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Historical Report
on
FORT BOWIE, ARIZONA
By
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Part I

APACHE PASS

From 1862 until 1894 Fort Bowie served as a key outpost in the U. S. Army's grueling campaigns against the Chiricahua Apache Indian. As the base of operations from which Gen. George Crook and, later, Gen. Nelson A. Miles launched the expeditions that brought about the final surrender of the notorious Geronimo, Fort Bowie attained its greatest historical significance. Even before the Geronimo war, however, it had played a leading role in advancing the southwestern frontier. As guardian of Apache Pass, it had performed signal service in protecting military and civilian traffic using this historic passageway through the Chiricahua Mountains. For years, Apache Pass had been a cemetery filled with rude monuments to pioneer courage and Apache savagery. After the soldiers came to build Fort Bowie, travelers crossing the mountains enjoyed a security that contrasted starkly with the apprehension that gripped those who had preceded them.

It is these stories--the conquest of the Apaches and the military protection of overland travel--that the ruins of Fort Bowie today vividly recall. But they also recall another story--the eventful story of Apache Pass before the soldiers arrived. The very decision to build a fort in Apache Pass is an indication of the significance the pass had already acquired. Along its rocky slopes lay one of the few feasible routes through the Southwest to California. Although the grade was steep and tortuous, and Apaches usually lurked on the heights, this route had

advantages not found elsewhere. Not only did Apache Pass admit a trail that was the shortest route from the Rio Grande to Tucson, but it afforded water in a country that boasted few water holes.

The Apache Pass Springs figure prominently in the accounts of nearly all of the early travelers through the pass. The springs seem also to have made the pass a favorite rendezvous of Apaches before the appearance of the white man. Lt. John G. Parke, crossing the Chiricahua Mountains in 1854, noted the large number of well-defined Indian trails radiating from the springs.¹

The Chiricahua Mountains had been the domain of the Chiricahua Apaches since Spanish colonial days, and it seems reasonable to infer that the Spaniards were not long in familiarizing themselves with Apache Pass and its springs. The Spanish frontier, moving north from Chihuahua and Sonora in the late seventeenth century, promptly collided with the Apaches, moving south at the same time. Beginning in 1693, Spanish officials soon found it advisable to dispatch punitive expeditions against the Apaches in the Chiricahua Mountains. Some of these columns, at one time or another, probably found themselves in Apache Pass and, perhaps, even camped at Apache Springs. Speculative as this may be, it is certain that by 1780 the Spanish knew of Apache Pass. They called it Puerto del Dado, a term whose meaning is somewhat obscure. In that year, Capt. Don Joseph Antonio

1. Parke's report, August 22, 1854, in Pacific Railroad Surveys, Vol. II, p. 10.

de Vildosola, campaigning against "the enemies of the frontiers," bivouacked on the upper San Pedro River. On November 9, he recorded in his journal that he had

detached Lieutenant Don Pablo Romero with an ensign and fifty men . . . to examine La Tinaja Colorada, and its hills, and to go at night to La Canada de San Borja, at the rise of the Sierra de Chiricagui [Chiricahua Mountains], along the western part and return through Puerto del Dado as far as San Simon. On his foray he was to strive as he held fit to acquit his obligation, for the punishment of our enemy and the glory of the army of our Catholic king . . .

Lt. Romero joined his captain four days later at the appointed place. He had encountered no Indians, but had found a cache of Apache supplies and equipment, which his men appropriated.² Vildosola's reference to Apache Pass--Puerto del Dado--with no other identification or elaboration, suggests the conclusion that the pass was not an unknown geographic feature before 1780. As the Spanish frontier receded, however, Apache Pass, and indeed the whole of the Chiricahua Mountain range, seems to have been left to the undisturbed enjoyment of the Apaches for half a century.

The Gadsden Purchase

Indians and Spaniards had long known of Apache Pass when the Mexican War broke out. But Americans appear to have had no knowledge of it, and almost no knowledge of the country south of the Gila River. Missouri

2. Alfred B. Thomas, ed., Forgotten Frontiers (Norman, 1932), pp. 208-209.

traders arriving in New Mexico over the Santa Fe Trail had penetrated the lower Rio Grande country and traded with settlements in Chihuahua, but they had no reason to explore the unknown territory west of the river. American fur trappers journeyed down the Gila in 1826, and in subsequent years an occasional trapper may have found his way through Apache Pass. But the mountain men were not noted for bequeathing records of travel to future historians. It remained for the Mexican War to acquaint Americans with the country south of the Gila.

The war and its aftermath clothed this region with vast significance. By the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the conflict, the United States acquired New Mexico and California. The Oregon boundary dispute had been settled in 1846. The Pacific Coast became a unity, but also an island of Americans separated from their eastern brethren by a great expanse of almost uninhabited mountain, prairie, and desert. Discovery of gold in California in 1848 not only invited a wave of migration over this wilderness area, but also made imperative a transportation and communication link between east and west. The gold-fever coincided with the railroad fever. Stimulated by a policy of granting public lands to the states in order to encourage railroad construction, a network of rails spread from the Atlantic Coast to the Mississippi River in the decade following the Mexican War. At the same time, sentiment for a railroad to the Pacific intensified, and the merits of the proposed routes were hotly debated in and out of Congress. Among the most vigorously espoused was the southern route. The slave states, bitterly divided over which city should

be the eastern terminus, were as one in championing a route across the Southwest to California. In addition to promising favorable climate throughout the year, such a route would be advantageous for fulfilling the treaty commitment to protect the Mexicans from incursions of American Indians. Moreover, as Southerners quickly pointed out, this route was strongly recommended by such army officers as Philip St. George Cooke and Randolph B. Marcy, who had campaigned in the Southwest during and after the Mexican War. There was but one drawback. The only feasible path for a southern railroad lay through the country below the Gila, and in the peace settlement Mexico had retained this tract of land.³

In Mexico City, American diplomats encountered a decided reluctance to part with more Mexican territory. Another assault on Mexico's domain by her northern neighbor would be difficult for Mexican national pride to withstand. The United States, however, held the high cards, for Santa Anna's shaky regime desperately needed money. With this knowledge, President Franklin Pierce dispatched James Gadsden to Mexico City to open negotiations with Mexican officials for the purchase of the strategic territory on their northern frontier. On December 30, 1853, the Gadsden Treaty was signed in the Mexican capital. Its terms embraced three offers by Mexico. After much acrimonious debate in Washington, the third was eventually chosen. With ratification of the treaty in the summer of 1854, the United States bought the country below the Gila for ten million dollars.⁴ It thus bought the southern railroad route and, incidentally, a land believed to be

3. Paul N. Garber, The Gadsden Treaty (Philadelphia, 1923), pp. 19-20.

4. Ibid., pp. 64-108. Will H. Robinson, The Story of Arizona (Phoenix, 1919), pp. 103-104.

rich in minerals. The gateway to the newly acquired territory was Apache Pass.

American Explorers in Apache Pass

During the five years before the signing of the Gadsden Treaty, American explorers and emigrants had traversed the country later included in the Gadsden Purchase. And in the years following the purchase, traffic grew steadily more dense. Military explorers, boundary commissioners, railroad surveyors, and California-bound gold seekers travelled through the country. Many explorers and emigrants undoubtedly threaded their way through Apache Pass in the early 1850's. Few left a record of their journey, and those who did for the most part failed to identify their route with much precision. At least two American officials, however, were in or near Apache Pass during these years.

John R. Bartlett, the American member of the joint boundary commission, explored the Chiricahua Mountains in September, 1851, and almost certainly used Apache Pass to cross the mountains. Bartlett had left the Santa Rita copper mines on August 27 with an impressively equipped company of fifty-seven persons. At Ojo de Vaca, he turned west on the trail of his Mexican counterpart, Gen. Pedro Garcia Conde, who kept sending back word that he had moved on to the west in search of good water. The Bartlett party crossed the Peloncillo Mountains and the San Simon Valley, then struck northwest along the eastern base of the Chiricahua Mountains. Early in the afternoon of September 4, the column turned sharply to the left and, entering a narrow defile, worked up to a

mountain valley that Bartlett compared to an amphitheater. Men spread out in all directions searching for water. Following a trail up a ravine, one of the men soon discovered "a spring and fine pool of crystal water." The animals were driven to this spring, and the party made camp nearby. This site, said Bartlett, was "the most eligible camping ground we had yet met with."

Breaking camp next morning, Bartlett and his entourage entered the pass through the mountains. In his journal, the boundary commissioner recorded that the mountains here were "more difficult to pass than any we had encountered before, consisting as they did of continuous hills, which required much care on the part of our teamsters; yet with locking wheels two or three times, and a little assistance by hand, we soon got through. The length of the pass, with all the sinuosities of our route, did not exceed three miles." Emerging on the other side of the pass, the party saw spread out below the Sulphur Springs Valley rimmed on the horizon by the Dragoon Mountains. Descending to the plain, Bartlett and his men went on to join Gen. Condé and experience more adventures.⁵

5. John R. Bartlett, Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua, Connected with the United States and Mexican Boundary Commission, During the Years 1850, 1851, 1852, and 1853 (New York, 1854), Vol. I, pp. 367-379.

Although Bartlett left some doubt about whether he used Apache Pass to transit the Chiricahua Mountains, Lt. John G. Parke, Corps of Topographical Engineers, left none whatever. The principal motive in concluding the Gadsden Treaty had been to secure a southern route for the Pacific Railroad. A month and a half before the Gadsden Treaty was signed, and over seven months before ratification, Secretary of War Jefferson Davis commissioned Lt. Parke to survey a railroad route along the thirty-second parallel from the Pima villages, on the Gila, to El Paso, Texas. Escorted by a detachment of the First Dragoons under Lt. George Stoneman, Parke left the Pima villages on February 16, 1854. Crossing the Sulphur Springs Valley on February 28, he could see in the distance the Chiricahua Mountains, with Apache Pass--Puerto del Dado he called it--a "very inviting" gap "lying directly on our course."

Topping the crest of the pass at 1 p.m. on March 1, Parke's men and animals had but one objective--to find water. They were delayed at the summit, however, by the appearance of several Apaches at the rear of the column. Some soldiers approached the Indians, who greeted them with "muchos amigos." A short parley revealed the peaceable disposition of the savages, and the troops descended the pass, experiencing much the same difficulty in negotiating the rugged slope with wagons as had Bartlett three years before. After fifty-five waterless miles, Parke and his men were overjoyed to find, 2.3 miles from the summit, the springs that made Apache Pass so important.

Five hundred yards from the springs, in a "small triangular valley with an abundance of grass and wood," Parke made camp. March 2 proved to be a cold and windy day, and the party remained in camp near the spring. Throughout the day, Indians came and went, some to beg and others to sell mules. When the pool of water at the spring began to give out, the Apaches guided Parke to another spring in a nearby valley. On March 3, the expedition broke camp and, following a tortuous ravine down the mountain, entered the San Simon Valley.

At the conclusion of his survey, Lt. Parke submitted his recommendations to Secretary of War Davis. Had they been followed, the Southern Pacific Railroad today would probably go through Apache Pass. The following year, however, Parke retraced his journey and recommended certain deviations in the route proposed in 1854. The new survey, he reported, resulted in a number of important improvements, "not the least of which is the avoiding of the Puerto del Dado of the Chiricahui [*sic*] Mountains. This ridge can be turned at its northern end by passing through a break or gap between it and Mount Graham." This gap, which the Southern Pacific Railroad used when its rails penetrated the region in 1881, was five hundred feet lower than Apache Pass, and the grade much less difficult. The Gap later became known as "Parke's Railroad Pass," or simply "Railroad Pass."⁶

6. Parke's first report is in Pacific Railroad Reports, Vol. II. His second report is in Ibid., Vol. VIII, Pt. II. His map, tracing the routes of both surveys, is in Ibid., Vol. IX

Emigration Through Apache Pass

The California gold rush brought thousands of emigrants over the southern route to the Pacific. Beginning in 1848 from the Mexican States, and in 1849 from the United States, the Argonauts made their way across southern Arizona (then part of the Mexican state of Sonora), down the Gila to the Yuma crossing of the Colorado, and thence to the gold fields. According to Bancroft, the number of emigrants using the southern route before 1851 has probably been over-estimated at 60,000.⁷ Nevertheless, the migration was a massive one, and it grew during the 1850's until several well-defined trails were worn into the deserts and mountains south of the Gila.

Apache Pass was a strategic point on one of three trails across this region, but during the early years of the migration seems to have been little used. The most popular route was the Cooke wagon road. Blazed by the Mormon Battalion under Lt. Col. Philip St. George Cooke in 1846-47, this trail avoided the direct route over the Chiricahua Mountains. Instead, it made a wide detour to the south of the mountains, struck the upper San Pedro River in modern Sonora, descended that stream, turned west to Tucson, thence to the Gila and on to California. Cooke had wished to go directly west from the Rio Grande to the Gila, but

7. H. H. Bancroft, History of Arizona and New Mexico, 1530-1888 (San Francisco, 1889), p. 466.

his guides, unfamiliar with the country, dissuaded him.⁸ The second trail, less suitable for wagons, followed the route taken by Gen. Stephen W. Kearny down the Gila to California in 1846. A few venturesome parties shortened Cooke's route by turning west from the Rio Grande, crossing the Peloncillo and Chiricahua Mountains, and joining Cooke's wagon road on the San Pedro. A party organized in New Orleans in 1848 by Dr. O. M. Wozencraft, who later became a prominent civic leader in San Francisco, is said to have been the first group of emigrants to use this route. This group went through Apache Pass.⁹ One other party, though conceivably the same one, is mentioned as following this cut-off in 1849. For the most part, however, emigrants seemed little disposed to deviate from the trails described in the journals of Cooke and W. H. Emory, Kearny's recorder--especially to strike out across the unknown and perhaps waterless expanse between the Rio Grande and the San Pedro.¹⁰

8. Ralph P. Bieber, ed., Cooke's Journal in Exploring Southwestern Trails, 1846-54 (Southwest Historical Series, Glendale, 1937), Vol. VII, pp. 105-107.

9. James H. McClintock, Arizona: Prehistoric, Aboriginal, Pioneer, Modern (Chicago, 1916), Vol. I, p. 85.

10. Ralph P. Bieber, "Southwestern Trails to California in 1849," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. XII, No. 3 (December, 1924), pp. 342-375.

The explorations of Bartlett and Parke dispelled much of the uncertainty about the country between the Rio Grande and Tucson, and beginning in the mid-1850's the route through Apache Pass came more and more into use. After the long, dry trek across the San Simon Valley, the promise of water at Apache Pass was a lure that pulled the emigrant onward. At the same time, the Pass, stronghold of the Apaches and a favorite place for ambush, had acquired a sinister reputation that must have filled the approaching traveler with foreboding.

For the Apaches, in contrast to their friendly reception of Parke, became increasingly unpredictable as travel grew more heavy. Large, well-organized parties usually had little trouble, although there were occasional attempts to steal horses or stock. Small or careless companies, however, were not always as fortunate. At Apache Pass, the emigrant trains encountered probably the greatest danger of Indian attack on their entire westward journey. According to one authority, "In the vicinity of Apache Pass, bones of slain cattle paralleled the road for miles, and little clumps of human graves were in sight from any point."¹¹ An army officer later recalled how, en route to Fort Buchanan in 1858, he had passed through Apache Pass and observed "numerous stone heaps that marked where the members of an emigrant party had but a short time before been cruelly murdered by the cowardly Chiricahuas."¹²

11. McClintock, Arizona, pp. 85-86

12. B.J.D. Irwin, "The Apache Pass Fight," The Infantry Journal, Vol. XXXII, No. 4 (April, 1928), p. 370.

The emigrants had to defend themselves as best they could, for there was little hope of military assistance. Not until 1856 did the United States permanently station troops in the area of the Gadsden Purchase. In that year four companies of the First Dragoons arrived in Tucson. The following year they built and garrisoned Fort Buchanan, on Sonoita Creek about twenty-five miles east of Tubac. These troops occasionally skirmished with Apaches, but the force was hardly large enough to pacify the entire Gadsden Purchase or to afford much protection to emigrants.¹³

Although the Federal Government offered but little protection to travelers, it did launch an ambitious program of improving old and building new wagon roads to the Pacific. Pursuant to a law enacted by Congress in 1857, the Department of the Interior established the Pacific Wagon Road Office. James B. Leach won the contract for constructing the road between El Paso and Fort Yuma, at the mouth of the Gila. Instead of routing the road through Apache Pass, Leach ran it north of the Chiricahua Mountains through Parke's Railroad Pass, and by-passed Tucson altogether.¹⁴ Although Leach later argued that his road saved the traveler over forty miles, it also traversed almost 200 miles of desert

13. Report of the Secretary of War, 1856, p. 3. Bancroft, Arizona and New Mexico, pp. 496-497. Frank C. Lockwood, "Early Military Posts in Arizona," Arizona Historical Review, Vol. II, No. 4 (January, 1930), pp. 91-92.

14. W. Turrentine Jackson, Wagon Roads West (Berkeley, 1952), pp. 36, 161-173, 226.

wilderness. Emigrants and freighters alike chose instead the certainty of water and the danger of Apaches, and they continued to use the trail through Apache Pass to Tucson.¹⁵ This route, in fact, had also been chosen by the engineers of the Butterfield Overland Mail, whose lumbering Concord coaches began operating through Apache Pass in October, 1858.

