

These letters, articles &c were written by a variety of people - Fremont Everett, his wife Eva Shumway Everett, their daughter Clara, Herbert Shumway and so on - and detail the building of a section of railroad in southern Mexico; but also tells us a lot about family dynamics, dreams of riches and failure. Some letters (for example, those to newspapers) were intended to be public - others were private, and a couple were very private. It's forty-five pages, but very readable.

From **Some of the Everetts**, pub 1916

About the year 1900 the family became interested in the building of the Pan American Railroad in Oaxaca and Chiapas, Mexico, an account of which follows:

### THE PAN AMERICAN RAILROAD

In the year 1900 Walter Everett made the acquaintance of James M. Neeland in Los Angeles. Neeland had been in Mexico and could speak Spanish fluently. He was one of the most remarkable men that I have ever met. His initiative and imagination were marvelous. He would conceive of schemes so great and daring that it made an ordinary man catch his breath, and yet his vivid imagination and great command of language enabled him to convince his hearers that the success of the plan was at least possible. "And," he would say, in concluding one of his word pictures of the working out of some great plan, "it will make us *rich* beyond the dreams of avarice." Naturally he was a born promoter. He had fallen in with a rather shrewd old Mexican, Jose Pe pe Mora by name, from whom he had learned many facts concerning a railroad that had, some twelve years before, been projected in the States of Oaxaca and Chiapas, in Southern Mexico.

This railroad had been in process of construction by the Baring Bros., of England, at the time their failure shook the financial world in the '80's, and was to have extended from San Geronimo, on the Tehuantepec Railroad, south-easterly along the isthmus to the frontier of Guatemala. It was intended as a military road and was much desired by Porfirio Diaz, who was then the ruler of Mexico.

When news of the failure of Baring Bros. reached the construction camps in Chiapas, the employees were panic-stricken, and they abandoned the job in about the same manner that burglars would leave the cracking of a safe at the sound of a policeman's rattle. Baring Bros. had assembled machinery, rolling stock and rails at Tonalá and Aurora to the value of hundreds of thousands of dollars, and all this property, together with many miles of grading, had reverted to the Mexican Government. At the time that Neeland and Mora took up the project much of the machinery had been ruined by the action of time, climate and vandals, but the eighty miles of good rails were uninjured, and much of the other property

still held value.

The Mexican Government would give this property, together with a large bonus in government bonds, to any one who would build the road, so Neeland and Mora assured Walter. Neeland drew rosy pictures of how easily he would make all participants "rich beyond the dreams of avarice" if Walter would finance the scheme. Walter became interested and he and Neeland came to Nebraska and laid the matter before father, Burton and myself. Neeland represented himself as a practical railroad builder with much experience. "You fellows put up the money and I will put on my overalls and go down and build the road," was his airy statement. Experience proved to us that he was incompetent, where executive ability was required, as a child of ten years. He was a promoter, pure and simple, and a good one.

Our family became interested. Franklin Everett, always wise, far-seeing and cautious, said to us—his sons: "You fellows can put your money in there blindly if you want to, but I am going to see for myself." He got A. B. Lyon to go with him, and in spite of his age, about sixty-eight, and extremely poor health, went to Mexico, and drove over the proposed line in a two-wheeled ox cart. He was too weak and sick to ride a horse and there was no other means of conveyance. In spite of the great hardships he endured and his constant sickness, he came back enthusiastic. "The greatest chance I ever saw," was his report.

About this time, it was in 1901, Hon. H. P. Shumway<sup>1</sup> and I determined to go into Mexico and get our own ideas at first hand. We visited Chihuahua, Mexico City, Puebla and many smaller places and were impressed with the opportunities that the country offered. But we had heard so much of the "deadly climate" and "bad water" of the tropics that we really failed to enjoy what should have been a most delightful trip.

Mexico City, under the splendid government established by Porfirio Diaz (one of the greatest men that the nineteenth century produced in any country), was making wonderful progress. For hundreds and perhaps thousands of years, a city had existed there. Originally its site had been a mountain lake. Gradually the water had passed away and as it grew dryer the city had grown up. Perhaps at first it was built on piles—anyway at the time of the conquest by Cortez the standing water still made causeways necessary in parts of the city. The city was entirely without drainage, and even where the surface was free from water, it stood at all times within a few inches of the top of the ground. It would seem that with a dense population, under such conditions, pestilence in some form would have been at all times present. But such is the disinfecting power of almost constant sunshine and the pure breezes that sweep down from the mountains that surround the valley, that even under the conditions I have described the death rate was far lower than one would expect. With good sanitation, it would become a health resort. Diaz was at the time of our visit putting in a system of sewers. The streets were being torn up and trenches dug. The accumulated filth of ages was being exposed and the stench was horrible; but when the work was completed

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<sup>1</sup>The Shumways and the Everetts had both lived on Portland Prairie, but the Shumways were in Minnesota and the Everetts in Iowa. Herbert Shumway's sister, Mary Evelyn, married Fremont Everett, the author. Herbert lived in Wakefield, Nebraska.

Mexico City was freed from danger of great filth disease epidemics, and made one of the most delightful residence cities of the world.

From Mexico City we went to Puebla, thence to Oaxaca. While there we visited the celebrated ruins of Mitla.

Shumway and I had often heard of the wonderful ruins of Mitla, situated some fifty miles to the southward of the city of Oaxaca, and we determined to take advantage of our stay at Oaxaca to visit them. We had been in Mexico so short a time that we had not acquired enough Spanish to enable us to get about conveniently. It chanced that we stopped at the only American hotel in the city. It was kept by a widow lady and her daughter, a young girl of some sixteen or seventeen years. In making inquiries of our landlady as to the best methods of reaching the ruins, it developed that she and her daughter had never seen them, although they had lived within a short distance, above mentioned, for many years; and we, feeling the necessity of some one who could speak the language, after some hesitation, ventured to suggest that if she and her daughter would make the trip with us we would pay all expenses. To our delight the offer was accepted in the same spirit in which it was made, and the next day we all climbed into an old-fashioned coach drawn by four very decrepit-looking horses, and started to see the ruins.

There is at Mitla a considerable town, and we found there what, in Mexico, passed for a good hotel. We were obliged to stay the night there, as it took the entire day to drive from Oaxaca to Mitla.

I shall never forget the joke on Herbert, occasioned by the fear which we both had of drinking the water; for at that time we imagined that all tropical streams were more or less polluted and poisoned. After driving all day in the dust we, of course, were tormented with thirst. We sat in our room after the day's drive was over and H. P. said, "I am going to buy a bottle of beer." Now, both H. P. and I were teetotalers. I laughed at him, saying that the beer would probably be worse than the water. However, he invested in a bottle of beer and drank the same eagerly. H. P. congratulated himself that he had been able to quench his thirst without danger of contracting some disease. The beer was warm and stale and there was no ice in town. We had not long been in bed when I was awakened by his groans. "What is the matter, H. P.?" said I. "Oh, that beer has made me so sick!" and a very sick man he was. However, nature came to his relief and he threw up the beer, after which we got a fair night's sleep.

Next day we visited the ruins and examined them carefully. Their celebrity rests upon their antiquity and the mystery which surrounds their origin, rather than any intrinsic merits in the ruins themselves. They are certainly beautiful, but an American contractor, given the proper material, could reproduce them in a few days. Considered as the work of a race of savages, who were ignorant of even the simple principle of the arch, and who, to cap their openings, used huge oblong blocks of unhewn stone, the ruins were certainly remarkable. The greatest wonder is, how, without the aid of any modern machinery, or even,

so far as we know, without draft animals of any kind, they were able to place in position lintels and caps of stone weighing many tons. It would seem, to look at these huge blocks, that it would be impossible to get enough naked human strength around them to raise them to the positions in which they were placed. Absolutely nothing is known of the race who built these ancient buildings, as even the natives found in the country at the time of the conquest by the Spaniards knew nothing of their origin.

We returned to the city of Oaxaca, and shortly thereafter went to Vera Cruz. One scene which we witnessed while in Oaxaca gives so clear an illustration of social and agricultural conditions in south central Mexico, at least the conditions that prevailed at that time, that I must relate it.

Passing along the country road at some distance from any large town, we came upon a great field of wheat, ripe and being harvested. In this field were a party of reapers, probably twenty in number, who were supplied with the old-fashioned hand sickle. Behind these reapers, wrapped in his blanket, came an overseer, and behind the overseer, gleaning the lost heads of wheat, was a woman. The scene struck me so forcibly that I stopped and said "Herbert, see Ruth! see Boaz! See the reapers! That certainly is a reproduction of the old Bible scene, as described in the book." And he agreed with me. In short, in that part of Mexico, and at that time, people were living in the same stage of civilization as when the fair Moabitess became the bride of Boaz.

While in Oaxaca some American whom we met there told us the following story:

*One of the sons of a wealthy landholder in that district had been sent to the United States for his education. (I will say here in passing that very many of the wealthy ranchmen of Mexico sent at least one of their sons for a period of three or four years to some good school in the United States.) This young man returned to his native state filled with new ideas which he desired to introduce, and being a man of wealth, before leaving the United States, he ordered shipped to him at Oaxaca a number of American steel plows. The natives having always plowed with a crooked stick, shod with a point of iron, looked askance at this American innovation. In Mexico the will of the master of the hacienda is never gainsaid by the peons, and grudgingly they accepted the new implements and went to work. A day or two later the young master went abroad to his fields to examine the work being done and, to his great astonishment, found that one handle had been sawed from each plow. He said, "Why did you cut the handle?" "Why, master," answered the majordomo, "we never used but one handle on a plow; why should we leave two on these?"*

On reaching Vera Cruz we really felt more fear of sickness than at any other point we had visited in Mexico. At that time there was no pretense of any sewerage system. The town of Vera Cruz, situated on the unhealthy gulf coast, was paved with small cobble stones. On each side of the streets was a gutter, down which flowed all the filth of the city. The only real scavengers the city had were the buzzards, of which there were myriads. They

were everywhere—on the roofs of the houses, on the passing cars, utterly fearless, for they were protected by law. They are tamer than our domestic chickens, but to us northerners they seemed uncanny.

As we sat in our room, in the second story of the best hotel the town afforded, we could see their curious prying eyes peering in at us from the roofs adjoining and from across the street. I confess the look of the filthy creatures got on my nerves. After sitting for an hour, I said to H. P., "Those buzzards are watching us and waiting to pick our bones, and the best thing we can do is to get out of Vera Cruz as quickly as possible." He jumped up with a shout of delight and said, "Say, I have been hoping to hear you say that; I did not want to be the first one to say it." We started north at once and thought we would never go into Mexico again; but by the time we reached home the unpleasant things had, to a certain extent, faded from our minds. We thought of the wonderful opportunities the country seemed to offer and soon were enthusiastically favorable to Mr. Neeland's scheme.

Hon. H. P. Shumway and our family having announced their approval of the railroad scheme, we laid the matter before Mr. J. O. Milligan, Mr. John D. Haskell and Mr. Darius Mathewson, all of Wakefield, Nebraska, and all men of high character and large means.

After a careful consideration of our reports and also the report of an expert engineer, who had gone over the proposed line, they agreed to join us in the enterprise. At about this time, also, Walter Everett became acquainted with Mr. Max Newmark and Mr. Berthold Baruch, two prominent Jewish gentlemen of Los Angeles, who were also men of high character and large wealth. These gentlemen became interested in the proposition and also joined us with their advice and capital. To assist us in financing the railroad work we obtained from President Diaz a concession for the establishment, at Tuxtla Gutierrez, capital of the State of Chiapas, of a bank of issue. This concession was exclusive and authorized us to create and operate the only bank of issue in that state. Under the law of Mexico we were authorized, upon paying in a capital of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in Mexican silver, which silver must actually be in the bank building when we opened for business, to issue paper currency based on said silver to the amount of seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Our plan was to use these bank notes in paying expense of building the railroad, the bank loaning to the railroad construction company.

I will say here that this plan failed because the peons, who were hired to perform the labor, were not accustomed to paper money and our bank notes would not circulate among them to any considerable extent. This, however, we could only learn by experience.

It was arranged that Walter Everett should be president of both the railroad company and the bank and be here, there and everywhere, as it were, looking after the general interests. Fremont Everett was to be general manager of the Banco De Chiapas, Edward B. Everett was to be treasurer of the railroad company; J. M. Neeland, our promoter, was to be general manager of the railroad; Delbert E. Lyon was to go as cashier of the bank;

his uncle, John B. Lyon, as skilled man and adviser in mechanical lines; and Alfred B. Lyon, as confidential agent and paymaster.

Later a son of J.O. Milligan joined us in our work and proved himself a most efficient and energetic man.

