



Álvaro Obregón Salido

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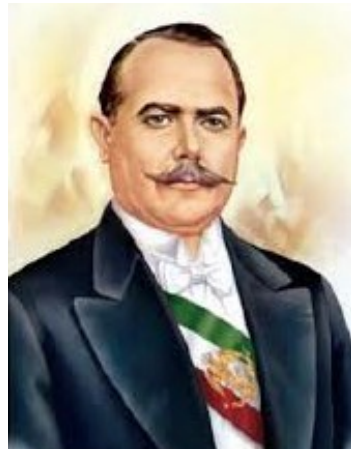
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Álvaro Obregón

Alvaro Obregón Salido (1880-1928) was a Mexican farmer, warlord, and general. He was one of the key players in the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). His election as President in 1920 is considered by many as the ending point of the Revolution, although the violence continued afterward. A brilliant and charismatic general, his rise to power can be attributed to his effectiveness and ruthlessness. He was also aided by the fact that he was the only one of the Revolution's "Big Four" still standing after 1923, as Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata and Venustiano Carranza all were assassinated.

Obregón was born the last of eight children in the town of Huatabampo, Sonora. His father,

Francisco Obregón, had lost much of the family wealth when he backed Emperor Maximilian over Benito Juárez in the 1860's. Francisco died when Alvaro was an infant, so he was raised by his mother, Cenobia Salido, and his older sisters. They had very little money but a strong home life, and most of Alvaro's siblings became schoolteachers.

Alvaro was a hard worker and very intelligent. Although he had to drop out of school, he taught himself many things, including photography and carpentry. As a young man, he saved enough to buy a failing chickpea farm and turned it into a very profitable endeavor. He also invented a chickpea harvester, which he began to manufacture and sell to other farmers. He had the reputation of being a local genius, and he had a near-photographic memory.

Unlike most of the other important figures of the Mexican Revolution, Obregón did not have anything against Porfirio Díaz. In fact, he had prospered enough under the old dictator to have been invited to Díaz' Centennial parties in 1910. Obregón watched the early stages of the revolution from the sidelines in Sonora, a fact which was often held against him later when the Revolution triumphed, as he was often accused of being a Johnny-come-lately.

He became involved in 1912 on behalf of Francisco I. Madero, who was fighting the army of Pascual Orozco in the north. Obregón recruited a force of some 300 soldiers and joined the command of General Agustín Sangines. The General, impressed by the clever young Sonoran, quickly promoted him to Colonel. He defeated a force of Orozquistas at the battle of San Joaquín under General José Inés Salazar. Shortly thereafter Orozco himself was wounded in combat in Chihuahua and fled to the United States, leaving his forces in disarray and scattered. Obregón returned to his chick pea farm.

With Huerta gone, it was up to the victors to try and put Mexico back together. Obregón visited Pancho Villa on two occasions in August-September of

Mexican Revolution Continued

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Álvaro Obregón

1914, but Villa caught the Sonoran scheming behind his back and held Obregón for a few days, threatening to execute him. He eventually let Obregón go, but the incident convinced Obregón that Villa was a loose cannon who needed to be eliminated. Obregón returned to Mexico City and renewed his alliance with Carranza.

On October 10, the victorious authors of the Revolution against Huerta met at the Convention of Aguascalientes. There were 57 generals and 95 officers in attendance. Villa, Carranza and Emiliano Zapata sent representatives, but Obregón came personally. The convention lasted about a month and was very chaotic. Carranza's representatives insisted on nothing less than absolute power for the bearded one and refused to budge. Zapata's people insisted the convention accept the Plan of Ayala. Villa's delegation was comprised of men whose personal goals were often conflicting, and although

they were willing to compromise for peace, they reported that Villa would never accept Carranza as President.

Obregón was the big winner at the convention. As the only one of the “big four” to show up, he had the chance to meet the officers of his rivals. Many of these officers were impressed by the clever, self-effacing Sonoran and retained their positive image of him even when they fought him later. Some joined him immediately, including several important unaligned independents with smaller militias.

The big loser was Carranza, as the Convention eventually voted to remove him as First Chief of the Revolution. In the absence of Huerta, Carranza had been the de facto president of Mexico. The convention elected Eulalio Gutiérrez as President, who told Carranza to resign. Carranza hemmed and hawed for a few days before declaring that he would not. Gutiérrez declared him a rebel and placed Pancho Villa in charge of putting him down, a duty Villa was only too happy to perform. Obregón, who had gone to the Convention truly hoping for an end to the bloodshed and a compromise acceptable to everyone, was forced to choose between Carranza and Villa. He chose Carranza and took many of the convention delegates with him.

Carranza shrewdly sent Obregón after Villa. Obregón was not only his best general and the only one with any hope of taking down the powerful Villa, but also there was an outside chance that Obregón himself might fall to a stray bullet, which would remove one of Carranza's more formidable rivals for power. In early 1915 Villa's forces, divided up under different generals, dominated the north. Felipe Angeles, Villa's best general, captured Monterrey in January, while Villa himself took the bulk of his forces to Guadalajara. In early April, Obregón, commanding the best of the federal forces, moved to meet Villa, digging in outside the town of Celaya.

