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## The Apache Chronicle

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"THE APACHE CHRONICLE"

edited by RICHARD N. ELLIS

NINETEENTH-CENTURY NEWSPAPERMEN were noted for their strong and often colorful language. They did not hesitate to take aggressive positions and were usually willing to engage in verbal and even physical attacks on both real and imagined foes. When the interests of their particular region were endangered, they became especially bitter. New Mexico editors were no exception, and during the late 1870's when Victorio and his Warm Springs Apaches were absent from the reservation, they freely offered complaints and suggestions. The targets of their verbal barrage included the Apaches; the soldiers who were unable to defeat the hostiles; Colonel Edward Hatch, military commander in New Mexico; and the Santa Fe *New Mexican*, which usually defended Hatch and the Army.

Government policy toward the Warm Springs band had been a marvel of inconsistency. In 1870, these Apaches had an agency but not a reservation at Cañada Alamosa, northwest of present-day Truth or Consequences. A year later they were moved, against their will, to the new Tularosa reservation near present-day Reserve. In 1872 the government accepted the fact that the Indians would not stay there, and in 1874 a new agency was established at Ojo Caliente, near Cañada Alamosa. Three years later, the Indian Bureau began to concentrate the Apaches at San Carlos in Arizona Territory. Once again the Warm Springs band was moved against its will. They hated San Carlos and broke away. Despite opposition from the Army and warnings that the Indians would break away again, they were rounded up and returned. Military predictions

came true. Victorio left San Carlos several times, until finally the government realized that the San Carlos experiment had failed. Victorio was then sent to the Mescalero reservation. He left there in September 1879 and pursuit by United States and Mexican troops did not end until Victorio and many of his followers were killed at Tres Castillos in Chihuahua in October 1880.<sup>1</sup>

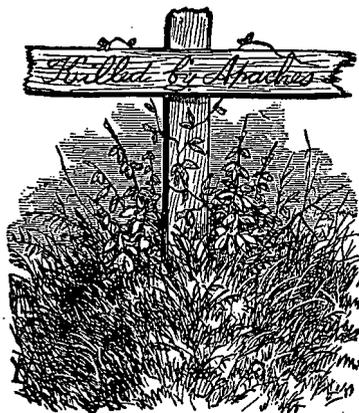
The New Mexico press, especially in the southwestern portion of the Territory, where Victorio operated, offered commentary on this situation from the beginning. Editors condemned federal Indian policy in general, described the reservation as the "temple of refuge" for marauding Indians, and demanded military control of Indian affairs.<sup>2</sup> As long as Indian troubles continued, economic development lagged. The Silver City *Daily Southwest* complained, "We are dreaming of a golden age and a future empire—and fifty dirty, lousy Indians have us in a state of siege."<sup>3</sup>

During 1879 and 1880 when Victorio was on the warpath, criticism often centered on the Army rather than on the Indians. Most frontier regions believed that the Army was too small and too inefficient. But in New Mexico Territory attacks upon the military had an added dimension. The only troops in the area were the black soldiers of the Ninth Cavalry. Anti-Negro sentiment was common in the press, although critics usually failed to realize that the regiment, responsible for the security of the entire Territory as well as portions of Colorado, was operating at less than half of its authorized strength.

While racial slurs were occasionally hurled at the long-suffering Ninth Cavalry, the most important target of editorial abuse was Colonel Edward Hatch, commander of the regiment and of the District of New Mexico. Hatch's inability to capture or defeat Victorio caused a growing chorus of bitterness. "We want a Soldier, not a Granny," wrote one John J. Bippus to the Las Vegas *Daily Optic*. He described the colonel as a "shoulder-strapped nincompoop."<sup>4</sup> In March 1880, the Silver City *Daily Southwest* demanded a court martial for the district commander and two months later was still castigating "the bigoted, self-conceited, cowardly, imbecile Hatch."<sup>5</sup> By June, the newspaper was resorting to crude

verse: "Hitchity Hatch-ity, here I come. Old Vic's after me, but you must keep mum."<sup>6</sup> While the Las Cruces *Thirty-Four* was boasting that it had originated the campaign to remove Hatch, the *Daily Southwest* was hinting darkly that some citizens believed that Hatch was being paid to keep southern New Mexico in turmoil to prevent immigration into the region. The *Grant County Herald*, meanwhile, challenged the veracity of Hatch's reports and his promises and complained that the people were being fed a "windy diet." "This flatulent diet," the editor continued, "is neither sustaining nor filling." He suggested that to catch Victorio would take someone "with a better military head than General Hatch has screwed on to him."<sup>7</sup>

