona Mariana Moreno Fimbres. The third of their children, Venancio Durazo Moreno, was born in Granados in 1843.

At age 25, Don Venancio I married Teresa Barcelo Durazo. The first of their children was Francisco. Don Venancio I sent him to study in the seminary in Hermosillo immediately after completing his primary education in Granados. Shortly thereafter, Francisco married his cousin, Eloisa Moreno.

Two of Francisco's sons, Don Venancio III and Lauro, came to live in Huasabas, becoming businessmen and cattlemen. Don Venancio III married Maria Moreno and Lauro married her sister, Maria Luisa Moreno.

Don Venancio III established a general store in 1931 and it is the oldest

commercial establishment in Huasabas that still continues to serve the public.

Don Venancio I had been married just two months when a bandit named Salvador Paredes, along with his sidekick Chacon, attacked Granados to sack it. He arrived early one day in June. The Granadenos barred their doors and climbed on the rooftops to see what was going on without being seen.

Don Venancio admonished his father, Don Francisco, not to wander out on the street. But Don Francisco, desiring to know who was provoking the commotion, went out in the street. A couple of Paredes' men fired at him and left him dead at the western corner of the plaza.

Paredes took as prisoners all the men he could round up to extract all the money he could from them. Since they didn't have too much, he took 25 of them and marched them to Huasabas. Among these was Don Venancio I, whose father had been shot earlier.

Don Venancio pleaded with Paredes to let him return to Granados to take care of his father's burial, placing as security Gerardo Rios. He was allowed to return to Granados and Dona Manuela Mella loaned him a pair of shoes to make the return trip. After the burial, Don Venancio returned to Huasabas at sundown as he had promised.

The next day the bandit marched all his prisoners toward Oputo. There he was warmly received and was treated to about three days of dancing, wine, women and song. But this was only a ruse planned by the district judge, Don Roman Roman and Father Moreno, the priest of Granados.

The plan worked out successfully and Paredes and Chacon were taken prisoners and the men disarmed. The day after this incident, the bandit and his sidekick were hanged.

Don Venancio I returned to work his small property that he had in the cove called La Cruz. He bought properties from natives of Huasabas and acquired other properties from the state government.

In 1880, Don Venancio I received notice that in Huachinera a widow was selling properties important for the raising of cattle. So Don Venancio I entered into an agreement with two friends from Huachinera. They visited the widow and presented their proposition to buy the property; a proposition which was immediately accepted.

They signed the purchase agreement before the local judge, requesting a term of little more than a month to consummate the purchase and transfer of title. They paid for the property in cash and the transaction would be completed upon receiving the documents that went with the property. As time and date, they set sundown of a certain day at which they would meet with a judge to finalize the transaction.

One day before the assigned day, Don Venancio I, representing his partners, left for Huachinera where the transaction had been registered. When he arrived there, he discovered that the agent in charge of the transaction had gone to Granados to present himself before the court, stating that if the interested parties did not show up by sundown, the contract would be null and

void.

Upon discovering this, Don Venancio I and his stableboy returned immediately to Granados. There was about a half-hour before the sun would go down when they arrived in Huasabas.

He told his stableboy, "Look, there goes Jorge's horse. It's going to stop and drink at the irrigation ditch. Run after it and rope it and hold it there for me."

They changed saddles and he took off at full gallop and arrived at the courthouse to meet the deadline just as the sun was setting. The agent was already there to declare that the interested parties had not shown up and the pact was null and void. In the presence of Don Venancio I, the judge legalized the pact agreed to and delivered to Don Venancio I the documents which legalized the properties.

Later on, Don Venancio I and Don Fadrique Arvizu, bought out the proportions held by their other two partners.

In the last decade of the past century, Don Venancio I decided to install a steam-powered flour mill. He ordered it from the United States through the business firm of Keterson Dejetum, which shipped it to Moctezuma in wagons and carts. From this same company, he requested an expert to come prepare the location for the mill. The expert constructed a building.

About that time, the machinery arrived at Moctezuma. Don Venancio decided to transport it, but since he nor the men that assisted him had knowledge of the machinery, they brought it in greater part assembled, even though the boiler weighed about three tons. They crossed the sierra of El Encino through the pass known as El Aire in two huge wagons pulled by oxen.

About this time, Francisco, Don Venancio's oldest son, returned after having gone through the second year in preparatory school in Guadalajara. He decided to help his father in his different businesses. Along with agriculture and the ranch, he dedicated himself to work the small mines.

Don Venancio I worked second class ores that were not thought of as commercially exploitable. To that end, he established two "arrastras" (drags) powered by a beast of burden to grind ore. The arrastas consisted of a flat stone surface about 15 feet in diameter over which a large rock was dragged to grind the ore. A pole at the center of the area served as a pivot around which a horizontal pole was pulled by a beast of burden. The rock was tied to that pole by ropes and dragged around the stone floor.

Once the ore was ground, it was placed in the arrasta and water and quicksilver were added. The mules dragged it all day until the substances were completely mixed. At night, the mass was heaped to prepare it for the next day. It was tested with a spoon made of cattle horn and if it still showed a residue of metal, the workers added quicksilver until there was no more metal to recover from the mass.

Next they liquefied the mass by putting it in a tub of cowhide hung near the water well. The workers poked the mass with a pole while another added

water until the mass liquefied and all the debris washed out leaving only the residue and quicksilver. Then the residue was washed with water until all the sand was removed and only the quicksilver remained.

With the process completed, Don Venancio would put one of his expert workers to washing that quicksilver on a metate, adding water and soap until the quicksilver and metal was as clean as possible. The residue was then cooked in a metal barrel in which the quicksilver was transported from the United States. The barrel was opened at one of its bases and filled. Compressing the mass until it was within two inches of the top, the workers filled the space that remained with "tepalcates" (pieces of clay pottery).

They secured the barrel edge with wire and placed it over another cylinder that was built into the adobe fireplace which had below it a door of sufficient size so that a bucket would fit. On top of the cylinder they build a fire. When the quicksilver was hot, it would fall to the bucket with water and when the worker estimated that the mass was completely melted, they tested it with a horn spoon. When no more quicksilver dripped into the bucket, they stopped feeding the fire. When the cylinder cooled off, they emptied it over a surface where a plug of the solidified mass remained.

Don Venancio performed this work only when his agricultural and cattle business permitted, since they were the base of his enterprise.

In 1907, Don Venancio I established a store of general merchandise. He sent two sons, Ignacio and Francisco, to Chihuahua and Hermosillo to buy the merchandise.

After a few months, he sent Venancio II to his Hacienda La Cruz as administrator and in the following year, he established in Huasabas a branch of his Granados store, sending Venancio II there and putting him in charge. Don Venancio I then retired to private life and distributed his lands among his sons and daughters.

In 1927, the two older daughters of Venancio II completed their education in Hermosillo and returned home. Don Venancio I asked his son to let Teresa, the oldest daughter, take the burden of caring for him. Teresa dedicated her time to caring for her grandfather since her grandmother had already passed away.

After 1929, Don Venancio gradually weakened and with resignation delivered himself to the will of God. One day while sitting in a rocking chair with his granddaughter working next to him, he said, "Listen Teresa, I'm in a cold sweat. Bring me a thermometer."

Teresa complied and placed the thermometer in his mouth. It did bulge a hair past 35 degree Centigrade.

He insisted that she tell him what temperature the thermometer indicated and when he found out, he said, "This is the sweat of death; I have little time left. Take me to bed and send for my compadre Jose Moreno and all of my children to give them my last advice and blessings. But don't leave my side, you pray and close my eyes."

When everyone arrived, he gave them advice, recommending that they fulfill all their duties as Christians, to be charitable and to remain united just as he had set the example.

He then gave them blessings and, turning to his granddaughter, told her, "Teresa, now you pray for me."

She gave him a crucifix which he took in his hands and kissed all the wounds of Christ, perfectly conscious. With great faith and atonement, he recited the Act of Contrition and his breathing got heavier and heavier and he drifted into sleep. His granddaughter closed his eyelids and his soul flew to heaven at 4:30 p.m. on Aug. 25, 1934.

His whole life was testimony of the perfect Christian, man and father that knew how to fulfill duties, leaving all of his progeny healthy examples in all spheres of life — social, political, like a good Christian, patriot and citizen.

IV. THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

In 1910 the Mexican Revolution exploded in Puebla.

Don Venancio I, alert to the happenings in the country, realized this was a general revolution and decided to move to the United States.

He called together his children and told them, "The situation is getting very serious and I am thinking of going to the United States. I would like all of you and your families to join me."

His sons Francisco, Carlos and Venancio II replied, "We are right in the midst of production at this moment and it would be very difficult to abandon our businesses. It would be better if you went with the unmarried children and we'll find a way of taking care of ourselves."

"Look," Don Venancio replied, "you don't know what a revolution is, and you may end up losing more by staying than by abandoning your property and businesses. Moreover, I would not be at ease if you do not accompany me."

The sons thought it over.

"I'll take care of all the expenses during the time that we live in the U.S.," Don Venancio I added.

The sons accepted.

Don Venancio I also suggested to his friends that they leave with their families to avoid possible disasters resulting from the uprising. His friends accepted the suggestion and started making preparations in the early months of 1911.

Don Venancio I sold his cattle to an outsider with the stipulation that upon taking the cattle away from his property, payment would be made to an agent who would remain behind to take care of his business.

By March of 1911, supporters of Francisco Madero had risen up against the government.

In Huasabas, each side entered with the objective of recruiting men and obtaining food and other necessities. Potential recruits were not offered pay but

were offered "free hand" authority. That is, they were given the authority to confiscate whatever they needed from stores and homes.

The troops that entered Huasabas normally camped out at the plaza, across the street from the church. They slaughtered cattle and prepared meat in the street between the plaza and church. The more daring robbed rich people.

Don Policarpo Moreno Durazo and Julian Moreno were considered men of great wealth and were prime targets.

Don Policarpo, who married Antonia Mella, daughter of Don Juan Mella of Huasabas, had stayed in Huasabas. He owned an entire block of property in the heart of town where he had an elegant residence. In the southeast corner of the block was his general store. On the north side was a warehouse always replete with corn, wheat, beans and other foodstuffs. On the west side was a warehouse with feed for his horses and cattle.

When the troops rode into town they confiscated nearly the entire contents of his store. They took what they could use and scattered the rest in the street. In addition to losing his store, his ranch was decimated, without even one head of cattle remaining.

There were two minor shoot-outs in town between the opposing factions. During one of them, Don Bernardo Manzo, former mayor, stuck his head out the window of his house to see what was going on. A bullet put an end to his life.

In 1915, troops entered Huasabas and took Don Policarpo and Don Julian captive to Moctezuma under orders of a General Samaniego. Approaching Moctezuma, the party waited for the Maderistas and Porfiristas to stop firing before continuing with the captives. A stray bullet ended Don Policarpo's life before they reached Samaniego's headquarters. Eventually Don Julian was set free and he returned to Huasabas.

