

THE END OF THE APACHE WARS:  
GENERAL NELSON A. MILES AND THE  
GERONIMO CAMPAIGN, APRIL - SEPTEMBER, 1886

by

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## PREFACE

Much has been written about the Indian wars in the Southwest, including the 1885 - 1886 Geronimo Campaign. Most works, including reminiscences and general histories, devote extensive coverage to the period of Brigadier General George Crook's command, from May, 1885, through March, 1886. The six months' interlude between his departure and the final surrender of the renegade Chiricahua Apaches led by Geronimo seldom receives more than cursory notice, however. Although Odie B. Faulk's The Geronimo Campaign (1969) discusses the chronology of the full fifteen months' warfare, it fails to analyze the Apache war on a national scope. Rather, it highlights the major military events and dwells at length on the role of Lieutenant Charles B. Gatewood in obtaining Geronimo's surrender. Consequently, the necessity of analyzing this six months' period in terms of national Indian policy, both civilian and military, presents itself. The goals of this particular study have been to assess the cultural background of the Chiricahua Apaches, to glance at the various means of dealing with them by the Spanish, Mexicans, and Americans, and, finally, to focus on the military manner of conquering this nomadic and warlike tribe which

was believed to have impeded progress in the Anglo settlement of Arizona.

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## ABSTRACT

During the nineteenth century the Indians in the American West posed one of the prime obstacles to the settlement of that area. In Arizona, the Apaches, particularly the Chiricahua band, had rampaged first against the Spanish, then against the Mexicans, and finally against the Americans. After the Civil War they were herded onto reservations, but they escaped regularly to go on raiding forays through southern Arizona and Mexico. The United States Army, serving as both a protective and punitive force, then pursued the escapees and forced them back onto the reservations.

In April of 1886 Brigadier General Nelson A. Miles arrived in Arizona to assume command of the military Department of Arizona, succeeding Brigadier General George Crook. The previous month Crook had obtained the surrender of a band of Chiricahuas, including Geronimo, which had escaped from the reservation in 1885. Geronimo's band escaped again, however, and Crook was relieved of his command. Miles, unfamiliar with the geography of Arizona, the Apaches and their style of warfare, and disdainful of Crook's methods, came armed with plans to force the Apaches to surrender. By July, however, he discovered that his

plan had failed, and he quietly reverted to Crook's plan of finding the Indians by employing Apache scouts, following them, and negotiating a surrender. This plan, rather than his own, ultimately brought about Geronimo's surrender.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Among the last of the Indian tribes to fall before the Westward push of the American frontier were the Apaches in Arizona. The presence of Indians on the frontier had presented a problem for the Americans ever since the early establishment of the English colonies. The difficulty lay in dispossessing the Indian Americans of their land in order to make room for the Anglo-Americans. Consequently, the federal government continued a policy initiated during the colonial period, relocation of the tribes farther West, beyond the civilized frontier. Western settlement expanded more rapidly than the short-sighted politicians foresaw, however, so that by the 1870s, vacant areas of western land to which the Indians might be removed had diminished greatly. Arizona and New Mexico, home of the Apaches, were among the last of the western lands invaded by the Anglo-Americans because of the unattractiveness of the land, climate, and Indian inhabitants. By the early 1870s, however, these two territories began to gain population and Apache raids brought about federal action.

The Apaches, traditionally a warring nation, feared that the Americans, like the Mexicans before them,

would take over their best hunting grounds, causing the Indians to starve. Retaliating for the invasion of their land, the various tribes descended upon villages, towns and ranches, stealing whatever livestock might be available and murdering the inhabitants in the process. In response to pleas for aid by the Americans in Arizona, President Ulysses S. Grant ordered federal troops to garrison the territory and protect the residents. With no available area to which the troublesome Apaches might be removed, the Grant administration established reservations in an effort to contain them and end their fearsome sprees. The Apaches, like many other Indian groups in the country, found this system unsuitable, however, as they experienced both difficulty adjusting to sedentary life and dissatisfaction with the agents and military control. Consequently, the Apaches, particularly the Chiricahua band, often left the reservations at San Carlos and Fort Apache to go on raiding forays. The last of these occurred in 1885.

The outbreak of about 125 Chiricahuas from the San Carlos Reservation on May 18, 1885, marked the onset of their last series of raiding escapades in the Southwest. Raiding ranches, stealing stock and murdering residents, this group of renegades terrorized the populations of southeastern Arizona and northern Sonora for ten months.

They succeeded in eluding detachments of the United States Army under the direction of Brigadier General George Crook, taking refuge in high mountain ranges accessible only on foot. In January, 1886, leaders of the hostile group met with an American Army detachment pursuing them in Mexico and agreed to parley with General Crook near the end of March. Partially successful, the March meeting resulted in the surrender of all but thirty-seven of the hostile band. The pursuit and subsequent surrender of the latter band comprises the final phase of the Apache Wars.

Because of the escape of these thirty-seven Indians under the leadership of Geronimo, Crook's superiors in Washington expressed dissatisfaction with his methods of warfare and with the surrender conditions he offered the Apaches. Faced with this, as well as local criticism, Crook asked to be relieved of his command and transferred out of Arizona. Brigadier General Nelson Appleton Miles, another veteran Indian fighter, replaced him as commander of the Department of Arizona on April 12, 1886.

When General Miles took over from General Crook, he altered the campaign strategy, under orders from his Washington superiors. Crook correctly recognized the guerilla nature of Apache warfare; he knew that conventional methods could not work and that the Apaches would

never be captured outright. The only means of overpowering them militarily would be to kill them one by one. Crook's strategy, therefore, consisted of trailing them as closely as possible, then offering to meet, talk, and negotiate an honorable surrender, thus inducing the Indians to return to the reservation.

Ignorant of the nature of the Apache and of the territory in which he was to work, Miles devised a strategy more pleasing to his Washington superiors than Crook's. Whereas Crook employed companies of Indian scouts as his primary field units to track down the renegades, Miles replaced them with companies of regular soldiers accompanied by a few Indian auxiliaries. Crook trusted the scouts and believed they could follow the renegades better than any regular soldiers ever could. Miles, however, distrusted the Indians and expressed more faith in the trailing and pursuing abilities of his regular troops. His primary strategy consisted of constantly stalking and harrassing the renegades in the belief that they would tire quickly, become worn out, and then, in an exhausted state, surrender to the army. To aid the implementation of his strategy, Miles ordered troops to guard specific areas and also established a network of heliograph stations to speed communications and maintain daytime surveillances of the countryside.

By July, 1886, after nearly three months in Arizona with no positive results to show for his efforts, Miles realized that his strategy would have to be altered. His troops pursued Geronimo's band through southern Arizona and into Old Mexico, but the Indians showed no signs of slowing down nor any desire to surrender. Miles therefore added another element to his plan of warfare, one similar to his predecessor's strategy. He decided to send out an independent scouting group, including two Chiricahua Apaches, to seek out the Indians wherever they might be and discuss their surrender. A study of the first three months of the campaign illustrates the events which led Miles to change his mind, while the last two months show the implementation of his additional tactic and its result, Geronimo's surrender.

Following the renegades' surrender, their disposition, and that of the non-hostile Chiricahuas as well, posed a problem. Although Miles, like President Grover Cleveland, favored the removal of both groups, they disagreed about their future location. Miles favored removal to the Indian Territory in Oklahoma, while the President and his associates preferred Florida, an ironic choice considering that previous federal policy relocated hostile Indian groups farther West. Miles objected to the East Coast location as unhealthy for the Apaches, long adapted

to the arid climate of Arizona, and voiced his objections to the Washington officials for nearly two months. In spite of the General's opposition, the President ordered both the hostile and non-hostile Apaches shipped to Florida. Miles' efforts in their behalf illustrates a benevolent or compassionate side of his character, one ignored or misconstrued by most authors. Furthermore, he defied Washington orders to hold the hostiles as prisoners for trial by the Arizona authorities. Knowing their fate would be a speedy and unjust trial, he moved them out of the territory via railroad to Florida, risking the charge of insubordination in the process.

Detailing this five month segment of the campaign demonstrates the implementation of federal policy regarding hostile Indians and their ultimate disposition, as well as the military facets of the campaign itself. It is an illustration of a policy that protected the Anglo-Americans invading Indian territory and then demanded that the Indians accept the invasion and submit to American rule at the risk of removal or extermination.

## CHAPTER II

### THREE CENTURIES OF WARFARE

The end of the Apache Wars in September, 1886, not only halted warfare but brought the old Apache civilization itself to a close. The clashes between the Indians and white men represented a cultural war, with the Indians fighting desperately to retain their life-way while their opponents, Spanish, Mexican, and American, attempted to clear the land of the Apache and, what seemed to them, his alien civilization. Had the Apaches been a sedentary tribe, like the Pueblos or Papagos, warfare would not have continued intermittantly for three centuries. Instead, the Apaches, historically and traditionally, were a warring and raiding nation, making their living by nomadic hunting and raiding of civilized regions. The clash of cultures became inevitable when the white men moved into the Indians' territory and demanded that the traditional life-way cease.

The traditional Apache culture dates from the time of their nomadic wanderings from the northwestern section of the North American continent. Demographic pressures caused the migration of a whole group of Indians known as the Athapascans, including both the Western

and Chiricahua Apaches. While invading other Indian lands in their southward push, it became necessary to compete with the inhabitants for whatever food was available. Consequently, the habits of warring and raiding remained with the Apaches, forming their style of life long before the invasion of the white men.

By the time of the first European intrusions into Arizona and New Mexico, early in the sixteenth century, the Chiricahua Apaches had gained a reputation among neighboring Indian tribes for their savagery. They even remained isolated from other Apache groups, creating a virtual wall of hostility around themselves.<sup>1</sup> Organizational structure and food gathering techniques also differentiated the Chiricahua from the Western Apaches, for while the latter had adapted somewhat to agricultural techniques, the Chiricahuas retained their old methods of obtaining food, by hunting game and raiding sedentary villages.<sup>2</sup> Because of this distinction, the Western tribes

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1. This factor may be responsible for their downfall. Because of their isolation, they did not retain close ties to the other Apache groups, who later held few scruples about hunting the Chiricahuas while in the employ of the Army. See Ralph H. Ogle, Federal Control of the Western Apaches, 1848 - 1886 (Albuquerque, 1940), 17, fn. 68; Edward H. Spicer, Cycles of Conquest; the Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1555 - 1960 (Tucson, 1962), 243.

2. Grenville Goodwin, The Social Organization of the Western Apache (Tucson, 1969), 7. See also M. E. Opler, "An Outline of Chiricahua Apache Social

later adapted more readily to sedentary agricultural life on the reservations, while the Chiricahuas tolerated the confinement for relatively short periods of time only.

Since raiding and warfare played such an important role in an Apache's life, the boys of the tribe became proficient at hunting, riding, and using weapons early in life.<sup>3</sup> Becoming a warrior was the goal of the Apache youth, for it meant honor and good standing within the tribe. Killing a member of another tribe, or, later, a Mexican or American, added to the reputation of a warrior. The Apaches felt no remorse at the senseless murder, for according to their beliefs, they "recognized no duties to any man outside their tribe. It was no sin to kill enemies or to rob them."<sup>4</sup> Clearly, two factors of the Apaches' life-way, their self-imposed isolation and their war-like inclinations, ultimately made assimilation into the European culture impossible.

Unaware of the difficulties to be encountered, Spain's New World policy centered on absorbing the Indian communities into the nation, rather than exterminating or

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Organization," in Fred Eggan, ed., Social Anthropology of North American Tribes (Chicago, 1937), 173 - 242.

3. Lt. A. G. Hennise to Wm. Clayton, August 21, 1870; in House Executive Document No. 1, part 2, Vol. 1, 41 C, 3 s, 624.

4. S. M. Barrett, ed., Geronimo's Story of His Life (New York, 1906), 29, fn.

removing them, as the English did. The Indians, however, received a poor first impression of the invaders who visited their villages. They seemed interested only in demanding food and clothing and in ravishing Indian women. The Indians soon ascertained that the intruding scoundrels were concerned only with their own interests, and therefore rejected any Spanish peace overtures.<sup>5</sup> The only real benefits they reaped from the Spanish inroads were the acquisitions of horses and firearms.

A symbiotic relationship developed between the Spanish and Apaches in the late eighteenth century. The Spanish supplied food in exchange for peace, but the relationship deteriorated when the Mexican independence movement ousted the Spanish government. The new Mexican government, unstable and experiencing financial difficulties, could not afford to continue rationing. Consequently, the Indians reverted to their former practice of raiding, and between 1820 and 1835, they killed over five thousand people, destroyed one hundred ranchos, camps and other settlements, and forced between three and four thousand Mexican settlers to flee from the northern

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5. Memorial of Fray Francisco de Velasco, quoted in George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595 - 1628 (Albuquerque, 1953), II, 1094. Declaration of Fray Miguel de Menchero, 1744, quoted in Charles Wilson Hackett, Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773 (Washington, D. C., 1937), III, 401.

frontier.<sup>6</sup> The Mexican government responded to the Apache reprisals by beginning a policy of extermination. In 1835 and 1837 respectively, the states of Sonora and Chihuahua hired bounty hunters to kill Apaches, but this only served to intensify the Indians' hatred for the Mexicans.<sup>7</sup> By 1848 their attacks became so treacherous that the Mexicans abandoned Tubac and temporarily lost Fronteras.<sup>8</sup> The Apaches rampaged with ferocity, and the Mexican government could not control them. Such was the situation when the United States acquired the territory of southern Arizona by means of the Gadsden Purchase in 1853.

Apache-American relations began peacefully, with a wait-and-see attitude on both sides. By a treaty of July 1, 1852, one of the principal Apache chieftains, Mangas Coloradas, of the Bedonkohe band, agreed to maintain peace with the United States. He and his men continued to war against their mortal enemies, the Mexicans, however, in spite of American demands that they cease. The Apaches failed to understand how the American

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6. Thomas Edwin Farish, History of Arizona (Phoenix, 1915), I, 78 - 79.

7. Ralph A. Smith, "The Scalp Hunter in the Borderlands, 1835 - 1850," Arizona and the West, VI (Spring, 1964), 5 - 22.

8. Dan L. Thrapp, Conquest of Apacheria (Norman, 1967), 10.

government could dictate Indian rights, for according to Apache thought, the only way one group acquired control over another was by winning a war, yet none had been fought with the Americans.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the Indian situation among American settlers in southern Arizona remained quiescent for nearly eight years. The federal government formulated no strict policy, as long as peace reigned, and allowed the Apaches to roam freely. Elsewhere in the United States it herded tribes onto reservations, but in Arizona military strength remained minimal and reservations had not reached the planning state yet. In 1860, however, two unrelated events occurred which turned the Apaches into warriors once again and activated government concern for a definite policy.

In the first instance, a Mexican working with the joint Mexican-American border survey shot and killed an Apache without provocation. The remuneration suggested by the man's boss, a mere \$30, infuriated the Indians, who sought revenge immediately.<sup>10</sup> The second incident, known as the Bascom Affair, concerned a conflict between Lieutenant George N. Bascom and the Chiricahua Apache chief, Cochise. Bascom accused Cochise's tribe of having kidnapped a young Mexican boy, Felix Ward, but their leader

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9. Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, 246.

