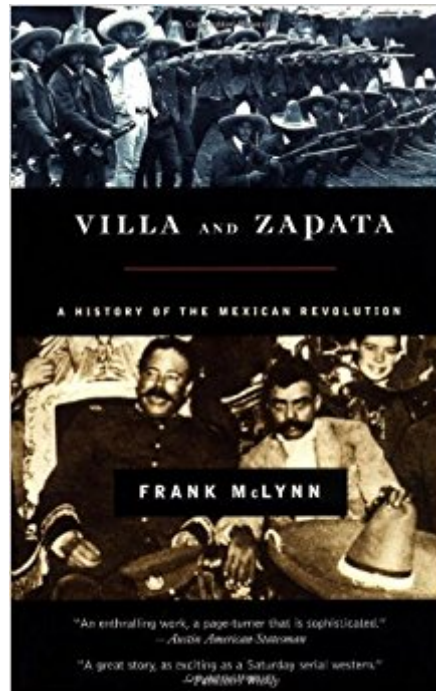




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Villa And Zapata: A History Of The Mexican Revolution



Synopsis

Recounting the decade of bloody events that followed the eruption of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, Villa and Zapata explores the regional, international, cultural, racial, and economic strife that made the rebels Francisco (Pancho) Villa and Emiliano Zapata legends. Throughout this volume drama colludes with history, in a tale of two social outlaws who became legendary national heroes, yet—despite their triumph and only meeting, in 1914, in the Mexican capital—failed to make common cause and ultimately fell victim to intrigues more treacherous than their own. 16 pages of black-and-white photographs bring this gripping narrative to life. "McLynn ... tells it so well ... you can hear the strains of the Mexican patriotic standard ‘Zacatecas' as you read it."—Austin American-Statesman "An admirably clear account of the chaos of revolution, its rivalries and bloody struggles...."—The Spectator "Informative and insightful ... feels less like a history than a great story, as exciting as a Saturday serial Western."—Publishers Weekly

Book Information

Paperback: 496 pages

Publisher: Basic Books (August 15, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0786710888

ISBN-13: 978-0786710881

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 1.4 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 44 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #160,609 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #139 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Latin America](#) #143 in [Books > History > Americas > Mexico](#) #206 in [Books > History > Asia > Japan](#)

Customer Reviews

The Mexican Revolution began in 1910 and lasted for over a decade, a bloody and confusing saga of betrayal, corruption, misshapen politics and mislaid trusts that, in the end, accomplished little for lower- and lower-middle class Mexicans. Historian and biographer McLynn (Carl Gustav Jung; etc.) reconstructs the revolution through the biographies of its two most important figures, Francisco (Pancho) Villa, the bandit-turned-revolutionary, and Emiliano Zapata, whose declaration, "It's better to die on our feet than to live on our knees," later became La Pasionaria's Spanish Civil War slogan. Comprehensive almost to a fault, McLynn also devotes many pages to other key players: the

revolution's first leader, Francisco Madero, who, having defeated President Porfirio Díaz, stopped short of killing the president and members of the fallen government; and the ambitious Pascual Orozco, a controversial revolutionary figure believed by some (his pal Villa later among them) to have been on Díaz's payroll. Having moved briskly and clearly through the disorganization and obfuscation of one of the bloodiest (and longest) revolutions in history, the author makes this informative, insightful study even more compelling with his witty and fluid prose. In his exhaustive research, McLynn plumbed "the ranks of the apocrypha," compared conservative histories to liberal ones and accounted for trends (economic, cultural, agricultural, industrial) concurrent with and pertinent to the revolution. McLynn grasps so completely and communicates so deftly the nuances of government corruption, the U.S. stance toward a long succession of Mexican autocrats, infighting between Zapatistas and Villistas, that this book feels less like a history than a great story, as exciting as a Saturday serial Western. Three maps, 16 pages b&w photos. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In a rare accomplishment, McLynn, a biographer of Sir Richard Burton, Carl Jung, and Napoleon, here presents his topic in a logical and understandable manner for almost every level of reader while also incorporating the latest research. While claiming to be writing a dual biography of Mexican rebel-outlaws Francisco (Pancho) Villa and Emiliano Zapata, McLynn has actually produced a judicious analytical account of the Mexican Revolution of 1910-20. He discusses the roles of the U.S. government, Gen. John J. Pershing's troops, German secret agents, and corrupt Mexican officials, drawing on a wide reading of English and Spanish studies and document collections. At the same time, his narrative is lively and gripping, leading the reader into this thoughtful study. Students and instructors of Mexican history at all levels will find the bibliographical essay invaluable. This belongs in all libraries whose patrons have even the most casual interest in Mexican history. Stephen H. Peters, Northern Michigan Univ. Lib., Marquette Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Excellent detail. Bibliography is extensive. A few conclusions could have been stronger with footnotes and rational. The Latin phrases and historical allegory might break the flow for some readers. Of the many, likely hundreds, of books and articles I have read on the Mexican Revolution is one of the ten best and the best synthesis.

