

How I Remember It

My first recollection or talk of war was when my Father Chimiqchue would tell us great stories of his Father's Father and of their raids deep into Mexico against the Spanish and Mexicans in the early days, long before the white man came from the east to invade our lands. Those early raids were to capture horses and livestock and anything else that would make our life easier.

The long journeys into our enemy's territory were for other reasons as well, such as to kill as many of the Spanish as possible and to destroy their haciendas. This was done in retaliation for taking our men, women and children and forcing them into a life of slavery as they had done the Mexican Indians long ago. The raids could take many weeks and were planned with precision and cunning, and were well thought out in advance.

When we departed to go on these long journeys, we would travel in such a manner that we would arrive at our destination very early in the morning. This was done to avoid fighting or being detected if possible. One of the methods we used to avoid unwanted contact was to coax our prey out to a safe distance, encircle them and drive them off quietly. If

we were discovered, this would alert our enemies for miles around and defeat the purpose of the raid. If pursued or if there was a chance of being captured, we would kill the captured animals, scatter in different directions and return later to pack the meat out under cover of darkness.

My father told me his ancestors fought the Spanish with such hate and ferocity that Juan De Onate, the first Spanish Governor of New Mexico, was forced to move its first capital at San Gabriel to Santa Fe. He told us of the Apache's hatred for the Spanish and Mexicans for murdering, enslaving and torturing the Apache and we were the only people who would not bow to slavery and the Apache killed them with a vengeance.

In 1861, Cochise and a group of Chiricahua was wrongly accused of abducting a white rancher's son and running off his cattle by an inexperienced Army Officer, Lt. George Bascom of the 7th Infantry. Lt. Bascom ordered Cochise and five other Apaches to appear for questioning.

When they denied guilt, Bascom ordered his men to seize and arrest the Apaches. Without warning gunfire broke out and in the ensuing struggle, soldiers killed one Apache and subdued four others. Cochise escaped by cutting through the side of a tent.

Until this incident, Cochise had been a woodcutter at the Apache Pass stagecoach station for the Butterfield Overland line and had long resisted fighting Americans preferring to council for peace instead.

Cochise soon abducted a number of whites to exchange for the Apache captives, Bascom retaliated by hanging six Apaches, including relatives of Cochise. Avenging these deaths, Cochise took to the warpath with his uncle, Mangas Coloradas and a large band of Apaches of which I was a member.

During the following year, warfare by Apache bands was so fierce that troops, settlers and traders all withdrew from our lands. When the white mans war broke out (The Civil War), almost all the US Soldiers were withdrawn from our lands and sent back east to fight their own war. Our lands were abandoned by the whites. Two years later, Mangas Coloradas was captured and killed; still, with Cochise as our leader we were able to elude the white man's army for ten winters by taking refuge in one of our strongholds in the Dragoon Mountains of Arizona. From this area we continued our raids and forays against any encroachment into our land, and always returning to our stronghold if pursued. Forty one winters had passed for me at this time.

It was about this time (1871), that General Crook came to our country to try to make peace with the Apache. He treated us with dignity and respect, and we soon learned that Crook was a white man that could be trusted to keep his word when given to the Apache. Cochise surrendered to Crook in September, but, resisting the forced transfer of our people to the Tulacosa Reservation in New Mexico, escaped the following spring.

When the Chiricahua Reservation was established in the southern most region of Arizona that summer, he surrendered for the last time. Cochise died there in two more winters.

General Crook knew that the Apache had long warred between themselves and other factions of our tribe, and he recruited many of us as scouts and hunters for the cavalry. It was during his first winter in our land that I became a scout and meat hunter for Crook. I was a seasoned warrior with many honors, war trophies, many ponies and two wives. He was a man to be trusted, and showed courage to the Apache. These two things, truth and courage in the face of your enemy is very important to an Apache, he never lied to us. I scouted many times for Crook and took part in several major engagements such as the battle at Salt River Cave in

1872, where I was wounded in the abdomen and at the Turret Mountains when the Tontox Apache surrendered for the last and final time.

By the time of Cochise's death in 1874, all the Chiricahua had been moved to the Warm Springs Reservation because the Indian Agent at the Canada Alamosa Agency was crooked and was arrested for selling Apache provisions at inflated prices and pocketing the money.

The agent was removed permanently from his post and returned to Washington where he was tried, convicted and sent to prison.

He was replaced by Tom Jeffords a long time and trusted friend of Cochise. Crook had been successful in establishing peace between our people and the whites in the early 1870s, but when he left we were being mistreated by the army and hostile settlers once again.

After the death of Cochise, Geronimo (Goyathly, "one who yawns") became the principal leader of our people. After more than 4000 Apaches were forcibly moved to a barren wasteland in central Arizona known as the San Carlos Agency, deprived of traditional tribal rights, short on rations and homesick, Geronimo and hundreds of

Apaches left the reservation to resume their war against the whites.