Don Venancio I left a person in charge at each of his ranches with the standing order: "Don't offer opposition to any of the forces that may want to take anything. Instead, cooperate with them, asking nothing more in return than a receipt for what they take in support of the cause."

Don Venancio I, accompanied by his family and Don Fadrique Arvizu and Jose Moreno with their families, headed toward Douglas. They stayed a week at Hacienda La Cruz waiting for the latest news of the revolutionary forces that had risen up in Sahuaripa and other neighboring places. From there they started to Moctezuma because they were afraid that if they waited longer, the railway to Agua Prieta might be put out of commission.

When they arrived on Moctezuma, friends there said, "It isn't necessary to go to the U.S. The federal government will put down the uprising shortly."

Don Venancio I and his entourage were not of the same opinion and replied, "Since we are already on the move we are going to continue for a short stay in the U.S. anyway."

When Porfirio Diaz was deposed as president of Mexico and the fighting factions came to a peaceful agreement, Don Venancio I thought peace would

continue. He sent Venancio II and family to Granados to assess the damage.

Early in 1912, Don Venancio I and son Francisco, returned to Granados. Then in March, Pascual Orozco rose up against the provisional government. The Durazos moved to Moctezuma, where they spent the rest of that year.

In March of 1913 they received notice that the Orozquistas were going to attack Moctezuma. Don Venancio I and his friends decided to move back to Douglas. That turned out to be a good move because the Orozquistas did attack Moctezuma. Some of Don Venancio's friends from Moctezuma were forced to join him in Douglas.

Don Venancio I and friends remained in Douglas during the Carranza uprising. Venustiano Carranza rose up against the government established by General Huerta after the assassination of President Madero and Vice-President Pino Suarez.

While in Douglas, Don Venancio's friends got together to decide whether they should support the Huerta government. But after listening to his friends, Don Venancio I replied that he would not take part in the armed revolution of Mexico. He sincerely felt that it was unchristian for men to be killing each other because one or another governed the country. Because of this, he abstained from taking an active part in the struggle.

Don Venancio I stayed in Douglas with sons Francisco and Ignacio until 1917. During this time he built apartment flats that were rented until the project paid off and they were sold.

Don Venancio I was at La Cruz when, in 1918, an epidemic called the "Spanish Influenza" appeared. The epidemic caused great ravages in Huasabas and other towns of the region. About 90 per cent of the inhabitants fell victim to this disease, which plagued the area for about a year. There were times when corpses were buried daily. On several occasions, those that had been pall bearers one day were themselves buried the next day. Even in large families there was often only one person left standing to take care of the rest of the family which was sick.

The most popular treatment for this sickness was cooked yams. Since the sickness was so horrible and deadly, the demand for yams skyrocketed. A Chinese man who lived in Huasabas at the time had the largest garden of yams in town. He was the one that suggested cooked yams as the antidote for the disease.

V. THE LAST OF THE SAVAGES

The last violent encounter between Indians and "people of reason" in this region occurred on Nov. 1, 1919 in Bacadehuachi.

Nachito Moreno, resident of Oputo, was headed toward Bacadehuachi to sell wheat. A band of Yaqui Indians ambushed him at Cumaro Ranch about five miles north of Huasabas, killing him and relieving him of his wheat. They headed toward the Tazajal Ranch northeast of Huasabas.

Mariana, one of the residents, saw the Indians approaching and fled to Huasabas to get help. On receiving the news, Ramon Rios "El Siguamari"

got on his horse and headed for the ranch to protect his fiancée who lived there.

The Indians captured "El Siguamari" and forced him to act as their guide. They crossed the river and then at a place called "El Carrizalito" they pulled off Siguamari's clothes and gave him a torn piece of clothing of their own to wear. They set him free but another captive guide did not fare so well. They hung him at this spot.

Siguamari ran toward Huasabas and as he approached the river his family met him. When they arrived in town, they encountered a resident of Oputo.

"I'm looking for Nachito Moreno," he said. "He left with a couple of mules loaded with sacks of wheat and was headed toward Bacadehuachi. His mules arrived home alone without the load. Has anyone seen him?"

Siguamari informed him that he was captured by a band of Indians who were carrying sacks of grain but they did not have Nachito with them. A search was organized and it wasn't long before they found the body.

Lt. Col. Fulberto Limon of the Mexican Army arrived in Huasabas with his soldiers. He was in pursuit of that band of Indians. Siguamari informed him that the renegades were headed toward towns on the other side of the river.

Being a Yaqui himself and knowing the ways of the Indians, Limon concluded the band was more than likely going to strike Bacadehuachi first. He and his soldiers galloped off taking the short route through Granados.

The Indians arrived at Bacadehuachi at 6 a.m. the next morning, in time to interrupt the wedding of Pedro Moreno and Genoveba Samaniengo. They mingled with the townspeople. The people, not knowing the intentions of the Indians, received them with caution and offered food and coffee.

But soon the Indians made their intentions known. They started to sack the town and took all the men captive, locking them up in the corral behind the schoolhouse. The women headed for the closest hiding places they could find. The young girls were rounded up by the older women and taken to hide in an attic (the only one in town.) The attic had a small porthole which allowed a little bit of air for breathing. They planned to stay stuffed in that attic until the attackers left.

The Indians were in the midst of sacking the town when they were surprised by the blaring of a bugle. Limon had deployed his infantry around the town and was leading a charge of his calvary down San Marcos Mesa. The Indians escaped through Nacori leaving many of their companions and three of Limon's men dead.

Jesus Valencia rushed to the attic to free the young ladies. They were terrified because they could hear the Indians coming and going in the house and thought that at any moment their hiding place would be discovered. When they received the news of Limon's arrival, they left the attic and from that house all the way to the church went on their knees to give thanks.

The town was seriously damaged. In addition to property stolen, the Indians damaged that which they could not carry. It was obvious the attack was

based not just on material needs, but also on their hate for the "whites." It is not known why Huasabas was spared, since the marauding band passed within a couple of miles of it.

As a result of this action, Limon was promoted to full colonel and later advanced to the rank of general. At the time of the Bacadehuachi incident, Limon was about 20 years old.

The victory of Limon is celebrated every year in Bacadehuachi on Nov. 1 with a parade, the singing of a hymn that was composed in his honor and other festivities. A school in Bacadehuachi is named after him.

There were other visits to towns in the region by Indians.

Dona Ursula, who lived next door to the author when he lived in Huasabas, was feeding her hogs one afternoon. The pigpen was in the orchard back of the house near the irrigation ditch that ran past the extreme end of the property. The ditch was overgrown with tall weeds and as she fed the hogs, an Apache youth popped out of the weeds.

She was startled and swallowed hard but didn't panic. The Indian motioned that he wanted something to eat. She went back to the house, spread some refried beans on a tortilla, rolled it up into a burrito and brought it out to the Indian. The young man lunged at her, grabbed the morsel from her hand and downed it in a couple of bites and ran off. This occurred some time in the early 1920s and is probably the last incident involving Indians in Huasabas.

In the early part of the 1900s, the town was raided by Apaches who carried off food and small items of property but didn't do much damage. One piece of property carried off was a young boy, six or seven years old, named Caralampio. He was never seen again and was given up for dead.

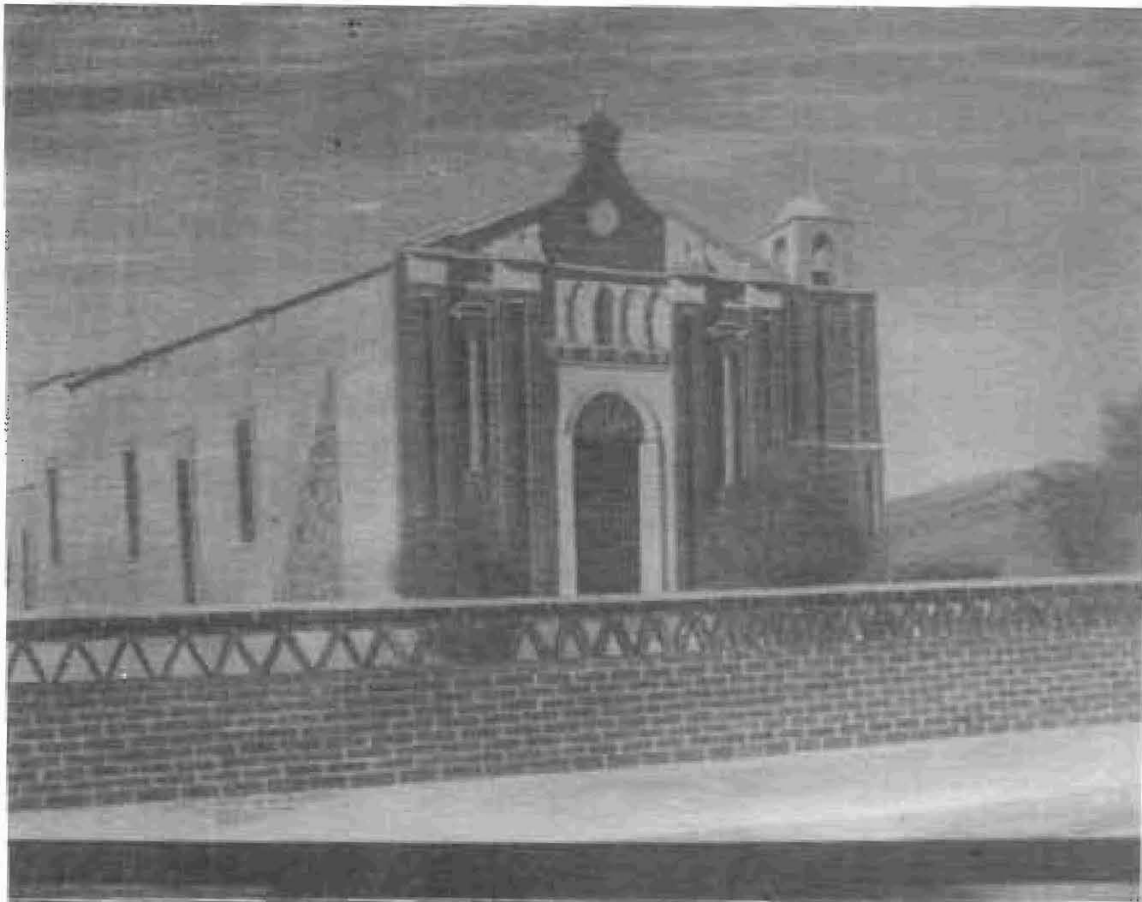
Years later, the Apaches raided the town at night. The morning after the raid, Caralampio's mother got up and cautiously entered the kitchen because she had heard Indians in there the previous night. She was shocked by what she saw. "La olla de los frijoles" (clay bean pot) had scribbled on its sooty surface "Caralampio" and food had been taken from the kitchen.

The boy apparently had assumed the life of the Apaches and never returned to his family except for that one clandestine visit, preferring the nomadic life of his captors.

