

John J. Pershing, General of the Armies:
A Life of Triumph and Tragedy

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General John J. Pershing was the commander of the American Expeditionary Force in the First World War. His official rank was General of the Armies, the highest in American history with the technical exception of George Washington. Before the war, Pershing served in the Indian Wars, the Philippines, Japan, Manchuria, and Mexico. Pershing's life was a series of triumphs and tragedies. He suffered through poverty, the loss of a family, failures in his career, and the deaths of tens of thousands of the men he commanded. Nevertheless, Pershing achieved tremendous victories, overcoming enormous obstacles through the strength of his fortitude. His exploits shaped the world he lived in and carry on into the present day.

John Pershing was born on September 13, 1860, in Laclede, Missouri. He was born into one of the wealthiest families in the county, but the Depression of 1873 took their wealth, forcing Pershing to take charge of the family's affairs. This first tragedy dashed his dreams of becoming a lawyer and Pershing was forced to drop out of school and work the family farm at age thirteen.¹ Nevertheless, he continued to study by candlelight. When he was eighteen he was knowledgeable enough to take a teaching job in nearby Prairie Mound. In his autobiography, Pershing credits his short teaching stint with fostering his leadership abilities.² It was also one of the first times he would prove his bravery. At one point, young Pershing had to confront an angry farmer, the father of one of the students Pershing had punished. As recorded in the

¹ *Gen. John J. Pershing Boyhood Home State Historic Site*, Museum, Laclede, MO.

² John J. Pershing and John T. Greenwood, *My Life before the World War: 1860-1917 ; a Memoir* (Lexington, KY: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2013), 33.

Missouri Historical Record, Pershing told the farmer to “put down his gun, get off his horse, and fight like a man.” Pershing “thrashed” the farmer soundly.³

While teaching Pershing happened across a flyer advertising a district-wide examination for the United States Military Academy. With this magnificent stroke of luck, his life took a new course. Pershing studied religiously for the exam and scored higher than all the other candidates.⁴ In January of 1882 he left his home state for the first time, traveling to New York to enroll in a preparatory course.⁵ While at West Point, Pershing proved extremely popular among his peers. He was elected class president four years in a row and crowned his experience by being appointed First Captain of the Cadets, the highest honor available to a student.⁶ This was the first of many of his career triumphs. At West Point, Pershing met many of the men that would make up his staff in the First World War.

John Pershing’s military career began with his graduation from West Point in 1886. His first assignment was at Fort Bayard, New Mexico, with the Sixth Cavalry. He had hoped to join in the campaigns against the Apache, but by the time he left West Point the majority of the fighting was over. Nevertheless, Pershing was elated to join the unit.⁷ In New Mexico, he earned a reputation as an enterprising and bold young officer. His duties consisted mainly of drill and training. One of the favored training exercises involved the men splitting into two groups, with one group acting as a mock raiding party and the other as pursuer. Pershing proved his mettle

³ Ivan H. Epperson, "Missourians Abroad- John J. Pershing," *Missouri Historical Record* 011, no. 3 (April 1917): , <http://digital.shsmo.org/digital/collection/mhr/id/7886>, 320.

⁴ John J. Pershing and John T. Greenwood, *My Life before the World War: 1860-1917; a Memoir* (Lexington, KY: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2013), 36.

⁵ *Ibid* 38

⁶ *Ibid* 48

⁷ Jim Lacey, *Pershing: A Biography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 12.

early in these exercises, at one point marching his troops 130 miles in forty hours.⁸ It was also in New Mexico that Pershing's love of the rifle appeared. His early experiences in marksmanship competitions would cement his faith in the weapon, something that would prove unfortunate in the First World War.⁹ Pershing's time in New Mexico came to an end when the Sixth was assigned to South Dakota to contain the Ghost Dance movement.

Pershing's time in the Sixth Cavalry was relatively brief. He never saw any real action in either New Mexico or South Dakota. In 1891 he was appointed the military instructor at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. The cadet corps at the university was mandatory for all male students. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it was also extremely unpopular.¹⁰ However, Pershing soon revitalized the program. He instituted a system of class seniority similar to West Point's and insisted that all cadets attend training sessions. Reviving the program would prove to be one of Pershing's earliest career triumphs. He was tremendously popular among the cadets, so much so that when he left they cut up a pair of his riding pants to use for badges.¹¹ The formerly ragged cadet corps entered a national drill competition in Omaha in 1882 where it won first place, vastly improving the popularity of the program and cementing Pershing's reputation.¹² Pershing also earned a law degree in Lincoln, fulfilling his childhood dream.

