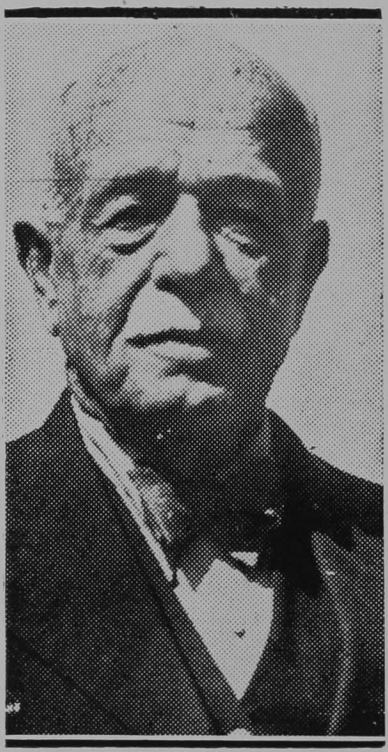

John P. Clum, 1851-1932

THE ARIZONA HISTORICAL REVIEW

Vol. V. July, 1932 No. 2

JOHN P. CLUM

By LESLIE E. GREGORY

Scattered through miscellaneous writings, official reports and histories of Arizona, there are at least three claims to the accomplishment of alleged peace in the Territory of Arizona in 1874, yet, on the legislative records of the previous decade and for several years following are inscribed the petitions of a tortured and tormented people to Congress for help in the delivery of struggling pioneers from the Apache scourge.

Writing in 1884, Hon. Patrick Hamilton said: "From 1864 to 1874 the history of Arizona is written in blood." Hamilton estimated the toll of settlers at the hands of fiends, and the unmarked graves of that period, at one thousand. Following the assertion that "slowly the red man yielded to his destiny," Hamilton paid rhetorical tribute to the army and left the inference that approximately two thousand troops deployed over an area as great as all New England and Pennsylvania combined, whipped the fierce Apache from his lair and established a pacific condition.

In 1871, Governor Safford laid aside his executive duties, headed a nondescript body of volunteers, marched on foot for twenty-seven days and covered nearly six hundred miles in an effort to drive the murderous Apaches back from the outposts of civilization. Governor Safford had no faith in the meagre protection afforded by the war department, notwithstanding the outstanding bravery of the insufficient number of available troops then in Arizona.

In the same year, William S. Oury headed a volunteer contingent against the Aravaipa tribe claiming justification for the Camp Grant Massacre in the alleged inability of General Stoneman to cope with requirements for frontier protection. The Oury party clubbed a colony of reservation Indians to death within sight and within range of the guns of Camp Grant.

A citizen who afterward became Arizona's delegate to Congress played a part in the preliminaries, by waylaying and holding as prisoners two soldiers who had been dispatched from Tucson to Camp Grant with warning to the commanding officer of the impending tragedy. The adjutant-general of the Territory furnished part of the equipment used in the expedition.

The incident provoked President Grant into a threat of martial law unless the participants were convicted of crime. Oury and about one hundred of his companions were arrested but no jury could be found to convict them. In 1885, fourteen years later, Oury reduced the details of the affair to writing, describing "the full measure of our triumph" on "the bright April morning of April 30th, 1871." In conclusion, Oury took credit for peace, prefacing the list of asserted subsequent peaceful conditions with: "Behold, now, the happy result immediately following that episode."

A third claim to peace was bound up in the Howard treaty with Cochise which, in 1874, was apparently being faithfully observed by the Chiricahuas.

War department records do not reflect a state of peace with the Apaches commensurate with conditions ascribed by writers. However, from 1874 to 1881 an only too brief diminuition of hostilities marked a calm before the storm that broke in the Eighties and drenched Arizona with later annals "written in blood."

The first centralized effort of the War department toward handling the Apache situation came with the creation of a military department for Arizona in 1869, with headquarters at Fort Whipple and with General

George Stoneman in command of the forces allotted to the Territory. General Stoneman was succeeded by General George Crook in 1871. In 1875, General Crook was removed and General August V. Kautz took charge.

The rapid succession of commanding generals was brought about as the result of dissatisfaction. Each change meant a new effort to bring about peace and with each change settlers took heart again. In turn three Civil War heroes wrestled with the Indian problem—Stoneman, a national idol who as Brigadier-General of the Fourth Cavalry became the outstanding hero of the campaign of the Chickahominy; Crook, who held the day for Sheridan at Winchester; and Kautz, the daredevil commander whose forces destroyed the railroads of the Shenandoah and cut off Confederate supplies during the siege of Petersburg and Richmond.

Stoneman retired from the army and moved to California, where he was elected governor. General Crook continued as an Indian fighter in other fields. General Kautz had a stormy three years in Arizona with Governor Safford and others. An unremitting activity against him on the part of Governor Safford brought about a hearing and the general's removal. Kautz, who seemed to have a penchant for taking his trouble into print, was finally courtmartialed over his distribution of a pamphlet criticizing the Judge-Advocate who presided at the hearing.

