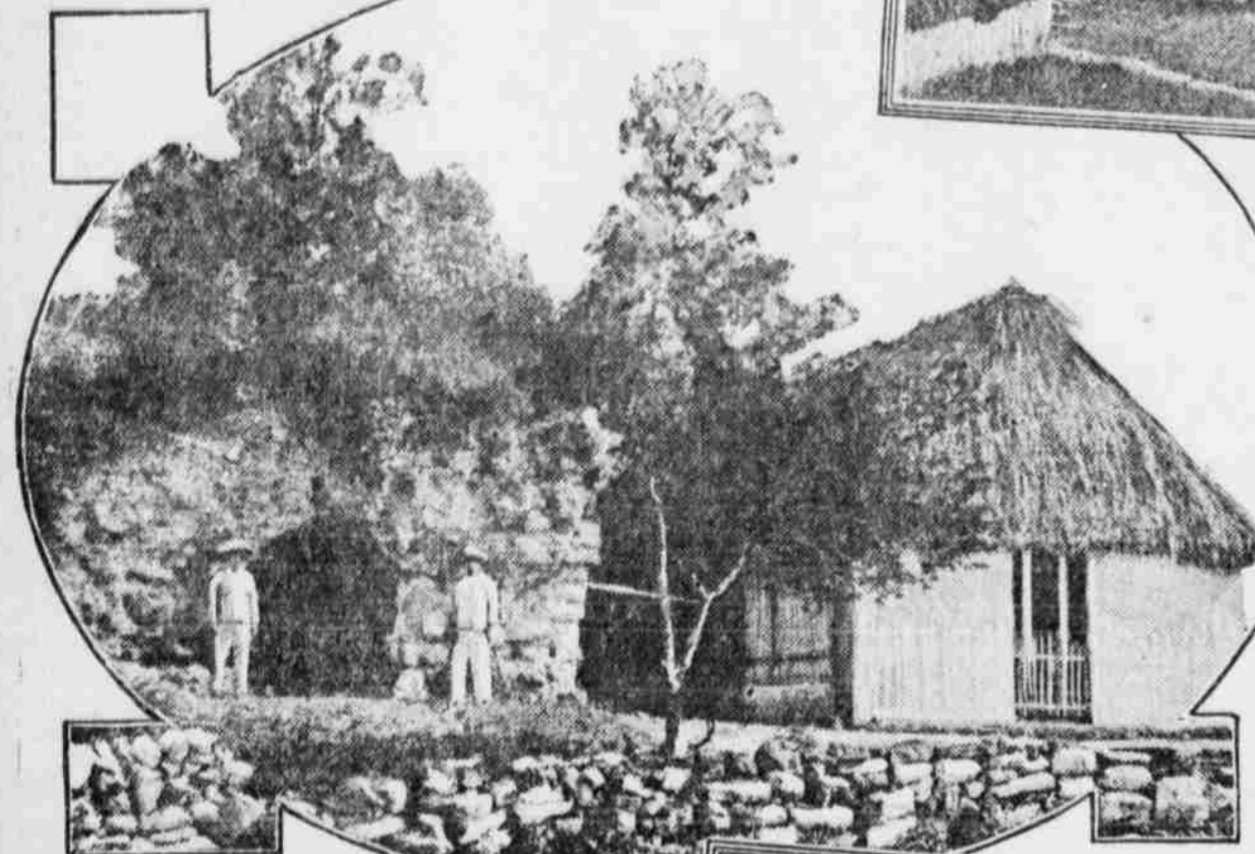


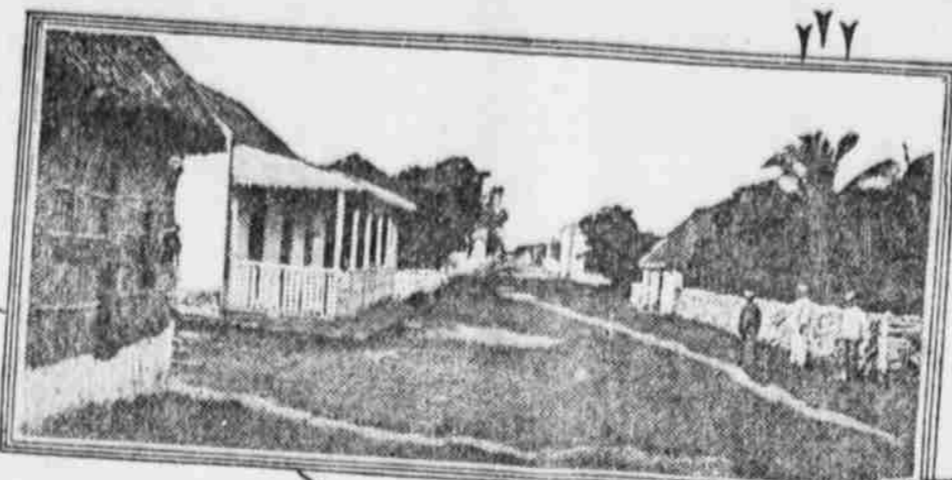
COZUMEL

A MEXICAN ISLAND

FROM PAN-AMERICAN UNION



THE CHURCH AT EL CEDRAL



A STREET SCENE IN SAN MIGUEL



TEQUILA PLANTATION, JALISCO



A COCONUT GROVE ON THE ISLAND

In the Caribbean sea, about twelve miles from Yucatan across the channel of that name, lies Mexico's most easterly outpost, the island of Cozumel. The name comes from the ancient Mayan and means "The Isle of Swallows." It is included in the northern division of the territory of Quintana Roo, the capital of which is Santa Cruz de Bravo, named for the rugged old warrior who, during the Diaz regime, administered all that part of Mexico, mainland and island, which lies to the east of Yucatan. The foreign port nearest to Cozumel is Belize, British Honduras, distant about 155 miles southwest. Off to the northeast, some 210 miles away, lies Cuba. From extreme points north to south the island, which is rhomboidal in form, measures a little under 50 miles, and from east to west about 14 miles.

Cozumel occupies a very prominent place in Mexican history. It was the first land sighted by Hernando Cortez when, in 1519, he sailed westward from Cuba on that famous voyage which had for its object the quest of gold and for its result the conquest of an empire. Cortez, however, was not the first Spaniard to set foot on Cozumel's shores. The year before he landed it was visited by Grijalva, the discoverer of Tabasco; and Bancroft, the historian, mentions others who touched there during the earlier cruises of the Castilians among the Antilles.