It was in this context that a single-page broadside appeared in the Mesilla Valley in April 1880. Unfortunately, the original has not been found, for the graphic illustrations must have added to its effect. The author apparently was Albert Jennings Fountain, who came to New Mexico with the California Volunteers. Fountain, at one time editor of the *Mesilla Valley Independent*, was an important Republican politician who later engaged in a spectacular quarrel with Albert Fall that ended with the apparent murder of Fountain and his young son. The editor of the Las Cruces *Thirty-Four*, which carried the broadside as a supplement dated April 7, 1880, was Simeon H. Newman, former editor of the *Las Vegas Weekly Mail*, who later moved to El Paso and began the *Lone Star* in that city.<sup>8</sup>



*"THE APACHE CHRONICLE"*

We have received the advance sheet of a new journal with the above appellation, from which we make extracts. It is accompanied with an official letter in the well-known chirography of Mr. A. J. Fountain, of Mesilla.

The illuminated heading represents an Apache brave, with a scalping knife in one hand and a bleeding scalp in the other, executing a dance over the mangled corpse of his hairless victim; while in the distance is seen a frontier settlement in flames and the telegraph wire cut. An U.S. mail sack cut open is lying upon the ground and near by the bodies of a woman and an U.S. soldier. Encircling these is the Latin motto "sic volo, sic jubeo." The paper is dated "San Andres Cañon, Organ Mountains, 3d Moon." It is published every moon at the headquarters of General Victorio, Commander-in-Chief of the Apache Nation, and is his Official Organ. Term of subscriptions, 3 scalps per moon. Loco, Nane and Raton, Eds.

A premium is offered for soldier scalps, they being very scarce. Citizen scalps taken at a discount, as the market is overstocked.

The Official Directory reads "Victorio, Capitan Grande and Commander-in-Chief; Nane, Minister of War; Loco, Secretary of Finance; Raton, Attorney-General; Jose, Chief of Medicine and Custodian of Scalps."

"Correspondence solicited. No attention will be paid to anonymous correspondence. This rule, however, will not be adhered to in the event of receiving such communications from army officers, the editors being well aware of the fact that, under existing orders, army officers are inhibited from giving information to newspapers and that violation of the order will subject them to trial by court-martial, should their names be disclosed."

Juan Fulano, of Palomas, advertises that he will furnish Apaches on the war-path with government arms and ammunition at reasonable rates and will take stolen horses and mules in exchange.

The "Robbers' Roost Intelligence Office," also at Palomas and under the special patronage of Gen. Victorio, advertises to furnish Indians with reliable information.

We present a copy of the letter accompanying the advance sheet and the extracts which follow, in order to give the reader an idea of the style.

*San Andres Cañon,  
Third Moon.*

Editor THIRTY-FOUR:

By direction of the Commander-in Chief, I transmit you advance sheet of the *Apache Chronicle*, official journal of General Victorio, which find enclosed, with the request that you place same on your exchange list. Owing to the misrepresentations of the Big White Chief Hatch, the impression has been created that he has defeated our great and honorable Chief. In order to eradicate this false impression by giving the truth to the world the publication of the *Chronicle* has been commenced.

Very Respectfully,  
Your Enemy,  
NANE,

Sec'y of War.

GRATIFYING IF TRUE—Our brave warriors will be pleased to learn that it is reported that our esteemed friend Captain Beyer has been ordered to take the field with a fresh pack train and a large supply of ammunition. This intelligence we hope to be true, as our young warriors have wasted considerable ammunition lately shooting cattle. They will rejoice at the prospect of obtaining a fresh and abundant supply; and, besides, a feast of fat mule meat would be pleasant to take. Beyer, old friend, we welcome you.

