

CULTURAL INFLUENCES UPON EDUCATION AMONG
THE MESCALERO APACHES

by

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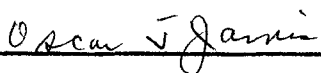
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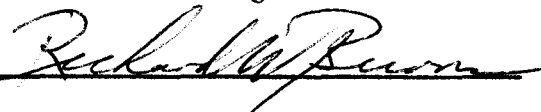
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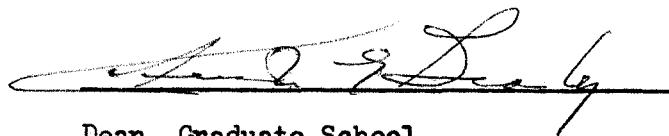
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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT
OF THE PROBLEM

The student of history of the Southwest is as likely to be misinformed as the average layman concerning the actual role of the fierce Apache in settling and developing this vast section of the continent. Anthropologists only sporadically devote attention to the tribe; few ethnologists have bothered to delve beneath the exterior of the race. And colorful as that exterior may be, careful examination of the subject reveals an enigma that belies most stereotypes of this once-proud group.

Educators and other professional researchers who work closely with the Mescaleros have evinced increasing concern over the apparent failure of middle-class, Western educational methodology to satisfactorily prepare Apache youths for their expected position in a highly technical, strigently-ordered society. The same experts only recently admitted the almost total lack of relevancy in the usual curricular fare of reservation and/or public schools attended by Indian students. Before this admission, the ordinary practice was to blame the language barrier for all shortcomings. This scapegoat no longer can bear the full blame. Broader, cultural differences have affected both the responsiveness toward and the acceptance of traditional educational offerings.

Social scientists are more than ever aware of the importance

of accepting and appreciating cultural diversity. It is equally important for children to learn about traditional values and how they originated. Before a universal goal of peace and mutual respect can be realized, people of varied ethnic and racial origins must learn to live and work together. This is accomplished through knowing each other's social customs and the historical factors involved in adjusting to new ways and conditions.

The Apache lifestyle is presently in an obvious state of flux. Basic cultural values influence the behavior and attitudes of the families, who actually live in two cultures, while belonging to neither and being accepted by neither. The children suffer most under these conditions, for they attempt to hold on to established values while trying to relate to the larger society in which they must live.

This report will review the cultural heritage of the Mes-calero Apaches, pointing out the influences of tradition and custom upon education. An acquaintance with the history, political organization, social practices, religious beliefs, and economy will equip the educator with some understanding of Indian behavior. Hopefully, this knowledge will also equip him to be alert to all opportunities for incorporating the Apache culture into a program of continual improvement in the quality of their education.

Chapter II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SOUTHWEST TRIBES

Sometime about the year A.D. 1000 a series of migrations brought some early settlers to North America. Whether they crossed over a land bridge or upon the frozen sea of the Bering Straits is open to question, but migrate they did. Working progressively southward toward better climes and a more plentiful food supply, these early Athabaskans brought first to Canada and later to the American Southwest a language, a culture, and a distinctive appearance.¹

At a somewhat later date the aborigines divided into three separate groups. Why the pilgrims decided to leave the main body of their group in the Yukon and MacKenzie valleys of Canada is not known. Some of the migrants drifted towards present-day California; the others settled near the Arizona-Mexico border. An opposing theory, espoused by relatively few researchers, suggests that the entire group originally settled in the region of Promontory Point, Utah, and later dispersed generally southward and westward, but conjectures that a few moved in a northwesterly direction to form the basis of the Canadian Athabaskans.² Be that as it may, the next positive traces of the wanderers are found in the Southwest, where this group subsequently divided into the tribes

¹Frank D. Reeve and Alice Ann Cleaveland, New Mexico, Land of Many Cultures, (Boulder, Colorado: Pruette Publishing Company, 1969), p. 6.

