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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries · complete applicable sections)

STATE:	New Mexico
COUNTY:	Luna
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

1. NAME

COMMON:

Village of Columbus and Camp Furlong

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Village of Columbus and Camp Furlong

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Columbus**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: **2**

STATE   **New Mexico**   CODE

COUNTY: **Luna**   CODE

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
[X] District [ ] Building	[ ] Public Public Acquisition:	[X] Occupied	Yes:
[ ] Site [ ] Structure	[ ] Private [ ] In Process	[X] Unoccupied	[X] Restricted
[ ] Object	[X] Both [X] Being Considered	[ ] Preservation work in progress	[ ] Unrestricted [ ] No

PRESENT USE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

[ ] Agricultural	[ ] Government	[X] Park	[ ] Transportation	[ ] Comments
[ ] Commercial	[ ] Industrial	[X] Private Residence	[X] Other *(Specify)*	
[ ] Educational	[ ] Military	[ ] Religious	**Some structures**	
[ ] Entertainment	[ ] Museum	[ ] Scientific	**are vacant**	

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

See continuation sheet. Also contact Mr. Edward T. Beck, Jr.

STREET AND NUMBER:

Columbus Historical Society, P.O. Box 562

CITY OR TOWN: **Columbus**

STATE: **New Mexico**   CODE

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Office of the County Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:

Luna County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: **Deming**

STATE **New Mexico**   CODE

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

New Mexico Register of Historic Places

DATE OF SURVEY: [ ] Federal [X] State [ ] County [ ] Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

New Mexico State Planning Office

STREET AND NUMBER:

403 Capitol Building

CITY OR TOWN: **Santa Fe**

STATE: **New Mexico**   CODE

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CONDITION	*(Check One)*					
	☐ Excellent	☒ Good	☒ Fair	☒ Deteriorated	☒ Ruins	☐ Unexposed

(Check One)		*(Check One)*	
☒ Altered	☐ Unaltered	☒ Moved	☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(if known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The historic district encompasses part of Pancho Villa State Park, a large portion of Columbus, and the airfield, which accounts for much of the designated area. There is one isolated structure, the brick schoolhouse. Most of the buildings within the district are located along the railroad right-of-way, and many were built by the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad about 1902. Southern Pacific acquired the line and associated structures in 1927 and pulled up the rails 5 years after ceasing operations in Columbus in 1959. The track bed remains, however, and provides a visual link between most of the historic buildings, particularly the customs house, depot, pumphouse, section house, and Hoover Hotel. Most of these structures are vacant and in only poor to fair condition, yet because of their proximity to the rail bed and because of the absence of intruding modern buildings, they retain a striking atmosphere of the past. The principal structures are keyed in red on the accompanying map.

The Depot. The El Paso and Southwestern Railroad built the depot along with the pumphouse, customs house, and section house, about 1902. The station house is a hip-roofed, frame structure constructed in the shape of a cross, the transverse portion and one end being two stories high and the other end one story. Situated east to west along the south side of the track bed, the building itself measures about 55 feet long, but a loading platform, which flanks the east wing on 3 sides, extends the overall length 15 additional feet. Notable exterior features include double board-and-batten sliding doors that open onto all three sections of the loading platform, four mullion windows in the lower north side of the transverse portion, and two-over-two sash windows in the other parts of the building. Piercing the roof of the yellow-painted and black-trimmed edifice is one interior chimney, which apparently served potbellied stoves in the waiting and baggage rooms on the first floor of the west wing. All of the east wing was devoted to the handling of freight, and the original scales remain. After Southern Pacific abandoned the depot in 1959, it was used alternately as a newspaper office, meetingplace for Boy Scouts, and community library. Today it remains little altered and in fair condition, but it is vacant and has been the object of minor vandalism.

The Pumphouse. Situated just south of the rail bed and some 200 yards east of the depot, the pumphouse is a small, rectangular-shaped, gable-roofed, frame building about 35 feet long and 15 feet wide. It has double board-and-batten

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PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

☐ Pre-Columbian | ☐ 16th Century   ☐ 18th Century   ☒ 20th Century

☐ 15th Century   ☐ 17th Century   ☐ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)*   1916-1917

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

Aboriginal   ☐ Education   ☒ Political   ☐ Urban Planning

  ☐ Prehistoric   ☐ Engineering   ☐ Religion/Phi-   ☐ Other *(Specify)*

  ☐ Historic   ☐ Industry   lasophy   _____

☐ Agriculture   ☐ Invention   ☐ Science   _____

☒ Architecture (depot) ☐ Landscape   ☐ Sculpture   _____

☐ Art   Architecture   ☐ Social/Human-   _____

☐ Commerce   ☐ Literature   itarian   _____

☐ Communications   ☒ Military   ☐ Theater   _____

☐ Conservation   ☐ Music   ☒ Transportation   _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