The next few years would see Pershing take a variety of short-lived assignments. He left Lincoln in 1895 to take command of the 10th Cavalry in Montana. The 10th, also known as the Buffalo Soldiers, was an African-American division, one of several black contingents Pershing

⁸ Donald Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J. Pershing* (New York City: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 19.

⁹ Jim Lacey, *Pershing: A Biography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 14.

¹⁰ *Ibid* 13

¹¹ Everett T. Tomlinson, *The Story of General Pershing* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1919), 59

¹² Jim Lacey, *Pershing: A Biography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 17.

would command in his career. Pershing's chief triumph in Montana was the deportation of several bands of Cree fugitives to Canada. He once again proved himself an able commander, treating the black troops with the same dignity he afforded any others, thereby earning their trust and admiration.¹³ After this assignment, Pershing acted as an aide for General Nelson Miles, commander of the U.S. Army in Washington D.C. He then transferred back to West Point to act as a tactical officer. This would prove to be one of the few failures of his early career, as Pershing was almost universally reviled by the cadets as a disciplinarian. Their loathing reached such heights that when Pershing entered the mess hall, all of the many hundreds of cadets eating would fall dead silent.¹⁴ It was at West Point that Pershing earned the nickname "Blackjack" due to his association with the black regiments.¹⁵ The moniker was not intended to be polite. Perhaps not surprisingly, Pershing mentions little of this tragic experience in his autobiography.

As the Spanish American War drew closer, Pershing requested reassignment to the army. He was sent back to the 10th Cavalry as quartermaster. Pershing found the unit entirely unprepared for war. It lacked even basic necessities like food and blankets.¹⁶ Pershing swiftly began reorganization. The unit was sent to Tampa in May of 1898 in preparation for the invasion of Cuba. The effort to prepare the Tenth for landing would foreshadow the immense logistical hurdles of the First World War. They finally embarked on the ship *Leona* on June 7 and landed near Santiago.¹⁷ Pershing soon received his first taste of combat at San Juan Hill. The Tenth Cavalry was one of the units that advanced first, enduring heavy shelling and Spanish rifle fire.

¹³ John J. Pershing and John T. Greenwood, *My Life before the World War: 1860-1917 ; a Memoir* (Lexington, KY: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2013), 91.

¹⁴ Donald Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J. Pershing* (New York City: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 43.

¹⁵ *Ibid* 17

¹⁶ John J. Pershing and John T. Greenwood, *My Life before the World War: 1860-1917 ; a Memoir* (Lexington, KY: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2013), 105.

¹⁷ *Ibid* 107

Pershing stood firm under the fire; one officer described him as “cool as a bowl of cracked ice.”¹⁸ This comment is especially insightful when considered with the fact that Pershing saw over half of his fellow regimental officers become casualties.¹⁹ After the battle, Pershing was given command of three troops of cavalry in addition to his duties as quartermaster.²⁰ He made numerous trips back to the supply depot through thick mud while suffering from malaria. On one of these trips, he encountered Theodore Roosevelt for the second time, cementing their friendship and all but guaranteeing the success of his later career.²¹ Pershing’s time in Cuba was a triumph in two ways. First, it proved his courage on the battlefield. Second, and perhaps more importantly for his future commands, it demonstrated the lengths to which he would go to supply his troops. After the Tenth returned to the United States the army determined that Pershing had requisitioned almost a million dollars’ worth of extra supplies.²²

After the war, Pershing was transferred to the newly-acquired Philippines. He was assigned to Mindanao, an island populated by a Muslim Moro majority. The Moros presented a unique problem because they were both highly tribal and religiously fanatical. The American occupiers had to contend with religious terrorism as well as intertribal warfare.²³ Pershing was given command of the new Fifteenth Cavalry Regiment. He took a unique approach to pacifying the Moro insurgents. Pershing studied the Moro culture and language to better understand the core reasons for the insurgency. He then invited local sultans to parlay, convincing many of the

¹⁸ Donald Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J. Pershing* (New York City: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 52.

¹⁹ *John J. Pershing: The Iron General*, by Fritz Weaver and Tracey Connor (USA: New Video, 2000), DVD.

²⁰ Donald Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J. Pershing* (New York City: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 57.

²¹ John J. Pershing and John T. Greenwood, *My Life before the World War: 1860-1917 ; a Memoir* (Lexington, KY: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2013), 118.