VI. THE CHURCH OF THE TOWN

The church that was constructed in 1790 did not remain intact but was rebuilt and remodeled during its nearly two centuries of existence. Early in the 1900s, there remained a row of rooms in the churchyard which in their time (probably the 1800s) had been a convent. At the beginning of this century they were used as a school.

The convent extended from what is now the old parish house to the corner of Juarez Avenue and Ignacio Aldana Street. At this corner in the early 1940s, there were ruins still standing that probably were the last remnants of the convent.



This is a painting of the old church as it existed in 1943. The facade was built in 1925-26 but the basic structure was that built by Father Nentvig in the late 1700s.

The yards on both sides of the church were used as cemeteries in the last two centuries but with time all visible signs disappeared. When the main irrigation ditch of Huasabas was laid along the western boundary of the churchyard, several human skeletons were uncovered that undoubtedly belonged to that cemetery.

One change in the church occurred in 1917. The ancient brick floor was raised and wooden planks were found underneath. This may have been the tomb of Fray Marcos del Rio and other church dignitaries because the planks had Latin inscriptions and Roman numerals on them.

In 1925, the roof was replaced with a corrugated metal roof. One of the gigantic beams removed from the old roof still exists in the home of Don Venancio III.

In 1926, the brick and concrete facade was designed and built under the direction of Don Miguel de Castillo, a resident of Moctezuma. This facade was of excellent architectural design that gave the church a unique appearance. Don Miguel was also the designer of the elegant altar built at that time.

The bell tower was constructed during this period. The bells which hung in the churchyard since the big earthquake were installed in the tower. Because

of the fear that the bells might fall from the belfry due to earthquakes, they had been hung from a beam supported by two Y-shaped tree trunks in the churchyard. There are three bells, one with the year 1889, another with the year 1890 and a third with the year 1691 inscribed on the surface.

Labor for rebuilding the church was provided by the townspeople. At about 4 p.m. the church bell rang and entire families gathered to work on the church. Women and children carried sand in pails or clay pots from the arroyo. Men brought sand in sacks on the backs of burros and bricks were transported from Basuchon where they were made.

In 1928, Huasabas received a statue of Nuestra Senora de la Asuncion. It replaced the statue of La Virgen Dolorosa which was transferred to the rear of the church.

Demolition of this church began in 1954 to make way for the present church. The cornerstone was placed in 1956. The firm Arquitectos Asociados of Ciudad Obregon designed the church but construction was by the people of Huasabas. The project was financed totally through voluntary contribution. The church first saw service in 1959.

The church was built in the same place as the ancient church, but since that one was long and narrow and the new one short and wide, the rear end of the



The existing Nuestra Senora de la Asuncion Church was built in 1954-56 under the direction of Father Ricardo Duran. October, 1986 photo.

ancient church remained intact for several years. In 1986, the principal part of the altar still stood out in the open but in relatively good condition considering that it had been exposed to the elements for 25 years.

VII. EARTHQUAKES

On May 3, 1887, the region shook with a devastating earthquake that left many dead and injured.

Don Venancio I, who at the time was at La Cruz, rapidly saddled a horse and galloped to Granados where his family was staying. As he passed through the area known as "El Huarache" the earth opened up beneath the hoofs of his horse, spitting water and fire.

A great crack passed through the west side of Huasabas and continued north to Colonia Morelos. This crack is known as the Fault of Huasabas.

In Huasabas, people didn't know what was happening but people who had worked in California knew what it was all about. They urged everyone to get out of their houses. Many houses were destroyed or severely damaged.

The earthquake did not consist of a single shock but several quakes. The epicenter was located in Batepito, an abandoned town. In Bavispe not a single house was left standing; 47 people perished there.

The toll would have been greater had it not been for Don Cesario Moreno. He had lived through quakes in California and knew what to do. He shouted to get people out of the church in which they were taking refuge. The church collapsed in a heap of dirt and splinters shortly after it was evacuated. Don Cesario managed to save the statue of San Miguel before the church collapsed.

"Tia Madre" Valencia, born in Huasabas in 1900 told the author that there was another great earthquake in 1908 or 1909. She missed it, sleeping through the whole thing. She was awakened by rescuers to find a hole in the roof and a pile of adobes beside her bed. The atmosphere was opaque with dust and it was difficult to breathe.

In 1913, Huasabas was shaken by another earthquake. It destroyed several houses and left others in a weakened state. Persistent rains completed the job of destroying them.

An indirect death from this earthquake was Refugio Fimbres, aunt of the author. She had been ill for some time and her legs and feet were wrapped in hot rags to make them sweat. This supposedly would make her feel better.

The house shook and a crack appeared at the corner of the room in which she was sitting. Everyone scrambled out into the cold rain. This sudden exposure to the cold in her state of health caused her illness to aggravate. Days later she passed away.

An indirect death of the earthquake was that of Don Lino Moreno, an elderly man. While attending mass, a lady had a seizure and she screamed and flailed her arms. The abrupt manifestation startled the congregation and everyone thought she sensed an earthquake. People panicked and scrambled

out of church. When Lino failed to show up at home, his family searched for him. They found his trampled corpse near the main entrance of the church.

In the wee hours of the morning in 1923 the celebration of the wedding of Don Ramon Urquijo and Carmelita Higuera was starting to wind down when a horrendous noise was heard and the ground began to shake. A boulder, the size of a house, rolled down the mountainside, east of town. Another quake was in progress and caused great damage to the church.

The earthquakes caused some families to abandon Huasabas and seek refuge in other places. Don Jose Maria Leyva (grandfather of the author) took his family to Oputo. There with Don Antonio Bartolini, he purchased a flour mill complete with an orange grove from a Father Valencia.

They gave Father Valencia 20 cows as a down payment and 20 more during the next two years. On completing the payments, Father Valencia told Don Bartolini to notify Don Jose Maria to stop by for the ownership papers. The notification was never given. Don Jose Maria and family returned to Huasabas and Don Bartolini remained with the mill.

Don Jose Maria then constructed another mill in Huasabas, since he was very good at carpentry, mechanics, masonry and related disciplines. Another of his projects was installing the irrigation wheel at the plaza.

The wheel was made of wood and was about six feet in diameter. It had several buckets fixed around its periphery. The running water of the ditch pushed the wheel by its submerged portion. The wheel turned, filling the submerged buckets. At the top, the buckets emptied water into a trough which carried the water to trees in the plaza.

Around 1950, the ditch was rebuilt on the western part of town. The irrigation wheel was moved to the new ditch and later replaced by a wheel made mostly of metal.

VIII. HARBINGERS OF THE MODERN ERA

In 1920, telephone service was inaugurated in Huasabas, uniting it with Oputo and Moctezuma. The one telephone was a crank-type which required the caller to turn a crank (or have a helper do it) while he talked. But by 1925 there were few traces left of the system; it is not known why it was abandoned.

An automobile entered Huasabas in 1928 driven by Cayetano Sanchez of Moctezuma. This motorist crossed the mountain in his Model T Ford without benefit of roads. Little by little, with patience and help of a squad of assistants and teams of mules, he opened up a trail to Huasabas.

The local populace referred to it as "La Maquina." Don Cayetano charged half a peso per person for a trip from one end of town to another. Anytime the Model T was in town, the doorway of every house was blocked by people watching agape as the strange apparatus went by. The aroma of the exhaust was new and strange and people were attracted by it.

That Model T was not the first auto in the area. A little bit earlier a Granadeno had brought in a Dodge, disassembled, on a mule train and had

reassembled in Granados. He charged \$5 (pesos) for the trip between Granados and Huasabas. These vehicles were soon followed by a truck purchased by the Barcelo brothers of Granados.

As motor vehicles began to appear, fuel for them had to be obtained. Don Venacio III had gasoline brought in from Moctezuma by mule. Each animal carried a 35-liter can slung on either side. He sold it for \$5.70 (pesos) a 5-gallon can.

In the 1940s there were two or three locally owned vehicles. Carlitos Moreno had a much-admired blue two-door coupe. For a while, sitting on the street corner in the evening, admiring and talking about the contraption was a past time of men and boys.

In 1942, Jose Pedro Leyva and Manuel Durazo acquired a commercial truck with racks. The vehicle did not move about town without a dozen kids hanging around the edge of the flatbed with their knees tucked up to their tummies, like a bunch of monkeys getting a ride.

How things have changed! Today, during the celebration of Nuestra Senora de la Asuncion, on August 15 the town suffers the same problem as a great metropolis — the lack of parking space!

One late afternoon in 1932, the sound of a gasoline motor was heard in the distance, but somewhat different than that of a truck. Jose Pedro Leyva looked southeast toward the drop-off of the mountain. And there in the sky over "La Pirinola" was a speck slowly moving towards Huasabas and the sound was emanating from it! The speck slowly took shape and sent the entire populace of Huasabas into turmoil.

The plane circled the town, once, twice and started descending toward "El Llanito," a clearing on the west side of town. Drove of people were already running toward the clearing when the plane landed. Two American aviators stepped out and greeted the crowd, which met them with reserved smiles and admiration.

A couple of young ladies were trying to coax Ramona Valencia to return to her house and get dressed for her wedding. But not until she had gotten her eyes full of that strange machine and its occupants did she return to her dressing room. The groom, Jose "El Zorillo" Fimbres, was no doubt in the crowd also. The wedding was held but with a slight delay in the proceedings.

The aviators were taken to Jose Maria Leyva's house to spend the night. One aviator was a cattleman with a ranch in Casas Grandes and spoke a bit of Spanish. They were flying from Casas Grandes to Sahuaripa.

Early the next morning, the two men walked around town, looking it over, then returned to the Leyva residence for breakfast and continued on their journey.

IX. THE RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

The Mexican Revolution culminated in the Constitution of 1917 which attempted to correct many social injustices that existed. But not all aspects of it were fully implemented immediately. In 1924, Plutarco Elias Calles took

over as President. During his administration, he enforced the Constitution. This made for repercussions throughout the land and affected life around Huasabas.

That part of the constitution which caused the religious conflict was: "Religious associations known as churches, whatever their creed may be, shall in no case have the power to acquire, possess or administer properties, nor capital representing them; those that it has at present, directly or indirectly, shall become the property of the Nation...."

The clergy and faithful opposed the law and the conflict began. Town officials, being mostly Catholics, ignored as best as possible government orders that went against their religion. Many Catholics actively opposed the government, converting themselves into "Cristeros" (soldiers of Christ.)

The government expropriated certain church properties. Some churches were closed by the government. Religious ceremonies were not permitted. These orders were felt in Huasabas in the early 1930s and the polemic situation lasted until about 1935.

Juan Navarrete, the Bishop of Sonora, and seminarians and priests were exiled at Los Cireales, a retreat in the mountains near Bacadehuachi. Once in a while, and only at night, they would come to towns to visit and attend to the religious needs of people. One priest who frequently visited Huasabas was Father Luis Barcelo, grandson of Don Venancio I.