On Christmas night of 1901, the writer, Fremont Everett, his wife and daughter, and Delbert E. Lyon left Lyons, Nebraska, to go to Tuxtla Gutierrez, capital of the State of Chiapas. About the same time John B. and A. B. Lyon went to Tonalá, in the same state, for the purpose of taking up the work of railway construction. My family, Burt Lyon and I went first to Mexico City, where we were delayed for some weeks in the necessary work of gathering up and transporting the two hundred and fifty thousand silver dollars necessary to the opening of the Banco De Chiapas. A part of this silver was bought in the city of Mazatlan and transported by steamer to Tonalá. It was found impossible to buy any considerable amount of silver in Mexico City, and for weeks telegrams and letters were flying about the republic in search of the necessary silver.

As descriptive of things in Mexico City at that time I herewith copy a letter from my daughter Clara to the home paper in Lyons:

●<sup>2</sup> LETTER FROM MEXICO - CLARA EVERETT TELLS of the MANY STRANGE SCENES in MEXICO CITY.

Mexico City, Mexico, Jan. 29. Mr. Basler, Editor of Lyons *Sun*:

Dear Mr. Basler — As you requested me to write, I will do so and tell you about some of the sights which seemed strange to me.

A short time before entering Mexico City we passed many fields of the maguey. This plant resembles in appearance our century plant, and from it is obtained pulque or native whiskey of the Mexicans. Pulque much resembles milk in color.

The other morning we visited the Mexican market. On entering we passed through a gate on a side street into an open court paved with rough stones. Seated in rows on the pavement were women and men, in looks and dress much resembling our Indians. In front of them, arranged in piles, which they were constantly handling over with their dirty fingers, was nearly everything in the line of eatables. Passing on, we saw various booths, some filled with odd Mexican crockery, such as pitchers, water jugs and bottles; others contained collections of old knives, pistols, brass candlesticks, Catholic beads of ivory and steel with a little ivory cross attached. Then here would stand a man with various colored cotton handkerchiefs for sale, another with lace dangling from his arms and shoulders.

The dress of the poor laborer of the city is usually white cotton trousers held up

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2 Where this published letter ends is unclear ...

by a red sash, blouse of same material as trousers, and head topped with a peaked sombrero, Spanish name for hat. At night and in the morning when it is cold they wear a blanket with a hole in the middle, through which they put their head. There are a great many beggars here in the streets. Women with babies in their arms come to you and beg. The babies hardly old enough to walk grab at a centava if held out to them. It is pitiful to see how poor and ragged the poor and low classes are. Labor is very cheap. Men called *cargadores* will carry your heavy trunks from the depot to your hotel for 50 cents Mexican, a little less than 25 cents our money. Two of them, each with a trunk on his back, carried ours up to a room on the third floor after having carried them several blocks. They use their backs for carrying anything very heavy. You may see them on the streets loaded down with lumber, sacks of straw or stone, or balanced on the head so nicely they need not be steadied by the hands, even when running, are baskets of bread, fruit and sweets.

It is not customary for people of the better class to carry heavy bundles on the street. We often hire a boy to carry our purchases, as he will carry it a mile for a centavo. The wealthy make a display of their wealth by having a fine carriage procession every night between six and eight o'clock. Down San Francisco street, a principal street of the city, where there are no electric car lines, will extend carriages sometimes three and four deep up one side and down the other, slowly or sometimes stopped in blockade. The occupants are richly dressed. The coachman and footman sit in front in fine livery. Once in a while an auto is seen in the procession.

The houses of the better class are usually three stories high and built around patios or gardens. In place of windows are double glass doors, which open onto iron-railed balconies overlooking the street or patio. People prefer living in the second or third story, as it is warmer and also more healthful. The wealthy often rent their lower floor for a saloon or some similar purpose.

At night a street seems enclosed by high walls, as the buildings are built in a solid block, no alleys being between, and as shutters closed over the glass doors hide the lights within. Policemen are stationed one on each corner, lanterns in hand, although the light of the lantern is dimmed by the electric glare. As we pass through the street, crouched in the deep doorways, where they will spend the night, are seen various specimens of humanity.

We have only felt one earthquake, although there have been several, one rather violent one occurring early in the morning, failed even to awaken us. We found a scorpion in our room, which escaped into a hole in the wall before we could kill it, which caused us more worry than the earthquakes. We can depend upon every day being fine and so much resembling the day before that no one thinks of remarking on the weather. As a result of this some of the peons cook and eat on the street. Seated on the pavement around a small stove, on which rests a dish of Mexican food, may be seen a family. First one dishes out a dainty portion with his hand and then another.

While in Mexico City we lived at a hotel, and one day Mrs. Everett discovered a

scorpion clinging to her skirts, and as we had always heard that the sting of a scorpion was deadly, we went to the landlady and gave the alarm. "Oh," said she, "the scorpions here are nearly harmless, but when you get down in the hot country (where we were going) they are deadly." I will pause here to say, while in our construction camp in southern Oaxaca, my wife was stung twice by scorpions, and when she mentioned the fact that they were deadly the natives replied they were not very bad there, but they were deadly in Texas. As a matter of fact, a scorpion sting is but little worse than that of a honey bee.

At last, after many weeks delay and within the time that our concession with the bank would expire, we succeeded in getting, or thinking we had gotten together all the silver necessary. We started from Mexico City sometime in February, 1902, for our ultimate destination, the capital of Chiapas. At that time railroads from Mexico City southward were generally under construction and very few of them finished. We were forced to go to Vera Cruz over the Mexican National Railway where we took a dirty and exceedingly cranky Mexican coast steamer to the town of Coatzacoalcos<sup>2</sup>, now called Port Mexico. From there we took the Tehuantepec Railroad across the isthmus to San Geronimo, a town on the Tehuantepec Railroad about thirty-five miles from the Pacific Coast. This town, San Geronimo, was the initial point of the Pan American Railroad construction, which we were about to undertake. The concession called for a railroad from San Geronimo to the border of Guatemala, a distance of about three hundred miles.

When we arrived at San Geronimo we found that the actual construction work was to be first started at or near Tonalá, a point about one hundred and twenty-five miles down the coast from San Geronimo. We learned also that there was no method of reaching Tuxtla except to go across the country on horseback or to take a coasting steamer from Salina Cruz to Port Arista, which was the port of entry for Tonalá, and thence over a mountain road by wagon. The time when the bank must be opened was so near at hand that I bought a horse and saddle at San Geronimo and undertook the journey across country, as being the quickest method of reaching the capital of Chiapas, while my wife and daughter took the easier but more circuitous route by steamer to Tonalá. Fortunately we fell in with a most worthy couple, a missionary and his wife, McDonald by name, who were also going into the State of Chiapas in the course of their work. They had been in Mexico some time and spoke the language fluently. This made it much pleasanter for my wife and daughter, who traveled in their company.

The method of placing passengers on board these coast steamers was very amusing to on-lookers and somewhat startling to passengers, especially to ladies. Few of the towns along the coast of Mexico have any harbor, simply an open roadstead. The steamer would sail as close to the shore as safety permitted, and goods that would not be injured by sea water were thrown into the sea and floated to shore, while things that would not bear this rude treatment were conveyed by lighters; but the water close to shore was too shoal for even the lighters to reach the bank, therefore the passengers were usually carried to the lighters in the arms of a brawny Mexican, and when the lighters reached the steamers, the passengers

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<sup>2</sup> Coatzacoalcos

stepped into a large box, to which a cable was attached, and quickly swung to the deck of the steamer like any other bale of goods. My wife was inclined to hesitate in getting into the lighter, and while she hesitated she was seized from behind by a sturdy Mexican, and before she knew what had happened was safely deposited in the lighter.

When they reached Tonalá they were provided with a two-seated platform spring wagon, which I had shipped from Omaha for use there, and our party secured four horses and a driver to take the ladies from Tonalá to Tuxtla Gutierrez, a distance of about one hundred and twenty-five miles across the mountains. In the meantime I had traveled in company with the Government inspector, who was, under the law, an official of our bank and who must be present at the opening thereof, and his wife across country on horse-back.

I reproduce herewith a letter written by me at the time of this trip, which is more exact than I can give from memory:

**TAKES A WILD RIDE -  
FREMONT EVERETT TELLS OF A THRILLING NIGHT'S EXPERIENCE - TRIP THROUGH DARKEST  
MEXICO.**

Hacienda, Llano Grande, Chiapas, Feb. 21, 1902.

H. H. Basler - Lyons; Nebr

Dear Friend:

I have a few hours here while my horse is resting and will write you a letter, which you may publish or not, as seems to you best. In it I will endeavor to describe my first night in the State of Chiapas.

On February 16th I left Mrs. Everett and Clara to go with friends by steamer from Salina Cruz to Tonalá. This I did that they might be spared the 200-mile ride on horseback, that I was about to take. I bought in San Geronimo a lazy, obstinate little mountain horse, of which I at once formed a very poor opinion, a very good saddle and a pair of saddle bags. These latter I packed with a change of underclothing, the important papers which I carried, and a package of small silver coins and copper centavos, the money current among the poor Indians of the mountains which I must cross to reach Tuxtla, the capital of Chiapas. Then, in company with Sr. Don Clemente Castillo, the Government inspector, of our bank, his wife, child and two servants, started up the valley of the White Water River, called in Spanish the Augua<sup>3</sup> de Blanco.

The journey for the first three days was uneventful. The river valley is mostly covered with small timber, but the country is semi-arid and very large trees, are not numerous. However, the rainy season lasts four months, so that good cereal crops can be raised where the people are not too lazy to plant and cultivate them. Although this is the dry season, the valley is well watered by streams from the mountains and we never rode far without crossing a rapidly flowing brook. Many of the trees are loaded with beautiful flowers

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<sup>3</sup> Probably *Agua*

and there are growing wild many cannas, begonias and other house plants of the north. Cocoanuts, oranges, lemons, limes and bananas are plentiful. But my story: These three days were in Oaxaca; the third day near night we entered Chiapas and camped at an Indian hut just over the boundary. As the sunshine is very warm in the middle of the day, we had planned to sleep until midnight, then get up and ride by moon-light. At two o'clock in the morning we were mounted and Senora Castillo led the way, riding an ambling little mule. Suddenly from the roadside bolted a pack of Indian dogs, causing the mule to shy and she was thrown heavily. We got her back to the hut, and as she was unable to ride, it was decided that Sr. Castillo and the child and one servant should remain with her while the other servant, an Indian mountaineer, and I should ride to this place, thirty-three miles, for a carriage. As Sr. Castillo and his wife had during our journey together treated me with a kindness and courtesy that I have seldom seen surpassed or equaled, I was very anxious to get assistance for the injured lady, and the guide and I set off at a round pace over the mountain road, for we had now left the valley and were crossing a very rugged mountain range.

I soon began to fear that my Indian guide was possessed of a devil, for he dashed along in the dim light of the moon in a way that made me think that my apparently awkward and obstinate pony would surely fall and break my neck. But that broncho was mountain-bred and, like Abe Lincoln, he always rose to the occasion. On and on went the Indian and on and on I followed, hugging close to the overhanging mountain walls, along the brink of the fathomless gulfs into which I dared not to look, winding and twisting among crags and trees, dashing through mountain torrents, the loose stones of their beds rolling and slipping under the feet of our horses. Still all this time we did have a road, a rough road, it is true, but still a road. Suddenly the wild man in the lead turned at right angles and forced his horse down a faint trail of the mountainside, down, sliding, slipping and stumbling, until at last we reached the bottom of a deep canyon where the moonlight scarcely penetrated. What did the guide mean? Was he leading me away to rob and murder me? I was unarmed and he was a powerful fellow. Still I was completely lost and there was nothing to do but follow him. We rode for a long time along a mountain stream, crossing and recrossing it, as the dim trail wound in and out to avoid overhanging cliffs. Slowly the moon sank in the west and the canyon became so dark that I could not see the guide, who hurried along, leaving me at times far behind. Fearing that I should miss the trail and get entirely lost, I twice called to him to wait, which gave him great amusement and he chuckled at my discomfiture in a most exasperating way. He could not speak a word of English and I very little Spanish, so I could not give him the blessing he deserved. At last he left the torrent bed and turned, in the thick darkness, up a trail that showed dimly on the mountainside, so steep that we dismounted, that our horses, unencumbered, might scramble up. Every moment my respect for my broncho increased; not once did he stumble in the darkness, not once slip. Up and down inclines, over boulders, along black gulfs that would have tried the nerve of a mountain sheep, that pony carried me, quaking with fear, but perfectly unharmed. On the open road in broad day, he was an unbroken cayuse. On the mountainside, in thick darkness, surrounded on all sides by terrors real and imaginary, I would not have exchanged him for Maude S. or any racer that ever trod the turf. Higher and higher we climbed. Now we were skirting the mountainside at

a great altitude. At my left the mighty shoulder of the Sierra, beneath me a thread of a footpath. At my right a black and mighty void like that which separated Lazarus and Dives, and faintly from its depths came the roar of a mighty river. About me were giant pines, their leaves sighing softly in the night winds. My fear had passed away, but a great awe fell over me, for, dimly seen in the faint light of dawn, the scene was of stupendous grandeur. A quick turn, a sharp upward scramble, and we were at the summit of the pass and on comparatively level ground. The guide condescended to tell me that he had brought me across the range on a burro trail—a short cut. A burro trail, in the thick darkness that precedes dawn, and on horseback.