10. John Gregory Bourke, On the Border with Crook (Chicago, 1962), 118.

denied the charge. In the interrogation which followed, Bascom treacherously attempted to trap Cochise, but the chief escaped, and the lieutenant captured six warriors instead. Cochise retaliated to Bascom's refusal to free the Indians by capturing three Americans. When Bascom remained adamant, Cochise ordered the American captives killed. Bascom, in retaliation, hanged the Indian captives, igniting twelve years of constant and bloody warfare.

Within a year, the outbreak of the Civil War forced the army to abandon the Southwest to the Apache raiders, Mexican bandits, and frontier desperadoes.<sup>11</sup> The close of the war and return of the troops brought no improvement to the situation, however. In addition, the civil and military authorities began to conflict with one another, representing sentimentality and hostility respectively toward the Indian. Only the fine line distinguishing hostility and non-hostility on the part of the Indians determined which was placed in the position of primacy. In Arizona, the flagrant Indian hostility and rampant violence helped the military to acquire and retain control in place of the civilian-run Interior Department after 1871. That year, residents of Arizona petitioned

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11. Report of the Secretary of War, 1888, Senate Executive Document No. 1, part 2, Vol. I, 50 C, 1 s, 6. Hereafter, Report of the Secretary of War, 1888.

President Ulysses S. Grant for help, claiming that in the short space of three or four years, some four hundred of their meager number had fallen victim to the Apache vengeance.<sup>12</sup> Grant subsequently ordered Brigadier General George Crook to assume command of the military in Arizona commencing June 4, 1871.<sup>13</sup>

With the arrival of Crook in Arizona, a definite Indian policy began to be formulated. It differed from the previous period by creating a stronger military stance in which military authority over the Indians ranked supreme over civil authority, represented by the Indian Office.

As in other areas of the country, the military inherited the job of keeping a close watch on the Indians, protecting the settlers, preventing raids, and punishing violators of Indian-related laws. In order to facilitate this, and also to contain Indian wanderings within a limited area, the Grant administration initiated the reservation system for the Apaches. One reservation, the San Carlos, held several Apache groups, while the second was intended for the Chiricahuas only. Nestled in the southeastern corner of the state, the Chiricahua reserve bordered New Mexico on the east, Old Mexico on

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12. Ibid.

13. U. S. Army, Department of Arizona, General Orders and Circulars, 1870 - 1886, R. G. 94, June 4, 1871.

the south, and included their native Chiricahua Mountains. Raiding forays into Mexico from this convenient location brought a close to the reservation, however, and in 1876, the government moved the Chiricahuas north, to San Carlos. Many fled rather than accept removal and scattered in small groups into New Mexico, the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico, or joined another Apache group under Chief Victorio, then on the warpath in New Mexico and Chihuahua.

Under Crook the reservation system became efficient and effective, with daily head counts of all male Apaches, to keep track of them, and a tagging system, in which each male wore an identification tag. Crook attained success in his Indian management, not only because he could communicate with them, but because they trusted him as well.<sup>14</sup> No amount of trust or communication could change life on the reservation, however. It remained a

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14. This is not to paint Crook with a saintly halo, for he made his share of human, near-sighted blunders. For example, in 1874, agent James Roberts induced the Coyotereros at Camp Apache to dig five miles of irrigation ditches to aid their farming, making three hundred acres of new land available near the agency. Crook, however, soon ordered no farming beyond a one mile radius of the military post. This also serves to exemplify the conflict between civil and military authority. The military furthermore began to take over the administration of the reservation itself, arresting Indians who carried agent-issued passes. See Roberts to Smith, April 7, 1874, Records of the Indian Office; Roberts to Smith, August 31, 1874, House Executive Document No. 1, part 2, Vol. 1, 43 C, 2 s, 594; "P. A." to Roberts, July 2, 1874, Records of the Indian Office. See also Ogle, Federal Control of the Western Apaches, 129, fn. 35 and 36.

boring, fruitless and frustrating experience to the freedom-loving Apaches.

At San Carlos, the Indians complained about the restraints placed upon them and about the corrupt management as well. The army had transferred General Crook from the Department in 1875 and replaced him with weak commanders under whom the civilian agents reaped material benefits at the expense of the Apaches. The Indians reported that "their rations, blankets, and stores were stolen and sold in the towns, probably with much truth, for the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, together with the inspector and agent on duty, were compelled to resign."<sup>15</sup> Although Crook returned to command the Department of Arizona in 1882,<sup>16</sup> Indian dissatisfaction had mounted to the boiling point, and in March of that year, about 710 left the reserve, remaining absent for over a year.

From the time of their return, in June, 1883, until May 18, 1885, the reservation remained peaceful. Then, objecting to General Crook's orders prohibiting the traditional tizwin-drinking and wife beating, and fearing treachery on the part of the soldiers and Indian

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15. Report of the Secretary of War, 1888, 6.

16. Crook served in Arizona from 1871 to 1875, when he was succeeded by Colonel August V. Kautz, then General Orlando B. Willcox. He returned on September 4, 1882.

scouts, Geronimo, Natchez,<sup>17</sup> Nana and Chihuahua led forty-two other warriors and ninety-two women and children from the reservation. They proceeded without stopping to their fortress of refuge, the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico, an expansive, labyrinthine network of steep and rugged mountains located south of Arizona and New Mexico. The Geronimo Campaign commenced.

Although war chief of the Chiricahua Apaches, Geronimo<sup>18</sup> was born a Bedonkohe Apache, of Mangas Coloradas' band. He met Americans, members of a survey party, for the first time in 1857 and came away favorably impressed. Later, after encounters with the American military, he changed his mind, however. He began to distrust the soldiers for their deceit and dishonesty, believing that the military men abused his people by cheating and defrauding them and by reporting only Indian misdeeds while ignoring army errors. To Geronimo, the military men only saw things one way and never considered the Indian side of a question.<sup>19</sup>

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17. Natchez, son of Cochise, was hereditary chief of the Chiricahuas, taking over the leadership following the death of his older brother, Taza. Cochise died in 1874. Geronimo was the war chief, however, an important distinction.

18. His Apache name was Go khlä yeh (one who yawns), but the Mexican troops dubbed him Gerónimo. Barrett, Geronimo's Story, 54, fn. 4.

19. Ibid., 118.

In spite of his distrust of Americans, Geronimo reserved his hatred for the Mexicans and spent most of his warring life in a ruthless vendetta against them. While at peace with the Mexicans, his band left their home grounds in 1858 to go south to trade in Sonora. Leaving their camp, women, and children outside a small Mexican town, they went to barter. On their return they discovered that Mexican troops had raided the camp, killing the guards and many of the women and children, including Geronimo's mother, wife and three children. Hence his vengeful attitude toward the Mexicans, a vengeance that never seemed sated.<sup>20</sup>

From 1858 to 1877, Geronimo roamed about with Chief Victorio's band of Apaches. They lived off the land and at the expense of ranchers in their territory. Then, in 1877, Indian agent John Clum, with the aid of his San Carlos Indian Police, captured both Victorio and Geronimo and escorted them, under arrest, to the San Carlos Reservation. Geronimo remained there until he left during the general exodus in 1882.<sup>21</sup> After a year of freedom, the army induced him to surrender and he, with his followers, returned to the reservation. Then, in May, 1885, after

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20. Ibid., 114.

21. Report of the Secretary of War, 1884, Senate Executive Document No. 1, part 2, Vol. I, 48 C, 2 s, 161.

disagreeing with the army's reservation policy, Geronimo and his followers made their final escape.

Responsibility for capturing and returning the escaped Indians to the reservation fell on the army, the government's chief agency of enforcement in Arizona Territory. Having been in similar situations previously, Commanding General Crook set his basic strategy into motion. This consisted of keeping up with the fleeing hostile Indians as best as possible and eventually bargaining with them to induce their return to the reservation. Therefore it was important that the Apaches not gain too much distance, for they could lose themselves in mountainous regions, particularly the Sierra Madre in Mexico. Accordingly, field troops guarded ranches and waterholes frequented by the Indians. The pursuit party employed companies of Indian scouts, usually Apaches who were enemies to those being followed, commanded by cavalry officers, since Crook believed no one to be more capable of tracking down an Indian than another Indian.<sup>22</sup>

During the winter of 1885, Crook employed his Indian auxiliaries, under Captains Emmet Crawford and Wirt Davis, to trail the hostiles through Mexico. On January 10, 1886, Crawford's company surprised the Apache

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22. George Crook, "The Apache Problem," Journal of Military Service Institution in the United States, VIII (September, 1886), 262.

camp and routed it. Though losing their equipment, most of the Apaches escaped and encamped a few miles away from the army. The next day they met with the Americans to discuss surrender. While the two groups conferred, a group of Mexican irregular troops attacked, believing the entire gathering to be Apaches.<sup>23</sup> In the ensuing engagement, Captain Crawford received a mortal wound, and only with great difficulty were the Mexicans persuaded to leave the Apaches to the Americans. Negotiations then reconvened and ended when Geronimo agreed to meet with General Crook at Cañon de los Embudos, on the Mexican side of the international boundary, five or six weeks hence.<sup>24</sup>

The hostiles kept their word and arrived at the meeting site before General Crook, on March 25, 1886. In the meantime, an enterprising American rancher named Bob Tribolett set up a shack not far from the Cañon, on the Mexican side, where he sold mescal, whiskey, and tobacco. The Apaches lost no time in finding their way there, and by the next morning, March 26th, they were suffering from the effects of the night's revelry and expressed apprehension about the General's continued absence. Crook arrived later that day, however, and

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23. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, Senate Executive Document No. 1, part 2, Vol. I, 49 C, 2 s, 152; 156. Hereafter, Report of the Secretary of War, 1886.

24. Ibid., 153.

conferred with the Indians. No results came from the first meeting, but a second, on March 27th, produced Chihuahua's surrender. Mescal still flowed freely in the renegades' camp, though, making them difficult to deal with. In addition, Natchez and Geronimo felt slighted and insulted when Chihuahua received more attention than they believed he warranted. Considering themselves to be the leaders of the hostiles, they resented his independent surrender and refused to accept the terms. Instead Geronimo demanded that they be returned to Fort Apache with guarantees of amnesty and refused to accept a two-year exile on the East Coast, as Chihuahua had done, but Crook remained adamant in his position.

That night, pandemonium reigned in the hostiles' camp as they became roaring drunk on Tribolett's liquor. Though still uncertain of Geronimo's surrender, Crook decided that the Apache party and Lieutenant Marion Maus'<sup>25</sup> troops should move north toward Fort Bowie. The movement began the next morning, but instead of staying with the hostiles, who remained armed, unguarded and drunk,<sup>26</sup> Crook thought it necessary to leave the party

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25. Maus had taken over command of the Indian scouts after Crawford's death.

26. Crook said, "That night [the 27th] whisky or mescal was smuggled into their camp and many of them were drunk. The next morning Chihuahua reported the fact, but told me they would all begin to move to the border."

and telegraph Washington of his success. Two days later, on the thirtieth, he again wired his superiors, but this time there was little good news to relate. Thanks to Tribolett's intoxicants and a fear of treachery, Geronimo and Natchez had fled again, with twenty warriors and about as many women and children.<sup>27</sup> Crook's only consolation lay in the fact that Chihuahua and twelve other men, plus their women and children, remained behind to take their chances with the Americans. Shortly thereafter, on April 7, this band of seventy-seven boarded a train, as prisoners of war, bound for their exile in Fort Marion, Saint Augustine, Florida.<sup>28</sup>

Following the escape of Geronimo and his group, Crook came under criticism from all quarters. Tucson newspapers were irate, and the Arizona Gazette copied an

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Report of Brigadier General Crook in Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, 153 - 154. See also H. W. Daly, "The Geronimo Campaign," United States Cavalry Association Journal, XIX (October, 1908), 258 - 259.

27. Daly believed Geronimo and Natchez to be jealous of Chihuahua and angry with Crook for giving him deferential treatment, when, Daly claims, Chihuahua and his twenty warriors were responsible for ninety-five percent of the killings during the campaign. Daly, "The Geronimo Campaign," 99.

28. They believed the length of their exile to be two years, as promised by General Crook at Cañon de los Embudos, but President Grover Cleveland refused all the conditions of the surrender, except that of sparing their lives, and these Apaches unknowingly viewed their homeland for the last time when they departed.

editorial expressing its sentiments: "The government of the United States ought to present a chromo to General Crook and then retire him on the allowance of an invalided corporal of the cavalry. This last escape of Geronimo accentuates the appalling imbecility of this much vaunted Indian fighter."<sup>29</sup> His superiors in Washington were equally annoyed with him, and the numerous telegrams between Crook and Philip Sheridan, commanding general of the army, climaxed with Sheridan's terse, "...please send me a statement of what you contemplate for the future."<sup>30</sup> Crook believed that an impasse in methodology had arisen. Sheridan never approved of his use of Indian scouts, especially Apaches, and even suspected that they might have allowed Geronimo to escape. Therefore Crook responded by defending his troops, Indian scouts, and methods of operation, but added that "...it may be, however, that I am too much wedded to my own views in this matter" and asked to be relieved from command of the Department.<sup>31</sup> On April 2, 1886, he received orders transferring him to the Department of the Platte and designating Brigadier

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29. Originally published in a Los Angeles (California) Herald editorial, date unknown, quoted by the Arizona (Phoenix) Gazette, April 3, 1886.

30. Sheridan to Crook, April 1, 1886, Records of the War Department, United States Army Commands, Fort Bowie, Arizona, R. G. 98. Hereafter, USAC, Fort Bowie.

31. Crook to Sheridan, April 1, 1886, Ibid.

General Nelson A. Miles, commander of the Department of the Missouri, as his replacement.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, General Crook's tour of duty ended ignominiously in the eyes of both his commanding general in Washington and the citizens of Arizona Territory. Geronimo and his few remaining followers, by slipping through Crook's fingers, received a temporary reprieve and extended their centuries old life-way by a short time. They continued raiding in Arizona and Mexico for the next five months until their final surrender in September to General Miles, concluding the efforts of three national governments over a period of three centuries to force the submission of the proud Apache nation.

The replacement of Crook by Miles signalled an attempt at altering Indian policy in Arizona. When Miles succeeded Crook, he changed the campaign strategy, under orders from General Sheridan. After three months, however, Miles was forced to realize that Crook's method of negotiation, rather than his and Sheridan's notions of constant pursuit, would bring about the desired results of the Indians' surrender.

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32. R. C. Drum to Crook, April 2, 1886, Ibid.

## CHAPTER III

### EASTERN STRATEGY FOR A WESTERN CAMPAIGN

When Nelson A. Miles assumed command of the Department of Arizona on April 12, 1886, he brought nearly twenty years' experience in Indian warfare with him. He had gained this on the Plains and in the Yellowstone region, earning much of his fame for pressing his troops through the heavy snows of winter campaigns. Arizona, he discovered, was not the Plains. Here, temperatures soared to 110° during the summer, and the scarcity of water on the desert drove both man and beast frantic with thirst. At the same time, the heavy seasonal thunderstorms quickly washed away any tracks. Instead of a flat, desert wasteland, he encountered a vast area criss-crossed by high, rugged mountains. The renegade Indians he sought to conquer employed guerilla tactics by moving at night, breaking into smaller bands to confuse the trailing army, and using the desert climate and geography to their advantage. All of this was a totally different experience for Miles.