Baptisms and weddings were celebrated clandestinely in houses of trust. One of those houses was that of Don Venancio I. The living room of this house was dedicated to the faith and served as a private chapel for Don Venancio I and family members.

Another house of trust was that of the Fimbres family, kitty-corner from the southeast corner of the plaza. Here the Bishop of Sonora took refuge for a few days and people took advantage of the opportunity to get married or have children baptized.

One night, while several couples from Oputo were staying at this house waiting to be married, an unknown man climbed the roof of the house across the street and began hurling epithets against the Bishop and the Church, including a threat to "drag the Bishop out of there by his tongue."

Chuchi Fimbres chased the intruder but after a couple of blocks, he slipped and fell and the suspect escaped. With his hide-out uncovered, the Bishop fled through a secret hole in the wall that connected that house with the one next door. He escaped safe and sound but dirty. In his scramble, he fell into a hog puddle in the corral.

Although government troops arrived and stayed in town for a while, there were no violent incidents of any consequence. A barracks of federal troops was established across the street from Don Francisquito Fimbres's house.

The soldiers frequently went to Francisquito's house to fetch water from his well since there was none at the barracks. They also frequented his store and often abused their "free hand" privileges.

Dona Anita, Francisquito's wife, was not one to be abused or intimidated. She had strong words with the commander and the abuses stopped. On another occasion, a cap of one of the soliders accidentally dropped into the well.

"You are not leaving until you take out every drop of that contaminated water out of the well!" she told the soldier. And she made that poor soldier draw out bucket after bucket of water until she felt the water was pure enough to drink.

Don Francisquito, Jose Maria Duran, Jesus "Chu" Fimbres, Jose Maria Leyva and others were frequent occupants of the town's jail. This was a result of the government's orders making teaching of socialism obligatory at school. As a result, Catholics were prohibited from sending their children to government schools under the penalty of excommunication.

Children scattered all over avoiding school. Some were sent to Oputo, some hid out at La Cruz, in ranches, or simply out in the fields. The men were jailed for about eight days and freed with the understanding that they would comply with the government decree. When they failed to do so, back to jail they went.

"This is going to be my death bed," Don Francisquito told Anita when she brought him his meals.

"Nonsense. Jails are for brave men feared by the government! Don't you back down!" Anita responded.

Don Francisquito urged Che Juan Leyva, alcalde at the time, to give him a receipt indicating he'd completed his jail sentence. Without it any government agent could jail him at any moment. Che Juan refused.

After about a month, Don Francisquito strapped on his .45 pistol and went to the ayuntamiento. When Che Juan entered, Don Francisquito put the .45 to Che Juan's back and said, "My receipt or your life!"

The receipt was handiest and Che Juan handed it over.

The federal commander knew Don Francisquito was the leader of the local Cristeros. He also knew that once in a while Francisquito received written orders. Once when he wanted to get those orders and suspected Don Francisquito had them, he entered Don Francisquito's house to search it.

"What are you doing here?" Dona Anita demanded as she surprised him.

Composing himself, he answered, "Look here, lady. I know that there are written orders in this house for the Cristeros and I intend to see them. I hereby order you to hand them over to me."

"Well, if you want them," Dona Anita replied, "go up the mountain because those orders are out there where the pants are and not down here with the skirts!"

And this was the relationship that existed between this family and the federales during their stay in town. The commander of the troops shrugged off the fact that Don Francisquito was in charge of the local Cristeros and even though he jailed him a couple of times, there was no real reason to take serious reprisal against him.

In Granados, the alcalde, Francisco "Chito" Moreno, maintained loyalty to the government and attacked Catholics strongly. For this reason he was assassinated. The Cristeros dragged him out of the ayuntamiento and took him to the plaza where he was shot. The government sent troops to Granados so the Cristeros fled to the mountains east of Huasabas and hid near the peak where they could see if the troops were climbing up to their hide-out.

Surprise! The federales attacked them from the rear, crossing over the mountain from the east. The Cristeros fled over known territory with the federales hot on their tails. The federales couldn't catch them because they were not as familiar with the terrain. The Cristeros were successful in evading the federales with only two wounded.

One night, with a full moon, two young men surreptitiously sneaked toward the church. Armed with a hacksaw, Jose Pedro Leyva "Cheperte" and Jose Noriega "Chicapuz" sawed off the padlock to the church door while the federales slept in the plaza.

They climbed into the belfry and pulled down the government's red and black flag. Chicapuz slid the rolled up flag into a pants leg. They were on their way to show off their trophy when just outside the churchyard they were surprised by Francisco Acuna, alcalde loyal to the government.

"What are you boys doing out here?" he asked.

"Heading home. We're coming from the San Ysidro ceremonies."

The alcalde didn't suspect anything and the boys continued on, with Chicapuz walking with a definite limp. The flag was presented to Father Luis Barcelo who, it was rumored but never confirmed, wore a pair of red and black underpants.

The clergy and government eventually reached an accord. The Cristeros turned in their firearms and persecution ceased. The government went after the leaders of the Cristero movement and executed some of them but troops pulled out of the towns. The Cristeros came down from the hills marching with the standard of El Cristo Rey. The doors of the churches were reopened.

X. THE REIGN OF SENORITA CHU

Decades before liberation of women came into vogue, in Huasabas a young senorita took reins in hand and was head of the town. In 1928, Maria Jesus Fimbres, known to everyone as Senorita Chu, accepted custody of the church.

In small Mexican towns, the church represents not only the center of religion but also, to a certain degree, the cultural and social center of the people. In this way, Senorita Chu assumed the duty of religious, cultural and social leadership.

Her responsibilities were: to insure the church was clean and orderly, that it was stocked with everything necessary to carry out religious ceremonies, to receive priests and other church dignitaries, to direct mass when no priests were available, and to lead the praying of the rosary every evening. These were duties she discharged faithfully for more than 50 years.

Looking minutely at the detail of these responsibilities, one realizes the effort, energy and will power necessary to carry them out. Here's one example.

Altar candles could not be purchased in stores in the early years. They were handmade, beginning with the most elemental step of preparing the wax. She bought beehives and, after extracting the honey, melted the wax in a crock.

After the wax was melted and impurities removed with a ladle, the liquid was poured on a table to cool into a thin sheet. The sheet was cut into pieces about the size of a regular sheet of paper. These were scattered on the grass in the sunshine, apparently to bleach.

The apparatus for making the candles consisted of a hoop made from a supple willow branch. The hoop was about three feet in diameter. It was suspended from a roof beam by string so the hoop was horizontal. From the periphery of the hoop hung about two dozen cotton strings.

The wax was remelted in the crock and with a ladle Senorita Chu poured the hot wax at the top of a string so it flowed down the string. When all the strings had received their first coating, the cycle started again to add second, third, fourth, fifth and more coats until the candle gradually reached the dimension desired.



Senorita Chu's general store, La Palma, was established in 1936 and closed its doors in 1965. The room housing the store, the zaguan and the room to the right of the zaguan were razed in 1991 after about 275 years of service. September, 1963 photo.

Financing the church was always a problem, particularly in the 1930s. Church garments and altar cloths took on the appearance of quilts with their multitude of patches. Many a time candles for the daily rosary were lit only when someone arrived with matches because funds were insufficient to buy a box of matches for the church.

Each year on Aug. 15, the town celebrates its patron saint, Nuestra Senora de la Asuncion. The day is preceded by a novena, or nine days when mass is celebrated about 4 a.m.

Senorita Chu would awaken at 2 or 3 a.m. and stay awake on her cot (people normally slept outdoors during the summer) watching the stars to determine when she should go to open the church and prepare for mass. She didn't have an alarm clock; no one in town did. No one, except for her, had any use for them.

In April, 1978, the golden anniversary of her service to the church was celebrated. A mass was held with the attendance of 12 priests from out of town. A ceremony of recognition was followed by a dinner held in her house. Friends and family members from around Sonora, Arizona and California attended.

She was honored not only for completing half a century as custodian of the church but also because of her prestige as a leader. Her advice was always sought in matters of protocol and etiquette.

She had a Victorian air about her that demanded admiration and respect. Although her formal education consisted of only one year of school, she was considered one of the better educated people in town. She had educated herself with whatever means were available.

Senorita Chu discharged her duties for five more years and didn't retire until she could no longer walk to church. Then in her own home, she continued to prepare children for their first communion.

Senorita Chu related to the author the following incident:

The last time she performed cleansing of the statue of La Virgen Dolorosa (Our Lady of Sorrows), something strange happened. Upon wiping the face, it took on a very youthful appearance and tears began rolling down its cheeks.

A man in church to help with heavy work was there. Senorita Chu called to him.

"Tell me, what do you see?" she asked.

"They look like tears," he replied.

Convinced of what she had seen, Senorita Chu wrote a letter to the bishop, relating the incident.

Besides the job of church custodian, Senorita Chu was a businesswoman. She established a small general store in 1936 that was one of the more popular stores in town because of easy credit to the penniless. "La Palmita" served Huasabenos for 29 years, closing its doors in 1965.

On Dec. 18, 1988, Senorita Chu, after a year of being bed-ridden, left this world to receive her final reward.

XI. PUBLIC WORKS

In 1936, a few miles to the north of Oputo, construction of a dam on the Bavispe River was started. The project was completed in 1942. This is the Lazaro Cardenas Dam, commonly known as "La Angustura" (The Narrows) because it is built at a constriction in the river between the Nacozari and the Huachinera mountains.

The dam, built of reinforced concrete, is about 95 yards high and 180 yards wide. It formed Angostura Lake and reduced the inconstancy of the river but did not totally eliminate it. During the rainy season, tributaries south of the dam cause the river to flood. The problems of our ancestors repeat themselves but less frequently.

Other public works, which reduced the isolation of the town and improved its standard of living, began to be felt in the 1950s. These were improvement of roads, installation of potable water and installation of an electrical transmission line from Nacozari.

Electrical energy made refrigerators and television possible. And with the arrival of television, the ambition of Huasabenas became to live like women on TV. They discarded homemade shoes, exchanged pigtails and "molotes" for modern hair styling and Indian-like skirts for pants and shorts. The classical Huasabena passed into the annals of history forever.



This matrimonial entourage is about to round the corner of Jose Maria Leyva's house. The hats on the young ladies of the bridal retinue were a recent invasion into the tradition of "rebozos" worn by the women of Huasabas at the time. June, 1965 photo.



The Lazaro Cardenas dam on the Bavispe River forms Angostura Lake. Popular with Arizona fishermen, the lake is about 60 miles north of Huasabas. June, 1965 photo.

Those who have lived with the comfort of potable water might think that everyone would want this convenience. But that is not the case because human beings are prone to resist change, and that is what happened in Huasabas. The installation of the water system was made in 1957 but not without protest. Some didn't want to be bothered by the monthly charge. Others felt no need, saying, "We have wells, the irrigation ditches and the river nearby. Who needs it?"

