



Figure 36: LUMBERING IN THE SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAINS. After the lumber operators passed through an area.

Colonia Juárez

Colonia Juárez fared somewhat better than the mountain Colonias. There was no more farm land for the necessary food crops, but the orchards were producing well. In 1925, an excellent crop of apples yielded 19 carloads. The markets for the fruit were mainly Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua and Mexico City. Again, in 1929, an excellent crop was sold; over 31 carloads were shipped out and about 10 carloads were sold locally. It was figured at this time that a good year brought from 40,000 to 50,000 pesos from the sale of apples. The Stake report of March 31, 1933 stated that more fruit trees were planted during this year than had been planted in any year since the Exodus. In 1937, report, another record yield of apples was harvested. The fruit sold amounted to 45 carloads of apples and 2 carloads of Bartlett pears.⁶⁰

The fruit business was about the only business Colonia Juárez had at this time. The industries before the Exodus – cannery, tannery, shoe shops and carpenter shop - no longer existed. In 1931 there was interest in establishing a poultry industry and about

⁶⁰ Jensen, *op. cit.*,

2,500 baby chicks were purchased that year. In 1935 more people became interested in this new enterprise, and by 1937, a Chicken Cooperative was organized, with a stock investment of several hundred thousand pesos. Elbert Milles from Utah, was hired to run the cooperative. The hatchery, which the cooperative bought, was set up in Colonia Dublán. The chicken business thrived until the late thirties, when a disease killed most of the chickens. This practically bankrupted the cooperative and there was very little done in the chicken business until 1949.

Colonia Dublán

Colonia Dublán during this period of reconstruction was much more diversified in its business enterprises than any of the other Mormon Colonias. The two things that contributed to its prosperity were the large amount of land that could be put under cultivation and the Ferrocarril Noroeste de México, which ran through the town.

During 1920, two flour mills were built by Mormons in Colonia Dublán. One mill later came under the ownership of Mexicans, while the larger mill was held in Mormon hands. The smaller mill had a 150 barrel capacity or 18 tons in 24 hours, and 2,000 tons storage space. The larger mill (Mormon owned) had a slightly higher output per day and larger storage capacity (3,000). The machinery for the mills was bought in Mexico City, but had previously been imported from Germany. A foundry was established in connection with the Mormon mill in order that replacement parts could be made in case of break downs. Also the mill had its own power and light plant system. Most of the flour was sold locally, and to the towns in the vicinity. The flour was not as finely ground as that in the United States, nor was it bleached.

Dairying was a secondary business up to the middle of the 1920's, after which it became one of the enterprises which gave the colonists help in getting started again, after their great losses during the revolution. A cheese factory was suggested as a way to use the surplus milk, and give the people a cash return, after a period of time. Up to this time they were forced, due to their financial situation, to buy on credit from the local store,

against their year's crop. The debt was paid after the harvest in terms of their produce. For many years, surplus over the store debt was small.

The idea of a cheese factory was taken up by a group of the farmers. The building used for the factory had been a small blacksmith shop. For the first few years, the dairymen sold their milk to the cheese factory, though it was some time before payment was received.

The first and only market for the cheese was in the city of Chihuahua. There was a problem in selling the cheese, since there was so much ranch cheese being made that the market was flooded. They tried to refrigerate the cheese, but lost most of it, so it was next suggested that they make soap from the cheese, but even the soap did not sell.

With the cheese factory coming into existence, the dairy herds began to increase. In many cases farmers brought registered stock from the United States. Many of the herds were sired entirely by registered bulls. The herds were 99 per cent Holstein.