The Overland Mail

As early as 1852, when Congress authorized the Pacific Railroad Surveys, officials in Washington had clearly recognized that it would be many years before the railroad could be completed and put into operation. In the meantime, the nation needed some form of overland mail and passenger service to the Pacific. With this contention Congress did not argue. On the contrary, in session after session it considered the matter. But in each instance representatives of North and South failed to agree on the specific route to be followed. Finally, by leaving the selection of a route to the Postmaster General, the issue was resolved. On March 3, 1857, Congress passed the Post Office appropriation bill, which included an amendment authorizing the establishment of overland mail service between the Mississippi River and San Francisco.¹⁶

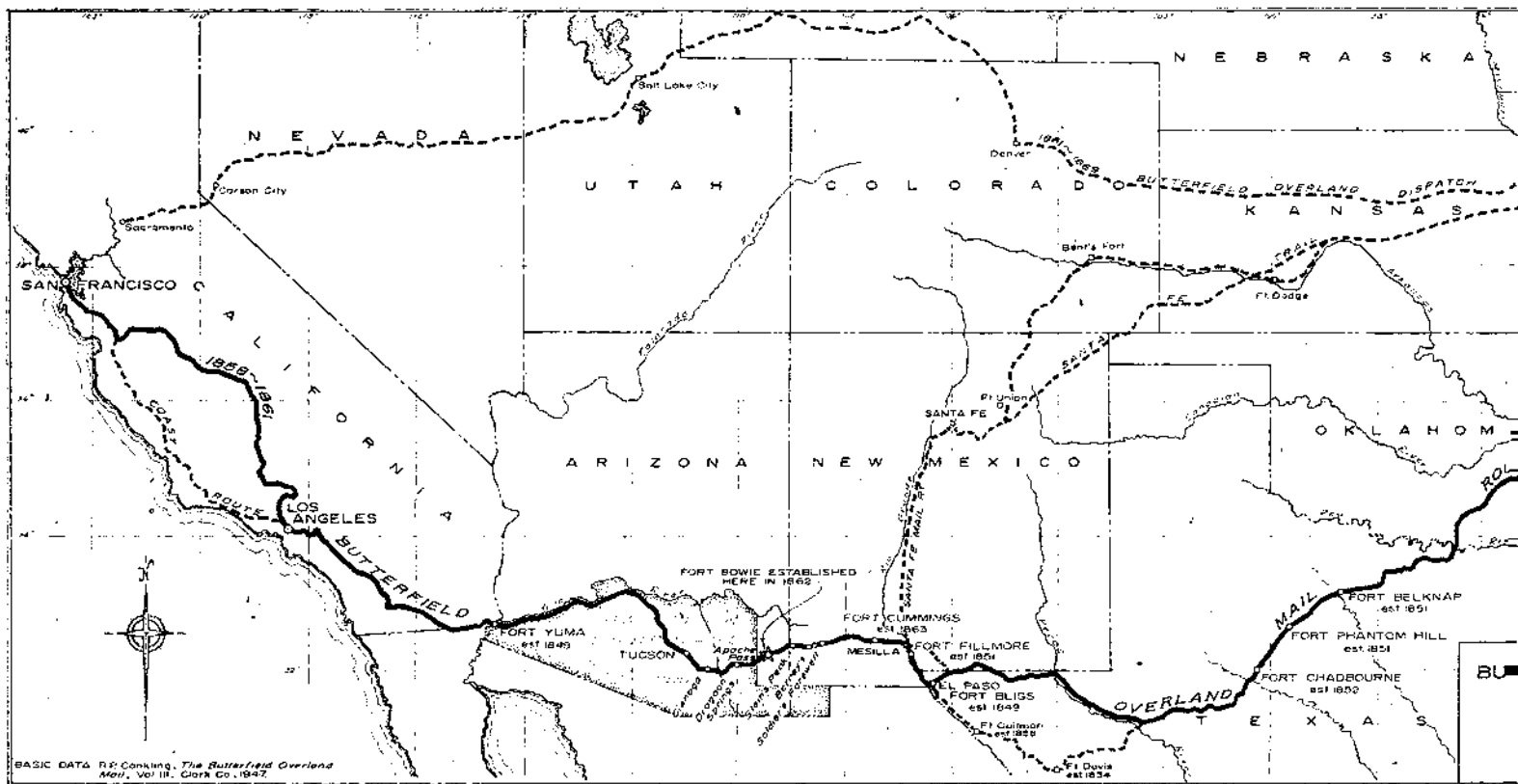
15. R. P. and M. B. Conkling, The Butterfield Overland Mail, 1857-1869 (Glendale, 1947), Vol. II, p. 131.

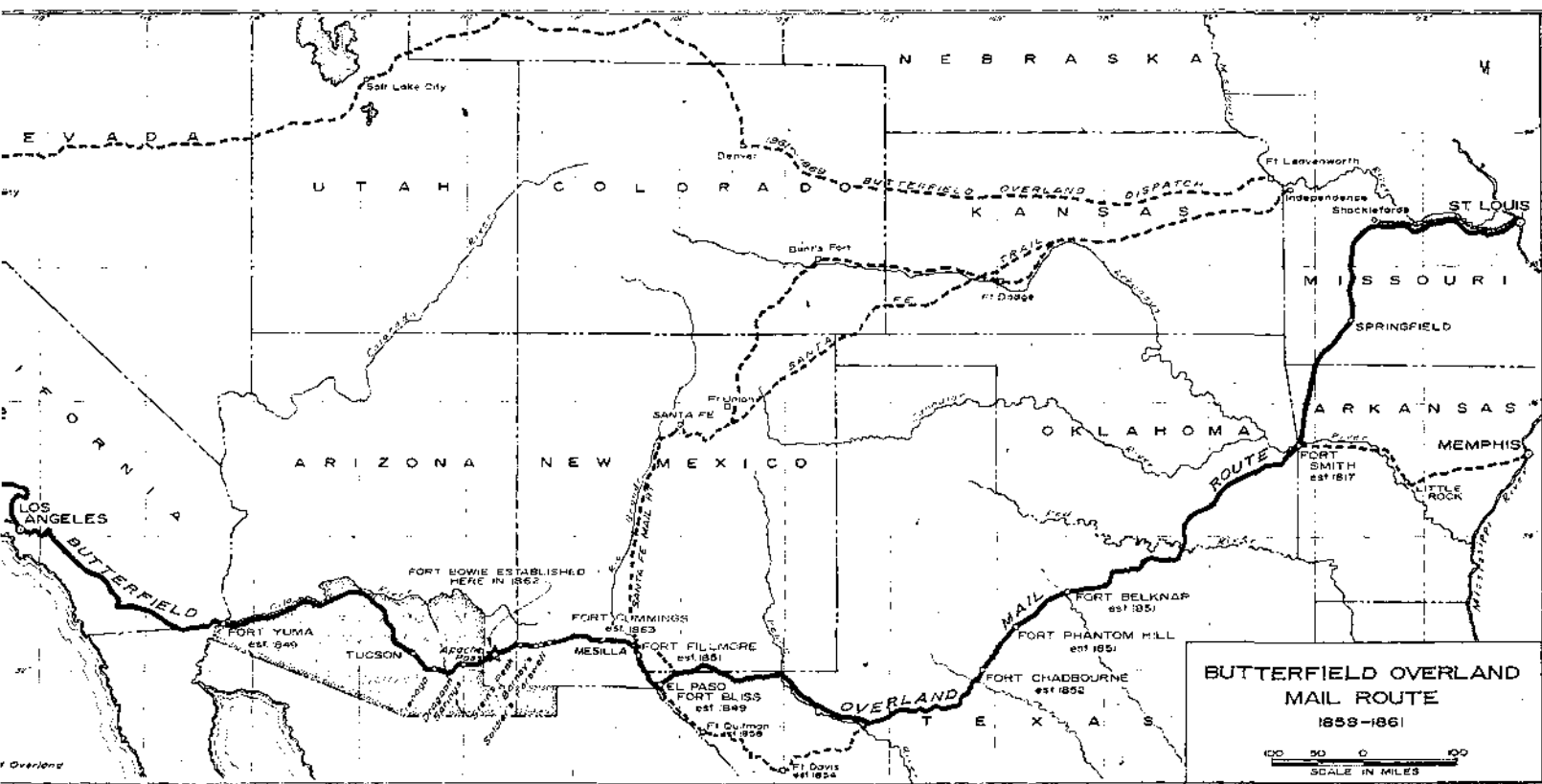
16. LeRoy R. Hafen, The Overland Mail, 1849-1869 (Cleveland, 1926), Ch 3, O. O. Winther, "The Southern Overland Mail and Stagecoach Line, 1857-1861," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XXXII, No. 2 (April, 1957), pp. 82-89.

The Postmaster General, a Virginian, chose a southern route, with two eastern termini--Memphis and St. Louis. John Butterfield and his associates won the contract. In September, 1858, coaches left San Francisco and the railhead town of Tipton, Missouri, for the 2,795 mile journey over the "ox-bow route," a journey that Congress had declared must be completed within twenty-five days. For three years, the company operated over this route, and maintained a schedule comfortably within the specified time limit. There are few more exciting phases of frontier history than the story of the Butterfield Overland Mail, and few places along its route at which its story can be better told today than Apache Pass.

Butterfield's stage coaches were not the first to use Apache Pass. When his engineers reached the pass, they found a stage line already in operation there. A mail contract had been awarded to James E. Birch, also a bidder for the overland contract, for a stage line between San Antonio and San Diego. Birch's equipment began rolling in the summer of 1857, but from all indications few stations were ever built and service was not particularly satisfactory. When the Butterfield coaches began to use the route between El Paso and Fort Yuma, Birch's company discontinued service on this part of the line.¹⁷

17. Conkling and Conkling, Butterfield Overland Mail, Vol. I, pp. 92-97. Frank C. Lockwood, Pioneer Days in Arizona (New York, 1932), p. 300. The first Butterfield coach from the East bore to Arizona one of the outstanding pioneers of the Southwest, Charles T. Hayden, whose son, Senator Carl T. Hayden, has represented Arizona in the U. S. Congress since admission to statehood in 1912.





Near the Apache Springs, where Bartlett and Parke had camped and where emigrants habitually replenished their water supply, the Butterfield Company built the Apache Pass stage station. No diagram of this structure has been located, but, like most other stations, it probably had one or two small rooms for the attendants and a corral for horses. According to Capt. John C. Cremony, who was there in 1862, the station was built of stone.¹⁸ A large pile of rocks just north of the old Fort Bowie cemetery today marks the probable site of the building. Excavation might well reveal the foundations, and hence the floor plan, of the stage station.

According to the historians of the Butterfield Overland Mail, "The mail road entered Apache Pass three-quarters of a mile south of the ~~present~~/Lawhorn ranch-house and then followed a winding course south through the canyon along the east side of what is now known as Fort Bowie wash to a point about an eighth of a mile west of the springs known originally as Apache Springs, where the station was located."¹⁹ At the station, the horses were changed and the passengers refreshed themselves at the springs. Then the coach continued northwest up to the summit of the pass, the highest point on the Western Division of the route, descended

18. John C. Cremony, Life Among the Apaches (San Francisco, 1868), p. 164.

19. Conkling and Conkling, Butterfield Overland Mail, Vol. I, p. 132.

in a wide, southwesterly arc to the Sulphur Springs Valley, and proceeded on to Ewell's station, fifteen miles west of the pass.²⁰

Like the emigrants, John Butterfield regarded Apache Pass the most dangerous point on the entire line to the Pacific. This region was still the stronghold of the Chiricahua Apaches. Under Cochise, one of the most dynamic leaders in their history, they lived in the Dragoon Mountains, but also roamed extensively over the Chiricahua Mountains. Although some of his people were undoubtedly responsible for many of the tragedies that befell emigrants in Apache Pass, Cochise himself seems at first to have been peaceably disposed toward the whites. At any rate, he raised no objection to the construction of a mail station at Apache Pass. And in December, 1858, he promised an agent of the Indian Bureau, whom he conferred with at Apache Pass, that travelers passing through his domain would not be molested. Nevertheless, the agent apparently had some misgivings about the reliability of the Apaches, for he proposed that they be moved north, away from the travel route. John Butterfield accorded the Apaches even less confidence, and he urged the Government to establish a military post in Apache Pass to protect his coaches on this critical segment of their journey. Although his proposal was favorably received in Washington, no action was taken during the period that the Overland

20. Ibid., p. 139.

Mail used the southern route.²¹

Butterfield's apprehension may not have been well-founded in 1858. Three years later it was. In 1861 Apache Pass was the scene of historic events that implanted in Cochise a deep and undying hatred of the white man. At this time, also, a Butterfield stage coach, for the first time on record, was attacked by Indians and the mail delayed.

The Apache Pass Fight

Although John Butterfield distrusted Cochise, his agent at the Apache Pass stage station, a man named Culver, established apparently cordial relations with the Chiricahua chief. Culver, in fact, had contracted with Cochise to supply the mail station with wood, and for that purpose the Chiricahuas had moved their camp to the vicinity of the stage station. They were living here in February, 1861, when Lt. George N. Bascom and sixty men of the Seventh Infantry arrived from Fort Buchanan.

Bascom's mission was a delicate one, requiring more knowledge of Indian ways than the young lieutenant possessed. Three months previously an Apache raiding party had stolen some stock from the ranch of John Ward (or Wadsworth) on Sonoita Creek. They had also abducted the small son of a Mexican woman who lived with Ward. Although the

21. Ibid., p. 138. Paul Wellman, Death in the Desert (New York, 1935), p. 60. Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1859-60, p. 714.

Chiricahuas were probably in no way involved in the kidnapping and theft, Ward was convinced that Cochise's warriors were guilty. He had appealed to Col. Pitcairn Morrison at Fort Buchanan to recover the stolen property. This duty Col. Morrison had assigned to Lt. Bascom.

Bascom camped in Apache Pass, and under a flag of truce invited Cochise into his tent to confer. The Lieutenant brusquely charged Cochise with the crime and demanded the return of the boy and the cattle. Cochise denied all knowledge of the affair, offering at the same time to help in the search. But Bascom refused to listen. He informed Cochise that he would be held prisoner until his people returned the stock and the Mexican boy. Enraged, the Apache chief drew his knife, slashed the wall of the tent, and slipped out. He then bolted through the cordon of soldiers and, though wounded in the leg, ran up the slope to safety. The troops seized the other members of the Apache group, including Cochise's half-brother, and retreated to the stage station, where they barricaded themselves in the corral. Cochise, after collecting his warriors, appeared on the hill near the station and called to the attendant to come out and talk. Culver and two other Butterfield employees, Walsh and Wallace, walked out to meet Cochise. The Indians instantly seized Wallace, but the other two Americans broke and ran back to the station. They were dropped by a shower of bullets before reaching safety.²²

22. Frank C. Lockwood, The Apache Indians (New York, 1938), pp. 100-102.

Early in the evening the westbound stage reached the station, paused long enough to change the team, and rushed on into Apache Pass. Strangely, it made its way through the pass in safety. Near the western end of the pass, the stage came upon the smoldering remains of an emigrant train. Mutilated bodies were scattered about the charred wreckage. Eight of the men had apparently been bound to wagon wheels and burned alive. At Ewell's station the westbound stage met the eastbound stage. Apprised of the danger that awaited them in Apache Pass, the occupants of the eastbound stage nevertheless decided to try to make it to the Apache Pass station. Entering the pass well after dark, the stage had reached the summit and begun its descent when, from the slopes above, the Apaches opened fire. The driver was wounded and two of the mules fell. The passengers returned the fire and William Buckley, Butterfield division superintendent, who chanced to be on the coach, leaped to the ground and cut the two mules from their traces. With the wounded driver still at the reins, the coach fought its way down to the station.²³

During the next few days Cochise tried twice to induce Bascom to exchange his Apache prisoners for Wallace. Each time Bascom refused the offer, demanding that Cochise first return the stock and the Mexican boy.

23. Conkling and Conkling, Butterfield Overland Mail, Vol. II, pp. 135-136.

At length Cochise made a final attempt. He brought forth Wallace, whose hands were bound by a rope one end of which was tied to Cochise's saddle. Wallace made a desperate plea to Bascom to accept the Apache terms, but the Lieutenant again refused. Sgt. Reuben P. Bernard also argued with Bascom, but to no avail. Bascom placed Bernard under arrest for insubordination. Seeing that his opponent had no intention of yielding, Cochise suddenly spurred his mount and, before the eyes of the soldiers, dragged Wallace over the rocky ground to his death. The Apaches then disappeared into the hills.²⁴

During the first night of the siege, Bascom had sent a courier to try and work his way through the pass and ride to Fort Buchanan for help. The soldier arrived at the fort safely, and Col. Morrison dispatched Assistant Surgeon B.J.D. Irwin and a small detachment of soldiers back to the mail station. They arrived several days later, and the following day Bascom was reinforced by two companies of the First Dragoons from Fort Breckenridge. The strengthened force then set out in search of Cochise. They located and destroyed the Chiricahua camp, but could find no Indians. In the course of this scout, the troops discovered the bodies of six white men, probably from the ambushed emigrant train, whom the Apaches had hanged. Outraged, Lt. Bascom promptly rode back to the stage station and

24. Lockwood, Apache Indians, pp. 104-105.

hanged his six Apache hostages in retaliation. The troops then returned to their stations.²⁵

If Cochise had been an unknown quantity before Bascom arrived on the scene, there was now no question whatever. The Chiricahuas had gone, or been driven, on to the warpath, and were not to make peace for over a decade. It was a particularly inauspicious time, for the approaching Civil War was to leave the Arizona frontier utterly without military protection. The impending crisis also forced John Butterfield to abandon the great ox-bow stage route. In January, 1861, secessionist elements in Texas confiscated stock and equipment belonging to the stage company, and the mails were stopped at Fort Smith and Tucson. As a result, the Butterfield Company in March established schedules over the central route, reaching San Francisco by way of the Platte River and the California Trail.

25. Irwin, "Apache Pass Fight," pp. 373-375. Irwin, who wrote his account in 1887, stated that he himself had suggested that the prisoners be hanged, and had insisted when Bascom demurred.

Part II

THE FOUNDING OF FORT BOWIE

Preoccupied as they were with life and death struggle against the Apaches, the small band of American settlers south of the Gila River still found time to form strong opinions on the great national issue of the day. Overwhelmingly they favored the secessionist cause. Although neither the people nor the land could contribute much to the Southern war effort, the new Confederate government in Richmond took more than a passing interest in the Gila country. Its geographical position made it vital to plans the Confederates were forming for eventually conquering the California gold fields. In the 1850's this region had offered the only practicable southern route for a railroad to California. In the 1860's it offered the only practicable southern route for an invasion of California. Accordingly, when a Texan force captured the Mesilla Valley in July, 1861, Lt. Col. John R. Baylor proclaimed that all of New Mexico south of the thirty-fourth parallel now comprised the Confederate Territory of Arizona. Early in 1862 he sent Capt. Sherod Hunter with a small force of soldiers to take possession of the Gila region. On February 28 Hunter occupied Tucson.¹

1. Bancroft, Arizona and New Mexico, pp. 511-513. See also Hunter to Baylor, April 6, 1862, in Richard H. Orton, ed., Records of California Men in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1867 (Sacramento, 1890), p. 45.

