Peru – Juan Pevez Essay, Research Paper

In December of 1915 a huge step for the rights of Peasants in Peru was taken. Juan Pevez was born in Ica, Peru and in 1915 he lead an uprising against the Picasso family who ran the that Pevez worked on. In Water!, an excerpt from Pevez’s autobiography, a dispute over rights to water is described and how the peasants overcame . Southern Peru does not see much rain during the year, so when it does come it is an extremely valued commodity. In December 1915 a very unusual thing happened. The water came much earlier that year and to the peasant’s surprise it went unnoticed by the estate owners. In that time the estate owners unlawfully kept the water from the peasants until their own fields were irrigated. The water came that year in the middle of the night so the estate owners were clueless. Unaware that they had the same rights to the water as the estate owners, the farmers were reluctant to open up the Sluice gates that allowed the water to enter their own small canals to irrigate their land. Juan Pevez, who was enrolled in the School of Agronomy informed the farmers that legally they had a right to the water. Trusting Pevez, they all opened their gates to irrigate their fields unbeknownst to the landowners. Soon, morning came and the “stolen” water was noticed and a brawl broke out between the serfs and the estate owners. After being broken up the peasants formed a delegation to make a plea to the Technical Commission to state their concern about the unfair distribution of water. The director of the commission, Ezequiel Gago, heard both sides argument. In December 1915 history was made when Gago ruled in favor of the Peasants. That was the first time in the history of the valley that a group of peasants won a case against a powerful landowner like Picasso.

The account of this event is very important for many reasons. First, as I stated before, this was an historical event for the peasant community in Peru as well as the rest of South America. The event that Juan Pevez lead was a landmark event in the history of not only peasants but everyone in South America. It was the beginning of a movement of sorts toward a freer nation. That event had a lasting effect. The delegation that was formed to protest the Water withholding grew and grew and now is still in effect today under the name of the Peruvian Peasant Federation.

This document had much importance in the time it was written for numerous reasons. First, it was an account of something that had happened that people wanted to know about. This was, like a I said, a historical event. This event helped others stand up to the unjust living conditions that they were living under and served as a reminder that the peasant community could rise above their oppressors. Another reason that it was important was that most of the history, especially in that time, was written by authorities parties and was biased in some ways against people of the lower class. This was an accurate account that we, as historians, can use to better put the events in that time period into context.