As the new commander of operations, he assessed the Apache situation on his arrival in Arizona. The strategy he evolved, however, was tempered by the set of orders he received from General Sheridan in Washington.

Coming from the commanding general of the army, these orders seemingly overshadowed any consideration Miles might have entertained about their inadequacy for his particular situation. Sheridan disapproved strongly of General Crook's tactics, demanding that Miles employ more conventional methods of warfare. Specifically, Sheridan could not tolerate Crook's heavy reliance on the efforts of four hundred Indian scouts, mostly Apaches, while nearly five thousand American soldiers occupied the territory. Therefore he demanded that the "most vigorous operations be carried on," and that Miles make "active and prominent use of the 'regular troops' under his command."<sup>1</sup> Miles complied with Sheridan's demands and dispensed with his predecessor's tactic of using companies of Indian scouts to trail, seek out, and pave the way for negotiation with the renegades. Instead, he employed companies of American soldiers, aided by a few Indian auxiliaries, to pursue Geronimo and his band relentlessly, hoping to force them to surrender. Two months of fruitless pursuit convinced Miles to alter his strategy, however, and by July, he reverted in part to Crook's methods by sending out a small independent party, including two non-hostile Chiricahua

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1. R. C. Drum to Nelson A. Miles, April 3, 1886, cited in Nelson A. Miles, Personal Recollections and Observations of General Nelson A. Miles (Chicago, 1896), 476.

Apaches, to seek Geronimo and present his personal demand for the Apaches' surrender. Ultimately, this method, rather than his much vaunted pursuit and other tactics, resulted in their surrender and the end of the Apache wars.

Bearing in mind Sheridan's instructions, Miles issued a set of orders for his personnel. "The chief object of the troops," he stated, "will be to capture or destroy any band of hostile Apache Indians found in this section of the country...." In order to facilitate this, he divided the department into districts of observation, an administrative as well as a geographical distinction. Like his predecessor, Miles continued the practice of placing infantry detachments at vulnerable ranches and waterholes, as well as in mountain passes frequented by the Apaches. Scouting and persistent pursuit fell to the cavalry aided by "reliable Indians" serving as auxiliaries and trailers. He demanded strict accounting for each cartridge issued and the destruction of all used shells in the field to prevent the hostiles from picking them up, reloading them, and using them against the Americans. In addition, Miles inaugurated two new tactics for warfare in Arizona, the use of the heliograph for relaying messages and a hot pursuit offensive. The latter formed the nucleus for the entire campaign. From the beginning of

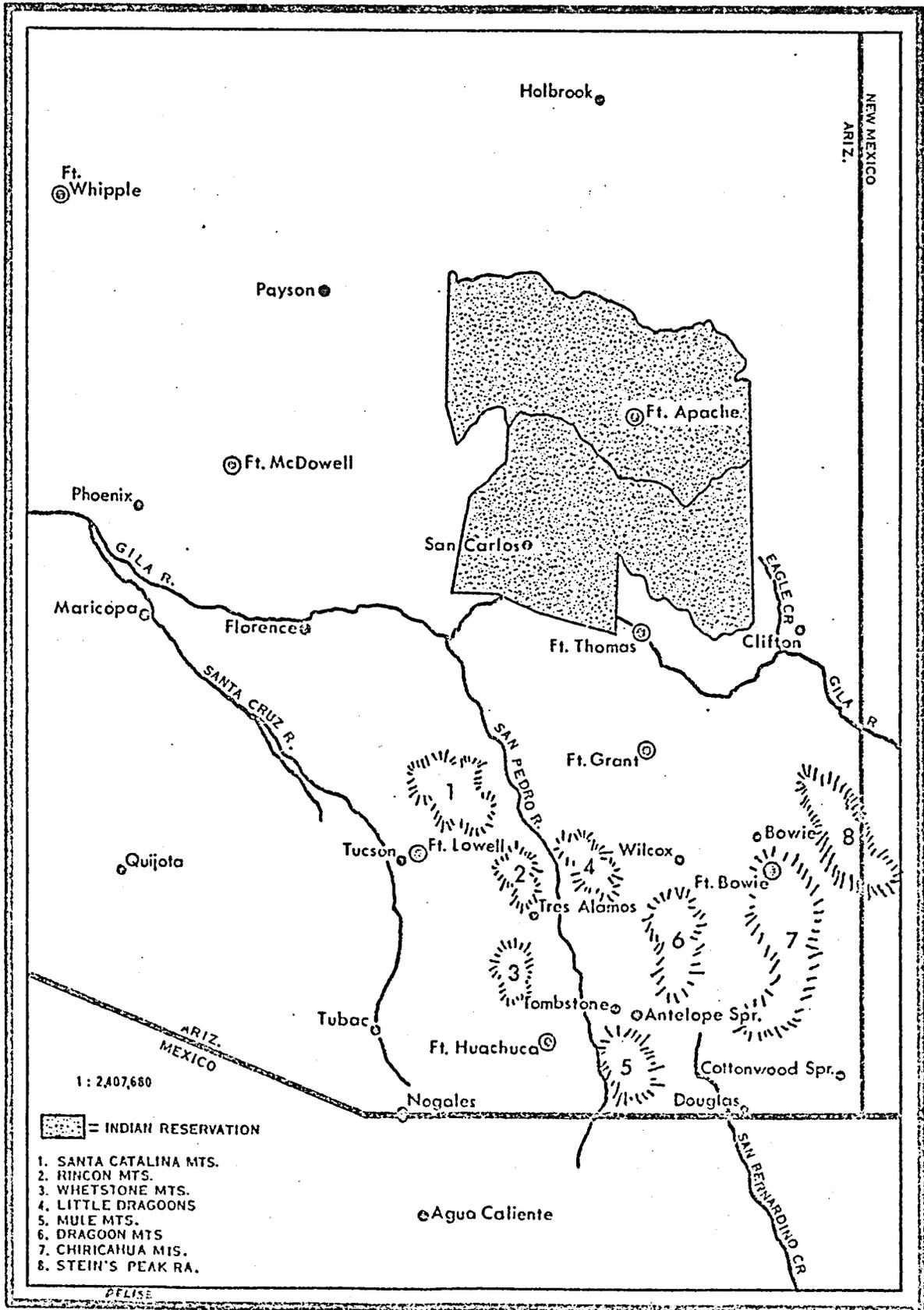


Figure 1. Southeastern Arizona

his command, the, he introduced his own innovations and emphasized the "active role" to be played by the regular troops.<sup>2</sup>

These instructions revealed the administrative structure of his department and the manner in which he organized his commands. During the first month of the campaign, Miles took complete control, issuing specific orders for troop movements and placements. He remained in close communication with parties sent to trail the Indians and often traveled to the town or post nearest to the recent hostilities to oversee the army's movements.<sup>3</sup>

By the end of the first month's activities, however, Miles began turning to his acting assistant adjutant general, Captain William A. Thompson, to handle the administrative details. As the campaign progressed, Thompson, a veteran of Arizona service, was given a freer rein and allowed to use his own judgement more.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the

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2. Ibid., 485 - 486; U. S. Army, Department of Arizona, General Orders and Circulars, 1870 - 1886, R. G. 94, General Field Orders No. 7, April 20, 1886. Hereafter, General Field Orders No. 7, 1886.

3. Miles' conscientious efforts during the early part of the campaign are reflected in his orders dated from towns near the Mexican border, where most of the action occurred at this time, and in the length and careful wording of his orders. See U. S. Army, Department of Arizona, Correspondence, 1869 - 1886, R. G. 98, April - May, 1886. Hereafter, DAC.

4. Ibid., May - September, 1886.

district commanders<sup>5</sup> assumed greater responsibility for the issuance of commands. They, in turn, delegated responsibilities to the detachment leaders who headed the trailing parties. In the early portion of the campaign the senior officers maintained military control; by the close, however, the junior officers inherited the leadership. The very nature of that portion of the campaign, two hundred miles below the Mexican border, forbade close communications. Thus, as the hostile Apaches moved farther from the military posts and, finally, into Mexico, the leadership moved down the scale from General Miles and his staff, to the district commanders, and then to the younger officers. The responsibility became greater with the increasing distance between the Apaches and Arizona, and these junior officers, to whom most of the responsibilities fell, deserved the accolades for success as much as did General Miles.

The unsung heroes of any military campaign, aside from the junior officers, are the enlisted men, the backbone of the army. On his arrival in Arizona, Miles found nearly 4900 of these troops, comprised mainly of the Eighth and Ninth<sup>6</sup> Infantries and the Fourth and Tenth

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5. The officers in charge of each of the major garrisons overseeing the several hundred square miles surrounding their posts.

6. The Ninth Infantry replaced the First shortly

Cavalries, at his disposal to hunt fewer than fifty Apaches. The Tenth Cavalry, known as the "Buffalo Soldiers," was an all-Black regiment, and it played a valuable role in the early portion of the campaign.

In addition to what Sheridan called the "regular troops," the army employed over four hundred Indian scouts, many of whom were Apaches. By the end of the campaign in September, Miles succeeded in reducing the number of scouts to 345 and had replaced as many Apaches as possible with Pima and Papago Indians.<sup>7</sup> While General Crook believed the non-hostile Apaches to be best in scouting their hostile brethren, most of the populace of the territory, as well as General Sheridan, disagreed. Miles also disputed the point with Crook and placed little trust in the Apache scouts, believing that they would not kill other Apaches in skirmishes.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, he announced the mustering out of all Apache scouts when their terms of service ended.<sup>9</sup>

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after Miles' arrival. U. S. War Department, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Returns of United States Army Commands, R. G. 94, Department of Arizona, May, 1870 - December, 1887.

7. Ibid., April - October, 1886.

8. Miles, Personal Recollections, 495.

9. William A. Thompson to Lieutenant Walsh, April 15, 1886, DAC; Department Headquarters to All Commanding Officers, June 17, 1886, USAC, Fort Bowie. The last of the Apache scouts were mustered out on July 1, 1886.

While the Apache scouts were mustered out, Miles recruited replacements.<sup>10</sup> He was forced to offer generous enticements to recruit the Indian scouts, however, such as mounted pay for the Papagos<sup>11</sup> and ten days' leave in thirty for the Pimas.<sup>12</sup> Even so, Miles' recruiters experienced difficulty; one visited every Papago village for eighty miles around Quijotoa yet failed to obtain a single volunteer.<sup>13</sup> Miles used these replacements, after they finally signed on, as scouts and auxiliaries working in conjunction with regular military detachments, rather than in all-Indian companies. By this method, he compromised his need for the Indians' scouting abilities with his distrust of their loyalty.

Along with the problem of mustering out the scouts, Miles faced another, that of the morale among his troops. It reached a low point with Crook's failure, and Miles observed that many had served in the field for lengthy periods, "doing the most disagreeable and hazardous duty

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10. Miles to Lieutenant Davis, April 30, 1886; Miles to Captain Royall, April 30, 1886; Thompson to Miles, May 13, 1886, Communications during Field Operations, handwritten copy, Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Box 1. Hereafter, CFO.

11. Miles to Davis, April 30, 1886, Ibid.

12. Miles to Lieutenant Samson Faison, May 15, 1886, Ibid.

13. Faison to Miles, May 22, 1886, Ibid.

and appeared to have little hope of success."<sup>14</sup> What hope they had disappeared with the consumption of three demi-johns of whiskey by Geronimo and his followers. He wrote to his wife that the men felt disheartened by their long exiles in the field,<sup>15</sup> and that he had never seen a "more demoralized and inefficient command."<sup>16</sup> Although Miles could do little to raise their spirits, he saw to it that the field detachments were rotated frequently and well supplied with rations. In addition, troops which served in the field for long periods were sent, upon returning, to distant posts to receive the rest they needed and earned.<sup>17</sup>

Miles applied his overworked troops to two types of strategy, defensive and offensive, which he outlined in his instructions. The districts of observation formed the main defensive line, but it proved to be ineffective. The various military posts, at the centers of these districts, were too geographically distant from one another to

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14. Miles, Personal Recollections, 477.

15. Miles to Mary Miles, April 11, 1886, cited in Virginia Weisel Johnson, The Unregimented General: A Biography of Nelson A. Miles (Boston, 1962), 230.

16. Miles to Mary, May 8, 1886, cited in Newton F. Tolman, The Search for General Miles (New York, 1968), 137.

17. Miles to Captain Abiel L. Smith, April 16, 1886, DAC.

guard them effectively, and the Apaches found it easy to slip between the guarded regions. For example, the entire border between Fort Huachuca, in southern Arizona, and Fort Bliss, Texas, nearly 250 miles, lay unprotected by a single outpost. This was prime Apache country. Miles could see readily how the hostiles moved back and forth between the United States and Mexico. In an effort to seal this gap, he wrote to Washington recommending that Congress appropriate \$200,000 to strengthen existing posts and establish new ones to guard the areas through which the Apaches were known to pass.<sup>18</sup> The perennially short-funded government failed to make any appropriation, however.

Stationing detachments in mountain passes, at water holes, and on ranches was standard procedure in Arizona. Like the district of observation concept, however, it also proved ineffective. For example, in May, troops discovered the body of a man, killed by the Apaches, in the Dragoon Mountains eight miles south of Cochise Stronghold, yet a cavalry detachment stationed at the Stronghold had failed to discern the presence of the Apaches in the area.<sup>19</sup> The shrewd Apaches followed the army's signs easily and avoided any entanglements unless

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18. Miles to the Adjutant General, April 20, 1886, Ibid.; Arizona Daily Citizen (Tucson), April 23, 1886.

19. Thompson to Miles, May 19, 1886, DAC.

directly confronted. Any encounter with the Indians by the army, therefore, proved to be accidental, not the result of any superior abilities on the part of the soldiers or the result of Miles' tactics.

Miles established the heliograph system in Arizona for both offensive and defensive purposes. He had first used the heliostat, as he called it, on the Yellowstone River, communicating between Fort Keough, Montana, and Fort Custer, Wyoming, thirty miles distant. Theoretically, the heliograph was an ideal means of communication in the dry air of the southwest where the Apaches frequently cut the telegraph wires. Composed of a mirror and shutter, it reflected the sun's rays from the mirror while the shutter interrupted the reflection in long and short flashes, using the American Morse Code. Arizona's high mountain ranges overlooking broad valleys, plus good visibility, provided the ideal proving grounds.

Lieutenants Alvarado M. Fuller and Edward E. Dravo received the assignment of establishing the system, in Arizona and New Mexico respectively. By April 29, Fuller completed three stations, at Fort Bowie, Helen's Dome, and White's Ranch. Four more, including the one at Fort Huachuca, began functioning in May, and by July 14, he completed the remaining eight Arizona stations.<sup>20</sup>

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20. Alvarado M. Fuller, Heliograph Report,

Few men stationed in Arizona understood the heliograph, so on his first day in command, Miles wired for help.<sup>21</sup> In response, General William B. Hazen, chief of the Signal Corps, sent instruments and men trained in their use to Arizona. Others received instructions in the heliograph's operation, but a full-scale operation of the network did not come about until July. By then, most of the stations were completed, and the operators had become adept. It is important to note, however, that by this time the heliograph's usefulness declined. Although it stretched across Arizona and New Mexico, it did not extend into Mexico, where Geronimo's band fled in June with the army following. Instead of being of great use in spotting the Indians in the valleys and communicating their position, the system became of secondary importance and was relegated to communicating supply requests. Only the time-consuming courier system could be used in the Mexican portion of the campaign.<sup>22</sup> In this way, General Miles' much vaunted innovation amounted to little more than an interesting experiment.