As a result of Baylor's advance into New Mexico, the federal troops stationed at Forts Buchanan and Breckenridge had been withdrawn.² The Apaches, knowing nothing of the great war in the East, supposed that they had frightened the soldiers into leaving. With murder, robbery, and pillage, they terrorized the land until only in Tucson did the whites feel secure. At Apache Pass, Cochise and his Chiricahuas all but choked off traffic on the road to Tucson. But, unknown to the Chief, a formidable adversary was soon to enter the picture in the person of Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton. To meet the threat posed by the Confederate invasion of the Rio Grande, Carleton was leading a force of 1,800 California Volunteers from Fort Yuma up the Gila. Capt. Hunter and his small band of Southerners hastily pulled back to join Baylor, and on May 20 the advance guard of the California Column entered Tucson, where Carleton soon established his headquarters.

Roberts' Battle With Cochise

Carleton intended to march east, clear the Rio Grande Valley of Confederates, and join Brig. Gen. E.R.S. Canby, who commanded United States forces in New Mexico. On June 15, 1862, he sent out three couriers with dispatches for Canby. Indians waylaid them in Apache Pass and killed two.

2. Many officers had already cast their fortunes with the South. One of these was Capt. R. S. Ewell, who later earned fame as a Confederate general.

The other made his escape only to fall into the hands of Confederates on the Rio Grande.³

Six days later, on June 21, Lt. Col. E. E. Eyre and 140 men of the First California Cavalry left Tucson with orders from Carleton to establish an advance base on the Rio Grande. While Eyre watered his animals at the springs in Apache Pass, seventy-five to a hundred Indians, mounted and well-armed, appeared uncomfortably close to the grazing cavalry horses. As the Apaches bore a white flag, Eyre went out to confer with their chief--perhaps Cochise, although Eyre seems not to have known his name. The Colonel told the Apache leader all about the great captain in Washington and the great captain in Tucson, and how the Americans wanted very much to be friends with the Apaches. The Chief said that he, too, wanted peace, as well as tobacco and food. The conference adjourned with the Indians receiving tobacco and food and the soldiers receiving promises of unmolested passage through Apache territory. The Indians withdrew; shot, lanced, and scalped three Californians who had strayed from camp; and easily eluded a pursuing party ordered out by the angry Eyre. Apparently anxious to have Apache Pass behind them, the troops moved down to the San Simon Valley and made a dry camp for the night.

3. The War of the Rebellion, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Ser. I, Vol. L, Pt. 1, pp. 93-123.
Hereinafter cited as O.R.

At 11 p.m., a volley of six to eight shots disturbed the military routine, wounding the assistant surgeon and killing a horse. The Californians had been well indoctrinated in Apache ways.⁴

Col. Eyre might well have congratulated himself on experiencing so little trouble in Apache Pass. Not so fortunate was Capt. Thomas L. Roberts, whom Carleton sent out to establish a supply base for Eyre at the old San Simon stage station east of Apache Pass. With 126 men, both infantry and cavalry, a battery of two prairie howitzers, and a large wagon train, Roberts set out from Tucson on July 10. Four days later, at Dragoon Springs, he divided his command. Leaving Capt. John C. Cremony and his company of cavalry to guard the wagon train, Roberts pushed on with the infantry and artillery to ascertain whether enough water for the command might be found in Apache Pass, forty miles distant.

Unknown to Roberts, nearly five hundred Apaches awaited him in Apache Pass. According to Cremony, Mangas Coloradas had come to persuade Cochise to join him in expelling miners from his domain in the vicinity of the Pinos Altos gold mines. Instead, Cochise had persuaded Mangas to remain and help make war on the soldiers coming from the west. The allied Mimbres and Chiricahuas concealed themselves behind rocks on the slopes

4. Eyre's report, July 6, 1862, in Orton, Records of California Men, pp. 58-60.

above Apache Pass and waited for the unsuspecting Roberts to march into the ambush.⁵

The Californians were well into the Pass at noon on July 15 when, from above on both sides, the warriors opened a savage fire. Unable to return the fire with any effect, Roberts backed out of the pass. But it was imperative that he reach the springs on the other side of the defile. Re-forming his command, he again advanced into the deadly fire and managed to cut his way through to the old stage station near the springs.⁶

Still the troops were denied water. The Apaches gathered behind rock breastworks that they had built on the slopes commanding the springs, and, as Roberts later reported, "they seemed very loath to let me have water." The Captain now played his trump card. He ran the howitzers into position, breaking their trails in order to elevate the muzzles enough to bring the enemy fortifications under fire.⁷ Bursting artillery shells scattered the warriors over the hills and enabled Roberts' men to take possession of the springs.

5. Cremony, Life Among the Apaches, pp. 160-161.

6. See Roberts' report, July 19, 1862, in O.R., Ser. I, Vol. L, Pt. 1, pp. 128-132. Cremony, Life Among the Apaches, pp. 157-167, gives a detailed account of the battle.

7. George H. Pettis, "The California Column," Arizona Historical Review, Vol. I, No. 1 (April, 1928), p. 89.

The Captain next sent six cavalrymen back to find the wagon train and relate what had happened. They were also to tell Capt. Cremony that Roberts would leave a detachment at the springs and march back to join the wagons in order to escort them through Apache Pass. The couriers were no sooner through the pass than about forty Apaches fell upon them. A running fight ensued. Pvt. John W. Teal fell behind his companions and was cut off. His horse was hit by a bullet and dropped. Taking refuge behind the dying mount, Teal held the circling savages at bay with his carbine and revolver. A fortunate shot wounded Mangas Coloradas himself, and the Indians promptly lost interest in the contest. Shouldering his saddle, Teal followed the trail of his comrades and, after an eight mile hike, joined them at Capt. Cremony's new camp. The Captain, upon learning from the rest of the couriers of Roberts' misfortune, had parked the train at Ewell's old stage station, fifteen miles west of the pass. Shortly before midnight, the exhausted infantry finally arrived.⁸

Early the next morning, the entire command began the march back to Apache Pass. In skirmish formation, with flankers thrown wide to either side, Roberts brought his troops safely through the pass and joined the detachment left at the springs the night before. Again the Apaches had

8. Cremony's report, July 16, 1862, in O.R., Ser. I, Vol. L, Pt. I, pp. 132-134. See also Cremony, Life Among the Apaches, pp. 157-160.

occupied the breastworks above the springs, and again an artillery bombardment swiftly cleared them out. The rest of the day the troops employed watering the animals and restocking their own supply of water. Also, Roberts had the spring dug out and its sides shored up with a makeshift wall. The capacity of the springs, he reported, had been thereby increased fourfold. On the morning of July 17, the column broke camp and marched on to the San Simon station, where Roberts carried out his mission by establishing a supply base.

In his two-day battle at Apache Pass, Capt. Roberts had lost two killed and two wounded, and he reported that his men had killed at least nine Indians. An Apache participant later told Capt. Cremony that sixty-three warriors had been killed by the howitzers and only three by musketry. "We would have done well enough," he added, "if you had not fired wagons at us."⁹

Building Fort Bowie

From their similar experiences at Apache Pass, both Col. Eyre and Capt. Roberts clearly saw that, once the California Column moved to the Rio Grande, its line of communication with Tucson and California would be in jeopardy as long as the Indians held undisputed possession of Apache Pass. Reporting his battle in the pass, Capt. Roberts on July 19, 1862, advised Gen. Carleton of his conviction that "a force sufficient to

9. Cremony, Life Among the Apaches, p. 164.

hold the water and pass should be stationed there, otherwise every command will have to fight for water, and . . . are almost certain to lose some lives." A week and a half earlier, Col. Eyre had made similar recommendations to the General, suggesting that a company of infantry be positioned at Dragoon Springs and two at Apache Pass. Infantry, he claimed, would be much more effective than cavalry, which would have difficulty operating in the rugged mountain terrain and, moreover, would be unable to find adequate forage for its mounts.¹⁰

Gen. Carleton himself had an opportunity to inspect Apache Pass late in July. With the bulk of his command, he left Tucson on July 23 to establish his headquarters on the Rio Grande. Four days later he was at the Apache Pass mail station. As Carleton later reported, he found it "indispensably necessary to establish a post in what is known as Apache Pass,"¹¹ and at the mail station he had his adjutant general write out the necessary order. The order specified that 100 men from Companies G and A, Fifth California Infantry, were to remain at the pass to construct the fort, which was to be named for the Colonel of the Fifth, George Washington Bowie. Maj. T. A. Coult, of the same regiment, was to supervise the project and serve as the first post commander. Carleton left no

10. O. R., Ser. I, Vol. L, Pt. I, pp. 128-129.
Orton, Records of California Men, p. 61

11. Carleton to Drum, Assistant Adjutant General
at San Francisco, Sept. 20, 1862, in Orton, Records
of California Men, p. 64.

doubt in Maj. Coult's mind about what his mission would be. He was not only to escort travelers, mail couriers, and supply trains through the pass "and well out into open country," but also to "cause the Apache Indians to be attacked whenever and wherever he may find them near his post."¹² The next day, July 28, 1862, Fort Bowie officially began to play its long and colorful role in the conquest of the Apaches.

Maj. Coult was soon reinforced by forty-nine more men, including a detachment of cavalry, and he set about constructing the fort. Capt. L. E. Mitchell chose the site, a hill dominating the ravine in which the springs were situated. On the four faces of this hill the Californians constructed defensive outworks. Describing the fortifications, Coult reported that

The total length of wall around the post is 412 feet, the height four to four and a half feet, and thickness from two and a half to three feet at bottom, tapering to eighteen inches to two feet at top, and built of stones weighing from twenty-five to 500 pounds. The works are not of any regular form, my only object being to build defenses which could be speedily completed, and at the same time possess the requisites of sheltering their defenders, commanding every approach to the hill, and protecting each other by flank fires along their faces.

The breastworks enclosed canvas tents in which the men lived, as well as a stone guardhouse fourteen feet square and loopholed on two sides.¹³

12. Records of the Adjutant General, Fort Bowie, Arizona Territory, Reservation File, July 27, 1862. Reproduced in Richard Y. Murray, The History of Fort Bowie (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Arizona, 1951), pp. 60-61.

13. O.R., Ser. I, Vol. L, Pt. 2, pp. 73-74.

Completed in two and a half weeks, the new fort looked more like a temporary cantonment than a permanent installation. But Coult felt that it would serve the purpose for which it was designed. And indeed it did. Although officers and men alike considered Fort Bowie a most undesirable station--even after a larger and most substantial post was constructed--the Chiricahuas were never again to control Apache Pass.

The Volunteers, 1862-1866

The measure of Fort Bowie's success is to be discerned in the few clashes with Apaches that occurred there after its establishment. An Indian was occasionally to be seen lurking in the hills around the fort, and now and then stock or horses disappeared. Any soldier who wandered far from camp by himself took a fearful risk, and some lost their lives. But the battles between whites and Apaches for the water of Apache Springs seemed now to be a thing of the past. Aside from the daily military routine, the troops kept busy escorting supply trains and mail couriers through the pass, and in making the few improvements in living conditions that were possible with limited means and a small garrison.

Life at Fort Bowie had few features to recommend it to the Californians. The post was isolated, the habitations rude, the food bad, and sickness prevalent. If Indians were seldom seen, they were nevertheless present, and a nerve-racking vigilance was always necessary. Recognizing the morale problem, Gen. Carleton saw to it that the troops were rotated often. Post commanders and garrisons came and went with great frequency, and most units enroute from Tucson to Santa Fe, where

Carleton had set up his headquarters, had to take their tour of duty at Bowie. Maj. Coult relinquished his command within two months, and by the following summer the post had been commanded, successively, by no less than six officers.

Perhaps because personnel assigned to Bowie could look forward to imminent reassignment, but also because of insufficient manpower, tools, and construction material, the fort became an even more miserable station than it had originally been. In October, 1863, the post commander described the condition of the fort for Gen. Carleton:

The quarters, if it is not an abuse of language to call them such, have been constructed without system, regard to health, defense or convenience. Those occupied by the men are mere hovels, mostly excavations in the side hill, damp, illy ventilated, and covered with decomposed granite taken from the excavation, through which the rain passes very much as it would through a sieve. By the removal of a few tents, the place would present more the appearance of a California digger rancheria than a military post.¹⁴

Carleton received frequent proposals for remedying these conditions, and indeed authorized the construction of a new fort in Apache Pass. But command changes and departmental reorganization produced one delay after another, and no action was taken until after the Californians had been mustered out of the service.

14. O.R., Ser. I, Vol. L, Pt. 2, p. 1134.

Although the troops at Fort Bowie successfully carried out Carleton's instructions to protect that portion of his line of communication lying through Apache Pass, they found it next to impossible to "cause the Apache Indians to be attacked whenever and wherever" they might be found. There were rarely more than a hundred men at Bowie, and often as few as fifty. Such a small force could do little more than garrison the post and provide escort service through the pass. Occasional patrols sought to ferret out the Indians, but with scant success.

One such patrol set out on April 25, 1863, to investigate reports of a large force of Indians north of the fort. At the springs the detachment discovered a party of Apaches and opened fire. The Apaches returned the fire and began to withdraw. After a three-hour running fight, the troops broke off the pursuit and, with one man wounded, returned to the fort. The Apaches had their revenge four months later. With masterful tactics, three separate parties of Indians managed to divert the herd guard and make off with the entire herd of cavalry horses. The post commander led a detachment in pursuit, but the Apaches succeeded in escaping with their plunder intact.¹⁵

15. Report of Capt. B. F. Harrover, April 26, 1863, in O.R., Ser. I, Vol. L, Pt. 1, p. 213. Report of Sgt. Charles Kuhl, Sept. 1, 1863, in Ibid., p. 233.

Until 1864, Gen. Carleton had his hands full fighting hostile tribes in New Mexico. But in the spring of 1864 he turned his attention to the Arizona Apaches. In the campaign that followed, the role played by troops from Bowie was largely one of unrewarding scouting in the Chiricahua Mountains. In May, however, they formed part of a command organized by Lt. Col. Nelson H. Davis, whom Carleton had instructed to found a new post, Camp Goodwin, on the Gila River. In the course of his march, Davis located and destroyed four Apache camps, killing some eighty Indians and capturing thirteen.¹⁶

Early in the following year, 1865, Fort Bowie got perhaps its most energetic commanding officer to date, Lt. Col. Clarence E. Bennett. Led by Bennett, the garrison saw much field service but few Indians. On an extended scout to the Gila, however, he located an Apache rancheria and, taking elaborate precautions to surprise it, deployed his men for the attack. But the Indians discovered his approach and fled, leaving him an empty camp to destroy. The next day, on his way back to Fort Bowie, Bennett struck another trail, followed it into a canyon, and came upon the camp of Francisco's band of Apaches. Again the Indians scattered before battle could be joined, but Bennett managed to capture their cattle herd and drive it back to Bowie.¹⁷

16. O. R., Ser. I, Vol. XLVIII, Pt. 1, p. 903.
Ibid., Ser. I, Vol. L, Pt. 2, p. 868.

17. Bennett's Report, July 6, 1865, in O. R., Ser. I, Vol. L, Pt. 1, pp. 415-419.

A campaign organized by Brig. Gen. John S. Mason kept the Californians from Bowie in the field during much of the winter of 1865-66. Again they thoroughly scouted the Chiricahua Mountains, had one encounter with Cochise, and spent several months trying, without success, to bring on another.¹⁸ This was the last service the California Volunteers saw in the Apache Wars. It was over a year after Appomattox when they were finally relieved by regular troops and sent back to California to be mustered out of the service. On May 3, 1866, Capt. W. H. Brown arrived at Fort Bowie with Company E, Fourteenth U.S. Infantry. He found Cochise still very much at large and more actively hostile than ever.

18. Ralph H. Ogle, "Federal Control of the Western Apaches," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XIV, No. 4 (October, 1939), p. 363.

Part III

PEACE WITH COCHISE

For six long and bloody years after the close of the Civil War, Cochise ravaged the ranches and settlements of southeastern Arizona. Almost alone, the inadequate garrison of Fort Bowie stood against Cochise and his tribesmen. The memory of the unfortunate Bascom episode continued to fill the Chiricahua Chief with bitter hatred for the white man, and he led his warriors in a bloody war of extermination that spared no American or Mexican unlucky enough to fall within his grasp. Murders and depredations multiplied alarmingly, and the citizens and officials of the territory cried in vain for enough troops to subjugate the Apaches.¹

Although the garrison at Fort Bowie was not strengthened, the post itself was enlarged in 1868. A new location was selected on a plateau

1. The demand for more troops, however, did not originate entirely in a desire to end hostilities. Brig. Gen. E. O. C. Ord, commanding the Department of California, reported in 1869 that supplying the Army was almost the only profitable business in Arizona. "Hostilities," he said, "are therefore kept up with a view to protecting inhabitants most of whom are supported by the hostilities. Of course their support being derived from the presence of troops, they are continually asking for more." Report of the Secretary of War, 1869 (abridgement), p. 116.

southeast of the first fort, and construction of adobe quarters began immediately. Substantial barracks, a row of houses for officers, corrals and store houses, a sutler's store, and a commodious hospital soon occupied the four sides of the sloping parade ground.² In subsequent years more buildings were added, and at the time of its abandonment in 1894 Fort Bowie consisted of some three dozen structures, most of them adobe construction.

