Pancho Villa--New Mexico State Park series

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Pancho Villa

Pancho Villa State Park, on the southwest edge of Columbus, was created by the 24th New Mexico Legislature on March 6, 1959, "in interest of preservation of the memory of the unique, historical occasion of the last hostile action by foreign troops within the continental United States." The park was dedicated on November 18, 1961, by Governor Edwin Mechem of New Mexico and Governor Teofilo Borunda of Chihuahua; it occupies the grounds of old Camp Furlong, southwest of Columbus. Creation of the park was a gesture of good will between the United States of America and Los Estados Unidos Mexicanos.

As a further sign of good feeling between New Mexico and Chihuahua and between Mexico and the United States, Avenida de Amistad (Avenue of Friendship) was dedicated in June 1966 by Chihuahua's Governor Praxedes Giner Duran, and a gift of 400 sycamore trees was presented to New Mexico's Governor, Jack M. Campbell.

Some of the original Camp Furlong buildings, relics of Pershing's expedition into Mexico, an outstanding desert botanical garden, and panoramic views of southern New Mexico and northern Mexico are features of the park. Facilities include picnic and camping shelters, barbecue grills, restrooms with showers, and a fully equipped playground. Stone-lined driveways and foot trails lead through the desert garden, up Villa Hill, and to the remnants of the military camp. The headquarters building, partly in ruins, is an adobe house with a rusty sheet-metal roof. Nearby is the first grease rack installed to service U.S. Army motorized transport engaged in actual field operations. Across and east of the Columbus–Palomas highway is the site of the first operational military air base established by the U.S. Army. From that site, biplanes flew into Mexico to aid the Pershing expedition. In Columbus is the privately owned Pancho Villa museum.

PANCHO VILLA (courtesy Pancho Villa Museum).

Along the west side of the park, centered on Villa Hill, is the desert-vegetation garden. This plant paradise contains spiney wands of ocotillo; pointed, sawtoothed leaves of yucca and agave; thorny branched mesquite; purple cholla, snowball cactus, and stag horn cholla; polkadot, bunnyear, and prickly pear cacti; barrel cacti; jubilee tree; and creosote (greasewood) bush.

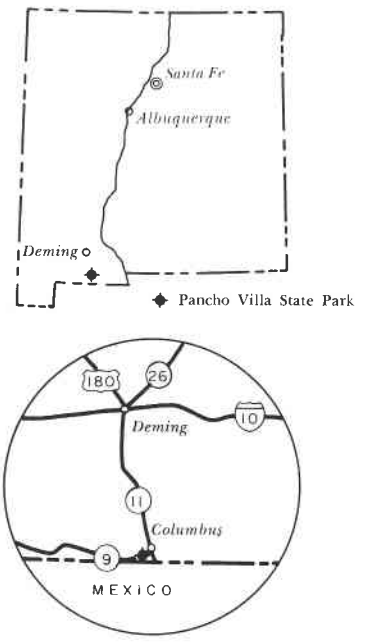
History

During the late months of 1914, Francisco "Pancho" Villa was part-time president of Mexico, alternating in office with Emiliano Zapata. Disliking Mexico City, Villa left and headed home to Chihuahua. His enemies, Venustiano Carranza and Alvaro Obregón, united against Villa, and during 1915 their armies defeated the villistas in a series of battles. The United States officially recognized Carranza as the main power in Mexico, supplied arms to the carrancistas, and transported Mexican troops through Arizona to fight in Sonora against Villa.

Before 1915 Villa had been friendly with the United States; he went on hunting trips with Generals Pershing and Hugh Scott, rented a house in El Paso, purchased military supplies from New York, and basked in the aura of a favorable American press. Florence and Robert Lister in *Chihuahua, Storehouse of Storms,* noted General Scott's comment that the United States government's recognition of Carranza solidified the power of a man who rewarded the United States with kicks on every occasion. It also made an outlaw of Pancho Villa, who had helped the United States by returning millions of dollars worth of property to Americans in Mexico.

After his defeats in Sonora, Pancho Villa vowed retaliation against the United States for its support of the carrancistas. In March 1916 he moved northward toward Palomas with 400 men. At 4:30 a.m. in the moonless, black hours of March 9, 1916, a shot shattered the silence at Camp Furlong, killing sentinel Fred Griffin at Troop K's headquarters. "Viva Villa!" rang out in all parts of the camp and in adjacent Columbus, as Pancho Villa's villistas began their historic raid. Buildings were set afire as the battle swirled through Camp Furlong and Columbus. American machine guns helped keep the invaders at bay; as the eastbound morning train approached in the early dawn, the Mexicans retreated. Smoke drifting up from the smoldering ruins hung over the battleground. American casualties included 24 dead and seven wounded (soldiers and civilians). Villa's dead have been estimated at between 50 and 200.

General "Black Jack" Pershing's punitive expedition into Mexico sent 15,000 men to capture Villa. Motorized transport was used for the first time in a military campaign; also for the first time, the Army Air Corps went into action in foreign skies. Pancho Villa

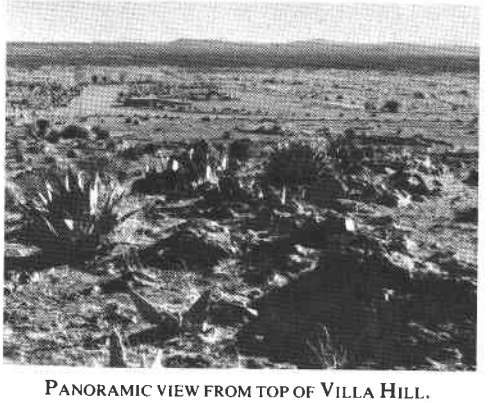


escaped. Within a year Pershing's expedition reentered New Mexico, and the Columbus raid became history. That memories have been softened by desert breezes and bitterness replaced by friendship between Chihuahua and New Mexico is proclaimed by the establishment of Pancho Villa State Park. To most Mexicans, Pancho Villa was a hero of the Mexican Revolution. The blame for the Columbus raid can be shared by both nations.