It is a matter of record that from the deck of his "flagship"—a little vessel of less than 100 tons burthen—Cortez counted 14 towers on the north and northwest coasts of the island. These he found, when he landed, surmounted as many temples, erected for idolatrous worship. When he disembarked with half of his followers (all told the expedition numbered only 617 men), leaving the others on board his small fleet to repel possible attack, Cortez' first act was to dismantle these temples. Fired with religious zeal, he pushed his way through the crowd of Indians who had come down to the beach to receive him, and, mounting the steps of the principal place of worship, where the high priest and his attendants were grouped, he harangued the natives on the sinfulness of their idolatry, using an Indian who had been captured off the coast of Yucatan by Grijalva and who had acquired a working knowledge of Spanish in Cuba, as an interpreter. After thus giving vent to his religious fervor, and Cortez' worst enemies could never truthfully assert that he was not sincere in his faith, he ordered his soldiers to tear down the altars dedicated to the false gods and in their place set up a cross. No arguing, no reasoning. Prompt, aggressive action, without regard to odds, and such action was Cortez' main characteristic at all times when dealing with the natives wherever he went. Doubtless much of his remarkable success with them was due to it. Although the Indians were obviously docile, the invaders were taking big chances in thus desecrating the sacred groves. But nothing happened. The audacity of the proceeding was sublime, and so great that it simply dazed the natives and left them incapable of protest.

