

4. Ace Daklugie, Charlie Smith, and Jasper Kanseah (Chiricahua Apaches) Remember Geronimo, n. d.

[Ace] Daklugie

Not until after the death of my father, Juh, did Geronimo become very prominent. After that he just took over. He was a Betonkohe and never was elected to the chieftainship. Naiche was chief, but he was very young—too young for the leadership. It took a man to lead the Chiricahua. Geronimo was of middle age, a well-known fighter and superb leader, and he was also a Medicine Man. No White Eyes seem to understand the importance of that in controlling Apaches. Naiche was not a Medicine Man; so he needed Geronimo as Geronimo needed him. It was a good combination. Geronimo saw that Naiche was accorded the respect and recognition due a chief and that he always occupied the seat of honor; but Geronimo planned the strategy, with Naiche's help, and made the decisions. Of course, had Juh or Geronimo been chief, nobody could have usurped their prerogatives. But don't forget that not being a Medicine Man was a great handicap to Naiche.

Several years after our capture, and after I returned from school, I lived in Geronimo's village and was his confidant and interpreter. I accompanied him everywhere he went. When he took pneumonia at Fort Sill and was sent to the hospital, Eugene Chihuahua sat beside him during the day and I at night. And he died with his hand in mine. Even in his delirium, he talked of those seventeen men who had eluded five thousand men of the army of the United States for many years; and eluded not only them, but also twenty-five hundred Mexican soldiers—seventy-five hundred men, well armed, well trained, and well equipped against seventeen whom they regarded as naked savages. The odds were only five hundred to one against Geronimo, but still they could not whip him nor could they capture him.

But I am Geronimo's nephew and there are people who might think that I am biased. Go see Charlie Smith. As a child he and his mother were captured by Geronimo's band. Charlie was with Geronimo and Naiche about a year, I think, before going to Florida.

Charlie Smith

... I'll never forget that winter. Geronimo would line the boys up on the bank, have us build a fire and undress by it, and then make us plunge into the stream, breaking the ice as we went. The first time he did this, I thought that the ordeal would be over when he let us get out of the water. But no—time after time we warned ourselves by the fire and returned to the icy water. There were times when I just hated him. Geronimo would stand there on the bank, with a stick in his hand. What for, I don't know; I never saw him strike anybody. But we knew he might and that was enough. Nobody defied Geronimo.

Was I present during the fighting? Geronimo had the women and children along, and of course they saw what happened. If pursued, he, as did all Apaches,

tried to protect them by sending them ahead; but ordinarily, when fighting occurred, it was because he laid an ambush, and every one of the band was there. Some of the women were very good shots—good fighters, too. Lozen, sister of Victorio, was called The Woman Warrior; and though she may not have had as much strength as one of the men she was as good a shot as any of them.

When actually on the warpath the Apaches were under very strict rules. Even words for common things were different. Women would go with their husbands, but they could not live together. No unmarried woman was permitted to go with them. Lozen? No, she was not married; she never married. But to us she was a Holy Woman and she was regarded and treated as one. White Painted Woman herself was not more respected. And she was brave! Geronimo sent her on missions to the military officers to arrange for meetings with him, or to carry messages.

When Geronimo crossed the border into New Mexico or Arizona, it was usually to get ammunition. I do not think that he wanted to kill, but there were cases when he had no choice. If he were seen by a civilian, it meant that he would be reported to the military and they'd be after us. So there was nothing to do but kill the civilian and his entire family. It was terrible to see little children killed. I do not like to talk of it. I do not like to think of it. But the soldiers killed our women and children, too. Don't forget that. There were times that I hated Geronimo for that, too; but when I got older, I knew that he had no choice.

Stealing horses was fun. I was not quite old enough to get in on that, and how I envied those who were! It was usually the boys, too, who shot the fire-arrows to set horses ablaze. I never saw that done but twice, though. I did see many, many people killed. I wish I could forget it. Even babies were killed; and I love babies.

But Geronimo was fighting not only to avenge his murdered mother, wife, and children, but for his people and his tribe. Later there were Apaches who were bitter against Geronimo, saying that it was his fault that they were sent to Florida and were prisoners of war for twenty-seven years. Well, if they'd had the fighting spirit of Geronimo, they need not have been sent. The big difference was that he had the courage to keep on and they were quitters. Some of them have "gone white" and blame Geronimo for everything. I don't respect them. They were cowards. I won't name them. I am ashamed that they are Apaches.

And don't forget that Geronimo knew that it was hopeless. But that did not stop him. I admire him for that. He was a great leader of men, and it'll become the cowardly to find fault with a man who was trying to keep them free. And don't forget that he was fighting against enormous odds, or that nobody ever captured him.

Jasper Kanseah (nephew of Geronimo)

My father died before I was born, and my mother died when they drove us like cattle from Cochise's reservation to San Carlos. I had nobody but my grandmother and she had to walk. I was little, and when I couldn't keep up she carried me. She told me that Geronimo was my uncle, but I didn't remember him till he came to San Carlos. When he came my grandmother had already gone to the Happy Place, and I had nobody. But Indian women were good to me, and even when they were hungry they gave me some of the food their own children needed. We never went hungry till we got to San Carlos; and there we almost died because there was no food.

