

# Our Advent Into the Great Southwest

REMINISCENCES OF FIFTY YEARS AGO

(By G. A. CLUM, MESILLA, NEW MEXICO)

How many citizens of the southwest have any idea of what the states of New Mexico and Arizona represented fifty years ago? How many would venture into a country of like condition and chance? How many would be eager to discard the comforts and luxuries of civilization and plunge into a veritable desert, in which cowboys, bandits and Indians swayed and comparatively ruled and reigned? And yet, we venture to state there is not a pioneer living who would not be glad to live over again the "good old days" of fifty or more years ago. Civilization has its manifold advantages and illimitable charms, but the intrepid heart of the old pioneer regrets that there are no more "wild and woolly Wests" to penetrate, conquer and redeem.

In the spring of 1875 we left the terminus of the railroad at Pueblo, Colorado, with San Carlos, Arizona, as our objective point. Having always lived in the East, and being inured to the fastidious habits and customs of urban life in cities such as New York, Montgomery, Alabama, Charleston, South Carolina, and Washington, D. C., we naturally recoiled as we contemplated the leap into the direful realities of which we had heard and read of the Great Southwest.

Being at the end of steam transportation, with only an occasional stage accommodation, we were in a quandary regarding further travel, when, fortunately, a trader from Cimmaron, New Mexico, invited us to accompany him on his return trip as companion or body-guard, which invitation we promptly accepted.

With two staunch ponies and light buggy we made some thirty miles a day, stopping at cattle ranches for food and shelter for ourselves as well as our horses. With Pike's Peak in the far distance on our right, and an endless prairie before us, there opened up a vista of territory most wonderful and fascinating, as we journeyed in comparative silence and thoughtful solitude.

At Cimmaron we connected with the regular line of stage from Denver, and engaged passage for Santa Fe. We had four mules and what was called a "jerky," and the first night out

we upset. The driver had evidently fallen asleep and the rear mules had walked into a side ditch, which became deeper and deeper until the jerky toppled over and the mules stopped. We climbed up and out through the side door, not at all injured but somewhat bewildered. The driver beseechingly importuned us not to report the episode and out of regard for his feelings and his job, we kept the peace. At the last relay we had a Concord coach and four good horses whose reputations as runaways were notorious, but with a trusty driver we dashed into Santa Fe in regulation style.

To travel upon schedule time, or with the hope of possible transportation, occasions but little discomfort, but to find yourself cut off entirely from your destination for want of a conveyance of any description whatsoever, is calculated to create a state of intense perturbation and despair. The only stage line from Santa Fe into Arizona was south to Tucson, via Silver City, which would carry us in a roundabout way, and no nearer San Carlos. Not a blessed thing west into Central Arizona, the goal for which we were destined. But patience rewards the faithful, and after pondering for several days, some army officers with their families, from Ft. Wingate en route for the East, drove into town. And here was our medium of deliverance. Two vacant ambulances with four mules each were to return from whence they came, and it was not long before we booked our exit.

With a fervent handshake we said farewell to kind friends, which our sojourn had inspired, we passed out of the ancient town of the middle west and resumed our adventurous journey. We drove south some fifty miles to Albuquerque, then west about 100 miles to Ft. Wingate.

Albuquerque was an ancient adobe pueblo, typically Mexicana. We were intensely interested in the people and the aspect of the country through which we passed. The valley along the Rio Grande, occupied and partially cultivated in a primitive manner by Mexicans, betokened a state of utter destitution and mediocre civilization. Everything was quaint and ancient. Mud houses. Enormous solid wooden cartwheels; small oxen with long horns in front of which were lashed a stick for a yoke; plowing with a wooden plow which merely pushed the earth aside; women peeping with one eye from behind shawls, while others carried well-balanced ollas upon their heads; men wrapped in vari-colored blankets and wearing wide-brimmed hats strolled leisurely about—all this gave a singularly picturesque effect to the country that reminded us of the old Biblical picture of Pal-

estine, and we could imagine we were Jacob or Jacob's son touring the Holy Lands, minus the camels.

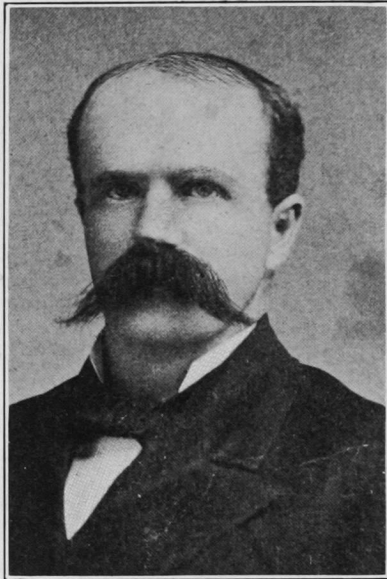
Arriving at Ft. Wingate early one morning, we immediately took passage with a mail carrier bound for the Little Colorado in Arizona, about 100 miles the western limit of his route. We had a hybrid team consisting of a mule, a horse, and an open buckboard. Traveling was glorious and we enjoyed every mile of it. We cooked our own meals and slept on the ground in nomadic fashion. It was an open country through the Navajo Reservation, but as we had become accustomed to fierce looking Mexicans and fiercer looking Indians, we assumed a courageous attitude of outward indifference, whatever may have been our inmost misgivings.

