

## GERONIMO

**GERONIMO:** That name sparked terror in the hearts of many people living in the Southwest in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But who was this man? Was he the “murdering savage” as depicted in the newspapers of the day or was he a “freedom fighter” trying to save the last elements of a culture being overwhelmed by another culture? This article does not attempt to answer that question but rather present a brief summary of Geronimo’s life.

**BACKGROUND:** At the time of Geronimo’s birth there were several distinct tribal groups that comprised the Southern Apaches. The principal tribes were the Mimbrenos whose homeland was in the Mimbres Mountains and what is now the Silver City area of New Mexico; the Chichenne or Warm Springs tribe who occupied the area east of the Mimbrenos to the Rio Grand and south to around the Mexican town of Canada Alamosa; the Chokonens or Chiricahua tribe whose homeland included the Dos Cabezas, Chiricahua and Dragoon mountains; the Nednais who lived in the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico; and the Bedonkohe whose territory was west of the Mimbrenos and north of the Chikonens. These tribes were on friendly terms with each other and frequently intermarried. Their relations with the northern Apache tribes were frequently hostile. This hostility would later create serious problems when the U.S. Government established a policy to relocate all of the Apache tribes to the San Carlos reservation. This article on Geronimo’s life was derived from several sources, some of which were contradictory.

**GERONIMO’S EARLY LIFE:** Details of Geronimo’s birth are clouded in history and are fairly speculative as to where and when. It appears that he was born in the early 1820s somewhere along the upper portion of the Gila River. Many researchers of Apache history believed that this was somewhere near the current town of Clifton. However; Daklugie, the son of Juh and the nephew of Geronimo, said that the location was in the canyon of the Middle Fork of the Gila River. This canyon is northwest of the present town of Gila hot springs. Geronimo gave the location the Apache name of Nodoyon Canyon. What is known is that his father was Taklishim, son of Chief Mahko of the Bedonkohe Apaches and that he was given the birth name of Goyahkla (or Goth-lyka as Daklugie spelled it) which in Apache means “One Who Yawns”. He was not called by the name “Geronimo” until later in his life after the Mexicans called him that during a battle but the name stuck and after that everyone, even the Apaches, called him by the name Geronimo. For the purpose of this article we will use the name Geronimo throughout.

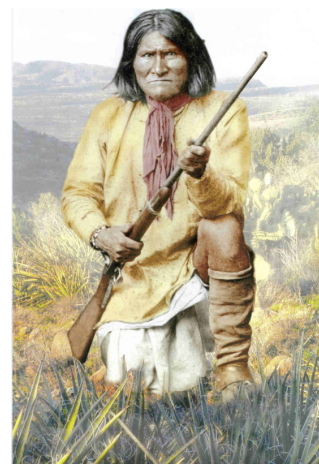
During Geronimo’s childhood, the Bedonkohe Apaches lived in a comparative peace and Geronimo was raised in a fairly stable environment. His training to be a warrior started when he was about six years old when he helped care for the horses, learned to shoot with a bow and arrow and learned to make tools. By the time he was ten he was hunting with the men and by the age of fourteen was being trained for war.

After his father’s death when he was still a youth, Geronimo and his mother decided to visit friends and relatives of the Nednais Apache Tribe living in the Sierra Madre

Mountains of Mexico. Here he was introduced to the state of war that existed between the Apaches and the Mexicans. He learned the art of a warrior by accompanying his friend Juh on excursions against the Mexicans and was admitted to the council of warriors at the age of seventeen. Once he became a warrior he was permitted to marry. After he presented a herd of horses to his intended's father, he took Alope as his wife. Soon after, Geronimo, Alope and his mother returned to his homeland and the Bedonkohe Tribe. While there, Geronimo and Alope had three children.