In 1874 John P. Clum brought Arizona intellectual leadership and a magnetic personality that penetrated the hearts of savage and dominated the whites within the range of his influence.. He inaugurated the San Carlos Apache Police and Tribal Court system, the evolution of which is now represented in the National Indian Police system, with ramifications extending to all Indian reservation in America, the most potent influence for frontier peace in the history of the nation.

It is all the more remarkable that one of the strong arms of Uncle Sam's administration developed in fruition of the dream of a twenty-two year old youth whose ex-

periment was launched within a few days after his arrival at San Carlos. His first annual report, dated August 31, 1874, the eve of Young Clum's twenty-third birthday and twenty-three days after his induction into office as Indian Agent, contains the following: "I have appointed four Indians to act as police. They arrest the insubordinate and guard the prisoners and do general police duty. The result is very satisfactory and it is my intention to employ them permanently at $15 per month." Four wild Apaches learned the rudiments of civil government from John P. Clum, essayed an application for self-determination and their preceptor lived to see his dream fulfilled.

He was born September 1, 1851, of Holland-Dutch stock, and was reared as a farmer boy in the valley of the Hudson.

The tranformation of John P. Clum is an intriguing story. In 1870, he was a prematurely bald divinity student of eighteen years, at Rutger's College. Ill health terminated the college career of one who might have been described as a "pale-browed student." Out of college but still in contact with associates in the Dutch Reformed Church, Young Clum entertained a hope of ultimately entering the mission field.

In the meantime, developments were in progress in Arizona. Aravaipa Apaches who had escaped the Camp Grant Massacre had been permitted to settle at the confluence of the Gila and San Carlos rivers, beyond a mountain range and beyond the reach of outraged settlers, against whom the Camp Grant military appeared to feel unable to properly protect its wards. Military supervision at San Carlos ensued for a time. In 1874, the reservation was turned over to the Department of the Interior and a civilian agent was sought. There were no applicants. Nobody had the temerity to seek the position. For once a government job sought the man.

An official of the Home Missionary board of the Dutch Reformed Church believed that Clum could assume the position and also do the Apaches some good

along spiritual lines. Following months of indecision and a study at Washington of the past history of San Carlos, Clum reached a worthy conclusion: "I cannot do worse than the others and, if I make good, I will be in a class by myself."

Upon his arrival at San Carlos he was confronted with depressing conditions that almost deterred him. A hideous incident turned the course of his life. Previous to his arrival, a band of army scouts had been sent to capture a renegade. One day they returned, opened a sack and rolled the head of the renegade at the feet of the new agent. From that horrible spectacle a master arose. A young civilian disarmed the scouts, rebuked the army and bade it stand aside. The Dutch Reformed Church lost an embryo clergyman, the southwest unfolded a virile manhood and Arizona gained a stalwart figure. The "pale browed student" was relegated to the past. Today, on the San Carlos Indian reservation, aged and once fierce Apache warriors delight in reminiscence concerning their beloved idol, and their descendants repeat traditional tales of "Nan-tan Be-toon-e-ki-ay," — "The boss with the white forehead."

The 1874 report offers the first glimpse of what developed enmity between Clum and the army and brought about an enduring bitterness. In the past year, however, two army men of that era have told the writer that their former estimates of Clum had disappeared and his late vindication prompted regret over unfortunate differences of the past which must be revealed inevitably in faithful presentation of history.

Two paragraphs of the report are as follows: "On taking charge of the agency, I found the same mixture of civil and military rule was still working detriment to the Indians. I therefore immediately assumed entire control of all affairs appertaining to the Indian Service, in order that the Indians might understand that there was but one administration and one administrator. The rule over the Indians previous to my arrival was intended to be severe, but being shared by many rulers, it became

weak, inefficient and dangerous to the proper discipline and progress of the Indians.

"Should the military desire to remain on the reservation, I shall not object. Yet I should strongly oppose a nearer residence than five miles from the Indian camp, as the effect of the association of the soldiers with the Indians is very demoralizing."

"Detriment" and" demoralizing" are mild terms in comparison with Oury's terse description of similar conditions at Camp Grant, in which he declared: "Hell was fully inaugurated." Clum's beginning of his administration and his announced intention of abolishing the military contingent were treated with ridcule. His ideas were deemed preposterous. He went forward with his plans, gained rapid success, established confidence with the Department of the Interior and succeeded in having the troops removed.

Four Apache policemen transmitted their understanding of Clum and their faith in his friendship to fellow Indians and to enemy tribes, inviting others to dwell at San Carlos. There were eight or nine tribes of Apaches scattered over more than six hundred miles of territory. They were savage, lawless and unfriendly toward each other. It is doubtful if they had a common purpose aside from waging incessant war upon the whites.

(*To be continued*)