However "qualified" a young man, directly from the East, may consider himself, there are a few things in the West of which he has no conception. We learned from experience that in order to conceal our abject ignorance, "silence was golden." We ceased to ask questions and relied upon events to develop specific knowledge. To illustrate: About noon the carrier observed that after crossing the river we would have dinner, and presently we traversed a low, sandy place, and pulling out to one side of the road he stopped. We inquired what he intended doing and he answered "get dinner." We innocently asked "where is the river?" and he laughingly replied "Why we just crossed it." It was the Rio Puerco, which at this time was as dry as the desert, but at flood time is a raging torrent. By digging three feet in the "river" a brownish looking water appeared, which was evidently relished by our team, and, at least, it made excellent coffee. Again: The carrier gathered some fagots for cooking, and plucking a bunch of green twigs from a bush he placed them beneath the pile and igniting a match he applied it to the green twigs, when to our utter amazement they instantly flashed into a flame that fired the entire mass. We caught our breath at the startling phenomenon, but uttered not a word. Subsequently we learned that the green twigs were greasewood that supplied the entire country with superior kindling.

The carrier was an indifferent and careless driver. He permitted the team to rush headlong into sags and ditches at the imminent peril of the buck-board. Several times we cautioned him of the danger, but to no avail, and about sundown the inevitable happened. And there we were—in an Indian country, thirty miles from nowhere, and with a broken axle. But as Uncle Sam's mail must not be delayed, and as we were labeled

"express," the entire consignment must be delivered according to contract, so, in the morning, after borrowing saddles from the Navajos, we mounted our trusty charges and proceeded to proceed. Progress was slow but sure, and without danger of breakdown. In the afternoon of the following day we reached the Little Colorado, not a little thankful for the rest. Our hotel was an adobe, and our host a Mexican. As we found the meals palatable and our quarters comfortable, we made no gestures, but "Hell and Maria," as Dawes would have exclaimed, "how were we to get out of there?" The Mexican did not know; there were no horses to hire, and apparently we were "up against it." But was it chance or divination? Upon the third day a lone horseman rode into camp. He proved to be a cowboy from a cattle ranch located about thirty miles south which supplied the Camp Apache Indian Reservation with beef. To him we explained our dilemma. "Well," he said, "I am looking up strays, but tomorrow I will return with an extra horse. That's the best I can do." Which "best" we declared superlative. The next afternoon he returned, and the following morning, sanguine that our troubles were over, and with buoyant heart we sprang into the saddle and "hit the trail" for the cattle ranch, which we negotiated before night. The next morning, with a fresh mount, we essayed the trip to Camp Apache—some twenty miles—without escort. It was a beautiful morning; the atmosphere exhilarating, and the trail fine. We rode through tall pines, along running brooks, and the scenery was lovely and thrilling. But we were in the Apache country, and we knew their history, but "faint heart ne'er won fair lady," so we braced up for any event. But events failed to materialize, and on and on we rode, enjoying inspiring nature, but always with an eye out for these "events." At last, in the afternoon we came upon the Apaches in twos and threes and then in groups. To our utmost disgust they paid no particular attention to us, and we were not at all disposed to form their personal acquaintance. Without further incident, in a mile or two we rode into the agency.

To our surprise and delight, at Camp Apache we met the San Carlos Indian Agent, a personal friend, who was en route to Washington on official business. On the following morning we bid him au revoir, and with an ambulance-and-four he pulled out for Albuquerque, while we trailed south. We had an entourage of about 100 San Carlos Apaches, and a single Mexican, the agency interpreter. Mounted upon "Mike" the best saddle mule at the reservation, we trekked for San Carlos.



G. A. CLUM IN 1880

While unknown to tourists, this trail, for mountain climbing and scenic beauty, will compare with any in the country. Especially grand and majestic was the Black River Canyon, with its adjacent mountain lifting its peak some 500 feet skyward. The trail along its side was almost perpendicular in places, and along narrow passages that looked down into chasms, dark and formidable. At times we preferred to walk. To witness the Apaches slowly winding up along the mountainside, some on horseback and many on foot, leading their ponies, was a sight worth seeing.