I think that I was eleven when my uncle, Geronimo, came and took me with him. And he gave me to Yahmosha to be his orderly and learn to be a warrior. I stayed with Yahmosha and cooked his food, and got his horse and fed and watered it; and I never spoke unless somebody asked me a question. And I ate what was left. No matter what happened, I didn't complain. And even when I talked I had to say it differently. (On the warpath we don't talk as we do most of the time, but differently.) I had to think what Yahmosha wanted next and then get it for him before he told me. But I was proud to be taught by a great warrior and I tried to do everything right.

I knew Geronimo and I knew that he was the victim of liars. He was lied about by many of his own people for whom he was fighting. He was betrayed by them. He was betrayed by Miles. I am not sure but that he was betrayed by Crook, though some think not. But I know that he was lied to by Miles. That man did not do what he promised. Geronimo was a really great fighting man, and Miles was a coward. Everything he needed for his troops was provided for him and them, but Geronimo had to obtain food for his men, and for their women and children. When they were hungry, Geronimo got food. When they were cold he provided blankets and clothing. When they were afoot, he stole horses. When they had no bullets, he got ammunition. He was a good man. I think that you have desperados among you White Eyes today that are much worse men and are more cruel than Geronimo.

◀ E S S A Y S

David D. Smits, a professor of history at the College of New Jersey, contributes the first essay. Here he considers the employment of Indian scouts and allies by the frontier army. Smits concludes that Indian scouts, allies, and auxiliaries played an essential role in many of the campaigns against Indian peoples. Why would Indians decide to aid these efforts against other Indians? In the second essay, Tracy Neal Leavelle, a doctoral student in American Indian history at Arizona State University, demonstrates that this era did not mean exactly the same things to all Native communities. The residents of the Grande Ronde reservation in Oregon showed their commitment to make necessary changes and adaptations in order to try to make their surroundings as productive and meaningful as possible. Why do some Indian nations receive more attention than others during this time period?

Indian Scouts and Indian Allies in the Frontier Army

DAVID D. SMITS

This essay will examine the frontier army's rationale for relying on "friendly" Indians, the effects of such reliance on the so-called hostiles, the opposition from tribal chiefs, Indian Bureau officials, and even many army commanders to the enlistment of "friendlylies," the exigencies of guerrilla warfare that forced commanders to make

use of Indians, the hazardous nature of military service for the "red bluecoats," the multifarious uses of the army's Indian scouts, and the relations between such scouts and their white comrades-in-arms. . . .

High-ranking military commanders offered several reasons, beyond the Indians' proficiency as trailers, for enlisting them in the frontier army. John M. Schofield, one of the Union's most distinguished Civil War generals and, after [Philip] Sheridan, the army's commanding general, believed that service in the army reduced the discontent so common among young Indian men on reservations. . . .

General [George] Crook was the officer most responsible for convincing the army's high command of the psychological value of employing the hostiles' own tribal members against them. . . . The employment of Indians—especially those belonging to the hostiles' own tribe—would destroy the troublemakers' morale. Hence, as early as the spring of 1867, an outmaneuvered General Winfield Scott Hancock wrote to [William Tecumseh] Sherman requesting permission to enlist two hundred to three hundred Indian scouts because he believed it would "demoralize" the recalcitrant Sioux and Cheyennes.

Although Indian voices seldom found their way into the historical record, sufficient fragmentary evidence exists to suggest that the army's efforts to demoralize its Indian foes by employing their own tribesmen were quite effective. Captain John G. Bourke, a member of Crook's staff, recounted that on November 25, 1876, Colonel Ranald MacKenzie, accompanied by Sioux and Cheyenne scouts enlisted at Red Cloud agency after Crook had confiscated their horses, struck the Cheyenne village of Dull Knife and Little Wolf in the Big Horn Mountains. In utter exasperation Dull Knife called out to MacKenzie's Indian scouts: "Go home—you have no business here; we can whip the white soldiers alone, but can't fight you too." MacKenzie had at his disposal about four hundred Indian allies, including Arapahos, Bannocks, Pawnees, and Shoshones, in addition to his Sioux and Cheyennes, and they bore the brunt of the fighting that day.

It is apparent that the "hostiles" ordinarily disdained the white soldiers' fighting abilities, but had a wholesome respect for the army's Indian allies. Wooden Leg, a Northern Cheyenne who fought against Custer at the Little Bighorn, recalled that in that fight the hostile Indians called out to the Seventh Cavalrymen: "You are only boys. You ought not be fighting. We whipped you on the Rosebud. You should have brought more Crows or Shoshones with you to do your fighting."

Not surprisingly, given white Americans' ambivalent attitudes toward Indians, some military officers themselves opposed the army's reliance on Indian confederates. One reason for this opposition was that such opponents doubted that Indians could ever renounce their Indian allegiances and become completely loyal to the United States Army. After Geronimo's escape from the army in March 1886, for instance, Sheridan angrily wired Crook, commander of the Department of Arizona: "It seems strange that Geronimo and party could have escaped without the knowledge of the [Apache] scouts." To the distrustful Sheridan, Crook responded: "There can be no question that the scouts were thoroughly loyal, and would have prevented the hostiles leaving had it been possible."

Two days after Crook's response he was relieved of his Arizona command. His replacement was Brigadier General Nelson A. Miles, who promptly discharged most of the Apache scouts on the assumption that they were disloyal. . . .

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