



In 1885, 134 Chiricahuas fled one last time. In March 1886, deep in the Mexican Sierra Madre, the leaders Chihuahua, Naiche, Nana, and Geronimo surrendered to General George Crook, as recorded in this famous photograph. Geronimo sits third from left, Crook second from right. Photo by C. S. Fly. (Courtesy Museum of New Mexico, neg. no. 2116)

Chihuahua and Nana but all 382 Chiricahuas living peacefully at San Carlos — including the scouts who had served loyally under Crook. Within a few days, Geronimo and Naiche each surrendered to Lieutenant Gatewood and his two Apache scouts, Kayitah and Martine. This time they did not bolt when Miles showed up with his troops. On 8 September 1886, the last Chiricahuas (including Kayitah and Martine) left Fort Bowie, Apache Pass, and their homeland as prisoners of war headed for Florida by train. Eugene Chihuahua summed up the sorrow of his people: “It would have been a good day to die.”

### **The Strong, Sad Odyssey of the Chiricahua**

“I’m history myself, just sitting here!” That’s how Elbys Hugar introduced herself when I walked into the Mescalero Cultural Center she curates. Hugar is granddaughter to Naiche and the great-granddaughter of Cochise. Her father knew

Geronimo's medicine songs — handed down from Naiche — and she says, "When I need strength every now and then, I take out a tape of my father singing and play it." As White Mountain Apache historian Edgar Perry says, songs (which are also prayers) are "the Apache heartbeat."

Hugar remembers lying awake as a child listening to her parents and grandparents and their peers reminisce: "At night, they would keep the fire going after dinner, burned down to embers. They would tell stories way into the night. Those things you never forget."

Across the parking lot at Mescalero, Narcissus Gayton works in the tribal office building; her great-grandmother was Victorio's daughter. Gayton listened to my request for an interview and said: "Don't you think you're a generation too late?" Perhaps so. Chiricahuas who had been the youngest members of those last defiant bands lived into the 1950s and 1960s. They told their stories to historian Eve Ball and to anthropologist Morris Opler. Even so, we live close to the days when Apaches freely roamed their sacred lands. We cannot talk with anyone who lived that life. But we can talk with those who knew them. In another generation, that link, too, will be gone.

In 1983, thirty-eight Apaches toured the Chiricahua Trail of Tears by bus. They visited the forts in Florida and Alabama where their grandparents had been imprisoned. Says Narcissus Gayton: "You just don't know how it makes you feel when you visit those places. It does something to you." Gayton had heard her grandmother talk about the cells in which they lived, and at Castillo de San Marcos in St. Augustine, she saw the rooms.

In 1886, General Miles promised the Chiricahuas that they would be held in Florida for just two years and then returned to their homeland. Instead, they remained prisoners of war for twenty-seven years and never returned home.

When Eugene Chihuahua saw the main contingent arrive in Florida from San Carlos, stacked like cordwood in locked freight cars, he said: "I don't know how those poor people could have lived through that horrible trip." For the first two years, the men of Geronimo's band were separated from their families, imprisoned at the opposite end of the state.

By 1888, all had been transferred to Mount Vernon Barracks in Alabama, a place even worse, in the Apaches' judgment. Eugene Chihuahua said: "We didn't know what misery was till they dumped us in those swamps. Everything moulded — food, clothes, moccasins, everything. There was no place to climb to pray. If we wanted to see the sky we had to climb a tall pine."

The crowded prisons, humid climate, tuberculosis, and malaria devastated the

people of the desert mountains. By the end of 1889, one fourth of the captive Chiricahuas had died. Many of the younger Apaches were shipped to Pennsylvania, where the staff of Carlisle Indian School did its best to destroy their identity as Indians.

Finally, eight years after surrender, with the help of political pressure from generals Oliver Otis Howard and Crook, and Crook's trusty Captain Bourke, in 1894 the 407 remaining Chiricahuas were moved to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. They built villages based on old family groups, and they were delighted to be free to support themselves by gathering, farming, and cattle raising. The time they called "The Lonesome Years" had ended.

Eugene Chihuahua spoke fondly of Oklahoma: "We could see the mountains. They weren't tall like ours but they were mountains. There were trees, and we didn't have to climb one to see the Sun. The best of all was to hear the coyotes sing, and the cry of the quail too."