Villa took the bait and attacked Obregón, who had dug trenches and placed machine guns. Villa responded with one of the old-fashioned cavalry charges which had won him so many battles early in the Revolution. Predictably, Obregón's machine guns, entrenched soldiers, and barbed wire halted Villa's horsemen. The battle raged for two days before Villa was driven back. He attacked again a week later, and the results were even more devastating. In the end, Obregón completely routed Villa at the Battle of Celaya.

Giving chase, Obregón caught up to Villa once again at Trinidad. The Battle of Trinidad lasted 38 days and claimed thousands of lives on both sides. One additional casualty was Obregón's right arm, which was severed above the elbow by an artillery shell: surgeons barely managed to save his life. Trinidad was another huge victory for Obregón. Villa, his army in tatters, retreated to Sonora, where forces loyal to Carranza defeated him at the battle of Agua Prieta. By the end of 1915, Villa's once-proud Division of the North was in ruins. The soldiers had scattered, the generals had retired or defected, and Villa himself had gone back into the mountains with only a few hundred men.

With the threat of Villa all but gone, Obregón assumed the post of Minister of War in Carranza's cabinet. While outwardly loyal to Carranza, it was fairly obvious that Obregón was still very ambitious. As Minister of War, he attempted to modernize the army and took part in pacifying the same Yaqui Indians who had supported him early in the Revolution.

Mexican Revolution Continued

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In early 1917, the new constitution was ratified and Carranza was elected President. Obregón retired once again to his chickpea ranch but kept a close eye on events in Mexico City. He stayed out of Carranza's way, but with the understanding that Obregón would be the next President of Mexico.

In June of 1919, Obregón announced that he would run for president in the 1920 elections. Carranza, who did not personally like or trust Obregón, immediately began working against him, claiming that he thought Mexico should have a civilian president, not a military one. In any event, Carranza had already picked his own successor, the little-known Mexican ambassador to the United States, Ignacio Bonillas. Carranza had made a huge mistake by reneging on his informal deal with Obregón, who had kept his side of the bargain and stayed out of Carranza's way from 1917-19. Obregón's candidacy immediately drew support from important sectors of society: the military loved him, as did the middle class (who he represented) and the poor (who had been betrayed by Carranza). He was also popular with intellectuals like José Vasconcelos, who saw him as the one man with the clout and charisma to bring peace to Mexico.

Carranza then made a second tactical error: he decided to fight the swelling tide of pro-Obregón sentiment. He stripped Obregón of his military rank, which was accurately seen by the people of Mexico as petty, ungrateful and completely political. The situation got tense and ugly and reminded some observers of the Mexico of 1910: an old, stolid politician refusing to allow a fair election, challenged by a younger man with new ideas. In June of 1920, Carranza decided that he could never beat Obregón in a fair election and he ordered the army to attack. Obregón quickly raised an army in Sonora even as other generals around the nation defected to his cause. Carranza, desperate to get to Veracruz where he could rally his support, departed Mexico City in a train loaded down with gold, friends, advisors, and sycophants. Before long, however, forces loyal to Obregón attacked the train and destroyed the rails, forcing the party to go overland as they fled. Carranza and a handful of survivors of the so-called "Golden Train" accepted sanctuary at the town of Tlaxcalantongo from local warlord Rodolfo Herrera in May of 1920. On the night of May 21, Herrera betrayed Carranza, opening fire on him and his closest advisers as they slept in a tent. Carranza was killed almost immediately. Herrera, who had switched alliances to Obregón, was put on trial but acquitted.

With Carranza gone, Adolfo de la Huerta became provisional president and brokered a peace deal with the resurgent Villa. When the deal was formalized (over Obregón's objections) the Mexican Revolution was officially over. Obregón was easily elected in September of 1920 to the post of President.

Obregón proved to be an able President. He continued making peace with those who had fought against him in the Revolution and instituted land reform and education. He also cultivated ties with the United States and did much to restore Mexico's shattered economy, including rebuilding the oil industry. He still feared Villa, however, newly retired in the north. Villa was the one man who could still raise an army large enough to defeat the federales, so Obregón had him assassinated in 1923.

The peace of the first part of Obregón's presidency was shattered in 1923, however. Adolfo de la Huerta, an important revolutionary figure, former interim President of Mexico and Obregón's Minister of the Interior, decided to run for President in 1924. Obregón favored Plutarco Elías Calles. The two factions went to war, and Obregón and Calles crushed de la Huerta's faction. They were beaten militarily and many officers and leaders were executed, including several important former friends and allies of Obregón. De la Huerta himself was forced into exile in the United States. All opposition crushed, Calles easily won the Presidency. Obregón once more retired to his ranch.