General Victorio has ordered that all travel be stopped upon the Jornada until Hatch consents to come out from his strongholds and fight. He says he is determined to make the white chief toe the scratch and give battle. Our General is a great and wise chief and

can accomplish most things that he undertakes; but when he sets himself the task of making the white chief fight, we venture the assertion that he undertakes more than is in his power to accomplish.

All quiet at Colorado and Santa Barbara. Six citizens killed by our braves. The troops are shut up in Hillsboro and Fort Bayard.

We learn from our Palomas friends that the U.S. government intends to remount the 9th cavalry. This is good news, as our stock is quite poor and we need fresh horses badly.

The warrior who was accidentally wounded during our recent campaign has been taken to the Mescalero Reservation, where he is receiving the necessary surgical treatment. Upon his recovery he will rejoin Chief Victorio, having first received the usual presents of rifles, ammunition, blankets, rations, etc.

There is great complaint regarding the inferior quality of government ammunition furnished the Mescaleros who joined General Victorio yesterday. They threaten to return to the Agency and Meekerize the "Tata."

A few of our young men raided Toussaint's ranch on the Jornada and brought in his horses. Every little helps.

Twenty scalps were brought in this week and turned over to the Hon. Jose, the lawful custodian. Due notice will be given of the dance.

The latest news, by runner, from the Mescalero Agency indicates that all is well. Our Mescalero allies are killing citizens and cattle and playing hob generally. It will not take long to force the U.S. to make a treaty at this rate, and we will then come in for our share of the spoils.

A highly successful raid was made on the settlements around Colorado and Santa Barbara this week. Green Wortley and a number of other citizens were slaughtered by our warriors and much valuable property destroyed.

The buckboard carrying the U.S. mail was taken by our braves last week near Aleman on the Jornada. The driver was, of course, killed. In the mail sack was found an official dispatch from the

District Commander to the Secretary of War informing him that "all was quiet on the Jornada."

The six warriors who were detailed to surround the hundred troops stationed at or near Hillsboro, with instructions to capture their ammunition pack train if they sallied out of camp, have returned and report that there is no prospect of drawing the troops out. The soldiers, according to their account, are demoralized and cowed.

We learn from headquarters that General Victorio contemplates taking formal possession of Forts Bayard and Stanton shortly. Several applications have been received from our Palomas friends for the appointment [*sic*] of Post Trader at the first mentioned post. The applications will receive due attention.

BY TELEGRAPH.—A small detachment of braves tapped the telegraph wire on the Jornada yesterday and took off the following dispatches: "Fort Bayard, March 35 [*sic*]. To the Secretary of War, Washington, D.C.: In response to your inquiry of this date I have the honor to report that the accounts received by you of Indian depredations on the Jornada are base fabrications concocted by interested parties. It is true that a stage driver was brought in dead; but there are grave suspicions that he first robbed the mail and then committed suicide to cover his crime. All is quiet here.—Signed, Old Scratch, District Commander."

"Fort Bayard, 25. To the Secretary of War: Toussaint's horses have been stolen. This is an indications [*sic*] that the hostiles are pressed to the wall. Send me 10,000 men and I will finish the campaign within the present century.—Signed, Scratch, Dist. Commander."

## NOTES

1. Accounts of the Victorio campaign and the changes in United States policy can be found in Dan L. Thrapp, *The Conquest of Apacheria* (Norman, 1967); Ralph H. Ogle, *Federal Control of the Western Apaches, 1848-1886* (Albuquerque, 1940 and 1970); William H. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers* (Norman, 1967); and Richard N. Ellis, *General Pope and U.S. Indian Policy* (Albuquerque, 1970).
2. Las Cruces *Thirty-Four*, Oct. 8, 1879.
3. Silver City *Daily Southwest*, March 27, 1880.
4. Las Vegas *Daily Optic*, May 20, 1880.
5. Silver City *Daily Southwest*, May 14, 1880.
6. *Ibid.*, June 7, 1880.
7. *Grant County Herald* (Silver City), April 3, 1880.
8. See Arrell M. Gibson, *The Life and Death of Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain* (Norman, 1965). Porter A. Stratton, *The Territorial Press of New Mexico, 1834-1912* (Albuquerque, 1969) gives a good account of Territorial newspapers and editors.