Daklugie, with eight years of training at Carlisle and the support of every influential Apache, took over the tribe's cattle-raising operation. He married Chihuahua's daughter Ramona, interpreted for Geronimo, and declined election as "working chief" in deference to Naiche. Factions remained, of course.

The military threat posed by the Chiricahuas gradually lessened – even in the minds of the Arizona settlers still frenzied with fear at the thought of the legendary raiders' return. Nana died in 1896, Chihuahua in 1901, and Geronimo in 1909. Even so, a handful of Juh's group had never surrendered, escaping the roundup of the 1880s and continuing to live free in Mexico's Sierra Madre. Battles with miners, ranchers, and loggers occurred as late as the 1930s; today, Chihuahuans still will admit to being terrified of Chiricahua Apaches. No more than a dozen Mexican Chiricahua descendants can exist, mostly men cowboying discreetly on isolated ranches.

In 1913, the federal government granted the Chiricahuas in Oklahoma full freedom, though no reservation. One hundred and eighty-seven chose to move to the Mescalero Reservation, while eighty-four of the more acculturated stayed in Oklahoma on land purchased from Comanches and Kiowas.

Allan Houser, sculptor and painter, is perhaps the best known Chiricahua to have grown up in Oklahoma (spending his youth "sketching chickens and motorcycles" and sculpting bars of soap). Sitting among monumental stone and bronze Apaches at his studio in Santa Fe, he told me: "My dad [Sam Haozous – a grandson of Mangas Coloradas] moved out onto an allotment. The nearest Apache family was on a farm five miles away. Chief Naiche's daughter was another neighbor, but I was raised pretty much like an Anglo.

"I tried to learn as much as I could growing up. At my first unveiling [of a sculpture], I wanted to speak about my dad, tell him how he was responsible for everything. But I froze up.

"My father was thirteen in the big battles; he knew many songs. He was more familiar with Geronimo's war songs than anyone. It's how I learned to respect our people. And it was a hard time to be proud of who you were."

Geronimo himself regretted surrendering to the last. He was not loved by all Apaches, but to Daklugie, he "was the embodiment of the Apache spirit, of the fighting Chiricahua." Today, young Apaches still must make sense of his violence while honoring his skills as a leader. Delmar Boni, San Carlos artist and teacher, went to Fort Sill to visit Geronimo's grave.

"The words came. I spoke to him in our language. I said, 'I'm here. We still hear your words quite strongly. Young and old alike, they still talk about you: your leadership, the things you stood for — our standards and values. We realize that your intentions were good. Your intentions were all for the betterment of the People.'

"I talked and talked and told him how glad I was to talk to him. And he listened. He listened. I just gave real freely of my words. And yet I could feel on the other end, that spirit listening. I said, 'As a young Apache, my love goes out to you. I will cherish this meeting and always uphold those things that you have put out before us.'"

The Fort Sill Apache community has continued to exist, though intermarriage and the lack of a tribal land base has tended to disperse the Apaches throughout the local community. Alan Houser says: "When I go back to Oklahoma, I have no one to speak Apache with."

When Mildred Cleghorn, Houser's cousin and chair of the Fort Sill Apache, attended the 1986 centennial of Geronimo's surrender at Fort Bowie, she was seventy-six: "We . . . stood where the old ones stood, camped where they camped, prayed where they prayed, and we completed the circle. That was something that I always dreamed of doing. And I can understand now more why they yearned so much for the country. And how they fought almost to the last person in order to keep it."

In 1988 there were more than three hundred enrolled tribal members but only four full-blooded Chiricahuas left in Oklahoma. For the rest of the tribe, their continuing history is the history of the Mescalero reservation, where Chiricahua, Lipan, and Mescalero together have created a new Apache community.

### **The Mescal Makers**

The Mescalero Reservation had its drawbacks. Surrounding Sierra Blanca, summer range for the largest Mescalero band, it made a harsh home in winter and was too small to support traditional food gathering and hunting (and too high for many staple foods, including the mescal that gave the tribe its name). The Apaches did not gain clear title to the land until 1922, and the Mescalero Apaches of today include

more peoples than a century ago. Still, they live on a portion of their sacred lands. They have a home.

The Mescalero future looked bleak in 1880. In the panic over Victorio's raids, the army had disarmed the People and penned them in a manure-filled corral. Disease forced their release, but they remained under martial law until January 1881.