Last Years of the Cochise War

Cochise found many attractive new opportunities for murder and plunder when the Government, in 1866, restored mail service between Mesilla and Tucson. A post office was opened on this route at Fort Bowie, and the mail carriers rode through Apache Pass twice a week. The duty was extremely hazardous, and many mail couriers lost their lives in ambushes prepared by Cochise's warriors. Following such a killing, patrols normally set out from Bowie in pursuit, but they rarely caught the offenders.³

2. The post is described in the following sources: War Dept., Surgeon General's Office, "A Report on Barracks and Hospitals with Descriptions of Military Posts," Circular No. 4 (Washington, 1870). War Dept., Surgeon General's Office, "A Report of the Hygiene of the United States Army with Descriptions of Military Posts," Circular No. 8 (Washington, 1875). Throughout its history, the post in Apache Pass was known alternately as Camp Bowie and Fort Bowie. In 1879 it was officially declared a fort.

3. Murray, History of Fort Bowie, pp. 110 passim.

FORT BOWIE, ARIZONA

MAY 20, 1889

100 50 0 100 200 300
SCALE IN FEET

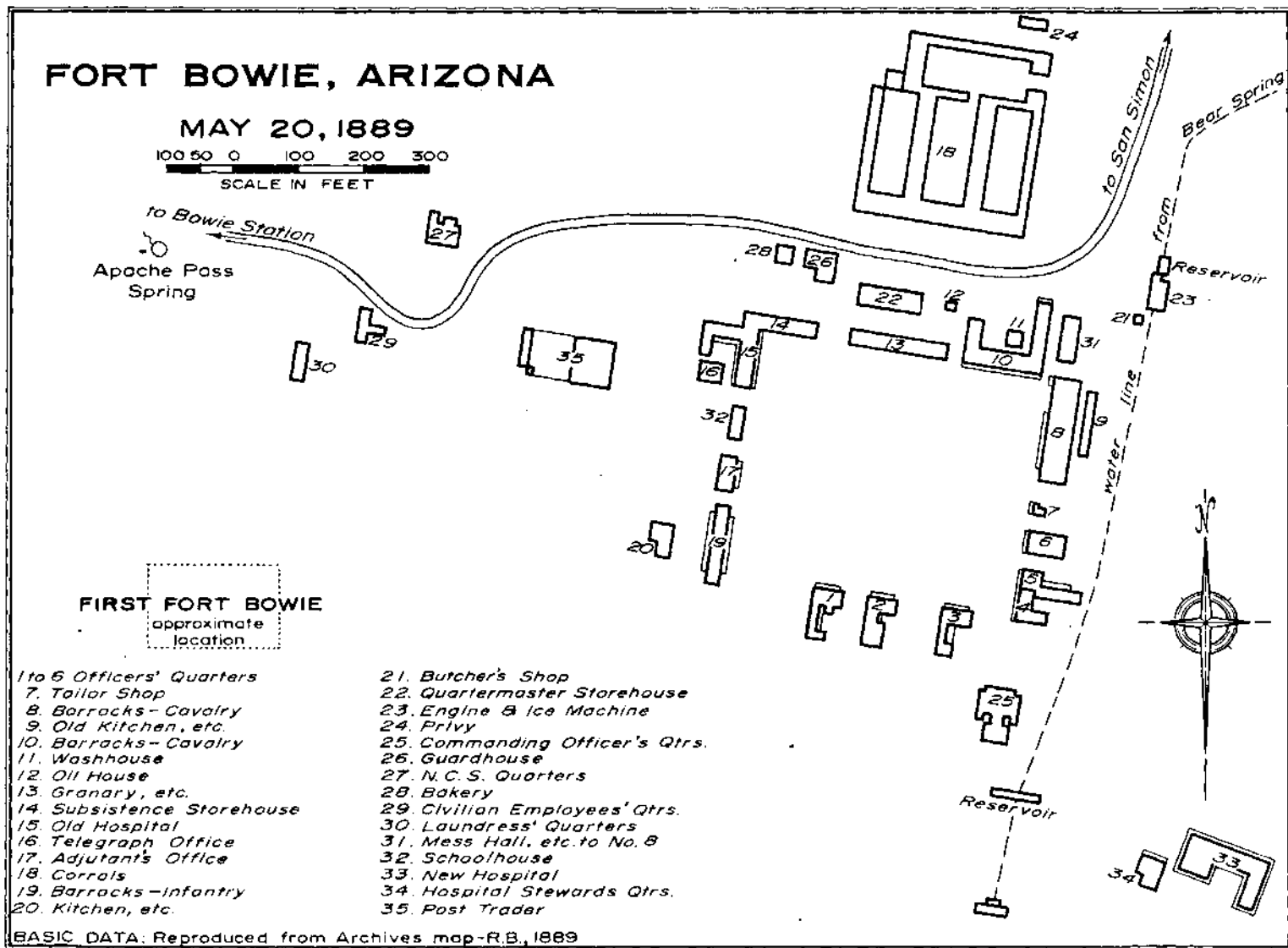
to Bowie Station
Apache Pass
Spring

FIRST FORT BOWIE
approximate
location

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 to 6 Officers' Quarters | 21. Butcher's Shop |
| 7. Tailor Shop | 22. Quartermaster Storehouse |
| 8. Barracks - Cavalry | 23. Engine & Ice Machine |
| 9. Old Kitchen, etc. | 24. Privy |
| 10. Barracks - Cavalry | 25. Commanding Officer's Qtrs. |
| 11. Washhouse | 26. Guardhouse |
| 12. Oil House | 27. N. C. S. Quarters |
| 13. Granary, etc. | 28. Bakery |
| 14. Subsistence Storehouse | 29. Civilian Employees' Qtrs. |
| 15. Old Hospital | 30. Laundress' Quarters |
| 16. Telegraph Office | 31. Mess Hall, etc. to No. 8 |
| 17. Adjutant's Office | 32. Schoolhouse |
| 18. Corrals | 33. New Hospital |
| 19. Barracks - Infantry | 34. Hospital Stewards Qtrs. |
| 20. Kitchen, etc. | 35. Post Trader |

BASIC DATA: Reproduced from Archives map-R.B., 1889

PLATE NO. 5



In 1869 Fort Bowie got an unusually aggressive and capable commanding officer who had met Cochise in battle before. As a sergeant, Capt. Reuben F. Bernard had been with Lt. Bascom in 1861 when that officer clashed with Cochise. A court-martial had acquitted Bernard of insubordination in opposing Bascom's course of action, and he had risen through the ranks to the grade of captain. As the commander of Troop G, First Cavalry, Bernard now returned to Apache Pass to undertake a series of vigorous field expeditions against Cochise. In October, 1869, Bernard and sixty-one men fought a battle with several hundred of Cochise's followers in the Chiricahua Mountains, and killed eighteen warriors. A week later, he encountered Cochise again, but this time the Apaches numbered over five hundred and, after a hard fought battle, they forced him to fortify. A relief party from Bowie failed to break the siege, and only on the approach of a strong force from Camp Crittenden did the Apaches scatter into the mountains. Early in 1870 Bernard retaliated by surprising his antagonist in the Dragoon Mountains and killing thirteen Apaches. Again in January, 1871, Bernard struck. He fell on a hostile camp in the Pinal Mountains, killed nine Indians and wounded many more.⁴ Bernard was transferred after this engagement, but his successors continued the relentless campaign against the Chiricahuas.

4. Post Returns, Oct., 1869; Nov., 1869; Feb., 1870; Jan., 1871. Cited in Murray, History of Fort Bowie, pp. 119-123.

To the handful of troops at Fort Bowie, and perhaps to Cochise also, it must have seemed as though the bloody conflict would continue indefinitely. In the years since the Civil War, dozens of battles and countless skirmishes had been fought between Cochise and troops from Bowie, and the issue seemed no closer to resolution. The situation had its counterpart in almost every section of Arizona, where scattered outposts of soldiers contended against other bands of Apaches. To breathe new life into the military effort against the Apaches, the Army in 1871 assigned Lt. Col. George Crook, Brevet Major General, to command the Department of Arizona. With five companies of cavalry, Crook took the field in July, visited Fort Bowie, and proceeded northward to inspect other installations and toughen his command. In the midst of this march, he learned that the Grant administration had decided to test its highly touted "Peace Policy" among the Arizona Apaches, and he was forced to suspend operations while the President's emissaries attempted a conciliatory approach.⁵ With the Chiricahuas, this approach was not the dismal failure it proved elsewhere in Arizona.

The Howard Mission

While Crook marked time, a presidential representative, Gen. Gordon Granger, was sent out to talk with Cochise. Early in September, 1871, the two met in the Canada Alamosa Valley of New Mexico. Granger promised Cochise a reservation in the country where they were then conferring if he would cease raiding and live in peace. This proposal Cochise found acceptable. Several months later, however, the Chiricahuas were ordered

5. Martin F. Schmitt, ed., General George Crook, his Autobiography (Norman, 1946), pp. 160-168.

to a reservation in the barren Tularosa Basin of New Mexico, and Cochise replied by renewing hostilities on an even larger scale.⁶ Another representative of the President, Vincent Colyer, was meanwhile journeying the length of Arizona, conferring with one tribe of Apaches after another. Crook had no confidence in the promises the Indians so freely made to Colyer, and bluntly told him so. Even Colyer soon admitted failure, for the Apaches only waited until he was out of sight to commit fresh outrages. Crook prepared to resume the offensive,⁷

Almost immediately, however, another peace emissary from Washington arrived on the scene. Vastly annoyed, Crook sat back to watch Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard try his hand at negotiating with the Apaches. An officer with a distinguished war record, the one-armed Howard had also earned a reputation for deep religious convictions. No less impressed with the merits of the Peace Policy than Vincent Colyer, he was at the same time far more practical and flexible of mind than Colyer. Crook, however, had little use for Howard, whom he regarded as a pompous religious fanatic.⁸

6. Wellman, Death on Horseback, pp. 343-344. The text of Cochise's eloquent speech to Granger is reproduced in A. N. Ellis, "Recollections of an Interview with Cochise, Chief of the Apaches," Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, Vol. XIII [Topeka, 1915], pp. 387-392.

7. Schmitt, General George Crook, pp. 167-168.

8. Ibid., pp. 169-170.

While Crook chafed at the delay, Howard made one unsuccessful attempt after another to locate and confer with Cochise.

At length Howard found a way to open communication with the elusive Chiricahua leader. At a military camp in the Tularosa Basin, the General chanced to meet Thomas J. Jeffords, an army scout. In 1867, Jeffords had superintended the mail service between Fort Bowie and Tucson. During a period of a year and a half, fourteen of his men had been killed by Cochise's warriors. Disillusioned with the Army's inability to protect his mail riders, Jeffords had resigned and begun prospecting. But first he went directly to Cochise's Stronghold resolved to work out an arrangement that would permit him to search for gold in safety. Cochise was apparently impressed by the calm courage and forthright honesty of this white man. As a result, Jeffords won immunity from Chiricahua war parties, and, incidentally, laid the basis for a life-long friendship with Cochise.⁹ It was five years later that Gen. Howard found Jeffords and asked the scout to lead him to Cochise's headquarters. Jeffords consented on condition that the General go without military escort. Howard agreed. Guided by Jeffords, the General and his aide, Capt. J. A. Sladen, accompanied by two Chiricahuas recruited by Jeffords, set out for Cochise's Stronghold in the Dragoon Mountains, west of Fort Bowie.¹⁰

9. Lockwood, Apache Indians, pp. 111-112.

10. O. O. Howard, My Life and Experiences Among Our Hostile Indians (Hartford, 1907), pp. 186-195.

As Howard and his companions crossed the Sulphur Springs Valley, drawing closer to Cochise's Stronghold, their anxiety intensified. Time and again they built a ring of fire on the prairie--five fires to indicate to Cochise that five people came in peace. But what their reception by Cochise would be, neither Jeffords nor the Apache guides would hazard a guess. One evening two Chiricahua boys appeared at Howard's bivouac and led the small party into a secluded mountain valley where a group of Indians were camped. Next morning Cochise, accompanied by his brother, son, and two wives, rode into camp. "This is the man," whispered Jeffords to Howard. The General waited apprehensively for Cochise to reveal his attitude. The Chief dismounted and, after embracing Jeffords, turned to Howard, grasped his hand warmly, and said, "Buenos dias, Señor."

Howard and Cochise sat on the ground and exchanged views. Cochise recited the many wrongs done him by the whites, dwelling on the Bascom affair with particular bitterness. Nonetheless, he declared, he desired nothing more than peace. The General explained his plan for forming a reservation for all Apaches, including the Chiricahuas, on the Rio Grande. Cochise replied that, for his own part, he liked the Rio Grande country, but that not all of his people held similar views. To accept this reservation, he thought, would split the tribe. The Chief was ready with a counter-proposal. "Why not give me Apache Pass?" he asked. "Give me that and I will protect all the roads. I will see that nobody's property is taken by Indians." When Howard demurred, Cochise persuaded him to stay at the Stronghold for ten days while he summoned

his lieutenants for consultations. Cochise then voiced his fear that, as his people began to assemble, they would be attacked by soldiers. Howard offered to send Capt. Sladen to Fort Bowie to give instructions that would prevent this eventuality, but Cochise insisted that Howard himself go, as the soldiers were more likely to obey him. Howard agreed, made the trip to Bowie, then returned to Cochise's Stronghold. He stayed there for eight more days, negotiating with the Apache Chief.

As the Chiricahua sub-chiefs began to arrive, Cochise conferred at length with them. Howard soon saw that they were not going to accept his scheme for locating all Apaches on the Rio Grande, and he reluctantly abandoned this plan. In the end he acceded to Cochise's initial suggestion and promised the Chiricahuas a reservation embracing a large part of the Chiricahua Mountains and the adjoining Sulphur Springs and San Simon Valleys. Even this proposal was the object of heated contention in the Chiricahua council. Howard waited in suspense. Finally, after much acrimonious debate, Cochise gave him the answer. "Hereafter," he said, "the white man and the Indian are to drink of the same water, eat of the same bread, and be at peace."

The next day, October 13, 1872, Howard and his party, accompanied by the Apache leaders, set out for Dragoon Springs, where they met Maj. S. S. Sumner and his staff from Fort Bowie. In another council, the boundaries of the new reservation were defined, the agency at Sulphur Springs formally established, and, to the great delight of the Indians, Tom Jeffords appointed agent. Howard directed Maj. Sumner to furnish the tribe with

rations until the Interior Department could assume the responsibility. His mission successfully concluded, Howard left for Washington.¹¹

Howard's success stopped Crook from executing plans he had formulated for an offensive against the Chiricahuas. In September, 1872, while Howard was still searching for Cochise, Crook had announced a policy of "proceeding at once to punish the incorrigibly hostile." Cochise he regarded as the most incorrigibly hostile of all, and as a first move he intended "to iron all the wrinkles out of Cochise's band." Crook accordingly concentrated his troops at Camp Grant for a thrust at the Chiricahuas. Relying on spies in Cochise's camp, Crook planned to locate and surround the village at night and strike at dawn in a surprise attack. Before he could carry out his designs, however, Gen. Howard made peace with the Chiricahuas, and Crook was forced to suspend operations. He turned his attention to the Tonto Basin, and in the historic campaign that followed succeeded in subjugating the various bands of hostile Apache and Yavapai Indians who roamed throughout central Arizona. With the Chiricahuas already on a reservation, Arizona enjoyed a period of relative peace. The peace lasted until after Crook, newly promoted to brigadier general, left the Southwest in the spring of 1875.¹²

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 187-225. Ralph H. Ogle, "Federal Control of the Western Apaches, 1848-1886," *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. XV, No. 1 (January, 1940), p. 62. Howard's report of his mission to Cochise is published in Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872, pp. 175-178.

12. Schmitt, *General George Crook*, pp. 176-186.

The Chiricahua Reservation

Under the watchful eyes of the troops at Fort Bowie, the Chiricahuas settled down on their new reservation. It was a reservation in name only. The Chiricahuas had not been subjugated by force and, in their untamed state, did about as they pleased. A realist, Jeffords recognized that he served as agent at the sufferance of his charges. But he believed that, as long as he issued rations and refrained from undue interference, the Chiricahuas would keep the peace. During the remaining two years of his life, Cochise worked quietly with Jeffords to make the experiment in reservation life succeed. The close friendship between the two men, and Cochise's own great influence with his people, combined to keep the Indians reasonably restrained. Arizona settlers expressed amazement that the old chief had actually kept his word, and the men of the "Tucson Ring"--merchants who had been making enormous profits from Army contracts during the years of hostility--barely concealed their discomfiture.

Cochise fell ill early in 1874, and on June 8 he died.¹³ The Chiricahuas selected Taza, Cochise's eldest son, as their new chief. He carried on the peaceful policy cemented by Cochise and Gen. Howard, and worked closely with Jeffords to govern the Chiricahuas in the tradition of his father. But while he ruled creditably, Taza was neither the statesman nor the leader that Cochise had been. If Jeffords had planned to tighten

13. The last interview between Jeffords and Cochise is interestingly described in Lockwood, Apache Indians, pp. 128-130. Cochise was buried somewhere in his Dragoon Mountain Stronghold. Jeffords was probably the only white man who knew where the grave was located, and he carried the secret to his death.

his control of the Indians, Cochise's death must have ended his hopes.

Between 1872 and 1876 Jeffords found it necessary to move the agency headquarters twice. The original agency established by Gen. Howard had been located at Sulphur Springs. In September, 1873, however, Jeffords moved the tribe across the Chiricahua Mountains to San Simon in search of better land for agricultural purposes. Because of the prevalence of malaria, this location proved undesirable, and two months later an officer of the Indian Bureau directed that the agency be established in Pinery Canyon. The new site was convenient to Apache Pass, and the Chiricahua bucks soon learned that emigrants and freighters travelling through the pass were only too anxious to trade whiskey for horses, a transaction agreeable to both parties but demoralizing to the Indians. In order to exercise more rigid surveillance, Jeffords in the summer of 1875 again moved the agency, erecting his headquarters in Apache Pass near Fort Bowie. Here the agency remained until the abolition of the Chiricahua Reservation.¹⁴

Meanwhile, friction had been steadily mounting between Jeffords and his superiors. Officials of the Indian Bureau wanted the Chiricahuas placed under rigid control, made self-supporting, and started on the road to civilization. Jeffords regarded this approach as visionary, and continued the system of loose management that he had inaugurated in 1872.

14. Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1874, pp. 595-596; 1876, p. 711.