**GERONIMO'S POWER:** Many Apaches were considered to have the *Power*. This power could manifest itself in many different ways to the different Apaches. All of the great chiefs had the *Power* but not all chiefs did (Naiche, son of Cochise, did not have the *Power*). The Apaches felt that Geronimo definitely had it and that it made him a great warrior although he was never to become a chief. Geronimo first realized that he had received the *Power* in about 1851 when he was grieving over the loss of his family after they had been massacred by the Mexican Army at Janos. He heard the voice of Ussen saying "no gun can ever kill you". Several years later (about 1858) when his sister, wife of Juh, had been in labor for four days and was not expected to live Geronimo climbed the mountain behind the area that would later become Fort Bowie and pleaded with Ussen to spare his sister's life. Geronimo heard Ussen respond that his sister would live and that he would never be killed with weapons and that he would die in old age of natural causes. Geronimo's belief in Ussen was very strong and he prayed to him daily.

**LIFE AS A WARRIOR:** The war between the United States and Mexico introduced a new element into the relationship between the Americans and the southern Apaches. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo contained a provision that required the Americans to prevent the Indians living on the US side of the border from conducting raids against their historical enemies in Mexico. Up to that point, the relationship between the Americans and the Apaches had been generally friendly since the Americans were mostly passing through Apache Territory. Their main problem was with the miners who to a great extent were lawless and violent and had no respect for the Apaches whose land they were invading. Also the miners were digging up the land in search of silver and gold, an act that the Apaches considered disrespectful to their god Ussen. They considered that gold was sacred to Ussen and that groveling in Mother Earth for it would invoke the wrath of Ussen. In addition the Apaches had enough on their hands in their wars with the Mexicans without starting a conflict with the Americans.



Geronimo  
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About 1851, an event occurred that drastically affected Geronimo's life. Geronimo and the Bedonkohe had come under the leadership of Mangas Coloradas, Chief of the Mimbrenos Apaches. The Mexican state of Chihuahua had attempted to make peace with the Apaches by inviting them to trade in their towns and even provided occasional

rations. Mangas Coloradus had organized a trading mission to Casas Grandes and had stopped enroute at Janus. Since it was a peaceable mission, the men had brought along their wives and children and had set up camp just outside the town. Most of the men went into town to trade and had left their weapons and only a few men to guard the camp. On their way back to camp they heard that General Carrasco from Sonora had crossed into Chihuahua, found the camp, captured the horses and supplies, killed about 25 of the people and had taken 50 or 60 women and children captive to be sold as slaves. Geronimo's mother, his wife and his three children were among those killed. This incident generated in Geronimo a lifelong hatred of the Mexicans and he vowed to extract vengeance on the Mexican army troops.

He soon got his chance when Mangas called a council and it was decided to go on the warpath. Geronimo was selected to seek the support of the Chiricahua Apaches under Cochise and the Nednais under Juh. They both agreed to join Mangas who was leading the Mimbrenos, Bedonkohe and Warm Spring Apaches. They encountered the Mexican troops at Arispe and proceeded to inflict a resounding defeat on the Mexicans. It was Geronimo's actions in this battle that earned him the name "Geronimo". Subsequently, Geronimo led small groups of warriors to continue to take revenge against the Mexicans. It should be remembered that at this time much of the Southern Apache territory was still in Mexico. Until the Gadsden Treaty, the US/Mexican border was defined as the Rio Grand and Gila Rivers. Around this time the Bedonkohe had merged with the Mimbrenos Apaches under the leadership of Mangas and Geronimo had married a Bedonkohe woman named Chee-hash-kish. They had two children, a son and a daughter. Geronimo's stature in the tribe had risen and he could now afford a second wife so he soon married Nana-tha-thitith. They had one child together.

Geronimo's first contact with Americans probably came in late 1851 when he heard that "white men" were surveying land near his camp and went to meet them. The "white men" turned out to be the International Boundary Commission headed up by John Russell Bartlett. Geronimo said he made a treaty with them by shaking hands and promising to be brothers. In July 1852, a formal treaty was signed in Santa Fe between Mangas Coloradus and the other Apache leaders and John Greiner, the Indian Superintendent of the Territory of New Mexico. The Apaches promised peace to the United States and free passage to its citizens through their territory. The Apaches respected this provision until the "Bascom Affair" of 1861. Raids against the Mexicans continued however.

