

Apache Warriors - Part 2

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For El Defensor Chieftain

Part 1 of this article pointed out how the deadly raids by the Apache began in 1835 when Mexico placed a bounty on Apache scalps. Caught off guard, the Apache suddenly found themselves being attacked for their valuable scalps. In 1837, Chief Compas was killed for his scalp. Mangas Coloradas became hereditary chief of the Warm Springs Apache.

In 1846, when the American's arrived, Mangas Coloradas signed a peace treaty with the United States. This allowed free travel for the Army in New Mexico and the building of forts along the Rio Grande.

In 1851, 400 Mexican soldiers attacked an Apache camp near Janos, Mexico. Among the dead was Alope,

Geronimo's wife. In retaliation, Geronimo pledged to kill every Mexican he could, a promise he kept for the following 35 years.

That same year, the peaceful coexistence with the American's changed when a group of miners at Pinos Altos whipped Mangas Coloradas nearly to death. Retaliatory raids against the White Man began, though not aimed at the U. S. Army.

That, too, changed in 1861 when 2nd Lt. George Bascom falsely accused Chiricahua Chief Cochise of stealing cattle and kidnapping a rancher's son. Cochise was innocent and escaped confinement to convince the Apache band who had committed the crimes to return the cattle and small boy. In retaliation for Cochise's escape, Bascom had several warriors hung, including Cochise's brother. Cochise, in turn, killed several American's near the fort. The Apache War with the Army was on.



Courtesy of Smithsonian Institute

Traditional dress for an Apache warrior (left) and a young Apache woman. The Apache began to adopt western dress when in captivity in the 1870–1880s.

After two years of war, 70 year old Mangas Coloradas entered Fort McLane to beg for peace. Instead, he was killed by the soldiers and beheaded. The desecration of the revered Chief infuriated the Apaches for generations to come. The slain Mangas Coloradas was also Cochise's father-in-law. Oops. Now the entire Chiricahua nation was involved.

The senseless killing of Mangas Coloradas, and the mutilation of his body, continued the Apache Wars for another 25 years. Upon the death of Mangas Coloradas, Victorio became the hereditary chief of the Warm Springs Apache.

By the 1870s, many Apaches tired of the wars. They were always on the run and chased down on both sides of the border. They surrendered to the U. S. Army. The Warm Springs Apache, under Chief Victorio, settled at Ojo Caliente, west of present day Monticello. They lived there in peace, building homes, growing crops, and hunting for game in the San Mateos.

The Chiricahua's were settled on the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona. Later, the Chiricahua Reservation was established near Fort Bowie for Cochise's band of Apaches. These bands lived at the San Carlos and Chiricahua reservations in relative peace.

CUSTER'S LAST STAND

Apaches were not the only Indians being relocated to reservations. In 1876, the 7th Cavalry was sent to Montana to round-up bands of Lakota Sioux and Northern Cheyenne Indians. They were to be relocated to the Sioux reservations established in the Dakota Territory.

The 7th Cavalry was split into two regiments commanded by General Alfred Terry and Lt. Col. George Custer. They were to meet at the Little Bighorn river on May 26. Custer's 7th Cavalry arrived the day before and spotted a Sioux village along the river. Against orders to await the arrival of Terry's command, Custer believed that his 7th Cavalry could handle any Indian force encountered. He ordered his army of 700 men into the river valley and surrounded the village.

The Sioux scattered in all directions, making Custer believe they were in retreat. Actually, they were running to the other sides of the surrounding hills where Chief Sitting Bull and his warriors were camped. The balance of power quickly changed. In short order, Custer found himself surrounded by at least 2,000 mounted and armed Sioux warriors.

The Sioux Indians completely overwhelmed Custer's force. Historians claim he was outnumbered by at least three-to-one. This was the Battle of Little Bighorn, often called "Custer's Last Stand." In the end, Custer, and his entire force of 700 men, were completely annihilated.

The Apaches in New Mexico and Arizona were not involved in this conflict, but they were soon to bear the consequences. The reason: the government in Washington D.C., and the American people, were completely stunned by the total defeat of the Army at the hands of the Sioux. Suddenly, every Indian on the continent was a savage – ignoring the thousands of Indians living on reservations in peace. Custer's Last Stand completely changed the U. S. policy towards the Indians, including the Apache.