As a result the Indian Bureau, almost from the beginning, had denied him the support and cooperation to which he was entitled. In fact, at times he was reduced to purchasing supplies for the tribe out of his own pocket. The Bureau was also growing more and more dissatisfied with the location of the Chiricahua Reservation. It bordered on Mexico, and to it gravitated the unruly spirits of the San Carlos, White Mountain, and Tularosa Reservations. Joined by Chiricahua incorrigibles, they indulged in the favorite Apache sport of raiding Mexican settlements. Try as he might, Jeffords never succeeded in entirely stopping this activity.¹⁵ By 1876, the officials in Washington were only waiting for an excuse not only to rid themselves of Jeffords but also to move the Chiricahuas away from the border to a location where more effective control could be exercised.

The Chiricahua Removal

The Bureau found its excuse in the spring of 1876. The beef quota for the Chiricahua Reservation had been cut, and rations became so scarce that, in February of that year, Jeffords permitted part of the tribe to move to the Dragoon Mountains in order to augment the food supply by hunting wild game. While camped in the mountains a quarrel developed among some of the Indians, and two men and a child were killed. The tribe broke into factions. Taza took most of the people back to the agency in Apache Pass, but Skinya, with about twelve families, remained in the Dragoon Mountains.

15. Ogle, "Federal Control of the Western Apaches," pp. 202-208.

In March, a few warriors from Skinia's band made a raid into Mexico and returned with some stolen gold. Pionsenay, Skinia's brother, got drunk on whiskey bought with the gold from a white man named Rogers, who operated a trading post at Sulphur Springs. In his intoxicated condition, Pionsenay killed two of his sisters. Then he returned to Rogers' trading post. When Rogers refused to sell him more whiskey, Pionsenay murdered him and his assistant. Joined by other discontented bucks, he committed a series of depredations in the San Pedro Valley. With a troop of cavalry from Fort Bowie, Jeffords set out in pursuit of the outlaws. The soldiers discovered Skinia's band fortified in the San José Mountains. After exchanging a few shots, the cavalry commander, Lt. Austin Henely, decided that an assault would be too costly and took his men back to Fort Bowie. Jeffords informed Taza that, henceforth, all Apaches found west of the Chiricahua Mountains would be considered hostile, and the troops from Fort Bowie combed the Sulphur Springs Valley and the Dragoon Mountains for the renegades.¹⁶

The outbreak of violence led the Governor of Arizona Territory to denounce the Chiricahuas and their agent and demand that the Interior Department remove these Indians from the reservation. As a result, the agent at San Carlos Reservation, John P. Clum, was ordered early in May, 1876 to go to the Apache Pass agency, suspend Jeffords, and move the Chiricahuas to San Carlos. Clum demanded military support, and Brig.

16. Ibid., pp. 235-236. Lockwood, Apache Indians, pp. 215-216. Post Returns, April, 1876, cited in Murray, History of Fort Bowie, pp. 196-197.

Gen. August V. Kautz, Crook's successor, concentrated ten troops of cavalry and two companies of Indian scouts at Fort Bowie.¹⁷

Meanwhile, the Chiricahuas, aware of the Government's plans for their removal, held a council on the night of June 4. Skinya and Pionsenay demanded that the Chiricahuas again go to war with the whites. Taza and Nachez, Cochise's younger son, argued for peace and submission. A fight broke out in which Skinya was killed and Pionsenay and Taza were wounded. Only the arrival of soldiers from Fort Bowie restored order. Shortly afterward, Agent Clum reached Fort Bowie. He called a council with the Chiricahuas and explained the necessity for the Government's action. Taza readily agreed to the removal of his people to the San Carlos Reservation, and on June 12 Clum and 325 Chiricahuas, escorted by Gen. Kautz's soldiers, left Fort Bowie for San Carlos. The Chiricahua Reservation was promptly restored to the public domain.¹⁸

17. John P. Clum, "Geronimo," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. III, No. 1 (January, 1928), pp. 8-17.

18. Ibid., pp. 14-18. Record of Medical History of Post Fort Bowie, Arizona Territory, June, 1876, cited in Murray, History of Fort Bowie, pp. 199-200. Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1876, p. 390. Pionsenay surrendered to Clum, and his wound was dressed by the surgeon at Fort Bowie. He subsequently escaped from a deputy sheriff taking him to Tucson for civil trial.

Not all of the Chiricahuas, however, had followed Taza. Geronimo, Juh, and Noglee, leaders of a band that spent most of its time raiding in Mexico, remained behind. They began a reign of terror, murder, and destruction that ravaged southeastern Arizona and recalled memories of the days before Cochise made peace. Gen. Kautz and his successor, Brig. Gen. Orlando B. Willcox, directed sustained operations against these Indians for the next three years. Troops from Fort Bowie and the newly founded Camp Huachuca took the field. They scoured the Chiricahua and Dragoon Mountains, skirmishing frequently with the Indians but only occasionally bringing on a decisive engagement.

Lt. Austin Henely and Lt. John A. Rucker, stationed at Fort Bowie, were especially active in hunting down the Chiricahuas. In January, 1877, Lt. Rucker led fifty-two soldiers and thirty-four Indian scouts in an assault on a hostile encampment in New Mexico's Liedendorf Mountains. The Indians lost, in addition to camp equipage and their entire herd of stock, ten men killed and a number wounded.¹⁹ The following December, Rucker again engaged a band of renegades in New Mexico and inflicted even greater losses on the marauding hostiles.²⁰ Lt. Henely, meanwhile, had been actively scouting the region west of Fort Bowie; on one of his scouts he travelled

19. Post Returns, Jan., 1877, cited in Murray, History of Fort Bowie, p. 203.

20. Post Returns, Dec., 1877, in Ibid., pp. 206-207.

450 miles and penetrated Mexico as far south as Janos. The vigorous operations of the team of Rucker and Henely came to a tragic end in the summer of 1878. Near Camp Supply, which had been established in the mountains south of Fort Bowie to facilitate scouting operations, Henely was attempting to cross a flooded canyon when the raging torrent swept him under. Rucker tried to save him, but both officers were drowned. They were buried in the post cemetery at Fort Bowie on July 13, and the name of the supply base was changed from Camp Supply to Camp John A. Rucker.²¹

Military operations continued for another year. Finally, late in 1879, Geronimo and Juh, largely through the efforts of Tom Jeffords and Lt. H. L. Haskell, were induced to surrender. With 105 followers, these Apache leaders arrived at Fort Bowie on December 29. A week later they were escorted to San Carlos and settled on that reservation. But Fort Bowie had not seen the last of Geronimo.²²

21. Post Returns, July, 1878; Medical History, July, 1878, in ibid., pp. 207-208.

22. Post Returns, Dec., 1879, in ibid., pp. 210-211.

Part IV

THE GERONIMO WAR

For two years after Geronimo surrendered, the Chiricahuas remained at peace. In fact, except for the fugitives, the majority of the tribe had been living quietly on the San Carlos Reservation since their removal in 1876. They had installed a network of irrigation ditches and were growing wheat, barley, and corn. Taza had died during a trip to Washington, and, after their surrender, Geronimo and Nachez, Taza's younger brother, gained stature in the tribe.

The peaceful disposition of the Chiricahuas afforded the soldiers at Fort Bowie little relief from field duty. During 1880 and part of 1881 units from Bowie were almost constantly in the field assisting troops from New Mexico in the campaign against Victorio and his successor, Nana, whose Warm Springs Apaches were terrorizing New Mexico and Chihuahua. After the death of Victorio in a battle with Mexican troops, this band ceased to be much more than a menace that required continuous patrolling of the international boundary. While the soldiers were occupied with Victorio, however, trouble was brewing in their rear that was soon to erupt in another bloody war with the Chiricahuas.

The Chiricahua Outbreak of 1881

For several years, the San Carlos Reservation had suffered assaults on its boundaries by land-hungry whites. Miners crossed the line from the west in increasing numbers. Mormon colonists settled on the eastern boundary,

diverted water from the Gila River to irrigate their lands, and produced a water shortage on the reservation that caused some of the Apache crops to fail. More Mormons swarmed into the country west of Fort Apache. As a final blow, the discovery of coal in the southern part of the reservation stimulated an influx of whites from the south. Exposed to covetous white men from every direction, the Indians grew increasingly restless.

In this frame of mind, many Apaches fell under the influence of a medicine man named Nakaikoklini, whose mystical teachings and prophecies created great excitement. The agent called on the Army for help, and Col. E. A. Carr, commanding nearby Fort Apache, was ordered to arrest Nakaikoklini. On August 30, 1831, Col. Carr led eighty-five cavalymen and twenty-three Apache scouts to the camp of the medicine man on Cibicue Creek and took him into custody. The arrest precipitated a vigorous attack on Carr's command by about one hundred heavily armed warriors. Some of the scouts, whom Nakaikoklini's doctrine had infected, revolted, shot down a captain and six soldiers, then joined the hostiles. During the struggle, Nakaikoklini was killed by his guard. Carr's command repulsed the assailants, but next morning, while Carr was still in the field, they joined with other disaffected bands and attacked Fort Apache. The garrison successfully withstood the assault, and the Indians finally withdrew.¹

Alarmed at the prospect of another general war with the Apaches, the Army rushed reinforcements, including units from Fort Bowie, to Carr's assistance. Although the Indians involved in the Cibicue affair were

1. Ogle, "Federal Control of Western Apaches," pp. 295-296.

largely Coyotero Apaches, the Chiricahuas, who lived in the vicinity of Fort Apache, grew increasingly apprehensive as they watched more and more soldiers arrive at the fort and go into camp. A spate of rumors ran through the tribe like a prairie fire, and, when the agency police began to arrest the leaders of the Cibicue revolt, the Chiricahuas became thoroughly frightened. On September 30, seventy-four Chiricahuas, including Geronimo, Nachez, Chato, and Juh, fled the reservation and headed for Mexico. Despite military efforts to apprehend them, they made good their escape. In the Sierra Madres, the fugitives joined old Nana and the remnant of Victorio's Warm Springs band. Troops from Fort Bowie, once more commanded by Capt. Reuben F. Bernard, fanned out to patrol the border and prevent raiding parties from entering the United States.²

Nothing was heard of the renegades until the following spring. In April, 1882, Chato and Nachez, with a party of warriors, slipped through the screen of cavalry patrols and raided settlements in Arizona. They rode as far north as San Carlos, where they forced Loco and his band to leave the reservation and join their race for the Sierra Madre sanctuary. With Loco, the hostile party now numbered 700 people. They clashed with Col. G. A. Forsyth near Stein's Peak in the Peloncillo Mountains, but escaped with small loss. A command under Capt. T. C. Tupper, which included a troop of cavalry and a company of Indian scouts from Fort Bowie, next intercepted the Apaches in

2. Ibid., pp. 296-300. Report of the Secretary of War, 1881, p. 147.

Mexico several miles south of the border, but again they eluded capture. Joining forces, Tupper and Forsyth pursued the Apaches deep into Mexico and pushed them into an ambush prepared by a large Mexican force. The Mexicans killed a hundred Indians and the rest fled into the Sierra Madres. Again the renegades were safely beyond the reach of the Army, and patrols from Fort Bowie resumed their scouting operations along the Mexican border.³

Crook in the Saddle

It was now obvious to authorities in Washington that they had another full scale Apache war on their hands. Another costly campaign would have to be launched. As a preliminary step, the United States opened discussions with Mexico on the Apache problem. On July 29, 1882, the two governments signed an agreement that permitted regular troops of either country to cross the international boundary when in close pursuit of hostile Indians.⁴ Although U.S. forces had occasionally crossed the border, they had done so illegally. Now, the legal barrier removed, American troops were free to conduct operations aimed at the Apache sanctuary in the heart of the Sierra Madre Mountains.

A second important preliminary step came on September 4. Brig. Gen. George Crook was reassigned to command the Department of Arizona. With characteristic determination, he attacked his problem immediately. Mounted

3. Ogle, "Federal Control of Western Apaches," pp. 303-304.

4. U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XXII, p. 934.

on his celebrated mule, Apache, he rode about the department talking with the Indians. He quickly came to the conclusion that they had been robbed, cheated, and in general most shamefully abused by the agents of the Indian Bureau. In fact, he reported, the Apaches "had displayed remarkable forbearance in remaining at peace."⁵ But the damage had been done, and Crook next set about improving the management of San Carlos and preparing for an offensive against the renegades in Mexico.

Crook's first move was to reorganize the administration of the San Carlos Reservation. In November, 1882, he called the reservation Indians into council and outlined for them the new system. No longer would they have to live near the agency and report frequently for roll call. Henceforth, they would be free to settle wherever on the reservation they chose. Now that the Apaches could seek out better lands, Crook told them, they would be expected to make a more serious attempt at farming and self-support. Although the civilian agent and his staff would continue to perform their previous functions, the Indians would also be accountable to military agents--Capt. Emmet Crawford at San Carlos and Lt. Charles B. Gatewood at Fort Apache. Lt. Britton Davis was assigned to assist Crawford and Lt. Hamilton Roach to assist Gatewood. These two officers were to recruit and command companies of native scouts that would preserve the peace.⁶

5. Report of the Secretary of War, 1883, p. 160.

6. Ibid. Britton Davis, The Truth About Geronimo (New Haven, 1929), p. 30. Lockwood, Apache Indians, p. 201.

Crook next turned his attention to the task of organizing an expedition to ferret the renegade Chiricahuas out of the Sierra Madre Mountains. His previous experience in Arizona had taught him that it took an Apache to catch an Apache. Regular troops proved too cumbersome for the type of mountain and desert warfare at which the Apaches excelled. Having decided to rely on Indians as the backbone of his striking column, Crook reorganized the Apache scout corps and recruited it to full strength. Skilled frontiersmen who had served Crook before turned up to enlist as white scouts. Among them were Al Sieber, Sam Bowman, and Archie McIntosh. The leading exponent of mule trains for supply transport, Crook devoted much attention to organizing his pack trains. Under his old packmaster, Tom Moore, they were brought to peak efficiency.⁷

Before Crook's expedition could get under way, the Chiricahua renegades struck again. In March, 1883, while Geronimo raided for horses in Sonora, Chato and twenty-six warriors crossed the international boundary and blazed a bloody trail across southern Arizona. The garrison at Fort Bowie tried to intercept him. Patrols combed the Chiricahua Mountains and the Sulphur Springs and San Simon Valleys. Troops from other forts also took the field to search for the raiders. In six days, however, Chato and his men rode 400 miles, killed twenty-six settlers, and disappeared into Mexico without being sighted by a single soldier.⁸

7. Schmitt, General George Crook, p. 245.

8. Ogle, "Federal Control of Western Apaches," pp. 308-309. Post Returns, March, 1883, cited in Murray, History of Fort Bowie, p. 221.

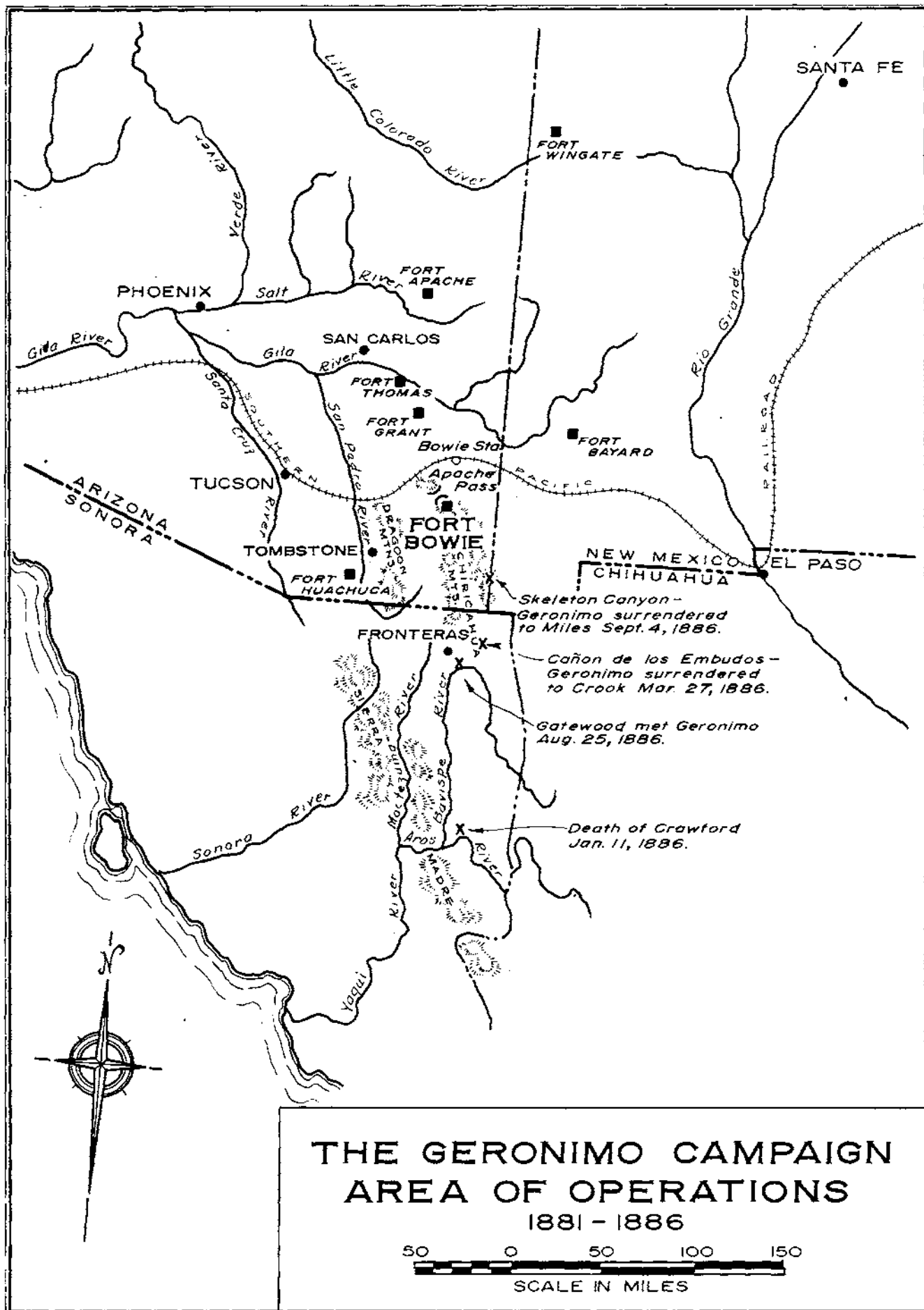
For Crook, Chato's raid produced one beneficial result. One of Chato's warriors, whom the troops later dubbed "Peaches," deserted his comrades and surrendered at San Carlos. He offered to guide Crook's expedition into the Sierra Madres and help find the Chiricahua camp. Crook accepted his services, and early in May, 1883, crossed the border with 195 Apache scouts under Capt. Emmet Crawford and a troop of the Sixth Cavalry under Capt. Adna R. Chaffee.

