

DISORDER ON THE BORDER

The battles of revolution in Mexico brought disorder along the boarder as outlaws, bandits and revolutionaries such as Francisco “Pancho” Villa caused havoc. On the U.S. side, only a handful of sheriffs, Texas Rangers, customs inspectors, and about 50 soldiers tried to protect border towns. In 1911, the U.S. sent 100 troops to help, but infamous bandit Chico Cano ambushed American officials. Afterwards, the U.S. army withdrew most of their troops.

The colorful character Pancho Villa was trying to overthrow the Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz. He even signed a contract with a Los Angeles film company to have them film his battles. However, on December 29, 1913, Mexican federal forces defeated the “Villistas” and also captured the Los Angeles film crew. They were held hostage for almost a year before Pancho Villa defeated Mercado, and could stage his battle for the film crews.

Because of political issues, and feeling betrayed by the United States, Villa attacked Columbus, New Mexico. The U.S. launched a successful expedition under General John “Black Jack” Pershing. Outlaws continued to raid border towns, so the U.S. army sent the Eighth Cavalry on a second punitive expedition. They were accompanied by reporters, photographers and a film crew, who took advantage of new technology and instead they rode in Ford sedans.

The U.S. government realized how important it was to guard the border. By 1916, more than 100,000 American troops had been stationed along the U.S.-Mexican border.

World War I and its new technology changed Texas forever. Almost 200,000 Texans served in WWI, and military bases and training camps sprang up across the state. The war ended in 1918, and by 1919 planes were doing much of the border surveillance. By the 1920’s the Mexican government became more stable and relations with Mexico improved.

Math Question: The Texas-Mexico border is about 385 miles long. In 1910 only 75 officials protected the border. How many soldiers per mile were there? (.19) You can see they were not enough. If you grouped them in patrols of 5 how many groups would there be? (77) In 1911, 100 troops were added. What % of increase was this? (133%)

Discussion: What technology is being used now for border control?

Discussion: The War in your Living Room. With 24 hour news channels showing war and disasters do you have a different view point than if you had to read what happened weeks later? Would you feel as compelled to act or send aid?