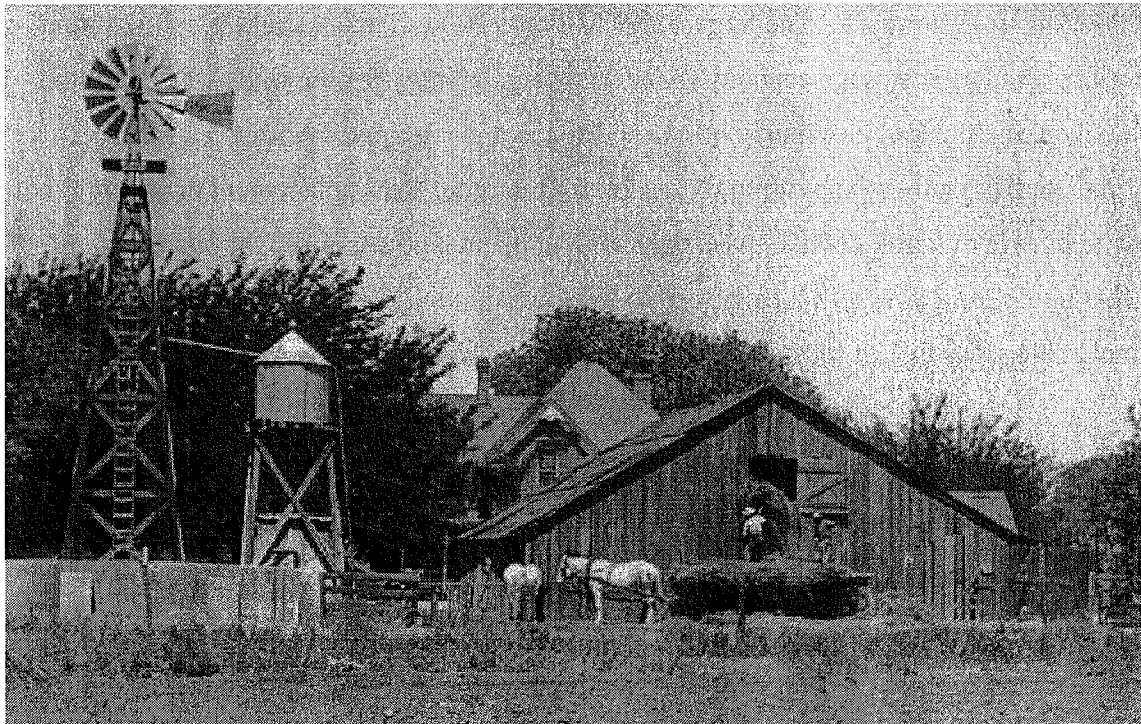


Figure 37: BARNS AND CORRALS. The usual type of barn found in the Mormon settlements.



Figure 38: BARNs AND CORRALS. The most modern barn in the Mormon Colonias. Colonia Dublán

In 1926, several silos were constructed for storage of feed for the increasing dairy herds. They were all trenched silos; one was cemented, while the other three had dirt sides and floors. The size of the silos was about nine feet deep, nine feet wide, and eighty-five feet long, and held about 120 tons of ensilage. These trench silos could be dug no deeper, since the ground water level was just below nine feet. A machine was brought in from the United States to chop the corn that was used for ensilage. The ears of corn were sometimes picked from the stocks before processing the stocks. In most cases, the silage was dumped into the trench without any precaution being taken to keep down the spoilage, so usually about half of it spoiled. In cases where the corn was tamped as it was dumped into the trench, only a small amount spoiled. When the silos were full, they were covered with wheat straw, and then a layer of clay and barreal soil.⁶¹ By 1931, the

⁶¹ Barreal – A place where water will not sink into the soil. It is black alkali soil. The penetration of water is greatly reduced by the presence of sodium carbonate in the soil.

Mormons had ceased to use these silos. This was a period of drought and not enough corn could be grown per acre to make it worth the labor. In later years it was not profitable to start raising corn again, since the price of wheat was rapidly rising above the price of corn.

The first part of 1932, Ara O. Call, who had just graduated from an Agricultural College in the Eastern United States, came back to the Colonia and took over the cheese factory, in an attempt to put it on a more modern basis. He made cheese by the “blending process” and for the first time the company made good money.