By the mid-1880s, the Mescaleros had resigned themselves to the inevitability of reservation life. Gambling replaced raiding as an outlet for frustrated Apaches. A day school and the first missionary (by chance, a Catholic) arrived. From a population of about three thousand in 1850, the Mescaleros hit bottom in 1888 at 431 tribal members. Gradually, they came back from the nadir, surviving tuberculosis epidemics and further attempts to steal their lands — including a proposal to add the reservation to a national forest and a promotion scheme disguised as a bill to transform Sierra Blanca into a national park.

Through the next generation, the Mescaleros dealt with a series of dictatorial Indian agents — some honest and some not. Historian C. L. Sonnichsen summed up the problem: "Apparently, the way to make fourth-rate citizens out of the Indians was to send fourth-class white men to manage them." One agent misinterpreted the girl's puberty ceremony so completely that he justified his attempt to suppress it with: "These dances had been used principally to advertise the grown girls for sale to the highest bidder."

Mescalero lands became a haven for displaced Apaches, the Mescaleros absorbing immigrants in the hope that increased numbers would help them in retaining title to their land. In 1903, thirty-seven Lipan Apaches who had been living in Mexico were accepted into Mescalero. In 1913, the Chiricahuas came from Fort Sill by train — wagons, dogs, and all. They had sold their cattle herds in Oklahoma, so they had to rebuild them at Mescalero. Nearly all the Chiricahuas moved to Whitetail, an isolated part of the reservation, living in tents for four long, cold winters before houses could be financed.

Gradually, these disparate groups began to evolve into the modern Mescalero community. A Tribal Business Committee formed in 1918. Logging operations began in 1923, though federal control of tribal income did little to nurture self-determination. After the Indian Reorganization Act passed in 1934, the business committee functioned as a tribal council, and its president became the functional Mescalero chief.

Cattle raising and timber sales became more and more lucrative. In the three years following the organization of a Cattle Growers Association and the abolition of leases to non-Indians, the income from stock rose from \$18,000 to \$100,000. The Indian New Deal of the 1930s really seemed to work for the Mescalero, and the reservation became a prime example of advances resulting from government programs.

Day schools replaced the hated boarding schools. Health programs, tribal courts, new homes, stock improvements — all began in the thirties. By 1942, every family had a house, though many were scattered across the reservation in places unlikely to yield a living.

Daklugie had his doubts about this “progress.” In his later years (he died in 1955), he viewed the Chiricahuas’ move from Oklahoma as “a terrible mistake.” He told Eve Ball: “Those at Fort Sill became dependent on themselves by the farming experience, and they seem to have been strengthened . . . Here at Mescalero . . . they have been deprived of all initiative . . . All decisions are made for them. There is nothing ahead for themselves or their children. They have never been free.” Daklugie, of course, had been free. He saw what no one now living has seen. He had lived the life of a roaming, raiding Apache, under great leaders. He also had seen his mother and youngest sister killed and his eldest sister wounded in a single battle with Mexican attackers.

Intermarriage began to fuse Mescalero, Lipan, and Chiricahua into a new people. Cooperative management of the reservation and universal dependence on agency services increased this trend. World War II opened up the reservation to a vastly wider world. The Mescaleros began to take advantage of the rich resources of their half-million-acre homeland and of newly experienced leaders.

When the Indian Claims Commission turned to the Apaches, the three peoples living at Mescalero agreed to share equally in judgments that eventually reached \$25 million. A new tribal constitution, adopted in 1964, defined the Mescalero Apache Tribe without regard to original bands (though in the 1980s, when community members suggested I speak to a neighbor they usually identified each individual as Chiricahua, Lipan, or Mescalero). All children with one “Mescalero” parent are enrolled members.

For almost forty years, one man has led this newly defined community. “We owe everything to Wendell Chino,” proclaims Mescalero entrepreneur Frederick Peso, former assistant to the BIA superintendent. Narcissus Gayton says: “We have to give a lot of credit to Mr. Chino for putting up with us. He’s spoiled us — he’s spent most of his life trying to make things better for us.” Other tribal members form an opposition, concerned that Chino has too much power.