In 1927, Obregón decided he wanted to be president once again. Congress cleared the way for him to do so legally and he began to campaign. Although he was elected President for the period between 1928 and 1932 in July of 1928, his second rule was to be very short indeed. On July 17, 1928, a Catholic fanatic named José de León Toral managed to sneak a pistol past security at a banquet in Obregón's honor at "La Bombilla" restaurant just outside of Mexico City. Toral made a pencil sketch of Obregón and then took it to him. The sketch was good and it pleased Obregón, who allowed the young man to finish it at the table. Instead, Toral pulled his gun and shot Obregón five times in the face, killing him instantly. Toral was executed a few days later.

November 10th



Join us for an evening of Fun and

Special Entertainment



Mobile Home Park Recreation Room - 8901 Eton Ave., Canoga Park

Featuring A Happy Hour Buffet & Prehistoric Poison

\$15.00 per person - Make your reservations early as seating is limited

For Reservations or Information Contact:

Bobbie Strelow - bobbiejoann2@gmail.com or (818) 388-7801

Annual Holiday Party

Card Signing Party

December 3

From 2 to 4 PM

Bobbie Strelow's Home - 20939 Lanark St., Canoga Park

We are giving back to the community this year

Please Bring A New Unwrapped Gift For A Child 1-18 Years Old

RSVP to Bobbie Strelow
By December 1st
(818) 388-7801 or
bobbiejoann2@gmail.com



Appetizers prepared by
Your Officers
Wine - Beer - Punch
Only \$5.00 per signature



Presidents Article

Dia de Los Muertos—

The Taxco delegation is busy planning, packing, and practicing as we get ready to head off to Taxco for 9 days of education and fun at the end of October! At least I am practicing my Spanish – a number of those going are bi-lingual and will be able to help those of us more challenged. We'll have the opportunity to experience staying with families, attend the Dia de Los Muertos festival, and not to be missed the digging of the Jumilla beetles. We will return with wonderful memories, new friends, and stories to regale the members with! Stay tuned....and in the interim check out the Jumilla beetles on the internet!



Jo Lamoreaux

See those horses run....

Yes -FOT will be at Santa Anita on Sunday October 15 for a day at the races enjoying lunch in the Turf Club. We'll be cheering our favorite horses to the winner's circle, especially in the race named for Friends of Taxco! Time is short to RSVP- see the flyer for all the details.

Kick Back on Friday Night November 10th....

As we head into the holiday season, we thought we'd change it out the November social a bit and have a fun evening with some 'special entertainment', an appetizer buffet, and libations at the Eton Community Center in the Eton Mobile Home Park. TGIF with FOT!!

Update on 2018 Officers...

The nominating committee has done its work and we have a great slate of officers for the upcoming 2018 year! We will install the 2018 team on Sunday, November 19th at the General Meeting and thank the exiting officers for their hard work this year! Please mark your calendars to join us.

The weather cooperated---

For our September luau. Many thanks to Bobbie for hosting and turning her backyard into a wonderful Hawaiian space! We had many guests that evening who had the opportunity to experience FOT hospitality! We are diverse group and inevitably as people have a drink and speak they find something in common- a place they've both visited, they went to the same high school, both came from the same state and many other things people share in common. It made for a wonderful evening!

Lastly and perhaps most importantly—

The devastating earthquakes which hit Mexico in September. We have been in communication with our Taxco friends and I am very happy to report all are doing well with no major damage to any of their homes. The churches in town have suffered damage and there are others in town who were not as fortunate as our members. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.

Take care,

Jo

October Ways and Means



Trip Includes:

*Admission to the Park & Turf Club
Round Trip Transportation
Full Lunch Served in Turf Club*

Only \$45 Per Person

Sunday - October 15th

Meet at the Canoga Park Elks Lodge by 10:30 AM

20925 Osborne St., Canoga Park

The vans will leave promptly at 10:45 AM for the Park

For tickets and information email or call Bobbie Strelow
bobbiejoann2@gmail.com - (818) 388-7801

TICKET PURCHASE DEADLINE - OCTOBER 1ST

Calendar of Events 2017

- October 15** **Santa Anita Trip - Be There By 10:30 AM**
\$45.00 Meet at Canoga Park Elks Lodge - 20925 Osborne St.
Leaving Elks Lodge promptly at 10:45 AM
- October 21** **Board Meeting - 10:00 AM - No Brunch**
Bobbie Strelow Home
- November 10** **TGIF - 6:30 PM**
\$15.00 Mobile Home Park Recreation Room - 8901 Eton Ave.
- November 19** **General Meeting & Installation of Officers - 1:00 PM**
\$10.00 Canoga Park Women's Club - 7401 Jordan Ave.
- December 3** **Holiday Card Signing - 2:00 PM**
\$5.00 Bobbie Strelow Home - 20939 Lanark St.



FRIENDS OF TAXCO
 contact information
 Randy Lewis - Editor
 P.O. Box 9070
 Canoga Park, CA 91309
 (818) 998-0983
 randy7547@gmail.com