²Jack D. Forbes, Apache, Navajo, and Spaniard, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), p. xxii.

now known as Apaches and Navajos, two of the better-known American Indian families today. These tribes are particularly known because their stories have been romanticized and retold countless times by novelists, school textbooks, and the electronic communications media. Though the subject of study for many anthropologists, American Indians as a group lack a true, in-depth ethnological investigation.¹

Anthropology tells us the three main groups of Athabaskans developed varied cultures: the sub-Arctic clan remained fairly pure; the California group was acculturated into indistinction among the Hupa, the Karok, and the Yurek; the Southwestern families were much influenced by the Pueblos.² The chief connection between the Apaches and the Navajos is that both belong to the Athabaskan linguistic family.³ All the groups speak dialectic versions of their original tongue; "...language is much more stable than culture..." their speech changed little during the extensive migrations.⁴

Several theories concerning the origin of the name "apache" exist. It may be a derivation of the Yuman e-patch, meaning "man" or "fighting man."⁵ Or it could have come from the Zuni word "apachu" which means "enemy." The latter is the more likely, since the

¹Adamson Hoebel, Anthropology, the Study of Man, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 35.

²Harold E. Driver, Indians of North America, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 597.

³Clark Wissler, Indians of the United States, (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1940), p. 203.

⁴Driver, Indians of North America, p. 597.

⁵Ralph H. Ogle, Federal Control of the Western Apaches, 1848-1886, published doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1940. Reprint, Historical Society of New Mexico, Publication in History, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press) 9: July 1940, p. 5. Citing F.W. Hodge, "The Early Navajo and Apache," American Anthropologist 8: 233.

Apaches were known as fierce warriors and raiders of the Pueblos.

So dominant did the Apaches become that the area was later called Apacheria by the Spaniards. This territory is bounded roughly by the Colorado and Rio Grande rivers on the west and east, respectively; it extends southward over Texas' Big Bend country and the states of Chihuahua and Coahuila in Mexico.¹ Ogle places the northern border of Apache-land at the San Francisco Mountains of New Mexico.² (See map and language chart, p. 5a).

The Apaches were among the first aborigines to see white men. Lured by the provocative tales with which Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions captivated all adventurous men, Spaniards began a series of treks to explore and exploit the El Dorado that lay to the North of Mexico.³ The most prestigious expedition by far was that of Don Francisco Vazquez de Coronado, who marched into Apacheria in early 1541.⁴

Records of the Coronado Expedition, 1540-1542, relate the wonder felt by the Europeans at the sight of such physically powerful savages, who used dogs as beasts-of-burden.⁵ Casteneda, one of Coronado's recorders, labeled the Indians "Querechos" because of their trade with the Queres (or Keres) pueblos.⁶ Other names include

¹Morris E. Opler, Apache Odyssey, A Journey Between Two Worlds, 2d ed., (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969), p. 9.

²Ogle, Federal Control, pp. 1-2.