The density and the lack of harmony in the style makes difficult the perception of a global vision of the Mexican revolution, with not enough references to the context in Europe, somehow in the US, and specially during WWI.

Excellent read,informative, and detailed. My only objection is the use of French words and phrases that the author uses to describe or to make comparisons to. Being a little versed in European history would also help. But, these are my shortcomings. Aside from that, excellent book.

'Villa and Zapata' deserves reading twice, the book is so rich in detail and the Mexican Revolution was so fascinating and timeless. But it's likely only dedicated students and historians will give the book much attention. Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa were the most prominent and remembered among the constellations of men at war and movements in Mexico from 1910 to 1920, but the book's attention to so many facets of that decade of Mexican history - and how these melded into Woodrow Wilson's America and the First World War in Europe -- was its most remarkable feature to me. Permit me as a compliment to 'Villa and Zapata' to paraphrase at some length from two of its parts describing the deaths of those two prominent and remembered but very different warriors, and then briefly from the book's Conclusion. First died Emiliano Zapata - 'On April 10, 1919, Zapata and his escorts rode down the hills towards a hacienda - in familiar territory, as he had taken it in early 1911. There were shops outside the hacienda, and Zapata stopped and conferred there with his escorts. Jesus Guajardo, who was to accept Zapata's surrender at the hacienda, came outside and joined Zapata and his escorts. Only one zapatista had entered the hacienda - Zapata's principal aid Miguel Palacios was discussing the handover of 12,000 rounds of ammunition. Outside Guajardo suggested to Zapata that they ride inside the hacienda walls for dinner. Zapata was wary but tired and hungry, and so he acceded, taking a bodyguard of just ten men. He mounted his horse and rode into the hacienda's plaza, as Guajardo's guard of honor stood at attention - paying their visitor a great compliment. A bugle sounded and the guard presented arms. The last note sounded and Zapata had reached the threshold of the building when the guards opened fire at point-blank range. Zapata died immediately, and Palacios and two of the escort also perished. The rest of the zapatistas fled for their lives.' Pancho Villa lasted four long years more - 'On July 20, 1923, Villa drove to Canutillo in a large Dodge saloon with six men. In the town, at the intersection of Benito Juarez and Claro Hurtado streets, there was an old man selling candy and he cried out Viva Villa! It was a prearranged signal, and as Villa turned the corner he ran into a fusillade of bullets. He was killed instantly. The Dodge went out of control and hit a tree. One of Villa's companions managed to

crawl under the car and play dead while a gunman ran up and pumped more bullets into Villa's head. Another companion managed to kill one of the assailants before making good his escape. Claro Hurtado was less fortunate. Trying to get away down a river bank, his way was blocked and he was gunned down when he turned back.'The book's Conclusion begins -'The Mexican Revolution was a ten-year Iliad, in which Villa, Zapata, Obregon and Carranza played the roles in fact which were played in myth by Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector, and Aeneas. Historians estimate that the death toll was between 350,000 and 1,000,000, excluding the victims of the 1918 flu epidemic, which added another 300,000 to the list of fatalities. Civilization's thin veneer was never thinner than in the Mexican Revolution, and the moral is surely that even in advanced societies we skate all the time on the thinnest of ice. And a seemingly trivial political crisis can open up the ravaging maw of an underworld of chaos.'

Good read, super informative

Great book--- lots of detail - - -showed good and bad of all persons - -good Mexican history!

Well researched, very informative.

These days you can probably just read a wikipedia entry if you want to "know about" a subject, so a book has to have more than just facts. Villa and Zapata is well worth that extra effort. It is fast-paced, well-written and very informative. I had a little hesitation before reading this book based on the title--was it going to be more a biography of Villa and Zapata than a history of the revolution? Turns out not, but, as in all great histories, you get a great sense of all of the big players--not only Villa and Zapata, but Diaz, Huerta, Obregon, Carranza and others--what those people were like and what drove them, and how their personalities played out in action. A very complicated and confusing period in history made clear and done in an entertaining way. High recommend.

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