Chino, half Mescalero and half Chiricahua, has made an enormous difference for his people. Seminary educated, he has provided strong, honest, consistent leadership since the 1950s, both for the Mescaleros and as a national Indian leader, gaining the reputation of being “the conscience of tribal leaders.” John Gonzales, the San Ildefonso president of the National Congress of American Indians in 1989, calls Chino “the E. F. Hutton of Indian country — when he talks, people listen.”

During Chino’s tenure as president at Mescalero (all but four years since 1953), the



Reverend Wendell Chino, circa 1951, two years before his first election as tribal chairman. Chino has dominated life at Mescalero ever since, revolutionizing the tribal economy and ruling with savvy and strength — too much strength, some would say. Photo by Keller.

(Courtesy Museum of New Mexico, neg. no. 111755)

tribe has diversified economically in creative ways — partly in response to bad years for cattle and timber in the late fifties. In 1962, the Apaches borrowed \$1.5 million from the government to purchase a ski area on the slopes of Sierra Blanca. A decade later, below the reassuring silhouette of their sacred mountain, the Mescaleros created a reservoir as a scenic backdrop — and fishing hole — for a resort hotel complex called the Inn of the Mountain Gods, complete with golf course and dude ranch. (Chino found a contractor to build the small earth dam for one-sixth the cost estimated by the BIA; to serve alcohol at the Inn, he took his case to the U.S. Supreme Court.)

In a recent interview with Judy Gaines, Chino said: “Too many tribal leaders want consensus because they’re afraid to exercise real leadership.” He told journalist Stan Steiner: “Some tribal chairmen are not dedicated to their people. They are dedicated to their job. Instead of serving their people, they serve themselves. They are interested in power.” A panel in the Apache Cultural Center proclaims Wendell Chino’s own goals: “As the Apache people continue to adjust to a new culture, we hope that we can hold on to the best of the old — the wisdom and beauty of ancestral traditions.”

President Chino recently may have gone too far for the taste of his people in his willingness to "adjust to a new culture." In 1991, he agreed to accept Department of Energy money to study storing high-level nuclear waste adjacent to the reservation. The DOE has promised enormous amounts of money to the tribe for its acceptance of the deadly spent fuel. Many of Chino's constituents are not willing to take the risk, and they are upset with the man they now call "Chernobyl Chino" for considering it. Harlyn and Joseph Geronimo, leaders of the opposition, repeatedly lose to Chino in tribal elections. Says Joseph Geronimo of the potential difficulty in maintaining tribal control over nuclear waste: "Every single treaty we've ever made with the U.S. government has been broken. What recourse do we have if the government breaks this?"

Today, three thousand Mescaleros live along the highway between Tularosa and Ruidoso, most of them close to tribal headquarters at Mescalero itself. Only a few families live off-reservation. Many still speak Apache, though intermarriage and the loss of extended families are making inroads on fluency; the modern dialect is more Mescalero than Chiricahua.

Only two elders in their eighties survived to work with Evelyn Breuninger on her Mescalero dictionary — one, "an old Lipan man whose memory is shaky." Breuninger says: "If we had done it earlier, we could have gotten all the names for different birds, rocks, bugs, flowers, foods." Just two families (both descendants of Chatto) make baskets, twining burden baskets rather than weaving the more spectacular coiled pieces with yucca patterns.

Narcissus Gayton, a nurse and community health representative, believes: "If you compare Mescalero to other communities, alcoholism here is nothing." Evelyn Breuninger worked for many years as a social worker: "Compared to New York City, our problems are mild. With child welfare cases, there is always an aunt or cousin to take kids when they need to be taken from parents. We're all kind of a big family here."

Many Mescalero girls still pass through the ritual of becoming Changing Woman. Though most participate in a joint ceremony held each year at the Mescalero Fairgrounds on July Fourth, more and more families arrange their daughters' ceremonies themselves, "out and about on the reservation" — part of a "cultural renewal" that Evelyn Breuninger sees.

Elbys Hugar laments the loss of the old days, when "people lived long. Now there are hardly any elderlies — too many kinds of food introduced, air that is not clean. Nothing but machines now — it makes time for people to get in trouble."

And yet, "the tribe is a multimillion dollar corporation. We have a good portfolio," according to Frederick Peso. Unemployment (running about 35 percent) and underemployment are problems, but more than one-half the three-hundred-person staff of the Inn is Apache. Mescalero lift operators help Texas tourists (among the





Fred Peso, 1988. Peso keeps these photographs of his grandfather, the Mescalero chief Peso, on the walls of his café on the road from Mescalero to Ruidoso. Says Peso: "We know who we are, we know where we came from."