Evidently the fellow had got, by reason of my calling out for him to wait for me, a very poor opinion of my nerve, for he proceeded to attempt to frighten me by saying "Tigre akee," that is, there are tigers in this place. I have no doubt it was true, but after the real danger through which I had passed, imaginary mountain lions were rather a relief, and I promptly informed the smart fellow that tigers were "muy bueno" (very good), but precipices were "muy malo." He had nothing further to say, and we reached this place, where we were most kindly received and provided with a good breakfast, and a carriage was promptly sent for the injured lady. We had ridden eleven leagues over those mountains in five hours.

I expect to reach my destination tomorrow.

The injured lady was brought safely to the ranch, where I wrote the foregoing letter, and there her husband secured a carriage to transport her the rest of the distance to Tuxtla. One more incident of this trip I must give as illustrating the handicap under which a stranger, unacquainted with the customs of the country he is entering, often labors.

On the day following our leaving the ranch above described we reached the home of another wealthy land proprietor and were invited to stop for dinner, the day being Sunday. It had been heralded abroad that Los Americans were to establish a bank at the capital, and our Government official introduced me as the head of the bank. I was received with extreme kindness and deference, and when it came time for us to eat was placed at the head of the table. Accustomed, as we all are in America, to accept the place to which we are assigned when dining in the home of others, I innocently accepted the place of honor, and without the least thought that I was breaking one of the most sacred rules of Mexican etiquette, calmly proceeded to eat my dinner. During the journey I had become very well acquainted with the wife of the Government official, she having been educated in San Francisco and speaking perfect English. We had conversed much of the time, and she had been interested in learning all she could about the United States, and in turn told me many things about Mexico. Her husband was unable to speak much English and joined but little in our conversation. The lady and I became quite friendly and, after the dinner was finished and she got an opportunity to speak to me aside, she said, "Oh, Mr. Everett, I am so sorry; you made a terrible mistake!" Her evident perturbation alarmed me considerably. "Oh," said she, "you should not have accepted the place at the head of the table; by all the rules and customs of our country the honor guest must be offered the head of the table, but he must never accept

it, but must decline it with courteous thanks, as the host always occupies that position himself." Well, it was done and could not be helped, and I didn't let it worry me very much.

The next day we reached our destination to find that we were still many thousands of dollars short of the necessary coin to open the bank, and on the next day but one we must either open it or forfeit our concession. J. M. Neeland and Walter Everett had both reached the capital before I did, and somewhere between the coast and Tuxtla, which is situated high up in the mountains, Bert Lyon was struggling with a band of mules and peons, bringing an additional fifty thousand dollars. Neeland had bought every dollar in silver that could be bought in Tuxtla. As he expressed it, "The merchants here have scraped their tills to sell us every cent of silver money they had." The night before the time for opening the bank had arrived, and Walter and I slept in a room in the best hotel the town afforded, which would be considered a fairly good livery stable in our country. All night long we heard the clink of silver dollars as gamblers plied their trade in the next room. Walter whispered to me the next morning, "They have been counting our money all night. I am afraid poor Bert is gone." This showed the state of anxiety in which we were. The morning of the day of opening was dawning; fifty thousand dollars in silver and our trusted and faithful friend were missing. We went to the bank building early in the day and made all the preparations we could for opening. Mr. Neeland had even invited all the notables of the city to join with us in the afternoon to celebrate the opening of the bank, but we were unable to open because of lack of silver. Hour after hour dragged by and we waited with the most intense anxiety for the appearance of Bert and his mules loaded with silver. We did not at that time know, as we afterward learned, how absolutely safe the country was under the rule of Diaz, and it seemed to us highly probable that our pack train had been waylaid, the silver taken and Bert Lyon killed.

At 12 o'clock, as we sat in the bank room, talking over our troubles, a great shout arose, and we rushed to the door to meet Bert with his peons, mules and silver all intact. Poor Bert had scarcely slept or eaten during the trip in his anxiety to carefully guard the treasure, and he was one of the worst looking white men I have ever seen. His face was covered with two weeks' growth of beard; his hair and beard were matted with dust, his clothing in rags where they had been torn by the thorny brush along the trail, but he was triumphant and exultant; he had achieved the result sought, and arrived with his silver in time. At three o'clock in the afternoon, in the presence of all the notables of the city, we formally opened the Banco De Chiapas.

Bert Lyon, my family and I speedily settled down to life in the little Mexican city. As is the custom with nearly all the business men in Mexico, we lived in the same building in which we did business. The building was a large adobe, well built, and had formerly been a Catholic boarding school. In the kitchen was a huge Mexican stove, and if any of our American young people had seen it they would certainly wonder what it was. It consisted of a long bench built of brick, standing about as high as an ordinary table, and at regular intervals along the center of the top were small holes or depressions in which small charcoal fires were built, and over these fires was cooked all the food used by the school at

the time it was running. We were obliged to use the same means of cooking to some extent, but secured a small stove as soon as possible.

Our isolation, owing to our lack of knowledge of Spanish, was made more bearable by the fact that the missionary, Rev. McDonald, whom I have mentioned, and his wife had decided that Tuxtla was as good a place as any for their missionary work and settled there near us. They were most excellent people and the lady and my wife became close friends.

Bert Lyon learned the language very rapidly, as did also my daughter Clara.

The Mexican people have customs that are altogether different from our own, so far as social matters are concerned. In Tuxtla no young Mexican would have thought for a moment of calling upon a young lady, nor had he attempted to call upon her, would he have been permitted by her parents to see her; but young people must get together somehow, and it was the custom on almost every evening, (for the evenings were always pleasant there), for the young people to go to the plaza. Around this plaza were extensive brick walks. The young women would link arms, just as American girls do, in twos or threes, and march around the plaza in one direction, and the young men and boys of the town would walk around the plaza in an opposite direction; but as they passed each other they would smile and look all sweet things which they were forbidden to say to each other.

I have so far failed to mention that a wealthy lady of Los Angeles, a widow, Mrs. Coronell<sup>3</sup>, who was half Mexican and half American, and spoke both languages perfectly, had joined our party and taken some stock in our enterprise. She being familiar with the customs of both countries, took Bert Lyon, who was young enough to have been her son, under her maternal wing and got huge enjoyment out of leading him to break the ironclad Mexican rules of etiquette. For example, she became acquainted with the daughters of the most wealthy and influential citizens and would invite them to her house, where she introduced them to Bert and to American ways of doing things. So one night, in company with Mrs. Coronell, he went out to the plaza and marched with the young ladies. The young men of Mexico looked on in astonishment and envy. I said to a young Spaniard, who was working for his uncle in the city, "Antonio, why don't you do as Bert is doing?" (for by this time he and Bert had become friends) "and walk with the girls?" "Oh," said he, "Senor Everett, that will do for Bert, he is American; but it would not do for me."

The Mexican people thought it very wonderful that my wife and daughter should go freely about the town entering the stores to do their trading, and of course we could not know how badly they may have thought of us. However, as we represented the financial power of the town in the bank, we were always treated with the utmost courtesy, at least to our faces. Next door to us and separated only by the adobe wall was the residence of Senor Ramon Rabasa, State Treasurer, one of the few honest Mexicans whom I met while in that

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3 Mariana Williamson de Coronel, as she was known despite a later unsatisfactory marriage to a Mr Smith. A famous collector of native American art and a close friend of Helen Hunt Jackson

country. He had a daughter named Guadalupe, whose pet name was Lupie, a girl about Clara's age, and they immediately became fast friends. Clara would go over to Lupie's at any time she felt like it with perfect freedom, and after we had lived there a few weeks Lupie actually came to our house, a distance of about three steps, without a servant following her, and she felt as if she had had about as much adventure as an American girl would to make a trip to Europe alone. I tell these things that you may know something of the manners and customs of the new country to which we had come.

Bert Lyon and I had just got the bank opened and fairly running when I began to receive letters from Mr. Neeland, who was acting as general manager of the railroad company, and Mr. Ed Piantoski<sup>4</sup>, who was our chief engineer, each one desiring me to come to Tonalá and make the other be good. Each claimed that the other was hampering him. Piantoski, who was supposed to be in charge of the actual work of construction, stated that Mr. Neeland was constantly interfering with his plans and countermanding his orders. Mr. Neeland in his letter claimed that Piantoski would not do the work as he wished him to do it. I had no real authority in the railroad company, for I had gone there as a bank manager and not as a railroad official. However, they both thought that in the absence of Walter I represented the Everett interests, which was true, and that I ought to settle the troubles between them. It was one hundred and twenty-five miles over the mountains to Tonalá, and an ox cart or a saddle horse was the only means of transportation. I finally left the bank in charge of Bert and made a hasty trip to Tonalá, where I talked with each of the two men, and as is usually the case found that both were somewhat in the wrong. Of course, I tried to point this out and to get them to work together in harmony, giving each of them a little friendly lecture which, also is usually the case, had no other effect than to get them both down on me. Having no authority to order anything and neither of the two men having any inclination to listen to my advice, I returned to Tuxtla, having accomplished nothing except to satisfy myself that without some change in the management the road would never be constructed. In the meantime, John B. and A. B. Lyon were down at the railroad work; but because they were friends of the Everetts, they were regarded with jealousy by Neeland and Piantoski and were pointedly ignored by both. They were deeply interested in all our plans, having taken stock with us; and had come there to do something or anything that could be done to push the work. They wrote me, and they also wrote to Walter, stating the conditions, urging that something be done, because the time within which the first fifty kilometers of the road must be finished was rapidly passing and we were liable to lose our concession. Walter responded promptly and when he reached the scene of action took personal charge, ignoring Mr. Neeland as general manager, because we had discovered by that time that he had no qualifications for the position he held and that he simply hampered the efforts of others without doing anything himself. For days and weeks he sat in the office at Tonalá reading and writing letters without going out upon the work or giving any assistance in any way, his excuse being that he had eniwas in his feet. Now, eniwas are the product of an egg laid in the skin by some insect, which, by the way, I never saw. The eggs hatch and form themselves a little pouch or pocket just beneath the skin and feed on the living flesh and blood of the

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<sup>4</sup> probably Piontkowski

victim. However, they are not the least painful, and the first intimation you have of their presence is a small swelling about the size of a pea. The treatment is very simple, consisting only of opening the skin sufficiently to remove the pouch, which, strangely enough, causes no bleeding, and washing the opening with some antiseptic. The wound quickly heals.

Walter pushed the railroad work vigorously for some weeks and Mr. Piantoski cooperated well with him. The work went rapidly forward, but Walter had duties that called him away and out of Mexico, and as soon as he went away the old strife between the manager and chief engineer started again. I found that I was powerless to remedy the trouble, being without any legal authority, and I notified the men who were furnishing the money, father, Mr. Milligan and the others, which resulted in a meeting in Mexico City, at which all the interests were represented, and it was agreed, with the consent of Mr. Neeland, that Mr. Piantoski should be given full and autocratic power. In short, he was to be the commander-in-chief; the rest of us were to take orders from him. He promised that if he could have full power he would push the work to the limit, and I wish to say for Mr. Piantoski that he made good. He worked with feverish energy and the work went forward rapidly. Piantoski was an able young man. His chief fault was an excess of vanity and an overpowering fear that his merits would not be fully recognized.

About this time it was decided that it was best to sell the bank at Tuxtla so that I might give my entire time to the railroad work, our force of Americans being so exceedingly small, and I moved my family from Tuxtla to Jalisco. I had no authority except to handle funds. It was my business to see that the money was there, that the men got their pay every Saturday night, and so far as possible that nothing was wasted. This work I performed to the best of my ability and with fairly good results.

Mr. Piantoski and a special friend of his, who acted as conductor of the train, a Mr. Cameron, and they and their wives arrogated to themselves all the authority in the camp. I could not ask the simplest and most harmless question about business without being snubbed. If I happened to ask an employee a question he was likely to say, as some of them actually did, "I am working for Mr. Piantoski." Naturally, as one of the men who was putting in money to construct the railroad. I resented this treatment, feeling that while Mr. Piantoski was entitled to all authority, we having delegated it to him, I, as a representative of the men who were building the road, was entitled to respectful treatment. However, the all important thing was to finish the fifty kilometers before the expiration of the time fixed by our contract with the Mexican Government, and I took quietly all kinds of snubs and disrespectful treatment, but I did not forget.