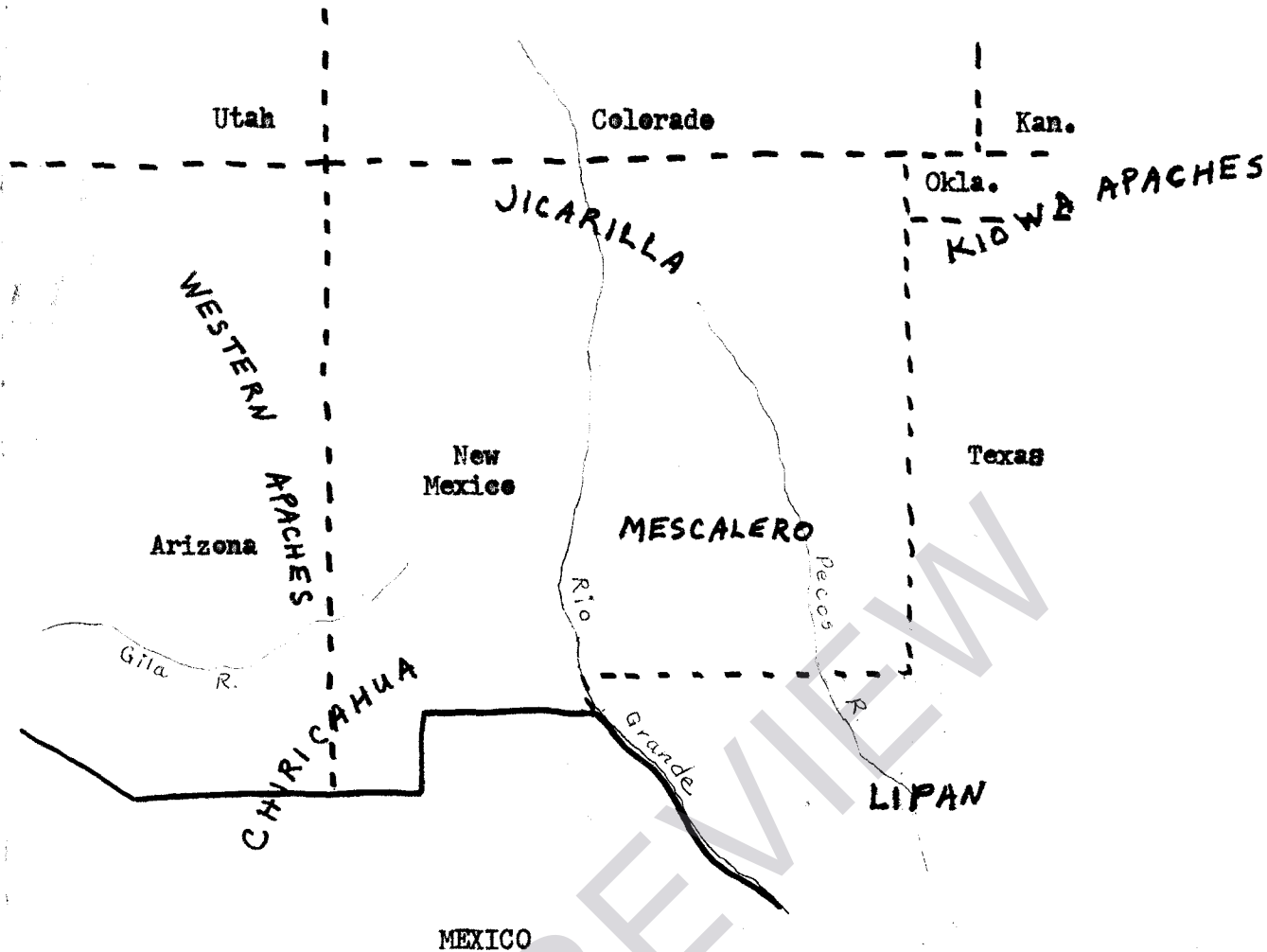
³George P. Hammond and Edgar F. Coad, The Adventure of Don Francisco de Coronado, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1938), p. 10.

⁴Herbert E. Bolton, Coronado, Knight of Pueblo and Plains, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1949), pp. 13-22, 112.

⁵Ibid., p. 247.

⁶Ibid., p. 246.

LOCATION OF APACHE GROUPS ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE



Heijer further divides the large groups into specific tribes and bands:¹

The Western Group

A. Navajos

B. San Carlos/Chiricahua/Mescalero

1. The San Carlos group

- a. San Carlos
- b. White Mountain or Coyotere
- c. Cibique
- d. Southern Tonto
- e. Northern Tonto

2. Chiricahua-Mescalero

- a. Chiricahua
- b. Mescalero

The Eastern Group

A. Jicarilla-Lipan

- 1. Jicarilla
- 2. Lipan

B. Kiowa Apache

¹Harry Heijer, "The Southern Athabaskan Languages," American Anthropologist 40 (1938): 85-87. For simpler listing, plus estimates of population in 1850, see Colonel George Archibald McCall, New Mexico in 1850: A Military View, ed. Robert W. Frazer, (University of Okla., 1968).