Like his plans for the heliograph, Miles' plans for the cavalry went awry. The mounted soldiers, he

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September 30, 1886, Special Collections, University of Arizona Library.

21. Miles to Brigadier General William B. Hazen, April 12, 1886; Miles to Hazen, April 15, 1886, DAC.

22. Fuller, Heliograph Report.

believed, should be able to drive the Apaches from 150 to 200 miles in forty-eight hours.<sup>23</sup> Although feasible on the Plains, it proved impractical in southeastern Arizona, something he failed to anticipate. When pursued, the Apaches split into small groups and fled to the mountains, where the cavalry could follow only at reduced speed. In addition, the cavalry horses fared poorly in mountainous regions as their shoes wore out quickly on the rocky ground. Frequently the cavalrymen became unwilling infantrymen as their horses' conditions forced them to dismount and lead the animals.<sup>24</sup> The cavalry failed to live up to Miles' expectations, not because of poor men or mounts, but because the General, in his ignorance of the country, expected more of the cavalry than it could give.

All of these various military measures theoretically provided background and support for Miles' main tactic, hot pursuit. He intended that the hostiles should be given no respite. When discovered within a military district, the commander of the region ordered immediate cavalry pursuit from the nearest post, supplemented by

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23. Miles, Personal Recollections, 485 - 486; General Field Orders No. 7, 1886.

24. Lieutenant John Bigelow, Jr., On the Bloody Trail of Geronimo (Los Angeles, 1958), 177.

the infantry. The Indians were to be harrassed continually until they volunteered to surrender. "The argument in my mind," Miles wrote later, "was that no human being and no wild animal could endure being hunted persistently without eventually being subjugated."<sup>25</sup> Underlying this strategy lay his personal belief that American soldiers could match the Apaches' pace and overcome them. Therefore, he chose his main pursuit detachment with care. After touring several posts he picked Captain Henry W. Lawton of the Fourth Cavalry<sup>26</sup> to lead the troops, primarily because of the Captain's excellent physical condition and because he, like Miles, believed the Indians could be "defeated" and "subjugated."<sup>27</sup> From the middle of June until late August, Lawton took his troops deep into Mexico in pursuit of the Apaches.<sup>28</sup> His hot pursuit, however,

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25. Miles, Personal Recollections, 486.

26. Lawton enlisted in the Union army during the Civil War and was breveted Lieutenant Colonel. At the close of the war he joined the regular army as a lieutenant and rose through the ranks. During the Spanish-American War he served as a Major General of Volunteers in the Philippines and was killed on December 19, 1899.

27. Miles, Personal Recollections, 486 - 488. Interestingly, Miles used no Tenth Cavalry troops, the Black regiment, in his hot pursuit. They did an admirable job during May, but after that time they were relegated to routine garrison duty.

28. A treaty renewed between the United States and Mexico on October 16, 1885, for one year, authorized "reciprocal crossing of the unpopulated and deserted portions of the international boundary-line by the regular

cooled in the labyrinthine network of the Sierra Madre Mountains, as his Indian auxiliaries lost the hostiles' trail. Here, once again, Miles' strategy broke down as the pursuit party plodded along looking for signs of the Indians. In most instances, the Americans found themselves several days behind the hostiles, and after the summer rains began in July, the trail disappeared completely. Geronimo and his band knew of the army's pursuit, but it could not be termed a close pursuit. In fact, Lawton's Indian scouts lost the trail, and the troops were wandering about deep in the interior when Lawton received word that Geronimo had appeared in the town of Fronteras, some 200 miles to the North. Thus, another of Miles' tactics failed because of his ignorance of the geography and climate.

Neither Sheridan nor Miles accepted Crook's method of using Apaches to hunt Apaches. Both believed in the ability of American troops to do the job as well and more loyally. Sheridan supported Miles' strategy, including his innovations. In the end, however, none of his strategy worked as effectively as he planned. By

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Federal troops of the respective Governments, in pursuit of savage hostile Indians...." U. S. Congress, Senate, Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols, and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1776 - 1909, Senate Document No. 357, 61 C, 2 s, I, 1162 - 1163.

July he was no closer to capturing Geronimo and his band than when he arrived in April, and at this point he reverted quietly, though on a small scale, to Crook's method of using Apache scouts. Ultimately, this method, not his new innovations, brought about Geronimo's surrender.

## CHAPTER IV

### CAMPAIGN INTO MEXICO

The final stage of the Apache wars dated from the last week in April, 1886, to the first week in September. During that short four-month period the campaign passed through two phases which disproved General Miles' theory of subjugating the Apaches and proved General Crook's. In May and June Miles employed his own method of constant pursuit by the regular troops. This continued into July, but then he added another tactic by sending an independent party in search of the renegades. The party, consisting of Miles' personal representative, Lieutenant Charles B. Gatewood, and two Chiricahua Apaches, met with Geronimo and his band in August and offered the General's terms for surrender. This meeting, rather than the constant pursuit, influenced the renegades' submission to Miles in September. A study of the campaign reveals the ineffectiveness of the first three months, the breakdown of Miles' initial tactics when the Indians fled into Mexico, and demonstrates the necessity of changing tactics.

Following their escape from General Crook's troops in March, the Apaches, led by Geronimo, fled south into Mexico. They remained in hiding until the end of

April, when they renewed their feared depredations south of the border, near Nogales.<sup>1</sup> With this news, General Miles put his plan into operation. He moved to Camp Crittenden, on Sonoita Creek, to supervise the operation<sup>2</sup> while the commanders of all the districts of observation began fortifying the strategic positions within their command areas. The brunt of the responsibility, however, fell on the commanders of Forts Huachuca and Bowie, Captain William Royall and Major Eugene Beaumont, whose districts extended to the Mexican border. The cavalry units were prepared to give chase, while detachments of cavalry and infantry occupied mountain passes, ranches, and water holes.<sup>3</sup> Miles hoped to discourage the Apaches from returning to Arizona by such deployments, but instead, the renegades moved northward without detection. Entering the Santa Cruz Valley for the first time in ten years, they murdered two members of A. L. Peck's family and captured

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1. Miles to A. A. G., Division of the Pacific, April 24, 1886; Thompson to Commanding Officer, Camp Rucker, April 26, 1886, DAC; Arizona Daily Citizen (Tucson) April 26, 1886; Silver City (New Mexico) Enterprise, May 7, 1886.

2. Arizona Daily Citizen (Tucson), April 28, 1886.

3. See Beaumont to Doane, April 27, 1886; Richardson to Captain William B. Kennedy, April 28, 1886; Richardson to Benjamin, April 28, 1886, USAC, Fort Bowie; Arizona Daily Citizen (Tucson), April 28, 1886; Ibid., April 20, 1886; T. D. Casanega Papers, Arizona Historical Society.

his young niece.<sup>4</sup> On receiving a report of the murders the cavalry began its pursuit operation as Captain Thomas Lebo's command of Black cavalrymen took to the field. This Tenth Cavalry troop pressed the Indians for over two hundred miles before bringing them to bay in the Piñito Mountains. The hostiles occupied a strong position, however, in a tongue of broken lava-like rocks which provided perfect cover,<sup>5</sup> and in the ensuing skirmish Lebo's men were unable to defeat them.<sup>6</sup>

After their engagement with Lebo's troops, the Apaches divided into two groups. One started toward the Azul Mountains in Mexico, the other moved in an easterly direction in an effort to confuse the soldiers and divide the pursuit parties.<sup>7</sup> Although followed by both American

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4. Young Trinidad Berdine was recaptured from the Apaches in June and narrated the story of her experiences. See "The Story of Trinidad Berdine as Related to Lieutenant Charles Finley," Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Box 1.

5. Jack C. Lane, ed., Chasing Geronimo: The Journal of Leonard Wood May - September, 1886 (Albuquerque, 1970), 28.

6. U. S. War Department, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Returns from United States Military Posts, 1800 - 1916, R. G. 94, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, May, 1886. Hereafter, Post Returns. Report of Captain Thomas C. Lebo to Captain William Royall, May 3, 1886, CFO; Arizona Daily Citizen (Tucson), May 4, 1886; Miles, Personal Recollections, 489 - 490; William H. Leckie, The Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West (Norman, 1967), 243.

7. Arizona Daily Citizen (Tucson), May 6, 1886.

and Mexican detachments,<sup>8</sup> the Apaches evaded them and moved into the country around Nogales, Mexico. The troops frequently sighted them but they continued depredating and "frightened [the town] into a state of siege."<sup>9</sup>

While this continued, Captain Lawton and Troop B, 4th Cavalry, prepared to leave Fort Huachuca. General Miles had designated this as his main pursuit company to follow the hostiles wherever they fled and give them no rest. Thus, after their brief incursion onto American soil the renegades found themselves pursued by three groups rather than one, by Captain Lebo's men, Captain Lawton's troops, and a Mexican army detachment.<sup>10</sup>

Miles' strategy at this juncture was to trap the Apaches between the two American forces. Therefore, Lawton's group crossed the border and moved south of the

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8. Miles to A. A. G., Division of the Pacific, April 27, 1886, DAC.

9. Bigelow, On the Bloody Trail of Geronimo, 177.

10. Captain Henry Rohnstedt and Fernando Ruiz led the Mexican troops. Miles established a good rapport with the Governor of Sonora, Luis Torres, which made it easier to move American troops and supplies south of the border. The Mexicans had much to gain by the Apaches' defeat but their animosity toward the Americans had created obstacles previously to a concerted effort by the two nations to eliminate the Apache menace. Miles has never received adequate commendation for his peaceful cooperation with the Mexicans during this campaign. For examples of his diplomacy, see Bigelow, On the Bloody Trail of Geronimo, 176; J. H. Scott to Miles, May 19, 1886; Torres to Miles, May 19, 1886, CFO; Miles to Major Ruiz, April 28, 1886, DAC.

Indians, to Imuris, while Lebo's troops remained just north of the border. In the meantime, the Mexican troops encountered the hostiles near Planchas but met defeat.<sup>11</sup>

Other American troops began closing in from the north, intending to drive the Apaches south into Lawton's waiting army, and one of these scouting expeditions came upon the hostiles accidentally. On May 15, Captain Charles Hatfield's detachment surprised the Indians near Santa Cruz, Sonora, and managed to capture their horses, saddles and camp equipment. Later that day, though, while moving through a box canyon, the renegades ambushed the Americans, recaptured their horses and equipment and escaped in an easterly direction. This engagement marked the last direct contact with the Indians until late August.<sup>12</sup>

Realizing the concentration of troops in the area, the hostile band split into two groups, as it had done previously, to confuse the Americans and divide their efforts; Miles advised Lawton, by courier, to follow the Indians and "make them feel that they are pursued."<sup>13</sup>

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11. Thompson to Lawton, May 13, 1886; Miles to Division of the Pacific, May 13, 1886, DAC.

12. Arizona Daily Citizen (Tucson), May 17, 1886; Report of Captain Charles Hatfield, June 13, 1886; Hatfield to Lt. James Parker, May 15, 1886, CFO; Harry C. Benson, "The Geronimo Campaign," Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, also, Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Box 1.

13. Miles to Lawton, May 16, 1886, DAC.

At this point, however, the futility of Miles' plan became apparent. The infantry detachments in mountain passes failed to detect the Indians' presence, while the cavalry units were unable to pursue them over large areas because they fled into the mountains. They moved south of the border beyond the range of the incompletd heliograph system, and couriers became the sole means of communication.

Most of the hostiles remained in the Nogales area and avoided the Americans. A smaller group, however, presented a greater potential problem. After leaving the main renegade band, it carefully began winding its way north toward the reservation. Had it intended to surrender to the army, it could have done so at any time, but the cautious movements and direction indicated to Miles that it hoped to reach the reservation and obtain aid or incite a rebellion. Realizing the immediate danger of such an occurrence, he ordered all trails to the reserve carefully guarded.<sup>14</sup> Of all his efforts in Arizona, this one was the most successful, for these hostiles failed to reach their destination<sup>15</sup> and later returned south to find the main group. Perhaps their lack of success here

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14. Miles to Col. William Shafter, May 19, 1886, CFO.

15. Shafter to Miles, May 23, 1886, Ibid.

convinced them to move deeper into Mexico and remain isolated from the rest of the Apaches on the reservation.

Miles expected the main band to move south to escape the American army concentrated near the border, but instead, the renegades defied the General's expectations and invaded Arizona again. On May 22 they continued their depredation spree, capturing two boys at the Jonquin Iccles ranch eighteen miles east of Tucson, then moving northeast in the direction of the smaller band.<sup>16</sup> Miles' frustration at his inability to contain the hostiles is reflected in his grasping at any available means of capturing them. When a group of Mexicans near Tres Alamos thought they had trapped them, Miles offered each Mexican \$4 per day plus \$2000 if they killed or captured Geronimo.<sup>17</sup> This citizen party proved to be as ineffective as the army troops, however, as the Apaches slipped past their guards to the Rincon Mountains. Miles ordered the mountains encircled but again, the Indians escaped.<sup>18</sup>

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16. Memorandum, March 22, 1886, DAC; Thompson to All Officers, May 22, 1886, CFO.

17. Bigelow, On the Bloody Trail of Geronimo, 187; Arizona Daily Star (Tucson), May 25, 1886. The War Department, however, disapproved Miles' financial undertaking and refused to supply funds for paying the Mexicans. Arizona Daily Star (Tucson), May 25, 1886. The Mexicans, in turn, agreed to fight without pay if supplied with arms and ammunition, and Miles accommodated them. Lt. Wilbur Wilder to Thompson, May 26, 1886, CFO.

18. Bigelow, On the Bloody Trail of Geronimo, 188.

In the wake of this series of failures, Miles sought further means of reaching the hostiles. He sent out Natchez' mother and another Chiricahua woman to see if they would be willing to surrender, but the women reported that they had failed to find the renegades.<sup>19</sup>

Unknown to the army, the main band of Indians had returned to the Rincon Mountains, just east of Tucson, and established a camp. With the sighting of their signal fires on June 3, the Americans began a pursuit leading to the Whetstone Mountains,<sup>20</sup> then to Mexico via the Patagonias. Lieutenant Robert Walsh and his detachment succeeded in surprising an Apache encampment in the Patagonias and capturing their stock, but as usual, the Indians escaped.<sup>21</sup>

Captain Lawton and his men joined in the hunt after the hostiles crossed the border into Mexico.<sup>22</sup> This marked the beginning of their 1400-mile expedition which lasted until the end of August. At times during the next three months the troops pursued the Indians closely,<sup>23</sup> but as

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19. Lt. Col. James F. Wade to Thompson, May 29, 1886, CFO.