On Sundays when work was not proceeding, Piantoski, his pet conductor, and their wives, would take the construction train and go some distance along the partly constructed line, and hold a picnic, on which joyous occasion the men who were building the road were sneered at and dubbed farmers—which we were, and of which we were proud—but which was intended by the speakers as a term of contempt. On one occasion the pet conductor remarked, "Well, I guess we will build some road this year. I hear they have a good

corn crop in Nebraska." These things always got back to the men who were concerned and they did not fail to reach our ears. When the fifty kilometers were finished and done in time, I informed Mr. Piantoski that his services were no longer required; for the finishing of the fifty kilometers ended the period for which absolute power had been granted to him. When I told him of his discharge he said, "Mr. Everett, I was hired by the president of this company, and I decline to accept a discharge from any one else." Now, Walter had paid us a flying visit a few weeks before, had learned of the insults to the men who were doing the work and was just as indignant as I. He gave me a letter addressed to Piantoski discharging him, but suggesting that I not deliver it if Piantoski accepted a verbal discharge from me; so when Mr. Piantoski made his not unexpected answer, I replied: "Ed, I wanted to spare your feelings all I could in this matter, but since you must have a formal discharge, here is a letter written to you from the president, to be delivered upon the completion of the fifty kilometers," and I delivered it to him. I never saw a man more crestfallen. It was evident that he believed that his successful completion of the fifty kilometers would outweigh any influence that I might have.

By this time I had learned something of the actual work of railroad building and something of the Americans who were in that part of Mexico, and we were fortunate in securing the services as chief engineer of a Mr. Bowman, who had all the ability and but few of the faults of Mr. Piantoski; but what was far more important, we secured the services, as superintendent of construction, of Henry Heintz, a young American of German descent, one of the most energetic and effective workers I have ever met. He had had, at that time, fifteen years' experience in railroad work in Mexico. He spoke the language fluently and knew Mexican character to a nicety. To him we granted the same full powers that had been granted Piantoski, but gave him frankly to understand that the men who were backing the enterprise must be treated with respect. However, in his case this was entirely unnecessary, as he knew his place and kept it. None of us ever attempted to interfere with his management or override his authority, and he on his part gave us the most respectful treatment, and we became his firm friends. To him more than to any other one person is due the credit of our successful completion of the first division of the road. It was no uncommon thing for him to get up in the middle of the night to ride from the camp where he was to some other camp to see that the men got to their work at the proper time in the morning and that all things were going well.

I seemed to possess something of the faculty for smoothing down rough places and satisfying men who had become dissatisfied, and I looked after the paying out of the money. For the actual construction work I was entitled to no credit whatever. The first division of the road was completed under Mr. Heintz's management within the time specified, and the road was, for a new road, a very good one. However, we were tired of Mexico, its hardships, its privations, and I may add, its dangers, for during the three years in which we were building the road we lost by death out of the handful of Americans who furnished the brains for the work John B. Lyon, who died of a liver trouble, undoubtedly induced by the tropical climate; young Mr. Milligan, who had become division superintendent, and was a most estimable and efficient young man; William Mann, brother-in-law of Walter's, who was with us but a short time before he was stricken by one of the fierce fevers of the country and

died in a few hours; our master mechanic, a Mr. Jennings, who was a wonder in his line, also died suddenly of fever. These men died natural deaths, and in addition thereto we had two startling tragedies. First was the death of our humble but trusted employee, old Chinese Tom, our cook. Tom had been with us from the start and we all regarded him with affection, because of his faithfulness and zeal in protecting the interests of the company; also he was always kind and accommodating. One night, after every one had left the cookhouse, excepting Tom and his helper, another Chinaman, the men in the office, some fifty feet distant from the cookhouse, were aroused by a tremendous hubbub and outcry in the cookhouse, and rushed there, to find old Tom dead, literally chopped up with an ax, and his helper desperately wounded, with one arm entirely cut off, but still living, and the cookhouse turned into a shambles. Who did the murder we never knew. Indeed, we could hardly form a theory as to who did it or why it was done. The wounded Chinaman died in a few days, but absolutely refused to tell us who was the assailant or why the crime was committed.

The other tragedy occurred something like a year later and was the shooting in the night of our chief engineer, Mr. Bowman. He was found dead in his room after the sound of a pistol shot, and it has always been a question of doubt whether he shot himself accidentally or whether someone from the outside killed him by shooting into the room where he slept. He was dead and that was all we could learn about it. So both those murders have passed into history with their mysteries absolutely unsolved.

More than half of the white men who went from the north to assist in this work went to their graves within three years. These things and the tremendous strain of financing the project began to get upon our nerves. This Pan American Railroad is the only road, that I have ever heard of, which was built without the issue of bonds. The construction work was all done and paid for out of the pockets of the men who took up the work until we had finished this first division, but we began to want to get out from under the burden. An opportunity came to sell the road to people in Kansas City and the sale was effected. At about that time and before the road was delivered the bonds were placed upon it and a part of our pay for the road was taken in these bonds. At the finishing of this first division, also, the Mexican Government paid the first subsidy, and we drew at that time about twelve hundred thousand dollars in cash from the Mexican Government.

All of the survivors of the expedition, excepting A. B. Lyon, returned to their homes in the north, but A. B. remained in Mexico and married a beautiful young Mexican lady, who has since visited with him in his old home town and made a most favorable impression among all of Fred's many friends. We were all glad to return to our native land and to be relieved of the pressure which had been upon us, but after all there is no period of our lives to which we look back with so much pleasure as the three years in which we struggled with all sorts of difficulties in the wildest part of Mexico.

## letters from Herbert Shumway

- newspaper clipping LETTER FROM MEXICO

City of Mexico, Apr 23 1901-Friend Wheeler - The ride down from Chihuahua was very pleasant, taking nearly two days and nights. The greatest thing of interest to me on the trip down was the great drainage canal, a few miles north of this city. This was commenced in 1607 to drain the valley of Mexico. This was a most stupendous undertaking to be done by mere human strength. It is almost four miles long and from 150 to 250 ft. deep. The Indians were compelled to labor as slaves, and tradition says 115,000 of them were worked to death in the building. It is the most impressive example I have ever seen of what the pure physical strength of human beings can accomplish.

But this city! There is so much to say that I am discouraged. Words can convey no conception of it to one who had only seen the cities in the US. But the great churches and cathedrals is what impresses me the most. There are so many of them and they are so massive, rich and grand. They were mostly built during the 16th and 17th centuries, there are but few less than 150 years old. One can only consider with awe the wonderful power of the Church of Rome at that period, which enabled her to build such magnificent monuments in this new hemisphere. I have seen nothing in Chicago or New York that is any comparison to these churches. The cathedral is a most massive building, with sister churches that open into it about 400 ft square. The main room is 177 ft by 400 ft with an arched roof of stone and brick 179 ft from the floor, supported by 14 immense pillars of stone about 10 ft in diameter. And such massive walls! We climbed up the tower over 200 ft and the walls there were 46 inches thick. Words can convey very little idea of the interior. There are two immense organs at least 150 ft high and the altars and shrines were of carved woods, gold, silver and precious stones. The vessels holding the holy water of which there were several were almost five feet across and two feet deep [and] were cut from onyx. The paintings on the walls and ceiling were very fine and there are some famous paintings brought from Europe. I have never seen such a picture of worth and grandeur in a church. It is built on the site of the Aztec temple. The first church was completed in 1524 but the main cathedral was started in 1573 and completed in 1667.

One afternoon we went out to visit Quadaalupe [sic] almost 7 miles north of the city. This is the holiest shrine and the most costly church in all America. It is not very large, the nave 122 ft by 200 ft and 125 ft high. But the interior! I have never seen anything so rich and beautiful. The altar has solid silver railings, and has a dazzling beauty with its gold, silver and precious jewels. In 1895 a crown was placed over the Tilma of the Holy Virgin. This coronation was perhaps the greatest gathering of Catholic Ecclesiastics ever held in America. The jewels for the crown were donated by the wealthy ladies of America and Europe and is a galaxy of gems. The first shrine was built in 1532 and through the centuries additions have been made, more especially to the interior until now the small church is said to have cost about \$12,000,000 besides jewels donated.

Time forbids much of a description of the National Museum and art gallery. They are far better than I expected to see and contain relics of priceless value. Marelló [sic], Rafael and have each a painting here. But I can better appreciate Clave's and Ramirez. The great sacrificial stone upon which the Aztecs offer human sacrifice impressed me very deeply.

The National Library is very fine. One could spend days there. There are two books printed in the 15th century and quite a collection of American and English books.

The rock of Chapultepec is a wonderful place, crowned with the magnificent castle, which now contains the school for cadets, the West Point of Mexico, and the residence of President Diaz. By getting a permit we were allowed to examine the famous castle. But there is so much of interest that one cannot write about it.

This valley has an altitude of 7000 feet and the finest climate I ever saw. It is midst of summer here now and a little warm about three hours in the middle of the day, while a person wants to rest. The rest of the day is rather cool, but as I have on my winter underclothing it is not uncomfortably cold. There are few flies or fleas or small insects here. The air is pleasant and invigorating. It is a pleasure simply to exist here. I attended a Masonic meeting and found the work practically identical with that in Nebr.

The work of the different protestant missions require more than a passing word. They are doing a great work here, it seems to me, with wonderful success. Their adherents are now estimated to number 70,000. Seeing something of what they are doing here, I can appreciate as never before the need of such work and the fruit which it bears. It seems to me that it is the noblest work that a human being can devote his life. Sunday Mr. Everett and I attended the M.E. Church in English, for there are many Americans here, and listened to a very able sermon from Rev. Bassett of Iowa, and then attended services in the Mexican M.E. church. There was quite a large attendance, and to look into the faces of those persons it seemed as if their inmost being had been lifted and exalted by their religion. We could not understand the Spanish, but they sang "Rock of Ages," and "Jesus like a Shepard lead me." It seemed to me it was the sweetest music and carried one the nearest Heaven of anything I have ever heard in my life. I shall never miss an opportunity to hear the Mexican-Christians sing those old songs. In singing they have sweet, musical voices and the worship seemed from their hearts pure and undefiled religion.

We have had an unexpected delay here of nine days, to get some of the concessions signed in which some of our party are interested. But it has given us a good opportunity to see the city and study its people in customs of which I have not time to write. But it seems during the 16th and 17th centuries Mexico enjoyed a period of great activity, as is shown by the magnificent monuments left. During the 18th and until the latter part of the 19th it was in a deep sleep, from which she is just arousing. And it looks for the immediate future to show a progress and development equal to that of Japan. President Diaz is doing a wonderful work, and I believe is one of the greatest men of this age and that of the future will

give him a place in Mexico's life similar to that held by Washington and Lincoln in our own.

Tonight we start south in a very arduous trip of about 2000 miles.

Very Respectfully, H P Shumway

- newspaper clipping LETTER FROM MEXICO Oaxaca, State of Oaxaca, May 4, 1901-

Friend Wheeler - Leaving Mexico we took the Mexican railroad to Orizaba. This is one of the most delightful rides in America and no one should come to Mexico without going down there. A few miles after leaving the city we pass the prehistoric pyramids at San Juan Teotihuacan. There are two, one 216 and the other 151 feet high, and I should think about 800 and 600 feet square at the base. They are about half as large as the famous pyramids of Egypt. They are built on the level plain, and it is a wonder who built them and for what purpose. I am surprised that so little attention has been given them. For seven hours we ride over the undulating plateau covered with hundreds of thousands of acres of Maguey from which the Mexican drink pulque is made. The plain is very fertile, dotted over with villages and such lots of churches, "grand old churches, centuries old." It seems as if the entire wealth of Mexico during the 16th and 17th centuries must have been given to building churches, for they are everywhere, so immense, grand and rich. We pass by the volcanoes Popocatepetl<sup>5</sup> and Ixtaccihuatl<sup>6</sup> and Orizaba<sup>7</sup>, 18250 ft, claimed to be the highest mountain in North America. The view of these mountains is very impressive. The peaks in the Rockies are along the ranges so even Pikes Peak appears very small in comparison for these peaks rise almost out from the level plain about 11,000 feet and about 4,000 feet covered with perpetual snow giving them a sublime beauty. About 2 o'clock the train stopped to get water, just as we commence to leave the high plateau of 7,000 feet and drop to the low land of the coast. There is one of the most charming lovely views I ever saw. Malteata [?] lies just at the foot of the Mt 2000 feet below, in a lovely little valley while the road runs 13 miles to reach it. While Nagoles lies in plain view a few miles beyond but in another drop in the valley of 1,000 feet. It is worth many miles travel to see that picture. To follow that valley down through the mountains was a great engineering feat. In 29 miles the road makes a descent of 4100 feet. Orizaba is a lovely little city with its tropical plants and flowers, and after our long ride over the plateau it seems like an oasis in the desert.

Vera Cruz is a hustling seaport, but we found little of special interest there, excepting yellow fever which caused us to abandon our trip through the Isthmus and go back to the highlands and down here. We received at Vera Cruz a most impressive temperance

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<sup>5</sup> Popocatepetl

<sup>6</sup> Ixtlahuacatl

<sup>7</sup> Orizaba

lecture. In inquiring of various persons about the probabilities of taking the fevers, the first question almost invariably would be "Are you addicted to the use of strong drink?" And when we would answer "No" they would say that we would probably get through all right but it would be almost sure death to one who had drank much liquor.