During the early morning hours of March 9, 1916, approximately 485 Mexican revolutionaries under the command of Gen. Francisco "Pancho" Villa crossed into the United States, attacked the sleeping border town of Columbus, N. Mex., and killed 10 civilians and 8 soldiers.[1] Occasioned largely by a long period of political unrest in Mexico and a heavyhanded American foreign policy, the incident had far-reaching repercussions. Without consulting the Mexican Government, President Woodrow Wilson ordered a punitive expedition into Mexico to capture Villa and prevent further raids across the international border. Accordingly Gen. John J. Pershing gathered several thousand U.S. troops at Columbus and led them more than 300 miles into Mexican territory. Although Pershing's undertaking worsened the already strained diplomatic relations between the two nations and failed to catch Villa as well, it smashed several detachments of Villista guerrillas. Perhaps more important, the expedition provided an invaluable training exercise and testing ground for officers and equipment used in World War I. Because of the employment of numerous airplanes and hundreds of trucks and automobiles in addition to the largest assemblage of cavalry units since the Civil War, military historian Clarence C. Clendenen has labeled the venture correctly as "the last of America's nineteenth-century wars and the first of those of the twentieth century."[2] Columbus stood at the center of this activity.

(continued)

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[1] There is little agreement about the number of American dead. Figures in printed sources range from 15 to 24. In "Pancho Villa at Columbus: The Raid of 1916 Restudied," Southwestern Studies, III (Spring, 1965), 29, however, Haldeen Braddy lists 18 dead and 8 wounded.

[2] Clarence C. Clendenen, Blood on the Border: The United States Army and the Mexican Irregulars (New York, 1969), 315.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Braddy, Haldeen, "Pancho Villa at Columbus: The Raid of 1916
    Restudied," Southwestern Studies, III (Spring, 1965), 1-43.
Clendenen, Clarence C., Blood on the Border: The United States
    Army and the Mexican Irregulars (New York, 1969).
O'Connor, Richard, Black Jack Pershing (Garden City, 1961).
Smythe, Donald, Guerrilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J.
    Pershing (New York, 1973).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | O R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | |

CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds
NW	31° 49' 51"	107° 38' 29"		31° 50' 10"	107° 38' 17"
NE	31° 49' 51"	107° 37' 30"			
SE	31° 49' 17"	107° 37' 30"			
SW	31° 49' 17"	107° 38' 29"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: circa 138

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

George R. Adams, Managing Editor

ORGANIZATION	DATE
American Association for State and Local History	June 1, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:

1315 Eighth Avenue South

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Nashville	Tennessee	

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐   State ☐   Local ☐

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

_____
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

_____
Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

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7. Description (cont'd.)

sliding doors at each end and two windows on each side. The tower, which sat originally astride the roof, has been removed. A similar pumphouse has been demolished.

The Customs House. The El Paso and Southwestern Railroad erected this square, hip-roofed, one-story structure about 1902, and later the U.S. Customs Service utilized it. Today it is a private residence. Like the depot, the customs house is of frame construction and painted yellow with black trim. A partially closed veranda extends across the front facade and an enclosed shed across part of the rear.

The Section House. The date of construction of this gable-roofed, gray stucco-covered adobe dwelling is unknown. Erected by the railroad and used presently as a private residence, the house is single storied, eight bays long, two bays wide, and in poor condition.

The Richard Rodriquez House. Located south of the depot on N. Mex. 11, this dwelling resembles the section house but is in better condition. In 1916 it stood adjacent to the expanded Camp Furlong. The owner is a survivor of the Villa raid.

The Hoover Hotel. Viewed alone, this two-story, frame-and-adobe structure is far from imposing. In the small village of Columbus, however, it is an eye-catching feature of the skyline. One of the few centrally located buildings that survived the Villa raid, the hotel is rectangular shaped, measures about 30 by 50 feet, and has a single-story shed porch across the front facade and an enclosed shed addition part way across the rear. The roof is hipped but does not appear to be original. Front entrance is through a double door topped by a transom. The lower floor contains a central hall, lobby, and six other rooms. A two-flight, partially enclosed stair leads from the lobby to the second floor, where there are nine sleeping rooms. Although the structure is an important part of Columbus' history, vandals have virtually wrecked the interior.

The Camp Furlong Recreation Hall. The exact relationship of this rectangular-shaped, gable-roofed, frame structure to Camp Furlong is unknown. It is believed to have been erected in the spring of 1916 for use as a hospital and relocated on the present site about 1935, when the Civilian Conservation Corps occupied it.

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7. Description (cont'd.)