After the Gadsden Treaty of 1853 the US border was moved south and encompassed most of the Apache lands except for the Nednais who lived in the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico. During this period the border was only loosely respected and Mexican Troops routinely crossed it in search of Apaches who had been raiding south of the border. On one of Geronimo's raids he was badly wounded (struck near the eye by a glancing bullet) and was recuperating back at his rancharia when it was attacked by Mexican troops. Most of the warriors were away and the camp was quickly overcome. Geronimo survived but his wife Nana-tha-thitith and their child were among the many killed.

At the time of the “Bascom Affair”, January 1861, Geronimo and other Bedonkohees were living among the Chiricahuas and he had married a Chiricahua-Nednai woman named She-gha who was a close relative of Cochise. About this time he also took another wife, a Bedonkohe woman named Shtsha-she. There is no indication that Geronimo was present at Apache Pass on the day Lt Bascom held the meeting with Cochise but he was definitely involved in the succeeding events and the following war against the Americans. The murder of Mangas Colorado on 18 January 1863 by US Soldiers from the California Column under Brigadier James Carleton after he had been lured by a profession of peace was the final straw for the southern Apaches. Geronimo participated in numerous raids against the Americans and Mexicans for the next several years. Attrition was heavy on both sides and the great chiefs (Loco, Juh, Victorio and Cochise) began to consider making offers of peace.

Peace came to the Chiricahua Apaches in October 1872 with the signing of a peace treaty between General Oliver Howard and Cochise and the establishment of the Chiricahua’s homeland as their reservation. Geronimo was present at the peace negotiations at Council Rocks and at the treaty signing at Dragoon Springs. The Chiricahuan Apaches lived in peace with the Americans on their reservation but once again American policy changed. Shortly after Cochise died in June 1874, the powers in Washington at the urging of San Carlos agent John Clum decided to consolidate the Apaches into the San Carlos Reservation and the Chiricahua Reservation was closed in June 1876. Not all of the Apaches living on the reservation agreed to go to San Carlos because they considered the place to be unhealthy (malaria was prevalent) and they weren’t on friendly terms with the northern Apaches. Taza and Naiche, sons of Cochise, complied with Clum and took a band to San Carlos but Juh and his followers went south to the Sierra Madre Mountains in Mexico and Geronimo took a band to the Warm Springs Reservation. A number of others also fled and hid out in their ancestral mountains. Since Geronimo had defied Clum’s orders to go to San Carlos and went to the Warm Springs Reservation instead, Clum essentially established a vendetta against him. A series of attacks occurred in various areas and Geronimo was blamed by Indian Agent Clum for nearly all of them. He thus acquired a reputation far out of proportion to his actual deeds and his name became a household word among the Americans. In April 1877, Clum went to the Warm Springs Reservation, arrested Geronimo by a ruse, and took him and his band to San Carlos in May. This was the only time that Geronimo was ever captured.

Clum kept Geronimo incarcerated at San Carlos with the intention of turning him over to the Sheriff in Tucson for hanging. This did not happen, however, because Clum resigned his position as agent in July after losing a dispute with the Army over who had ultimate authority over the reservation. The new agent ended up releasing Geronimo. The next several years experienced a series of break-outs from San Carlos by the different tribes. The first involving Geronimo occurred that fall (1877) and he remained on the run until a meeting with General Willcox’s aide-de-camp Captain Haskell in December of 1879 convinced him to return to San Carlos and live peaceably. His friend Juh, chief of the Nednais, surrendered in January 1880 and moved his band to San Carlos. The Apaches under Chief Naiche (Taza had died on a trip to Washington) and Juh then