300,000 annual users) onto the chairlifts at Ski Apache, where the tribe recently invested \$35 million. The tribal cattle herd has been a one-brand corporation with shareholders since 1962, and now numbers some seven thousand head. Income from the Inn, Ski Apache, and a new sawmill supports the tribal government, and some money reaches tribal members as dividends.

Frederick Peso says: "We don't feel we're part of a minority, we think of ourselves as the chosen few. We know who we are, we know where we came from. We're fortunate that the elders looked out for us, and now we are constantly looking forward to the unborn. We still work as a tribe — the tribe comes first, the individual second.

"The day we forget that, we'll be like everybody else."

### The Western Apache Melting Pot

"They keep asking us, 'Why don't you live in the beautiful pine country? San Carlos is so dry.' The traditional people know why we were there. Because they are in the middle of that four sacred mountain." Philip Cassadore explained his unlikely



Sierra Blanca and the Inn of the Mountain Gods, 1988. Built in 1972, the inn — with its reservoir, golf course, and dude ranch — constitutes a major achievement by Mescalero tribal president Wendell Chino. Apaches total more than half of the inn's 300-person staff.

home this way, but his heritage shaped his attitude: his great-great-grandfather Casidor was chief of the San Carlos "subtribal group" of the Western Apache. San Carlos was home to Casidor, and it became home to other Apaches (some more willingly than others) — the "Western Apache melting-pot," in the words of ethnographer Grenville Goodwin.

The five groups or subtribes of Arizona Apaches now called, together, the Western Apache, varied in their isolation before "melting-pot" times. The White Mountain people, then as now largest in territory and numbers, lived in close contact with the San Carlos and Cibecue groups, who, in turn, were friendly with each other. The Northern and Southern Tonto groups lived on the northwestern Apache frontier, interacting with each other but rarely in contact with other Apaches.

The Tontos became the most distinct of Western Apaches. Cibecue Apaches farmed more intensively. Cibecue and, especially, White Mountain and San Carlos Apaches owned more horses and spent more time raiding.

Only the Northern Tontos had a territory that did not include agaves to harvest. They traveled south below the Mogollon Rim once each year to make mescal in the

country of their neighbors, the Southern Tonto. Agave expert Howard Scott Gentry has noted that the ranges of *Agave parryi* and its allied species and the territory of "the wide-ranging Apaches" coincide nearly perfectly. *Apacheria* could just as easily be called *Agaveria*.

All these Apache groups were on the move for most of the year, cycling through the rough mountains and deserts from pines to saguaros in rhythm with ripening plant foods. Western Apache groups ranged through nearly ninety-thousand square miles of territory — three-fourths of the state of Arizona. Raiders struck north to the Navajo and south to the O'odham and to Mexico. In peaceful times, traders took the place of raiders. One White Mountain Apache horse purchased six or seven Navajo blankets; one bundle of mescal, one medium-sized blanket; one good tray basket, one blanket. At Zuni, an Apache buckskin was worth one sack of corn in trade; a fringed burden basket bought one big blanket.

Group distinctions began to break down when the United States army began its concentration policy, bringing the Apaches together at San Carlos. No Western Apache group, however, has been so dislocated as the Chiricahuas. Cibecue people and western White Mountain people can be found today in their ancestral homes; so can San Carlos people. Many eastern White Mountain people live in the San Carlos Reservation community of Bylas — part of their original band territory. (Demands that children attend school full-time ended the seasonal migrations to winter camps at lower elevations.)

The Tontos, more dispersed, today live in Camp Verde, Middle Verde, and Clarkdale, where they have intermarried with Yavapai, and in a tiny reservation community of their own in Payson. Agnes Curtis, for instance, told me that she is the only Tonto Apache weaving baskets at the Middle Verde Reservation, where her grandmother made big storage baskets that "she used to trade to the man at the Wingfield Store for two to three months groceries." But Curtis has no grandchildren who are full-blooded Apaches.