Installations were made in a few homes and those that had previously rejected the project began to see its advantages. Shortly, everyone in town had running water.

With the installation of the water system, the burros with their "boots" disappeared. No, not boots on their hooves, but "botas de agua" (water boots). They were leather bags, one hung on each side of the burro to carry water. In the lower corner, a cow horn was pulled snug against a hole in the bag. To discharge water, the horn was pushed in and the hole unplugged. Water was carried from the irrigation ditches to many homes in this manner.

Water boys also disappeared. They were young men who, lacking a burro and water bags, placed a pole across their back and a bucketful of water at each end of the pole. Gone also were young girls, carrying a bucketful of

water in one hand and the hem of their dress extended in the other as if to balance the load. The washer ladies that lined the irrigation ditch soaking and scrubbing their laundry on the rocks while their naked kids romped in the sand of the arroyo also disappeared.

Installation of electricity encountered a similar resistance as the installation of the water system. The transmission line from Nacozari was completed about 1971. Many of the older generation did not want to subscribe because they saw no use for it. Reluctantly some accepted it for the convenience of turning lights on and off.

Before the electrical system was installed, there had been private power plants. The church had a system installed in the late 1940s. The pool hall and cantina of Manuel Durazo had its own power plant to light the pool table and power the record player. Before this, probably in the early 1940s, Don Julian Moreno had his own plant that provided energy to his home and to the home of Don Venancio III. The plants were used only for lighting at night. Gasoline was difficult to come by since it had to be shipped in from Moctezuma.

What most notably impacted life of the Huasabeno was construction of the paved road to Hermosillo and Agua Prieta in 1978. The barrier that isolated Huasabas from external civilization was torn down and the town was left exposed to the world, for better or for worse.

Before 1950, travel to Huasabas by motor vehicle was a test of will power and endurance. A pick and shovel were standard tools in a vehicle to clear the way. Roads were virtually impassable by passenger car. Dry washes served as road in many portions and about 50 percent of the road was traveled in low gear.

The steep and winding road that crosses Huasabas Mountain to the east was made by pick and shovel and explosives. No machinery, other than a truck for moving loads of dirt or rock was employed.

In the mid-1940s, work crews established their first camp on the curve as the road starts to climb up the slope of the mountain. As work progressed, the camp moved further up the mountain. Work was completed in about 1945 and connected Huasabas with Bacadehuachi.

Much of tillable land is on the other side of the river from Huasabas. Crossing the river was a necessity several times a week. Men waded across with farm implements on their backs. Crossing with clothes in a bundle above their heads was common.

Then in the early 1950s, after centuries of being at the the mercy of the river, a "canastilla" (small basket) was installed at a main crossing point. The canastilla consisted of a platform about six feet long and four feet wide made of wooden planks. A tower of rough timbers was constructed on both riverbanks and steel cable hung between them. The cable was about 15 feet above the water level at its lowest point. Two pulleys rode on this cable and the canastilla was suspended from them. Motive power was provided by the occupants pulling on a rope strung between the two towers.



Typical crossing of the Bavispe River before the "pango" and bridge were located at this point. June, 1965 photo.



One of the more useful public works has been this suspension foot bridge over the Bavispe River. It opened for service in July, 1988. It is located at the site of the "canastilla" and "pango" which served as crossing means in the near past. July, 1988 photo.

Following on the heels of this innovation, was the "pango," a flat-bottomed, flat-topped, rectangular ferry boat. It was similar to the canastilla in that it was attached by pulleys to the cable but it floated on the water. Even large trucks loaded with timber could safely cross the river at just about any time.

In 1985, three towers to support a bridge were built. When some Huasabenos discovered that the engineers planned to build the bridge at the level of the towers, they informed the engineers that this was totally inadequate because during the rainy seasons the bridge would be covered by about 10 feet of water.

The engineers paid little attention, but then the rains during the winter of 1985 left them with their mouths wide open. The entire valley turned into a river and the top of the towers was about 10 feet below the surface.

The engineers returned to their drawing boards. By October, 1986, the towers were rebuilt and the two ends of the bridge were in place. On



This is the modern bridge a mile north of Huasabas as it was being built over the Bavispe River. The bridge greatly increased traffic between Huasabas and formerly isolated towns on the other side of the river. The pedestals the workers are standing on were going to be the original level of the bridge. The rains in the winter of 1985 demonstrated that a little more height was needed. October, 1986 photo.

The wheat was then taken home and washed in a tub. Debris was removed and the wheat spread out to dry, usually on canvas cots or "petates" (palm frond mats).

The next operation was grinding the wheat in the "tahuna." The tahuna consisted of a circular base made of adobe, like a huge cake about eight feet in diameter and two feet high. On this base was mounted the lower grinding stone. The stone was about four feet in diameter and a foot thick, with a hole in the center and radial grooves sculpt on its upper surface. On top of this stone was the matching upper grinding stone, much like the stone on which it rested. It had its grooves on the lower face. Attached to the upper stone was a pole about 10 feet long. At the free end of the pole was harnessed the burro or mule that rotated the upper stone over the lower fixed stone.

Above the center of the stone was a container in the shape of an inverted pyramid. This held the wheat that was to be ground. The apex of the pyramid contained a hole through which the wheat dropped into the hole at the center of the upper grinding stone. There was a flapper valve under the apex of the wheat container that vibrated to feed the wheat at a constant rate. The vibration was achieved by a small wooden or metal rod that dragged on top of the rough surface of the rotating stone and transmitted the vibrations to the flapper valve.

The ground wheat exited around the periphery of the grinding wheels as it squeezed out between them. This product collected on the surface of the base which had a border around it to keep the stuff from flowing on to the floor.

The sifter consisted of a tray and flour box. The sifting tray was a wooden ring about eighteen inches in diameter and four inches high with the bottom end covered by a cloth made for sifting. The flour box was a wooden box about two feet wide by three feet long and two feet deep. Inside the box on two opposite sides were nailed a couple of runners on which the sifting tray rested.

The worker placed a few cupfuls of the ground wheat in the sifting tray and moved it back and forth over the runners, banging it against the ends of the box so the flour sifted through the bottom of the tray while the wheat bran remained in the tray.

Finally, the flour was mixed with other ingredients and the tortillas which people had prayed for so fervently were finally on the table!

Of course, man does not live by bread alone, but must supplement it with beans, meat and vegetables. Therefore, the other major crops in this valley were corn and pinto beans. Smaller plots of land were dedicated to potatoes, sugar cane, vegetables and "veranos" (watermelon and melon patch.)

Until the 1960s, orange trees lined the main irrigation ditch. Homes had orange trees in their back yards and the plaza was one large orange tree grove. About this time a plague called "El Piojo" (the Tick) hit the region and not a single tree was left. Attempts are being made to replace the trees with another variety.

December 16, the governor of Sonora inaugurated the bridge. Towns east of Huasabas are no longer isolated from civilization. Eventually the paved road will extend to the east and connect Sonora with Chihuahua.

In town itself, there has been an increase of public works. The new ayuntamiento building houses local governmental offices, post office, telephone office and hydraulics works office. The building, small but modern, was first occupied in 1987 although it is not fully completed.

Telephone service was formally inaugurated in October, 1990. It consisted of only one telephone, operated by a young lady who handled calls and the office was constantly busy.

In November, 1991, 100 private telephones were installed in the town. The system is wireless, transmitting signals to a satellite which links Huasabas with Hermosillo.

The installation of the sewer system was initiated in 1989 and is nearly completed. Connection of homes to the system is underway.

The road to Granados, which passes through the main street of Huasabas, has been paved to include that portion passing through town. But with progress comes risk and danger. Prior to the paving of roads, vehicular accidents were virtually unknown. In the short time that the three-mile stretch between Huasabas and Granados has been paved, several accidents have resulted in deaths and serious injuries.

XII. DAILY LIFE AT MID-CENTURY

Before 1950, the town was self-sufficient in basic needs such as wheat, corn and pinto beans. The devout people always implored the heavens with great faith for "our daily bread." The Lord heard them and gave them bread, but in an indirect way.

First the land had to be tilled, then divided into sections, followed by sowing of wheat. A pass was made by the plowing team to cover the seed, followed by periodic irrigation and finally the wheat was harvested, a handful at a time using a sickle. The wheat stalks were collected in a "tina de cosecha" (harvesting tub) which consisted of a tub, roughly hemispherical, about three feet in diameter and about two feet deep made out of cowhide. It was mounted on two wooden runners, usually just a couple of poles with the bark stripped off. A mule or burro pulled the sled.

An "era" was prepared in the field. This consisted of a circular area about 75 feet in diameter with the ground packed and hardened. A pole was stuck in the middle. This was used as a pivot around which a tethered mule or horse trampled the wheat stalks strewn on the surface. This was the "threshing machine."

Once the wheat had been squeezed out of the stalk, the grain was separated from the chaff. This required the cooperation of Mother Nature. Using a wide-bladed wooden shovel, the crushed wheat stalks were heaved into the wind, which would blow the chaff away allowing the grain to drop and collect near the worker.

The wheat was then taken home and washed in a tub. Debris was removed and the wheat spread out to dry, usually on canvas cots or "petates" (palm frond mats).

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In addition to oranges, the town could count on small harvests of peaches, lemons and limes.

While most men spent their days at the "milpas," they sometimes worked as traveling salesmen. They went to Nacozari and Pílares de Nacozari to sell oranges, panocha (brown sugar cakes about the size of a cupcake), carne seca (beef jerky), pinole (ground popcorn), eggs and even a few live chickens.

In preparation, the men spent days going from house to house collecting eggs. The goods, including chickens, were packed in "guacales" which were cage-like crates made up of poles about an inch in diameter and put together in the manner of a log cabin. The crates measured about two by three feet and one foot in depth. The poles were held together by cowhide straps.

Their pack animals loaded, the men set out on foot or horseback behind their mule train. The trip to Nacozari normally took three days with a couple of overnight stays in the mountains sleeping under the stars and serenaded by wolves and coyotes.

Panochas went for ten cents (of a peso) each. Oranges bought two pesos per hundred at a time when the exchange rate was two pesos per dollar.

With their merchandise sold, the men returned happy with pesos in their pockets. At this time, money was very scarce and bartering was prevalent. A peso in the pocket gave a young man a sense of security and satisfaction.

But if the reader considers this enterprise not profitable, he should consider what others did to complement the product of their "milpas."

Don Pedro Acuna was the town's lumberjack. He and an assistant packed provisions to camp out at "La Sierra De La Madera" (Lumber Mountain) for several days to cut lumber. They traveled a day to arrive at the upper levels of the mountain to set up their operation.

First they constructed a "tarango" (arrangement of poles where the tree would fall and be worked on) next to the tree that was to be felled. With a two-man saw, they cut the tree at its base. Once down, the tree was de-limbed and the hard work began.

The two men would saw down the entire length of the tree on one side, forming one face of a beam. Parallel to the first, they sawed down the length of the tree to form another face of the beam. The tree was turned 90 degrees and the operation repeated to form the other two faces of the beam.