lived peaceably until after the Cibeqe incident of 1881 that resulted in numerous military being sent to the reservation. Although they were not involved in Cibeqe, Juh and Geronimo feared that the retribution by the army might spread to them so Juh, Naiche and Geronimo gathered their followers on 30 September 1881 and fled to Mexico killing everyone they encountered and picking up supplies and horses on the way. Once in Mexico, they joined other Apaches under Nana in the Sierra Madre Mountains. In April 1882 Geronimo and Naiche returned to San Carlos and forced a large number of the peaceable Apaches in Loco's tribe to accompany them on their return to Mexico with the intent of increasing the size of their tribe. This was probably the biggest mistake of Geronimo's career. There were very few trained warriors among the captured Apaches and probably three to four hundred women and children who had become used to reservation life which made fast and secretive movement difficult and the military was in fast pursuit. Other than one skirmish, they eluded contact with the military while on the US side of the border but a large force under the command of Lt. Col Forsyth followed their tracks into Mexico. The Apaches had felt relatively safe once in Mexico not realizing that they had been followed. An advance scouting party under Captain Tupper discovered their camp near Los Huergos and inflicted considerable casualties (Seventeen warriors and seven women) before the Apaches managed to escape. During their flight to their refuge, they were ambushed by a Mexican force under Colonel Garcia with many more casualties. Between the two battles, the Apaches had lost twenty-six of one hundred warriors and many women and children including thirty-three who had been captured and would be sold into slavery. Subsequently, Geronimo participated in numerous raids on both sides of the border.

These raids led to the reassignment of General Crook to Arizona in September 1883. Crook believed that the only way to stop the raids was to attack their refuge in the Sierra Madre. A key element of his plan was to enlist the aid of Apache Scouts to search out the renegades. In May 1884 Crook's forces made contact with the Apaches in their Sanctuary and after many discussions, all the leaders except Juh agreed to return to the reservation. Over the next several months, the various bands began arriving at San Carlos. Geronimo finally arrived in late February 1885 with twenty-six warriors and seventy women and children with twenty-five tribe members still to arrive. When they came, all of the Chiricahua Apaches were now considered to be at San Carlos (Juh had died and his followers were assumed to have joined the other bands). The Chiricahuans wanted an area by themselves and preferred the Eagle River area but that area had been removed from the reservation boundary and had been occupied by the Americans. They finally settled on the Turkey Creek area near Fort Apache. They maintained the peace but conflicts between the San Carlos Indian Agent and the military made them uneasy and suspicious. Also, the soldiers at the post were harassing and making threatening gestures toward them. On 13 May, the Chiricahuas decided to hold a big dance and celebration the next day. The celebration would naturally include tiswin, an alcoholic drink that was prohibited by the authorities but was considered a normal social drink by the Apaches as alcohol was to the soldiers. The day after the celebration, two chiefs informed Lieutenant Davis that the government had no right to tell them what they could drink or how they should treat their women. They also told Davis that he had no jail big enough to put them all in jail. Unsure of the government's response, rumors naturally

spread. This unease led to the next breakout from the reservation on 18 May 1885, the fourth by Geronimo. A major factor in the decision to leave the reservation came from Huera, the Apache lady who had manufactured the tiswin and knew she would receive punishment. She challenged the men not to submit to arrest and instead act like warriors and flee to Mexico. Geronimo and Mangus (son of Mangus Coloradus) convinced Naiche and Chihuahua that the soldiers were coming to arrest them so they fled together with their people. When Naiche and Chihuahua discovered they had been deceived by Geronimo about the threat from the soldiers, the group split up. Geronimo and Mangus gathered their followers and separately fled to Mexico. Naiche and his people tried to go back to the reservation but ran into the scouts of the patrol that was searching for them and decided to join Chihuahua who was heading for the mountains to hide out until things settled down before returning to the reservation. They were attacked by another patrol and also fled to Mexico. The groups following Geronimo, Naiche and Chihuahua eventually rejoined in Mexico. The group following Mangus never rejoined the others.

**GERONIMO'S SURRENDER TO GENERAL CROOK:** General Crook felt that the only solution to the problem was to follow them into Mexico and either bring them back to the reservation or destroy them. A patrol under Captain Crawford entered Mexico on 11 June 1885 and one under Captain Davis crossed the border in July. These patrols relied heavily on the use of Apache scouts who were indispensable for tracking and locating the camps of the renegades. On 7 August, Geronimo's camp was overrun and although most of the warriors escaped, fifteen women and children, including three women and five children of Geronimo's family were captured and taken back to San Carlos. His two year old son died at Fort Bowie while being transported to the reservation and is buried at the Fort Bowie Cemetery under the name of "Little Robe". In September, Geronimo and four of his followers crossed the border and headed north to the Fort Apache area with the intent of recovering his family and on 22 September managed to locate one of his wives (She-gha) and his 3-year old daughter and escape with them back to Mexico. On the way, the group captured three Mescalero women and three children to take with them. Geronimo took the youngest woman, Ih-tdda, as his second wife and a young boy to raise as a son. For the next few months, a number of raids into the US were made including one into the Fort Apache area where they killed a number of Apaches in retribution for their participation as army scouts.