After the San Carlos and Fort Apache reservations were administratively divided in 1897, the San Carlos people continued to see gradual encroachment on their lands by whites. By 1925, nearly the entire reservation was leased to non-Indian cattlemen, who devastatingly overgrazed the land. In 1930, Coolidge Dam was completed, flooding Old San Carlos, whose residents moved to Peridot or to the little community of Rice, now known simply as (New) San Carlos. As Edward Spicer put it: "The Apaches had become doubtful, so completely had they been left out of the planning and preparation, whether the land was really theirs any longer." During the building of the dam,

San Carlos men had jobs; when it was completed and the Depression hit, wage work evaporated.

Ironically, the reservoir—intended for irrigation use—effectively ended San Carlos farming. In response, the BIA ceased renewing Anglo grazing leases and provided cattle for the Apaches. By the end of the 1930s, the San Carlos Apaches had been transformed into stockmen.

This was the time, too, that anthropologist Grenville Goodwin lived at San Carlos, sitting with elders, encouraging them to tell their stories. He came to San Carlos in time to listen to Anna Price, eldest daughter of the powerful White Mountain chief Diablo, tell of her father's exploits from nearly a century before. Goodwin listened to John Rope recount his experiences as one of Crook's scouts and to Palmer Valor tell the story of a raiding party that reached the Gulf of California. Goodwin's work forms our bedrock source for understanding traditional Western Apache kinship and social organization.

A business committee dominated by the BIA superintendent in the 1920s evolved into a tribal council that today runs the tribe as a corporation. Through the mid-twentieth century, cattle, farming, and mining leases became the primary management concerns, but no San Carlos leader has galvanized the People or transformed their relatively dismal economy.

Councilwoman Lucille Shorten spoke to me in 1988 in her office, below a bumper sticker that proclaimed, "I'm Apache Indian and Proud of It." She comes there each week to wait for anyone who wishes to speak with her: "We're here for the people, not just our friends and relatives." She told me: "I was raised the hard way, when this place was Rice, Arizona, when San Carlos was where the lake is. Only a few of us have lived here all our lives. Now lots of people have moved here and they're fighting over land and leases."

San Carlos has plenty of undeveloped land but few resources to match. Grazing and timber cutting produce short-term profits but must be curtailed periodically to let the range and forest rejuvenate. Only a few individuals mine the semiprecious peridot gemstones. Recreational concessions on San Carlos Reservoir, according to Shorten, "help the white people, not the Indians."

Edward Parmee studied San Carlos education programs from 1959 to 1961 and came to depressing conclusions that in large part still apply. San Carlos, he wrote, shows what can happen when "a community . . . is manipulated by outside sources and its people are neither trained nor given an increasing share of the responsibility for their own affairs, when they are deprived of their traditional heritage while pressured to accept change, and when their social, political, and economic institutions

are disrupted without provision for immediate or adequate replacement.”

As Lucille Shorten puts it: “Apache people are a proud people — too much pride. Even though there is something that could be done for them, they won’t ask. An Indian has a feeling to make his or her own choice, and not to let someone tell them.”

Parmee found that the goals of assimilation built into the program were diametrically opposed to the goals of most Apaches. The system is certainly better today than it was thirty years ago, but the battle for effective education remains the key to the San Carlos Apache future, as it is for all Indian communities.

Katie Stevens Begaye, director of Indian Education for Arizona, is Seneca/San Carlos Apache and married to a Navajo. She says, bluntly: “Language, history, and culture are one and the same.” And yet: “The elders’ position that ‘without the language you aren’t Apache’ is worth striving for, but it’s not realistic. Meanings are transmitted from one generation to the next; they will be carried on, but the medium won’t be a tribal language.”

Begaye fiercely remains an optimist. She told me: “You have to be an optimist! I am amazed at the incredible continuity of values across urban and traditional up-bringsings.”

Though more and more young San Carlos Apaches move from the reservation to look for work, most Apaches still have little interest in accumulating capital. They would prefer to remain at home even if that means sacrificing financially. Their primary desire is to remain Apache.

San Carlos has struggled with its economic and educational troubles. Lucille Shorten says there are only a few jobs: “The BIA jobs are for people with degrees, with qualifications. San Carlos people are afraid to apply, so many have been turned down. There are low-paying jobs in Globe, but you use up all the money just getting back and forth [the twenty miles each way]. People are cutting wood, digging their own peridots. Married couples with children get general assistance. Poor people who want to get their kids educated don’t get help; scholarship money goes to the people who are well off.”