For this work, they got to sleep on rough ground under the stars and eat a dinner of hard bean burritos, some beef jerky and, more than likely, a cup of coffee with a chunk of panocha to sweeten the palate.

After a few days, they would secure the ends of three or four beams on each side of their pack animals and, with the ends dragging along the ground, start their journey down the mountain toward town. The lumber was sold for a few pesos or exchanged for foodstuffs or other goods.

Placida, wife of Don Pedro the lumberjack, was well-known for her soap. She gathered entrails of slaughtered animals and put them in a tub made from a 55-gallon oil drum. From this she rendered fat that was the principal ingredient of her soap.

In another metal tub she placed ashes and poured water on it. The water drained through the ashes and out holes in the bottom to be collected in another tub. The water was allowed to evaporate and the residue was the lye that mixed with the fat made soap.

The final product was a crude, smelly, grayish soap that burnt the hands when one used it. But it was cheap and most of the time all that was available.

Starch was another product produced at home. It was made in the following manner.

Bran left over from production of flour was placed in a metal tub with a perforated bottom. Water was added to drain through the bran and into another tub. This tub was set aside so water could evaporate leaving a wet residue. The women took the residue in their hands and squeezed it to get the remaining water out. This was spread out on a mat or a cot and allowed to dry. During this time it fermented and the whole mass vibrated from thousands of maggots that appeared. It generated a smell that caused even the strongest person to gag. After the mass dried, it was sifted and the resulting product was the starch.

Having starch on hand, the logical thing to do was to starch and iron shirts and dresses. Ironing was another chore that women tried to evade in vain.

The irons were rowboat-shaped solid pieces of iron with a handle attached. Several were required for an ironing session. They were placed over hot coals or a fire. As irons cooled, they were placed on the stove and another picked up to continue the work.

There were women that went around town performing this uncomfortable and tiring chore just for a cup of coffee, a bean burrito or maybe some ground coffee or a cup of sugar to take home. If they were given a piece of worn-out clothing for a day's work, they had it made.

While on the subject of production of substances for the home, we must mention paint, or more accurately "white wash."

To begin with, demand was not great because most homes were built of adobe walls, except those of "rich" people. Those who could afford it had the walls plastered and painted white.

The process of making whitewash began with a trip across the river for pieces of lime. At home, a fire was built and the rocks piled on top of a grill. When the rocks went from translucent to opaque white, they were taken out of the fire and ground into powder. The powder was mixed with water to whitewash the walls.

A common color scheme was a white wall with a dark band at the bottom about two to three feet high. There was a reason for this.

One of the first chores of the day was to spread water on the dirt floor before sweeping it. Dirty water often splattered the walls and that was unacceptable on a white wall. A dark band made the splattered water less noticeable. The dark paint was made with the ashes.

Fresh meat was a luxury. Livestock was slaughtered three or four times a

month at the home of the owner. The operation was performed before dawn to take advantage of cool temperatures.

After the animal was killed, an abundance of young boys held the hoof of the animal while it was being skinned. It was an honor and insured the boys would be given the bladder of the animal, which made a good but smelly balloon.

The operation was a community affair since there were many chores to be performed rapidly. Men and women sliced the meat to make jerky (the only practical way to preserve meat); several women diced the fat to make lard and chicharrones; others ground and mixed the meat to make chorizo (sausage); young boys cleaned the entrails to be used as casings for the chorizo (for the next slaughter); the housewife apportioned the meat to be distributed; men prepared the hide for tanning or curing and finally, cleaned up.

Boys and girls distributed meat to the homes of family members, friends and neighbors. As much as possible was consumed within two days. The custom of distributing fresh meat assured the owner of the slaughtered animal that he would receive fresh meat when one of his recipients slaughtered an animal.

One of the first slaughter products was blood collected in a pan or pail and used to make blood sausage. Any dirt or insects, especially flies, that went in became part of the ingredients. Mexicans say "If it doesn't kill you, it'll make you fat!"

The hide of the animal was sometimes used without tanning to make crude harnesses or seats for chairs. However there were three or four tanning tanks in town. Water was introduced into these concrete pools and the bark of the "chino" tree was thrown in. This produced the acid that turned the hide into leather.

The leather was used to make saddles, saddle bags, chaps and all kinds of equipment for beasts of burden and "tehuas." This was the footwear of every male in town except one or two rich men. The sole was either leather or cut from discarded automobile tires. The front and rear uppers were tacked to the sole. They were stiff!

About once a month, occasionally more often, a motor vehicle would make its way to town. Being in town in total silence and then hearing a faint purring sound that very slowly grew into the sound of a motor vehicle was, at this time, a very exciting experience.

Young boys knew that within one hour or so, a motor vehicle would enter town. The boys went to the north part of town to await the vehicle and, if it was a truck, hung on to the edge of the bed for a ride into town.

The vehicle would usually arrive at the Jose Maria Leyva's residence since it was the most popular of the two guest houses. Room and board was available although it was not advertised. (There were no signs in town, no street signs, no store or business signs, no signs of any kind.)

At night after dinner, Huasabenos would slowly walk down the street by

the guest house and discretely glance toward the zaguan, hopeful of catching a glimpse of a visitor. But these were uncommon occurrences. Most of the time the town would be without visitors and the silence deafening.

At night soon after supper, people would drag out chairs to sit in front of the zaguan door. Men and boys would gather at street corners to talk about the day's happenings or just to joke.

On moonless nights one could see a dimly lit doorway or window in the distance or see a cigarette seemingly float down the street and glow as the smoker took a puff. Sitting on the street corner, anyone could recognize anybody walking down the street just by the sound of his footsteps, by the motion of the cigarette and by noting at which houses the cigarette paused.

The silence would often be broken by very young horsemen mounted on bamboo steeds as they ran up and down the street chasing each other or a "herd of cattle." Some of the best "horses" could be had at the bamboo grove on the north side of Senorita Chu's milpa. This grove produced pure-blooded mounts — wild, untamable and playful, worthy of a Pancho Villa. Those were the ones I used to ride.

XIII. PITAHAYAS AND PANOCHA

The end of the year approached and with it the "moliendas." Rare was the Huasabeno that did not have a sugar cane plot in his milpa. They harvested it primarily to make panocha, but weeks before the harvest of the sugar cane for the molienda, it was being harvested on a small scale for chewing. It was a custom to sit on street corners in the evening, talking, chewing the cane and making piles of waste pulp.

The sugar cane was stored in caches, a shallow ditch about two feet wide and six feet long. It was covered with bamboo poles cross hatched with straw and dirt on top. The sugar cane stored in these caches should have lasted at least a month but nocturnal visitors would jump property walls, sneak in and take out a cane or two. The supply dwindled fast.

After harvesting and removing the "tail" of the sugar cane, it was transported to the mill. There were four around town. The mill consisted of two or three iron rollers (although in the 1940s there were remnants of one with wooden rollers).

The rollers were about 1½-feet long and 10 inches in diameter. They were placed close to each other the same as wringers in old washing machines. Their axis was in a vertical direction. By means of gears, they turned so that a cane stuck between them was squeezed and drawn through to the other side.

A pole, about four inches in diameter and 15 feet long was the lever that turned the rollers with a mule at the other end to furnish the power. The "agua miel" (honey water) or cane juice collected in a concrete trough.

The juice was carried by bucket to the processing vats. It didn't arrive full; kids would dip cups or "jicaras" (ladle made from half a gourd) into the bucket as it passed by.

There were usually three huge vats about four feet in diameter installed on



This abandoned sugar cane mill is a relic of the past. A long timber was attached at the channel on which the young man is sitting. A mule at the other end of the timber powered the machine. The sugar cane was inserted between the rollers. November, 1987 photo.

fireplaces. The juice was introduced into the first vat, a bit of powdered lime added and the juice brought to a boil. The foam that formed was removed with a jicara.

The precooked juice, now a light syrup, was transferred to the second vat. Here it cooked more and was transferred to the third vat. From this vat, thick molasses was poured into cupcake-like molds. The molds were carved out of a large wooden plank, about a foot wide, eight feet long and four inches deep. The plank was watered down to keep the panocha from sticking to it. The molasses cooled and crystallized in the molds and was removed when cool.

There were stages in the process when the product could be removed. One

was soon after it was introduced into the third vat. This yielded a light syrup known as "miel de ricos" (syrup of the rich) because of its delicate taste. Allowing it to cook a little more, the yield was a thicker, darker syrup known as "miel de pobres" (syrup of the poor).

With a few more minutes of cooking, the product was a thick, viscous molasses which stayed pliable when cooled. It was at this stage that kids would expect some uncle or friend to dip in a cane and pull it out covered with the super sweet "melcocha," a long all-week sucker.

A little more time on the fire yielded molasses that upon cooling became hard and brittle and could be shattered like glass. After completing the cooking process, the product was brown sugar. At this stage, the technique of an experienced master was required.

This man would wet the tip of his finger and with a quick sweeping motion dip out a sample of the hot molasses and put it in his mouth. He tested its consistency and determined the point at which the molasses should be transferred to the holding trough. The product was stirred in this trough and then poured into molds. Once cooled, the molds were pounded to extract the panocha.

The residue of the holding trough was a sticky type of molasses which was scraped off. A sugar cane with its juice squeezed out was split open, the molasses poured in and the ends of the cane twisted to hold the molasses. This was called "panocha de morro."

