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*DISASTER AT WHITE TAIL:  
THE FORT SILL APACHES' FIRST TEN YEARS  
AT MESCALERO, 1913-1923*

JOHN A. TURCHENESKE

DURING the early morning hours of Friday, April 4, 1913, the Rock Island Railway special train bearing 163 Chiricahua Apache prisoners of war rumbled south toward the Sacramento Mountains as it skirted past the Valley of the Fires' eastern rim. As the train slowly crawled to a halt in the sleepy New Mexico hamlet of Tularosa, the twenty-seven-year period of captivity experienced by a number of these Indians came to an end.<sup>1</sup> In 1886, charged with allegedly abetting Geronimo and his fellow belligerents, the military uprooted these particular individuals from their San Carlos and Fort Apache, Arizona homes. In point of fact, none of those Chiricahuas removed to Fort Marion, Florida and subsequently transferred to Mount Vernon Barracks, Alabama in 1887 were guilty of armed insurrection. For reasons of political expediency none would ever be returned to Arizona.

Younger members of this forlorn band had been born into captivity while the Chiricahuas were held for twenty years at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, from which all of these Indians had come. Generally known as the Fort Sill Apaches, the Chiricahuas were about to be amalgamated with the Mescalero Apaches. Shortly after detrainning, Major George W. Goode, their officer in charge, returned these Indians to the Interior Department's jurisdiction, thus officially releasing the Chiricahuas from their odious status as prisoners of war.<sup>2</sup> Their reputation somewhat altered by a prolonged period of confinement, the Chiricahuas, in the custody of agent Clarence R. Jefferis, journeyed to the Mescalero Indian Reservation as the "best bunch of Indians in the country."<sup>3</sup>

Yet the Chiricahuas did not necessarily share the moment's euphoria, for their odyssey to New Mexico was born of desperation. When the Chiricahuas were removed from Alabama to Fort Sill in 1894, they were promised freedom and permanent allotment at that installation "if they behaved themselves."<sup>4</sup> Consequently, scrupulously avoiding breaches of discipline, they conscientiously adhered to their captors' program of civilization and diligently labored to place themselves in an economic position to handle such allotments. Contrary to one Indian Office operative's observation that allotment of Mescaleros would provide a salutary example for the Fort Sill Apaches,<sup>5</sup> the Chiricahuas, at the time of their removal from Fort Sill, were basically self-sufficient and able to make their way in the white man's world if properly supported by the Indian Bureau. They had become experienced cattlemen with approximately 10,500 head of high grade Herefords worth well over \$300,000. Had Fort Sill been abandoned and given over to the Chiricahuas as originally intended, these Indians in time would have become one of Oklahoma's wealthiest tribes.<sup>6</sup>

Yet promises of permanent homes, allotment and freedom at Fort Sill were never realized. By 1903 military officials decided to retain Fort Sill for future artillery training. Geronimo's demise in 1909 eradicated most of the opposition emanating from New Mexico to Chiricahua resettlement in that territory. With this obstacle finally removed, War Department personnel were easily enabled by instilling fear, suspicion and deep despair among the Chiricahuas that they would never receive Fort Sill as earlier promised them, to convince most of these Indians that relocation to Mescalero would be in their best interest. Relentlessly pressured by the military to make this decision, those Chiricahuas, too weak to withstand such onslaughts and longing for freedom and a home to call their own, eventually clamored for resettlement at Mescalero.

There immediately ensued a four-year acrimonious struggle between the War and Interior Departments over which settlement policies would be pursued. Although Interior's efforts to maintain the Chiricahuas at Fort Sill came to naught, in the compromise agreement which followed, that Department's Indian rights activist allies<sup>7</sup> exacted a guarantee that those Chiricahuas choosing Mescalero as their new home would be placed in as good an eco-

nomic condition as they had known at Fort Sill.<sup>8</sup> Tragically, this pledge was also to remain unfulfilled. What befell those Chiricahuas who came to New Mexico during their subsequent ten-year period of severe impoverishment at the Mescalero Indian Reservation amply demonstrates why, removal importunities to the contrary, the Fort Sill Apaches had every reason to question whether the latest promises made them regarding their well-being at Mescalero would come to pass.<sup>9</sup> Developments which unfolded after their arrival in New Mexico would also illustrate why, in reality, many of these Indians hated to leave and were apprehensive of departing Fort Sill, as well as why they never considered themselves truly free<sup>10</sup> upon release from their status as prisoners of war, and why they regretted coming to Mescalero.<sup>11</sup>

Initially, at least, these Indians' friends cautiously expressed optimism over the Chiricahuas' future at Mescalero. Missionaries of the Reformed Church in America believed that Fort Sill Apaches' release from captivity was an event of great import.<sup>12</sup> Echoing this view, members of the Board of Indian Commissioners believed the Chiricahuas' resettlement at Mescalero was transacted "in a manner highly creditable to the Government." This move provided a means for these Indians' proper civilization and development. At the same time, Board members urged Indian Office personnel to exert every effort to develop the Chiricahuas' sense of independence and responsibility and "prevent anything like a backward industrial tendency or a going back from individualistic to tribal customs."<sup>13</sup>

Slightly over a month after the Chiricahuas' arrival in New Mexico, Major Goode returned to Mescalero for a six-day tour of inspection relative to the progress made by his former charges. His report sounded a note of caution. While Goode found them cheerful and orderly, they as yet had not been settled in any permanent location on the reservation. Rather, they continued to be encamped at the agency headquarters, and thus were most interested in being finally situated at their new homes. Goode believed they could best be satisfied and encouraged by being so located with as little delay as possible. Since Mescalero afforded a fine cattle range, their money should be invested in stock. "In their present frame of mind," said Goode, these Indians would continue to pro-

gress if encouraged and given the opportunity. Were the Chiricahuas "discouraged by delays or failure to realize their hopes they will drift back into old vicious habits, and become worthless and troublesome." One way to accomplish the objectives set for the Fort Sill Apaches was to allow agent Jefferis a free hand in the administration of these Indians' affairs by exempting him from Indian Office regulations which might hamper such management.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, there were reports of a more propitious nature. Prior to the Chiricahuas' removal to Mescalero, New Mexico's Senators Albert B. Fall and Thomas B. Catron and their stockmen constituents opposed such transfer. Ostensibly, their protests were based on a fear of renewed Apache hostilities. Actually, these maneuvers were designed to protect their reservation grazing leases.<sup>15</sup> Fortunately, no reports of "open outbreak of hostilities between the Indians and white settlers as was alleged to be feared by New Mexican politicians and cattlemen" came from Mescalero.<sup>16</sup>