"buffalo-eaters"¹ or de Sosa's translation of Querechos as "herdsmen" and his own preferred Vacquero because these Indians followed the herds of buffalo (cows, in their notes).²

Coronado's detailed accounts of the geography, as well as the flora and fauna it supported, agree with later accounts. The aboriginal Apache country provided the greatest contrasts of geographic and climatic features.³ Mountain peaks, alkali flats, and dunes, and interminable stretches of desert were its components. Wide ranges of precipitation and temperature occurred because of varying altitudes. Sparse vegetation in the flatlands consisted of sagebrush, cacti, yucca, and mesquite; principal examples of wildlife were rabbits, antelope and prairie dogs. Higher elevations supported juniper, pine, and pinon. Aspen and spruce cloaked the upward slopes to the timberline. Elk, deer, and bighorn abounded in the foothills and higher ridges; bison on the plains to the east, incredibly numerous at one time, were practically eliminated by 1875. Mescal and sotol, two plants important to the diet of the Mescaleros, were found in plenty.⁴

The country of the Apaches is still cruel and demanding, brooking no relaxation of the drives geared to self-preservation. Yet the rugged grandeur of the Apache homeland is frequently softened

¹Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, "Letter to the King," Narratives of the Coronado Expedition, ed. and trans. George P. Hammond and Edgar F. Goad, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940), p. 186.

²Belton, Coronado, p. 246.

³Opler, Apache Odyssey, p. 10.

⁴Max L. Moorhead, The Apache Frontier, Jacobo Ugarte and Spanish-Indian Relations in New Spain, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), p. 3.

by the deceptive fragility of its scant wildflowers or the incredible delicacy of crystalline geologic formations. Whether astonishing by virtue of their rarity or awe-inspiring due to colossal proportions, the beauties of nature are appreciated, mimicked, even worshipped by Apaches. The same is true of other Indian cultures, of course, but the awful desolation and forbidding character of the American Southwest appear to have imparted a double portion on nature's awareness to these Indians.

The aridity of vast stretches of desert in Apacheria was sometimes eased by cloudbursts; these in turn cut deep washes that made travel on foot, horseback or other conveyance inconvenient for Indians, impossible for others.¹

If the inhospitable country did not create the nomadic economic, political, and social order of the Apaches, it certainly influenced it.² The band of Apaches which became known as Mescaleros³ was familiar with the farming practices of neighboring cultures, and some of them engaged in sporadic cultivation; but the main body of the group depended on hunting and gathering, an economy suited to fluidity and mobility. Such an economy contributed to a scattering of the people, discouraging or eliminating conditions which foster the permanent family and other social arrangements.⁴

¹Moorhead, The Apache Frontier, p. 3.

²Driver, Indians of North America, p. 258.

³The name is derived from the use of mescal, an agave, as food and ceremonial refreshment. It is rarely used today, owing to its scarcity. One may see its preparation and purchase a sample at the annual Ceremony of Maidens at the Mescalero Reservation on the Fourth of July. Bland and sweet after long baking, Apaches regarded mescal as a candy or desert. It does not refer to mescaline or the peyote button.

⁴Driver, Indians of North America, pp. 24-54.

On the whole Apaches possessed superb physiques and were able to withstand the hardships imposed by their environment.¹ Their personality was characterized by pride, distrust, and a noticeable jealousy of their liberty. In addition a spiritual heritage was shared by all tribes: a belief in a Supreme Being called Yastasitan-ne, although he was not commonly worshipped.²

As was mentioned earlier, while Apaches linguistically constituted a single nation, their varying cultures did not.³ Originally a part of the same Athabaskan stock, the Navajos branched off and established distinct cultural patterns by the close of the Eighteenth Century. Even though the Jicarillas after separation from their parental stock followed a lifestyle similar to that of the Navajos, both adapting to the sedentary habits of agronomy, the former remained typically Apache.⁴ It is logical to assume, therefore, that habitat and mores exerted more influence upon the scattered tribes than did cultural retention.

Evidence of the impact of habitat is noticeable in differentiated architecture of various tribes, and even among the two bands of Mescaleros. The eastern band pitched highly mobile tipis of animal hides on the plains. The western band constructed crude brush dwellings called wickiups. Both communities lent themselves to abandonment whenever epidemic or accumulated refuse dictated relocation.

¹Moorhead, The Apache Frontier, p. 6.

²Ibid. An apparent contradiction may be found in Eve Ball's In the Days of Victorio, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1970), p. 27. The narrator, himself an Apache, declares that his people regularly entreat their Supreme Deity, whom he calls Ussen. The topic will be fully discussed in a later chapter of this thesis.