²² Donald Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J. Pershing* (New York City: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 59.

²³ *John J. Pershing: The Iron General*, by Fritz Weaver and Tracey Connor (USA: New Video, 2000), DVD.

benefits of American rule. In this manner he was able to pacify several tribes without bloodshed. Those that proved stubborn were dealt with systematically through siege operations and anti-guerilla tactics.²⁴ Pershing's carrot-and-stick approach was appropriately dubbed "Iron Kindness".²⁵ Soon Pershing calmed the entire region and gained the friendship of several tribes, achieving a victory many thought was impossible. He was elected as a *datto*, a Moro chieftain, by an assembly of tribes. This was unheard of for an occupying army.²⁶ Pershing's time in the Philippines was the first truly great triumph of his career, demonstrating both his insight and his decisiveness.

Soon after his glorious return to the United States in 1903, Pershing was introduced to Helen Frances Warren, the daughter of a wealthy Wyoming senator. The two were smitten almost instantly. An uncharacteristically excited Pershing broke into a friend's room late one night to tell him that he had finally "met the girl God made for me!".²⁷ They married on January 26, 1905 in a wedding filled with so many important bureaucrats that the Senate adjourned for the day.²⁸ This stood in sharp contrast to Pershing's boyhood roots on the family farm. The Pershing's enjoyed a brief honeymoon in Wyoming before his duty called them to Japan. Pershing's marriage to Warren was the biggest triumph of his personal life for two reasons. First, Pershing loved Warren to the depths of his soul.²⁹ The second reason was more practical.

²⁴ John J. Pershing and John T. Greenwood, *My Life before the World War: 1860-1917 ; a Memoir* (Lexington, KY: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2013).

²⁵ *Gen. John J. Pershing Boyhood Home State Historic Site*, Museum, Laclede, MO.

²⁶ "How Captain Pershing Won Distinction," *Omaha Daily Bee*, April 26, 1903, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn99021999/1903-04-26/ed-1/seq-28/>.

²⁷ Donald Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J. Pershing* (New York City: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 113.

²⁸ John J. Pershing and John T. Greenwood, *My Life before the World War: 1860-1917 ; a Memoir* (Lexington, KY: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2013), 216.

²⁹ *John J. Pershing: The Iron General*, by Fritz Weaver and Tracey Connor (USA: New Video, 2000), DVD.

Warren's father, Senator Francis E. Warren, was the richest man in Wyoming, was chairman of the Military Affairs Committee, and had vast political connections.³⁰ Pershing would derive significant career benefits from Warren's resources, not the least of which was the influence of the senator in Pershing's AEF command.³¹

Pershing's triumph over the Moro tribes had made him a national hero.³² A campaign was started to promote him to a generalship but the jump from captain to brigadier general proved too much for his old friend President Roosevelt to justify. His next assignment was as an observer in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, this time with his wife in tow. The Russo-Japanese War was the first major international conflict since the Franco-Prussian War and every great power was eager to witness the effects of untested military technology. Pershing's time in the East was a success because he saw firsthand the immense sacrifices of men and munitions necessary to defeat a mobilized nation-state.³³ The Russo-Japanese War exposed Pershing to the tragedies of modern war and taught him lessons of administration that would later prove invaluable. When Pershing returned to the United States in 1906 the political climate had changed. He received his promotion, jumping from captain to brigadier general over 862 senior officers. Public reaction was vehemently negative but the promotion was irreversible.³⁴ In 1907 John Pershing returned to the Philippines, this time as General Pershing. He was placed in command of Fort McKinley where he would establish a combined arms training program that

³⁰ Jim Lacey, *Pershing: A Biography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 50.

³¹ *Ibid* 89

³² "Congress Meets in New Session," *The Black Hills Union* (Pennington, South Dakote), December 18, 1903, [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn97065832/1903-12-18/ed-1/seq-5/#date1=1789&index=4&rows=20&words=Pershing Philippines&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1904&proxtext=pershing philippines&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn97065832/1903-12-18/ed-1/seq-5/#date1=1789&index=4&rows=20&words=Pershing%20Philippines&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1904&proxtext=pershing%20philippines&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1).

³³ John J. Pershing and John T. Greenwood, *My Life before the World War: 1860-1917 ; a Memoir* (Lexington, KY: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2013), 12.