These raids intensified the effort to attack the renegades in their Sierra Madre stronghold and on 9 January 1886, Captain Crawford's scouts located their Rancheria and his forces were able to surround it at night without the Apaches becoming aware although the braying of a burro finally aroused the camp. The Apaches managed to slip away unharmed while Crawford's forces occupied the camp. Crawford and the Apaches agreed to a meeting scheduled for the following day to talk when fate intervened. Mexican irregulars attacked the US encampment thinking it was the Apache camp and Crawford was killed. Crawford's scouts struck back and killed all eighteen of the Mexican officers and wounded five of the men while Geronimo watched from a distance and laughed. Lt. Maus assumed command of the American patrol and on 15 January held the conference with the Apache leaders consisting of Geronimo, Naiche, Nana and Chihuahua. Maus's terms were surrender or be destroyed. The Apache leaders agreed

that they would meet General Crook at the border in “two moons” to surrender. Maus took nine Apaches as hostages (Chief Nana and his wife, a wife and child of both Geronimo and Naiche, a “buck”, a boy and one other woman) back to Fort Bowie to assure that the rest of the tribe would surrender to General Crook as scheduled.

On 5 February Maus recrossed the border and set up camp about ten miles south to await the arrival of the Apaches. They held to the agreement of “two moons” and by 19 March all of the Apaches had arrived and had set up their camp about a half-mile away. They refused to cross the border until they had formally surrendered to General Crook who was still at Fort Bowie. The surrender conference was held from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1886. The Apaches wanted a simple return to the reservation but Crook said the time for that was past and they must surrender unconditionally with the warriors being imprisoned in the eastern US for up to two years. Chihuahua broke first and agreed to these terms and eventually the others did also with Geronimo being the last. In celebration, the Apaches went on a drunken debauch with liquor provided by a bootlegger named Tribolett who, it was felt, had ulterior motives. He was a member of a group that profited from the Indian wars by supplying the Army and also by trading with the Apaches for the livestock and goods they had plundered. The ending of the Apache wars would make a serious dent in their lifestyle. He went to work on Geronimo and convinced him that as soon as he crossed the border he would be hanged. On the night of 28 March Geronimo and Naiche with twenty warriors, fourteen women and six children made their escape back into the interior of Mexico. Having been chastised by General Sheridan for “laxity” in his handling of the surrender, General Crook asked to be relieved of his command and on 2 April was replaced by Brigadier General Nelson Miles.

On 26 April, Geronimo and Naiche crossed the border into Arizona just east of Nogales on what was to be Geronimo’s last raid into the United States. They moved north and early the next morning entered Calabasas and stole six horses before heading west toward Agua Fria Canyon (renamed Peck Canyon). The raiders arrived at the ranch house of Artemus Peck about 9:00 A.M. and proceeded to kill Peck’s wife Petra and their infant child and then ransacked the house. The warriors found Petra’s niece, Trinidad Verdin, hiding under a bed and were about to kill her when Geronimo stopped them. He put Trini on a horse behind his son Chappo and the raiders had continued up the canyon about 2 miles when they spotted Peck and Charlie Owens who had been rounding up maverick cows. They killed Owens and captured Peck who had been thrown from his horse. When they were stripping off his clothes they noticed he was wearing red flannel underwear. Geronimo addressed him as Mangas Coloradas (Red Sleeves) and for a reason known only to Geronimo decided to spare his life. There are indications that some of the warriors may have had contact with him when he lived in Mexico and had remembered him as a “good man”. After stripping Peck to his underwear the raiders continued up the canyon to the west. The following day, 28 April, they reentered Mexico via the Pajarito Mountains but not before some of the warriors killed a cowboy near Yank’s Spring and stole 50 horses.