Yesterday we went down to the ruins of Mitla<sup>8</sup> 30 miles from here. They are much more interesting than I expected to find. They are scattered over ground about 2 by 2 1/2 miles and show remains of immense buildings. The Mexican government is excavating and exploring and are finding courts and rooms and catacombs and finely preserved walls richly ornamented with hewn stone. In one court are six obelisks still standing about 12 ft high and 4 feet in diameter. Some of the walls still standing I should think were 20 feet high. Over all the doorways are immense stones instead of arches. I measured one which was 3 1/2 feet wide, 4 1/2 feet high, and 22 feet long. The walls in various places are covered with hieroglyphics which have never been deciphered. The doors are not over 5 1/2 feet high showing that the builders were a small race of people. There being no tradition among the Indians of the builders of the temple at the time of the Spanish conquest, shows that the builders were exterminated by a people who were themselves exterminated before the conquest. While on the road there we stopped to see the Big Tree at Tule. This is a gigantic wonder for a tree. The trunk 6 feet from the ground is 154 feet in circumference.

Oaxaca is a very fine city of about 30,000. Being in the tropic with an elevation of over 5,000 feet is delightful. During the last four years the extremes have been 65 and 80, and during the last year 67 and 78. It rains every afternoon during the summer months, so it is a little cooler in summer than in winter. The water is cool and wholesome, a very rare thing in Mexico. Being so far south the sun is directly overhead at noon this time of year, and the days are surprisingly short. Daylight comes about 5:15 and dark quarter to seven. Santo Domingo church here rivals Guadalupe<sup>9</sup> as the richest church in Mexico. It is claimed this cost \$13,000,000 and looks much the richer, for nearly the whole interior, even the dome is covered with beaten gold, and one can appreciate the richness of gold. While Guadalupe has so much solid work that don't make the show. It is claimed that at Guadalupe 26 tons of silver was used in the railings alone around the altar.

To us from Nebraska the farming seems very crude indeed. Now that I have seen farming here I can for the first time realize the farming mentioned in the Old Testament. The plows are a long pole with a sharpened stick morticed in, a handle fastened on so it can be held upright, then it would stir up the ground about 4 inches deep. We did not see a steel plow among the farmers in Mexico. To cut the grain they would gather what stocks they could hold in one hand and then cut it with a sickle. Children would gather these handfuls up carefully, put them in bundles, and a man would follow with withes and bind the bundles. We saw one field with 50 at work harvesting. In plowing the big fields there would be an overseer on horseback and from 20 to 35 teams at work. One three-horse Nebr. team would do more work

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<sup>8</sup> Mitla?

<sup>9</sup> Guadalupe

than the whole bunch.

Threshing was the queerest. They would make a stone floor, erect a revolving part in the middle, fasten a long pole to that, tie to the pole ususally 22 mules and drive them round and round until the wheat was threshed out. To clean the wheat they would stretch an oxhide between poles, punch holes in it, and toss it up and down until all the wheat runs though the holes. No wonder only the richest can afford to eat bread.

I cannot understand the seasons here. There are two, the wet and the dry. But they seem to sow and reap irrespective of months. Many large fields of both wheat and corn would be divided into four parts. In one they would be preparing the ground, the next would be growing, the next ripening while in the next they would be harvesting and threshing.

As a farming country Mexico is exceedingly poor. I should think that about two-thirds of Mexico was semi-arid, comparing unfavorably with eastern Colorado. With irrigation the soil would be exceedingly productive, but there is no water to irrigate only a small portion of the arid part. Western Nebr looks like a garden compared to a great part of what we saw of Mexico.

Everything being in such a primitive condition there, the mines, cattle industry, rich lands along the coast, manufactories, and the improvements in the cities, offer great inducements to American capital and enterprise. But anyone must be very careful about going there unless he has a good position assured or takes a lot of money, human labor is about the cheapest thing there. Many of the farm laborers get only 18 cts a day, Mexican equal to 9 cents our money and it takes a very skilled mechanic to get a dollar a day Mex or 50 cts Amer. But to keep the peons at work and do it anywhere near right they have to have overseers for everything. And there is a great demand for American overseers and managers. The greatest demand is from the plantations in the low lands, where it is very dangerous for northerners to live. One must be very careful about going without money. The government offers great inducements for capital to develop the country and millions are flowing in from the states. Mexico has today great opportunities for safe and profitable investments.

Respectfully yours, H P Shumway

## Everett Letters

- June 24 (no year) but seems to refer to Mexico business to Herbert Shumway from Franklin Everett

Friend Herbert

I inclose letter from Mont which explanes it self better than any thing that I can

say. I dont know how much money has bin sent down there since the meeting in Chicago but if there has bin no ties bought it seems to me that there should not bin very much money spent. Tel Miligan to put in what ever money that he wishes so that he will get as big a bonas as any one gets. How is your lone geting along.

F Everett

- Kansas City Tuesday morning, 12/18/1901 to Helen H Shumway from Evelyn Shumway Everett

Dear Nellie

Arrived here safe and sound. They called our train about three minutes before our sleeping car tickets were ready, so you see we had no time to spare. Our berths were made and we were in bed before we left Omaha. That hearty laugh at Lyons did me a world of good. I had been bracing myself for what seemed to me to me a tragedy and it was turned into a comedy. I woke up in the night and had to laugh. It did look so funny to see you great big women pounce down on one poor little fellow. I was realy afraid [words torn away] -n't survive. I sha--[words torn away] for signs of softening of the brain. Our train is over an hour late from here, but Mont says we can get on our sleeper, so by by. Expect to get a letter from you in Mexico. Love from Eva

P S Have Ruth [Shumway] write

enclosed letter dated on train near La Junta Col. 12/18/1901 to Helen H Shumway from Fremont Everett

Dear Nellie - Eva says I may write to you- good isent she? Have been eating the pressed chicken that you fixed- it was very good but I just thought how much better you would be pressed than the chicken. Now when Eva reads that she wont let me write again. Tell Herbert that I will write him soon. Mont

We did not get the letter mailed so will write a little more and mail at La Junta. We had a good nights sleep but we rode cold all day yesterday. There is more snow here than at Lyons and it seems every bit as cold. They could not by any means get the cars warm. We will stop soon for breakfast. Feel as though I could eat a good one.

Well our journey is so far very uneventful, and there is not much to write. We just eat and sleep and ride.

I just looked this over, think I will let him send it. Eva

- Mexico City, Mexico 1/08/1902 to Helen H Shumway from Clara Everett.

Dear Aunt Nellie,

Mamma has just been reading a letter from Uncle Herbert so I decided to write to you.

I wish you were down here. My wouldn't you and mamma enjoy the sightseeing together. There is so much of interest in and around the city. One place that I would like to hear you exclaim over is the Palace of Chapultepec. I suppose Uncle Herbert has told you about that but it is the most magnificently furnished building I was ever in. Then we have ridden a short distance down the Viga Canal and also among the floating gardens. Then we've been out to Coaycan where is Cortez old home and the well where he drowned his first wife. We took nearly all these sights in the first week when there were a party of tourists, whose acquaintance we had made on the sleeper from El Paso down, to go with us. They were very nice people but they have gone now and also some other people, a Mrs. Neeland and a Mrs. Coronell<sup>10</sup>, the latter will be down in Tuxtla this winter she has some interest in the bank, the former's husband is overseer of the r.r. crew and so she goes with her husband, have made it more pleasant for us, but they go to-night with the r.r. party. Mr Neeland and Burt Lyon will open the bank while papa with us waits here until the bills come and then signs them. It will be about a month I suppose before we leave.

We have two large rooms, very comfortably furnished and do very light-house-keeping. We get meals at Porter's Restaurant when we wish. Nearly every morning we visit the flower market and try to jew down the natives who of course expect it and sometimes we get bargains in sweet peas, roses, etc. In the afternoon we study Spanish. We are taking [lessons] of a Spanish girl. She is very pretty but speaks English very little. I am afraid we will not learn very quickly of her but we like the girl very much. Then in the evening the carriage parade down San Francisco St when all the swells of the city make a display of themselves in their fine carriages drawn by beautiful horses, and driven by a coachman all togged out in livery. This lasts from about half past five until half past seven.

Address us at The Hopkins House Room No 9. How is Ruth? Does she still go to school? Tell her to write to auntie and me. We would like it ever so much. Love to all ,  
Clara M Everett

- Mexico City, Mexico 1/09/1902 to Helen H Shumway from Evelyn Shumway Everett

Dear Nellie - We received H.P. letter yesterday. He said you had been talking of writing for a week so I expect to get a letter from you soon. I think if you folks knew how we

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<sup>10</sup> Mariana Williamson de Coronel, as she was known despite a later unsatisfactory marriage to a Mr Smith. A famous collector of native American art and a close friend of Helen Hunt Jackson

long to hear from there you would do better. You want to be sure and come down when Herbert does. You will have to put up with a great deal that is disagreeable, but I think you will feel paid, for it is a wonderful and peculiar country. I enjoyed it at first but am getting tired of seeing so much dirt and filth and wretchedness. We try to see something new every day. Yesterday we hunted pon brokers shops. I found an opal ring for Clara<sup>11</sup> that I thought was pretty and cheap. We have been to all the places of note in and near Mexico. When Mont gets time we are going to take some of the side trips. We have two real pleasant rooms. Pay \$65 a month. We get meal tickets at about \$.65 a meal. Part of the time we lunch in our room. Every thing is so high. butter \$.90 a lb. Cream \$.80 a qt. Crackers \$.50. Chicken \$1.75. I prised a bottle of preserved cherries that held a quart \$2.50, everything else the same. It is so provoking that we have to be to all this expense.

Did Ruth get her spoon and the boys their pins. They are made of Mexican money. Love to all from

Evelyn Everett

- undated letter apparently from Mexico City to Herbert Shumway from Evelyn Shumway Everett

Dear Brother

You wondered how Clara and I stood the earthquake shock. I do not think either of us was frightened. I ran out on the balcony to see if there was any thing to see. Of course it gave one a peculiar sensation to feel the earth swaying, as Clara said it made one feel rather puny when this great solid stone building would rock so. It broke the wall in the out side room. They say the safest place is in the doorway opening onto the patio. I never was seasick but I was decidedly dizzy that time, and my head was swaying after the earth stoped. I don't worry any over them. I begin to think my nerves are pretty good, even the "alacran" (the most poisonous of the scorpion family) didn't frighten me out. I will send you a picture from time to time that I think you will like. I have not received that letter yet from Nellie that she was going to write so long ago. Love to you all from your Sister.

Evelyn Everett

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11 Clara Everett, Fremont's daughter.

- Tuxtla, Mexico 3/02/1902 to Herbert & Helen Shumway from Evelyn Shumway Everett

Dear Sister and Brother

My long journey is ended at last. Nothing would have induced me to have undertaken it, if I had had an idea what I would be obliged to go through. Herbert you know how the fleas and dirt was at Vera Cruz. Well that was a fine clean palace compared with what we have had since. The last night before we got here we stayed at a hut with pigs, horses, dogs and hens as sleeping companions. The bed room had a roof of mud and straw, for floor the ground and it smelt horrid, so we all took our cots out in the open air, but we could not leave the fleas behind. There were thousands of them. We could not sleep at all. We would have driven on but the team had to rest. When we arrived at San Geronimo we found the teams gone so Mont came across horseback. We had to wait six days for a boat to take us to Tonalá. The hotel was a good-sized barn with boarded up stalls a little higher than your head for bedrooms. One end of the dinning room was a saloon, in one corner a billard table, and the dinning table in the other. Imagine us eating with men smoking, playing and drinking and half a dozen dogs howling and dodging under your chair to get away from the kicks of the men. The people are very kind. They did all they could for us, but it was very hard to endure. Salina Cruz was worse for there were bed bugs as well as fleas. The boarding the boat was quite a novelty. The harbor is not deep enough to let the steamer in very close to land so they send a launch out to carry things to it. The launch can't get within 30 or 40 ft of shore so things are carried out to it by Mexicans. After the freight was loaded I knew our time had come. I wanted Clara loaded first. I was looking around for her when I felt myself suddenly lifted in the air and out in the waves before I knew what had happened, and then I clung for dear life to the neck of a laughing Mexican. How I landed in the boat I don't know, but Mrs McDonald who followed came in with her feet in the air and her dress skirts around her waist. When we reached the steamer a kind of a basket chair was let down by machinery which we got in and were safely put aboard. The whole thing was very comical. We had to pay \$.25 to get aboard the launch and \$1.50 to get on the steamer, and the same to land, only four men carried us to shore in a chair.