³⁴ Cullom Holmes Farrell, *Incidents in the Life of General John J. Pershing* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1918), 82.

proved immensely effective. Pershing's program was so successful that same model is currently in use at the National Training Center in the Mojave Desert.³⁵ Pershing would later become the military governor of the Moro Province where he had received his datto-ship. It was here that his actions in a siege would earn him a nomination for the Medal of Honor, although it was rejected at his own insistence that he didn't deserve such commendation.³⁶ His triumphs, imbued in the schools, roads, and bridges he built, remained in the Philippines long after he left.

After the Philippines, Pershing was stationed in San Francisco. He lived there for a short time with his wife and four children, Helen Elizabeth, Mary Margaret, Ann Orr, and Francis Warren. Shortly after, Pershing was ordered to El Paso to oversee border defenses in preparation for potential incursions by Mexican rebels. While in El Paso, Pershing's home in San Francisco burned. Only his five year old son Francis Warren remained. This tragedy deeply affected Pershing. He became withdrawn and sullen. Even years later, he would still fall into fits of melancholia.³⁷

Still reeling from his family's deaths, Pershing embarked on one last major assignment before WWI. In 1916, 425 raiders under Pancho Villa attacked Columbus, New Mexico killing eighteen American citizens.³⁸ Pershing was sent in pursuit. He led ten thousand US troops into northern Mexico, an unmapped and undeveloped wilderness.³⁹ The operation is significant for several reasons. It was the first time the American army employed trucks and airplanes. More importantly, it revealed how woefully unprepared the army was for modern combat. The

³⁵ Jim Lacey, *Pershing: A Biography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 58.

³⁶ *Ibid* 72

³⁷ *John J. Pershing: The Iron General*, by Fritz Weaver and Tracey Connor (USA: New Video, 2000), DVD.

³⁸ Donald Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J. Pershing* (New York City: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 218.

³⁹ Stephanie L. Kukuljan and Kimberly Harper, "John J. Pershing (1860 - 1948)," *Historic Missourians - The State Historical Society of Missouri*, , <https://shsmo.org/historicmissourians/name/p/pershing/>.

airplanes were obsolete when the operation began and all had broken down by the end of the first month.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the supply chain was tenuous at best and recruitment was lower than expected. Nevertheless, the expedition pursued Villa four hundred miles into Mexico, killing several hundred of his men but failing to capture him.⁴¹ The army was forced to withdraw when Mexican troops began attacking. To avoid war President Wilson ordered the troops to return to the United States. However, despite its failure, the operation did give many American officers, including George Patton, their first taste of warfare.⁴²

Meanwhile, US relations with Germany had soured. The combined effects of the Zimmerman telegram and German U-boat attacks on American shipping made the public more hospitable to war. The United States entered the First World War in April of 1917. Pershing, desperate to avoid a desk job in Washington, sent letters to both President Wilson and Secretary of War Newton Baker expressing his eagerness to command, stating that he was “fully prepared for the duties of this hour”.⁴³ Pershing initially expected to command a division. Several factors influenced his selection as commander of the entire American Expeditionary Force. Pershing was one of only a few generals who had commanded a contingent larger than ten thousand troops. Additionally, the only other general in consideration, Leonard Wood, was deemed too politically ambitious to be loyal to Wilson.⁴⁴ Therefore, Pershing was the only viable candidate.

⁴⁰ Jim Lacey, *Pershing: A Biography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 80.

⁴¹ Donald Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J. Pershing* (New York City: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973).

⁴² John J. Pershing and John T. Greenwood, *My Life before the World War: 1860-1917 ; a Memoir* (Lexington, KY: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2013), 355.

⁴³ Jim Lacey, *Pershing: A Biography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 88.

⁴⁴ John S. D. Eisenhower, *Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 29.

Pershing faced several immediate challenges. The greatest was the maintenance of the supply chain. The United States needed millions of tons of supplies, almost all of which had to be shipped across the Atlantic. German submarine warfare compounded the issue. Once in port, the supplies had to be sent along dilapidated roads and railways. The US lacked planes, tanks, machine guns, and radios. These had to be borrowed from the British and French.⁴⁵ Pershing set about appointing capable officers to handle these issues. The logistical struggles weren't helped by the fact that he had to fight his allies every step of the way. Both the British and the French wanted the American troops scattered throughout their armies as replacements. Furthermore, they wanted to cut the training of the green US troops short so that they could join the front more quickly.⁴⁶ Pershing and Wilson were both wholly opposed to the idea of US troops under foreign command. The absence of a truly American army would have limited the country's power at the bargaining table at the end of the war.⁴⁷ Pershing proved steadfast, shouting down commanders Douglas Haig and Ferdinand Foch when they insisted on merging the armies.⁴⁸ The issue faded when Pershing triumphed at St. Mihiel and the Argonne in spite of his logistical hurdles, proving the Americans' abilities.