20. Bigelow, On the Bloody Trail of Geronimo, 202; Bigelow to Miles, June 7, 1886, USAC, Fort Bowie.

21. Walsh to Lawton, June 6, 1886, CFO.

22. Report of Captain H. W. Lawton, June 10, 1886, Ibid.

23. Lt. Bigelow came upon a previous days'

the campaign moved deeper into Mexico they lost track of the hostiles who used the rough terrain and inclement weather to their advantage. Miles performed conscientiously in his role, ordering rudimentary entrapments from the north and south, but during July and August he lost direct contact with Lawton and had no knowledge of the hostiles' location. Because of poor communication, the campaign had moved beyond his control, and he could only trust that Lawton was progressing in his search. It became clear that the hot pursuit had bogged down; the Indians gave no indication of suffering psychological stress from the constant pursuit and made no overtures to surrender. This caused him to turn once again to the Chiricahuas themselves for help. He never discarded the hot pursuit but in July he asked for two Apache volunteers to guide and accompany Lieutenant Gatewood to Geronimo's camp. This decision marked the end of the first phase of the campaign.

During June Miles had experienced another failure, and perhaps this also induced him to change his tactics. The small group of about six Indians that attempted to reach the reservation failed and began moving toward

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encampment which showed that the Apaches ate raw meat. He interprets this as indicating that they were pursued so closely that they could not even take time to build a fire. See Bigelow, On the Bloody Trail of Geronimo, 220.

the south.<sup>24</sup> The heliograph stations in the eastern portion of the state traced their southward travel, but despite the reports, no detachment encountered them.<sup>25</sup> They remained undetected, in the district of Fort Bowie, and Miles believed that the troops should have little difficulty overtaking them,<sup>26</sup> but his defenses failed.

Major Beaumont, commander of the district, suggested that an expedition under Lieutenant James Parker be organized from Cloverdale, New Mexico, to follow this small group, hoping it would lead to the main band.<sup>27</sup> Miles concurred with the plans and ordered Parker to select his own party of fifty-eight men, including fifteen scouts led by Hank Frost. Like his orders to Captain Lawton, those to Parker were general and vague; he told the lieutenant to run down or surprise any of the renegade band whose trail he found and advised him to use his own judgement according to the circumstances.<sup>28</sup>

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24. Lt. Col. James F. Wade to Thompson, May 29, 1886, CFO.

25. Antelope Springs Heliograph Station, June 6, 1886, USAC, Fort Bowie. Interestingly, this station spotted the Indians on three successive days moving through the Dragoon Mountains toward the Sulphur Springs Valley and Mule Mountains but apparently failed to report it until the sixth.

26. Miles to Beaumont, July 2, 1886, CFO.

27. Beaumont to Miles, July 2, 1886, Ibid.; Beaumont to A. A. A. G., July 6, 1886, USAC, Fort Bowie.

28. Miles to Beaumont, July 2, 1886, CFO; Thompson

The campaign's second phase began when Miles realized that his troops had little chance of capturing the Apaches outright, as his first three months proved. Instead, they would have to be induced to surrender, the method used by General Crook. Thus, after two months' search, Miles found two Chiricahuas who agreed to seek Geronimo's party and deliver the General's demand for surrender. Miles never admitted that his pursuit strategy failed, but his change in tactics produced the desired result, Geronimo's surrender, and probably shortened the campaign by several months.

Once he and his troops crossed the border into Mexico, Captain Lawton was virtually on his own without direction from Miles. Finding pursuit in alien territory difficult, he changed his tactics by keeping the Indian scouts a full day ahead of the regular troops.<sup>29</sup> By freeing them from the encumbrance of the regular troops,

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to Parker, July 3, 1886, USAC, Fort Bowie. Thompson also warned Parker to be careful in his encounters with the Mexicans because relations between the United States and Mexico had been strained by a border incident at El Paso. Known as the Cutting Affair, this diplomatic entanglement concerned the imprisonment of an American newspaper editor, Edward Cutting, by Mexican authorities. He had written an editorial criticizing the Mexican government and then had the imprudence to cross the border and get himself arrested. The incident brought about international repercussions, as the Mexicans refused to release Cutting until August, after negotiations with the American State Department.

29. Captain Lawton's Report, June 10, 1886, CFO.

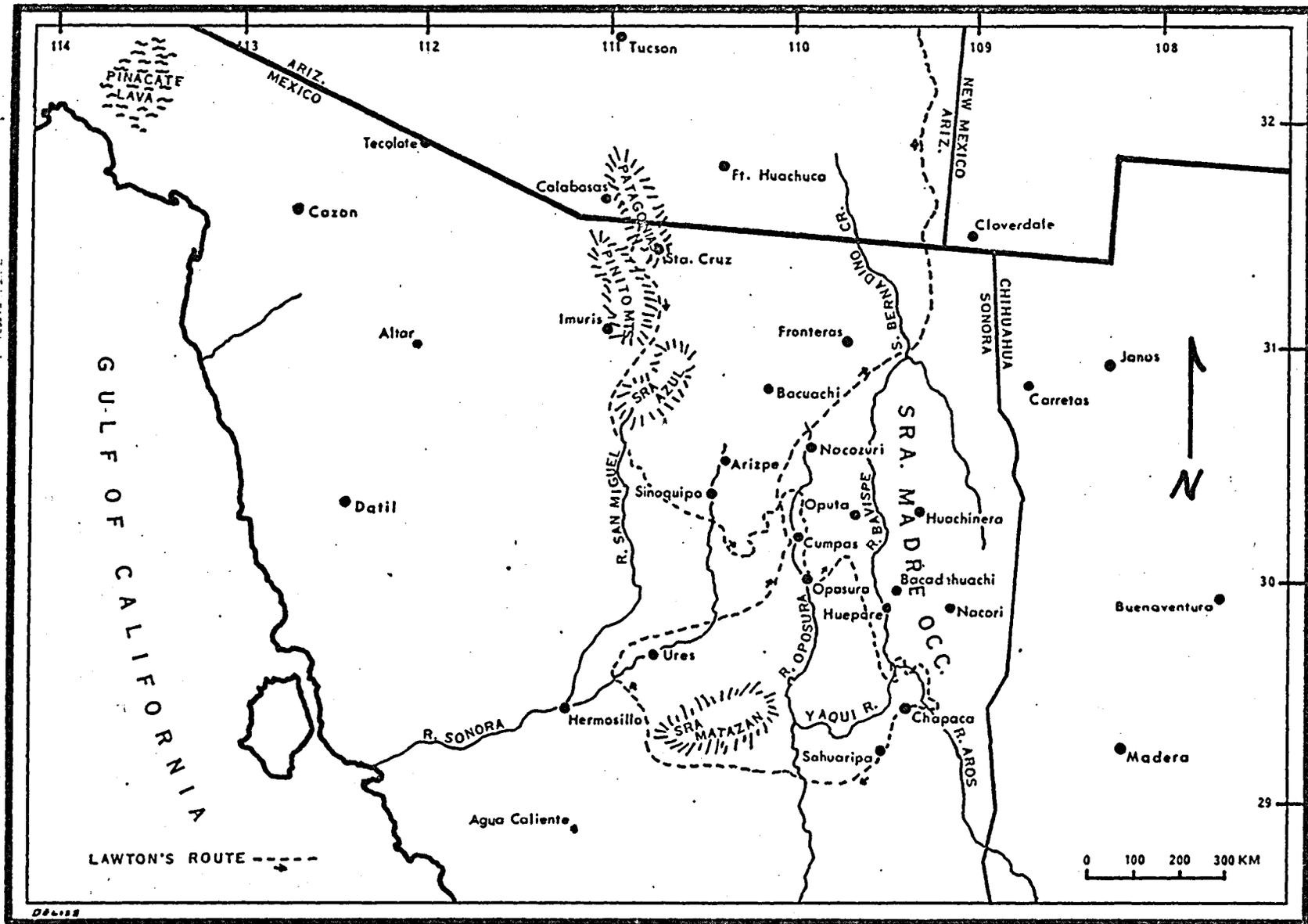


Figure 2. The Mexican Theater

they could move at their own pace and accomplish more. Even with this freedom, however, the scouts found trailing to be almost an impossible operation. They roamed about northern Sonora for the remainder of June, without sighting the Indians, then journeyed to the south.

By July 1, Lawton had carried his pursuit ninety miles below the border, to Cumpas. Ahead of him, the hostiles fled farther south and deeper into the mountains, making every attempt to elude the Americans and Mexicans. Lieutenant Brown wrote, for example, that he had trailed the Apaches over the roughest of mountains before abandoning the pursuit; the trail headed northward but one by one, the hostiles left in all different directions, leaving no trail to follow. The Mexicans experienced no better luck, as the trail "crossed and recrossed and interlaced, going in all directions."<sup>30</sup> Consequently, the scouts lost the trail completely. Lawton suspected that the Apaches had traveled to the Sierra Madre Mountains, to the east, but in spite of this suspicion, he decided to go farther south and established a camp at the confluence of the Oposura and Yaqui Rivers. Thus, he reasoned, if the Indians moved south, his force would block them, but if they returned north, he could pursue them into the hands of other American units. Therefore, he requested that

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30. Brown to Lawton, July 1, 1886, CFO.

cavalry or scouts be sent from Fronteras to Oputa to intercept any hostiles attempting to move through the area.<sup>31</sup>

On July 3, Lawton learned that they had attacked a ranch near the Arros, confirming their southern location. Once again, he formulated an entrapment strategy as he decided to station his troops farther south of them and pull the northern-based units to the south. While Lawton's men traveled to their position, the Indian scouts under Lieutenant Brown attempted to follow the hostiles' trail, but the heavy summer rains virtually eliminated all traces of it, and it was nine days before they discovered a trail leading toward the Yaqui River. Although three days old, the tracks indicated a slowing of pace, and the next day the scouts sighted the renegades' camp. Taking precautions to conceal their presence, the scouts detoured six or seven miles around the camp to some low hills west and north and planned to drive the Apaches into the hands of the infantry. Geronimo's sentries, however, detected the scouts, sounded a warning, and the entire party fled on foot, abandoning all of their equipment.<sup>32</sup>

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31. Lawton to Thompson, July 3, 1886, Ibid.

32. Brown to Lawton, July 14, 1886, Ibid.; Arizona Daily Citizen (Tucson), July 22, 1886. Interestingly, this non-encounter is recorded as an official engagement in Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army (Washington, 1903), II, 448.

After a delay,<sup>33</sup> Lawton and his men attempted to follow the Indians but found no tracks.

At this time the summer rains played havoc with Lawton's attempts to trail the Apaches. Even the scouts were stymied as the rains "washed the trails off the face of the earth."<sup>34</sup> They found a few scattered signs south of the Arros River but could not follow them further and thus made no progress. Lawton then decided to move east on the Arros toward the Sierra Madre Mountains, yet he had no notion of the hostiles' location,<sup>35</sup> illustrating the lack of communication and organization.

The hardships of such a campaign began to take their toll on the soldiers. Hot weather, drenching rains that brought no cooling relief, spoiled food, and lack of success weakened the men in health and morale. Lawton's dismounted cavalymen withstood the rigors well considering that they had to march on foot, while a company of infantrymen became exhausted and had to be sent to Cumpas to recuperate on August 1.<sup>36</sup>

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33. Further pursuit was delayed by Surgeon Leonard Wood's illness, the result of a tarantula bite, from which he recovered on July 18. See Lane, Chasing Geronimo, 69, 72, 74 - 75.

34. Lawton to Thompson, July 31, 1886, CFO.

35. Ibid.

36. Spencer to Miles, August 16, 1886, Ibid.; Lane, Chasing Geronimo, 81. In his diary, Surgeon Wood

Although Lawton's troop strength diminished with the departure of the infantry, another group of reinforcements marched into camp two days later. Lieutenant Parker's troops, with Lieutenant Gatewood and two Chiricahua scouts in tow, discovered his camp on the Arros River, two hundred fifty miles below the international boundary.

Gatewood and the two Chiricahuas were General Miles' personal emissaries to Geronimo. As early as May, Miles had searched for any Indians willing to go to the hostile camp with his surrender demand.<sup>37</sup> After receiving negative responses, he consulted an Indian whom he trusted, George Noche, who suggested that a Chiricahua named Kayitah<sup>38</sup> might undertake the trip. Kayitah agreed, provided another Chiricahua, Martine, accompanied him. Because both had relatives in the renegade band, Miles knew they would be able to approach their camp safely. They

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noted that Lawton had requested a company of picked infantry for reinforcements. Instead, he received a sullen, motley crew recently released from the guardhouse and sent to Mexico for further punishment. To make matters worse, they came from different companies and had no commanding officer. Riding into camp after their arrival, Wood found several of them lashed to trees. Although untrained in leadership, Wood assumed command of them, promised them fair treatment, and reported that they in turn had performed well. See also Hermann Hagedorn, Leonard Wood: A Biography (New York, 1931), 76.

37. Miles to Pierce, May 19, 1886, CFO.

38. Kayitah deserted Geronimo's band in May and made his way north to Fort Apache to surrender.

enlisted as scouts and received guns, ammunition, and mules.<sup>39</sup> Miles chose Gatewood for this mission because of his experience in dealing with the Apaches; under General Crook, Gatewood had been in charge of the Indian scouts at Fort Apache and knew Geronimo and Natchez well.<sup>40</sup> Armed with a safe conduct for the two scouts<sup>41</sup> and accompanied by his interpreter, George Wratten, and his packer, Frank Huston, Gatewood departed for Mexico on July 15.<sup>42</sup>

Gatewood's party met Lieutenant Parker's command near Carretas on July 21. Parker had been ordered to await the results of the Chiricahuas' mission and furnish Gatewood with an escort.<sup>43</sup> Unable to release that many men, Parker decided that his whole company would accompany Gatewood to Lawton's camp. The party was delayed in

39. See Morris E. Opler, "A Chiricahua Apache's Account of the Geronimo Campaign of 1886," New Mexico Historical Review, XIII (October, 1938), 360 - 386.

40. Record of Service, Lieutenant Charles B. Gatewood, Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Box 3.

41. Miles to Officers in Command of U. S. Troops, July 9, 1886, CFO.

42. Dapray to Gatewood, July 10, 1886, Ibid.; Lieutenant Charles B. Gatewood, "The Surrender of Geronimo," Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Box 3; Arizona Daily Citizen (Tucson), July 19, 1886. Hereafter, Lieutenant Charles B. Gatewood will be cited as Lieutenant Gatewood. His son, who wrote several articles about him, will be cited as Charles B. Gatewood, Jr.

43. Pettit to Stretch, July 15, 1886, USAC, Fort Bowie.

leaving until July 27, however, as the ride from Bowie had aggravated some of Lieutenant Gatewood's old injuries.<sup>44</sup>

When Gatewood arrived at the American camp, Captain Lawton acknowledged his inability to find the Apaches.<sup>45</sup> After two weeks with no information he had dispatched his courier, William Edwardy, with another man, to seek information, and on his return Edwardy reported the Indians to be in the district of Ures, west of Lawton.<sup>46</sup> In his blind search and arbitrary choice of directions, Lawton had been moving away from Geronimo's band instead of following it. His command was so distant, in fact, that by the time it arrived in the Ures district the scouts found no trail they could follow, and again Lawton sent scouts to seek information.<sup>47</sup>

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44. A bladder infection caused Gatewood much pain and difficulty during this trip. Report of Lieutenant James F. Parker, July, 1886, CFO. Parker's report noted that they intended to keep their mission a secret from the Mexicans, for although both the United States and Mexico were eager to capture Geronimo, the Mexicans wanted a bloody revenge as they suffered even more than the Americans from his raids. Miles, on the other hand, had an honorable military reputation to defend.