³Supra, p. 4.

⁴Moorhead, The Apache Frontier, p. 4.

Further examples of diffused customs include eating habits. While habitat must be the preeminent factor, some foods acquired taboos apparently unrelated to locale. These same foods might be relished or even preferred by another group.¹

Exerting pressure upon the hunting grounds and natural ranges of the Mescaleros were several neighboring tribes, among whom were the Caddeans, called "Nations of the North" by the Spaniards; the eastern or Kiowa Apaches, and the Comanches.² From the north came raids by the Utes. Moorhead contends that, had it not been for the constant harassment from other Indians, the Southern Athabaskans could have routed the Spaniards, who had by now flooded into Apacheria.³

Initial meetings between Indians and Spaniards were not engineered with intent to establish mutual understanding and respect. Early contacts, however, were civil if not wholly cordial. The common curiosity of the two groups quickly provided a base for communication and barter. But when barter ceased and outright confiscation began, chances for peaceful, cooperative existence immediately vanished. The Indians' resentment and pretest burst into fierce hostility when news of Spanish outrages upon the aboriginal women spread with astonishing speed ahead of the advancing Europeans.⁴

¹Erna Fergusson, Dancing Gods, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1934), p. 250. For further indication of the acceptability of some foods that are repulsed by others, especially the flesh of horse or mule, see Opler, Apache Odyssey, p. 20 and Ball, Victorio, p. 55.

²Frank C. Lockwood, The Apache Indians, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 57. The author denies that Apaches ever warred on each other.

³Moorhead, The Apache Frontier, p. 9.

⁴Forbes, Apache, Navajo, and Spaniard, pp. 12-13.

Another cause of conflict through succeeding decades grew out of widely divergent ideas regarding ownership of property. The Europeans were possessive; they valued and protected their deeds to the essentials of their livelihood. With centuries of Roman law sanctioning their rights and tenure, they likely viewed with scant compassion the transgression of any of these rights. Apaches, on the other hand, had but a vague concept of land ownership; the survival of their immediate group always took precedence over unfathomable legalities. Existing as he did in a marginal economy, the Apache frequented the crops and livestock of his erstwhile conquerors as freely as he partook of nature's larder.¹

Not to be overlooked as a divisive factor were the slaving raids begun by the Spaniards in the early days of Mexican mining. Valuing liberty as something beyond price, Apaches abhorred the practice while unhesitatingly using it in retaliation against their oppressors.²

Attempts to negotiate a lasting peace between Apaches and Spaniards failed repeatedly throughout nearly two centuries of the Europeans' occupation of the Southwest. While other tribal nations accepted Spanish domination and enjoyed relatively harmonious relations with their conquerors, especially after de Vargas' reconquest in 1692, Apaches stubbornly resisted the Iberian yoke. The aborigines' lack of a powerful central government with the authority to enforce all-encompassing agreements rendered useless the pacts drawn by frag-

¹Moorhead, The Apache Frontier, p. 14.

²Warren A. Beck, New Mexico, A History of Four Centuries, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), pp. 48-49. See also Forbes, Apache, Navajo, and Spaniard, pp. 33-34.

mentary bands of savages with the Spaniards.¹

Conditions changed but little during the Mexican Period, 1821-1848. When Mexico sued for and won independence from Spain, the vast territory north of the Rio Grande, and embracing both its banks along its north-south course, came under Mexico's control. In general Mexico recognized the existing agreements between the more civilized Pueblos and their former governors. Other tribes which posed no threat to Mexican sovereignty were equally tolerated. Since no blanket mutual treaties existed between Apaches and the Spaniards, hostilities resumed their monotonous frequency.²

The advent of the "Americans" as trappers and traders, and later as soldiers during the Mexican War (1846-1848), brought no relaxation of tensions between redmen and whites. The new occupants were greeted almost immediately by uprisings that sometimes included previously peaceful Indians. General Stephen Watts Kearny had been deceived by the apparent ease with which he took New Mexico in 1846. Pausing only long enough to establish rudimentary U.S. law and some regulations for the American occupation troops, Kearny pushed on towards California. He had scarcely departed when a revolt in the Taos Pueblo claimed the life of Charles Bent, appointed acting-governor by Kearny.³

¹Moorhead, The Apache Frontier, pp. 14-15.