That night we camped at what was called Cold Springs. It was in a canyon, a cove-like location. There was an abundance of shade and plenty of grazing. It developed that, being a friend of the agent, we became the guests of the Apaches, especially the women. They prepared the meal—coffee, beef, broiled on a stick, a most delicious morsel. They brought branches and tall grasses upon which to spread our blankets for the night. Thoroughly amused, through the interpreter we expressed our genuine appreciation. As night threw its mantle of darkness about us, the scene became wonderfully strange, wild and uncanny. Men, women and children grouped around family fires; papposes howled; dogs growled; horses trampled, and the general mix-up of Apache belongings was a sight to hear and behold. Although conscious of the grave possibilities of the moment, exhausted nature carried us into dreamland.

At San Carlos we organized an institution of learning. We personified the president, the faculty, the entire push, and engaged to teach the young Apache ideas "how to shoot". It was a peculiar job. The kids were wild as deer, and when they saw us approach they would run and hide like quail. But when convinced that we were harmless, they became decidedly docile, and after a week "at school" they were transformed into the most ardent pupils. They would seek us out before the hour of lessons, and taking us by the hands would endeavor to persuade and entice us into the "hall of wisdom." Seriously, it was the most interesting endeavor we ever espoused. We taught exclusively by object lessons. We had the numerals, the alphabet and pictures of animals and objects with which they were familiar. We would go over the lessons in English, then repeat in Apache. One day they spelled h-o-r-s-e, and one boy pronounced it "clea," which is Apache for horse. This occasioned a great outburst of amusement as they called our attention to the discrepancy, but it demonstrated the fact that the boy knew what he was spelling. After the hour of exercises they would instantly rush, and the

one that gained possession of the pointer became teacher, and in the most earnest and solemn manner they would go over the lessons—both in English and Apache—without a single mistake. We gave them stubs of pencils, and upon scraps of paper to the agency employes they would display their aptitude, but, like other children, many of their d's and b's were inverted. Never did children exhibit more enthusiasm for learning, and none acquired it more readily. Their minds were alert, and their eyes would sparkle with intense gratification as they successfully mastered the rudiments of English. However, to the dishonor and disgrace of our government, there were no funds to prosecute the good work, and we were reluctantly compelled to abandon the mission.

Life on the reservation was not always tranquil and serene. Even among the most civilized tribes, disorder and crime obtains, and rules of conduct are necessarily prescribed with force to maintain them. Among a few thousand Indians there could be no exception. There existed no written code, but the common rules of ethics prevailed, with some thirty Apache police, equipped with Springfield rifles and a belt of cartridges, to enforce their observance, and, strange as it may appear, one felt safer within than beyond the confines of the reservation.

The more serious offenses were stock-trespassing, assaults, domestic troubles, tiswin fermentation, the secreting of arms, and a thousand other petty misdemeanors that required daily adjustment. A more efficient corps of police was never organized, and they could always be relied upon to make arrests, no matter how prominent or influential the offender, and peace and order became the rule and not the exception. However, the monotony of this regime was occasionally eclipsed by the unusual. One afternoon we heard a shot over at the agency, from the trader's store, at which we officiated as clerk. Looking across the campus some 500 yards, we observed in front of the agency building two Indians in personal combat. One was evidently attempting to take a pistol from the other, and every time he reached for the gun the other would level the weapon at his head, then the man aimed at would cover himself with a gunny sack. Simultaneously there arose loud calls from the Apaches, and from every direction they appeared running and shouting. All this occasioned the wildest possible commotion. It was the gathering of militant forces, pending an unknown crisis. Consternation prevailed, but without possible interpretation. Charley, our Indian boy janitor, suggested that we shut the door, and believing this the wise thing to do, we entered and locked it from within. Immediately sev-

eral shots rang out. We opened a rear door, but an Indian implored us to stay where we were lest we get hit by a stray shot. When the firing ceased we went out into the open to find out what had happened. An Indian had been killed; his lifeless body lay just over the corral wall.

