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G. C. Carothers Interview With Antonio Ramos Pedrueza
Document 3 in [The Investigation of Antonio Ramos Pedrueza](#)

Statement of Mr. George C. Carothers, made in the presence of Mr. Lic. Antonio Ramos Pedrueza, representative of the Mexican Government, and Owyang King and Arthur Bassett, representatives of the Chinese Government, on August 14, 1911, in relation to the events in Torreón on May 13, 14, and 15, 1911.

By Mr. Lic. Antonio Ramos Pedrueza – I am the representative of the Mexican Government; this is Mr. Bassett and that is Mr. King, representatives of the Chinese Government. Please state what is known to you.

From Mr. Carothers: My full name is George C. Carothers; I am the American Consular Agent in this city and have lived here for approximately 15 years. On May 13th, around 11:00 a.m., the Maderista forces began their attack from two sides of the city; one between Gomez Palacio and Lerdo, by the canyon called "Calabazas," and the other from the eastern side of the city, near the small ranch called "La Rosita." During the afternoon of the 13th, I witnessed the fighting from the windows of the Casino with a pair of very powerful binoculars. Around 4:00 p.m., the fighting seemed to be concentrated in the eastern part of the city, but I was unable to determine which side would ultimately prevail. Around four in the afternoon, I heard that an American had been shot in the stomach while watching the fighting from the windows of the Hotel San Carlos, so I thought it prudent to return home, where I remained until the morning of the 16th. During the afternoon of the 13th, I was informed by several people who lived with me and who frequently left the house to visit different parts of the city to find out what was happening, that the Federales had found some people inside the city firing at them from the rooftops. One case that particularly caught my attention was that of an individual who was found on the roof of a store called "La Prueba," owned by Tomas Zertuche Trevino, whose house faces the market and which was later looted, as I understand it, because the Maderistas said that they had been fired upon from there. The Federales in the trenches about three blocks down from the store realized someone was firing at them and conducted a thorough search, finding the man in the attic of the house, firing through the drainpipes. I was quite certain the fire was coming from the block where I lived, but I couldn't determine its source. This was on the 13th. During the night of the 13th and all of the 14th, the fighting was very slow, and I believed both sides were resting and that the battle would decisively resume on Monday. Around 4:00 a.m. on the 15th, I was awakened by several very excited police officers in front of my house calling for me. They told me that Mr. F. A. Villanueva, the state's Internal Revenue Collector, wished to see me at his house as soon as possible. Before I could get dressed and go downstairs, Mr. Villanueva was already there with the police officers.

He told me that the Federales had evacuated the city during the night and that the revolutionaries were expected to enter at any moment. I advised all the police officers to leave their weapons