Evidence soon surfaced that such fears were absolutely without foundation. "From all accounts," said Brigadier General Hugh L. Scott, the "only dissatisfied people over the situation are Senators Fall and Catron." Actually, New Mexico as a whole cared nothing "about the matter one way or another. . . . Far from deluging this country once more in blood as we used to read in the Senatorial screeds last fall," Scott said, the Chiricahuas were "looking for some baseball club to tread on their coattails when the only blood likely to flow would be that of the umpire."<sup>17</sup>

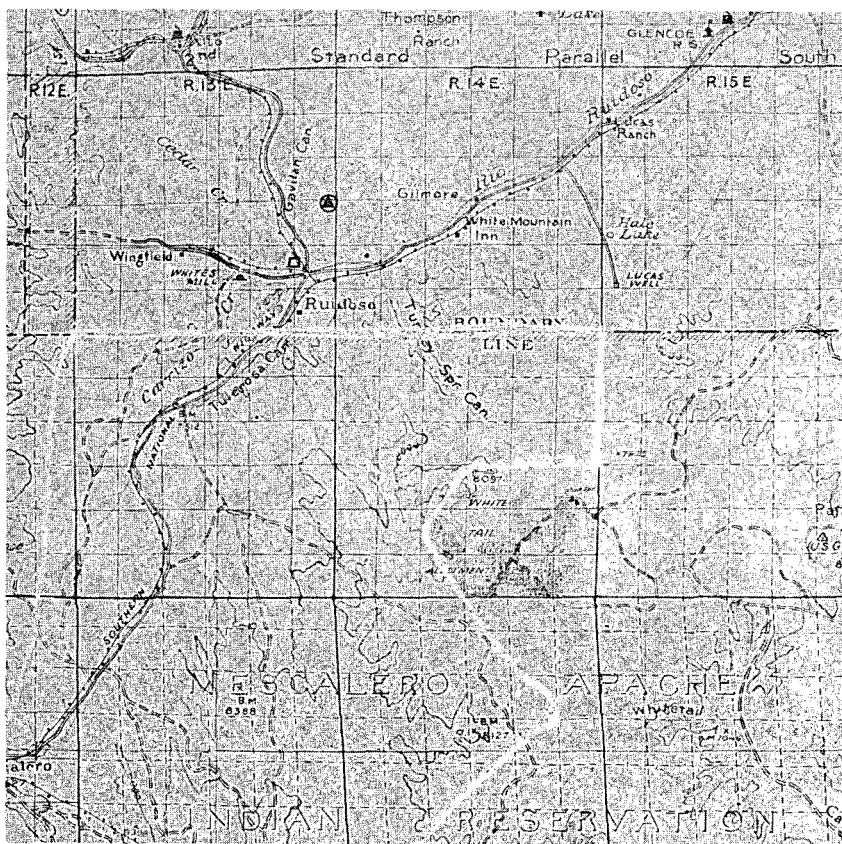
In mid-May, the first battle the Chiricahuas found themselves engaged in since their arrival at Mescalero was a baseball contest held in Cloudcroft with that city's team. According to the sports columnist for the *Weekly Cloudcrofter*, the game was an "easy victory for the Indians, the score standing 22 to 2 in their favor." Continuing, the columnist noted that "numerous errors on the part of the Cloudcroft team were responsible for the defeat." Actually, the "Fort Sill boys romped around the diamond and ran scores while some of the Cloudcroft boys were trying to put the ball somewhere—just where was not always plain." Goodwill was further manifested since "no one wanted to 'kill the umpire' or scalp anybody," and thus the "game passed off pleasantly."

Reports were that the "visitors expressed themselves as being highly pleased with the courteous treatment shown them while here and no doubt they will be back again."<sup>18</sup> Referring to the Chiricahuas' return engagement in July, Scott observed that such a felicitous outcome directly contradicted Fall's predictions of renewed carnage in New Mexico and Arizona.<sup>19</sup>

Yet for all this, the Chiricahuas faced serious difficulties, many of which would not be resolved for decades. By September, for example, these Indians had still to be permanently placed in their new homes in the reservation's White Tail Canyon district. Located approximately twenty miles northeast of the Mescalero Agency, White Tail was a narrow eight-mile-long valley over seven thousand feet in elevation which periodically suffered severe winter cold, heavy snowfalls, late and early frosts and occasional spring and summer droughts. As a reason for placing the Chiricahuas at this site, Jefferis advised his superiors that White Tail was the only area on the reservation that remained unoccupied. As matters stood, wells for drinking water, stock tanks, roads and houses were only partially constructed, and in some cases not even begun. Also, the Chiricahuas were unable to take advantage of the current growing season. Only now was ground being broken on an extremely limited amount of arable land which was not subject to irrigation. Even then, since the period in which crops could be made was of short duration, all that might be raised were small grains and vegetables.<sup>20</sup>

In this regard, Jefferis sounded an ominous note. It would be absolutely impossible for the Chiricahuas to sustain themselves economically solely on agricultural pursuits. Their major source of income would have to be realized from a prospective cattle industry, which the government had a definite moral and legal obligation to fund initially. As such, Jefferis and his successors would continuously plead for just such a program. Were the government not desirous of providing the necessary monies outright for this purpose, then a loan could be made using the reservation's timber resources as collateral. In this way, both Mescaleros and the Fort Sill Apaches would be highly benefitted.<sup>21</sup>