**GERONIMO’S FINAL SURRENDER:** In July 1886, General Miles at the suggestion of George Noche enlisted as scouts two former Chiricahua Warriors who had been pacified to reservation life. He directed Ka-teah and Martine to deliver a message to Geronimo

demanding his surrender. Lt. Charles B. Gatewood was selected to lead the mission with the authority to request support from any U.S. troops. Lt. Gatewood left Fort Bowie on 16 July with an interpreter (George Wratten who was to play a significant role in the lives of the Apaches after the surrender), a packer, three mules and the two scouts, Ka-teah and Martine, intending to pick up an escort before crossing the border. This didn't work out but soon after crossing he met up with Capt. Parker of the 4<sup>th</sup> Calvary who escorted him to the camp of Captain Lawton which was in the Sierra Madre Mountains about 250 miles south of the border. They arrived there on 3 August but soon learned that Geronimo and his band were near Fronteras, a few hundred miles to the northwest.

Lt. Gatewood and Captain Lawton soon set out for Fronteras and arrived there on 20 August. They learned that several Apache Women had visited Fronteras with a peace offer and had left to rejoin their tribe with three ponies laden with food and mescal (an intoxicating drink). They also learned that the District Perfect had gathered about 200 soldiers into town and planned to follow the women and attack the tribe after the warriors had gotten drunk on the mescal. He warned the Americans not to depart in the direction that the Apache women took as they would interfere with his plans.

Lt Gatewood left town with a small party by a circuitous route and intercepted the route of the women. He cautiously followed the women's trail while displaying a white flag. After tracking the trail for three days they set up camp on the Bavispe River not realizing that Geronimo had been observing them during their approach. On the evening of 23 August the scout Martine returned and told Gatewood that the hostiles were in an exceedingly rocky position high in the Torres Mountains about four miles away and that Geronimo was offended that Lt. Gatewood had not come directly to his rancharia instead of sending scouts. He also said he would talk only with Lt. Gatewood. The next day they approached within a mile of Geronimo's camp when they were stopped by an unarmed Apache. They were told that Naiche had designated a place for the meeting down by a bend in the river where there was wood, water, grass and shade.

After Gatewood signaled that all was ready for the meeting, the Apaches arrived to hear the deal that General Miles was offering. Lt. Gatewood said "Surrender and you will be sent to join the rest of your people in 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." Geronimo proposed several alternatives but in the end decided to accept the surrender terms. It seems that the turning point was when he was informed that the rest of the Chiricahuans who had remained at San Carlos had already been relocated to Florida along with the Apaches under Chihuahua who had been captured earlier. It was agreed that the Apaches would remain armed to protect themselves as they were being escorted to a meeting with general Miles north of the border. As they proceeded north, they were intercepted on 26 August by the Mexican Precept with his 200 troops which caused considerable consternation on the part of the Apaches. After a meeting with the Precept in which Geronimo assured the Mexican that he was surrendering to the Americans, the party was allowed to proceed. They crossed the border on 28 August and set up camp in Skeleton Canyon on the 28<sup>th</sup> to wait the arrival of General Milles for the formal surrender. General Miles arrived on 3 September and the formal surrender took place on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Geronimo met with General Miles first and accepted the terms since Naiche had



not yet come in. He had gone off by himself and was grieving because his brother-in-law Zhonne had gone back into Mexico to look for his favorite pony and had not returned and he feared he had been killed by the Mexicans. Naiche met with General Miles and accepted the terms late in the afternoon of the 4<sup>th</sup>. It is interesting to note that in his report of the surrender of Geronimo that General Miles made no mention of the part that Lt. Gatewood had played in the surrender.