45. Lieutenant Gatewood, "The Surrender of Geronimo," Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society.

46. Edwardy to Miles, August 16, 1886, CFO.

47. Report of Captain Lawton, en route to Fort Marion, Florida, September 9, 1886, Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Box 1; Report of the Secretary of War, 1886.

Having accomplished his mission of delivering Gatewood to Lawton, Parker left to return north. Gatewood placed himself under Lawton's command but "with the distinct understanding that [he] be allowed to execute [his] mission."<sup>48</sup> Lawton, on the other hand, expressed reluctance to take Gatewood under his command, perhaps fearing that the newly arrived officer would succeed in his mission, while his own long-enduring efforts would be overshadowed.<sup>49</sup> This fear is reflected in his report of August 15, in which he indicated concern about a rumor of his replacement. He thought such a move would be a mistake, for he was just now learning the country and had to work with the material at hand, probably referring to the ex-guardhouse inmates serving as his infantry. "I shall do my best as I have always done--and fully believe that I will kill capture or compel Geronimo to surrender."<sup>50</sup> Miles reassured Lawton that he fully appreciated his work

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48. Lieutenant Gatewood, "The Surrender of Geronimo," Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society. Leonard Wood quotes Gatewood as saying that he had no faith in Miles' plan and was disgusted with it. This may have been tempered by his poor health and by the fact that he was one of General Crook's supporters. Apparently skeptical of his ability to carry out the mission, he attempted to have himself returned to Fort Bowie on sick report. Wood refused to make any such report, however, Lane, Chasing Geronimo, 88, 92.

49. James Parker, The Old Army; Memories, 1872 - 1918 (Boston, 1921), 178 - 179; Odie B. Faulk, The Geronimo Campaign (New York, 1969), 114 - 115.

50. Lawton to Thompson, August 15, 1886, CFO.

and wished it continued.<sup>51</sup> In spite of this encouragement and Gatewood's willingness to place himself under Lawton's orders, however, a tension remained between the two officers until the end of the campaign.

Finding his command distant from the hostiles again, Lawton began marching westward. Parker, traveling north, received news that the Apaches were depredating near Oposura,<sup>52</sup> so he moved to intercept and reinforce Lawton's troops. Instead of accepting Parker's aid, however, Lawton ordered him to scout the Bavispe Valley and continue moving north.<sup>53</sup>

Lawton then pushed his troops northward and, after forced marches, arrived at Fronteras on August 20. Here he learned that Geronimo had attempted to negotiate a settlement with Mexican authorities, and that two days earlier, he had made an offer to the governor at Arispe. Sonoran Governor Luis Torres, however, would accept unconditional surrender only, and the Indian chief refused to comply.<sup>54</sup> Word reached Fort Bowie of the hostiles'

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51. Miles to Lawton, August 21, 1886, Ibid.

52. Lieutenant Charles Spencer's Report, August 16, 1886, Ibid.

53. Lieutenant James F. Parker's Report, August 26, 1886, Ibid. Parker's command finally reached Cloverdale, New Mexico, on August 26 and remained there for a much needed period of rest, as it had been on field duty since June 3, 1885, nearly fifteen months.

54. Torres to Fort Bowie, August 18, 1886, Ibid.

presence at Fronteras, and Beaumont, commanding officer of the fort, ordered Lieutenant Wilbur Wilder to the Mexican town. He authorized Wilder to offer the same conditions granted to Chihuahua and his followers, the previous April, unconditional surrender, protection of their lives, and removal from Arizona.<sup>55</sup> On reaching Fronteras Wilder encountered two of the Apache women and spoke with them. Learning that the band was tired and that Geronimo himself was injured, he offered Miles' terms. The women invited him to accompany them to camp but he refused and asked only that they deliver the message. The Mexican officials at Fronteras, however, resented this intrusion by the Americans, for they wanted to dispose of Geronimo in their own fashion. Consequently, around midnight on August 20, the Jefe Politico of Fronteras approached Wilder's camp and demanded the withdrawal of American troops from the town. The lieutenant considered complying with his request, but when the Jefe refused to permit Wilder's presence at any confrontations between himself and Geronimo, Wilder decided to remain.<sup>56</sup>

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55. Beaumont to Wilder, August 18, 1886, USAC, Fort Bowie.

56. Report of Lt. Col. George A. Forsyth, August 21, 1886, Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Box 2. Forsyth also repeated a rumor he had heard, that Geronimo intended to ally with the Mexicans in the event of an impending war between the United States and Mexico over the Cutting Affair.

In spite of the Mexican peace overtures, the hostiles fled again that evening. Lawton's command, which had reached Fronteras and remained camped on the outskirts of the city, followed in pursuit. Gatewood then saw his opportunity to reach the Apaches and moved out ahead of Lawton.<sup>57</sup> Separated from Lawton, he put his own plan into operation and told the two Chiricahuas to go ahead and find Geronimo on their own. They followed the tracks carefully to the threshold of the Apaches' stronghold before being challenged by the sentries who invited them into camp after learning that they brought a message from Miles. Geronimo listened, then replied that he was ready to surrender, and as a token of his agreement to speak to Gatewood, gave Martine a lump of cooked mescal, while the other Apache, Kayitah, remained in the hostile camp as assurance that Gatewood would come in peace. Early the next morning, Gatewood set out for the Indian camp to offer General Miles' surrender conditions.<sup>58</sup>

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57. Leonard Wood related that Lawton became irritable about Gatewood's mission at this point, especially when the lieutenant failed to keep him informed of his movements. See Lane, Chasing Geronimo, 98 - 102.

58. For further information on Lieutenant Gatewood's role, see Faulk, The Geronimo Campaign; Anton Mazzanovich, Trailing Geronimo (New York, 1933); Thrapp, The Conquest of Apacheria; Charles B. Gatewood, Jr., "Lieutenant Charles B. Gatewood and the Surrender of Geronimo," Arizona Historical Review, IV (Spring, 1931), 29 - 44; Mazzanovich, "Lieutenant Charles B. Gatewood, Services Ignored," Arizona Historical Review, III (Spring, 1929), 86 - 91.

Gatewood walked into Geronimo's camp accompanied only by his interpreter and two soldiers.<sup>59</sup> Before settling down to business, he and Geronimo went through the formality of smoking tobacco, an important ceremony to the Apaches because it established the peaceful temperament of the talk. Then Gatewood turned the conversation to Miles' message, that the Apaches must surrender and be sent to Florida,<sup>60</sup> but the old Indian countered by promising to return to the reservation if allowed to resume their farming efforts, be given food rations and equipment, and to receive amnesty for their crimes. Gatewood possessed no authority to grant such generous terms but

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59. The two soldiers are identified as Martin Koch and George Buehler in Faulk, The Geronimo Campaign, 121.

60. Controversy arose concerning the surrender conditions offered by Miles after the Indians left Arizona. Leonard Wood noted in his diary that "...no definite terms were offered to the Indians...they were told that General Miles sent word that he would use every possible effort to send them promptly out of Arizona and to save their lives." Lane, Chasing Geronimo, 104. George Wratten, Geronimo's interpreter during the meeting with Gatewood, also testified that the Apaches were to be sent to Florida, but for two years only and would return when the situation improved. This latter recollection is erroneous according to contemporary testimonies. Wratten, speaking almost twenty years after the surrender, probably confused Miles' surrender conditions with those offered by General Crook in March, 1886. Crook had promised Chihuahua and his Apache followers that they would be able to return to Arizona in two years. See "Interview with Geronimo and his guardian, Mr. George M. Wratten, as told to Dr. S. M. Huddleston, March 21, 1905," typescript, Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Box 5.

could offer only unconditional surrender. Geronimo, however, realized that he was in no position to bargain, for his group was surrounded at a distance by both Mexican and American forces, with more Americans arriving as reinforcements. Then Gatewood informed him that no more Chiricahuas lived at the reservation, that they went to Florida, and he appeared to waver.<sup>61</sup> He continued to question Gatewood, though, especially about General Miles' character, and would have continued the session far into the night, but no beef could be found to feed and sustain them. "I was relieved," recalled Gatewood, "that I didn't have to talk all night as well as all day."<sup>62</sup> Finally, before leaving, Geronimo asked Gatewood what he would advise, and the lieutenant replied that he would trust Miles and take him at his word.<sup>63</sup> This probably convinced the hostiles to consider seriously Miles' demand, for they knew Gatewood and trusted his judgement.

The next morning, the hostiles met with Gatewood again. Geronimo agreed to talk with General Miles to

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61. This was a bluff on Gatewood's part, for the removal of the remaining Warm Springs and Chiricahua Apache groups had not yet occurred.

62. Lieutenant Gatewood to Mrs. C. B. Gatewood, August 26, 1886, Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Box 7.

63. Lieutenant Gatewood, "The Surrender of Geronimo," Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society.

discuss the surrender (undoubtedly hoping to exact better terms), provided that Gatewood accompanied the Indians and the soldiers followed at a distance to insure the Indians protection from the Mexicans. After agreeing, Gatewood brought Geronimo into the American camp to meet Captain Lawton and Surgeon Leonard Wood, and Gatewood became optimistic about the outcome, writing, "if there is no bad break made, the hostiles will surrender and the war will end."<sup>64</sup>

With the long-sought Geronimo now in his camp, Lawton became uneasy with the responsibility.<sup>65</sup> He wanted to get the hostiles north as quickly as possible, but the Mexicans created a menace as they made the Indians nervous by demanding assurance that Geronimo really intended to surrender. Finally Lawton granted them an interview with Geronimo, who told them that he feared Mexican treachery but at least trusted the Americans to spare his life, and for that reason he chose to surrender to Miles. The Mexicans were only partly mollified but agreed to withdraw their troops if one of their soldiers

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64. Lieutenant Gatewood to Mrs. C. B. Gatewood, August 26, 1886, Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Box 7.

65. See Captain H. W. Lawton's Report, August 28, 1886, CFO. He wrote, "So many complications arise that I fear the results."

could accompany the Americans to confirm the Apaches' surrender.<sup>66</sup>

Instead of marching north to surrender directly, Geronimo asked to see General Miles, to confirm the conditions of surrender and possibly to convince him to allow the Chiricahuas to remain in Arizona. Lawton relayed the message to Miles, but convincing the general to meet the Indian proved nearly as difficult as finding Geronimo in the Sierra Madre Mountains. Miles undoubtedly feared General Crook's fate, that the hostiles would decide suddenly not to surrender and would escape. It appears as if he wanted Lawton to bear the responsibility by himself in the event of their escape, but Lawton on his part feared the same thing, a blot on his military record, and the frantic tone of his messages to Miles reflects this.

Miles proved to be of little comfort to Lawton. He urged the captain to obtain their unconditional surrender, saying, "Tell those Indians the safest thing they can do is to surrender as prisoners of war, and rely upon the government to treat them justly and fairly if they are acting in good faith."<sup>67</sup> Miles failed to understand one thing about the Apaches, however; they were aware of

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66. Lieutenant Gatewood, "The Surrender of Geronimo," Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society; Lawton's Report, August 28, 1886, CFO.

67. Thompson, by order of Miles, to Lawton en route to San Bernardino Ranch, August 29, 1886, CFO.

hierarchies of authority and observed the formalities and ceremonies accorded them, and for this reason, they wanted to see Miles and hear from his own mouth the surrender conditions. General Crook had understood this in March when he agreed to meet the Apaches. When Miles refused to come, Lawton's uneasiness grew and he requested Lieutenant Wilder to arrange for reinforcements to round up the Apaches should they decide to flee.<sup>68</sup> After repeated urgings from Lawton and Major Beaumont at Fort Bowie, Miles considered going to the camp,<sup>69</sup> though he still held no faith in the Indians' reliability. In his correspondence with Governor Torres of Sonora, he said the "...Indians have been talking about surrendering...but I do not think they intend to surrender...",<sup>70</sup> and after another of Lawton's pleas he replied brusquely, "I do not intend to go down there simply to talk."<sup>71</sup> Later that same day, however, the general finally consented to meet Geronimo if the hostiles gave some guarantee or hostages, and the chief sent his brother-in-law, Porico, to Fort Bowie as assurance of his good faith.

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68. Lawton to Wilder, August 30, 1886, Ibid.

69. Beaumont to Thompson, August 31, 1886, Ibid.

70. Miles to Torres, August 31, 1886, Ibid.

71. Miles to Lawton, August 31, 1886, Ibid.

While Miles tarried in indecision at Fort Bowie, the two camps, Lawton's and Geronimo's, moved slowly north. By September 1 they reached Cottonwood Springs, Arizona, just across the international boundary, but the Indians became restless, for seven days had passed since they agreed to surrender to Miles, and they had heard no word from him. Lawton became panicky and probably was exasperated with his superior, but finally Thompson notified him that Miles would start for his camp on the evening of September 2.<sup>72</sup> Miles accordingly telegraphed his immediate superiors of his intended trip but carefully worded his message indicating that he expected no favorable result to come from the meeting.<sup>73</sup>

Two days later, General Miles met Geronimo at Skeleton Cañon, twenty-five miles north of the border. Miles remained adamant about the surrender conditions he offered through Gatewood in spite of Geronimo's demand to be returned to the reservation accompanied by his property, arms and stolen stock. Miles then played his trump card, informing Geronimo that no friendly Apaches remained on the reservation. The futility of his position became apparent to the Apache; even if he and his band succeeded in breaking through the cordon of troops, there was no place to go.

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72. Thompson to Lawton, September 2, 1886, Ibid.

73. Miles to A. A. A. G., Division of the Pacific, September 2, 1886, Ibid.

Those Apaches remaining in Arizona were hostile to the Chiricahuas, and, if it was true that the reservation Indians had supplied them with arms and ammunition, no further aid could be expected from that quarter. Staying in Mexico meant pursuit by the ruthless Mexican army. With these considerations in mind, Geronimo asked that the Apaches' lives be spared. Miles promised them that they would not be killed but treated justly. Then, placing three rocks on the ground in the form of a triangle, each representing a portion of the Chiricahua tribe, Miles indicated that two of the groups Geronimo's band and the reservation Chiricahuas, would be moved to join the third, Chihuahua's band, in Florida.<sup>74</sup>

Geronimo accepted Miles' terms for himself but it remained for Natchez to speak for the rest of the band. Cochise's son had gone to the mountains to mourn for a brother whom he feared fell into the hands of the Mexicans. Accompanied by Lieutenant Gatewood, Geronimo set out in search of the mourner and convinced him to return and speak with General Miles.<sup>75</sup> In the afternoon on September 4, 1885, Natchez surrendered his band to the Americans. Early the next morning Geronimo, Natchez, three other

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74. Miles, Personal Recollections, 521 - 522. Chihuahua's band had surrendered to General Crook in March, 1886, and was transported to Florida in April.