Another serious difficulty which confronted Jefferis and his successors was the matter of those monies belonging to the Chirica-



Map of the Mescalero Reservation, showing the relationship of the White Tail Allotment to the reservation and to Ruidoso. Courtesy the National Archives and Records Center.

huas, which by mutual War and Interior Department agreement were to redound to both tribes' benefit. Contrary to Goode's expectations, the Indian Office rigidly regulated Jefferis' administration of the Chiricahuas' funds.<sup>22</sup> Fortunately for these Indians, after several months' delays they received their individual shares in the \$171,172.03 realized as their portion of those proceeds accruing from the recent sale of the Chiricahuas' cattle herd at Fort Sill.<sup>23</sup> Yet there still remained the matter of the General Apache Fund, totalling nearly \$30,000, which was to be made available for purchase of cattle for both Mescaleros and Fort Sill Apaches relocated in New Mexico.<sup>24</sup> Tragically, there is no extant evidence that these monies were ever turned over to the Mescaleros for this purpose, a situation which only compounded the problem of establishing them on an economically viable plane of existence.

While the Chiricahuas patiently awaited what had been promised them at Mescalero,<sup>25</sup> an obstacle of a more sinister nature lurked on the horizon. Still angered by the Fort Sill Apaches' removal to New Mexico, Senator Fall vigorously renewed his campaign to turn the Mescalero Indian Reservation into a national park.<sup>26</sup> In addition to protecting friends' and relatives' grazing leases at this location, Fall's latest covert purpose in pressing this issue was to obtain rights and royalties on minerals extracted at Mescalero. Mary W. Roe, a Reformed Church missionary, advised Edgar B. Meritt of the Indian Office that Fall would never rest until he met with success in this matter.<sup>27</sup>

According to Major Goode, favorable action on Fall's national park scheme would be a crime against the Chiricahuas and Mescaleros. Were the Indian Office to carry out its obligations to both tribal groups and properly develop the reservation, they would "be well off and prosperous in a few years." These Indians would be ruined if Fall's bill became law. "On whatever pretext white men are permitted to get a foothold on the Mescalero reservation, no matter how fair sounding may be the terms of the provision granting it, the fact will be a menace to their rights" and the initial step will have been "taken in what will eventually be their undoing." Goode urged friends of the Indian to prevent this from happening.<sup>28</sup>



Shortly, Goode would have additional words of caution on the Fort Sill Apaches' situation at Mescalero. In the company of General Scott, Goode arrived at the reservation on October 8 for the purpose of observing conditions which confronted the Chiricahuas. Goode advised U.S. Indian Commissioner Cato Sells that many of these Indians appeared "satisfied with the prospect ahead of them" but expressed impatience over delays in meeting their immediate needs, especially on the issue of clothing, a commodity which they desperately needed. Only thirty families were assigned farms at White Tail and construction on twenty-five houses had yet to be commenced. Families not yet located at White Tail would have to remain at the agency and live in tents during the winter. These could not possibly be relocated until summer.

Scott shared with Goode "great confidence in the ultimate success and prosperity of these Indians," provided they were "established under such favorable conditions as are obviously possible at this time; and with as little further delay as possible." To ensure their economic well-being, Goode urged that the range be stocked with cattle and that an adequate water supply be developed using wells and tanks. Health facilities were needed to treat pneumonia. In order to meet these needs, Jefferis needed the Indian Office's support and a free hand in the administration of reservation affairs. Goode strongly hinted that "prompt action now in developing conditions at Mescalero will meet with response from the Indians which will bring success and prosperity to these people." Otherwise, continued delay would only "discourage them and engender discontent with attendant evils, and make the task of the superintendent very difficult, if not impossible."<sup>29</sup>

Writing to Colonel Edwin St. John Greble immediately thereafter, the sense of urgency expressed by Goode for his former charges was somewhat stronger. Reiterating the points covered in his letter to Sells, Goode explained that his object in requesting Scott to accompany him to Mescalero was to make the Chiricahuas "feel that the War Department was interested in them—to reassure them and give them encouragement, notwithstanding the delays which tend to make them restless." Yet Goode wished it were "possible to impress upon the Commissioner," whom he believed was "much interested in these Indians," how important it was to achieve "results at Mescalero *with as little additional delay*

*as possible.*" Were the Chiricahuas "to back-slide, because of delay in developing conditions they have been waiting for, their demoralization will be very rapid; the whole Mescalero tribe will be affected, and the superintendent will be up against a hard proposition." Such would not come to pass if the reservation was well-stocked with cattle, for there would "be plain sailing; and those Indians will be self-supporting and prosperous in a few years."<sup>30</sup>

Greble, who was instrumental in establishing the field artillery school at Fort Sill, the construction of which finally forced the Chiricahuas off the installation, immediately transmitted Goode's communication to Major General Leonard Wood, U.S. Army Chief of Staff. Wood, who had held this position since 1910 and had been directly involved in suppressing the last of Geronimo's belligerencies in 1886,<sup>31</sup> requested the Interior Secretary to bring this urgent matter to Sells' attention. Sells, said Wood, should exert "special effort . . . to comply as promptly as possible with the promises made the Indians who went to Mescalero; that is, that they would be settled upon farms and be given an opportunity to earn a living, and that they would be rationed, clothed and sheltered until they had an opportunity to realize upon their first crops."<sup>32</sup>

Interior's reply failed to assure interested military personnel that arrangements made by both departments for the benefit of those Chiricahuas who relocated at Mescalero were being fulfilled properly. War Department officials learned that only blankets and shoes were authorized for shipment and that other matters pertaining to the Fort Sill Apaches "are being handled as expeditiously as possible."<sup>33</sup> Upon being informed of Interior's response, Major Goode observed that the "Indian Office has gingered up a little." Goode hoped "they will do the right thing by Jefferis and give him a chance to work out that proposition at Mescalero."<sup>34</sup>