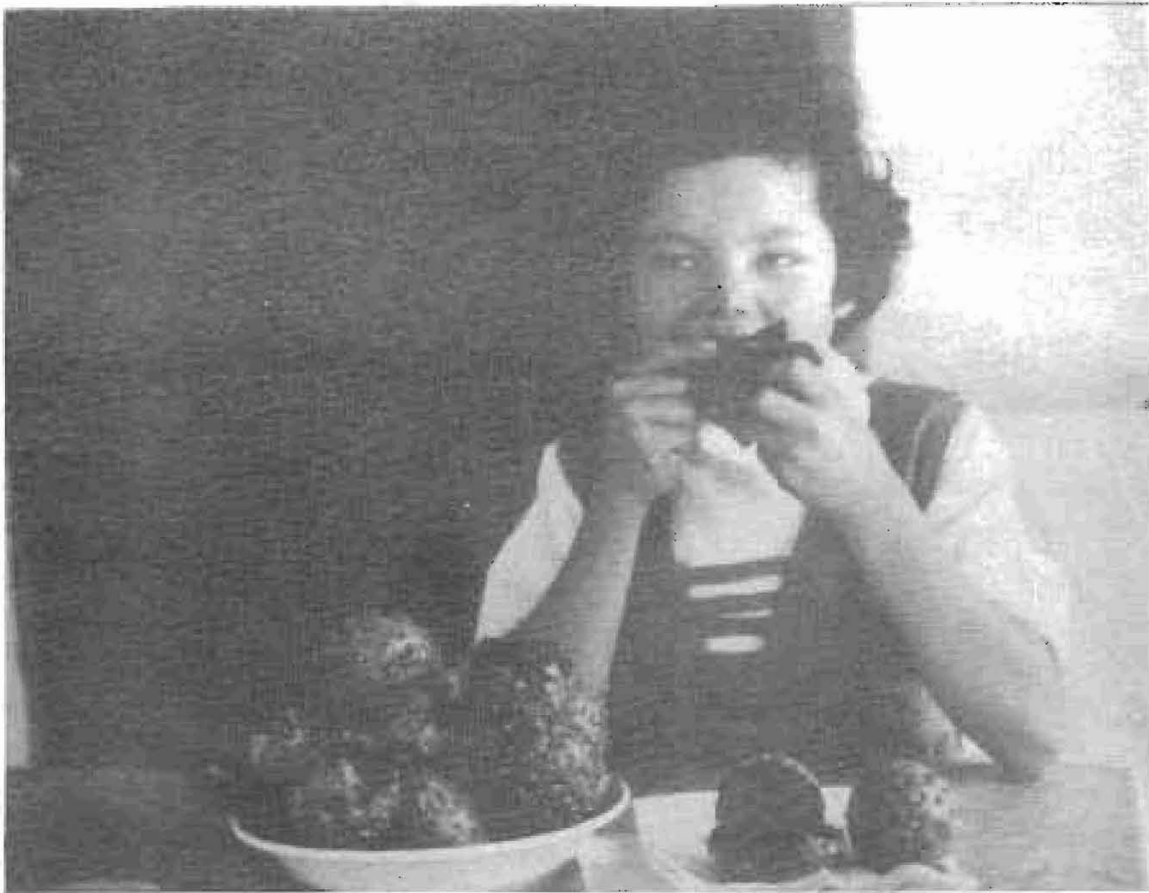
The milling and cooking began early in the evening and lasted until after midnight. As in other operations, family members, relatives and friends of the harvester participated and the occasion was a festive one, especially for children.

With the arrival of summer, the men prepared "chiviris." This was a bamboo pole with one end carved into the shape of a bi-tanged fork. One tang was longer and narrower than the other with a sharp point. The shorter tang had a broad point sharpened to knife edge. This tool was used to harvest pitahayas, the fruit of the pitahayo, a close relative of the sahuaro.

June 24, San Juan Day, was the target date to begin foraging for this delicacy, although some had already made trips by that date. About 4 a.m., while the air was still cool, men, boys and once in a while girls headed out to the mesas west of town on the other side of the river in search of pitahaya.

The fruit is found up high on the pitahayo. Standing off to a side, the pitahayero first scrapes spines off the fruit with the tip of the chiviri, making darn sure they don't drop on him. Next he inserts the long tang of the chiviri close to the stem of the fruit. Then with the shorter, knife-edged tang right at the stem, he thrusts the chiviri upward, cutting the fruit off the plant.

The taste is difficult to describe. It's not a single characteristic taste but varies depending on degree of ripeness. The riper the fruit, the sweeter the taste. The pulp is bright red to deep purple and has about a jillion tiny black seeds distributed throughout. These are eaten along with the pulp.



The best way to attack a pitahaya is demonstrated in this photo. To obtain the best flavor, pitahayas should be eaten fresh but pitahaya jam is also excellent. June, 1965 photo.

XIV. RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS

Before the 1950s, the townspeople were either more devout or they just manifested it more openly and frequently. There are several important "dias de fiesta" that are observed today, although the manner has changed somewhat from the past.

It is a good thing that the people of Huasabas are tough and hardy because few others could endure the processions that were held to implore the Almighty for rain.

About 4 or 5 p.m. in June and July, with scorching sun and the ground burning like a grill, the procession began. With the Cristo Rey (life-sized statue of Christ) on a platform supported on their shoulders, four men would lead the procession up main street. In front of them, more than likely, would be Senorita Chu in a black dress, black rebozo and homemade shoes, leading the prayers. Behind would be hordes of faithful followers; the men with straw hats and women with black rebozos to ward off the sun.

At certain locations, the faithful would stop and kneel on the hot, rough ground to pray. Then the procession would continue until it reached Basuchi. Often it would go to Baschucon.

Is it any wonder that the first summer showers were received with such joy

and jubilation when they had been had at such a price?

Don Vicente Valeriano took charge of another demonstration of devotion. Every year on "Dia de la Santa Cruz" (Day of the Holy Cross) he would construct an altar on the Cuesta del Calvario (Calvary Hill) between Basuchi and Basuchon.

"The Dance of the Matachines" was celebrated the night of May 3. Don Valeriano is long gone but his custom lives on, maintained by Angelito Urquijo.

Don Isidro and Maria Leyva of Basuchon celebrated the day of San Isidro Labrador (St. Isidor the Farmer). They constructed a simple platform out of poles and on it they placed the statue of San Isidro with a few angels guiding his team of oxen.

They would carry this platform through some of the milpas to bless the crops, particularly the wheat which was nearing harvest. Faithful followers were behind them. This was done on May 15. In the evening, the couple held a dinner for those who accompanied them.

During Holy Week, the Way of the Cross was re-enacted with the stations located in the churchyard.



This is the start of the "Via Crucis" on Good Friday. The Way of the Cross starts at the church, goes uptown about half a mile and returns to the starting point. In recent times, it climaxes with "crucifixion" of three Huasabenos. April, 1987 photo.

A man represented Christ and dressed in red tunic and carried a cross. Accompanying Christ was Veronica, the woman who took pity on Christ and wiped the blood from his face on the way to crucifixion. Another man played Simon the Cyrenian, the one who helped Jesus carry the cross.

The priest, assistants, actors and faithful stopped at each station, kneeling on the rough ground. The appropriate prayers were said, the people got up, wiped their knees and the procession continued on to the next station.

On one occasion upon making the turn toward the rear of the church, the congregation ran into a very unexpected sight. There at one of the stations was a burro dressed with pants on its hind legs and jacket over its shoulders.

Upon seeing the approaching multitude, the burro slowly walked away as if conscious of its dress. When the crowd stopped at the station, the burro also stopped. With prayers finished, the faithful got up, moved slowly to the next station and the burro did likewise.

A wave of giggles swept through the congregation. The somber countenance of the priest and assistants changed to that of controlled amusement. Open laughter could be heard in the rearmost ranks. When the burro led the crowd to the next station and stopped, the religious ceremony was suspended due to uncontrollable laughter.

From somewhere behind the churchyard walls, no doubt, was the satisfied laughter of "El Guero" and "El Apache" whose pranks respected neither rank nor pomp.

At present, Via Crucis is still held but it is conducted outside the churchyard, beginning and ending at the front entrance to the church. The prayers are led by Father Luis Barcelo over a portable public address system.

Up to about the 1950s, a feature of Holy Week was the burning of "Judas." Judas was a life-sized man of straw dressed in discarded clothes who represented the traitor who betrayed Christ. He was paraded from the church to the plaza to be burned in effigy.

A couple of men held him up on a rope suspended from a couple of poles and led the crowd to the plaza. Here the poles were stuck in the ground and as Judas dangled from his rope, his feet were set on fire and pretty soon he turned into a ball of flame.

Young boys dressed as "Fariseos" (Pharisees) ran around the plaza banging on cans, rattling "matracas" (a noisemaker made of bamboo and a wooden ratchet wheel) and in general raising Cain to distract the people from their holy obligations. This gave Holy Week the popular touch.

"El Dia de San Juan" (St. John's Day) is celebrated on June 24 with equestrian games and horseback riding around town. Motorized traffic yields the right-of-way to equestrian traffic. Young men and boys take out their finest horses and parade them up and down the streets, hoping to find their girls friends.

The equestrian game of "El Gallo" (The Cock) was standard fare for this day until a few years ago. A rooster was buried up to its neck in the middle of

the widest street in town. The object of the game was to gallop by on horseback, roll over as far as possible, reach down and grab the rooster by its neck, pulling it out of its hole.

Whoever was successful in accomplishing this task chased the other horsemen around town, whopping them over their back with the rooster. It was a demonstration of good horsemanship but a very lopsided contest —the rooster always lost. Few miss this bloody spectacle.

The biggest day in Huasabas is "El Quince de Agosto" (Aug. 15). The celebration is held to honor the patron saint of the town, "Nuestra Senora de la Asuncion" (Our Lady of the Assumption).

At mid-century, this day was anticipated with great bakings of bread. Several women at most households had to handle this tremendous chore. The dough was kneaded in huge wooden pans called "batellas" measuring about two feet wide and three or four feet long.

Women shared the work by kneading at both ends of the batella. Several types of bread were baked: semitas, molletes and large cow pie-shaped loaves that were stored and lasted for several weeks after the celebration.

To bake such quantities of bread required a special oven of which there were several in town. They resembled huge beehives made of adobe and were about six or seven feet in diameter at their base. Firewood was introduced, lit and allowed to burn until a large pile of coals was produced. The bread was placed on metal sheets and put into the oven by homemade flat-bladed wooden shovels.

Since several families shared the oven, the household gave the impression of a busy ant hill with people coming and going, performing the different chores of this operation and all done in a very festive mood.

The night of the 14th was observed with religious ceremonies, including mass in church. Upon exiting, the congregation was greeted with fire works and guns going off. The plaza had games, food and refreshments stands, including the ever-present cerveza stand. The following evening, a dance was held at the plaza. People from surrounding towns arrived in droves to participate in the merrymaking.

Nowadays, the festivities have been expanded to include the selection of "La Riena del Quince" (The Queen of the 15th). The candidates and their supporters parade around town on the back and roof of pickup trucks. Money raised during the campaign benefits local service organizations. At night, the reigning queen is accompanied by a retinue of elegantly dressed young ladies who took part in the campaign.

While at mid-century the young ladies of Huasabas dressed as best as they could for this special event, the quality and style screamed "Huasabas!" The girls of the new generation dress so that if yanked out of the plaza and dropped into a fancy New York nightclub, they would fit right in.

It is also becoming a custom to organize a caravan of Huasabenos from Hermosillo. The caravan usually picks up automobiles that came from the

direction of Agua Prieta. This motorized snake of about 75 vehicles is met at the entrance to town by townspeople, mariachi bands and young men on horseback with a banner "Welcome to Huasabas." The streets are lined with more Huasabenos greeting the arriving guests.

Houses are packed with people since there are but two hotels in town, each one with four or five rooms. A religious welcoming ceremony is held as soon as the vehicles disgorge their loads. This is followed by a popular lunch, free of charge, at the plaza.

Earth-shaking lightning storms, thundershowers, power failures, oppressive heat and hordes of insects are part and parcel of the celebration and serve to make it all the more memorable. A sudden shower may empty the plaza but the dancers are back again with renewed energy as soon as the showers dissipate.

"El Dia de la Raza" (Columbus Day) is celebrated Oct. 12. It receives relatively little attention in modern times, but at mid-century many homes prepared their windows by displaying an altar with statues of saints and lit with candles. The rim of most roofs in town were lined with lighted candles at night. For a town that had not yet experienced the miracle of electricity, this was a great spectacle and parties of festive people paraded through town to take in the magnificent sight.