Just months after the Battle at Little Bighorn, Washington issued a new policy to consolidate all Apaches to the San Carlos reservation in Arizona. This caused the forced relocation of the Warm Springs Apache from Ojo Caliente to San Carlos. This means Victorio and his band had to abandon their homes, their fields, and their lands. Victorio was extremely angry, accurately seeing this as a total betrayal of the promises of the White Man.

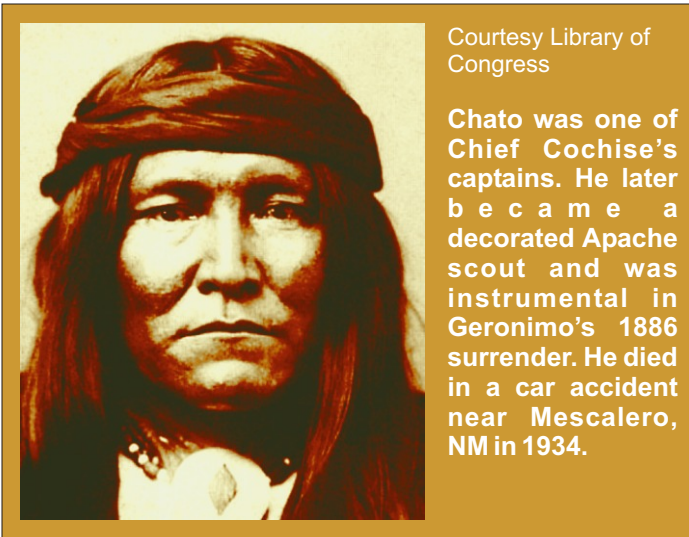
Later that year, Victorio, Geronimo, and Nana escaped San Carlos with about 200 warriors to renew the warpath against the Army.

THE INDIAN SCOUTS

When San Carlos was first established in 1874, The Army began recruiting peaceful Apaches as scouts. They were used to track down the remaining small bands of warring Apaches. The scouts were active military, given Army uniforms, a rank, usually Sergeant or Corporal, weapons, and a monthly paycheck. These Apache scouts



Courtesy U.S. Army archives
Alchesay was one of many Chiricahuas that served as Apache Scouts. For their valiant service to the U.S. Army, 14 Apaches, including Sgt. Alchesay, were awarded the Medal of Honor.



Courtesy Library of Congress

Chato was one of Chief Cochise's captains. He later became a decorated Apache scout and was instrumental in Geronimo's 1886 surrender. He died in a car accident near Mescalero, NM in 1934.

provided invaluable and loyal service to the U. S. Army, not only in tracking down the renegade warriors, but as guides through the scarcely charted mountains of southern and central Arizona.

One might wonder, why did Apaches agree to hunt down their own? The answer is simple. Most of the Apache people at the San Carlos and Mescalero reservations were living in relative peace with the Americans. Though conditions were degrading, they were well treated by the Americans and soldiers. Instead of the U.S. Army forces building housing and amenities for the Apaches at San Carlos as promised, most soldiers were on the trail hunting down the small remaining bands of attacking warriors.

These peaceful Apaches blamed their horrible condition on the handful of Apache warriors still on the war path. And, rightfully so. They believed were it not for Geronimo, Victorio, and Nana still on the rampage, the Apaches would be allowed to return to their homelands in peace.

Some of these scouts were named Elsat-Soosu, Kelsay, Kosoha, Nannasaddie, Machol, Nantaje and Jim. These are seven Apache scouts that were awarded the Medal of Honor in 1875 by President Ulysses S. Grant for their heroic service to the United States. In some cases, they saved the lives of U. S. soldiers.

A later recipient of the Medal of Honor was Apache scout Roudy for "his bravery in the action with Apache Indians." Rowdy died in 1893 and is buried at the National Cemetery in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

During the Indian Wars, 24 American Indians across the country were awarded the Medal of Honor; of those, 14 were the Apache scouts. Imagine – Apaches, those

merciless savages, receiving the highest military honor of the land. This should shed some light on the true story of the Apache people.