and uniforms in the plaza and go into hiding immediately, but I had Mr. Villanueva at my house, telling him that we couldn't do anything to remedy the situation but that we would speak with some prominent citizens by telephone, pleading with them to come and see if it was possible to do anything. Before it was possible to assemble this committee, the Maderistas began to appear in the streets in small groups. The first thing we heard were shouts and gunshots at the jail, and shortly afterward we saw the jail and the Political Headquarters ablaze, both having been set on fire. A few moments later, an individual at the Hotel Central, which at that time was adjacent to my house, told me that the store "La Prueba" was being looted. Around 6:00 a.m., a large mob gathered in front of a Chinese-owned store on the corner of the Plaza, about half a block from my house, and began looting it. The mob continued to grow, and a group broke away, heading up the street toward the Chinese Bank, which is located on another corner of the Plaza. While the mob was there, there were tremendous explosions and gunshots. The mob continued to spread until six city blocks were surrounded and filled by them. This mob was made up of Maderista soldiers and ordinary people. I heard many versions about the looting of stores, but it wasn't until around noon that I learned the Chinese were being killed. Around 3:00 PM, Mr. W. S. Conduit, Vice President and General Manager of the Guayulera Company, came to my house in his automobile. I begged him to do me the favor of delivering a message to Mr. Emilio Madero, who, as I understood it, was having lunch at the Sternau Hotel. In the message, I pleaded with Mr. Madero to come see me at the Consulate, which he did around 4:40 PM, accompanied by Mr. Conduit. I asked him what was happening and told him that I had been informed that all the Chinese were being killed. I asked him what steps he was going to take to put an end to the massacre. He replied that he was dismayed by the killings but believed that by that time—3:30 PM—he had his men under control and that no more Chinese would be killed; that he was gathering them into groups and sending them to the barracks for their protection. Mr. Madero issued safe-conduct passes to the various refugees who were in my house and left. On the morning of May 16, I left the Consulate to make a short inspection tour of the main parts of the city. I met many people, both Americans and Mexicans, all in a state of great excitement; most of the foreigners asked me if it might be possible to arrange a train to leave the country. Many different opinions were expressed concerning the cause of the massacre of the Chinese, some saying that the Chinese had fired on the Maderistas while others vigorously denied this version. I was told that the mob was trying to loot the merchants' stores, especially the establishment of La Suiza, owned by William Peters and Company, and the market, saying that they had been fired upon from these buildings. It seemed to be the general opinion that the mob was signaling to the Maderistas that they were being fired upon from certain buildings so that they would be allowed to loot them.

I believe, although I'm not certain about the date, that on the afternoon of the 16th, a young Chinese man named Wong came to my office and told me that there were about 75 Chinese people in the restaurant where he had come from, located around the corner from my house. He said these Chinese people were starving to death. He was wearing a Red Cross badge on his arm and told me he had been with Dr. Lim on his Red Cross work. I questioned him very thoroughly, since he was the first Chinese person I had seen since the massacre, asking him specifically about the number of dead and the extent of the damage, and especially about the reason for the massacre of the Chinese. He told me there was absolutely no reason. He hadn't been outside the

restaurant and couldn't give me much information except for what had happened to his own group. A small amount of money was collected from those in my office and given to him. I told him to return for more money once he had spent what I had given him. I asked him where Dr. Lim was, and he told me that the Maderistas had taken him to Gómez Palacio on the 15th. Then I went to see Mr. Emilio Madero for further information, and he told me that he had summoned Dr. Lim and was going to send him through the gardens to look for any Chinese who might be hiding and to ascertain the extent of the damage done there. On the 19th, Dr. Lim came to see me, and I learned from him that he had searched the gardens. I asked him if it was true that the Chinese in the gardens had fired on the Maderistas, and he said that it wasn't true; on the contrary, they had been warned by means of a notice issued by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce that they should not offer any resistance. He seemed dazed and unsure of what to do. On May 20, Mr. Woo Lampo arrived from Mexico City and told me he had been commissioned by the Chinese Chargé d'Affaires in Mexico City to write a report. He showed me a copy of the notice that had been issued by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. This copy had been removed from a post in the market. It clearly showed that it had been affixed because someone had stuck a sticky advertisement over it, and it was stained and showed signs of having been exposed to the elements. On June 6, I received instructions from the United States Ambassador, Mr. Wilson, to assist the Chinese community in every way possible in their inquiries. The Ambassador said he had requested permission from the Mexican government to do this and had received an affirmative reply. At 3:30 in the afternoon of June 6, in the company of Mr. R. L. Bonnet, Manager of the American Bank of Torreon, Mr. H. A. Cunard Cummins, British Vice-Consul in Gómez Palacio, and Mr. Foon Chuck, I made an inspection trip through the orchards of the Chinese and other properties of the Chinese where some Chinese had been killed.