Goode's expectation in this regard was not to be realized. Attempting to facilitate Chiricahua resettlement at White Tail, Jefferis begged Indian Office superiors in January 1914, for farm machinery, housing appliances, an increase of beef and other food rations and adequate hospital facilities.<sup>35</sup> Reformed Church missionaries believed the Chiricahuas' future at Mescalero was uncertain since provisions for their permanent establishment were either slow or "constantly deferred."<sup>36</sup> Matters became even more



The Fort Sill Apaches' baseball team. Courtesy the U.S. Army Field Artillery and Fort Sill Museum.

uncertain when Senator Fall reintroduced his measure to turn Mescalero into a national park.<sup>37</sup>

Vigorously protesting this move, Father William H. Ketcham, S.J., a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners, urged upon completion of his January 1914 visit to Mescalero that an appropriation sufficient to establish both Mescaleros and Chiricahuas in the cattle raising business be allocated these Indians so they might become economically self-sustaining.<sup>38</sup> Jefferis concurred with this view and further observed that the Indian Office's efforts in this direction were substantially lacking.<sup>39</sup> Since it was "obvious to anyone that an Indian cannot make his living from a tract of land" which did not exceed fifteen acres for each individual, Jefferis advocated stocking Mescalero, which contained "one of the finest . . . ranges in the country," with a minimum of twelve thousand head of cattle. Furthermore, if white permittees, whose leases had not yet been extinguished as earlier proposed, were making substantial profits from their sheep and cattle interests, then "why shouldn't the Indians' grass be eaten by Indian cattle and the profits therefrom accrue to the Indians?"<sup>40</sup>

An appropriation of \$200,000 would provide a good beginning for their cattle industry.<sup>41</sup> If necessary, Jefferis suggested, these and additional monies required for this purpose could be allocated on a loan basis, "to be secured by the timber on the reservation, which is valued at three and a half million dollars."<sup>42</sup> Stocking of the reservation with cattle, said Jefferis, "was cited as one of the advantages that would be enjoyed by the Fort Sills who elected to remove to Mescalero." These Indians came to New Mexico anticipating a prosperous future inasmuch as they left Oklahoma with the "full expectation of being just as well, if not better, situated." Jefferis wondered what their feeling might be "when they find that all there is for them here is a small piece of farm land which, work as hard as they may, cannot be made to produce enough to keep them and their families in food and clothing." Were Congress not to provide even a reimbursable appropriation with which to stock Mescalero with cattle, Jefferis could not see "what is to become of them."<sup>43</sup>

Holding a similar view of the situation, James Mooney, the noted ethnologist, definitely believed the Chiricahuas were removed to the wrong place.<sup>44</sup> They were, said Mooney, making a new beginning under adverse conditions and in "forced companionship with people, who although cognate, are their hereditary enemies." Mooney believed that the only logical location for these people was in Arizona. Since their fighting days were long over, and many were already of the second generation, Mooney was skeptical that the government could not relocate "fifty families in their native environment."<sup>45</sup>

Had the Chiricahuas been given the opportunity to decide whether to relocate in Arizona, Mooney believed most of these Indians would have desired to make such a move. As matters stood, said Mooney, "we see a decimated remnant officially cut off from their own kindred and further cut into two parts, each to continue as aliens in a strange land and among unsympathetic people and more or less hostile surroundings." Thus, rather than eliminate "a problem we have created an additional one." Furthermore, Mooney contended, history aptly demonstrated that tribal entities were able to "preserve their vitality and existence only in large bodies." Since the Mescaleros were both a small and dispirited people and "far behind the Chiricahuas in present advancement," their contact with the Fort Sill Apaches would prove severely detrimental to this group. Were the Chiricahuas returned to Arizona among related peoples, their prospects of survival would be increased measurably. Should they be forced to remain in New Mexico "with their small body and loss of faith in Government," they would be unable to "withstand the shock."<sup>46</sup>

In this vein, despite the heavy summer rains which promised fairly successful crops,<sup>47</sup> Jefferis reiterated his plea for funds with which to stock Mescalero with cattle, inasmuch as the "returns from crops produced on fifteen acres of land will be inadequate to support the average Indian family."<sup>48</sup> Although initial indications regarding endeavors to include the \$200,000 reimbursable cattle item in the fiscal 1915 Indian appropriation bill pointed toward success, upon further inquiry Jefferis learned that this measure failed to pass.<sup>49</sup> Instead, Jefferis would have to meet all of Mescalero's industrial needs out of a \$75,000 lump sum appropriation

allocated for this purpose.<sup>50</sup> This would allow the cattle business to commence on a somewhat meager basis "with the result that the first three years will be lean ones, so far as the Indians are concerned." Jefferis hoped the time would come when the Mescalero Cattle Company herds numbered at least twelve thousand head in order that "three full meals a day" for these Indians would be the rule instead of the exception."<sup>51</sup>

Were ensuing developments any indication, Jefferis's hope was not to be realized for some time to come. By mid-October 1914 the Indian Office stopped rationing the Chiricahuas. Asa Daklugie, who led the pro-Mescalero removal faction, believed his people were not yet ready for such action. According to Daklugie, anywhere from three to five years of continued rationing was necessary until the Fort Sill Apaches made an adequate beginning in the cattle industry as well as improving their farmland. Besides, as Daklugie viewed the situation, the government had a responsibility toward placing the Chiricahuas on an adequate plan of economic self-sufficiency.<sup>52</sup>

As if the matter of extinguished rations was not difficulty enough, in mid-October, after six weeks without rain, a substantial portion of the Chiricahuas' oat crop was devastated by fire. Shortly thereafter, numerous and heavy snowfalls punctuated the remaining fall and early winter seasons.<sup>53</sup> This circumstance made threshing of the Chiricahuas' crop nearly impossible. Although several families managed to complete this task, by the early spring of 1915 much of the crop was "still out in the fields." Were the elements to force this situation to continue, the Chiricahuas would be prevented from planting their fields in time to salvage a harvest in late summer.<sup>54</sup>