THE FINAL SURRENDER

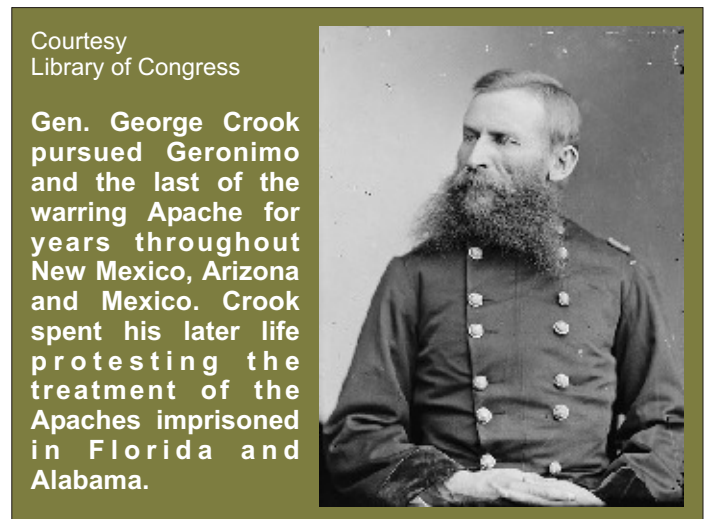
During the 1880s, General George Crook captured Geronimo and his band only to watch them escape. He was never successful in bringing them to peace. Crook vigorously pursued Geronimo and his warriors. He was also sympathetic and compassionate to the peaceful Apaches, ensuring they were well treated by his soldiers at San Carlos. Many Apaches, including the scouts, considered him a friend.

In 1886, General Nelson Miles replaced General Crook as Army Commander in Arizona. Gen. Miles brought an entirely different attitude. He disliked and mistrusted the Apaches and seemed to have little concern for their welfare. In short order, conditions at San Carlos began to degrade.

By summer, Miles had 5,000 soldiers at his disposal, nearly one-fourth of the entire U.S. Army. He was determined to capture or kill Geronimo and his band. He felt Crook's failure was due to his friendship with the Indians and had been deceived by his trusted Apache scouts. After a few months on the trail using non-Apache scouts and thousands of men roaming Arizona, Miles soon found he had no more success than Crook.

By autumn, his senior officers urged him to change his tactics and re-employ the Apache scouts. Miles submitted and allowed Crook's trusted scouts Chato, Kaetennae, Martine, and Kaitah to venture deep into Mexico to find Geronimo and convince him to surrender for the good of the Apache people.

Finally, these Apache scouts led the completely worn



Courtesy Library of Congress

Gen. George Crook pursued Geronimo and the last of the warring Apache for years throughout New Mexico, Arizona and Mexico. Crook spent his later life protesting the treatment of the Apaches imprisoned in Florida and Alabama.

out band of Apaches into an Army scout camp in Skeleton Canyon, south of present day Rodeo, New Mexico. On September 3, 1886 they surrendered to General Miles. The last of the rebels consisted of a mere 47 Apaches: 19 warriors and 28 women and children. The Apache warriors consisted of Geronimo, Nana, Lozen (Victorio's sister), Chief Juh, Loco, Mangas (Mangas Coloradas' son) and Naiche (Cochise's son). The Apache Wars were over.

It must be remembered that the majority of the Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apache had lived on the San Carlos reservation, though against their will, for ten years or more in relative peace. The deadly raids and depredations of the Apaches that made the Indian Wars famous was actually the handiwork of a relatively small number of warriors.

Still, one can't help but admire these Apache warriors. Geronimo was 58 years old; Loco and Chief Juh were in their 60s; Nana was over 80. These aging Apache leaders and a few dozen warriors outwitted and outmaneuvered thousands of U.S. soldiers for years. While for the most part the Army considered these

warriors uneducated savages, they in turn carefully analyzed the U.S. Army and exploited every weakness and tricked their genius. The United States won the war by simply wearing out aging warriors; the Apache warriors were the tactical winners.

THE APACHE EXILE

The result of the final surrender of Geronimo was a train ride to Florida for the Apache people and an exile that lasted 27 years. General Miles believed Arizona would not be secure until the Chiricahuas were completely removed from the territory. Immediately after the surrender, Gen. Miles declared all Apaches to be prisoners of war. This included arresting the Apache scouts, still wearing their Army uniforms – even those that days before gave General Miles his victory over Geronimo.