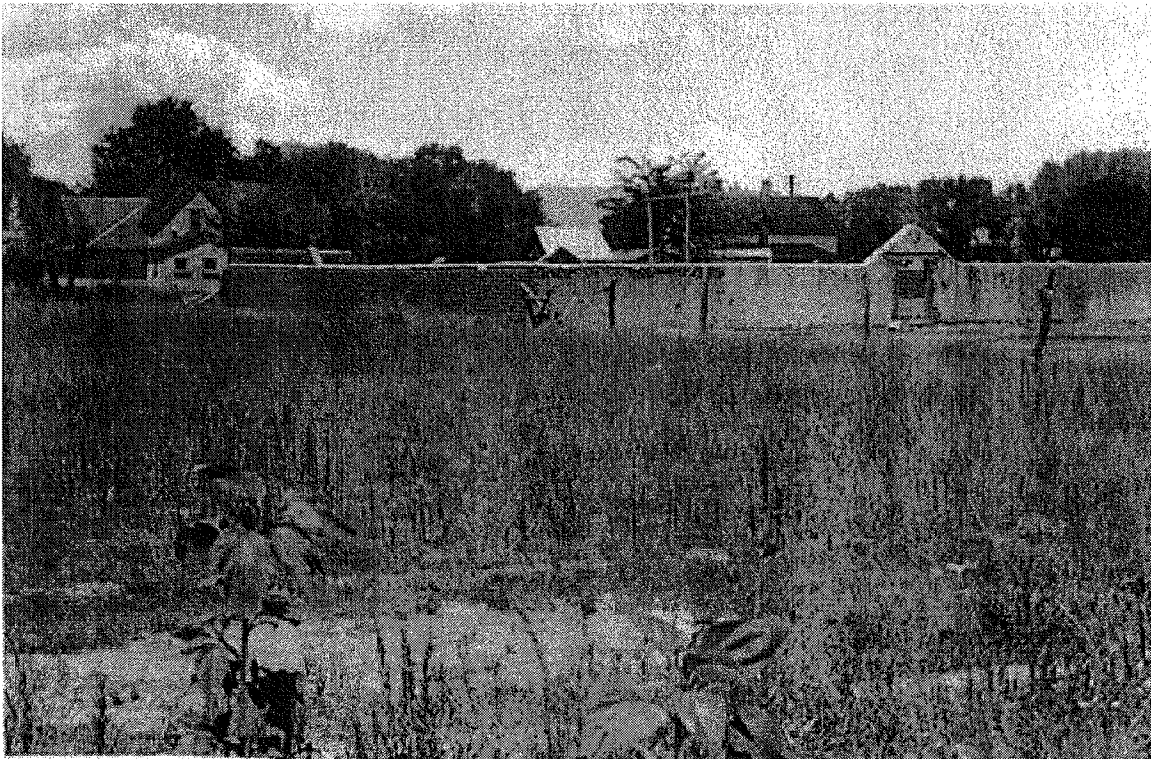


Figure 39: BARNS AND CORRALS. A large adobe corral. This helps to protect the animals from the high winds that blow here.

Several years later, Luis Lara bought a controlling interest in the cheese company. He immediately changed the system of payment for milk. The farmer could now get immediate cash for the milk delivered, rather than getting store orders or waiting for a year to get returns.

Soon after the revolution, a small nursery was started in Colonia Dublán. The purpose was to supply Colonia Juárez and the other Colonias with apple trees and shade trees for the parkways and town lots. After the first few years the nursery business slumped and in 1937, the company was near failure. At this point the sons of the original owners bought out the stock and put the business on a paying basis once again. The new management built up the business by selling fruit trees by mail order throughout Mexico and Central America.

During the reconstruction period, crops changed in their rank of importance, and new crops began appearing. Too, improvements in methods of planting and harvesting made it possible to increase the acreage planted by each farmer. As in the United States, the machine age was beginning to be apparent on the farms in Colonia Dublán, though horses, as a source of farm power, were still more important during this period than mechanical power.

