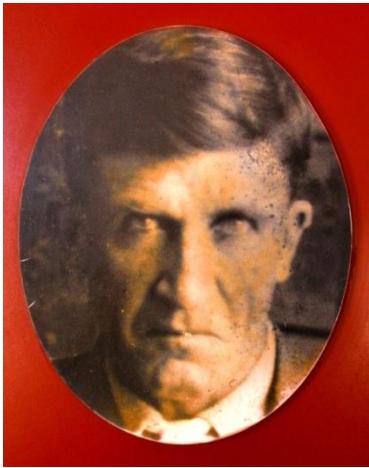


The naming of Pancho Villa State Park



Sheriff Jack Breen



Sen. Ike Smalley



Gov. Edwin Mechem

Columbus, NM Deputy Sheriff Jack Breen (1885 – 1962) originated the name “Pancho Villa State Park” (Deming Headlight, Nov. 23, 1961). Breen was the well respected Deputy Sheriff of Columbus at the time of the raid. Breen said he knew Villa well and stated that Villa was not in Columbus during the raid. Senator Ike Smalley (1905 – 1998) from Deming introduced the bill in the 1959 state legislature that was responsible for the construction of the park and he promoted the naming of the park (Deming Headlight, Nov. 23, 1961). The name “Pancho Villa State Park” passed unanimously in the New Mexico Senate and then passed unanimously in the New Mexico House. There were no dissenting votes. Pancho Villa State Park in Columbus, New Mexico, was established in 1959 “In the interest of preservation of the memory of the unique, historical occasion of the last hostile action by foreign troops within the continental United States” (Kottlowski, 1980). It became the only park in the United States to be named after a foreign invader. The naming of the 60-acre park was a gesture of friendship between the United States and Mexico (Deming Headlight, Nov. 23, 1961). The town of Columbus has been designated a National Historic Site. PVSP was dedicated on November 18, 1961 by Governor Edwin Mechem (1912 – 2002).