Through about 1961, the "Coloquio" was part of the Christmas celebration. The Coloquio is the presentation of a play associated with the Nativity.

Local players participated in this theatrical act. Don Ramon Urquijo for a very long time was in charge of this production. When the play was over, a dinner was held for all the participants at his house.

The play was held in the backyard of private homes. A simple stage was set up and the players wore something to identify them with the personage they represented.

For about 16 years this activity ceased, but in 1987, in an effort to raise funds to build a new home for the priest, the Coloquio was revived. Admission was about \$1 but at mid-century, admission was a couple of eggs, a panocha, a couple of heads of onions or a small sack of beans. Lacking that, you were allowed in free or you jumped over the back yard fence.

The last day celebrated in town is New Year's Eve. But anything said about that is superfluous. Mucha cerveza!

XV. THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The town had a basic educational system at the beginning of the century that provided education only up to the third grade. There was a school for boys and one for girls.

In 1917, the government decreed that educational facilities would be coeducational. The boys school was evacuated and the boys sent to join the girls. The girls did not show up for classes the next day because their mothers opposed a mixed environment.

After much discussion between parents and authorities, the parents agreed to a coeducational school. The boys school, kitty corner to the northeast corner of the plaza, became the coeducational school. This was the school until the mid-1940s, but not continuously.

In the 1920s, it served as the *ayuntamiento* and telephone office. It reverted to a school and then in the early 1930s during the religious conflict, it became a barracks for federal troops. It reverted back to a school house when the troops evacuated.

About 1947, a new schoolhouse opened across the street from the west side of the church. The new school offered education up to the sixth grade. Then a new building was erected between the west side of town and the cemetery.

In the 1960s, the tremor of the educational revolution could be felt in Huasahas but there was no means to accommodate it. But when the need arises and the will is present, the means can be found.

The town had long been requesting the government to provide a secondary school. But while it waited, it did not sit back idle. It shouldered its load and set about finding a means locally to satisfy its need.

The local authorities, under the direction of then-alcalde Jesus "Cantera" Leyva Suarez and with the efforts of Professor Ernesto Loreto Huasica, teachers, students and parents gathered enough donations to establish secondary education in the community. In 1966, 30 students began classes in a new secondary school.

But the secondary school is not in its own building. Primary classes are held in the school in the morning until about noon. Secondary classes are held from mid-afternoon until 8 p.m.

The schoolhouse is government owned but supported by the townspeople. Secondary teachers are paid a token salary by the parents of students but their work is practically a free social service to the community.

From this system of secondary schools, 19 classes have graduated and many students obtained higher education. Efforts continue to build a separate schoolhouse for secondary education.

In 1986, Husabas inaugurated a two-room schoolhouse for kindergarteners. To make it more attractive to youngsters, in 1991 a wading pool fed by the irrigation ditch that runs behind the school was added.

XV. THE KING OF SPORTS

Baseball has been played in Huasabas since the early part of the century but without the benefit of uniforms or field. At mid-century, games were held in open fields where the plaza of Basuchon now is and later where the municipal stadium now stands. Competition was between Huasabas, Granados, Oputo and Moctezuma.

The idea of having a more formal team from Father Ricardo Duran, who encouraged young men to form teams as a healthy form of entertainment. This he did through the Club de Guadalupenos, a Catholic male youth organization.

They wanted to wall in the field but that seemed an impossible dream; no one could bear the cost. Regardless, the task was taken on and a committee formed. Raffles and dances were held to raise the money. Donations were solicited from Huasabenos who lived in town and those who had moved away.

The task of building the stadium wall was not easy. The team decided to start carrying stones from the river to build the foundation but didn't have anything to carry them in. A baseball fan from Granados, Jesus Trujillo "Chachito" loaned a pickup truck and provided a driver.

The foundation was built, followed by the wall itself. The second stage was to plaster the wall. This was funded by the "Progress and Welfare Program" through the government.

Later grandstands, which seat about 300 people, were added. Dugouts followed. The stadium is much the same as those found in any small American town and is utilized by a very competitive baseball team.

TWO HUASABAS SONGS

These songs were written by Angel Leyva Noriega who was born in Huasabas in 1910. He moved to California in his youth and later was a Douglas resident for 35 years until his death in 1981.

HUASABAS QUERIDO

Senores, pangan cuidano
Aqui les va esta cancion
Voy a cantarle a mi tierra
Con todito el corazon

Soy purito huasabeno
No se me puede quitar
No le hace en donde me encuentre
Yo nunca te he de olivar

Viva Huasabas, senores
Donde siempre esta mi Dios
Las mujeres a los hombres
Los quieren de corazon

Huasabas mi tierra linda
Y sus hembras sin igual
En el estado de Sonora
No se pueden comparar

Los hombres son muy remachos

Y de todo corazon
Cumpliendo con sus deberes
Por eso los ama Dios

Asi le canto a mi tierra
Es la purita verdad
Esta es mi tierra querida
Pues mi Dios la cuidara

Su rio y sus canciones
Las moliendas sin igua!
En nuestros lindos paisajes
Nos ponemos a cantar

La luna nos da su luz
El sol nos da su calor
Y nuestras lindas mujeres
Nos dan alma y corazon

Huasabas, ya me despido
Esta tierra tan querida
Por donde quiera que yo ande
Tu seras mi consentida

VIVA HUASABAS — SEGUNDO CIELO

Huasabas, segundo cielo
Un pueblito encantador
Incrustado entre montanas
Y banado por el sol

El cerro que esta alla en frente
Que domina la region
Es un cerro tan hermoso
Tan gallardo y tan precioso
Que no hay otro alrededor

Sus mujeres tan hermosas
No se les puede negar
Cuando van a la molienda
Las miramos por alla

Se dirigen hacia el rio
Para irse alla a banar

Parecen amapolitas
Muy relindas y bonitas
Que quisiera yo arrancar

Viva Huasabas, senores
Como Huasabas no hay dos
Un pueblito tan humilde
Que lo ha bendecido Dios

Yo me siento en la montana
Y me pongo a contemplar
Cantando con mi guitarra
De noche de madrugada
Nunca lo podre olvidar

En el pueblo os protege
La Virgen de las Asuncion
Ella siempre nos ayuda
Y nos da su bendicion

A sus plantas me arrodillo
Implorando su perdon
Tan bonita y milagrosa
Que parece una rosa
Bendito sea nuestro Dios

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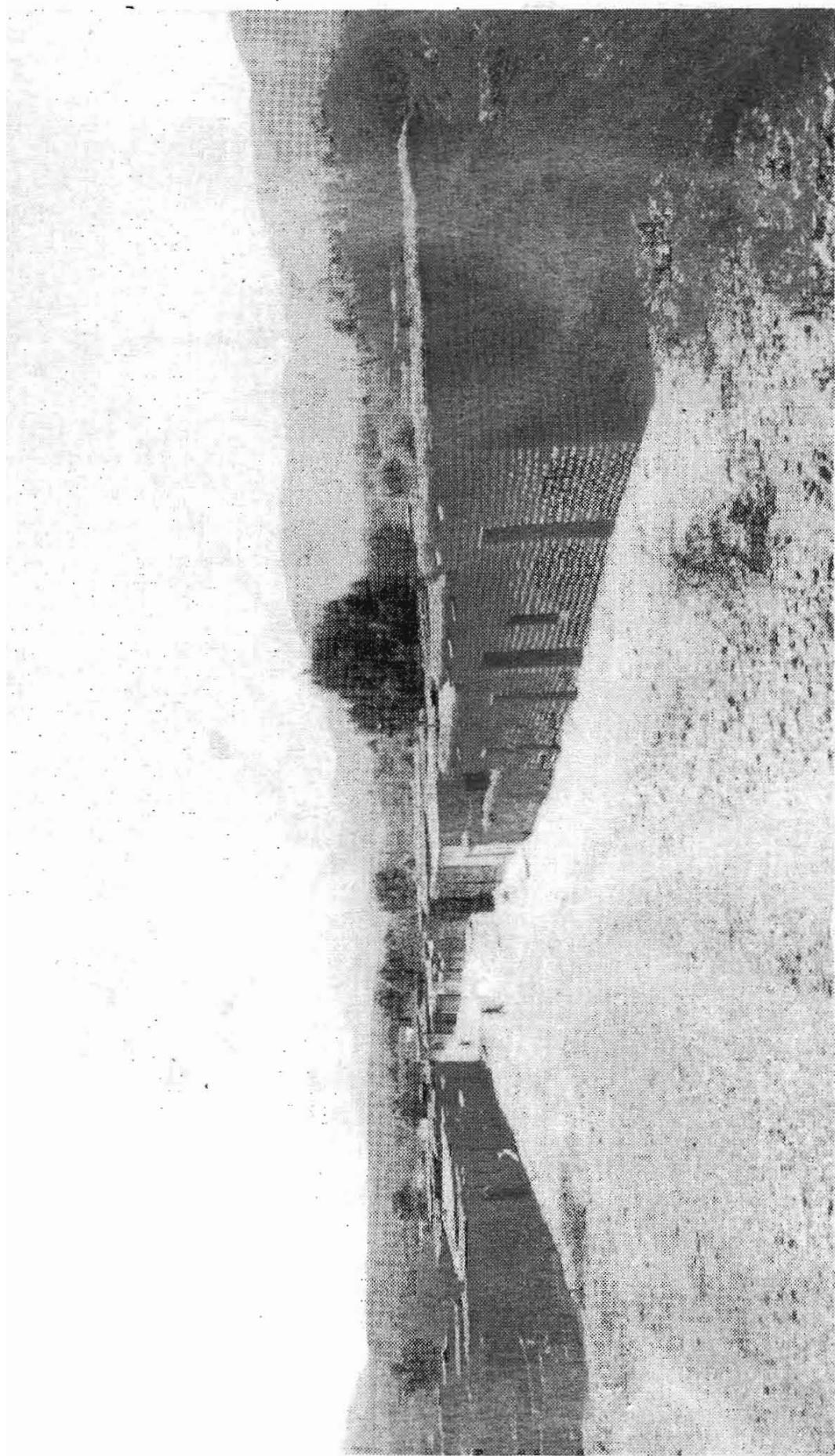
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About The Author: Frank Leyva was born in Huasabas but came to the United States as a boy. He became an electronic engineer at the U.S. Army's electronic proving ground at Fort Huachuca. Now retired, he lives in Tucson but visits Huasabas regularly.



These men are dressing after a refreshing swim in the Bavispe River at the most popular crossing point in Huasabas. For those not wishing to get wet, the "canastilla" in the left side of the photo is available. September, 1963 photo.



This photo of the main street of Bashuchi was taken in September, 1963. The street is now paved, lined with power poles and TV antennas sprout from roofs now covered with corrugated tin sheets.