²Beck, New Mexico, p. 121.

³Ibid., pp. 133-136, 177-179, 183. Also see Dwight L. Clark, Stephen Watts Kearny, Soldier of the West, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), pp. 116-201. Most authors agree that Kearny was a man of great administrative capabilities, and could doubtlessly have established conditions that would have allayed most of the fear and distrust of the Indians toward Americans. He was, however, gripped by his own quest for power and prestige. His jealousy of John C. Fremont, as much as his orders to proceed to California, prompted his hasty withdrawal from New Mexico Territory. His soldiers, left to occupy and hold Santa Fe, lost no time in establishing friendly relations with all the inhabitants of the ancient capital.

As the end of warfare heralded the annexation of the vast Southwest as U.S. Territory, citizenship was extended to all residents who wished to remain and accept it. All, that is, except the original inhabitants. However, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo recognized the Pueblos' ownership of homesites from the days of Spanish land grants. Thereafter two legal sets, occurring at 10-year intervals, granted this group the first U.S. citizenship awarded to southwest Indians, in 1868.¹

Fifteen years earlier the Indian Agent for New Mexico, Michael Steck, succeeded in negotiating a treaty with the Mescalero Apaches. The treaty would settle them on reservations and teach them to farm. When the Congress failed to appropriate the \$72,000 promised to fund the program, Steck took matters into his own hands, gathering the Mescaleros to Fort Stanton, where he doled out army rations while teaching them agriculture.²

One can only surmise what the outcome of Steck's attempts might have been, had not the Civil War interrupted the venture. Although very little military action occurred in New Mexico Territory,³ the commands of both Confederate and Union armies felt the sting of Apache guerrilla tactics. Quite certainly no Indian ever understood the reasons why Americans were fighting each other; they merely saw an ideal opportunity to avail themselves of the livestock they so

¹Lynn I. Perrigo, The Rio Grande Adventure, (Chicago: Lyons and Carnahan, 1964), p. 141.

²Ibid., p. 137. See also Lockwood, The Apache Indians, pp. 94-97.

³After briefly coming under Confederate control at the outset of hostilities, the Territory was abandoned to Union forces coming from California and the more immediate invasion of the Colorado Volunteers, in 1862. Although New Mexico was considered vital, as it controlled traffic to California's gold fields, it was too remote.

urgently needed. There was always the possibility, too, that ammunition, of which the Apaches were always in short supply, might be had. The war gave the Americans, in turn, an opportunity to field-test policies by which they hoped to solve the Indian "problem" in the Southwest.

Confederate General H.H. Sibley, in command of the C.S.A. Army in New Mexico, would have made slaves of the Indians in order to subdue them. His plan, however, never had a chance for trial.¹ Union General James H. Carleton became military governor of the Territory upon the retreat of the southerners. Carleton's policy was stated in the now famous--or infamous--order to Colonel "Kit" Carson on 12 October 1862:²

All Indian men of that tribe Apaches are to be killed whenever and wherever you can find them; the women and children will not be harmed; ...

...the Mescaleros broke their treaty of peace and murdered innocent people and ran off their livestock....this making of treaties for them to break whenever they have an interest in breaking them will not be done any more...

I trust that this severity, in the long run, will be the most humane course that could be pursued toward these Indians.

Carleton's next step towards ridding the area of the Indian menace was the establishment of the Bosque Redondo Reservation in eastern New Mexico. He chose Carson again to implement the gathering of the hostiles to the forty-mile square reservation, and urged the construction of Fort Sumner nearby to keep the savages there.³ Carson and five companies of soldiers succeeded in bringing in

¹Lockwood, The Apache Indians, p. 135.

²Ibid.

³Perrigo, Rio Grande Adventure, p. 138.