(The following is Eskillandieg's recollection of what happened)

"Indian Agent John Clum was given orders to escort the Apache from the Chiricahua Reservation to the San Carlos Agency. During the move, Geronimo and a number of Hostiles not wanting to go to the San Carlos agency, fled to the Warm Springs Reservation. Agent Clum went there lead by a number of Apache scouts, including myself to talk to Geronimo and try to convince him to return to the San Carlos Agency without having to force him to do so.

Negotiations were not going very well and Geronimo threatened to kill Clum and the rest of us including the scouts. The only reason blood was not spilled that day, is the cavalry escort that had lagged behind finally caught up with us, but almost too late. Geronimo was able to escape with most of his warriors to continue their struggle".

The year by the white man's calendar was 1882, I was still a scout when Crook came the second time, and fifty two winters had passed for me at this time. General Crook had been recalled to the Arizona Territory to conduct a campaign against Geronimo.

Crook remembered me by name and since I had been a loyal and trustworthy scout for so many winters, promoted me to the rank of Sergeant of Apache Scouts. After a long and bloody campaign, Geronimo met with Crook and surrendered to him two winters later (1884), but took flight from the San Carlos Agency the following year with a small band of warriors and was raiding south of the border deep into Mexico, and up into Southeastern Arizona and New Mexico.

General Crook, along with civilian scouts Al Sieber, Tom Horn and Mickey Free (the white child Cochise was falsely accused of abducting) and a large detachment of Apache Scouts including myself, set out in pursuit, and ten months later (March, 1886), found Geronimo's stronghold at the Canyon de Los Embudos in Sonora, Mexico near the border crossing where he surrendered to Crook once again. Fearing he would be murdered once he crossed into Arizona, Geronimo bolted and took refuge high in the Sonora Mountains of Mexico.

Because Geronimo was able to escape while under the protection of the US Cavalry, General Crook was replaced by General Nelson A. Miles in April of the same year. General Miles employed over 5000 white soldiers and at

least 500 Indian auxiliaries as well as scouts on this final campaign. In five months and a distance of over 1,645 miles, General Miles was still not able to locate Geronimo. Under advisement from Al Sieber, Miles assigned Lt. Charles Gatewood and a small band of Apache scouts with the task of locating Geronimo, I was the head scout of this contingent. High in the Sonora Mountains of Mexico we were able to find Geronimo, and thirty five men, thirteen women and nine children. Lt. Gatewood and two Apache scouts scaled the high cliffs catching the inhabitants off guard. Gatewood, who had earned almost the same respect from the Apaches that Crook had, convinced Geronimo and the last of his small war party to surrender.

At a council held at Skeleton Canyon in Arizona, Geronimo surrendered to General Miles after being told by Miles that after a brief exile in Florida, he would be permitted to return to Arizona. The promise was never kept. Below is Eskillandieg's account of what occurred)

"We had located Geronimo's Stronghold high atop a steep and craggy cliff in the Sonora Mountains in Mexico. Lt. Gatewood and two of the younger Apache scouts headed up what seemed to be an impossible trail up the steep cliff.

Without being heard or seen they were able to get to the top

and take Geronimo's small party by surprise. Some of the men wanted to kill Gatewood and the two Apache scouts but Geronimo would not let them. Geronimo asked Gatewood what he wanted and how he was able to find them. Gatewood replied that it was his Apache scouts that found Geronimo because no white man other than Al Sieber could find him and he was dead. Gatewood then relayed a message from General Miles, that if Geronimo would surrender, and agree to go into exile for a short time, he would be able to return to Arizona if he agreed to live in peace on the Chiricahua reservation. Hungry, starving and forced to kill their horses for meat, Geronimo and his small band of Apaches surrendered for the last time. He agreed that if Gatewood would accompany him and offer his protection he would go and council with Miles. After a lengthy journey we arrived at Skeleton Canyon in Arizona. After eating, smoking and making each other at ease, General Miles once again told Geronimo the conditions of his surrender and guaranteed that he could return to his homeland once his brief exile in Florida was finished. Goyathly's life as he knew it was over. This was to be my last scout with the Cavalry."

In 1886, I was discharged from the U S Army. I had been an Apache Scout for the Cavalry since 1871 and it was time

to go home and be with my family. I had been a part of the Cavalry for over sixteen years, first as a scout and hunter and then as a principal scout and finally as Sergeant of Apache Scouts for both Crook and Miles.

When Geronimo was finally captured for the last time, he was sent to a Florida prison camp along with the remainder of his people until 1894 when he was moved to Fort Sill in the Oklahoma Territory to live out his final days. I was able to escape the relocation by going to Mexico with my family and a small band of Apaches where we live today.

I received an honorable discharge, a fresh horse and gear as part of the separation payment for my service to the Army. I miss those days.

Eskilandieg, his mark.

This is where the narration of Eskilandieg ends. For his service to the US Cavalry, Eskilandieg was given a horse, rifle and cartridges, a new set of clothes, his severance pay and left for his home in Mexico where his two wives and fourteen children wait for him.

Andrew Hawthorne,

Harpers Weekly, N. Y

Arizona Territory, winter 1886