We arrived at the port at ten in the morning. Drove to Tonalá in the afternoon Friday. Drove to Aurero [?] Sunday. Started from Aurora Monday morning arriving here Thursday night, and such as sight as we are. The fleas don't poison me but they bite and crawl and my body looks as though some one had jabbed me all over with a needle. Clara looks as though she had the small pox and scarlet fever combined. If we can not get rid of them I shall take her home for it is terrible. They tell us it is all right after we get cleaned up. I hope so. The first day I got a tick on me which you have to burn out or they are liable to leave a bad sore, but I concluded the burn was worse than the bite so have pulled the others out. They have not amounted to much yet. The worst of anything that we have found yet is a tiny insect like a speck of dust that gets on you from the trees. It causes an eruption that looks and itches like poison ivy. It lasts about two days. We got pretty badly covered. All these insects come from the trees, if you keep away from them you are all right. The scenery over

the mountains was very fine, and the people treat you so nicely that they put us of the states to shame. Every place we stopped we were treated as honored guests. Every thing they had was at our disposal. It is very pleasant if they are not sincere, but I don't believe they are as bad as they are painted.

The flowers are perfectly lovely. Great trees as large as the oaks in Minn. loaded with bloom. Some look like pink, yellow and white lily. One that is very beautiful is star shaped with pure white waxy petals and very fragrant. Mont has been waiting some time for me to come to bed, so good night. Love to all and tell Ruth to write. From Evelyn Everett

- Salina Cruz 7/12/1902 to Herbert & Helen Shumway from Evelyn Everett

My dear Brother and Sister

We arrived in Salina Cruz just in time for the boat if it had sailed on time. They came in on time but had such a heavy cargo to load they did not get out last night, expect to go tonight. We have nice clean rooms and good wholesome food here this time. It is a saloon kept by an American. He treats us nicely. Last night at about two o'clock some one came and knocked on the door and called to Mr Hunter for a room. Mr Hunter called back that he could not keep him. The man said can we have this porch, I have been to four places before this, and I must have shelter, for I have a lady with me. I then opened my door which opened on the porch and told him the lady could share my room. The lady proved to be the wife of our master mechanic. You can imagine her delight when she heard they had found me, she is making her trip down here for the first time without her husband. They could not spare him to go after her. She is nearly prostrated with nervousness today. I hope she will stay, for they say he understands his business and he will not stay without her.

Since we left Laredo there has been four wrecks of trains that left just ahead of us, and one of our cars jumped the track, but all is well that ends well. I don't know why it is so, but I have not been so light hearted since I was a girl. All that heavyness seems to have been lifted. Clara hardly knows what to make of it. Perhaps it is because I have made up my mind not to struggle any more but take things as they come. I think Mr Milligan is allmost perfection. Tell Mr Milligan I would be very proud if I had such a son. He is as thoughtful as a man of forty. Love to all from your sister  
Evelyn Everett

- Hilesco, Mexico 8/21/1902 to Herbert and Helen Shumway from Evelyn Shumway Everett

My Dear Brother and Sister

I wondered and wondered why you did not answer my letter. When Bert came from Tuxtla he brought it down. I don't know why he did not send it. Of course I was very disappointed when I found I was not to go back to Tuxtla. I felt that I could not stay here, but I am well contented now. We brought down part of our things and sold the rest there. We have a nice comfortable room up on a side hill and get our meals at camp. Mont wrote you about the steamer. It was so aggravating. We went down to the train to bring the folks up, and there the steamer lay and the undercurrent so strong the boat could not go out to her. Finely I said we will go down on the beach and wave. If Walt is there he will know us by our dress (for Americans are rare) and he will wave back. Some one answered instantly, and that is all we know. The boat went on without unloading and carried away all the lumber and tools that the company have been wating so long for. They say they will send it back by the first boat they meet coming this way but it may be two weeks or more. Granville did not catch that boat. He came in today on another. He is getting the rough side of Mexico with a vengance. Coming back from Tuxtla in trying to cross a river that was very high on account of a rain, the horse fell and his spur caught on the saddle and he nearly drowned before he could get free.

Oct 1 Clara just found this letter. I supposed I had finished and sent it long ago. I shall be very glad to get back to the states. The steady heat is very trying. We are all broken out with a prickly heat, which itches like poison. The flies are very bad now, but no other insects to speak of, so really we have nothing to complain of. It still keeps raining but not as it ought to. People say stock will die before another rainy season. There is no more water in the streams now than there was when we came down in Feb. I suppose Granville told you about the great earthquake of the 23rd. I wrote him about it. On the 24 a tidal wave came in the port and frightened the people nearly to death. They telephoned for the train. At first Mont did not want me to go down, for every few hours we were having shocks, and another wave might flood the whole country. For miles just back of the port is lower than sea level. I wanted to go for I want to get every thing I can out of staying down here. I tell you the ocean was grand. You can imagine how it must have been disturbed for it was as muddy as the Missouri. The high white crested waves made a picture to be rememmbred. The port is disserted but I suppose they will build it up again when they get over their scare. They say it was the worst shock they ever had. I am so glad I was here to experience it. The rumble that comes first is quite terrifying. Today is the first day that we have escaped from a shock or two.

Now about business. Don't judge Mont until you see him and let him explain. If ever a man was placed in a hard position he is the man. Trying to do as he thinks best and receiving orders from Walt contrary to his judgement. For instance, to discharge draughtsmen (maps not finished). To discharge engineer when his work is not finished and it

would take months and all the expense over again to get another. I was so provoked last night. We got letters from Walt and his father both wondering why he had not obeyed orders and discharged the men. I told him to do it, we could stand the loss if they could. He did not sleep at all last night. He said the worst of all was for me not to stand with him. He said he must go ahead for he was sure he was right. I agree with him but I do get so out of patience with Walt [Everett, Fremont's brother] trying to run things when he knows nothing about the circumstances. I am afraid you will all think it unnecessary to straighten that curve that the inspector insists on. Walt and Neeland insisted that you did not have to go to Tonalá. Mont telegraphed Casusus. He says it must be done befor the government will accept. He dares not telegraph about the curve for fear it will stir things up and you will have all the curves to straighten, and that point is not as unreasonable as going to Tonalá. Those two things done, the inspector says he will accept the road. Mont is keeping the men to complete the road which is not finished anywhere, and to make those changes. He says he dares not take the chances on loosing the whole by trying to save a little now. The maps should have been made and accepted first, then there would have been no trouble, and they are not done yet. You may think you know something, but just come down here and try to build a rail road and that conceit will be taken out of you in a hurry. When this is accepted the rest will go on swimmingly for you have already bought your experience. Think of a mess of greenhorns trying to build a railroad in Mexico, out of the world, where it takes six weeks to get a screw, with a government that has unheard of laws, and a people that are as ignorant as cattle, and you can congratulate yourself that it has been done at all, instead of having a nice little sum [...]

- H P SHUMWAY & CO - dealers in LUMBER, COAL AND FARM MACHINERY agents for J I Case Threshing Machine Co -

Wakefield, Neb \_\_\_\_\_ 190; established 1882, oldest firm in Wakefield

agreement dated 2/25/1903

I hereby agree that in consideration of services rendered and to be rendered I will assign to H P Shumway one of the nine points of interest that I now hold in the Pan American Rail Road Company. And this I will do as soon as the stocks bonds and other properties representing the said values in said proposition are in my hands and in shape for transfer.

[signed] Fremont Everett

in presence of H H Everett

- undated note from (apparently) Mexico to Herbert Shumway from Fremont Everett

Dear Brother:

As Eva and Clara do not like it down here, I do not think it right to keep them in such a place and so shall go home as soon as I can see my way clear. But will stay until things are all in good shape here. So if you will turn me back the point that I gave you [in reference to agreement dated 2/25/1903] expecting to have you attend to my affairs for a long time, we will settle in some other way.

Your brother, Fremont Everett

- letter 2546 - 15th St, Denver Colo dated 4/02/1903 to Herbert P Shumway from Fremont Everett

Dear Bro - Your letter of 31st at hand and I am greatly pleased that Mr M feels as he does. But the fact is that it is the only thing to do.

I am going to go home next week and get into harness again. About the mortgage, I will get a new abstract if you desire. But as you had had the title examined and passed on by Brown I had no thought that you would have any anxiety about the matter. Of course I know the title is perfect but in case of your death it might be best for you to have among your papers an abstract with a lawyer's opinion on it. As Brown passed on it once he will readily do so again. I will write and order a new abstract. You have enough to worry over without worrying over that.

I hope we can buy Evans. If the Nebr people get that, we are in fine shape, as it will give us somewhere near 60% of the deal, and by no possibility can we ever be frozen out.

I presume, now that Granville is gone, that I shall have to go to Mexico again soon. But it will not do for me to go until these legal and monetary matters are all fixed up.

Yours, Mont

- THE FARMERS BANK, A State Bank  
Walter Everett Pres't  
Fremont Everett, Vice Pres't  
W S Newmyer, Cashier  
John P Piper, Asst Cashier

Lyons, Nebr 5/10/1903 to Herbert P Shumway from Evelyn Shumway Everett

Dear Brother

To say that I am angry and hurt is putting it mild. You know a blow at ones conceit tells. I was conceited enough to think that Mont did something for the company, and that it was appreciated, but it seems that they either don't want us to go down again or that we are only fit to do the disagreeable work. Nell said before when we were down that we were staying because we wanted to. The company did not need us. Mont says I can do as I please. He feels under no obligation to go. I told you, father and Bert that I consented to go, on condition that Mont had one of the leading places. I do not think it was too much to ask, for it would do us so much good down there. I could not sleep last night and woke Mont up in the middle of the night to tell him I was not going, but changed it to I did not think I would go. If we saved the company anything by going we would only have a part of it, if the company loses anything by our not going, it is only part our loss. I don't blame anyone, or ourselves either. Things just naturally go to some. I feel now like laying back and letting things drift. There will be enough made anyway, and I see no reason why we should sacrifice any more for it. Mont got a letter from Fred yesterday. Mont thinks he sees where he can help, and he says if I will plan on going down and only staying six weeks or two months he will go and get a long the rest of the time with out me. But I don't trust him. I have heard him talk before. If Walt had not been willing to have turned over the office to Mont, I would have seen everything lost before I would have gone a step. On the other hand it shows all the plainer that the company did not want Mont or were indifferent. You don't think we are under any obligation to go, do you under the circumstances?

From your sister Evelyn Everett

note from Fremont Everett at bottom: Dont say a word of what Eva has written to any one.

- Lyons, Neb 5/13/1903 to Herbert Shumway from Fremont Everett

Dear Brother:

I should start for Mexico Monday but am subpoenaed to appear at Tekamah on the 15 and again on the 19.

I have not found a Dr. yet and begin to fear that we shall not get one.

I think that we have done enough business on the plan of relying on fairness and "afterward" settlements. And to avoid all dissatisfaction and misunderstanding I want an agreement similar to the enclosed, signed by yourself, Mr Milligan, Mr Mathewson, father, and Burt so that there can be no mistake as to the understanding among us. Were I not a

member of the executive committee I would ask for a formal contract. But under the circumstances I think it would look better to merely have a signed memoranda, which in our circumstances will be just as good. I met Burt on the road this morning, and asked him what, in his opinion, would be fair - not having mentioned it to him before. "O!" said he, "\$5000 or \$6000." You, Mr Milligan, and Burt all putting it at practically the same figure. But no one can tell what will happen in a year.

I send you the Knox Co papers, including the Bearer note. I do not want to undertake to settle with Bearer, as I go so soon, and will leave it all to you. But I think it would be a good idea to try to induce prompt payment by offering to throw off a part or all (as you think best) of the disputed amount. About the difference due me from the Graves estate, just figure it out and when it comes in send it down to apply on my debt at the bank. If the abstract does not get around before I go, you can get it after I am gone.

I do not know as I shall see you again before I start, for I am going as soon as I can get away; but I shall go, easy in mind as to my own affairs, believing that you will treat them as carefully as you do your own. Work Hallie in all you can, but do not leave too much to him because he is my son, but remember he is a boy yet. I dont want to think of my own business after I start away. I want for some months at least to belong body and soul to the Chiapas Construction Co. I dont want any business but ITS business on my mind.

Your brother Fremont Everett

- THE FARMERS BANK, A State Bank

Lyons, Neb undated note to Herbert Shumway from Fremont Everett; believe this dates from 1903-4

Dear Bro

Better accept appointment. It was in my opinion a mistake to ask it. It would be a far greater one to decline it now it is offered. I do not think an appointment like that helps for a better one, but to refuse it now might hurt.

I think you can have Hallie<sup>12</sup> do a good deal of my farm visiting, dont want you to leave it all to him, but I would like him to have the drill of it, leaving the decision of important things, of course, to you, and you going often enough to keep in touch. If Hallie carries book when he goes and keeps memorandum of everything talked over, you can keep posted. I think timothy, red clover and white clover, mixed, the best grass seed for pasture. Herman Seuers [?] on Barron farm pays \$2.00 per acre cash rent for seeded ground and furnishes his own grass seed. But he has a very desirable farm. Mont

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<sup>12</sup> Harold Everett, Fremont's son.

● PAN-AMERICAN RAILROAD COMPANY FERROCARRIL PAN-AMERICANO -  
Construction Department  
San Geronimo, Oaxaca 7/27/1903

Dear Brother:

I wish you would look up the land prices and see what can be got for this land. I have an idea that the W 1/2 of w 1/2 22-29-8 should bring \$2,000 but perhaps \$1800 is enough.