Another discouragement which presented itself was the matter of housing. By the spring of 1915 housing construction for the Chiricahuas located at White Tail had not been completed. Homes which already had been erected were of poor quality. Incensed at yet another injustice inflicted upon the Fort Sill Apaches, James O. Arthur, Reformed Church missionary to both the Chiricahuas and Mescaleros, observed that "when the high winds from the west" come "sweeping down the canyon, every crack and knot-hole is discovered to admit the cooling breeze." A



Above: Asa Daklugie, leader of the pro-Mescalero removal faction. Courtesy the U.S. Army Artillery and Fort Sill Museum. Below: First housing at White Tail. Courtesy the Smithsonian Institution.



number of the houses were a "disgrace to the white men who are responsible for their erection." Homes were "built upon wooden posts for a foundation." and constructed "of lumber that went from the standing tree to the carpenters' hands in a month's time, so green that the sap oozed out with every nail driven into it." When these dwellings finally dried out, floors, inside ceilings and walls became surfeited with cracks such that "the knots drop out of the boards." This situation made Arthur "warm under the collar every time" he visited the Chiricahuas' homes, viewed the finished product and remembered that sufficient funds were appropriated "to have built a really respectable home under efficient management."<sup>55</sup> Similar disgust with such circumstances caused Asa Daklugie to lose confidence in Jefferis and call for a new agent.<sup>56</sup>

Jefferis's resignation on November 15, 1915 failed to have an appreciable impact upon the Indians at Mescalero. So despondent had some of the Fort Sill Apaches become that in early January 1916 several Chiricahuas were involved in a serious altercation with Tularosa law enforcement authorities which resulted in severe injuries. J. W. Prude, the trader at Mescalero who advised General Scott of these incidents, strongly urged that former agent James A. Carroll, in whom the Indians had confidence, be returned to this reservation without delay. Were this not to happen then future episodes of a similar nature "would be a sweet morsel in the mouth of . . . Senator Fall" so as to enable him to "criticize those who were instrumental in getting the Fort Sill Apaches" relocated in New Mexico.<sup>57</sup>

Despite such timely warnings, Fall wasted no time in attempting to utilize this "sweet morsel" to good advantage. On January 5, 1916, he reintroduced legislation which would make Mescalero a national park. Protesting the potential loss for these Indians of their mineral, land, timber and hunting rights, Richard Henry Harper, who initially established the Reformed Church's mission at this reservation, asked whether such action was just. "Shall a great Government like ours, in this enlightened age of the world, deal thus with a helpless people?" Harper believed that "such treatment of the weak by the strong in other days—and in some countries today—would be called barbaric." Harper wondered



whether it would be "less so if practiced by the people of the United States."<sup>58</sup> Also advocating defeat of Fall's endeavors in this direction, William A. Light, the new agent at Mescalero, believed the Indians' rights to this reservation should belong to them and "their descendants 'as long as the sun shines and the water runs.'"<sup>59</sup>

In this respect, Light especially emphasized the need to develop more fully these Indians' cattle business. Light's predecessor managed to purchase twelve hundred head of Herefords from the \$75,000 allocated to Mescalero for industrial purposes. At the same time, the Chiricahuas purchased seven hundred head from their individual monies. As a result of natural increase the herd numbered 3160 head at the end of 1917 and was worth twenty percent over the original purchase price.<sup>60</sup> Additional improvements at White Tail included storage sheds, cisterns, gardens, root cellars and fencing, and, according to Light, "other indications of general prosperity."<sup>61</sup>

Manifestations of well-being to the contrary, Asa Daklugie and Eugene Chihuahua, members of the Mescalero Business Committee, advised the Indian Office that "we just barely get along." Referring to a portion of the Chiricahuas' individual Fort Sill cattle monies reinvested in Herefords at Mescalero, Daklugie and Chihuahua said that "what money we had when we came to this reservation has been spent for . . . good purpose." Since they were in dire need of food and clothing, inasmuch as there was no "means of employment or any regular work to be given us," these individuals desired to know what became of the General Apache Fund. After all, "this money we sweat and work hard for" they earned it "honestly when [we] were prisoners of war." Daklugie and Chihuahua believed that improvements on the reservation ought to be funded by Congress.<sup>62</sup>

Difficulties confronting the Chiricahuas were compounded due to a severe drought experienced during the spring of 1918. Especially hard hit again was the Chiricahuas' oat crop which was to bring in desperately needed cash for "supplies of cornmeal, coffee, sugar, clothing, harness, various repairs and utensils of necessity." Of approximately 608 acres planted, less than seventy acres were productive. This led Light to describe their crops as failures and

express the fear they would "have very little to live upon." Daklugie and Chihuahua described the situation in stronger terms. "At the present time some of our number are existing upon less than white people feed to their dogs." Exhaustion of individual resources and credit at local stores did not improve matters.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, the Chiricahuas were in need of barns, pumps for a number of their wells, a blacksmith to repair their implements, a traction engine to thresh their oats and hospital facilities. Houses erected only several years earlier were already in poor condition. Indeed, by the end of 1918, houses had yet to be erected for several Chiricahua families. Small wonder that Daklugie and Chihuahua expressed the sentiment that "we have been neglected and some of the promises made by Government officials when we were liberated and placed on this reservation have not been kept."<sup>64</sup>