75. Lieutenant Gatewood, "The Surrender of Geronimo," Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society.

warriors and one woman accompanied Miles and a detachment of troops to Fort Bowie, arriving late that same day. As they rode along, Geronimo pointed out, optimistically perhaps, that it was the fourth time he surrendered, but Miles added that he thought it was the last time the Apache leader would ever have occasion to surrender.<sup>76</sup>

The remainder of the Indians and troops, with Captain Lawton in charge, traveled at a slower pace and arrived at Fort Bowie on September 7. The Apache wars had ended.<sup>77</sup>

When Miles arrived in Arizona he brought strategy designed for Plains Indian fighting. The Apache hostiles, however, fought a guerilla-type of hit and run warfare, so his main tactic, hot pursuit, failed to bring about the anticipated quick victory. His psychological strategy, that of persistently hunting the Indians, may have been effective to a certain extent in influencing their surrender, however. He initially believed that the band would remain together, be pursued as a unit and be chased breathless by mounted cavalry pushing them one hundred fifty to two hundred miles in forty-eight hours under favorable conditions,<sup>78</sup> but the topography of the country

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76. Miles, Personal Recollections, 527.

77. Post Returns, Fort Bowie, Arizona, September, 1886.

78. General Field Orders No. 7, 1886; Miles, Personal Recollections, 486.

did not lend itself to rapid and vigorous mounted pursuit. He was ignorant of the hostiles' tactics, as well as of the type of terrain encountered by the cavalry. Captain Lawton's groups comprised both infantry and cavalry, but five days in the field indicated to them, from their already-broken down horses, that the remainder of their journey would be on foot. Other companies of cavalry also encountered difficulties, primarily with keeping the horses properly shod due to the rough terrain. Little did Miles know that the hostiles would separate into small groups, confusing the trackers, and then meet at a pre-arranged destination. Nor did he know that they would make false camps at night and then laugh when they fooled the scouts.<sup>79</sup>

Previous expeditions discovered the futility of wearing down the hostiles with regular troops and therefore recognized the value of Apache scouts, born and bred in the mountains, who could find a trail where none appeared to the soldiers.<sup>80</sup> Miles overrated the value of regular troops and underrated that of the Indian scouts. Ultimately, the army did not bring about Geronimo's surrender; it was the work of two Apache scouts who

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79. Jason Betzinez, I Fought with Geronimo (Hattiesburg, 1959), 131.

80. Britton Davis, The Truth About Geronimo (New Haven, 1929), 221 - 222.

volunteered to seek the hostiles' camp and deliver Miles' demand for surrender.

Opinion regarding the performance of the auxiliary scouts was divided. Some officers believed them to be helpful, others thought they could get along better without them, but when it came to tracking the hostiles, the Indians, particularly the Apaches, were unequaled. Leonard Wood, the surgeon accompanying Lawton's expedition, acclaimed the scouts as efficient, hard workers.<sup>81</sup> Captain Joseph Dorst called them indispensable,<sup>82</sup> but an enlisted man remembered that they fought among themselves over plunder, and once they captured stock, they paid more attention to attending it than to scouting.<sup>83</sup> Despite their drawbacks, the Apache wars would have lasted considerably longer without the aid of the scouts.

The heliograph venture, as originally intended, failed because the Apaches traveled out of the sight of the operators during the daytime, and at night, when they accomplished most of their traveling, the heliographs were

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81. Leonard Wood, Report on the Campaign of 1886, Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Box 5.

82. San Francisco (California) Morning Call, April 21, 1886, in the Mazzanovich Papers, Special Collections, University of Arizona Library.

83. Lawrence Vinton, pseud. [Lawrence B. Jerome], "Geronimo's Last Raid," Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Box 5.

unmanned. As a result, the heliograph became relegated to the transmission of routine messages.

Insufficient communication posed the greatest obstacle in this campaign. Telegraph lines existed, but they covered only a limited territory and ran only between certain posts. Occasionally the Indians took care of a line by cutting it, then splicing it with rawhide, thus forcing a foot-by-foot inspection in order to discover the break. The heliographs assisted during these times of telegraphic blackouts, and it was, perhaps, their greatest contribution during the campaign. Although the actual message transmission took longer, a wider area could be reached. Communications in the field between different units presented the greatest problem, however. When the telegraph or heliograph could be employed, rapid communications existed, but most of the time couriers carried the messages from one command to another, causing the loss of much precious time, and often the information was outdated by the time it reached the intended recipient. *Directions from Miles or the district commanders, for instance, often took a whole day to reach the field, and by that time, the Indians might be thirty or forty miles away. In Mexico especially this communication gap made a noticeable difference in the campaign, for Lawton rarely knew the Apaches' location, and had he been in communication with the northern units, particularly during August,*

he would have known that the hostile party was moving north and saved himself and his men from more aimless wandering.

Miles assumed that the army would keep the upper hand in this campaign, but instead, the Apaches controlled the situation by being able to move quickly, and the army found itself lagging behind. The military never controlled the hostiles completely, and the campaign ended not because the army defeated them, but because, after fifteen months of freedom, they decided to stop running. Although Miles garnered the laurels for directing a brilliant campaign, it was not his strategy that won; it failed. Geronimo and his band decided to return to the reservation in September, and that decision ended the war.

## CHAPTER V

### APACHE REMOVAL

With Geronimo and his warriors safely at Fort Bowie, General Miles faced the problem of keeping his charges happy and carrying out his promise to send them to Florida. For fifteen years following the Camp Grant Massacre in 1871, military and civilian officials discussed the possibility of removing the Apaches from Arizona. The Secretary of the Interior recommended such a move in 1885 and later that year, General Sheridan traveled to Arizona to confer with General Crook, then in command. Crook's campaign in pursuit of Geronimo was beginning, however, and in view of this, the General believed the time inopportune for a removal operation. The decision was postponed until 1886, when General Miles succeeded Crook. In the summer of 1886, Miles discussed the removal of the reservation Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apaches, as well as the hostiles, with General Sheridan. Following Geronimo's surrender in September, Miles believed his troubles with the Apaches to have ended. Instead, he found himself trapped between the promises he made to the Chiricahuas at their surrender and the plans of his Washington superiors to turn the hostiles over to the civil

authorities in Arizona. He bore the reputation of being a pompous, self-seeking military man, but his endeavors to see the Apaches treated fairly after their surrender show Miles as not only a good military leader but a sympathetic victor as well.

Miles believed that the key to peace in Arizona lay not only in the capture of Geronimo but in the removal of the troublesome Apaches, non-hostile as well as hostile. This included the Warm Springs Apaches and those Chiricahuas living peacefully on the reservation at Fort Apache. The Warm Springs group lived there quietly but had a record of escapes and rampages.

During the latter part of June and early July, Miles visited Fort Apache accompanied by L. Q. C. Lamar, Jr., son of the Secretary of the Interior. They found the Indians drunk on tiswin, riotous, and dangerous. Miles reported that he had never met a "more turbulent and dissipated body of Indians." Although prisoners of war, Miles and Lamar noted that the Indians remained armed and mounted, and they believed the rumor that the reservation Apaches communicated with the hostiles, supplying them with ammunition.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, both men concluded that removal of these people was imperative. After Lamar's visit, Miles began investigating localities to which the

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1. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, 170; Miles, Personal Recollections, 496.

Apaches could be sent. Writing to his superiors at the Division of the Pacific headquarters in San Francisco, he informed them that the Apaches should be moved. He also requested permission to send an Indian delegation to Washington to confer with government officials and approve the removal location.<sup>2</sup>

From his post in Washington, General Sheridan presented an enigma to Miles regarding the removal question. The previous year, he favored and recommended transporting the Apaches to another area, but by the summer of 1886, he concluded that most of the Indian troubles resulted from such moves by the government. Instead of improving their behavior, forced moves served only to make the Indians more rebellious and discontent.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, he reversed his proposal of the previous year, advised against removal, and advocated controlling them within the territory.<sup>4</sup> By July 10, however, Sheridan again changed his mind and agreed to meet the Indians from Arizona. With

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2. Miles to A. A. G., Presidio of San Francisco, July 3, 1886, DAC.

3. U. S. Congress, Senate, Senate Executive Document No. 83, 51 C, 1 s, 1890, 3. Hereafter, SED 83.

4. Lamar to Secretary of War, July 10, 1886, Ibid., 6. In his 1886 report to the Secretary of War, however, Sheridan gave no indication of his vacillation on the removal question, stating only that he approved Miles' request to move the Apaches out of Arizona. See the Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, 73.

his approval, Miles ordered an Apache delegation headed by the Chiricahua, Chatto, and Captain Joseph Dorst to leave for Washington.<sup>5</sup> There they were scheduled to meet with the Secretary of the Interior to decide their fate.

Dorst and his party of Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apaches arrived in Washington in mid-July. They met with Secretary of the Interior L. Q. C. Lamar, and later with President Grover Cleveland, to voice their opposition to removal but neither official made any promises. In effect, the journey seemed a waste of time and only a token recognition by the government of the Indians' right to share in the decision affecting their future. Only Sheridan made an attempt at honesty, regretting that the Apaches had made the trip in the first place, for in his opinion, no suitable terms could be reached; the decision lay solely in the hands of himself and the President.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to rebuffs by government officials, Dorst's delegation met another obstacle, early day Indian rights' supporters who attempted to dissuade the Indians from cooperating with the government's intent to move them.<sup>7</sup>

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5. U. S. Army, Department of Arizona, General Orders and Circulars, 1870 - 1886, R. G. 94, Field Orders No. 74, July 13, 1886.

6. Dorst to Miles, February 28, 1890, SED 83, 45.

7. Miles accused the Indian supporters of opposing his military efforts in Arizona and of breaking the Apaches' confidence in him. In a letter to his wife, he

Consequently, by the time they departed Washington they were uneasy and suspicious, even though Cleveland had presented Chatto with a medal of former President Arthur and a document which the Indians believed assured their permanency in Arizona. Instead, the delegates never returned to Arizona. Sheridan ordered them halted once at Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania and later in Kansas, since both he and Miles feared an uprising if the Apaches returned home. Detained at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, by Sheridan's orders, the Indians waited until September 10 before being moved to Florida.<sup>8</sup>

While the Apache delegation journeyed to Washington to confer with the government officials, Miles began an investigation of the removal possibilities. From the beginning, he favored the Indian Territory east of New Mexico.<sup>9</sup> There the Apaches would be distant enough from

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identified the chief agitator as John Gregory Bourke, formerly a member of General Crook's staff and an outspoken critic of Miles' handling of the campaign and removal efforts. Miles to Mary, July 31, 1886, quoted in Johnson, The Unregimented General, 242.

8. Since Miles feared trouble if they returned to Arizona, their wait in Kansas was prolonged until a definite decision was reached regarding the destiny of the hostile and non-hostile Apaches still in Arizona. See Lamar to Drum, August 26, 1886, SED 83, 18; U. S. Congress, Senate, Senate Executive Document No. 117, 49 C, 2 s, 1886, 69. Hereafter, SED 117. Sheridan to Drum, August 27, 1886, 22 - 23; Drum to Commanding General, Division of Missouri, September 12, 1886, SED 83, 73.

9. Barber to Miles, July 2, 1886, DAC.

settled areas to discourage raiding forays, yet its climate would be more amenable to their health than that of the East Coast. The obstacle to their settlement in the Indian Territory lay in its limiting statutes forbidding the displacement of Arizona and New Mexico Indians to that area.<sup>10</sup> In spite of the restriction, Miles requested an amendment permitting no more than five hundred Apaches to settle in that region. In addition to a monetary savings of \$300,000 annually, he pleaded, many lives would be saved.<sup>11</sup> His superiors rejected the plan, however, justifying their action by taking refuge in the law.<sup>12</sup> The President, they said, could not justify changing the law and looked upon the settlement of a "lawless and dangerous" tribe among the peaceful Indians of the region as a breach of faith and treaty obligations.<sup>13</sup> Thus the

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10. Collecting and subsisting Apaches and other Indians of Arizona and New Mexico....the President of the United States is hereby directed to prohibit the removal of any portion of said tribes of Indians to the Indian Territory unless the same shall be hereafter authorized by Act of Congress." U. S. Congress, Statutes at Large, 45 C, 2 s, Chapter 87, 313.

11. Miles to A. G., San Francisco, July 12, 1886, DAC.

12. Sheridan to Miles, July 15, 1886, U. S. Army, Office of the Adjutant General, Special Files concerning Indian Troubles in Arizona and New Mexico, 1881 - 1887, File 1066, R. G. 94. Hereafter, AGO. See also SED 83, 8; SED 117, 55.

13. Report of the Secretary of War, 1886, 16.

government officials conveniently took refuge in treaty obligations, which they later broke, to prevent settlement of the Apaches in the Indian Territory.

On July 31 General Sheridan handed down his decision regarding the non-hostile Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apaches. He ordered them removed from Arizona, by force if necessary, to a location east of the Mississippi River, suggesting Fort Marion in St. Augustine, Florida. Those Apaches who surrendered to General Crook in March, 1886, had been sent there in April. Sheridan asked Miles' opinion of the plan and received an unfavorable response. Some advantages might be gained, such as relieving the citizens of Arizona of their concern and releasing soldiers from the reservation to guard the Mexican border. On the other hand, Miles cited several objections to Sheridan's plan. He feared that the federal government would be charged with tokenism and bad faith for bringing Chatto and his Apache delegation to Washington and then ignoring their desires. Secondly, word of Washington's betrayal might reach other Indian tribes in the Southwest and endanger future treaty attempts with them. Finally, Miles thought that if Geronimo, then in the mountains of Mexico, ever learned of the removal intentions, he would never make any overtures to surrender, necessitating a costly and time-consuming war of extermination. If the government's

decision to remove them was final, however, he restated his belief that they should not be sent to the East Coast, especially to Florida. The damp climate of sea level Florida would prove injurious to the Apaches, used to living in arid country several thousand feet above sea level, and Miles foresaw opposition to the move from the humanitarian presses in the East. An effective humanitarian-led campaign, he warned, might result ultimately in the Indians' return to Arizona.<sup>14</sup>

In the face of rejection by Sheridan, Miles stubbornly continued his investigation of the removal. Even in late August, after Sheridan's negative response and strenuous opposition from the residents of neighboring Kansas and Texas, he pressed for removal to the Indian Territory. In a letter to Lieutenant Colonel James F. Wade, commander of the Fort Apache reservation, Miles proposed moving the Apaches to "No Man's Land," north of the Texas Pan Handle between New Mexico and Kansas. There the Indians would be given an opportunity to own more land than at Fort Apache, each man woman and child receiving 640 acres. For each of the first two years of residence, every family would receive \$300 worth of stock and farming utensils, plus \$5000 per year to be divided among the prominent men of the tribe and \$5000 per year to pay

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14. Miles to Sheridan, August 1, 1886; Miles to Sheridan, August 2, 1886, AGO; SED 117, 56.

government employees.<sup>15</sup> After discussing this with tribal members, Wade told Miles that some appeared willing to leave Arizona under such conditions but many rejected it.<sup>16</sup>

Even with the tacit consent of some of the Apaches the government remained adamant in its opposition to Miles. Secretary of the Interior Lamar disapproved the proposed arrangement, though his son agreed with it. He reiterated the legal quandary of placing the Apaches in the Indian Territory and then lamely stated his objections to the "No Man's Land" settlement. No agency existed in that region, he said, nor housing for Indians and employees, nor funds for construction. In addition, the creation of such an agency would require the presence of a large number of troops to keep the Indians under control. All this being inconvenient, the Secretary concluded that the only logical location for the Apaches was Florida where they could be closely confined and disciplined until the government deemed it safe to place them on a reservation.<sup>17</sup> This marked Miles' final effort to move the Apaches to the Indian Territory. With no further opposition, the government's decision to move them to Florida

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15. Miles to Wade, August 6, 1886, DAC.