Geology

In the northwest corner of the park is Villa Hill, labeled "the hill with a view" by park signs. Rising about 25 ft above the surrounding sloping plain, it is topped by a flagpole with American and Mexican flags. From the crest, the Mexican–American border is clearly visible, and broad vistas stretch to the horizon in all directions.

Villa Hill is an outcrop of reddish-brown basalt similar to that on Loma Vista, the 75-ft hill lying 2 mi southeast. On the hilltop the basalt is highly vesicular with irregular cavities scattered throughout. These indicate that basalt flowed as a hot, semiliquid mass on the land surface, with the vesicles left as a result



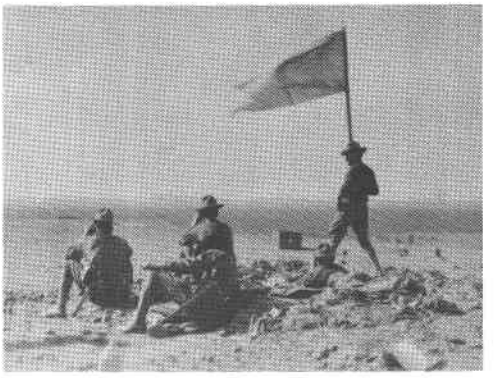
PANORAMIC VIEW FROM TOP OF VILLA HILL.

of gas-filled cavities when the rock cooled. East of Villa Hill, rocks exposed along the paths are a typical cross section of volcanic flows, showing flow basalt that is locally brecciated and contains small angular fragments of the gravels onto which it was extruded.

To the north-northeast is Columbus, and in the distance are the rugged Florida Mountains. On the eastern skyline, across the irrigated sandy Columbus Valley, the low volcanic hills of the West Potrillo Mountains stretch southward into northern Chihuahua. Other volcanic hills and ranges lie to the south amid sandy plains south of Palomas in northern Mexico. Underground water from ancient rains, stored in sand and gravel underlying the plains around Columbus, is now pumped to irrigate the green fields that circle the town.

During past centuries the Mimbres River (which rises in the Mogollon and Black Range areas north of Santa Rita) has, during flood stage, swept past Deming, rushed around the north and east sides of the Florida Mountains, and passed east of Columbus into Mexico to fill playas below Palomas.

To the southwest are the rugged peaks of Sierra de Palomas in northern Chihuahua, and on the western horizon is the sharp peak of Big Hatchet Mountain in southwest New Mexico. Sierra de Palomas' extension across the Mexican-American border (15 mi to the west) is the Carrizalillo Hills; the Cedar Mountains form the low skyline ridges to the west-northwest. Five miles to the northwest, bold, jagged triple peaks of the three sisters (Tres Hermanas Mountains) block distant views in that direction.



SOLDIERS ON LOOKOUT ATOP VILLA HILL, March 10, 1916 (courtesy New Mexico Historical Society).

Pancho Villa State Park is on the low edges of the large alluvial fan that extends southeast from the Tres Hermanas Mountains. Pebbles, cobbles, and boulders in the park were derived from rock outcrops in those mountains; they include fragments of quartz, feldspar, monzonite, rhyolite, latite, basalt, limestone, chert, and andesite. Mines in the northwest Tres Hermanas Mountains operated until the 1920's and produced about one-half million dollars worth of zinc, lead, silver, gold, and copper. Present-day outcrops of interest to rock hounds contain Mexican onyx, calcite, spurrite, and dumortierite. □

F. E. Kottlowski (revised 1980)

Dakota-Mancos terminology *(continued from p. 44)*

lent to the Clay Mesa Tongue, but that term cannot be extended into the Salt Lake area because of the pinchout of the underlying Cubero Sandstone Tongue of the Dakota Sandstone into Mancos Shale 30 mi (48 km) southwest of the Laguna section. Consequently, the informal term "lower part of the Mancos Shale" is applied to this unit. Similarly, the rocks that make up the lowest part of the Cretaceous sequence in the southern Zuni Basin cannot be included in one of the other named member-rank units and are simply referred to as the main body of the Dakota Sandstone.

The Dakota-Mancos sequence in the Salt Lake coal field consists of—from bottom to top—the Dakota Sandstone (main body), the lower part of the Mancos Shale, the Paguate Tongue of the Dakota Sandstone, the Whitewater Arroyo Tongue of the Mancos Shale, and the Twowells Tongue of the Dakota Sandstone.

Seboyeta Bay, an east-west lobe of the Western Interior seaway about 75 mi (121 km) long and wide, and roughly centered on Mount Taylor, provides an explanation for the thicker and older Dakota-Mancos sequence found in the southern Zuni Basin. Seboyeta Bay formed in middle Cenomanian time and expanded in a northerly, westerly, and southerly direction until latest Cenomanian to earliest Turonian time, when it became indistinguishable from the main body of the Western Interior seaway. Deposition of marine rocks occurred earlier in the Salt Lake coal field than in the northern Zuni Basin apparently because of a faster southwesterly transgression rate.

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