Guided by Peaches, the column marched to the headwaters of the Yaqui River. Crawford's scouts scoured the rugged wilderness of the Sierra Madres, and on May 15 surprised Chato's camp. They killed nine warriors and captured several children, but the remainder of the villagers scattered into the mountains. Three days later, however, Chihuahua appeared at Crook's camp to confer with the General. One by one, Geronimo, Chato, Nachez, and other renegade leaders followed Chihuahua's example and came in to talk. That the mountains of Mexico no longer offered a secure haven had come as a frightening revelation to the hostiles, and they declared their readiness to be forgiven and returned to the reservation. Crook astutely informed them that he was really not particularly anxious to make peace. Mexican forces, he said, were even then closing in on the Apache stronghold and, no doubt, would soon solve the whole problem by killing all of the renegades. Alarmed, the Chiricahuas begged Crook to accept their surrender and take them back to San Carlos. With a show of reluctance, the General finally consented. Escorted by Crawford and his scouts, 325 Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apaches reached San Carlos on June 24.⁹

9. Report of the Secretary of War, 1883, pp. 173-178. John G. Bourke, On the Border with Crook (New York, 1891), pp. 452-454. Schmitt, General George Crook, pp. 246-258. Davis, Truth About Geronimo, pp. 67-70.

Not all of the hostiles had accompanied Crawford to San Carlos. The most troublesome of the renegade leaders, in fact, had tarried in Mexico on the pretext that their widely scattered bands would have to assemble. They had promised to report at the agency in "two moons." Five moons later they were still in Mexico, and the Arizona newspapers had begun a virulent editorial campaign berating Crook for his failure to bring in all of the hostiles. In October, 1883, therefore, Crook ordered Lt. Britton Davis and his company of Apache scouts to locate the procrastinating Chiricahuas and return them to San Carlos. Camping near the border, Davis sent scouts into Mexico to search for the renegades. Finally, Nachez and Zele brought their people in and Davis, assisted by troops from Fort Bowie, escorted them to the reservation. In January, 1884, he returned, found Chato and Mangas (son of Mangas Coloradas), and took them to the agency. Only Geronimo and his band now remained in Mexico, and, for a third time, Davis camped on the border. Six weeks of scouting at last brought Geronimo and his band, trailing a herd of 350 cattle stolen from Mexican ranchers, to Davis' camp on the border. On the way to San Carlos, a U.S. Marshal and a posse of cowboys attempted to arrest Geronimo and take him to Tucson for civil trial. Aided by a West Point classmate from Fort Bowie, however, Davis tricked the Marshal and eluded the posse. With Geronimo safely settled at San Carlos, the Chiricahuas once more were all at peace.¹⁰

10. Davis, Truth About Geronimo, pp. 77-101. Report of the Secretary of War, 1884, p. 134.



The Outbreak of 1885

From the spring of 1883, when the hostiles agreed to make peace, until the spring of 1885 Arizona again enjoyed a brief respite from Apache depredations. On the reservation, however, the Chiricahuas found themselves caught in a power struggle between their military and civilian agents. Following the surrender of the renegades, the Secretaries of War and the Interior had held extended discussions that finally, on July 7, 1883, culminated in a joint memorandum that gave Crook police control of all the San Carlos Apaches.¹¹

This memorandum solved no problems, for the old curse of divided authority still prevailed. When the military agents, Capt. Crawford and Lt. Gatewood, attempted to extend their control of the Indians in accordance with the agreement of July 7, the civilian administrators, prodded by their superiors, resisted this encroachment on their customary authority. Sensing the conflict, the Indians sought to play off one agent against the other, and became increasingly difficult to control. They openly defied the prohibition against tizwin-drinking and wife-beating, and virtually dared the military to stop them.¹²

Conditions went from bad to worse, until on May 15, 1885, the climax finally came. Following a glorious tizwin drunk, Geronimo, Machez, and Nana, accompanied by forty-two warriors and ninety-two women and children, fled the reservation and once more headed for Mexico. Soldiers from Forts

11. Report of the Secretary of War, 1882, p. 179.

12. Davis, Truth About Geronimo, pp. 138-143. Ogle, "Federal Control of Western Apaches," pp. 314-321.

Bowie, Thomas, Huachuca, and Camp Grant enacted the familiar routine of spreading out to intercept the fugitives. But the Apaches, with their masterful evasive tactics, slipped safely across the border and lost themselves in the mountains. Once again the troops looked forward to the dreaded ordeal of a campaign in the forbidding Sierra Madres.¹³

Lt. Gen. P. H. Sheridan, commanding the Army, ordered an immediate and energetic campaign to round up the renegades. On June 9, he wired Crook authority to enlist an additional 200 Indian scouts, and instructed him to establish headquarters on or near the Southern Pacific Railroad. Crook chose Fort Bowie, which was thirteen miles from Bowie Station and at the same time convenient to the field of operations. On June 11 Crook arrived at the fort.¹⁴ From that day until the final capitulation of Geronimo in September, 1886, Fort Bowie was the base from which three successive campaigns and a multitude of small supporting expeditions were mounted against the Chiricahuas in Mexico.

Operations of Crawford and Davis

The reciprocal agreement with Mexico which permitted U.S. troops to pursue hostile Indians south of the border had expired. But Crook conferred with the governor of Sonora and obtained his consent to American operations in the Sierra Madre Mountains. He then dispatched two forces

13. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, pp. 147-148. Davis, Truth About Geronimo, pp. 144-151.

14. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, p. 149. Post Returns, June, 1885, cited in Murray, History of Fort Bowie, p. 225.

of Indian scouts into Mexico, one under Capt. Emmet Crawford and Lt. Britton Davis, the other under Capt. Wirt Davis and Lt. Charles B. Gatewood. He also stationed detachments of cavalry at virtually every water hole on the southern borders of Arizona and New Mexico to prevent the renegades from re-entering the United States.¹⁵

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1885, Crawford and Wirt Davis pursued the Chiricahuas with the utmost tenacity. Several times, the Apache scouts surprised the hostile camps in the Sierra Madres. In each engagement they destroyed much equipment, but never succeeded in fighting a decisive action. Flushed out of the Sierra Madres by the persistent trailing of the two scout columns, the hostiles drifted back towards the border. Despite the string of military outposts, one band slipped into the United States at Guadalupe Canyon. Followed closely by Crawford and Wirt Davis, the raiders re-crossed the border and lost their pursuers in Chihuahua. Exhausted, the striking columns reported to Crook at Fort Bowie in October, 1885, and preparations were promptly begun for a new campaign.¹⁶

In November, while Crawford and Davis were refitting their commands, Chihuahua's brother, Josanie, led a raiding party of ten warriors into the United States. During the period of one month, he rode 1,200 miles through

15. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, p. 149. Schmitt, General George Crook, pp. 256-257.

16. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, pp. 150-151. Davis, Truth About Geronimo, pp. 157-195. H. W. Daly, "The Geronimo Campaign," Arizona Historical Review, Vol. III, No. 2 (July, 1930), pp. 26-44. Daly was Crawford's packmaster.

a region patrolled by eighty-three companies of soldiers, killed thirty-eight whites, captured and wore out 250 horses, and escaped into Mexico with the loss of one man.¹⁷ The obvious seriousness of the situation brought Gen. Sheridan himself to Fort Bowie to confer with Crook. Sheridan arrived on November 29. Wirt Davis had already taken the field and Crawford left the day Sheridan arrived.¹⁸ The Lieutenant General apparently could offer few suggestions for improving Crook's management of the campaign, for the second Sierra Madre expedition was conducted in about the same fashion as the first. Indian scouts, led by white officers and relying on mule trains to transport supplies, combed the mountains of Sonora in search of the renegades. To Crawford's scouts fell the major share of the fighting.

The Death of Crawford

Capt. Crawford, assisted by Lt. Marion P. Maus, Lt. W. E. Shipp, and Tom Horn as chief scout, led his men through almost impenetrable stretches of the mountain wilderness of Sonora. While Crook, ignoring Sheridan's anxious telegraphic requests for information, enjoyed Christmas eggnog with Capt. Markland at Fort Bowie, Crawford's scouts searched the Sierra Madres for the trail of the hostiles. Some 200 miles south of the border they finally picked up the trail and, suffering from exhaustion and bitterly cold weather, followed it to the hidden renegade camp. On January 10, 1886, Crawford attacked the Indian village, only to find that the occupants

17. Ogle, "Federal Control of Western Apaches," pp. 323-324.

18. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, pp. 7-9, 71.

had discovered his approach and scattered into the mountains. While the officers were lamenting their misfortune, however, an Apache woman returned to the camp with word that Geronimo and Nachez wished to talk with Crawford the following day. Crawford agreed, and went into camp to await the scheduled hour.

Crawford was destined never to keep his appointment. At dawn the next morning a large force of Mexican irregular troops launched a surprise attack on the bivouac of the scouts. Crawford fell, mortally wounded. While Geronimo and his people gleefully watched the spectacle from surrounding heights, the Apache scouts and Mexican troops exchanged fire for two hours. Then the Mexicans fell back and occupied strong defensive positions. While the two forces confronted each other menacingly, Lt. Maus, who had succeeded Crawford in command, convinced the surviving Mexican officers of their mistake.

But Maus now found himself in an untenable position. Deep in unfriendly country, faced by hostile Apaches and suspicious Mexican troops, his ammunition and food virtually exhausted, Maus decided to return to Fort Bowie. At the end of the first day's march, another woman from Geronimo's band came to Maus and said that the Chiricahua leaders still wanted to talk. Two days later, Maus, unarmed, met with Geronimo, Nachez, Wana, and Chihuahua. Geronimo said that he wished to discuss the possibility of surrender with Gen. Crook personally, and for that purpose would meet with him near San Bernardino in "two moons." As evidence of good faith, Geronimo surrendered nine people, including his own and Nachez's wife and old Wana, to act as hostages. Leaving Capt. Crawford's body in the care of the Presidente of

Nacori, Maus hurried north to report to Crook.¹⁹

The Conference at Cañon de los Embudos

Lt. Maus reached the border on February 1, 1886, and, after communicating with Crook at Fort Bowie, was ordered south again to meet the hostiles and escort them to the conference site. He camped on the San Bernardino River, about ten miles south of the border, until March 19, when the renegades finally appeared. Maus attempted to persuade Geronimo to accompany him to Fort Bowie and there have his talk with Crook. But the Chiricahua chief-tain would go no further north than the Cañon de los Embudos, about twelve miles from the border, where he insisted that the General meet him.²⁰

19. Maus' Report, Feb. 23, 1886, in ibid., pp. 155-160. See also Maus' Narrative in Nelson A. Miles, Personal Recollections and Observations of Nelson A. Miles (Chicago, 1896), pp. 456-467. Crawford's body was later brought to Fort Bowie and, escorted by Capt. John G. Bourke, taken to Crawford's home in Nebraska for permanent interment. The State Department took up the matter of the attack on Crawford with the Mexican Government. Far from acknowledging responsibility, Mexico denied that any attack had taken place and demanded indemnity payments from the United States for a long list of depredations alleged to have been committed by Crawford's scouts. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, p. 10.

20. Maus' Narrative in Miles, Personal Recollections, p. 467.

On March 23, therefore, Gen. Crook left Fort Bowie for the Cañon de los Embudos. He was accompanied by his aides, Capt. John G. Bourke and Capt. Charles Roberts, and by Capt. Roberts' thirteen-year-old son. Crook also took with him several interpreters and two friendly Chiricahuas of some influence with the hostiles, Ka-e-ten-a and Michise. The mayor of Tucson and a photographer from Tombstone later joined the party. Reaching the canyon the next day, Crook found the Chiricahuas camped 500 yards from Haus in an impregnable defensive position atop a lava covered hill. "A full brigade," noted Capt. Bourke, "could not drive out that little garrison."²¹

The three-day talk began on March 25, 1886. Crook's party and the Chiricahua leaders seated themselves in a wooded ravine. First Chihuahua and then Geronimo launched seemingly endless harangues reciting the wrongs done them by their former agents and protesting their own complete innocence. Crook argued at length with Geronimo about his behavior at San Carlos. Finally, he bluntly declared, "Everything you did on the reservation is known. There is no use for you to try and talk nonsense. I am no child. You must make up your own mind whether you will stay out on the warpath or surrender unconditionally. If you stay out, I'll keep after you and kill

21. Bourke, On the Border with Crook, pp. 472-474. Schmitt, General George Crook, p. 263.

the last one, if it takes fifty years."²²

The Indians retired to their camp and, throughout the next day, debated the question of unconditional surrender. Ka-e-ten-a and Alchise circulated among the hostiles exerting their influence in favor of capitulation. During the day Crook apparently saw that he could not hope for unconditional surrender, and communicated to the hostiles the proposal that was later to produce so much confusion and controversy. He would accept their surrender on condition that they be confined in the East for not more than two years. They could take their families with them if they wished. Nana, who was too old to cause further trouble, would be permitted to remain at Fort Apache with the other Chiricahuas. This proposition the renegade leaders accepted, and in a second conference on March 27, Chihuahua, Nachez, and, finally, Geronimo each made a speech formally surrendering to Crook. The General promptly wrote a dispatch to Sheridan detailing the results of the meeting and sent it by courier to Fort Bowie for transmission to Washington. Early the next morning he started for Bowie himself, leaving Lt. Maus to escort the Chiricahuas to the fort.²³

As Crook and his staff rode north towards Fort Bowie, they met Geronimo, Nachez, and several other Chiricahuas riding in the opposite direction, roaring drunk. During the night they had bought mescal from a man named Tribolet, who lived on a ranch just south of the border. Now they were returning to

22. The transcript of the conference, as recorded by Capt. Bourke, together with pertinent correspondence between Crook and Sheridan, is reproduced in Senate Documents, 51st Cong., 1st sess., No. 88. Much of it is reproduced in Davis, Truth About Geronimo, pp. 190-212.

23. Bourke, On the Border with Crook, pp. 478-479. Schmitt, General George Crook, p. 261. Crook to Sheridan, March 27, 1886, reproduced in Davis, Truth About Geronimo, pp. 199-200.

camp. Crook continued on to Fort Bowie, arriving on March 29.²⁴ Lt. Maus went to the Chiricahua camp to get his charges started for Fort Bowie. He found most of the men drunk and in ugly humor. Late in the day they moved the camp ten miles, but continued to drink heavily. While drunk, Nachez shot his wife. Although Maus sent Lt. Shipp to destroy Tribolet's stock of mescal, the damage had been done. During the night, Geronimo and Nachez, with twenty men, thirteen women, and two children, left the camp and struck for the Sierra Madres. Chihuahua, Nana, and about a dozen men, with forty-seven women and children, remained behind. Maus detailed Lt. S. L. Faison to escort these Indians to Fort Bowie, and with Lt. Shipp and the scouts started in pursuit. The trail, as anticipated, led into the heart of the mountains. The terrain became almost impassable and, when Maus discovered that the fugitives had killed their horses and scattered on foot, he gave up the chase and returned to Fort Bowie, reporting to Crook on April 3.²⁵

The Replacement of Crook

When Lt. Maus reaches Fort Bowie, Crook had already completed the exchange of telegrams with Gen. Sheridan that terminated his services in Arizona.²⁶ Enmity seems to have been developing between the two generals for several months. The Lieutenant General, in many ways that must have

24. Schmitt, General George Crook, p. 251. Bourke, On the Border with Crook, pp. 460-481.

25. Maus' Narrative in Miles, Personal Recollections, pp. 468-470.

26. With the exception of one important telegram, which is reproduced in Davis, Truth About Geronimo, pp. 214-215, these telegrams were all reproduced in Miles, Personal Recollections, pp. 471-476. They were all dated between March 30 and April 3, 1886.

irritated Crook intensely, had demonstrated his lack of understanding of the problems involved in warfare against the Apaches. Moreover, he had barely concealed his distrust of the Apache scouts, whom Crook regarded as the only troops that could possibly track down the renegades.

Crook's telegram outlining the terms on which he had accepted the Chiricahua surrender produced consternation in Washington. President Cleveland, in fact, refused to approve the terms. Accordingly, Gen. Sheridan on March 30 wired Crook that the President insisted on unconditional surrender. Crook was instructed to reopen negotiations and secure such a surrender. He was also to "take every precaution against the escape of the hostiles," and to "insure against further hostilities by completing the destruction of the hostiles unless these terms are accepted." Capt. Bourke, who knew Crook perhaps more intimately than anyone who has left a record of him, described Crook's reaction to these instructions:

General Crook . . . was unable to see how he could allow Indians, or anybody else, to enter his camp under assurances of personal safety, and at the same time "take every precaution against escape." Unless he treacherously murdered them in cold blood, he was unable to see a way out of the dilemma; and Crook was not the man to lie to any one or deal treacherously by him . . .²⁷

The escape of Geronimo and Nachez naturally aggravated the conflict between the two generals. Sheridan, when he learned the news, sarcastically telegraphed Crook that it seemed strange that the renegades could

27. Bourke, On the Border with Crook, pp. 453-454.

have escaped without the knowledge of the Apache scouts. Stung by the implication of disloyalty among his scouts, Crook replied that "There can be no question that the scouts were thoroughly loyal, and would have prevented the hostiles leaving had it been possible." Sheridan answered this dispatch by stating, rather petulantly, that there now seemed no other recourse than to concentrate troops at key points and protect the settlers. "You have in your department forty-six companies of infantry and forty companies of cavalry," he declared, "and ought to be able to do a good deal with such a force." He ended by directing Crook to submit a plan for future operations.