Exceptional people still break through these barriers. Ned Anderson, for instance, was the middle child of a family of twelve. He did not speak English until seventh grade, but, highly motivated, he “ended up valedictorian without even knowing he was competing for it.” In junior college, an aptitude test told him he should be an artist. Anderson said to his advisor: “I’m an Apache, I’m already an artist. I want to be an attorney.”

Anderson earned his law degree, clerked for large law firms, worked in legal aid, and then served as San Carlos chairman for almost ten years. He is proud of his record, though the succeeding administration would disagree. Anderson told me sadly in

1988: "Here I am, a person with all the credentials, but around here no one has any use for me."

*In the Dry  
Mountains*

Anderson's goal is to become a college professor. But he "would like to live here and be with the People." He cannot do both.

Anderson is concerned about San Carlos: "People worry about Panama, Nicaragua, or South Africa; here on our reservation is a microcosm of that. Alcoholism and drugs are real problems. So many of our people are moving off the reservation for greater opportunities. The problem: management is in non-Indian, BIA hands. There is no real incentive."

Unemployment runs over 50 percent among the more than six thousand San Carlos Apaches. Nonetheless, the tribal cattle operation generates a million dollars annually in sales. San Carlos women are among the most prolific of all Apache basket makers, crafting twined burden baskets from miniature to full-sized, plus a few finely coiled pieces with intricate designs in black devil's claw.

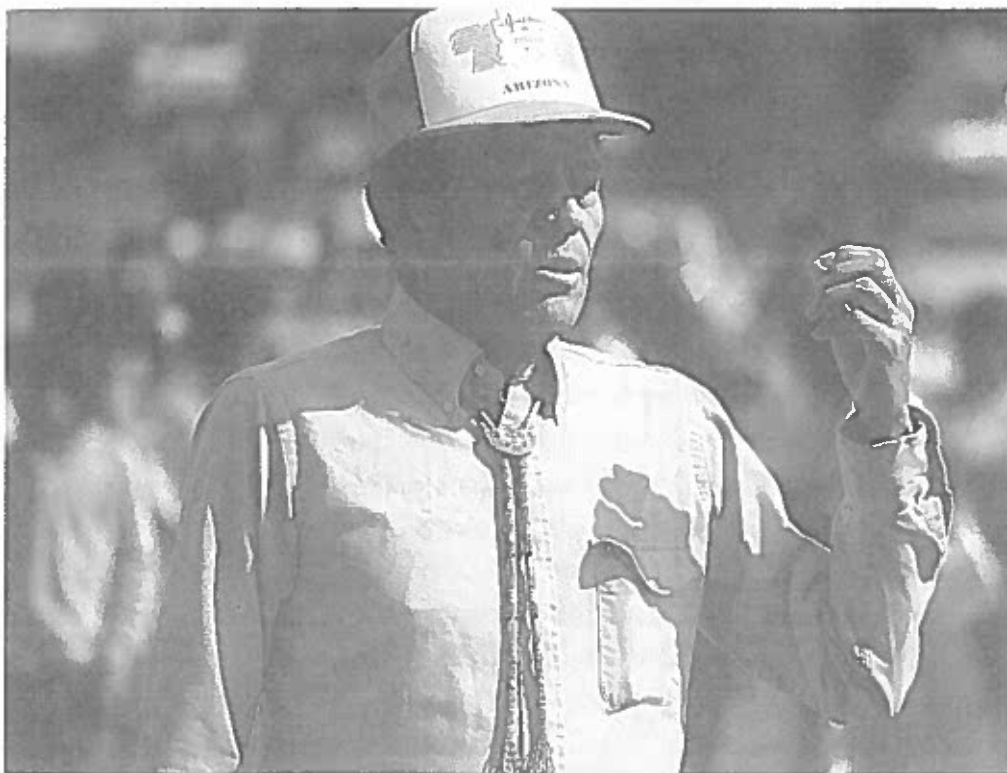
Both San Carlos and Fort Apache have kept many such traditions alive—the Apache language, the girl's sunrise ceremony, curing rituals. I spoke with Ned Anderson while he took a break from preparing for his daughter's puberty ceremony, scheduled the following week. He said: "I may sound ethnocentric when I say this, but I've always felt that without the American Indian the country as a whole would be in turmoil.