16. Wade to Miles, August 14, 1886, CFO.

17. Lamar to the Secretary of War, August 10, 1886, AGO.

became final.<sup>18</sup>

After wrangling all summer over the Apaches' destiny, the army failed to inquire about the feasibility of the move to Florida. Fort Marion, formerly the Castillo San Marco, was a small fort built by the Spanish in the late sixteenth century. Its condition had deteriorated badly, to the extent that prisoners could not be housed inside the fort due to leaks and general dampness. Consequently, those Indian prisoners already interned there, Chihuahua and his band, lived in tents pitched on the terreplein, or top, of the fort. When the army wrote to the fort's commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Loomis L. Langdon, about the expected arrivals, he responded that he could accommodate only seventy-five additional prisoners.<sup>19</sup> The sanitary conditions, even with this small number, would be stretched to the limit, but he recommended that no further prisoners be sent because sickness had swept through the fort's current occupants ever since their arrival. If the army was determined to send two hundred additional Apaches to the fort, however, he urged that Chihuahua's group be moved to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to make room. General Sheridan refused to

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18. Cleveland to Drum, endorsed by Sheridan, August 23, 1886; Drum to Miles, August 23, 1886, AGO; Sheridan to Miles, August 25, 1886, SED 117, 4 - 6.

19. Drum to Langdon, August 21, 1886; Langdon to Drum, August 21, 1886, AGO.

consider Langdon's objections. Instead, he ordered the removal, remarking that "the conditions stated by Colonel Langdon need not interfere with sending the remainder of the Chiricahua and Warm Springs Indians to Fort Marion, Florida."<sup>20</sup> Thus, in spite of being warned of the unhealthy nature of the fort and the geographic region, he forced the internement of over four hundred Indians in a place safe for no more than a hundred.

On hearing of the government's decision to move the Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apaches, Miles began planning the logistics. Rather than assuming the responsibility himself, however, he delegated the assignment to Colonel Wade at Fort Apache. Miles suggested two methods to effect the move. In the first case, the Indians could be rounded up by force. In the second, they could be called together while the Colonel explained that the President wanted them moved East for their own good and that their friends who had visited Washington agreed and also wanted them to leave. In either instance, Miles warned Wade that he must succeed in moving them quickly and quietly. He feared that if they learned of their destination and heard the public reports of the unhealthy situation there, many would attempt to escape.<sup>21</sup> Wade succeeded in

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20. Sheridan to the Secretary of War, August 28, 1886, Ibid.

21. Miles to Wade, August 27, 1886; Miles to

his mission, however, as he gathered the Indians together without any problems. On August 29, he ordered them to assemble, as if for roll call, while the soldiers surrounded them and disarmed them. They were then marched under heavy guard to Holbrook, one hundred miles distant, to await orders and transportation.<sup>22</sup>

An important series of events ensued from this point. While Colonel Wade was busy gathering the non-hostile reservation Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apaches, Miles was occupied with the meeting of Lieutenant Gatewood and Geronimo, south of the border. When the General met the leader of the Apaches early in September, the old Indian surrendered with the agreement that his life be spared and that he and the other hostiles be sent to join their families whom Miles reported to be in Florida. In fact, the reservation Indians had not been moved yet. Thus, Miles was working with two separate groups of Indians, the hostiles and non-hostiles.

When he returned to Fort Bowie with Geronimo, Miles notified Washington, stating that he intended to move the hostiles to Florida, as originally planned, "unless otherwise ordered."<sup>23</sup> He also notified General Howard

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Wade, August 28, 1886, DAC.

22. Miles to Wade, August 29, 1886, Ibid.; Miles, Personal Recollections, 504 - 505.

23. Miles to Lamar, September 6, 1886, AGO.

in San Francisco, who telegraphed Washington of an unconditional surrender.<sup>24</sup> Howard incorrectly assumed the surrender to be without conditions, for Miles never made any statement to that effect. This telegram initiated further misunderstandings in the East, and Miles' efforts to correct them and maintain his promises to Geronimo, to spare his life and move him to Florida, created ill-feelings and eventually resulted in an investigation.

Upon receiving news of Geronimo's surrender, General Sheridan wired his congratulations. At the same time he informed Miles that, in spite of the previous decision to ship the hostile Apaches to Florida, other government officials reversed this decision. They believed the warriors should be held as prisoners by the military "subject to such trial and punishment as may be awarded them by the civil authorities of the Territories of Arizona and New Mexico."<sup>25</sup> Sheridan, suddenly caught between his previous decision and this more recent one, relayed the President's message to Miles, to hold the Indians as prisoners "without conditions" in close confinement at Fort Bowie until a decision was made.<sup>26</sup> General Howard

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24. Howard to Adjutant General, September 6, 1886, SED 117, 7 - 8.

25. Drum to Cleveland, September 7, 1886, AGO; SED 117, 10.

26. Sheridan to Miles, September 7, 1886, AGO;

in San Francisco also received the President's message, relaying it to Miles. Dated September 8, he received the relay message late that afternoon.<sup>27</sup>

By this time Miles recognized a breakdown in communications. He had received Geronimo's surrender with the understanding that the Apaches' lives be spared and that they be sent to Florida to join the rest of the Chiricahuas. Washington was under the impression that the Apaches had surrendered without any promises having been made. For whatever motives, Miles played the honorable victor, taking every possible measure short of direct disobedience of orders to see that the Indians received fair treatment according to their mutual understanding of the surrender conditions.

Miles was determined to move the surrendered Apaches out of Arizona. He knew that the Arizona civil authorities intended to prosecute Geronimo, Natchez, and the rest of the hostile men to the full extent of the law. The Arizona version of justice, however, would have been little more than a sanctioned lynch mob. Military pride also made Miles unwilling to turn the Apaches over to the civil authorities. The military was responsible for

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SED 117, 9 - 10. Sheridan requested acknowledgement of receipt.

27. Drum to Miles, September 8, 1886, SED 117, 11.

chasing the Apaches and accepting their surrender, therefore Miles believed they should also carry out the victory to its logical conclusion themselves. With these considerations in mind, Miles began taking steps to aid the Indians.

Responding to Sheridan's telegram of September 7, Miles informed him that no accommodations were available for holding the Indians and requested permission to move them to Fort Union, New Mexico, Fort Bliss, Texas, or Fort Marion, Florida, for safety reasons.<sup>28</sup> President Grover Cleveland, aware of Miles' intention to move them out of the territory, refused to entertain any such notion. Instead, he ordered the military to "securely confine" Geronimo and his band at the "nearest fort or prison."<sup>29</sup> Miles had already decided, however, that the Indians could not be confined safely within Arizona and he searched for a way to avoid complying with Washington's orders. He found a convenient vehicle in the correspondence concerning the movement of the non-hostile Chiricahuas.

At this time, the non-hostile Apaches were still awaiting transportation in Holbrook, to the north. Before

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28. Miles to Sheridan, September 7, 1886, AGO; SED 117, 10.

29. Cleveland to Drum, September 8, 1886, AGO; SED 117, 11. Copies of this order were also sent to Miles, in reply to his telegram of September 7, and to General Howard.

he left Bowie to parley with Geronimo, Miles had telegraphed Washington, asking if they should be sent to Florida. When he returned from accepting the hostiles' surrender, the answer awaited him, ordering "...you will carry out the President's order and have the Indians moved straight to Fort Marion, Florida."<sup>30</sup> Miles accordingly carried out the direction and on September 14, the non-hostile Warm Springs and Chiricahua Apaches left for the East Coast.<sup>31</sup> In the light of Washington's refusal to send the surrendered hostiles to Florida, Miles put this telegram to good use, employing it as his justification for sending the hostiles to the East.

Late in the afternoon of September 8, the hostile Apaches boarded a Florida-bound train amid the strains of Auld Lang Syne. True to his word, Miles removed them from the territory before either the civil or military authorities could act. The move was timely, for the next day, warrants arrived for their arrests.<sup>32</sup> To give the train time to get out of Arizona, and beyond his military jurisdiction, Miles delayed notifying his superiors of the removal until September 9. The only reason he offered

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30. Drum to Howard, September 3, 1886, SED 117, 7.

31. Miles, Personal Recollections, 528.

32. Jerome, Special Agent, to Miles, September 9, 1886, DAC.

for not complying directly with orders was that the women and boys were most vicious and for several reasons it was unsafe to hold them at Bowie. He then stated that the train, accompanied by Captain Lawton, would arrive in San Antonio, Texas, the evening of September 9 and would be in Fort Marion "as directed by the Acting Secretary of War in three days." The surrender was not unconditional, he said, as reported by General Howard. The Indians surrendered with the understanding that they would be removed from Arizona.<sup>33</sup> Miles' wire placed General Howard in a bad position, since he had telegraphed the information that the surrender was unconditional. Howard, however, received no reprimand for his error and contribution to the post-surrender confusion.

Before being halted by orders from Washington, the Indian party reached San Antonio, Texas.<sup>34</sup> Geronimo and his party remained there, confined at San Antonio Barracks, until the government decided their status. Neither Howard nor Miles could provide satisfactory answers to questions concerning the surrender conditions. Consequently, the government asked Geronimo himself what

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33. Miles to A. G., Division of the Pacific, September 9, 1886, Ibid.; Howard to A. G., Washington, September 9, 1886, SED 117, 12.

34. Drum to General Stanley, Commanding, Department of Texas, September 10, 1886, AGO; SED 117, 13.

what conditions had been offered.<sup>35</sup> Interviewed by General Stanley, the Apache leader said that General Miles had promised to spare his life and those of his warriors and ship them to Florida where they would see their families in five days.<sup>36</sup> In the light of this evidence, that the surrender in fact contained conditions, the government permitted the Indians to proceed to Florida as promised.

Thus, Miles partially fulfilled the promises he made to the Apaches. Their lives had been spared. They went to Florida. Once there, however, Miles' word no longer prevailed, as Geronimo and his warriors found themselves confined at Fort Pickens, near Pensacola, while the women and children joined Chihuahua's band and the non-hostile Warm Springs and Chiricahua Apaches at Fort Marion, in St. Augustine. Chatto and his delegation, who had visited Washington in July, also arrived at Fort Marion.

The hostile men remained separated from their families until April, 1887, when they were all moved to Mount Vernon Barracks, Alabama. An investigation of the situation at Fort Marion by the Indian Rights Association

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35. Drum to Stanley, September 29, 1886, AGO; SED 117, 21.

36. Stanley to Drum, September 30, 1886, AGO; SED 117, 22.

led to the move as it revealed extremely crowded conditions, poor sanitation, and lack of proper clothing resulting in dangerous health conditions.<sup>37</sup> Clamor from the Eastern press forced the government to take action. Alabama proved to be little better than Florida, however, and the Apaches continued to die from respiratory problems. After several years of agitation led by the Indian Rights Association and General Crook, the Apaches moved again, for the last time. Ironically, their new home was at Fort Sill, in the Indian Territory, the region to which they had been forbidden entry in 1886.<sup>38</sup>

No official reprimands resulted from General Miles' actions to protect the Apaches and fulfill the surrender conditions. Insubordination on Miles' part was suspected but could not be proven conclusively, for he fell back on an early telegram from the Adjutant General which had ordered the Indians to be removed to Florida. Although this wire, dated September 3, referred to the removal of the non-hostile Chiricahuas, Miles conveniently misinterpreted it to mean hostiles as well.<sup>39</sup> A second

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37. See Herbert Welsh, The Apache Prisoners in Fort Marion, St. Augustine, Florida (Philadelphia, 1887).

38. For further information about the fate of the Apaches, see David M. Goodman, Apaches as Prisoners of War, 1886 - 1894, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Christian University, 1969.

39. See Drum to Howard, September 3, 1886, SED 117, 7.

controversial telegram, dated September 8, ordered Miles to hold the hostiles in close confinement, but he never acknowledged receipt as requested, nor did General Howard, who relayed the telegram, demand acknowledgement. After the controversy erupted over the hostile removal, and Howard's role as instigator of the unconditional surrender rumor became known, he demanded an explanation of Miles' failure to respond to the telegram.<sup>40</sup> Since he had not acknowledged it, Miles could safely claim that he had never seen the wire "owing to a remarkable series of circumstances."<sup>41</sup> According to Miles, he saw the telegram for the first time after the investigation began. He said he believed that because of telegraphic uncertainty the dispatch had been mailed and was then mistakenly filed with a series of repeated telegrams received at that time. The message was found forty-one days after its dispatch, when Miles ordered a search for it. He added, however, that the time logged on the dispatch was 4:05 p.m., and he had left with the hostiles at 2:55 p.m., before the order to retain them at Bowie allegedly arrived.

Miles' excuse sounded contrived, but perhaps it was valid. Henry Daly, a former packer who later rose

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40. Howard to Miles, November 2, 1886, AGO.

41. Miles to A. A. G., Division of the Pacific, November 3, 1886, DAC; SED 117, 30.

to chief quartermaster, claimed that as the hostiles proceeded to the train at Bowie Station, Miles' adjutant told him he had something in his pocket which would delay their departure but Miles would never see it.<sup>42</sup> This was probably the message from Drum. Perhaps Miles left orders with his aid not to show him any telegrams, but no evidence exists to support such a conclusion. Thus, the investigation ended with no charges filed. The most important thing, to the federal government and to the citizens of Arizona, was that the Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apaches no longer constituted a menace to the territory.

General Miles' Arizona campaign added little to the annals of military history. For all of his energetic innovations in warfare, hot pursuit by a select force, rapid communications via the heliograph, placing detachments in strategic positions, Miles discovered that, like General Crook, he had to follow the warfare rules established by the Apaches. Their guerilla tactics eliminated consideration of conventional tactics. Miles arrived in Arizona with hopes of a dashing victory over Geronimo to add luster to his military successes. Ultimately he

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42. H. W. Daly to Maj. C. B. Gatewood, June 18, 1928, Gatewood Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Box 8. In his diary Leonard Wood also mentions that the adjutant, Captain William Thompson, told him about the telegram. See Lane, Chasing Geronimo, 112.

discovered there was little he could do to run the campaign; his field commander and trackers were responsible for victory or defeat. In fact, Miles' campaign proved to be little different than Crook's. Miles at first disdained Crook's method of dealing personally with the Indians and bargaining, yet he discovered that if he wanted any victory, he, too, would have to meet them at their own level. Despite Miles' initial attitude towards the Apaches, however, a formerly overlooked picture of an honorable victor emerges as his efforts on behalf of the Apaches brought him into conflict with government authorities. It is to Miles' credit that he considered keeping his word to a small group of Apaches more important than cooperating with his superiors.

The end of the Apache wars in Arizona marked the close of an era in Arizona history and military history as well. For the military, the Apaches were among the last of the main Indian groups subjected and subdued, a victory for American Indian policy which dictated removing or disposing of the Indians to make room for the expanding nation. For the citizens of Arizona, the removal of the Apaches insured their safety and freedom to develop ranching and agriculture and encourage emigration from other parts of the country. Those Apaches who remained on the reservations in Arizona continued to live peacefully

and preserve their cultural heritage. The Apache wars became a memory of the past, lingering in the minds of the old Indians and relived yearly in their old age by army veterans.

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