Despite Pershing's tremendous success in building an effective army from the small and outdated American military, he wasn't perfect. He had long believed in the power of marksmanship in war and thought that the failure of British and French frontal assaults was due to their troops' inferiority in this area. In his mind, the Americans were sure to succeed where they had not.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, this proved false. American operations were marred by high

⁴⁵ Ibid 93.

⁴⁶John J. Pershing, *Final Report of Gen. John J. Pershing* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1920), 18.

⁴⁷ *John J. Pershing: The Iron General*, by Fritz Weaver and Tracey Connor (USA: New Video, 2000), DVD.

⁴⁸ Jim Lacey, *Pershing: A Biography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 167.

⁴⁹ Ibid 127

casualty rates, especially in the first stages of American involvement. Pershing reportedly wept when reading the casualty lists.⁵⁰ However, the Americans quickly learned to rely on artillery and the supremacy of combined arms, lessons the other powers had learned years before and that Pershing should have heeded. Had Pershing taken his allies advice, the US could have saved the lives of thousands of servicemen. This failure was the great tragedy of Pershing's term as AEF commander.

The injection of American numbers and morale turned the tide of the war. The exhausted German armies surrendered in the fall of 1918. Pershing was greeted with a ticker-tape parade in New York when he returned back to the United States. Afterward, he was left with little to do. He flirted with the idea of running in the next presidential election but early ballots showed that the public was uninterested in the idea.⁵¹ Pershing was appointed Chief of Staff where he fought a futile battle against Congressional dismemberment of the military. He was forced to travel the country to personally convince officers to stay in a military that looked increasingly obsolete in the face of pacifist public sentiment. He also improved the army training schools and created a general staff system still in place today.⁵² Nevertheless, the twilight years of Pershing's career were woefully anticlimactic. Pershing retired in 1924. He spent the remainder of his life writing his memoirs and heading the American Battlefield Monument Commission. Pershing continued to be involved in military affairs until his death, advising and recommending officers to Presidents and the Cabinet. He died on July 15, 1948.

⁵⁰ Ibid 128

⁵¹ *John J. Pershing: The Iron General*, by Fritz Weaver and Tracey Connor (USA: New Video, 2000), DVD.

⁵² Ibid

Legacy

General Pershing's legacy is enormous. He grew up in poverty, worked as a farmer and a schoolteacher, chased Apache, pacified the jungle, and commanded millions of men. He was a man trained by the officers of the Civil War and he himself guided the men who would command the US military into the beginning of the Cold War. Pershing brought the military from obsolete to elite. He overcame immense challenges in outfitting, shipping, and organizing a brand-new army of millions. The arrival of the Americans in Europe broke the morale of the German army, forcing a 1918 armistice and potentially saving the lives of hundreds of thousands of men. His insistence on the creation of a unified American fighting force in Europe ensured that President Wilson would have a place at the negotiating table when the time came for peace. Had Pershing failed in this, it is more than likely that Wilson's League of Nations would have never existed to serve as a model for the modern United Nations. His work as a military advocate after the war prepared the United States to enter the Second World War. Furthermore, although he himself failed to fully grasp the reality of modern blitzkrieg-style warfare, the men he trained did and they would provide excellent leadership in the decades following.

Pershing will never have the name recognition of Washington, Grant, or Patton. He never won a battle against overwhelming odds or orchestrated brilliant tactical maneuvers. However, his ability was the equal of almost any general in history. Coming from humble beginnings he rose to the highest rank in US military history. His genius lay in administration, in the selection of brilliant staff, and in an indefatigable will. Pershing's life was a series of immense triumphs and the deepest tragedies. He suffered through immense challenges, but he never showed signs of breaking. Poverty, disease, the deaths of his family, and the deaths of tens of thousands of his

own men failed to slow him. Instead, he marched on in spite of his tribulations, making a life that stands as a testament to American tenacity.

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"Congress Meets in New Session." *The Black Hills Union* (Pennington, South Dakote), December 18, 1903. [https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn97065832/1903-12-18/ed-1/seq-5/#date1=1789&index=4&rows=20&words=Pershing Philippines&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1904&proxtext=pershing philippines&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn97065832/1903-12-18/ed-1/seq-5/#date1=1789&index=4&rows=20&words=Pershing%20Philippines&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1904&proxtext=pershing%20philippines&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1).