Because these and similar conditions not only greatly disheartened the Chiricahuas<sup>65</sup> but also their Mescalero brethren, Asa Daklugie and his Mescalero counterparts launched a vigorous campaign which repeatedly urged Major General Scott, who had just completed his term as Chief of Staff, to "please ask Congress to give us its value and hold the timber so we can get homes and stock our range; we need their help as we are a poor people now."<sup>66</sup> Daklugie's entreaties eventually prompted Scott personally to ascertain conditions at Mescalero in his new capacity as a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners.<sup>67</sup> Because the Chiricahuas were promised "that they would be put in as good an economic condition as when they were at Fort Sill," said Scott, these Indians came to Mescalero in 1913 "full of courage and hope." Inasmuch as this guarantee remained unfulfilled, the Fort Sill Apaches not only became greatly discouraged over their future at this reservation, but also had retrograded since coming under Interior's jurisdiction. Relative to the proposed reimbursable cattle appropriation, which monies were designed to be allocated on the basis of Mescalero's timber resources as security, Scott maintained that "had action been taken at once these Indians would be on their feet."<sup>68</sup> While at Mescalero, Scott gathered the Chiricahuas together and "said 'I am sorry. I am responsible for your people moving here.'" If any wished to

return to Oklahoma, “ ‘I’ll be glad to take you back.’ ” Although several did return to Oklahoma, most “felt themselves committed and said they would try to begin life anew at Mescalero.”<sup>69</sup>

Ernest Stecker, who became the new agent at Mescalero in July 1919, was the major force behind the Chiricahuas’ renewed efforts toward a brighter future. Stecker, who was quite familiar to these Indians when they were at Fort Sill while he was Anadarko Agency superintendent for the Kiowas and Comanches, boldly produced a plan of economic development for the entire reservation. This project envisioned the sale of a minimum of 170,000,-000 feet of timber valued at \$500,000, the funds to be made available on a reimbursable basis. At least half of these monies would be invested so as to increase the cattle herd to six thousand head. There would ensue a minimum yearly sale of 4500 yearlings yielding an annual income of approximately \$180,000.<sup>70</sup>

Yet, despite Stecker’s efforts to attain this goal, there passed another three years before any positive action was obtained on this matter. Almost immediately Stecker’s plan was confronted with severe political opposition. In turn, this caused the Indian Office to be more than reluctant in expressing its support for Stecker’s proposal—so much so that the agent found himself constrained, in the course of urging support for his program, to advise General Scott that he had “no confidence in Mr. Sells.” Fortunately, Scott succeeded in his attempts at pressuring Interior to sign the necessary timber contract. By the end of 1920, one battle remained to be won as Congress had yet to allocate the reimbursable funding for this project.<sup>71</sup>

Yet opposition forces in Congress also could claim a partial victory. When the funding request for Stecker’s proposal reached Congress on January 7, 1921, only \$250,000 in reimbursable funds was solicited.<sup>72</sup> Despite Scott’s persistent pressure to have these monies made available, due to a short congressional session this appropriation failed to pass.<sup>73</sup> “After many years of disappointment,” said Roger Toclanny and Charles Martine, the Chiricahua members of the Mescalero Indian Business Committee, “it now seems as though our wish for better living conditions is to be realized.” They, as well as other members of this organization, decided to pressure government officials in order to ensure that

such prospects might be fully realized. As such, they constantly pleaded with Scott not to relax his vigilance on this issue.<sup>74</sup>

Indeed, according to Fred C. Morgan, the newly arrived agent at Mescalero, "unless funds are available from some source either to give them work or to set them on their feet in the stock business I anticipate that there will be many discouraged and hungry Indians before the problem is finally worked out." Otherwise, said Morgan, he saw "very little hope of getting these Indians on their feet at an early date."<sup>75</sup> Fortunately, the agitation exercised on behalf of these Indians began to produce favorable results. By May 1922 legislation had been formulated for a \$250,000 reimbursable appropriation designed "for the purpose of promoting civilization and self-support among the Indians of the Mescalero Reservation in New Mexico."<sup>76</sup> In the course of conference negotiations, funding for this item was pared down to \$75,000. Even so, during the first quarter of 1923, mainly due to the relentless efforts expended by Scott in support of both the Chiricahuas and Mescaleros, this measure became law.<sup>77</sup>

With this development, Sam Kenoi poignantly expressed these Indians' appreciation for Scott's endeavors on this issue. "Dear General accept our sincere thanks. There has," said Kenoi, "been much really great suffering here" among the Chiricahuas and Mescaleros. "With some of this appropriation available for immediate relief our suffering ought soon to be at an end." Kenoi promised that, "in our better times, when we are able to have at least the necessities of life," each "Indian will think of General Scott through whose efforts the much needed relief has come." Kenoi again hoped that Scott would accept the heartfelt gratitude of "these Apaches at Mescalero whom you have so often helped in a fatherly way. . . ."<sup>78</sup>

Thus, after a ten-year period of gross neglect by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a small beginning was made toward fulfilling the promises made to the Chiricahuas in 1913 when they left Fort Sill for Mescalero. As matters stood, the \$75,000 reimbursable appropriation would only provide for a portion of the much needed cattle with which to stock the reservation. They continued to be in need of better housing, and "barns and sheds for . . . their stock and farming utensils," for which purpose funds had to come from

some other source since the "Indians are without funds to do this work."<sup>79</sup> Years would pass before the Chiricahuas again experienced anything close to the degree of prosperity they attained at Fort Sill. Had the Indian Office been not only less concerned with political expedience regarding Fall's national park scheme, but also more willing to place the Chiricahuas on a plane of economic self-sufficiency by making available to them the General Apache Fund and pressing Congress for the reimbursable cattle appropriation at the very least, these Indians would not have been plunged into destitution. Had their rations not been summarily cut off, the Fort Sill Apaches, who certainly deserved better treatment, would not have been forced to starve. As such, the economic distress experienced by the former Chiricahua Apache prisoners of war is illustrative of an outrage perpetrated upon a people whose saga was already surfeited with abundant injustices.

#### NOTES

1. These Indians departed Fort Sill on April 2, 1913. Actually, 187 Chiricahuas were later returned to Interior's jurisdiction and placed on the Mescalero Reservation. For a complete accounting of the whereabouts of the twenty-four absent Chiricahuas, see George W. Goode to Adjutant General's Office (AGO), April 8, 1913, File 53119-09-123 Kiowa (BIAK), Central Files, 1907-1939, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Record Group (RG), Natural Resources Branch (NRB), Civil Archives Division (CAD), National Archives and Records Service (NARS), Washington, D.C. See also: U.S., Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1913*, p. 34.