Relations between the two officers had now reached such a state that, to Crook, there seemed but one possible course of action. On April 1, he submitted to Sheridan a lucid explanation of the philosophy that had guided his military and diplomatic dealings with the Apaches, and concluded by asserting his belief that "the plan upon which I have conducted operations is the one most likely to prove successful in the end. It may be, however, that I am too much wedded to my own views in this matter, and as I have spent nearly eight years of the hardest work in my life in this department, I respectfully request that I may now be relieved from its command."

27. Bourke, On the Border with Crook, pp. 483-484.

Sheridan lost no time in complying with Crook's request. The next day he issued orders directing Brig. Gen. Nelson A. Miles to relieve Crook of the command of the Department of Arizona.

On the day that Gen. Miles received his orders, Chihuahua and the Chiricahuas who had refused to go with Geronimo and Nachez arrived at Fort Bowie under escort of Lt. Faison. Crook could not bring himself to tell these Indians that his promise had been officially disavowed and, five days later, he loaded them on a train at Bowie Station for transportation to Fort Marion, Florida. On April 12, Gen. Miles arrived at Bowie Station and went immediately to Fort Bowie. Crook, newly assigned to the Department of the Platte, turned over his command to Miles and left Fort Bowie and Arizona for the last time.²⁸

With 5,000 soldiers at his command, Miles now faced the task of catching and subduing Geronimo and Nachez, with fifteen warriors and nineteen women and children, all that remained of the hostile array that had left the reservation a year previously.

Miles in Command

Sheridan's instructions to Miles were couched in general terms. While exercising great care to prevent the spread of hostilities, Miles was to conduct vigorous operations aimed at destroying or capturing the renegades in Mexico. Only in the matter of placing reliance on native scouts did

28. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, p. 154. Schmitt, General George Crook, pp. 265-266.

Sheridan get specific, considering it advisable "to suggest the necessity of making active and prominent use of the regular troops of your command."²⁹

Miles approached his task with characteristic energy. His first step was to strengthen the system of border outposts, which had never effectively prevented hostile forays into the United States. The high mountains, bright sunlight, and clear atmosphere of the Southwest offered ideal conditions for employing the heliograph. Using this device, which consisted of mirrors mounted on a tripod, skilled operators could catch the sun's rays and flash messages over distances as great as twenty-five or thirty miles. Dividing his department into districts of observation, Miles covered southern Arizona and New Mexico with a network of heliograph stations. In all, there were twenty-seven stations connection practically all of the high peaks of the region. One such station was located on Bowie Peak, above Fort Bowie. Linked with five other stations, the Bowie Peak heliograph during the summer of 1886 sent 802 messages and repeated 1,644--more than any other station in the system. In each district of observation, Miles positioned well-equipped mobile columns ready to intercept any marauding Indians sighted by the observers at the heliograph stations.³⁰

29. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, pp. 72-73.

30. Miles, Personal Recollections, pp. 431-434.

Satisfied that his defenses were in order, Miles turned his attention to planning an offensive. At Fort Huachuca he found an officer and a doctor who believed, as he and Sheridan did, that white soldiers could match the Apaches in cunning and fortitude. To Capt. Henry W. Lawton and Acting Assistant Surgeon Leonard Wood, Miles therefore assigned the responsibility of forming an elite striking column of specially chosen men. Lawton assembled his command at Fort Huachuca early in May, 1886. It consisted of one company of infantry, thirty-five cavalrymen, and twenty Indian scouts. A pack train of 100 mules and thirty packers provided daily supply.³¹

While Lawton was still organizing his column, the Chiricahuas seized the initiative and tested Miles' new defense system. Late in April they ravaged settlements in Sonora and then swept north up the Santa Cruz Valley of Arizona, killing whites and stealing stock. A troop of the Tenth Cavalry under Capt. T. C. Lebo trailed the raiders for 200 miles and finally, on May 3, brought them to bay in the Pinito Mountains about thirty miles south of the border. After a brisk engagement, in which Lebo lost one man killed and one wounded, the Indians broke contact and continued their flight. Other forces were now in the area, and on May 15 Capt. C. A. P. Hatfield and a troop of the Fourth Cavalry surprised the hostile camp east of Santa Cruz, Sonora. Although the inhabitants scattered into the mountains without loss, Hatfield captured all of their camp equipage and about twenty horses.

31. Ibid., p. 483. Hermann Hagedorn, Leonard Wood, a Biography (New York, 1931), Vol. I, p. 68.

The Indians responded a few days later by ambushing Hatfield's command in a box canyon. They killed two soldiers, wounded two more, and recovered all of their stock.³²

By now, however, Lawton had taken the field and was soon following the hostile trail deep into Sonora.

Lawton's Operations

After the battle with Hatfield, the Indians divided. One band, under Nachez, went north into Arizona and eventually reached the vicinity of Fort Apache before turning back to Mexico. The other headed west and was soon being pursued by Capt. Lawton's striking column. This command had left Fort Huachuca on May 5 and pushed into the Yaqui River country. The volcanic character of the mountain terrain quickly broke down the cavalry horses, and the troopers were forced to join the infantry.

For four months Lawton's troops chased the renegades from one mountain range to another. The 1,400 mile trek through the wilds of Mexico set a record for sustained operations under adverse conditions.³³ It would be difficult to find in the annals of the U. S. Army an instance in which climate, terrain, and enemy conspired to demand greater endurance and perseverance of men than did Lawton's campaign in Mexico. As Leonard Wood later recalled the ordeal:

One who does not know this country cannot
realize what this kind of service means--marching

32. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, p. 167.

33. For the details of the campaign, see Lawton's Report, Sept. 9, 1886, in *ibid.*, pp. 176-181; and Capt. Leonard Wood's Narrative in Miles, Personal Recollections, pp. 506-517. Hagedorn, Leonard Wood, pp. 67-103, follows the expedition in detail, quoting freely from the diary Wood kept.

every day in the intense heat, the rocks and earth being so torrid that the feet are blistered and rifle-barrels and everything metallic being so hot that the hand cannot touch them without getting burnt. It is a country rough beyond description, covered everywhere with cactus and full of rattlesnakes and other undesirable companions of that sort. The rain, when it does come, comes as a tropical tempest, transforming the dry canons into raging torrents in an instant . . . We had no tents and little or no baggage of any kind except rations and ammunition. Suits of under-clothing formed our uniform and moccasins covered our feet.³⁴

This arduous service left its mark on the men. When Miles first saw them at the close of the campaign, he was shocked by their gaunt and haggard appearance. Lawton had lost forty pounds, Wood thirty. Although the enlisted men had been hand-picked, only one-third of those who had left Fort Huachuca on May 5 were still in the ranks at the end. The rest were replacements added during the march. Three sets of officers had served with the command, only Lawton and Wood remaining with it from beginning to end.

Lawton's campaign, for all its demands on the participants, failed to produce the spectacular results anticipated. Only once did the troops corner their quarry. On July 14, after over two months of incessant trailing, Lawton's Indian scouts, commanded by Lt. R. A. Brown, a Fort Bowie officer, discovered the hostile camp 300 miles below the border. As the regulars moved into position for an attack, the Apaches took alarm and fled

34. Wood's Narrative in Miles, Personal Recollections, p. 517.

into the mountains, leaving their camp and equipment to the soldiers. Despite his failure to engage the enemy, Lawton's relentless pursuit probably had the effect of wearing down and disheartening the fugitives. At any rate, when Miles' peace emissaries finally succeeded in contacting the hostiles, Geronimo and Machez were willing to surrender on terms that, several months earlier, would have been promptly rejected. Of even more influence in bringing about the final surrender, however, was the removal of the reservation Chiricahuas from San Carlos to Fort Marion, Florida.

The Second Chiricahua Removal

The question of moving the reservation Chiricahuas out of Arizona had been under serious consideration for some time. When Gen. Sheridan visited Fort Bowie in November, 1885, he had consulted Crook and Capt. Crawford on the advisability of such a move. Both officers opposed it, Crawford in particular arguing that it would have a bad effect on the Chiricahua scouts whom he was on the point of leading into Mexico. The proposal, therefore, was temporarily shelved.³⁵ After Miles took command, he quickly became convinced that the success of operations in Mexico depended in large measure on ridding his department of the San Carlos Chiricahuas, for there was always the chance that they would provide ammunition and recruits to their kindred on the warpath. This conviction was reinforced in July, when Miles visited San Carlos. The Chiricahuas, living near Fort Apache, impressed him as a "turbulent, desperate, disreputable band of human beings," and

35. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, pp. 7-8, 71.

36. Ibid., pp. 14-15, 73-74, 170-171.

someone told him that they were at the very moment plotting an outbreak. He thereupon sent a delegation of Chiricahuas to Washington to be persuaded that removal from Arizona was in the best interests of the tribe. The delegates refused to be persuaded, and on their return trip Miles had them detained at Fort Leavenworth. A great deal of telegraphic correspondence followed between Miles and his superiors in Washington, who consulted closely with the President and officials of the Interior Department. Finally, Miles was authorized to send the Chiricahuas to Fort Marion, Florida.³⁶

The General moved promptly. Four troops of cavalry arrived at Fort Apache to reinforce the three troops of cavalry and two companies of infantry that garrisoned the post. August 29, 1886, was the day chosen for the coup. So great was Miles' anxiety that he left Fort Bowie and went to the Willcox telegraph station, which was in direct contact with Fort Apache, to await word of the outcome. At Fort Apache, the commanding officer, Lt. Col. J. F. Wade, assembled the Chiricahuas under the ruse of a routine roll call. When the unsuspecting Indians had congregated, Wade's troops swiftly moved into position with such overpowering strength that resistance was obviously futile. Three hundred and eighty-two Chiricahuas, including virtually all of the former scouts who had served Crook in the Mexican campaigns, were immediately marched to Holbrook and entrained for Florida. News of the successful capture came as a great relief to Miles, and he

36. Ibid., pp. 14-15, 73-74, 170-171.

returned to Fort Bowie and the problem of the Chiricahuas still at large in Mexico.³⁷

Hounded by Lawton's column and a number of other commands, and tempted by offers to make peace, the hostiles were on the point of surrendering.

Gatewood's Mission

After the renegades lost their camp to Lawton on July 14, they eluded their pursuers and drifted north towards Fronteras. Miles had already become convinced that the time was ripe to put out peace feelers. While at Fort Apache early in July, he had learned from Kayitah, a warrior who had recently deserted the renegades and returned to the reservation, that they were tired of outlaw life and might be persuaded to surrender if the right men were sent to talk with them. Miles selected Kayitah and another influential Chiricahua, Martine, to act as emissaries. To lead the party, he chose Lt. Charles E. Gatewood, whom Geronimo knew and respected.³⁸

Gatewood and the two Indians hastened to Fort Bowie, outfitted, and with an interpreter, a packer, and a courier headed for Mexico. The group met a number of cavalry patrols operating in northern Sonora, but could learn nothing of Geronimo's whereabouts. Gatewood then decided to contact Capt. Lawton's command, which he found on the Aros River. As Lawton did not know where the hostile were either, Gatewood put himself under the

37. Ibid., Miles, Personal Recollections, pp. 494-505. Col. Wade was the son of Senator Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio.

38. Davis, Truth About Geronimo, pp. 220-223. Miles, Personal Recollections, p. 506.

Captain's orders, with the understanding that when circumstances permitted he should be released to carry out his mission. Soon, news came that Geronimo and Nachez were near Fronteras. With six men furnished by Lawton, Gatewood hurried to Fronteras, Lawton following. Other commands, including two from Fort Bowie, had already converged on Fronteras. Obtaining two more interpreters from one of these detachments, Gatewood followed the trail of two squaws who had visited Mexican authorities at Fronteras with peace overtures from Geronimo.

Three days later, August 24, 1886, in mountainous country broken by a sweeping bend of the Bavispe River, Gatewood camped in a cane-brake and sent Kayitah and Martine ahead to Geronimo's camp. The two Indians entered the hostile rancheria and delivered Miles' demand for surrender, but Geronimo, holding Kayitah hostage, sent Martine back with word that only with Gatewood would he and Nachez talk. Gatewood promptly set out to meet Geronimo. Shortly after his departure, Lawton's regulars arrived and made camp in the cane-brake.

With only his interpreters and Martine, Gatewood entered the hostile camp. After all the Indians had been seated, Geronimo announced that they were there to listen to Gen. Miles' message. Bluntly Gatewood delivered it: "Surrender, and you will be sent with your families to Florida, there to await the decision of the President as to your final disposition. Accept these terms or fight it out to the bitter end." The hostiles soon made apparent their desire to surrender, but not on the terms offered by Miles. If they could go back to their people at San Carlos, said Geronimo, they

would make peace on the spot. After much discussion and argument, Geronimo, with an air of finality, said, "Take us to the reservation--or fight." Here Gatewood dealt an unexpected blow to the two chiefs. All of the Chiricahuas, he told them, were being removed from San Carlos to Florida--even the mother and daughter of Nachez. If the renegades went back to the reservation, they would be living alone amid bands of Apaches hostile to the Chiricahuas. This revelation sent the Indians into a cane-brake for consultation. When they returned, Geronimo and Nachez asked many questions about Gen. Miles--his age, size, appearance, character, honesty, etc. Finally, as the day drew to a close, Geronimo said, "We want your advice. Consider yourself not a white man but one of us; remember all that has been said today and tell us what we should do." "Trust General Miles and surrender to him," replied Gatewood with emphasis.

Geronimo promised to hold a council that night and give Gatewood his answer the next day. The Lieutenant returned to his camp and, with Lawton and Wood, anxiously awaited the outcome of the deliberations in the hostile camp.

The next morning Geronimo and Nachez told Gatewood that they would take their people and surrender to Gen. Miles. On the way, however, they must be permitted to keep their arms; Lawton's command must go along to protect them from other troops; and Gatewood must travel with the hostiles and sleep in their camp. To these conditions Gatewood and Lawton assented.

A courier was dispatched to Miles and the procession started north immediately.³⁹

The Surrender at Skeleton Canyon

When Miles learned of Geronimo's desire to confer with him personally, he grew very reluctant, directing that instead the hostiles surrender to Capt. Lawton. Lawton sent several more messages making it plain that Geronimo insisted on talking with the General and with no one else. Miles then demanded some evidence of good faith, and Geronimo sent his own brother to Fort Bowie to act as hostage. This convinced Miles. Accompanied by his aide and a cavalry escort, he left Fort Bowie on September 2 and headed south to meet the cavalcade of Apaches. On the next evening he reached Lawton's camp at Skeleton Canyon, sixty-five miles southeast of Fort Bowie.⁴⁰

39. Charles B. Gatewood, "The Surrender of Geronimo," Arizona Historical Review, Vol. IV, No. 1 (April, 1931), pp. 34-44. Conflicting versions of the hostile surrender are given by Lawton in Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, pp. 176-181; by Wood in Miles, Personal Recollections, pp. 506-517; and by Miles in ibid., pp. 519-525. It seems probable that Miles deliberately minimized Gatewood's role in the surrender. Lawton, Miles' protege and an advocate of the use of regular troops against the hostiles, got most of the credit and a promotion besides. He later rose to the rank of brigadier general and was killed in the Philippines in 1899. Gatewood, Crook's protege and an advocate of the use of Apache scouts, received almost no recognition. Injured in a dynamite explosion, he was retired on the half-pay of a first lieutenant. For Gatewood's case see Davis, Truth About Geronimo, pp. 220-230; and Anton Mazzanovich, Trailing Geronimo, 3rd ed. (Hollywood, 1931), pp. 259-318. Official correspondence covering the period of Miles' command is published in House Executive Documents, 49th Cong., 2nd sess., No. 117.

40. Miles, Personal Recollections, pp. 519-520. Miles' attitude may have been motivated in part by his preoccupation with the impending removal

Geronimo immediately appeared and was introduced to Miles. The Apache regarded the General for awhile, then turned to Lt. Gatewood and smiled. "Good, you told the truth," he said. Miles repeated to Geronimo the conditions under which the hostile surrender would be accepted. He explained that the renegades would be taken, with their families, out of Arizona. Thereafter, their fate would rest in the hands of the President. Geronimo assented to these terms, and the next morning brought in his band and formally surrendered. Nachez, however, was still in the mountains. He was mourning his brother, who had gone back into Mexico in search of stray horses and was thought to have been killed by Mexicans. Gatewood, accompanied by two interpreters and two scouts, went with Geronimo to Nachez's camp and persuaded him to come in and talk to Miles. Nachez, too, was pleased with the General and promptly surrendered his band.⁴¹

(cont.) of the reservation Chiricahuas to Florida. At any rate, it was apparently only after these Indians had been placed under military guard on Aug. 29 that he seriously considered a personal interview with the hostile leaders.

41. Gatewood, "Surrender of Geronimo," pp. 42-43. Miles, Personal Recollections, pp. 520-525. Miles makes no mention of Gatewood's role in persuading Nachez to surrender. According to Miles, he staged a demonstration of the heliograph for Geronimo. He sent a message on this instrument to Geronimo's brother at Fort Bowie and received a prompt reply. Geronimo was so impressed by the mysterious device that he sent one of his warriors to bring Nachez in. Geronimo's version of the Skeleton Canyon conference is given in S. M. Barret, ed., Geronimo's Story of his Life (New York, 1906), pp. 144-147.

