

American Woman Tells of Life at Bluefields and Its Revolutionists

NEW YORK, April 27.—The first refugees, vanguard of the exodus that always accompanies a Central American revolution, are beginning to struggle in. Several of them reached New York last week, having come by way of New Orleans from Bluefields, a central point in the controversy between Nicaragua and Honduras and the home of Jose Santos Zelaya, president of the former state and would-be dictator of all Central America.

"We have had exciting times," said Mrs. J. G. Pomeranik, an American woman who has lived for fifteen years in Nicaragua. "But Bluefields is used to having things happen, and it is a dull day when someone is not hatching a revolution or some prominent citizen fleeing the country."

Bluefields is so remarkably situated that

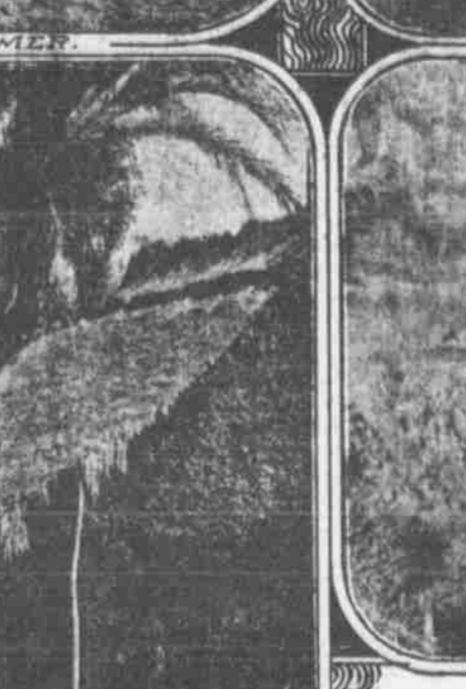
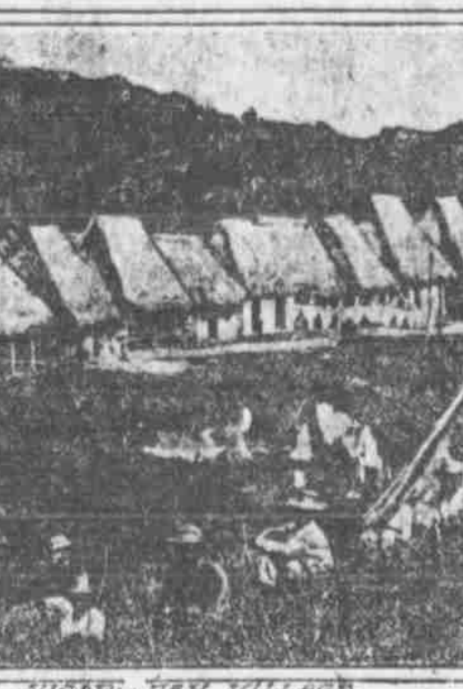
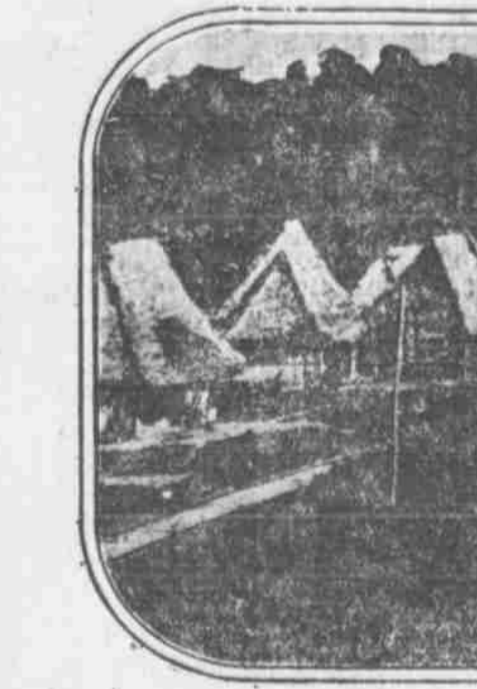
The Americans are there to make money as quickly as possible and then leave. There are, of course, a sprinkling of those who never leave of their own volition. They find the surroundings much more agreeable than in the United States and they spend their time disposing of the funds with which they always arrive amply supplied.

"The Americans have lately found rivals in the Chinese, who, under government approval if not patronage, have come to the country in considerable numbers. There are now twenty Chinese stores in Bluefields and the competition is keen between them and the Nicaraguans."

"Many persons declare that the American residents are at the bottom of many of the disturbances in Bluefields. An American took a prominent and valuable part

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now, of the rest of the world is slow in reaching it, and of little interest when it arrives. Therefore it cooks up its own news over night and its morning paper is never lacking in interest.

"What Bluefields cannot attend to in the newsmaking line Nicaragua and the neighboring states can. Between them they keep things interesting."