The three wives of Dizalin, one of the influential chiefs, had repeatedly complained of maltreatment at the hands of their liege lord, Dizalin. Time and again Dizalin had been reprimanded and admonished to treat his wives kindly. Finally he was notified that a repetition of his brutality would result in his being deprived of his wives. Some weeks afterward the women again appeared at the agency, bruised and battered and presenting a most pathetic appearance. Dizalin was sent for and informed that his wives were declared free and independent, and that he could no longer live with them. No particular import was given the incident, but on this eventful day Dizalin, wrapped in a blanket, appeared at the agency, and, as was his wont, entered the private office of the agent and sat down. After a few moments the agent told him to get out of there. Dizalin inquired, "Me go?" and the agent, in a stern and emphatic manner, replied: "Yes, you go!" Dizalin retired into the next room, the main office, occupied by the clerk who, with his back toward Dizalin, was busy at his desk. Dizalin rested his arms on a bale of manta, took deliberate aim and fired at the clerk. His pistol being old and defective, the concussion threw the barrel up and the bullet passed directly over the clerk's head and lodged in the adobe wall. The clerk bounded into the office of the agent, exclaiming: "Dizalin! Dizalin!" It was evidently the intention of Dizalin to kill the agent first, then the clerk, and take a shot at the chief of police at the guard-house, but the presence of the farmer's wife and a colored boy in the office of the agent undoubtedly intimidated and unnerved Dizalin, and averted a fatal tragedy. After a day or two affairs at the agency became normal again, but there were no more divorces decreed, mensa et thoro.

Ration day at the reservation was an event. Every Friday the Indians assembled at the agency, and seating themselves in rows were counted and a ticket distributed to each. The infant in arms was entitled to the same amount as the adult. The allowance, designated by the government, of 300 pounds of beef, four pounds of coffee, fifty pounds of flour, eight pounds of sugar and one pound of salt constituted the weekly ration for 100 Indians. Twenty head of beef, 2000 pounds of flour, 160 pounds of coffee, 320 pounds of sugar and forty pounds of salt aggregated the seventh day issue. The cattle were delivered

from vast ranges in New Mexico and Texas, and the provisions from Santa Fe and El Paso, under contract. This allowance of food for the support of the Indians was considered by the government as a just compensation for territory acquired and occupied by a strenuous and aggressive civilization.

Eskiminzin, chief of the San Carlos Apaches, represented the true type of American Indian. He was tall, slim and athletic; had high cheek bones and a Roman nose. His authority was supreme, and many a raid was effected under his direction and leadership. His reputation as a warrior and for death-dealing atrocities was second, if not equal, to his famed prototype, Geronimo. On one occasion calling at a settler's ranch, which he frequently visited in a most friendly manner, he shot and killed the settler, after partaking of the hospitality of his home. In explanation of his deed, Eskiminzin stated that "anyone could kill his enemy, but it required a brave man to kill his friend." However, Eskiminzin had reformed, and instead of being an avowed renegade and outlaw he became one of the most zealous exponents of law and order, and remained faithful to his natural death. He was elected honorary chief of the police force—a dollar a year man—given a needle gun, which he almost always carried, and with honor to his position and fidelity to his pacific declarations, exercised a most wholesome influence among his people. He developed into a practical farmer, and emphatically disproved the accepted approbrium that "all good Indians are dead ones."

One of Eskiminzin's wives had discovered a mineral ledge, and Eskiminzin, enthused with the knowledge that wealth was being extracted at Globe and other adjacent mining centers, was anxious for the agent to go and inspect the ledge. He had importuned the agent repeatedly, but the trip was always postponed. Finally the agent suggested that we go, and one morning, accompanied by Eskiminzin, his wife and the wife of the first sergeant of the police, we took to the hills. Each of us had a pony; Eskiminzin his rifle; the women had a butcher knife each in her moccasin, and we had pocket knives. Thus equipped, we were ready for anything. The trail was fine, and we rode until nearly sundown. We camped at a most delightful spot, where there was grass, running water and shade. We had supper and prepared for the night. We were far away in the hills, some twenty miles from the agency, but why should we worry? Did we not have the former terror of the entire country as a body-guard? With our saddle-blankets for a bed, and our saddles for a pillow, we never felt more secure, nor slept more soundly. In

the morning, after a mile or two, we came upon the ledge. It proved to be iron-capping, and after securing some specimens the women went berry-picking, and Eskiminzin, piloting us back to the trail, bid us skip for home while he waited for "the girls."

The reservation was never lonesome. There was always something unique to "kick up the dust" and make it interesting, but, becoming surfeited with Apache environment, we rode over the trail to Florence and taught the boys' school for the winter. We enjoyed the change, and had the best lot of boys and the best school in the territory. There were no rules exacted except "order." The boys could whisper and do anything so long as they maintained order, and by observing this rule the school developed into an example of perfect discipline. One other rule prevailed. The boys being for the most part Mexican, or half-Mexican, they were allowed to talk in their native language while at play, but only English was spoken in school. How strictly this rule was observed will be seen by the following: One afternoon while the boys were intent on their work, and the school absolutely quiet, a hand was upraised, and upon inquiry the owner observed: "Here is a boy cyphering in Spanish!"

The trustees wanted us to teach the succeeding term, but, instead, we staged it over to Tucson and matriculated in an attorney's office, and subsequently became clerk of the district court, clerk of the United States District Court, and deputy-clerk of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Arizona, a most enjoyable trinity.