The first place we visited was the orchard on Lin Ching's property. I questioned the Chinese worker who was in the garden, who told me that on the 14th, around noon, a group of six to eight Maderistas had come by, robbing the house and killing one of their compatriots. Afterward, we crossed over to Dr. Lim's orchard, where we found 10 or 12 Chinese men, and I questioned them all through Mr. Chuck, who acted as my interpreter, asking them to tell me the truth about what they knew. They told me that on the 13th, between 9 and 10 in the morning, a group of Maderistas had visited them, robbed them, and chased them with sabers, but none of them were killed; that on Monday the 15th, a large group of Maderistas appeared in the garden and ordered them to gather together because they were going to be taken to town. They were herded like sheep and driven toward the town at a run. It had rained very hard the night before, and the roads were full of mud and water. Every time one of them fell into the mud, he was shot and trampled by the horses. Of the twenty who were taken from the farm, seven died before reaching the barracks. Then we went to the orchard rented by Dan Kee and Wong Sam. We found this place guarded by a Maderista; the houses were looted of all valuables, and there were no Chinese there. The Maderista guard told me that 18 Chinese had been killed there—all of them. Afterward, we went to the place rented by Juan Quan, where I found approximately 18 Chinese. They were all extremely indignant at the mere thought that they had offered any resistance. They said that as soon as the firing began on the 15th, they had run away, hiding in the cornfields. Six of them had been killed on the 15th. From there we went to Mah Due's place, which we found destroyed, with nothing of value left in the house. I was told that 19 had been killed and 1

wounded out of the 20 who had been working there. After that, we went to Foon Chuck's place, where we found about 8 or 10 Chinese. The house had been damaged, the doors and windows torn off and carried away, and there was no sign of anything of value, even the engine parts, pump, and boiler having been taken. Ung Shung Yee was the one in charge, and he told us that the Maderistas had first arrived there on the 13th; that they had stolen many things and withdrawn on the 14th; that another party arrived shortly after the first one withdrew on the 14th and had forced them to cook their food. He said that on the 13th and 14th, they had used the walls of their corral as a parapet, placing ladders against the walls and firing upon them. The ladders were still in place when I was there, and I personally removed several bullets from outside the wall, which proves that the Maderistas' fire was returned. He told me that on the 15th, the Maderista soldiers began killing them, killing four of them in the courtyard and 29 in the open field as they ran toward the town. Thirty-three of the thirty-eight were killed at this location. We then visited the Orient Steam Laundry, the Shanghai Port, the Wah Yick Building, and the Railway Hotel, all of which clearly showed signs of having been looted, with their windows and doors destroyed.

On two separate occasions, I testified before the military tribunal in this city, and my statements are on record. From my subsequent investigations, I have come to the firm conviction that there was no resistance of any kind from the Chinese, but that the Maderistas may have believed they were being fired upon from the Chinese gardens. They believed the Chinese were the ones firing the fires, when in fact the gardens had been occupied by the Volunteers of Nuevo León, generally known as the "Yellows" because of their uniforms. It is a well-known fact that the eastern outskirts of the city were defended by the "Yellows." It is also my opinion that when the looting of the stores and the killing of the Chinese began, the common people incited the Maderistas, telling them they were being fired upon from the houses they wished to loot. I have been informed by many people that before the start of the fighting, the Chinese had withdrawn deposits of money, hiding it in their shoes, and that in cases where a Chinese died, someone would pounce on him, remove his shoes, and almost without exception find money inside. I was also informed that the Chinese who were rescued and taken to the barracks had the money they were carrying stolen from them by Maderista soldiers after they arrived at the barracks.

Mr. Pedrueza. – Do you know anything about a version of events involving the remains of some cognac bottles, which were used some years ago at a dance and which were in the courthouse, were unfortunately taken by the Maderistas when they looted the courthouse here?

Mr. Carothers: I know the bottles were in the courthouse because I have often seen them there in the corner of the courtroom of the Second Court of Letters, and I have heard that they were taken by the Maderistas and that several deaths resulted from drinking the cognac, which has given rise to the story that the water was poisoned.

Signed: G C Carothers