**TRANSFER TO FLORIDA:** On 5 September 1886 the Apaches and their escort left Skeleton Canyon and began the trip to Fort Bowie. General Miles, Naiche, Geronimo and three other leaders went ahead and arrived in Fort Bowie that evening and the rest of the party arrived on the 8<sup>th</sup>. While at Fort Bowie General Miles assured the Apache leaders of what was to await them in Florida. He told them that the past was forgotten, that they would begin a new life and that there would be a reunion of the whole tribe. He said: "Leave your horses here, maybe they will be sent to you; you will have a separate reservation with your tribe, with horses and wagons and no one will harm you." After the arrival of the others, they were taken to the train station at Bowie to commence their journey to Florida. The train was stopped at San Antonio and the Apaches held under guard while Washington debated their final disposition. Washington finally made up his mind and the train departed San Antonio on 22 October arriving in Florida on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Contrary to the promises, Naiche, Geronimo and all of the adult warriors were taken to Fort Pickens on Santa Rosa Island and all of the wives and children were taken to Fort Marion, three hundred miles away to join the Apaches under Chihuahua who had been sent to Fort Marion earlier. All of the Chiricahua Apaches (all of the Southern Apaches were now referred to as Chiricahuan) who had been living in peace on the San Carlos Reservation were also rounded up and sent to Fort Marion. This included all of those who had faithfully served in the military as scouts. The entire tribe would now be treated as prisoners of war.

**PRISON LIFE:** The initial plan was to keep those Apaches considered as hostile (the warriors under Naiche and Geronimo who had surrendered to General Miles) in isolation at Fort Pickens and all the rest of the Chiricahua Apaches in captivity at Fort Marion. However, contact with newspaper reporters and a sympathetic public soon came into play and the War Department had to change its plans. After an investigation it was decided to relocate the Fort Marion prisoners in April 1887. The families of the "hostiles" were moved to Fort Pickens and all of the rest of the Apaches were moved to the Mount Vernon Barracks near Mobile Alabama to get them away from the unhealthy environment of Fort Marion that had caused numerous deaths among the Apaches. In May 1888, the Apaches at Fort Pickens were also relocated to the Mount Vernon Barracks to rejoin the rest of the Chiricahua tribe which was still being held as prisoners.

In April 1889, an attempt was made by General Oliver Howard (and later that year by his son Lt. Guy Howard) to remove the Apaches from the Barracks and find them a permanent home. Their reports led to a follow-up investigation by General Crook in January 1890 who recommended that the tribe be relocated, preferably to the Indian Territory of Oklahoma. General Crook died in March and so did the recommendation. In 1891 the Apaches were allowed to construct a small village of eighty houses a short distance from the post which vastly improved their living conditions. It was here that

Geronimo established a reputation as a shrewd trader selling items that he had made. With the establishment of the village, Geronimo was appointed as “Justice of the Peace” to try minor offenses.

In 1893 an attempt was made by the War Department to break up the tribe and relocate them to several army posts around the country. This was opposed by General Miles who recommended that they be relocated as a group to Fort Sill in Oklahoma. After considerable deliberation by all concerned, this recommendation was approved and the remaining Apaches were relocated to Fort Sill in October. They were still to be controlled as prisoners of war. The Apaches quickly learned to become farmers and ranchers and Geronimo was soon recognized as being one of the best farmers of the tribe. The human side of Geronimo also became evident. In 1897 when his wife became ill with tuberculosis, Geronimo did all of the housework; washing the dishes, sweeping the floor and keeping his home immaculate. Not what you would expect of a grizzled old warrior.

In his years at Fort Sill, Geronimo became quite a celebrity. People were willing to buy anything that was connected with him and he became an expert businessman. His presence was sure to draw crowds and he became a main attraction at expositions such as the Trans-Mississippi Exposition in Omaha in 1898, the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo in 1901 and the St. Louis World’s Fair. All of his appearances had to be approved by the War Department since he was still a prisoner and many requests for his participation were denied. He attended the inauguration of Teddy Roosevelt in 1904 and at a meeting with the President made a plea for the Apaches to be allowed to return to their historic homeland. Of course, this request was denied.

Geronimo passed away on 17 February 1909 still classified as a prisoner of war. His vision from Ussen held true and he died in old age of natural causes. It was not until an act of Congress on 24 August 1912 removed the hated classification of prisoner of war from the remnants of the Chiricahua Apaches.

Summarized in July 2014 by T. Johnson from the books “*Geronimo*” by Angie Debo, “*The Conquest of Apacheria*” by Dan Thrap, *From Cochise to Geronimo*” by Edwin R. Sweeney and various articles appearing in “*Volume 27, Number 1 of The Journal of Arizona History*” published by the Arizona Historical Society.