Adobe Buildings in Pancho Villa State Park. Pancho Villa
State Park encompasses that part of Camp Furlong established
prior to the Villa raid. Of the original structures, only
one small rectangular-shaped, gable-roofed adobe building
and the walls of another remain. These served as officers'
quarters.

The Schoolhouse. Present-day Columbus residents believe that
many women and children took refuge in this two-story,
green-painted, brick building immediately after the Villa
raid. The structure has a flat roof, exterior brick cornice,
and segmental arches over all openings. It is in good
condition.

The Airfield. The present airfield is located on the site
of the landing strips used by the 1st Aero Squadron. No
historic buildings remain, but there are two modern frame
structures adjacent to the runway area. The airfield is
connected visually with the depot.

Boundary (as indicated in red on the accompanying map).
Beginning at the intersection of South Boundary Street and
Park Avenue, a line running east along South Boundary to
N. Mex. 11 and north along it to the intersection of the
highway and Ross Street; thence around the Richard Rodriquez
House, which is located on the southeast corner of that
intersection; thence north again along N. Mex. 11 to Albert
Street and east along it to Texas Street; thence south along
Texas Street to the southwest corner of the airport landing
area; thence around the Y-shaped landing field and back to
Texas Street and north along it to Albert Street; thence west
along Albert Street to Missouri Street and north along it to
the southern edge of the Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-
way; thence east then north along the right-of-way to the
point at which it turns east again; thence north across the
right-of-way to East Boundary Street and north along it to
its intersection with Broadway; thence around the Hoover Hotel
on the southeast corner of that intersection; thence south
on East Boundary to the northern edge of the Southern Pacific
right-of-way; thence west to Park Avenue; thence south along
Park Avenue to the starting point at South Boundary Street.

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8. Significance (cont'd.)

Villa's men burned much of Columbus during their March 9 raid, but the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad depot, the Hoover Hotel, and a few other buildings survived. Today they serve as reminders of the attack and ensuing events. Only two structures associated with Camp Furlong, the supply center of the punitive expedition, remain, but the 1st Aero Squadron's old airfield, which was the first operational military airbase in the United States, continues in use.

History

Until early in March 1916, Columbus, N. Mex. resembled many other small towns along the United States-Mexican border. The residents felt some apprehension about occasional violence that spilled across the international boundary from the ongoing Mexican Revolution, but they enjoyed the protection of a detachment of American soldiers and went, for the most part, routinely about their daily affairs. This situation changed drastically a few minutes after 4:00 a.m. on March 9, when the sleeping community came under attack from approximately 485 Mexican revolutionaries led by Gen. Francisco "Pancho" Villa.

After crossing the border about 1:00 a.m., the Villistas had approached Columbus from the southwest and divided into two parties which struck the town simultaneously. Dashing through the streets on horseback, the raiders filled the air with riflefire and shouts of "Viva Villa! Viva Mexico!" The attack caught the entire populace by surprise, including the nearly 350 members of the 13th Cavalry at adjacent Camp Furlong. While the surging Mexicans set fire to the Commercial Hotel and other buildings, some of the panic-stricken citizens fled into the desert. Others sought refuge in the Hoover Hotel, which was adobe and relatively fireproof and bulletproof, and still other Columbusites tried to defend their homes and places of business.

Meanwhile the Federal troops sprang into action, and although separated from their various assigned units, they fought back effectively. Particularly anxious moments occured when guardhouse locks had to be smashed to provide access to stored weapons and ammunition and when many of the intricately designed Benet-Mercier machineguns jammed, but once armed, the soldiers laid down a murderous crossfire. Illuminated by roaring flames from the business district, the Villistas

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8. Significance (cont'd.)

made good targets and soon had to withdraw. By dawn they were in full retreat. Maj. Frank Tompkins pursued them with a small cavalry force until midafternoon then returned to Columbus, where he found that 18 Americans had died in the raid. Villista dead numbered between 75 and 90.

Much has been written about the Columbus raid, but it and the events that followed are best understood in the light of Mexican and American political, economic, and diplomatic affairs over the preceding decades. From 1877 to 1911 Porfirio Diaz had exercised a strong dictatorship in Mexico, and although he had brought much-needed order to the country, most of Mexico's people remained landless and poor. On the other hand, thousands of Americans and other foreigners had migrated to Mexico to exploit its oil and other natural resources. In 1913 American investments in Mexico totaled about $1 billion.

Promising land reform, Francisco Madero overthrew Diaz in 1913 but in turn was deposed by Victoriano Huerta 2 years later. Throughout the revolutionary turmoil, worried U.S. investors in Mexico demanded that President Woodrow Wilson intervene in that country and restore order. Wilson refused to take overt action, but he did withhold recognition of Huerta's government and permit the sale of arms to his opponents, Venustiano Carranza and Villa. Dissatisfaction grew in both nations, and in 1914, following the arrest of American sailors in the Mexican port of Tampico, the United States seized Vera Cruz. This earned America the hostility of all Mexicans, even Carranza who stood to gain popular support as a result of Huerta's embarrassment. Mediation by Argentina, Brazil, and Chile ended the brief U.S. occupation of Vera Cruz, but additional problems lay ahead.