Bluefields, the capital city of Mosquito Reserve, has figured in the history of more than Central America. At one time it was the occasion of a slight frigidly between the United States and Great Britain, arising from the British protectorate over the Mosquito coast, in force some fifty years ago. After the protectorate terminated the Mosquito Indians, a highly civilized and wealthy tribe, maintained their own government until it was overthrown by the Nicaraguans. The Mosquito Reserve has been in a state of intermittent revolution ever since, but the Nicaraguan government has always triumphed in the end.

In the first revolution, which established Nicaraguan sovereignty over the Mosquito Indians.

"Little by little the Nicaraguans established themselves in Bluefields. Their first step was to build a club house—the Central American has a weakness for clubs—the most imposing structure in the town. To be sure, it was of wood, but it was painted to represent marble, and commanded much respect. Little by little the town swarmed in population, all Nicaraguans and all realtors in the immediate vicinity of the club."

"Then one fine morning the Indians awakened to find a Nicaraguan warship in the harbor, and the streets were filled with Nicaraguan soldiers. The club, which instantly changed its name to the Central American, was the fortified headquarters of the invaders. The Indians lost their heads in the excitement, and not until night came and they were urged to fight, it is said, by the Americans, who saw their cherished tariff concessions in peril, did they make any resistance."

"They attacked the palace and gained entrance to it, destroying its interior and furnishings. But the Indians, naturally peaceful, fought only when urged on. Realizing this, and the futility of continuing the struggle, the Americans determined to get into the band wagon. Gaining the top of a hill, with all the Indians assembled below him, the leading American of the town addressed them:

"Are you prepared to fight?" he asked.

"No," chorused back the Indians.

"Then give up. You will only hurt yourselves by resisting further. If you yield now, you can secure concessions. If you continue to fight, you will secure nothing and the end will be just the same. If you can't fight, quit."

"The Indians quit, and the Nicaraguan flag was raised over the Mosquito Reserve."

"The government could not be convinced that the Americans were not at the bottom of the resistance that had been made. Besides, it needed money, and the easiest way it knew to get it was to pile the duty on the imports."

"Then the merchants decided to rebel and planned a characteristic Central American coup. Their scheme was to have a revolution in Bluefields, restore the Mosquito Indians to their own and establish a friendly following, as president."

"General Rias was to receive \$2,000 for his trouble. The schemers were somewhat disconcerted, however, when in the midst of their conferences at the American club the United States consul, Mr. Clancy, walked in on them."

"When this wild scheme goes through," he said, "you forfeit the protection of the United States flag. That is all I have to say."

"General Rias a few days later found himself in possession of the town, established a name and issuing all sorts of edicts and manifestoes. All went well for a day or two. Then General Rias' curiosity got the better of him and he wanted to see what President Zelaya was going to do about it."

"The little steamer San Jacinto was equipped with the necessary supplies. With General Rias on board the San Jacinto started boldly out of the harbor to see what it could see."

"Before it had proceeded far it saw just as much as it wanted to. Two Nicaraguan warships were sighted, which to the little San Jacinto were huge proportions. Immediately the San Jacinto turned back and started for Bluefields."

"By the time it reached that haven two things had happened—its coal had given out and the enthusiasm of its backers had subsided. They refused to supply the boat with more coal to carry on this war. Helpless in the face of this rebuff, General Rias gathered together the remnants of his loyal troops, took them on the San Jacinto with him and made for safety. Point in safety, where he was obliged to go ashore. Without food other than that afforded by the jungle, his followers found it almost work-revolving. Half starved and completely subdued in spirit they made their way one by one back to Bluefields, so glad to be home that they didn't care what government they were under."

"General Rias performed the customary act of fleeing the country. He was obliged to sell his beautiful furs, or country home, and has never returned to his native land. His friend and confederate, Dr. Pedro Amador Funes Diaz, a Spanish physician and a warm friend of the Americans, shared his exile."

"After the Rias fiasco the government was more severe than ever in the matter of duties levied on the goods of American merchants, and all appeals to have them reduced were met with null results."

"The natives Nicaraguans are a gentle natured, kind hearted people. They are industrious and have a deep pride of race. They are uneducated, for they have no public schools. The government will not permit anything but Spanish to be taught, and as no one can understand that language neither teachers nor pupils can be found."

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Scenes Along Route of Travel in Sahara

though their product is not so good as the dates of Taflet, which lies at some distance from here in Morocco.

Tuat is now controlled by the French. It has a garrison of 400 or 500 gendarmes, under the command of the Algerian government, patrolling to keep order, and its people have become peaceful and thriving.

On my way to Taria I rode through patches of thorn bushes scattered at wide intervals apart. Such vegetation is found all along this part of the Soufiane, the moisture not being sufficient for anything else. There was a drove of camels feeding on the thorn bushes as I rode by and I stopped and made photographs of them. Neater the dry river bed where the moisture was greater were thick bunches of alfalfa grass and other desert plants and flowers, and then came the region of date trees. The palms were of all sizes. Some were just sprouting and others were as high as my head. Others were so tall that their Arab owner had to climb them to cut off the bunches of dates, which always grow at the top.

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