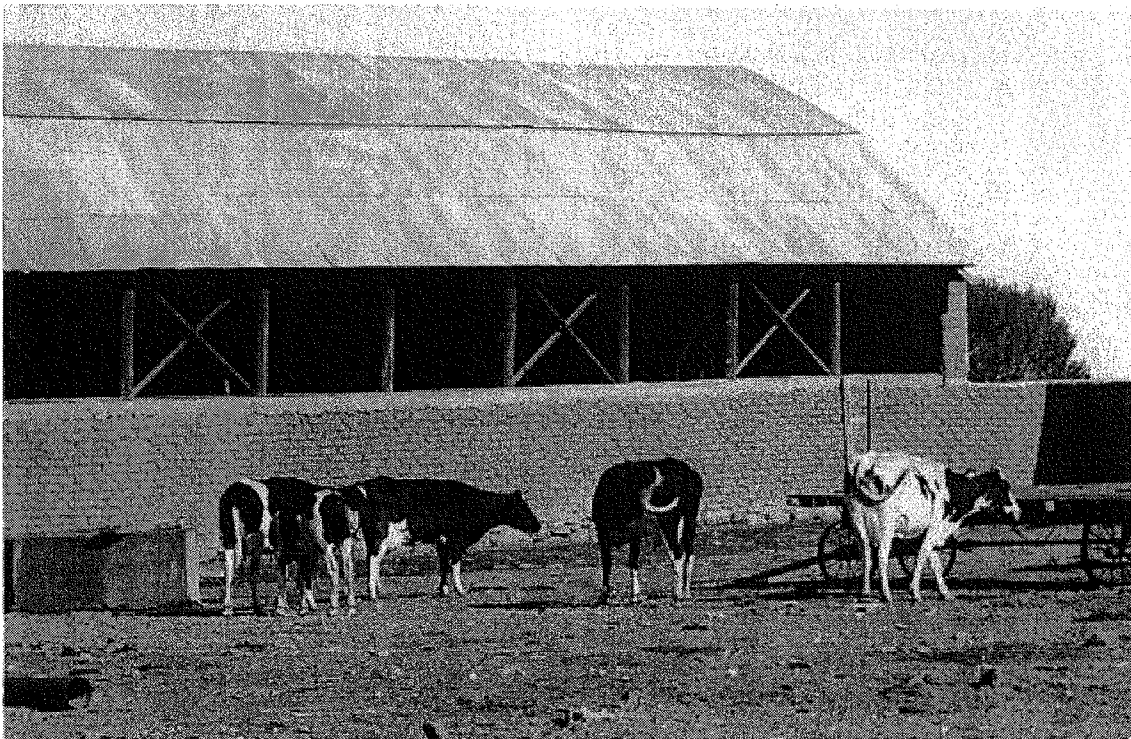


Figure 40: BARNS AND CORRALS. Inside one of the adobe corrals.

With the building of the flour mills, the acreage in corn began to drop. By 1932 the price of wheat had reached a price much higher than corn and this about ended the planting of corn by the Mormons. But before the corn fields were replaced by wheat, a new variety of corn was developed. The pre-revolution variety of corn, Mexican-June, was planted as late as 1923. At this time, a new variety had been developed by Joseph A. Moffet, a pioneer of the Colonias. It was a cross between Mexican-June and Hickory King. Hickory King is a white corn with large flat kernels. It is short and has small ears, but with a large number of ears to each stock. The new variety grew a corn that was medium in height, and large kernels and a number of small ears to the stock.

The increase in wheat acreage from 1920 through 1940 brought a number of new machines to the Colonia. In 1921, the Fordson tractor made its appearance and replaced the horse for plowing and threshing. In the early part of the 1930's, five combines were bought in the United States and tried in the Colonia. After a short time the farmers reverted to the old horse drawn header and stationary threshers, as it was found that the combines did not hold up on this type of farm land. The continual jerking and pounding over the borders needed in irrigating the wheat broke the combines repeatedly.