Geronimo and his band boarded a train for Florida just five days after their surrender. A few days later, 382 Apaches were taken by wagon from San Carlos to board a special train at Holbrook, Arizona. The confused Apaches had no idea where they were going. A week later, on September 17, they arrived at Fort



Courtesy of Smithsonian Institute

This famous glass-plate photograph, taken near San Antonio, Texas, shows Geronimo and his band of warriors enroute to imprisonment in Florida in October 1886, shortly after their surrender at Skeleton Canyon.

It was this small band of warriors that eluded thousands of U.S. soldiers during the 1880s. Many died in captivity; the others remained prisoners of war until 1913.



Marion, Florida. Geronimo and his warriors were sent to Pensacola, Florida, where they were imprisoned at Fort Pickens.

Even though Gen. Crook was no longer involved in Apache affairs, he was very vocal in expressing his opposition to sending the Chiricahuas to Florida. So concerned about their welfare, he traveled to Fort Marion in March 1887 and filed a report of his findings to the Department of Interior.

In the report, he wrote: "Twenty two (six women, one man and fifteen children) have died in confinement. There have been ten births. Of the 447 Indians, 82 are men, the remainder women and children. ... I desire to lay the strongest possible emphasis that of the 82 men not more than 30 have been guilty of any recent wrongdoings whilst many of the remainder were employed in our Army as regular commissioned scouts."

Regarding the prisoners at Pensacola, Crook wrote, "Geronimo and 16 of his men are confined in Fort Pickens. The wives and children of these men are in Fort Marion. This separation is a direct violation of the terms of surrender."

The Apaches were, however, well treated. In addition to the soldiers, townspeople and missionaries schooled the children and provided them with clothing, blankets, medical care and other needs. True friendships were developed.

MOVE TO ALABAMA

Gen. Crook's report did succeed in getting the Apaches moved from Florida. Unfortunately, not to their homelands in New Mexico or Arizona. In April 1887, they were moved to the Mount Vernon Barracks in Alabama.

This was an old Army arsenal that contained numerous buildings and small cottage buildings formerly used as barracks. These cottages provided fairly decent housing for the Apache families. This also reunited Geronimo and his men with their families for the first time since the surrender.

The damp and rainy weather continued to destroy the health of the Apaches. Death from pneumonia and other diseases kept dwindling their population.

Gen. Crook spent the last years of his life protesting the treatment of the Chiricahuas with little effect. In January 1890, he again visited his old adversaries at Mount Vernon Barracks. He noted that 119 of the 498 remaining Apaches had died. One of those deaths was Lozen, Victorio's sister. Though a woman, she was a fierce warrior who fought to the end with Geronimo.

The once mighty Chiricahua nation, once led by Chief Cochise, had dwindled to less than 400 people.

Just two months after his visit, General George Crook died. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. It

seemed the remaining Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apache had lost one of the few friends who truly cared for their welfare.

The government watched as the remaining Apaches got sick and died until about half of the original prisoners had perished. It was finally decided they had to be moved to a drier climate. In 1894, Congress approved sending them to Oklahoma.

FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA

The remnant of the Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apache arrived at their new home in Oklahoma in September 1894. They were still considered prisoners of war and sent to the reservation at Fort Sill. This was a 23,000 acre reservation established in 1871 for the Kiowa and Commanche Indians. The Apaches lived through the first winter at Fort Sill in tents.

The following spring, they began to build homes and cultivate their fields. In 1897, the Army added an additional 27,000 acres so the Chiricahuas could expand their herds. For the first time in years, they were beginning to have a normal life.

In 1903, the Army decided to reactivate Fort Sill for field artillery training. This required the Chiricahuas to be relocated to the eastern portion of the reservation. Chief Naiche and Geronimo took this opportunity to request their return to New Mexico or Arizona. Their request was flatly denied by Arizona. New Mexico had no objections, except their old homeland, the Ojo Caliente Reservation, was now private ranch land and no longer available. New Mexico offered alternative areas, but Geronimo objected to every proposal until negotiations were called off. This further alienated the aging Geronimo from his people.