When Cortez was at Cozumel the island had apparently several thousand inhabitants; but when Stevens, a prominent American archaeologist and traveler, went there in the early forties of the last century he found not a single soul. The crowds seen by the Spaniards were probably transients, for, as a matter of fact, Cozumel never had a large resident population. It was a sacred place to the Mayas of Yucatan and Central America, their Mecca, and a vast number of pilgrims went periodically to worship at its shrines. During the intervals between pilgrimages the priests, with their servants and retainers, were doubtless the only residents.

When the Spaniards became firmly established in Yucatan they forbade the pilgrimage to Cozumel, their reasons for this course being that they needed the uninterrupted services of the Indians as laborers. The church also took a hand in prohibiting festivals on the island. They carried the mind away from the doctrine which the mission fathers were propagating, and although the Indian had without very great difficulty been induced to accept the cross in place of the graven image, he would, when visiting the familiar scenes, be sure to associate with them the tenets of his old belief, still strong within him.

Notwithstanding that the religious peregrinations ceased, Cozumel was not entirely deserted until long after the invasion. Of course, it is more than likely that those whose homes were on the island continued to reside there after the main body stopped coming. For the greater part they were spiritual counselors and medicine men, and it is very probable that they were forbidden to leave. It would be decidedly to the interests of the conquerors, both lay and clerical, to keep them away from the masses of the people. That there was a settlement, and that Spaniards lived

in it, is proved by the ruined church on a burial ground one sees a couple of miles to the north of San Miguel, the principal town. Close by the church ruins is the site of an ancient village, now traceable only by its stone foundations.

Whatever the cause may have been, it came about in the course of time that the island of Cozumel was abandoned as a place of residence. It must have remained unoccupied for several generations, for when Stevens touched there with the object of exploring its ruined temples, of which many are known to exist, the entire surface, with the exception of two clearings, was covered with a dense growth of dwarf but thick timber. Stevens satisfied himself that this forest covered the whole area.

One of the open spaces referred to above was a clearing made by a man named Molas, a notorious character, half political refugee, half pirate, who had been exiled from Yucatan. Molas lived for many years in Cozumel, and doubtless would have "died in his bed"—the end most desired by all freebooters, we are told—had he never returned to the mainland, for his enemies were afraid to attack him in his stronghold. One fatal day, however, he sailed his schooner across the channel and landed near to where the Valladolid trail comes down to the beach. Molas' two sons—who had voluntarily shared their father's exile—accompanied him on this trip, having in vain tried to dissuade him from making it. Molas insisted that his sons should remain aboard the schooner until he gave the signal that all was clear. The signal never came. Waiting so long for it that they felt sure all was not well, the lads went ashore at last to investigate. The ever-vigilant foe had seen Molas' boat making for the mainland. A short distance from the beach, yet hidden by the jungle, they found their father's mutilated body.

The boys returned to the island only to remove their personal belongings and what they could carry away of the family effects, and then went to live in a remote part of Yucatan, as far removed from Cozumel and its sad associations as they could get. Thus it came about that the "Isle of Swallows" was again without human inhabitants.

The other clearing mentioned was the deserted ranch of a certain "Don Albino," as Stevens calls him without revealing his surname. Stevens met Don Albino in Valladolid, and heard from the ranchman's own lips why he left Cozumel. In Valladolid a cotton mill—famous in the annals of the town as the first to be erected in Mexico—had started operations, and the owner, an enterprising Spaniard, was paying high prices for the raw material and offering enticing premiums to encourage more extensive cultivation of the plant. Now, Don Albino possessed no land, nor had he the means wherewith to buy some; nevertheless he yearned to profit by the mill owner's bounty. So he conceived the idea of going over to Cozumel, which by that time was regarded as a sort of "No Man's Land," to raise cotton. He could easily convey the lint across the channel in canoes, and although from the coast to the mill was a journey of several days for pack mules there would be sufficient margin in the price to justify the expense of transportation. Full of enthusiasm, Don Albino gathered around him as many of the more destitute natives as he could induce by the lavish use of glowing promises to accompany him and set sail for Cozumel.