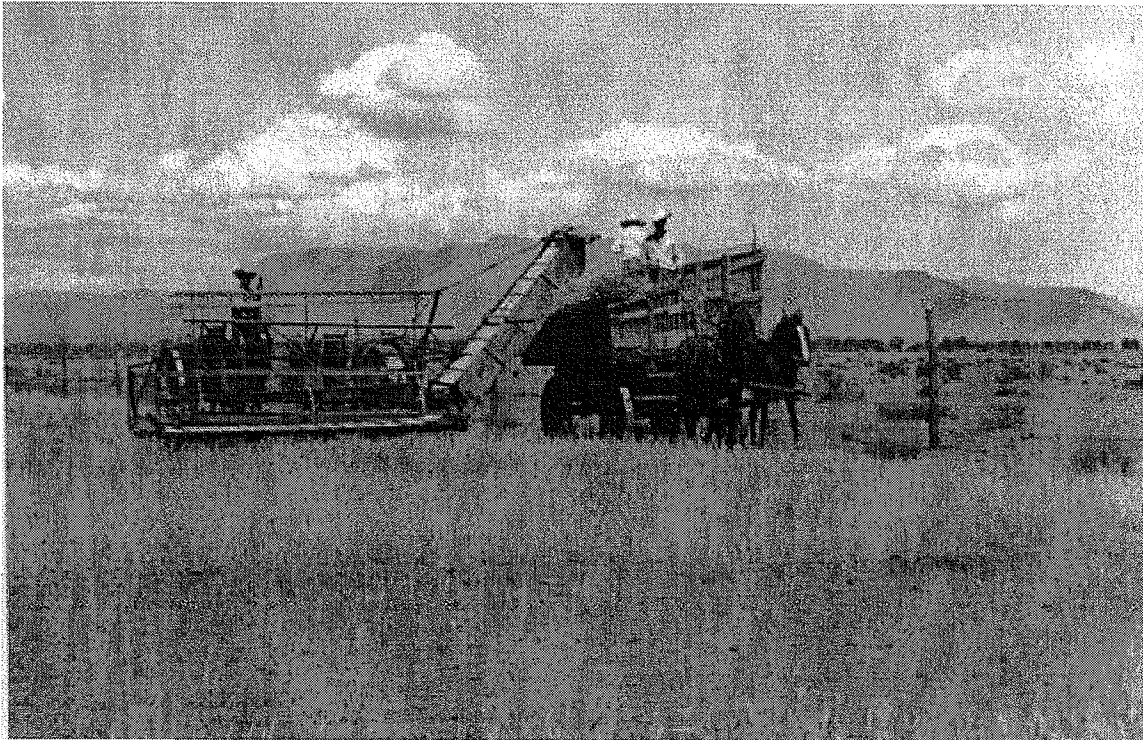


Figure 41: HEADER AND THRASHER. Front View of the horse drawn header. This type of equipment is still used by a few Mexicans.

In 1935 a new variety of wheat was introduced. It came from the Mennonites living in Southern Chihuahua. It was called “white top club,” and probably was brought into Mexico when the Mennonites left Canada. The yield of the new variety over “Chihuahua red,” as shown by an experiment by Joseph F. Memmott, was one hec (2.83 bushels) more per acre. Gradually a change was made to the new variety by the Mormons, though the Mexicans continued to plant a great deal of the “Chihuahua red.”

The first cotton appeared in the area about 1926, but very little was planted until recently. The reasons for its lack of popularity was that the price per bale was too low to take the chance on frost catching the bolls before they opened. Some years, a good crop could be obtained if the frost was late, but the gamble was too great to take the chance of a crop failure.

