



# Pancho Villa: The Legendary Life of the Mexican Revolution's Most Famous General

*Charles River Editors*

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\*Includes pictures \*Includes Villa's quotes about his own life \*Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading \*Includes a table of contents “My sole ambition is to rid Mexico of the class that has oppressed her and given the people a chance to know what real liberty means. And if I could bring that about today by giving up my life, I would do it gladly.” – Pancho Villa “Pancho Villa,” people whispered at the beginning of the 20th century, “can march 100 miles without stopping, live 100 days without food, go 100 nights without sleep, and kill 100 men without remorse.” The legend of Francisco Villa is full of heroism, tragedy and romance. It is the story of a poor farmer boy who became a bandit out of necessity, after avenging an injustice on his family; a military genius who fled from an oppressive government to lead the largest revolutionary army in his country's history, and defeated dictatorship to become Mexico’s liberator, only to fall again in disgrace when his troops abandoned him or were massacred by the enemy. Pancho Villa and his cavalry, Mexicans point out with a certain amount of pride, invaded the United States, and although they came and tried to capture him, they never found him. This is, at least, the version that most of them know, but it's certainly not the same as in their textbooks. The story of Francisco Villa bypassed official censorship from generation to generation, like leaves sailing at full speed on the surface of a stream. But the historical reconstruction is full of nuances. Was he a freedom fighter, or a bandit? Was he a Mexican Robin Hood, or a thief and a murderer? Was he present when his troops invaded U.S. territory? Was the advance of his famous "Dorados" (the “golden ones,” the name of his troops) the cause for joy, or terror among the people as they passed the countryside towards Mexico City? Pancho Villa’s personality has been controversial since the very beginning of his career as a General of the revolutionary army. Many biographies have been written about him, the first of which dates back to only a few years after his death. Counting the number books who take one of those two sides—butcher or freedom fighter—would be impossible, but they would probably form two piles of equal size. Through them, readers can learn divergent tales about one of the most widely known Mexicans, both in his country and abroad. For many Mexicans, he is a hero. In schools, teachers still speak cautiously about him to new generations of children, who are amazed by the tough guy with hat and pistols. And the old, those who had heard about his exploits from their parents, declare that Villa himself will ride again through the mountains of Mexico, on the day when the poor can no longer stand and a new revolution explodes. As Octavio Paz eloquently put it, “The brutality and uncouthness of many of the revolutionary leaders has not prevented them from becoming popular myths. Villa still gallops through the north, in songs and ballads; Zapata dies at every popular fair. ... It is the Revolution, the magical word, the word that is going to change everything, that is going to bring us immense delight and a quick death.” Pancho Villa: The Legendary Life of the Mexican Revolution’s Most Famous General chronicles the controversial life of one of Mexico’s most legendary fighters. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Pancho Villa like never before, in no time at all.

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