Engine still hung up on V C & P. Laid 1/2 Kilometer track with push cars today, can go out 8 kilometers with push cars all right. Am going to keep going until the rails are all used. Work going well at other end.

Fremont

● CHIAPAS CONSTRUCTION CO  
JO Milligan, President  
J M Neeland, Vice President  
H P Shumway, Treasurer  
Rob't S McClure, Sec'y  
Walter Everett, Gen. Man.  
Fremont Everett, Ass't Gen. Man.

Executive Committee Fremont Everett, J O Milligan, H P Shumway  
San Geronimo, Oaxaca 10/01/1903 to Herbert Shumway, Wakefield, Nebr from Evelyn  
Shumway Everett

Dear Brother,

I am a little uneasy about Mr. Link Milligan. He left here two weeks ago Monday. Said he was going to the City to meet his wife. We have heard nothing from him since. Perhaps he is home. He had every appearance of having been on a long spree. He came up on the six o'clock train from Salina Cruz Sunday night. We had hard work to get him away from the saloon to come down here at all. We kept him here until a little after nine, and I fixed up his bed for him, but he kept insisting on going back to town to see a man. Of course we could not force him to stay, so Mr Green went up with him and stayed until he went to sleep in his chair, then he took all his valuables and put him to bed, and left him. The next morning he came down to breakfast. He seemed to be in a dazed condition. Mont would ask him about the work down the road, he would say something was wrong, but did not know where to lay the blame. He wanted to be put in superentendent. Mont would have been in favor of it if he had kept himself straight. I can not help worrying for fear he did not reach Mexico City. Is he quarrelsome when he has been drinking? Mont and Walt went down the

line Monday. I do not know what they will do. They may not make any change, but Mont may spend his time going back and forth, perhaps they would be more saving if he was there. If they do that I think I will come home. Don't let Mr Milligan know that Link has been drinking, if they have heard from him, for Link would be so offended at me, and it would do no good, only worry his folks. If they have not heard, something must be wrong.

Love to all From your sister Evelyn Everett

- CHIAPAS CONSTRUCTION CO  
JO Milligan, President  
J M Neeland, Vice President  
H P Shumway, Treasurer  
Rob't S McClure, Sec'y  
Walter Everett, Gen. Man.  
Fremont Everett, Ass't Gen. Man.

Executive Committee Fremont Everett, J O Milligan, H P Shumway

San Geronimo, Oaxaca 10/6/1903 to Herbert Shumway, Wakefield, Nebr from Fremont Everett

Dear Brother

I want you and Walter to rake up every possible dollar of mine and put it into the deal in some shape either for extra stock or on the bond proposition. I do not know that you can get anything together after paying my interest at Oakland, but I thought perhaps you might raise a thousand dollars out of crops. It is too early for corn to go on the market, but I wish you would hire in my name as much money as you think my crops and farm produce will surely pay. The next 90 days from this date will surely see us through and we must have money and have it quickly. It ought to be safe to hire at least \$2,000 on the stock and grain that I can market during the next six months.

Yours, Fremont Everett

- letter dated Lyons, Nebr 12/14/1903 to Herbert Shumway from Evelyn Shumway Everett

Dear Brother,

Mont wanted me to get \$100 either from Laurel or Coleridge to meet a check which he had drawn on the bank. I knew it was no use to write Laurel, so had Will write

Coleridge. They wrote back they could not possibly let him have it. Now it seems to be something must be wrong there. I think I had better not write Mont anything about it, for it is hard enough for him to stay anyway. I do not know what to do unless you take it from the fund you have been getting together for him. I will have to have \$150 or \$200 to last me, if Mont don't come until Feb. It takes about \$60 to take us to Denver and we have our rent to pay in advance &c. Mont made his plans expecting me to draw it from Laurel or Coleridge. What shall I do. Is there any other way? I wish Mont was here, I don't like this worry.

From your sister Evelyn Everett

PS Father E says you had better get that money at Wayne if you can. He just telephoned me.

- letterhead of the PIONEER LUMBER COMPANY, Fremont Everett, President; M A Butterfield Vice-President; M E Butterfield Secretary; John Horsch, Treasurer- Coleridge, Nebr \_\_\_\_\_ 190\_\_

letter dated 4/28/1904

to Herbert P Shumway from Fremont Everett

Dear Bro; Please write me fully what arrangements you made with Mr Ed Dirks about surveying. He has gobbled about two acres of my land and says you agreed to stand by a new Survey. If you tied me up in that way I must stand it of course. If you did not I am going to bring suit at once. I have a clear case if you did not waive my rights. Please write fully and exactly what was said and done.

Yours, Fremont Everett (He is the man living south of Cave Farm)

- The Farmer's Bank, a State Bank; Lyons, Neb.  
Walter Everett, President  
Fremont Everett, Vice-President  
W S Newmyer, Cashier  
John F Piper, Ass't Cashier

letter dated Lyons 6/16/1904

to Herbert Shumway from Fremont Everett

Dear Brother

I congratulate you most heartily on your trade. It is the best trade of your life. I

would not give the other fellow \$4000 for the building that he allowed you \$10,000 for.

Was he drunk? Or did you hypnotize him? Cant you trade off our Laurel property. If you will find us such a deal as you got, will pay you a most liberal commission.

Eva says she owes you a dollar will pay when I see you. Mont

Fannie will not get here until tomorrow.

- letterhead of The Farmer's Bank, a State Bank; Lyons, Neb.  
Walter Everett, President  
Fremont Everett, Vice-President  
W S Newmyer, Cashier  
John F Piper, Ass't Cashier

letter dated Lyons 8/16/1904 to Herbert Shumway from Walter Everett

Dear Sir and Friend

Your letters of Aug 14th and 15th both rec'd this morning. As to the note due me of \$7,000 I find that here all right. It was in father's papers. I note waht you say as to the am't due you out of the subsidy, and if we ever get the subsidy will sell bonds equal to your amounts and get you cash.

Very truly yours, Walter Everett

- letterhead of PORTER'S HOTEL, la San Francisco No 4, Mexico City, Mexico letter dated Mexico, DF 9/09/1904 to Evelyn Everett from Fremont Everett

My own precious wife:

I saw Mr McDonald and he seemed very pleased to meet me. He says they enjoyed their trip to the states very much.

We learn that Walter intends to return promptly from St Louis. Why he went is a mystery to me. But we got good news yesterday from Burt Lyon. He says that the road is ready for acceptance and that the inspector says that we can open the road the 15th. But I don't see how that can be done with Walter away. For we do not know what papers and blanks he had secured. On the tenth we are going to have an interview with Casusus and learn what we can and we will apply to the government to permit us to open, and then open as soon

as we can. I dont think Walter can get back before the 14th so the opening on the 15th looks impossible to me yet. If only we had come down here one week sooner. But we did not and here we are in a mixup owing to not catching Walt. But really it looks as though our road would be accepted right away. Lots and lots of love. Address as shown at the top of the sheet.

Fremont Everett

P S Let Father read my letters so I wont need to write the same things twice.

postscript by Evelyn Everett (sending on to Herbert Shumway); Tell Myron I will not be up to Wayne. He and Mattie are going up Saturday and wrote for me to meet them - Eva

- postcard dated Lyons, Nebr 9/13/1904 to Herbert Shumway from Evelyn Shumway Everett

Dear Brother, Clara was so lonesome while I was away I haven't the heart to leave her. Her anticipations are so high and she is so joyous I can not bear to cast such a cloud over her. Disappointments and troubles come fast enough that can't be helped. I will let her be happy while I can. I will not always have it in my power.

Eva

- letterhead of Hotel Iturbide, Mexico letter dated 9/15/1904 to Herbert Shumway from J D Haskell

My dear Shumway

I should have written to you before but supposed Fremont had done so until to-day he informed me that he had not been thinking that you would be in Seattle. I presume that Davies [?] has advised you so far as he could of the way things stand down here. A telegram, dated Omaha Sept 13, from Walter asked us all to await him here and to wire him care of Boyden. We had expected him here to-day but now not until next Monday. We are at sea as to causes for his extensive journeyings but take it for granted that they are weighty. He ought to be here but perhaps nothing is suffering. We look for Neeland to-morrow from St Louis where he has been with Walter. He has been made Gen. Supt. by Drak and Heinz has been made Supt. of Construction and also of operation. Heinz has been here for 2 weeks preparing schedule of freight rates with the help of an expert employed by Drak. This is necessary or road cannot be operated until this is done and rates published. Stringfellow arrived 2 days ago with maps and plats of surveys of the 3 routes below Tonila [sic]. One is called the upper passing right in from Tonila and leasing 20 Kilom. to port sidetrack and so

without subsidys. Another, the middle or Baring [?], leasing track 6 Kilm from Port, the 3rd or Island route running from Port and near shore the easiest by far but not liked by Government as being too low. It is thought the middle route will be accepted. Everything points to the speedy acceptance of the road. The inspector has telegraphed Casarus that the road is acceptable. Casarus has notified the Government who have telegraphed Inspector asking if road is acceptable. On his reply that it is Government will accept and in 10 days or 2 weeks pay subsidy. Casarus has advised us that Limantour intends to pay subsidy in silver 80' on dollar. We are of course sorry for this. If this is done we will have a goodly pile to carry home. We are impatient to get things settled so as to go home but can do nothing until Walter comes. We are about to start a ballgame. I shall be glad to hear from you. Mr Milligan still stays and will probably until road is accepted.

Sincerely yours (unsigned but in same hand as others by J D Haskell)

- letter dated Friday, 9/29; reference to World's Fair makes it 1904 to Herbert Shumway apparently from Evelyn Shumway Everett

Herbert My Dear Brother

Please sir arise to remark no I mean I sit down to write a few lines to you in regard to the World's Fair I have been looking about for means to go with I declare Herbert with such a family on day wages I cant see where it is coming from, besides we have about \$500 to raise by the first of Jan including the house repairs, all I complain of is why I was ever born to love so intensely such things, and a poor purse. The thought occured to me possibly you might get me a pass (do you feel like saying that is just like a woman to have no better business ideas) of course I dont understand such things: if I could have a pass I could make my other expenses come within my means I beleve I will have to hire a girl and other expenses I can't avoid if I go. I await your reply with a goodeal anxiety for if you and Mont folks go without me it will break my "pore heart sure enuf." Yours in haste, sister

- letterhead of Hotel Iturbide, Mexico letter dated 10/02/1904 to Herbert Shumway from J.D. Haskell

My Dear Shumway

Casarus has notified us that the Government will pay our subsidy to-morrow at 11 AM. \$557,00 will be reserved for the completion of steel bridges, stations &c. Under our new contract with Drak he is to do all these things and receives \$300,000 while we get \$257,000 when they are done. The government pays cash 80% which makes \$1,176,400 now or \$547,163 gold. 65% will now be paid of the obligations. Drak has until next July 1 to pay

cash for bonds. The enterprise will not pay as much as all had figured but there will [?] be fair profits if the R R bonds are paid as everyone expects. I secured for you an allowance of \$700 salary for you as treasurer, which I thought would not come amiss.

With kind regards and hopes that your Seattle trip may be most pleasant for you and Mrs Shumway I am  
Sincerely yours, J M D Haskell

- note dated Mexico, 10/05/1904 to Herbert Shumway from Fremont Everett

Dear Brother:

I send draft for Neeland Note.

The note read 10% but it was a printed form and Walter and Neeland both were of the opinion that the understanding was 7% and I figured it that way. But Neeland paid the exchange which is an item here.

I start home tomorrow but will mail this today. Will explain all when I see you, it is too long to write.

Yours, Fremont Everett

- letterhead of THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUEL COMPANY - miners and wholesalers of COAL

E E Shumway, President

D W Brown, Vice-Pres.

H E Stewart, Sec'y

letter dated 10/31/1905 to Herbert Shumway, Wakefield, Nebr; from Fremont Everett

Dear Brother: I have received both your letters, one containing Yeaton Stock Certificates and one containing mine. I shall endeavor to see Mr Chas W Eberlein while he is at [Portland?].

I think your suggestion that I get in touch with the local agent at Portland, a good one. Will try to establish friendly relations with him.

Butterfield is here and will be in Wakefield in a few days and you can deliver the stock to him.

Yours, Fremont Everett

- letterhead of The Palmer House, Chicago (The Chicago Hotel Co, Lessee) Cable address REMLAP \_\_\_\_\_ 190\_\_

letter dated Oct 31 (suppose this to be 1904 or 1905) to Fremont Everett, Lyons, Nebr; from Walter Everett

Dear Brother

I wrote you several days ago about the stock of Chiapas Construction Co that Milligan took to Neb for Herbert to sign & return here. Up to date I have not heard from you, neither has the stock been rec'd by either Boyden or I. If it can't be sent very soon hold it till I come. I will leave here tomorrow or next day, I now expect. Have my mail held there. In haste,  
Walter Everett

note to HPS from Fremont Everett: I do not understand about the stock, for Boyden and Walter have done the business. Yours in haste, Mont.