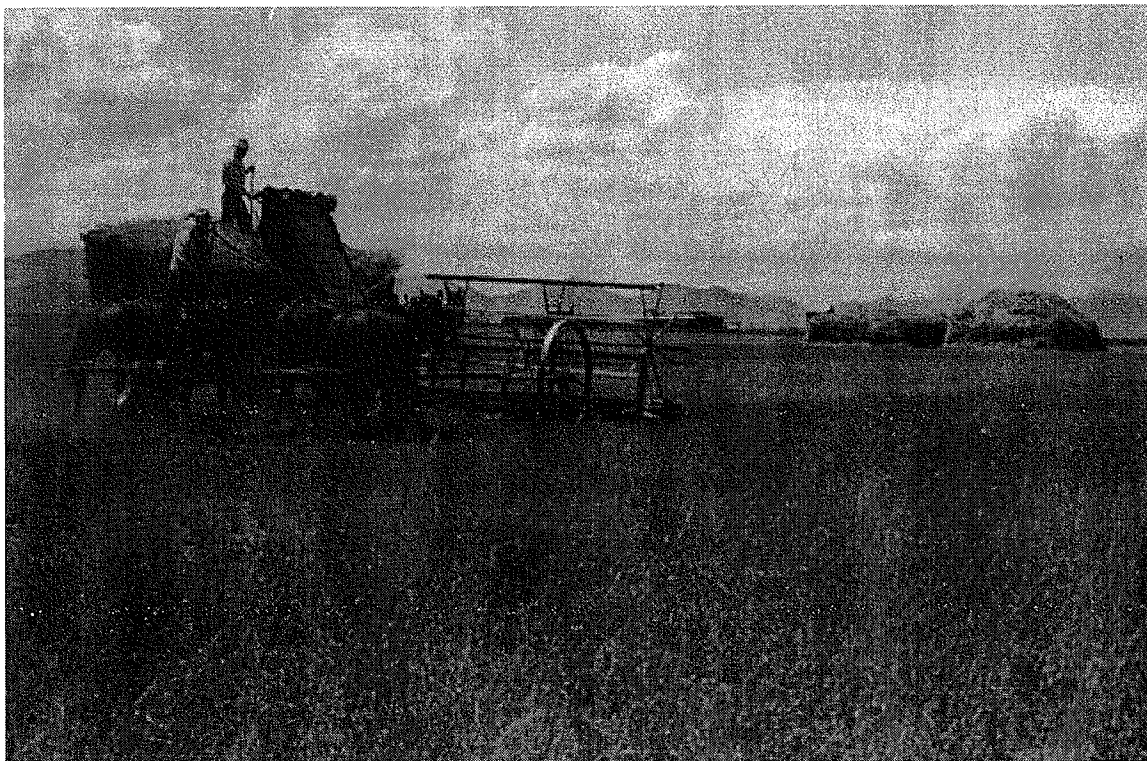


Figure 42: HEADER AND THRASHER. Rear view of the header. The wheat stack on the right.

Other small crops were beans, potatoes, hegari, cane sorghum and fruit. Beans were planted a great deal more by the Mexicans than by the Mormons. The common varieties planted were “ojo de cabra” and “New Mexico pinto.” Potatoes were generally planted only for family use, although several farmers in the Colonia planted large acreages for local sale. Hegari (a sorghum) was introduced about 1931 through a sample given William Walser by the El Paso Seed Company. From then on, a small amount was usually planted for chicken feed. Sorghum for molasses had been important before the Exodus, but as the years passed, sugar was easier to secure and prices were reduced, so that gradually less and less “sugar cane” was planted. Not much fruit was grown in Colonia Dublán. It did not seem to be an area for good orchards, and the trees were apt to die before the reached the bearing stage.



Figure 43: HEADER AND THRASHER. Stationary thrasher.

In 1931, a large orchard of 7,000 apple trees was planted on the flat. A spur railroad track was planned for the orchard, to handle the fruit when the crop matured. This orchard never produced enough for the need of a spur track, as too many trees died. The trees were watered and well cared for without much success. Some thought it was “root rot” and others thought it was “scald.” A few years after the planting the orchard was abandoned.



Figure 44: HEADER AND THRASHER. Tractor powered thrasher.

In the early 1930's, pigs were tried on a commercial scale by J. F. Memmott. The stock was purebred, registered Duroc-Jersey, from Phoenix, Arizona. From 100 to 200 hogs a year were raised and sold. The markets were local trade and Ciudad Juárez. The prices were not high enough to keep the enterprise going more than a few years. Since that time others have tried raising hogs, but were also unsuccessful.

Sufficient irrigation water was always a problem for the farmers of Colonia Dublán. From the very earliest time, water from the river was not enough, and then the water from the lake was not enough for all the farms, so finally drilling water wells was the next step in an attempt to have enough irrigation water when needed. Soon after 1925 two sumps were dug, one in the Dublán farm area and one in the San Jose tract. These furnished about a four inch stream in the spring only, when the water was most needed. The pumps were powered first by horses, then by motors. Holes in the river held a great deal of water and these were pumped by horse power and later by motors. In 1928 or 1929, a well rig brought from Deming, New Mexico, was tried in Colonia Dublán, but failed to get farther than seven feet down. In 1934, the first deep well was drilled with a

well rig bought in Cananea, Sonora. The well was 197 feet deep and had an eight inch pump. From this time on, wells were drilled on both the Dublán farms and the San Jose farms.