2. Goode to AGO, April 4, 1913, File Number 445841, Adjutant General's Document File 1890-1917 (AGO 445841), Records of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 94, Old Military Branch, NARS; Clarence R. Jefferis to Indian Office (IO), April 4, 1913, Records of the Mescalero Indian Agency (MIAR), BIA, RG 75, Archives Branch, Federal Records Center, Denver, Colorado. At least eighty-eight Chiricahuas remained at Fort Sill.

3. Elizabeth M. Page, *In Camp and Tepee: An Indian Mission Story* (New York, 1915), p. 239.

4. Hugh L. Scott to AGO, August 30, 1902, AGO 445841.

5. C. C. Early to Commissioner of Indian Affairs (CIA), August 7, 1912, MIAR.

6. Interview with Raymond Loco (RLI), conducted by John Anthony Turcheneske, Jr. (JAT), Apache, Oklahoma, November 12, 1976. Raymond Loco, born into captivity at Fort Sill, is the grandson of Loco, the great chief of the Chiricahuas' Warm Springs band.

7. These allies included the Indian Rights Association, the Lake Mohonk Conference on the Indian and Other Dependent Peoples, the Reformed Church in America and the Board of Indian Commissioners.

8. U.S., Department of the Interior, Board of Indian Commissioners, *Fifty-First Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1920* (ARBIC 1920), p. 142.

9. RLI.

10. Interview with Mildred Imach Cleghorn, conducted by JAT, Apache, Oklahoma, November 12, 1976. Mildred Cleghorn was also born into captivity at Fort Sill.

11. Interview with Blossom Hauzous, conducted by JAT, Apache, Oklahoma, November 12, 1976. Born into captivity at Mount Vernon Barracks, Alabama in 1893, Blossom Hauzous was in 1978 the oldest living survivor of the Apache prisoner of war experience.

12. *Eighty-First Annual Report of the Board of Domestic Missions to the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America*, Women's Board of Home Missions (New York, 1913), p. 13.

13. U.S., Department of the Interior, Board of Indian Commissioners, *Forty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1913*, pp. 4-5, 10-11.

14. Goode to AGO, May 16, 1913, AGO 445841.

15. See John Anthony Turcheneske, Jr., "The United States Congress and the Release of the Apache Prisoners of War at Fort Sill," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 54 (Summer 1976):199-226.

16. Lawton Constitution (Lawton, Oklahoma), April 10, 1913.

17. Scott to H. C. Phillips, June 24, 1913, Albert K. Smiley Papers (AKSP) Haverford College Library, Haverford; Pennsylvania.

18. *Weekly Cloudcroft* (Cloudcroft, New Mexico), May 22, 1913.

19. Scott to AGO, July 16, 1913, AGO 445841.

20. Mescalero Agency Annual Report by Clarence R. Jefferis, August 13, 1913, (CRJ 81313), MIAR; Jefferis to CIA, September 1, 1913, MIAR.

21. Jefferis to CIA, August 23, 1913, MIAR; CRJ 81313.

22. See, for example, Jefferis to CIA, April 12, 1913, MIAR; Charles F. Hauke to Jefferis, April 18, 1913, File 41294-1913-225 Mescalero; Central Files, 1907-1939, BIA RG 75, NRB, CAD, NARS (hereafter cited as BIAM); Frederic H. Abbott to Jefferis, April 19, 1913, BIAM; Abbott to Jefferis, June 18, 1913, File 5-1, Kiowa-Prisoners-Apache, Central Files, 1907-1936, Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, RG 48, NRB, CAD, NARS (hereafter cited as SI).

23. Goode to AGO, July 6, 1913, AGO 445841; Jefferis to IO, July 22, 1913, MIAR; Abbott to Jefferis, July 23, 1913, BIAM; Cato Sells to Goode, August 7, 1913, BIAM; Goode to Edwin St. John Breble, August 7, 1913, AGO 445841; Jefferis to CIA, September 18, 1913, MIAR. The Chiricahuas' cattle were sold in April 1913.

24. Goode to CIA, June 9, 1913, BIAM; Lewis C. Leylin to Secretary of War (SW), June 18, 1913, AGO 445841.

25. Goode to Phillips, September 21, 1913, AKSP (GWG 92113).

26. Fall commenced his endeavors in this direction as early as 1912. Throughout the Chiricahuas' first ten years at Mescalero, this problem surfaced repeatedly. Fortunately, Fall's efforts finally failed in 1922. Charles S. Sonnichsen, *The Mescalero Apaches* (Norman, 1958), pp. 228-9.

27. Mary W. Roe to Edgar B. Meritt, November 12, BIAK.

28. Goode to Phillips, September 21, AKSP.

29. Goode to CIA, October 25, 1913, BIAK. Hendrina Hospers, a Reformed Church missionary who came to Mescalero from Fort Sill with the Chiricahuas, also observed that "even now they are not yet settled at White Tail, their permanent location; it will be some time before their houses can be built." "Life With the Apaches At Mescalero," *The Mission Field* 26 (October 1913):221. A total of fifty-five Fort Sill Apache families had to be provided for. Thirty families may have been assigned farms, but only twenty-five were able to move into their new homes by winter's onset. Goode to Greble, October 25, 1913, AGO 445841 (GWG 10253).

30. GWG 10253.

31. See: Jack C. Lane, ed., *Chasing Geronimo: The Journal of Leonard Wood, May-September 1886* (Albuquerque, 1970).

32. Leonard Wood to SI, October 3, 1913, AGO 445841.

33. Leylin to SW, December 3, 1913, SI.

34. Goode to Scott, December 17, 1913, Hugh Lenox Scott Papers (HLSP), Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

35. Jefferis to CIA, January 20, 1914, MIAR.

36. "Notes From the Indian Fields," *The Mission Field* 26 (January 1914):337-8. Furthermore, "altitude, unaccustomed cold, living in tents, hardship and want are making heavy drains on the health and strength of the newcomers." Were conditions not improved immediately, Reformed Church missionaries foresaw the time when, out of desperation, both Chiricahuas and Mescaleros would return to former religious practices. "The Mountain God," *The Mission Field* 26 (April 1914):457-591.