Geronimo died on February 17, 1909 at 79 years of age – 100 years ago. Naiche, the hereditary chief of the Chiricahuas, wasted no time reopening the doors to move his band to New Mexico. With an ongoing dispute whether the Fort Sill Apaches were the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army or the Department of Interior, and whether negotiations with the Territory of New Mexico should be done through Washington D.C. or Santa Fe, the door closed nearly as quickly as it was opened.

Four years later, the door suddenly opened again. In 1912, New Mexico became a state. The U.S. Army nor Washington had any say in the affairs of the new state. New Mexico offered the Chiricahuas a home on the Mescalero Apache Reservation.



Courtesy of San Carlos Historical Society

Three famous Apache warriors in later years (from left) Naiche, son of Cochise; Daklugie, son of Juh; and “Charlie,” son of Victorio. Naiche and Daklugie were the last two hereditary chiefs to the Chiricahua.

Public meetings were held by the U.S. Army giving the Chiricahuas a choice as to where they wanted to live. Of the 270 remaining Chiricahuas, 87 voted to remain with the Kiowas at Fort Sill and 183 packed their bags for New Mexico. The U.S. Army lifted their prisoner of war status, ending 27 years of captivity.

Days later, the majority of the Chiricahuas boarded a southbound train for New Mexico.

MESCALERO, NEW MEXICO

The train carrying the 183 Chiricahuas pulled into Tularosa on the afternoon of April 4, 1913. To their surprise, hundreds of people were at the train station to welcome them home. Their distant cousins, the Mescalero Apaches, also met them at the station. Loading their new neighbors into dozens of buckboard wagons, they began the trip up the canyon to Mescalero.

Some of the Chiricahuas arriving at Mescalero were Azul, Geronimo's widow, Naiche and wife Haozinne and their five children, Naiche's mother Dostehseh (daughter to Mangas Coloradas and widow to Cochise), Dahteste (like Lozen, a woman warrior), Daklugie (son of Chief Juh), and several of the Apache scouts, such as Chato and Kaetennae.

The Chiricahuas settled in a mountain canyon called Whitetail that dearly reminded them of their old homelands in the San Mateos or the Arizona Superstition Mountains. Though these Apaches were

actually elements of both the Arizona Chiricahua and New Mexico's Warm Spring Apache, they agreed to consolidate to preserve their culture, call themselves Chiricahuas, and restored Naiche as the rightful chief of the band.

Not being accustomed to freezing temperatures and deep snowfalls, their first winter at Whitetail turned out to be brutal. By spring, many were considering moving closer to Mescalero. Then, in 1914, New Mexico Senator Albert Fall introduced legislation in congress to have the Mescalero Reservation converted to a National Park. This, of course, would force all of the Apaches to relocate nor allowed to graze their cattle.

Fortunately, in a rare instance of wisdom, Congress defeated Fall's National Park bill, even though he introduced it again the following session.

Could the bad luck of the Apaches get any worse? Yes. In October 1914, a forest fire destroyed acres of forest on the reservation, including portions of Whitetail. The Chiricahuas were forced to move to the agency headquarters at Mescalero.

Mescalero Indian Agent Clarence Jeffries, and his successor William Light, worked tirelessly in getting emergency funds from Washington to build new housing and medical facilities, purchase farm machinery, and cattle for the Chiricahuas. The displaced Indians became successful in building a profitable cattle and lumber industry for the Mescaleros.

Chief Naiche died in 1921 and was buried at Mescalero. He was succeeded by Daklugie, the son of Chief Juh, as hereditary chief of the Chiricahua remnant. He served as chief until his death in 1955. By then, most of the former Apache warriors and their wives that relocated to Mescalero had also died. They are all buried at the Mescalero Apache Indian Cemetery. Many of their descendants continue to live at Mescalero today.

Another Chiricahua that made the move from Ft. Sill to Mescalero was Apache scout Sam Chino. Son Wendell was born on Christmas Day, 1923. Upon the death of Chief Daklugie in 1955, Wendell Chino was elected chairman of the Mescalero Tribal Government. He held that job until 1965 when the tribe adopted a council type of government. Chino was then elected as Mescalero's first president and was re-elected 16 consecutive times, until his death in 1998. He served a total of 43 years as the elected "chief" of the Mescalero Apaches.