But the motley band soon tired of the monotonous life on the lonely island. They were restless spirits, who had lived by what was really little short of brigandage, tilling the land only to the extent of being sure of their staple food, maize and "frijoles" (beans). Sullen under the cravings for the comparative excitement obtainable in their native pueblos, they before long picked a quarrel with their "patron" and, seizing the only canoe, returned to Yucatan.

Entirely alone, Don Albino could make no headway with his project of getting rich quickly and, taking advantage of a passing vessel, went back to Valladolid. The cotton he had succeeded in planting before his mozos deserted him was allowed to grow wild, and the island once more was completely abandoned by man.

It was not until 1848 that Cozumel was again inhabited. The revolution which caused Yucatan and Campeche to separate had deprived many citizens of the means of livelihood, and for material as well as political reasons it became necessary for them to seek pastures new. The federal government offered to help them, provided they would leave the peninsula. But to where could they be transplanted? Being Yucatecs, quick to resent the paternalism of the government, and always suspicious of the party in office's bona fides, they were of a spirit difficult to keep under restraint and more than likely to soon become unruly again. Therefore to allow them to migrate to the central states, or even to the regions bordering on the Gulf of Mexico, was out of the question; it was imperative that they be kept apart from the more docile peoples of the republic lest they inoculate the latter with the political restlessness that had been their own undoing. Finally it was agreed that they should be taken to Cozumel. This arrangement was duly consummated, and everything necessary to enable the exiles to make a good start was furnished gratuitously by the government. After very many vicissitudes the colony thus launched gradually settled itself into place, becoming at the expiration of a decade or so firmly established, and Cozumel is today the "tierra" or homeland of as hardy and independent a set of islanders—half farmers, half fishermen—as can be found anywhere in the Antilles.

The present population of Cozumel numbers some fourteen hundred souls. The capital, San Miguel, is credited with 900 and the village of El Cedral has about 150; the remainder are scattered among the numerous ranches.

San Miguel is quite a thriving, well-formed town. It has several wide, clean streets; a plaza, a very presentable little church, one large general store and several small ones, an inn, and municipal offices and customhouse; it also boasts a sort of esplanade running along the entire sea front, at one end of which is the lighthouse and at the other a landing jetty. Although most of the buildings are palm-thatched cottages, there are several strongly built stone houses and the main street has a two-story brick house and a modern bungalow.

The only regular communication with the outside world is by government transport. These steamers call twice each month to leave and collect mail when en route with troops and supplies to and from Vera Cruz and the military stations of Quintana Roo.

Health conditions in Cozumel are extremely good, when the tropical climate of the island is taken into account. The normal rate of mortality averages 14 per 1,000. Epidemics are very rare, indeed, practically unknown.

The great majority of the Cozumel islanders are poor, so far as possessing a surplus of this world's goods is concerned, being satisfied with a hand-to-mouth existence.

Among the very few articles exported from the island are sponges, but the quantity is limited and the quality not very fine. More than one attempt has been made by foreigners to fully exploit the sponge business here, but all efforts to make it profitable on a large scale have failed.

There are very many ruins on the island—some of which I saw and to the extent of my limited time and ability examined—the architectural beauty and general plan of which provide irrefutable evidence that the early inhabitants were intelligent and cultured to a degree more than surprising.

PROMINENT PEOPLE

PROF. MILTON WHITNEY



In the opinion of many, one result of the war will be an increased and stupendous demand on America for foodstuffs, and advocates of the "back to the soil" movement are wondering if that will not bring about the return of many thousands of men from the city to the farm.

Commonly two causes are assigned for the abandoned farm. One is the loneliness of farm life and the lack of opportunity for wholesome recreation. The other is that the soil, through generations of cropping, has become worn out.