Miles was anxious to return to Fort Bowie. Escorted by a troop of Cavalry, he left Skeleton Canyon on the morning of September 5 and reached the fort that night. When nearing the post, Geronimo looked at the Chiricahua Mountains and remarked, "This is the fourth time I have surrendered." Miles replied, correctly as it turned out, "And I think it is the last time you will ever have occasion to surrender." Three days later Lawton reached Fort Bowie with the rest of the Indians. Miles had already thrown a cordon of troops around the Bowie military reservation in order to protect Geronimo and Nachez from the civil authorities, and he was anxious to be rid of his charges for good. Soldiers speedily disarmed and dismounted the renegades. On September 8, 1886, the prisoners were all assembled. Escorted by Lawton's command, they left for Bowie Station to be loaded on a train and sent to Florida. As the procession moved out of the post, the regimental band of the Fourth Cavalry formed on the Fort Bowie parade ground and, with the strains of "Auld Lang Syne," said farewell once and for all to Geronimo.⁴²

42. Ibid., p. 527.

EPILOGUE

Geronimo and Nachez had surrendered, but the nation had by no means heard the last of the Chiricahuas. Neither had Gen. Miles. President Cleveland, elated by the successful outcome of the campaign, wired Miles to hold the renegades at Fort Bowie until they could be turned over to civil authorities for criminal trial. Miles was now in an embarrassing position. He had to explain to the President that, like Crook, he had not obtained unconditional surrender. Certain terms had been granted. Moreover, the prisoners were no longer at Fort Bowie but already speeding towards Florida. The President promptly ordered them stopped and detained at San Antonio, Texas, while he tried to find out from Miles exactly what had been promised the Indians in return for their surrender. Miles evaded the issue and wrote wordy dispatches that said little. After a month of tiresome correspondence, the President decided that the terms were such that the renegades could not honorably be turned over to civil authorities for trial. He therefore directed that they resume their journey to Florida.¹

There were many aspects of the confinement of the Chiricahuas in Florida that aroused the indignation of organizations dedicated to securing justice to the Indian. They pointed out that Miles' action in taking the friendly Chiricahuas from their mountain homes to unhealthy captivity in Florida was bad enough. But to subject the men who had served Crook loyally as scouts

1. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, pp. 12-15, 144-146.

to the same treatment was worse yet. Moreover, even Kayitah and Martine, who at Miles' behest had gone with Gatewood to persuade Geronimo to surrender, had also been sent to Florida. Miles had promised Geronimo and Nachez that they would be sent with their families out of the Southwest. Yet the warriors were confined at Fort Pickens and the women and children at Fort Marion. Finally, removed from their natural habitat, the Apaches began dying in alarming numbers.

In Gen. Crook and Gen. O. O. Howard, who had made peace with Cochise in 1872, the friends of the Indian found powerful allies. Crook, especially, made many speeches, wrote pamphlets, and talked with congressmen and senators in an attempt to dramatize the plight of the Chiricahuas and the injustice done them. The campaign naturally aroused heated opposition from Gen. Miles and his supporters, and a violent controversy raged that abated only slightly when Crook died in 1890. Nevertheless, largely as a result of the activities of Crook, Howard, and the Indian Rights Association, the men at Fort Pickens were united with their families in 1887. A year later they were sent to Mount Vernon Barracks, Alabama, and joined the rest of the Chiricahuas, who had already been moved to this more healthful location. At last, in 1894 the entire tribe was moved, over the vigorous objections of Miles and the western press, to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Here Geronimo died on February 17, 1909. In 1913, 187 Chiricahuas were permitted to transfer to the Mescalero Reservation in New Mexico. The rest chose to remain at

Fort Sill, where the remnant of the tribe lives today.²

Geronimo and Nachez were not the last of the renegade leaders to surrender. Mangas, with two men and eight women and children, had separated from Geronimo in August, 1886, and was therefore not present at the Skeleton Canyon meeting. In early October, 1886, these Indians stole a herd of mules from a ranch in Chihuahua managed by Britton Davis, who had resigned from the Army after Crook's first campaign of 1885. Davis telegraphed Miles at Fort Apache of the route the Indians were taking. Miles dispatched a troop of the Tenth Cavalry under Capt. Charles L. Cooper to head them off. Cooper captured Mangas and took him and his people to Fort Apache, from which they were quickly shipped to Florida to join their brethren.³

The surrender of Geronimo, for all practical purposes, ended the Apache wars and, except for the Sioux outbreak of 1890, the Indian wars of the West. No longer were the frontier forts to play a significant role in western history. Many of them, in fact, were abandoned within a decade. Fort Bowie was no exception. It had outlived its usefulness and

2. A good resume of the controversy over the Chiricahua prisoners is given in Schmitt, General George Crook, pp. 289-300. The complete details of the dispute, together with pertinent correspondence covering the surrender, were published in Senate Executive Documents, 49th Cong., 2nd sess., No. 117. See also Herbert Welsh, The Apache Prisoners at Fort Marion, St. Augustine, Florida (Indian Rights Association, 1887). Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1913, p. 34; 1914, pp. 56-57.

3. Davis, Truth About Geronimo, pp. 231-232. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, p. 14; 1887, p. 158.

its remaining years were largely anticlimactic. The garrison devoted itself to rounding up a few Apaches who occasionally strayed from San Carlos and in investigating reports of Indian depredations. In 1837, 1838, and 1839, Gen. Miles and his successor, Col. B. H. Grierson, conducted maneuvers designed to give the troops in the Department of Arizona continuing field experience. For the men at Fort Bowie, the mock wars relieved the tedium of garrison life. Under Brig. Gen. Alexander McCook, who replaced Grierson, the maneuvers were omitted.⁴

Fort Bowie would probably have been abolished several years earlier than it was had not several small gangs of Apache outlaws taken refuge in the rugged mountains of southeastern Arizona. Notable among the renegades was the Apache Kid, whom patrols from Fort Bowie sought without success for six years. These patrols seemed to have little restraining effect on the activities of the outlaws, and in 1893 Gen. McCook concluded that Fort Bowie, too, ought to be abandoned. Although his recommendations were favorably received at the War Department, the heated opposition of Arizona citizens and officials put off the final decision for a year. On October 17, 1894, however, Troops B and L, Second Cavalry, evacuated the fort and marched out of Apache Pass. The military reservation was turned over to the Interior Department and the land auctioned off to ranchers.⁵

In subsequent years local residents cannibalized the buildings of the fort for construction materials. Erosion set in, and before long the post

4. Murray, History of Fort Bowie, pp. 256-260. Miles, Personal Recollections, pp. 537-544.

5. Murray, History of Fort Bowie, pp. 260-302.

had fallen into ruins. These ruins today stand as a monument to the American soldier who for over twenty years endured the hardships and dangers of campaigns that rank among the most arduous in military history. But the ruins also stand as a monument to the Chiricahua Apache Indian. With his unique blend of fighting qualities and unsurpassed mastery of guerilla tactics, he successfully defended his homeland against Spaniards, Mexicans, and Americans for two centuries. And in the end he succumbed only when his own kindred were mobilized against him.

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Photo No. 1

Fort Bowie in 1885. Looking south with Bowie Mountain in the background.

Tentative identification of buildings based on plan on Plate 5.

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| 1 - 6 Officers Quarters | 17 - Adjutant's Office |
| 7 - Tailor Shop | 18 - Corrals |
| 8 - Cavalry Barracks | 19 - Infantry Barracks |
| 10 - Cavalry Barracks | 20 - Kitchen |
| 11 - Wash House | 21 - Butcher Shop |
| 13 - Granary | 22 - Quartermaster Storehouse |
| 14 - Subsistence Storehouse | 25 - Commanding Officers Quarters |
| 15 - Old Hospital | 26 - Guard House |
| 16 - Telegraph Office | 28 - Bakery |

Photo taken by Lt. Charles B. Catwood - 1885



Photo No. 2

Fort Bowie in 1935. View approximately the same as in Photo No. 1. Looking southeast with lower slopes of Bowie Mountain showing in upper right corner. The ruins today are much the same.

Tentative identification of ruins based on plan on Plate 5.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 - Officers Quarters | 15 - Old Hospital |
| 3 - Officers Quarters | 18 - Corrals |
| 6 - Officers Quarters | 20 - Kitchen |
| 8 - Barracks - Cav. | 25 - Commanding Officers Quarters |
| 10 - Barracks - Cav. | 26 - Guard House |
| 11 - Wash House | 28 - Bakery |
| 13 - Granary | 31 - Mess Hall |
| 14 - Subsistence Storehouse | 33 - Hospital |
| | 34 - Hospital Stewards Quarters |
| | 35 - Post Traders |

Photo by George Grant - 1935





Photo No. 3 - Panorama of Fort Bowie and vicinity looking south.
Rough indication of proposed boundaries shown.
Arnberger, 1957.

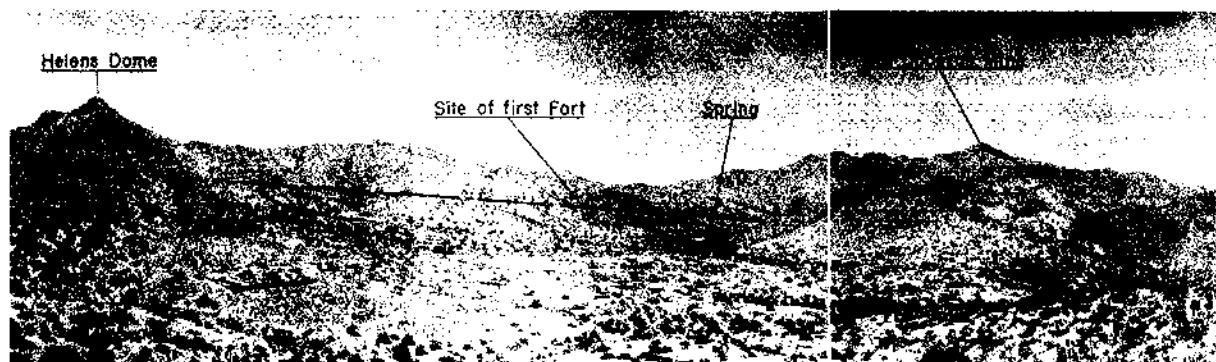


Photo No. 4 - Panorama of Fort Bowie and vicinity looking west
and showing rough indication of proposed boundaries.
Arnberger, 1957.

Photo No. 5 - Looking east from the fort. San Simon Valley in the middle distance. The mountains in the background are in New Mexico. The Butterfield Stage came through this valley to Apache Pass. Arnberger, 1957.

Photo No. 6 - Ruins of cavalry barracks. View is of the interior face of the west wall. Helen's Dome is in the background. Arnberger, 1957.

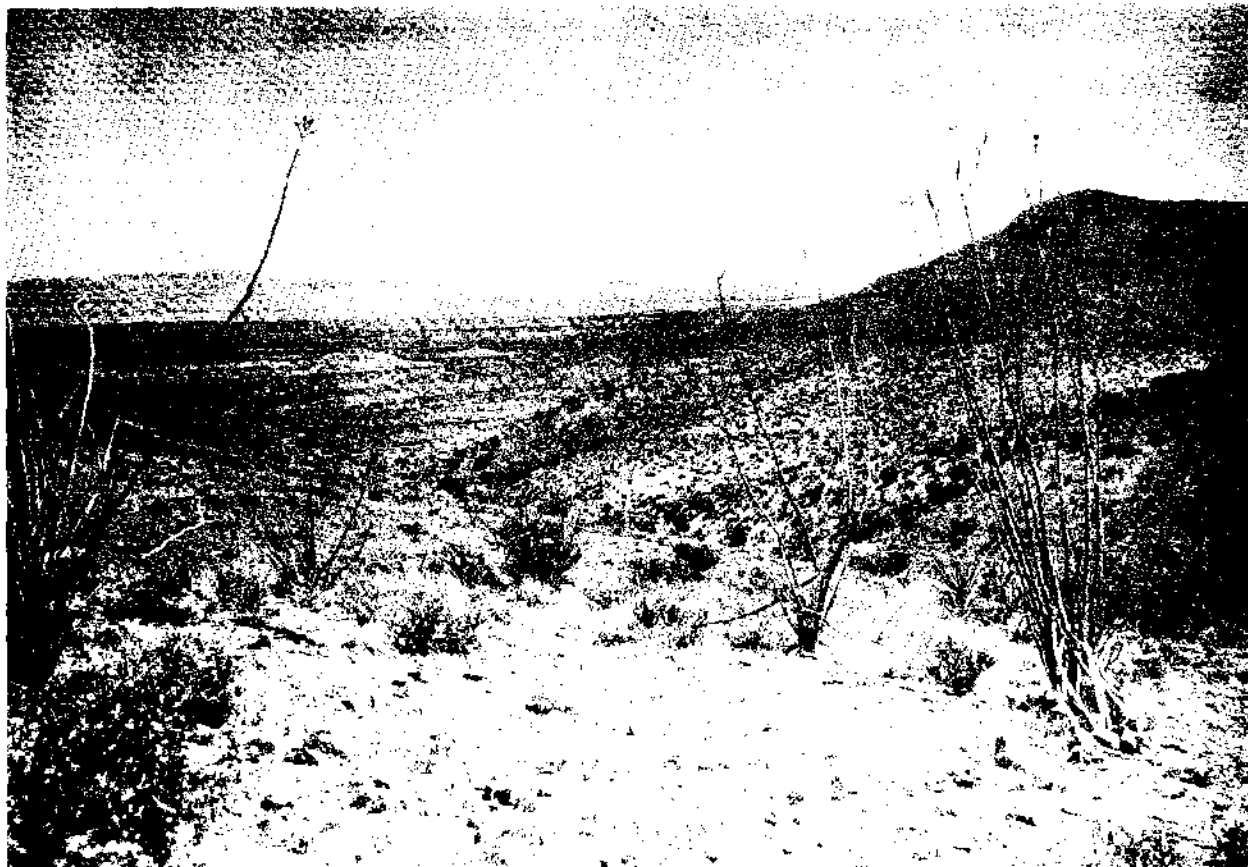




Photo No. 7 - Standing wall of the Hospital Stewards Quarters showing typical construction. Stone foundation, adobe walls and exterior plaster. McCollm and Benson in photo. Arnberger, 1957.

Photo No. 8 - Substantial walls remaining from a building
believed to be the Post Traders.
Arnberger, 1957.

Photo No. 9 - Walls of the old corrals. The hill in the
background is just north of and immediately
adjacent to the fort. It is on private land
and was excluded from the area proposed in
1939. This report recommends acquisition
of the property.
Arnberger, 1957.



Photo No. 10 - Low adobe walls are all that remain of the first fort built in 1862. Left to right Messrs. Benson, Scott, McCalm, Welker, Bowen and Reed. Arnberger, 1957.

Photo No. 11 - Spring located just west of the fort owned by Mr. A. L. Stansberry and showing present use. This is the spring which served the Butterfield Stage Station and figured so prominently in the early history of Apache Pass. Arnberger, 1957.



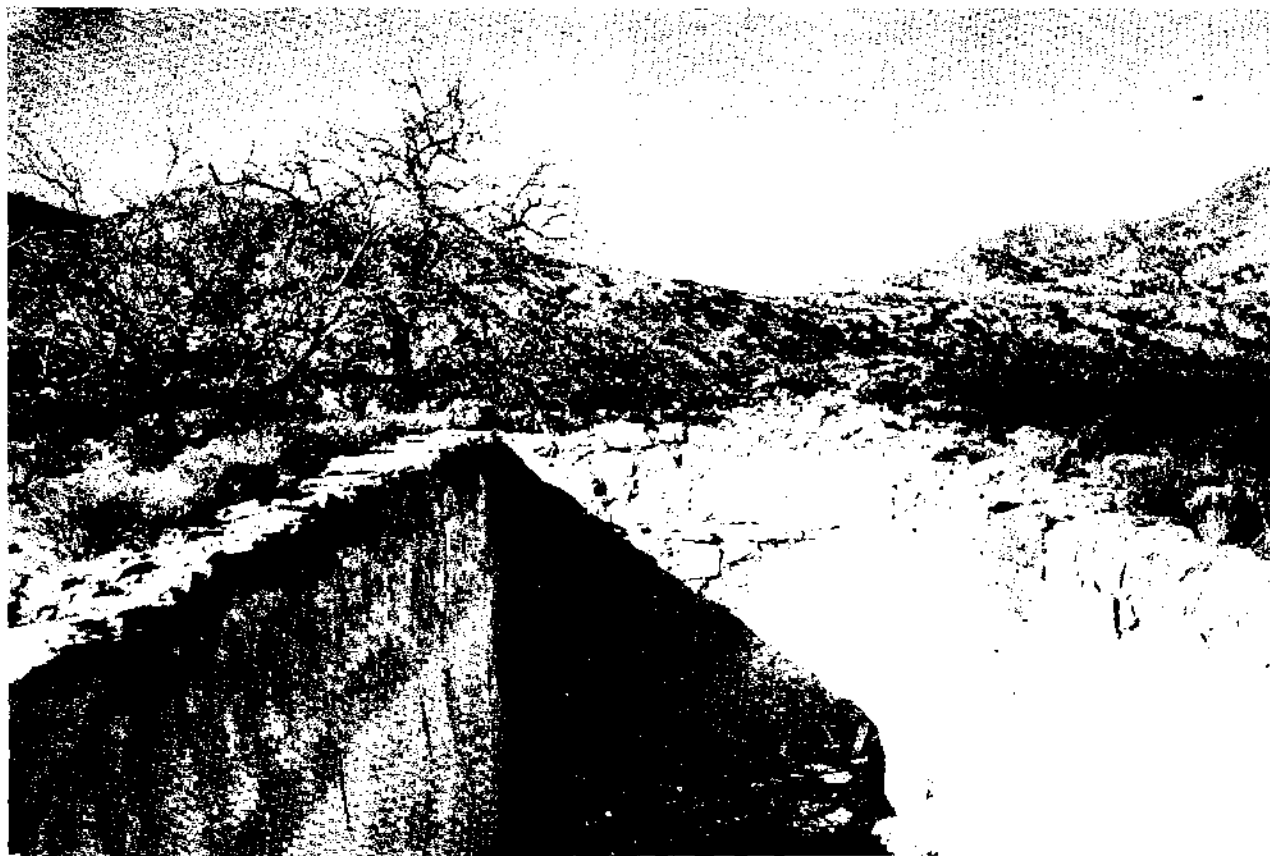


Photo No. 12 - Reservoir located above the fort on the lower slopes of Bowie Mountain showing rock construction and plaster finish.
Photo by Hugh M. Miller, 1953.



Gen. George Crook



Gen. Nelson A. Miles



Lawton's Pursuit of Geronimo
by
Frederick Remington



Natchez and Geronimo
at
Fort Bowie
September, 1886