In July 1914 Huerta fled to Spain, and Carranza took the reins of the Mexican Government. Villa refused to acknowledge Carranza's leadership, however, and continued the revolution, primarily in the northern region of the country. Wishing to see order established without further intervention, Wilson extended formal diplomatic recognition to Carranza in October 1915. Moreover, during that same month, when Villa's forces seemed to be preparing an attack against an isolated Carranzista garrison at Agua Prieta across from Douglas, Ariz., the President allowed Carranza to move reinforcements

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8. Significance (cont'd.)

by train from El Paso, Tex., to Douglas, where they
reentered Mexico. The result was a resounding Villista
defeat when they struck Agua Prieta as expected on November 1.

This U.S.-aided loss lends substantial credence to the
theory that Villa attacked Columbus the following March to
get revenge. It has been suggested also that Villa's goal
was to capture food, clothes, machineguns, ammunition, and
other needed supplies for his dwindling band of guerrillas.
Most likely he was motivated by both of these considerations.
In any case, he thrust Columbus into international headlines,
and made it a key link in the chain of misunderstandings and
tragedies that characterized United States-Mexican relations
during the 1910's.

The bloody event of March 9, 1916, also caused Columbus
to play an important role in what has been called America's
last 19th-century war and first 20th-century war--Gen. John J.
Pershing's punitive expedition into Mexico. The Columbus
raid was not the first foray of armed Mexicans onto U.S. soil,
but it was by far the largest and most costly. Consequently
a public outcry ensued, and without consulting Mexican
officials Wilson directed that a large American force march
at once into Mexico, capture Villa, and prevent further border
raids. Columbus became the expedition's principal base of
supply.

Immediately the town became a beehive of activity. The
first of several thousand troops arrived on March 10, and
Pershing, who had been selected to command them, arrived 4
days later. A natural leader who had risen rapidly in his
profession, Pershing enjoyed wide respect within the Army,
and he carried out his assignment with as much speed and
precision as was humanly possible. He decided to send two
columns into Mexico, one from Columbus and one from Culberson
Ranch in the southwest corner of the State.

The two forces started south on the 15th, and moving
swiftly, they came together on the 19th near Casas Grandes,
about 100 miles below the border. Villa had kept ahead of
them, however. Upon receiving information that the guerrilla
leader was at San Miguel, some 50 or 60 miles further south,
Pershing sent three fast-moving cavalry columns after him and
directed four smaller detachments to move east and west of
San Miguel and prevent Villa from escaping. On March 29 one

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8. Significance (cont'd.)

of the latter units clashed with approximately 500-600 Villistas at Guerrero and defeated them soundly. Other U.S. detachments skirmished successfully with smaller guerrilla bands, but again Villa eluded his pursuers.

Taking a chance that the crafty Mexican leader had gone to Parral, where he had friends, Pershing sent a detachment under Major Tompkins to investigate. Not only did Tompkins fail to find Villa, but on April 12 some 600 Carranzistas attacked the Americans. Tompkins' troops repulsed the Mexican Regulars, but the incident demonstrated clearly that Carranza opposed the punitive expedition and was willing to fight to end it.

Faced with the possibility of full-scale war, Pershing pulled back to San Antonio, divided his command into five districts, and confined his action to searching for isolated bands of Villistas. On April 30 Mexican and American officials began discussing complete withdrawal. The talks bogged down quickly, though, and on May 9 Wilson called out the National Guard as a precaution. By mid-July 112,000 of these soldiers had assembled along the Mexican border. The tension continued until early in 1917, when the President became convinced that Villa was no longer a threat to American security and ordered Pershing to return the punitive expedition to the United States.

The last members of Pershing's command marched into Columbus on February 5, 1917, almost a year after Villa's devastating raid there. It was a fitting site for disbandment of the expedition. Throughout the long months of pursuit, the town had served as Pershing's main supply base. Most of the soldiers who joined him in Mexico had passed through the enlarged Camp Furlong, and hundreds of trucks and automobiles had been unloaded from railcars at the Columbus depot and assembled to haul supplies across the border. The 1st Aero Squadron had transported aircraft from Fort Sam Houston, Tex. and established the Nation's first operational airbase southeast of town. In fact, although the trucks moved only part of Pershing's supplies and the planes did no more than carry messages and make aerial observations, Columbusites had witnessed the end of the American horse soldier and the birth of a motorized Army. No longer was the town like most other border communities. The events of 1916-17 had set it apart forever in the annals of American history.