37. Jefferis to Scott, February 7, 1914, HLSP; Meritt to J. W. Prude, February 16, 1914, MIAR.

38. William H. Ketcham, S.J., *Report On Conditions Among the Mescalero Indians* (Washington, D.C., 1914), pp. 1-3.

39. Jefferis to Scott, February 21, 1914, MIAR (hereafter cited as CRJ 22114). As late as May 1914 Oklahoma Representative Scott Ferris advised General Scott that "I had assumed the Indian Office had placed that provision in the bill, but after a further conference with the Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs, I find they are not ready to do this or to go as far as you request." Scott Ferris to Hugh L. Scott, May 23, 1914, HLSP.

40. CRJ 22114.

41. CRJ 22114. Jefferis explained that a total of one million dollars was necessary for this project. This sum would not only provide for the cattle purchase, but also would "rebuild pasture fences, improve range waterings, etc." An appropriation less than this meant that additional funds for this purpose would have to be requested from Congress.

42. CRJ 22114.

43. CRJ 22114.

44. Phillips to Scott, July 17, 1914, AKSP.

45. Mooney to Phillips, July 8, 1914, AKSP.

46. Mooney to Phillips, July 26, 1914, AKSP.

47. Jefferis to Scott, June 23, 1914, HLSP; Annual Report for 1914 by Clarence R. Jefferis, August 15, 1914, MIAR. The Chiricahuas planted most of the acreage in oats, which grain was designed to be their cash crop.

48. Jefferis to CIA, August 28, 1914, MIAR.

49. Scott to Phillips, July 13, 1914, AKSP; Jefferis to IO, August 4, 1914, MIAR; Meritt to Jefferis, August 5, 1914, MIAR.

50. Jefferis to CIA, August 6, 1914, MIAR.

51. Jefferis to Phillips, September 1, 1914, AKSP. At this point, the Indian Office's commentary on the situation which confronted the Chiricahuas was that "part of the band who removed to the Mescalero Reservation . . . have possibly not made so much advancement." U.S., Department of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1914*, p. 57.

52. Asa Daklugie to Scott, February 21, 1915, HLSP (AS 22115).

53. "White Tail, New Mexico," *The Mission Field* 27 (January 1915):380.

54. AD 22115; "Mescalero and White Tail Canyon," *The Mission Field* 27 (April 1915):520 (MWTC 415).

55. METC 415.

56. Daklugie to Scott, August 9, 1915, HLSP.

57. Scott to Sells, January 18, 1916, HLSP.

58. Richard Henry Harper to "All Who Desire Fair Treatment of the Indians," January 21, 1916, AKSP.

59. Annual Report for 1916 by William A. Light, n.d., MIAR.

60. Light hoped to purchase an additional five hundred head of Herefords during the spring of 1918. Light to Malcolm McDowell, December 28, 1917,



MIAR. The original investment allocated for this purpose in 1914 was \$65,000. By December 31, 1917 another \$20,758.16 was expended on this enterprise. U.S., Department of the Interior, Board of Indian Commissioners, *Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1918*, p. 379.

61. Annual Report for 1917 by William A. Light, n.d., MIAR.

62. Asa Daklugie, Duncan Bolatchu, Eugene Chihuahua (DBC) to CIA, April 15, 1918, MIAR.

63. Light to CIA, August 6, 1918, MIAR; DBC to Sells, August 1, 1918, HLSP; DBC to Light, August 1, 1918, MIAR.

64. Light to CIA, December 12, 1918, MIAR; DBC to Scott, April 20, 1918, HLSP. Reformed Church missionaries expressed similar sentiments during the course of 1919. In their estimation, conditions confronting the Chiricahuas at White Tail had deteriorated beyond repair. As such, the missionaries, quoting agent Ernest Stecker to the effect that "I would rather serve nine months in jail, having a warm room and plenty to eat, than to live up there," demanded that the government not only fulfill its promises to these Indians, but also to place them in a more suitable location at a lower elevation such as the old Almer Blazer farm which abutted Mescalero. George A. Watermulder to Sells, June 23, 1919, File 55630-19-123 Mescalero, BIA, RG 75, CAD, NRB, NARS.

65. Ernest Stecker to Scott, July 8, 1919, HLSP (ES 70819).

66. Daklugie, et al. to Scott, December 29, 1919, HLSP.

67. ES 70819.

68. ARBIC 1920, pp. 15, 142.

69. RLI.

70. Stecker to Scott, May 13, 1920, HLSP.

71. Stecker to Scott, August 17, November 23, December 4, December 10, 1920, HLSP.

72. John B. Payne to Charles Curtis, January 7, 1921, HLSP.

73. Scott to Homer P. Snyder, January 10, 1921, HLSP; Stecker to Scott, February 28, 1921, HLSP.

74. Mescalero Indian Business Committee to Scott, January 24, 1921, HLSP.

75. Fred C. Morgan to Stecker, March 9, 1922, HLSP; Morgan to McDowell, March 11, 1922, HLSP. As Sam Kenoi stated the case, both Chiricahuas and Mescaleros were prompted to continue their incessant pressure for the \$250,000 reimbursable appropriation out of a "desire to keep our tribe from extinction." Kenoi to Greble, January 2, 1923, HLSP.

76. U.S., Congress, Senate, An Act promoting civilization and self-support among the Indians of Mescalero Reservation in New Mexico, H.R. 6294, 67th Cong., 2d sess., 1922, p. 1.

77. Scott to Curtis, February 1, 1923, HLSP; Earl Y. Henderson to Scott, February 23, 1923, Mescalero Apache Agency, MS. 4525, Papers of the Bureau of American Ethnology, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (MS 4525); Morgan to Scott, March 19, 1923, MS 4525.

78. Kenoi to Scott, February 9, 1923, HLSP.

79. Morgan to Scott, December 7, 1922, HLSP.