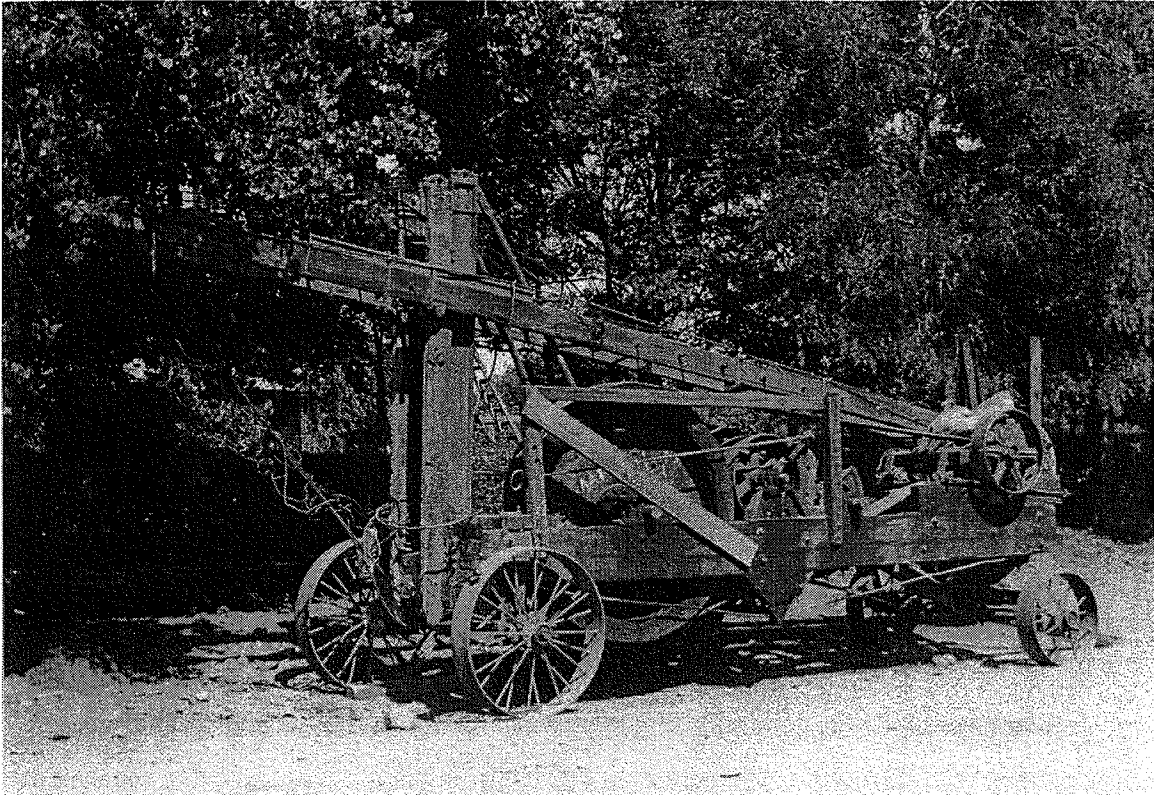


Figure 45: WELL RIGGS. The first water well drilling rig that was brought into this area and successfully drilled a deep well. It is still used today.

In the early thirties the water from the northern-most lake, “Long Lake”, began to be used for irrigation. The use of this lake by the Mormons did not last many years. After a few years the Governor of Chihuahua asked that it be given to the Mexican farmers in the vicinity of Colonia Dublán, since they had no irrigation water except from the river. It was turned over to these Mexicans soon after the request, with the stipulation that they do some work on the canal leading into the lakes from the river. Unfortunately, the canal work was never done by the Mexican farmers, yet the lake remained in their hands. In 1934 and 1935 the “Round Lake” belonging to the Mormons was enlarged by having an additional few feet added to the height of the banks. At the same time, it was faced with rock on the water side to keep the water from washing away the structure.