Both theories are wrong, according to Prof. Milton Whitney, chief of the bureau of soils of the department of agriculture, a man who has spent his whole life in the study of these problems.

"Hope and spirit of adventure are the chief factors in the movement from the eastern farm," is the succinct way in which Professor Whitney declares

his belief. Perhaps this war, with promises of a better and more stable market for food, may supply the needed incentive.

"Where are the abandoned farms?" he asked. "You do not find them in North Dakota or the Panhandle of Texas, remote and far from urban centers as they are. But you do find them in New York and Ohio, for example. Hope for a golden future is what moves men to go to the newer portions of the continent, or to the cities. Without hope for such a future, you cannot keep them in one place."

Professor Whitney is one of those government scientists who have given their lives to public service, their recompense a small salary and the satisfaction of doing helpful work. He is a native of Baltimore, and is fifty-three years old.

SALANDRA, WAR PREMIER

Politics took a peculiar turn in elevating Antonio Salandra to world-wide prominence as the war party premier of Italy. A less bellicose man and one more conservative by nature would be difficult to find among contemporary Italian statesmen.

Salandra is almost as fair an illustration of the scholar in politics as President Wilson. His interests are primarily those of the student. His past activities have been as much academic as political. He is simple, modest and domestic in his personal tastes. Nevertheless it is this professor of public law in the University of Rome who is today the idol of the Italian populace, to whom the idea of war with Austria is so dear.

Salandra was born at Troia in Foggia on August 31, 1853. Naturally a student he qualified for the degree of bachelor of laws at the University of Naples when he was twenty-two. He was indefatigable in equipping himself with a knowledge of public law and finance, so that when he entered the chamber of deputies in the sixteenth legislature his abilities were quickly recognized.

He held various governmental posts and finally received the treasury portfolio in the cabinet of Baron Sidney Sonnino, who is minister of foreign affairs in the present cabinet.



MONTANA'S ACTIVE GOVERNOR



Samuel V. Stewart, governor of Montana, is one of the group of western chief executives, like Spry of Utah, who aggressively oppose the encroachment of federal upon state rights in the matter of conservation. The constitution of Montana explicitly seeks to aid in the development of the natural resources of the state by encouraging capital to make use of the forests and streams and by safeguarding interests thus created.

Governor Stewart is a man of initiative and action, as was abundantly proved in the labor riots at Butte, when the I. W. W. were dynamiting shops and halls in their contests with employers. While the congressional delegation in Washington was frantically trying to induce the president to send federal troops to quell the riots—a body of soldiers was sent as at Missoula—Governor Stewart calmly announced that he had no use for federal troops, that the state could handle its own riots. He proved that it could, moreover, for he ordered out the National Guard and went down to the scene of the disorders and took charge himself. The rioting was stopped and the federal troops were returned to their quarters.

Governor Stewart is a lawyer, a director of two state banks and has been chairman of the Democratic state central committee. His term as governor is from 1913 to 1917.

LONDON'S DEFENDER

When Sir Percy Scott was appointed to the command of the gun defenses of London everyone acknowledged that he was up against a hard proposition—the guarding of the metropolis against the raids of the immense German Zeppelins. But nearly everyone over there had such confidence in Sir Percy that the success of the October raid of the kaiser's airships was really a great surprise. The citizens of London held indignation meetings, and the press asked loudly what he intended to do and why he didn't do it. Sir Percy's supporters insisted that all was well and that he had something up his sleeve.



Admiral Scott—he has had that rank for some time—is a scientist and a man of action. He invented a number of devices for insuring accuracy of fire by naval guns, and helped plan the first dreadnaught. As commander of the Terrible during the Boer war he mounted his 4.7-inch guns on carriages that were conceived and built within 24 hours, and got them across country in time to save Ladysmith. On the eve of the present war he declared the impotency of the big ship, asserting that above-water fleets would be swept off the seas by the submarine.