400-500 Mescalero Apaches, relentlessly tracked down over a period of months. Deprived of their beloved freedom and forced to farm, a task traditionally scorned by the hunters, the resentful savages had moderately successful crops that first year, 1863. The following harvest was more encouraging. The reservation policy seemed to be working for the Mescaleros, despite their animosity.¹

Colonel J. Francisco Chavez was subduing the Navajos at this time, also pursuant to General Carleton's policy. Carson joined in the effort, ruthlessly destroying the Indians' crops to starve them into submission. By the summer of 1864 the hungry redman capitulated. Eventually a total of some 8,000 was driven to Bosque Redondo.² The Indian Agent of New Mexico reported that the capacity of the reservation was thought to be sufficient for both groups, but warned against combining them, "as they are not friendly."³ His observation was a gross understatement.

The following year Agent Graves numbered Mescalero Apaches at Bosque Redondo at 336, while Navajos numbered 6,447. Conditions between the ancient enemies deteriorated. Adding fuel to the flames of unrest were rumors of further retaliatory measures to come from the soldiers. The culmination was the escape of the Apaches on the night of 3 November 1865. Only nine old and infirm Mescaleros were left on the Reservation.⁴

¹Perrigo, Rio Grande Adventure, p. 139.

²Ibid. Their weakened condition caused many deaths soon after.

³J.S. Graves, Special Indian Agent for New Mexico, "Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C.," December, 1865, cited by James D. Shinkle, Fort Sumner and the Bosque Redondo Indian Reservation, (Roswell, N.M.: Hall-Peerbough Press, Inc.), 1965, p. 35.

⁴Ibid., p. 36. The rumor had some basis in fact, apparently. Carleton's estimated population on the reservation for 1866 was 6,00, but gave no reason for the predicted decline

After deserting the Reservation the Mescaleros immediately resumed their old ways of life: hunting and raiding.¹ The last half of that decade saw numerous instances of hostility and savagery from the marauding bands. Having tried everything suggested² and thereby creating a vacillating program that both bewildered and confused the Indians, Wahsington officialdom finally saw the wisdom in returning them to their natural homeland. To this end President Grant in 1873 established the present Mescalero Indian Reservation on the slopes of the Sacramento Mountains of southcentral New Mexico.³

From the first, Government indifference, procrastination, and sometimes downright injustice, marked its dealings with these people. Added to the above factors were raids from the still-hostile Comanches and the to-be-expected deep-rooted resentment of the Indians towards their white captors. Is there any wonder such conditions precipitated further raids and forays from the reservation? That the white settlers retaliated in like manner is a moot point; nevertheless it was deemed necessary to deprive the Mescaleros of both their weapons and their horses to restore peace.⁴ The arrival of numerous

¹Beck, New Mexico, pp. 190-191.

²At least five official "policies" were attempted during the 1860's: the Extermination Policy; the Peace Policy which would have set up a live-and-let-live attitude; the Citizenship Policy which would train the aborigines for integration; Retaliation Policy which centered upon revenge; and the Reservation Policy. Perrigo, Rio Grande Adventure, pp. 134-135.

³Amy Passmore Hurt, "Life Among the Apaches," New Mexico Magazine (Santa Fe: Department of Development): March, 1962, pp. 15-17, 21, 34-35.

⁴Dan L. Thrapp, The Conquest of Apacheria, (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1967), pp. 197-198. Although Agent Russell testified that his charges were "good, quiet, peaceable," and should not be molested, the Army believed the Reservation served as a supply camp for Victorio, war chief of the Warm Springs Apaches.

Apaches from west of the Rio Grande had produced trouble and suspicion which prompted this desperate measure by the Army commander.¹

This was the last punitive measure dealt to the Mescaleros as a group. To be sure, small groups slipped away and joined renegade bands of Apaches not yet under reservation rule, e.g., Victorio and his Warm Springs warriors, or Geronimo and the Chiricahuas.² Much blame for the escapes must be laid at the door of the Government. The Indians received an insufficient supply of food and clothing; what they did get was of poor quality. Promises were not kept; Agents were paid little and transferred often, thus encouraging swindling and fraud.³

For the most part, however, the Mescaleros remained docile and obedient in the Reservation. Many of the former warriors joined the Army as scouts; indeed, had it not been for their superior qualities in tracking and their knowledge of Apache ways, the efforts to capture the renegade bands in their Sierra Madre hideouts might never have been successful. For their outstanding service to the United States, the scouts were called to Washington and presented specially designed medals from President Chester A. Arthur.⁴ It should be to Washington's everlasting shame that these decorated servicemen were then imprisoned with the very warriors they had assisted in capturing. Along with chiefs Geronimo, Nana, Loco, and

¹Ibid.