Lyons "Sun" article PAN-AMERICAN RAILROAD The Everett Railroad in Mexico is Nearly Completed. .

Down in the southwestern part of Mexico, on the Pacific coast, is being carried on the most interesting piece of railroad construction that has been undertaken in the Republic since the through line was constructed which connected the City of Mexico with the border line of the United States, and opened up the great commerce which now exists between these two great Republics. This railroad when completed, will be known as the Pan-American. It is a work which the general public, owing to the manner in which it's promoters are carrying out their project, has heard as yet, but little, but one which, when the time grows near for the line to be thrown open to traffic, it will be more written and talked about, will probably have more interest centered in it, by the Government of Mexico, by foreign commercial interests, and by tourists, than any other railway line in Mexico.

The reason that very little is known in a public way up to the present writing is that this railroad is owned by hardly a dozen men, whose manifest purpose is to build a good railroad and let the public talk about it afterwards. They are doing this work with their own private fortunes, and as is always the case in such instances, they have avoided the reclame that invariably is a part of the atmosphere of the professional promoter.

The line of survey of the Pan-American R.R. extends from San Geronimo in the state of Oaxaca, where it forms a junction with the Tehuantepec R.R. to Tapachula in the southernmost part of the stale of Chiapas, and then on to the Guatemalan border and including their respective points, branches running from the main line to the capital of the State, and to the only two Seaports Chiapas has. This railroad opens up the lower end of the

state of Oaxaca and the entire state of Chiapas having contributory to it, about 300,000 people. The principal towns touched by it are San Geronimo, Juchitan, Tonalá, Tuxtla Gutierrez, Eshuintla, Tapachula, and the two ports, Arista and San Benito. It runs through more than a dozen small pueblas and all the large haciendas in this region.

The main line and the three branches will embrace a total of 800 kilometres.

The railroad will be of vast interest to Mexico and its government, not only from the fact that it opens up this great region to commerce and throws its agricultural, animal and mineral products, in which it is very rich, upon the market, but from the point of political strategical value, and in this President Diaz can and doubtless realizes it's great importance, and in lending his encouragement to it's builders, for astute statesman, patriot, and deep thinker that he is, he must welcome a project which gives the Mexican Government the only access, the only approach, it has to its southern border line and which places within its hands, should the time ever come when Mexico will be called upon to defend her southern frontier, the power to plant in a day or two on her southern threshold, an army which otherwise might occupy weeks in making the journey over the narrow pack mule trails which they have had for roads in this tropic region.

It will be of unusual interest to the great outside world of commerce, for it is the foundation stone to what eventually will be the greatest railroad achievements in the western hemisphere, the connecting by railway of the vast North Central and South American Continents. It is of a particular immediate significance too, now that the Panama Canal is assured for the extension of the Pan American R. R. through Guatemala and San Salvador to Panama seem to be a certainty. All ready in Guatemala the railroad building there, has extended its line two-thirds of the way across that republic and the work on the northern end has stopped to await the exact connecting point with the Pan-American R.R. on the frontier so as to form a through line. That the tourist or commercial agent and his wares may leave New York City, Chicago or San Francisco and journey all the way to the South American Republics by rail, does not seem to be an accomplishment which the future holds very far away. To the vast number of tourists visiting Mexico each year, it will be equally as interesting, from the fact that the Pan-American R.R. passes through a section of the country which is as picturesque and beautiful as any in Mexico. Although it is in the southernmost part of the Republic it is separated from what is known as "the hot country" by a continuous chain of high mountains which extend from San Geronimo to Guatemala exactly parallel with the coast line, and about 30 kilometers inland. Between the range of mountains and the Pacific, one finds a rare climate indeed. Fenced off by nature by these high mountains it is like a secluded garden spot, where the terrific rainfalls of the adjacent tropics come not, and where, fanned by the cool breezes of the Pacific, which does not penetrate inland further than the mountain range, one enjoys the whole year round an even and temperate climate. Here in the twelve months the thermometer does not vary eight degrees, and the soil has the richness which is to be found in the nearby tropics where the trying climate and the fevers make it uninviting and dangerous to acclimated and unacclimated as well.

Besides all the facts enumerated, it is interesting abstractly considered, in fact it contains a good lesson in railroad construction to the old timers who failed to accomplish what has been done by these men, who when they undertook the Pan- American project were entire strangers to railroad building. The Pan-American was agitated some seven years ago, when there looked as though there was no possible chance of building the Panama Canal. Of course the Mexican Government was greatly in favor of it for obvious reasons, and offered the English syndicate who undertook it, the concession with considerable financial inducement. The syndicate began operations, but after a year they abandoned it in spite of the advantages with which the Government tried to surround it.

Some time later a company of American and Mexican capitalists was formed to build the road, and this company too, gave up, after a struggle. Work was commenced by the Pan-American Co., a little more than a year ago, and the first division, from San Geronimo to Tonalá, which is 300 kilometres in length [more than half of the main line] is about completed. The first week in April has been set as the date for the last and completing stroke of the work on the upper division. It is presumed that this part of the road will be put into operation at once, but the Pan-American has as yet made no official announcement. When this division is fully completed it will be inspected by officials on the President's staff and there is some rumor that even President Diaz may find time and interest to go on his special train and join in this inspection. To the country through which it runs this will be an occasion of great import. Reports from there say that the whole country side is going to make the event of the first train run over the line a feast day, in which speech making and public demonstration will be a marked feature of every town.

Technically considered from a rail-roaders point of view, the engineering problems in construction of this railroad have presented no great difficulties, such as might be found in a mountainous road, for the Pan-American runs through a very level country; but other difficulties almost insurmountable, there have been, and so intricate were they, that they sounded the death knell of the first two companies which were formed to build the line. There difficulties lay in the inability to get labor, local native prejudice, and inability to transport the railway material.

The men who, if it can be so put, privately form the Pan-American R.R. Co. are Americans, from the western part of the United States, Nebraska. There are only ten of them in the company, and more than half the road is owned by the Everett family, Franklin Everett, the father, Walter and Fremont Everett his sons. Walter Everett is the President and general manager of the road. They are the only members of the company in Mexico and it is to their efforts and more particularly to the efforts of Walter Everett, that the accomplishment of what seemed to be impossible is now being successfully brought into actual realization .

Walter Everett is a young man barely forty years of age. He is a typical son of the west, modest in his appearance and manner, sturdy and brown. He shows that he has grown up in the new country where in the early days a mans courage and the marrow of his force were tested to the utmost.

In his business as in his social bearing he exhales all the atmosphere which has marked the moral, social and commercial strength of the great west of the United States, and made her a younger but as important and as powerful a factor in American affairs as her sister, the East.

When it is considered that where the Pan-American railroad is being built is practically the jumping off place so far as transportation of material is concerned, for excepting the narrow pack mule trails and in some places almost impossible mountain paths, the only other means of transportation is around South America by ocean, the delivery of railroad material to certain parts of this line presents a very difficult problem. And when it is further considered in this far away place where many of the Indians have never seen a man of any white race and were scared almost to death at the first engine that met their gaze, where labor is difficult to obtain and more difficult to manage, the things accomplished by Mr. Everett are nothing sort of remarkable. He made friends with the Indians overcoming their prejudices and through some gift particularly his own he has been able to manage them and conduct the building of the railroad to his own and laborers entire satisfaction.

Like all men capable of great deeds Mr. Everett is a man of a few words; without him, perhaps for many years Mexico would have never had the Pan-American railroad.. The Everetts in their home in Nebraska are bankers, real estate owners, and merchants. They are well known and highly valued as only men of the highest business principal and most honorable practices can be.

The correspondent for the Mexican Railway Journal has inspected the line of Pan-American railroad and while he has seen railroads more expensively constructed, he has as yet to see a prettier piece of track than that which now lies all but complete between San Geronimo and Tonalá. He had the pleasure of riding at fifty-five miles per hour on an ordinary work train with hardly any discemable shaking up which demonstrates the ability with which the line was constructed.

**June 23, 1904** Lyons Sun

- Fremont Everett, 329 Artisan's Building, Portand Oregon letter dated 9/09/1922 to Howard Shumway, Wakefield, Nebr; from Fremont Everett

My Dear Boy:

Your welcome letter of Sept 2nd came duly to hand and as your aunt Eva probably will never get at it to answer I will do so for her. She will be glad to have the old letters that you are sending, and we thank you for them. We are pleased that you have your father's estate in fairly easy shape. I am getting on all right but in my effort to help others I have made myself hard up in my later years when I should have plenty of cash to spend. But

perhaps it is just as well for all concerned. My grandchildren will get less from me and will have to work for themselves which will be greatly to their advantage.

If you can get 72 for Rocky Mountain Fuel Bonds you are lucky. I sold mine for 55. I have little faith in our Mexican bonds - do not think the past due interest will ever be paid, and greatly doubt the payment of any part of the principal. Repudiation is in the air. Russia avows it. Germany would adopt it if she dared. Italy hints at it, France winks at it - only Old England and the United States stand firmly against the rising tide of Bolshevism. Then what can we expect of Mexico - poor, ignorant revolution-ridden Mexico - with its eleven million illiterates. Its ignorant prejudiced population furnishes just the soil for the seeds of socialism and anarchy to spring up and flourish - like mushroom spores on a dung heap. President Obregon would do right if he dared.

Our government could easily compel Mexico to pay her debts to Americans; but any administration that undertook to do so would be howled down by the mass of socialists, pacivists, and other D\_\_\_\_\_nd "ists" of which our country is full. Political demagogues would rise up and howl that our power was being used to coerce a poor and downtrodden nation in the interest of "Grasping Money Lords."

Well Howard, we may get something out of our just claims against Mexico; but I doubt it. Write when you have time. We are always very pleased to hear from you. Lots of love to your Mother.

Your affectionate Aunt and Uncle, Mont and Eva

from Dean Lobaugh<sup>12</sup>'s writings.

In his "Some of the Everetts" Fremont wrote at some length and most interestingly (he had justifiably some pride in his literary skills) of the Mexican venture and adventure.

A Los Angeles promoter got in touch with Walter Everett about the possibilities in developing a railroad in southern Mexico, in the State of Chiapas, on the Guatemalan border. A European firm had gone bankrupt in such an attempt in the 1880's, but had left some completed track, and a great deal of machinery. The idea was to buy the concession from the Mexican government (those were the days of Porfirio Diaz, the long-time Mexican dictator, whom Fremont Everett thought one of the greatest men of the century) and complete the road. Included in the deal was the privilege of establishing a bank of issue in Chiapas; for working capital of \$250,000 the bank could issue currency worth three times as much.

Although his son Walter was convinced that the deal was a very attractive

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12 Dean Lobaugh was the husband of Clara Everett's daughter Eleanor Merewether.

one, Franklin Everett, though then nearly seventy, insisted on a first hand look, so with one of the men of the Lyon family (from the founding family of Lyons) he made a most difficult journey through Mexico and returned to participate in the venture. Next, in 1901, Fremont Everett and his brother-in-law Herbert Shumway made a similar trip and came home similarly impressed.

So it was that at the end of 1901, when your grandmother Clara was 17, the Lyons entourage set out for Mexico. Although Fremont Everett does not give the exact date when the partially completed railroad was sold to other interests, it was apparently in late 1903 or early 1904, as indicated by the dates of your grandmother's enrollment at Denver University and her marriage.

The Mexican period of your grandmother's life became, as difficulties and disappointments marked her unfolding years, the shining highlight of her career. As a young American woman in a remote and backward part of Mexico, the daughter of an American capitalist, admired and almost worshiped by natives, she could never have envisioned that she would come to the end of her days lonely and disoriented in a decaying old farm house in Oregon.

With many difficulties, the Nebraska farmers, as they were referred to by workmen and other employees, managed to build a considerable amount of trackage in the jungles with the prescribed time limits. As the non-resident president of the company Walter Everett frequently had to make arduous trips from the States to settle disputes; Fremont, whose role was that of banker and paymaster, admitted that he wasn't very successful at the management level. In addition to family members, several men of the Lyons area had money in the venture (men of character and great means, your great-grandfather described them). Several people on the expedition died of tropical diseases, including Uncle Walter's brother-in-law.

Three years were enough for the Nebraska farmers, and when they were able to sell out to Kansas City firm, and the Mexican government paid them bonuses in cash and bonds for the work already completed, they were glad to return home.

"Mexican bonds' became a by-word in the family, as you know. For twenty years members of the family who held these bonds clipped coupons and received interest. Then about 1924, the Mexican government defaulted on the bonds, so they became virtually worthless. For years after I knew the family Uncle Walter was working on schemes to get something for the bonds. After her grandmother's death your mother had three \$1000 bonds; eventually we sold these, long after Uncle Walter's death, for 11 cents on the dollar in Eugene.