"No real war has come to our country from foreign places. I attribute this to the faith of the American Indian. The Great Spirit has protected us. No matter what we do or say, the foremost thing in our minds is the Great Spirit, the Giver of Life. We always pray before we do anything. We always believe, always try to keep ourselves in harmony with nature."

Philip Cassadore would have agreed with Anderson's belief in Apache spiritual power, if not with his politics. Cassadore said: "When I look at the problem of the Apache here, I look at the whole universe. Not just the narrow problem, the drinking problem. You communicate with everything. When we communicate, we meditate, we stand on the ground, on the dirt ground. That's why when I build my own house I want to have a dirt floor. I don't want cement.

"You're standing on the earth with no shoes on and pray. And your prayer is very effective that way. Being modern, our prayers are not effective. The ground, the Earth itself, give you a lot of energy. It's very important we take care of this Earth."

Craig Goseyun, who grew up in Bylas and now is a promising young sculptor, has his own concerns about how well we are taking care of this Earth. He told me: "When I was young, there was an abundance of game, and now it's sparse. Elk used to be abundant. The Gila used to go over my head; now it reaches just to my knee, and it's polluted."



Philip Cassadore orating at a puberty ceremony, Whiteriver, 1984. The San Carlos medicine man, who died in 1985, knew the complete song cycle for the girl's puberty ceremony. "I ask older people if I'm doing it right," he said. "That's how you learn."

Mount Graham, long sacred to the People, stands on the southern horizon of San Carlos territory. Today, the San Carlos traditionalists (led by Philip Cassadore's sister Ola) are fighting a proposal to place a massive complex of telescopes atop the 10,720-foot peak. The mountain is a sacred source of medicinal herbs — as well as home to the *Gaan*, an endangered squirrel, and a unique forest. Construction continues on the mountaintop while the Apaches sue.

Delmar Boni is one San Carlos Apache who has forged a way for himself between these conflicting demands. An artist living in Phoenix, he travels widely, conducting sweat-lodge ceremonies and talking with young Indian people. Boni says: "There is hope for Apache youth. You can be a part of both ways. When you take on another, you don't have to defy the other. There is a place there — right down the middle. Not too far to this side, not too far to this side, but down the middle, between pairs of opposites.

"Our people define that as the Life Way. The Apache Way.

"Fifty years from now — although one may have to commute from Albuquerque

282 or Phoenix to go back down to the Sunrise Dance — the dances will still be going on, the songs will be just as strong. The language will be strong.

In the Dry  
Mountains

“We will survive in this Way.”

### “Our Mountain Is the White Mountain”

“The Indians always look to the mountains; our mountain is the White Mountain. Our people in the valley here in Whiteriver are praying to that mountain in the east.” Fort Apache Museum director Edgar Perry loves to talk about his people. He goes on, looking out the window at the sun:

“In the old days, we just ran by that big yellow thing that’s always going up and down. There weren’t many people, water was clean. As long as they were traveling they were very healthy. There were plenty of edible foods along the way. No horses, no cattle — they were on foot.

“Imagine them going cross-country, crossing rivers after rains. As they move on, they’ve been where no one has ever been before. They use only what they need to survive. If they see an herb, they just take what they need for curing the person that needs it.”

The White Mountain people still have what they need. Perry says: “Apaches here have water, they have land, cattle, cornfield, lot of materials — timber, rock. They could be self-sufficient if they could use the best of two worlds.” There’s the challenge again — to use the best of both cultures. And Perry is right: the White Mountain Apache Reservation has as good a chance as any of meeting this challenge.

Most of all, they have stability. The Fort Apache Reservation, ranging from 2,700 feet to almost 11,500 feet, includes the traditional territories of the Cibecue and White Mountain Western Apache groups (collectively, the Coyoteros) north of the Salt and Black rivers. Many sacred sites still lie within sight of Apache homes. Freshly constructed HUD suburbs spread across lands enshrined in myth. Curing ceremonies remain strong, particularly in Cibecue, the most conservative Fort Apache community.

Anthropologist Keith Basso has been listening to his Western Apache friends at Cibecue for many years, and they have told him what this living with the land means. Annie Peaches: “The land is always stalking people. The land makes people live right. The land looks after us.” Stories are tied to the names of places; stories teach you how to live right; the place-name and the place itself keep you on the right road, the Apache Way. Benson Lewis: “Stories go to work on you like arrows.”