This article is a summary of President Roosevelt's address to Congress in 1903. Roosevelt specifically mentions Pershing when discussing the failings of the army's promotion system. It was useful because it demonstrates Roosevelt's devotion to Pershing and frustration in the fact that he couldn't promote him to a position other than general.

Epperson, Ivan H. "Missourians Abroad- John J. Pershing." *Missouri Historical Record* 011, no. 3 (April 1917): 313-23. <http://digital.shsmo.org/digital/collection/mhr/id/7886>.

This is a journal article about Pershing published just before his appointment as AEF commander. It is useful because it provides a history of Pershing written during his lifetime. It has quotes by people who knew him in childhood which are unavailable in more modern works.

"How Captain Pershing Won Distinction." *Omaha Daily Bee*, April 26, 1903. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn99021999/1903-04-26/ed-1/seq-28/>.

This newspaper article provided a contemporary view of the public reaction to Pershing's accomplishments in the Philippines. Given the size of the article and the fact that it was published in a relatively small newspaper, it is evident that that the country was elated about Pershing's victory and he was famous across the nation.

Pershing, John J. *Final Report of Gen. John J. Pershing*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1920.

This is Pershing's report to the Secretary of War, written in 1919. It covers the entire American experience in the war including the specific challenges the troops and officers faced. It provides Pershing's own perspective, albeit one carefully tailored to fit the demands of his job. This makes it rather unique and intriguing.

Pershing, John J., and John T. Greenwood. *My Life before the World War: 1860-1917 ; a Memoir*. Lexington, KY: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2013.

This is one of two Pershing autobiographies. As the title suggests, it covers his life from his birth to the end of the Mexican Punitive expedition. The book was useful because of both the

facts it provided and the light it shines on the perspective of Pershing himself. By examining what he did and didn't include, it is possible to gain insight about his personal priorities.

Secondary Sources

Eisenhower, John S. D. *Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002.

This book deals entirely with the American Expeditionary Force in Europe. It was useful because it describes the arrival of the Americans in Europe in great detail. It fully outlines the reasoning behind Pershing's selection as AEF commander and the logistical hurdles he faced.

Farrell, Cullom Holmes. *Incidents in the Life of General John J. Pershing*. Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1918.

This biography was written in the midst of the patriotic fervor surrounding the First World War. It recounts the major adventures of Pershing, often stretching the truth considerably to make him appear the epitome of the American hero. However, when this bias is taken into account the book remains a useful resource for details surrounding Pershing's life as the author was able to interview people who actually knew him. It also helped point me toward other sources.

Gen. John J. Pershing Boyhood Home State Historic Site. Museum, Laclede, MO.

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources has preserved Pershing's original family home and the Prairie Mound schoolhouse that he taught in. The exhibits were very informative and the guided tour provided excellent information about his early life. Additionally, visiting the place where Pershing grew up helped connect me to the man himself in a way that reading books cannot.

***John J. Pershing: The Iron General*. By Fritz Weaver and Tracey Connor. USA: New Video, 2000. DVD.**

I saw this film at the Pershing boyhood home in Laclede, MO. It was very informative and proved especially useful as a summary and addendum to the information available in the books I consulted.

Kukuljan, Stephanie L., and Kimberly Harper. "John J. Pershing (1860 - 1948)." *Historic Missourians - The State Historical Society of Missouri*. <https://shsmo.org/historicmissourians/name/p/pershing/>.

The State Historical Society website proved to be an excellent resource. It gives a good summary of Pershing's life and, more importantly, a list of resources for further research.

Lacey, Jim. *Pershing: A Biography*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

This book was the first book I read on Pershing. It provides an good overview of his entire life and details Pershing's experiences in the First World War in great detail. It served as both a terrific source of information and a reference to other resources.

Smythe, Donald. *Guerilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J. Pershing*. New York City: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973.

Smythe's book was one of my most useful sources. He gives an excellent account of Pershing's pre-WWI life. His work was invaluable because it draws on numerous primary sources including both letters and interviews with people who personally knew Pershing. Furthermore, he often provides information that Pershing himself skims over in his autobiography.

Tomlinson, Everett T. *The Story of General Pershing*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1919.

This book is a rather sensational biography of Pershing. It was written just after the end of WWI when patriotic spirit was high. It is primarily composed of stories of Pershing's exploits not found anywhere else. Also, the fact that it was written far before most other biographies mean that the perspective and focus of the author are different.