²Eve Ball, In the Days of Victorio, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1970), pp. 64-66.

³Ibid., p. 26.

⁴Wissler, Indians of the United States, pp. 204-205. Also see Tom Charles, "Old Scouts of the Mescaleros," New Mexico Magazine, August 1931: 17-19. Many old scouts were later ashamed of having taken the medals, and threw them away.

the few remaining survivors, they were entrained to a prisoner of war camp near San Augustine, Florida. Women and children were among the captives. In Florida, and later at a similar camp in Georgia, the Apaches died rapidly and steadily from the climatic conditions so different from their mountains and deserts of the West. Finally all were sent to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma in 1894, where they remained until the War Department granted blanket amnesty to all Apaches in 1913.¹

Peace had been firmly established long before at the Mescalero Reservation. The first government school for these Indians had been built on the Reservation in 1880. Many other features of civilization and progress have accompanied the growth and development of the area. Today the Mescaleros live on some 470,000 acres with the descendants of the Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apaches who chose this reservation from the selection offered them in 1913. Ft. Sill was the last place of confinement for the last Indians to submit to white men's domination. Although the last surviving prisoners died at Mescalero in 1969, the memories are still there.²

¹Lockwood, The Apache Indians, pp. 322-324.

²Ball, In the Days of Victorio, p. xv.

Chapter III

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The existence of accounts pertaining to any form of political or economic entities among Mescaleros prior to 1850 is admittedly rare. One should remember, however, that at this point in time the Apache began his permanent contact with Anglo-American forces whose penchant for records and data has supplied a plethora of accounts over the intervening period.

In assessing the impact of American power on Mescalero political organization one should bear in mind that the Apache had dealt with similar problems for some time. Nearly two centuries of Spanish occupation had acquainted him with myriad efforts to mold, remake, and canalize his antiquated customs. The cost, in terms of bloodshed from both races, had been dear. Perhaps of greater impact was the onslaught of Comanche territorial pressure which, as early as 1795, had reduced the band known as "Mescaleros" to a few families.¹

The Mescalero society utilized a remarkably egalitarian ideology. It was a highly mobile, non-centralized polity; the right of the individual to make and carry out his own decisions with respect to a multitude of larger problems had unchallenged priority. However, major solutions--economic, political, solidary, and ritual--were effected within the framework of the band.

¹Daniel S. Matson and Albert H. Schroeder, "Cordero's Description of the Apache--1796," New Mexico Historical Review 32: 335-356. This is one of the earliest references to the fact that the Mescaleros had separated from the Chiricahuas and were assuming band-identity.

For reasons of practicality this writer will use terms common to anthropologists and ethnologists to describe Apache political spheres operant in the recent past. Local group, band, group, and tribe are names used to designate certain organizations peculiar to Indians. Although clans and phrateries existed in other Apache cultures, there is no evidence to support such in regard to Mescaleros.¹

The primary and most strategically important group above the domestic level was the band. Within a band there might be several local groups, which were in reality extended families. The term "group," however, referred to several bands, loosely and temporarily united. Most ethnologists agree that the tribal entity among Apaches was scarcely more than a nebulous concept until reservation control was brought to bear upon the situation: Washington demanded a superordinate authority for the wider political field thus established.²

The band generally centered about a nucleus based on kinship, although consanguinity was incidental to and not exclusively determinant of membership. Far more prominent in the interests of cohesiveness were economic, defensive, and offensive factors.

Polarization and Territoriality The Mescaleros recognized and named large geographical regions where environmental factors geared to subsistence assessment exerted pressure sufficient to cause the shifting of entire bands. These environmental factors, involving plant and animal life, varied from season to season and from year to year. Hence the size of the band or group inhabiting an area at any given time was determined by the ability of the locale to adequately support the members.

¹Lockwood, The Apache Indians, pp. 52-55.

²Ibid., p. 56.