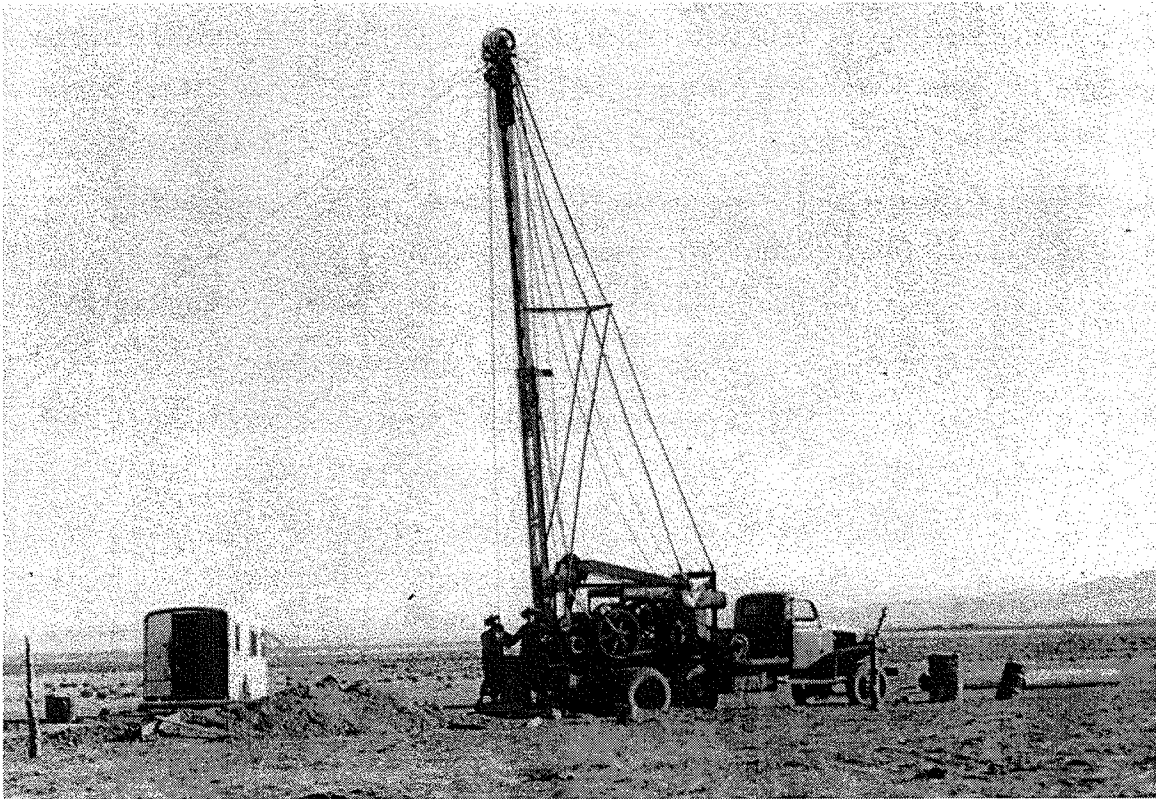


Figure 46: WELL RIGS. Newer well rig imported from the United States for deep well drilling.

The farm land was generally found between the town and the river. The acreage per farmer ranged from 40 to 150 acres. In 1931 farming again was started to the east of town on the “flat”. A little farming had been carried on there before the Exodus, but the lack of irrigation water made it difficult to grow a crop. In 1931 water from “Long Lake” was first used on the “flat”, as a ditch was then completed from the lake to some of this land. But farming this new area lasted only a few years, because the lake was turned over to the Mexicans, and because of the drought at this time, there was not enough water in the Mormon held lake to supply this new farm land.

After the revolution and until 1932, fairs were held at the school in Colonia Dublán. The other Mormon Colonias were invited to send their agricultural produce. Also the Mexicans were asked to bring what farm produce they wished to exhibit. The fairs lasted three days. All produce was shown in the various rooms of the school and the school grounds held the livestock. These fairs were not to sell the produce, but to see