During that time, Chino forced the United States to honor all treaties made with the Apaches, which of course benefited all American Indians. He challenged the right of reservations to govern themselves, including allowing legalized gambling. Testifying at Congress, he was asked why he wanted gambling for the Mescaleros. Chino replied, "Navajos make rugs, the Pueblos make pottery, the Mescaleros make money." Chino gained the right for legalized gambling, which of course opened the door for other reservations across the country.

Chino also developed various industries, from cattle and lumbering to the Inn of the Mountain Gods casino and resort, raising the standard of living of Mescalero to well above many other reservations.

The current President of the Mescaleros is Carleton Naiche-Palmer, a descendant of Chiricahua chiefs Naiche and Cochise. When the 183 Chiricahuas arrived at Mescalero in 1913, the total reservation population was about 500 Apaches. Today, the population is over 4,000 registered Apaches.

Compare this to Fort Sill. According to the tribe website, "Fort Sill Apache Tribe is made up of approximately 640 members, the majority of whom live outside of the state of Oklahoma." Only about 300 Ft. Sill Apaches still remain.

ALAMO NAVAJO RESERVATION

About 30 miles northwest of Magdalena, New Mexico is the Alamo Navajo Indian Reservation. The majority

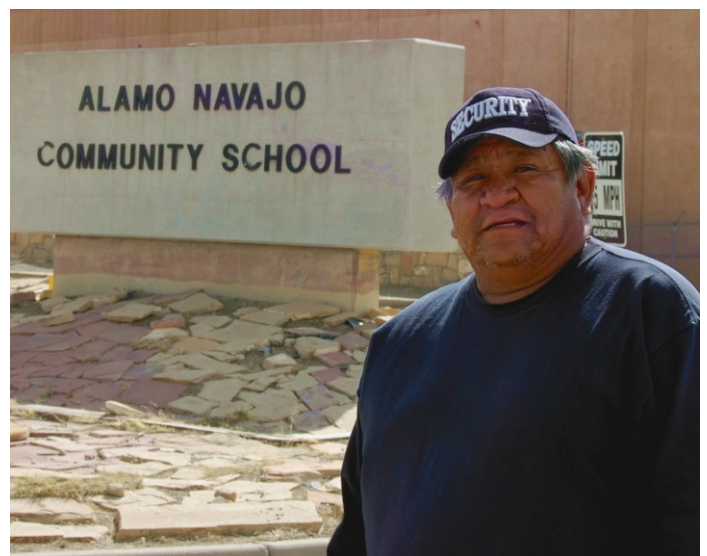


Photo by Paul Harden

The Alamo community, although a Navajo reservation, is home to both Navajo and Apache people. Lee Ganadonegro, a Navajo, has been an Alamo security guard for 14 years and is a descendant of the first Navajo to settle the area in the 1860s.

Meet the Warm Springs Apache . . .



Jackson Pino



Katherin Pino



Beverly Secatero

Photos by Paul Harden

Jackson Pino, Katherin Pino, and Beverly Secatero represent three of the families of Chiricahua Apache living at Alamo. Their ancestors, the Warm Springs band of the Chiricahuas, or the Tchihene, made southern New Mexico their homeland long before the first Spanish settlers arrived in the 1600s. They all come from a long line of the proud Chiricahua – the original inhabitants of Socorro County.

of the residents are Navajo that escaped Kit Carson at Canyon de Chelly in 1863. After their escape, they settled at an old familiar Navajo camp along the Rio Salado, where they lived in relative obscurity for many years. Discovered by government census takers around 1900, they were given reservation status.

When Chief Naiche died in 1921, a few descendants of the Warm Springs Apache living at Mescalero asked permission to move to the Alamo Navajo land. They wanted to be closer to their original homelands of the Plains of San Augustin and the San Mateo and Gallinas Mountains. The Alamo Navajo elders agreed. Several Warm Springs Apache families moved from Mescalero to the Navajo reservation, where they have lived ever since. Family names of Secatero, Apache and Apachito are some of these original Warm Springs Apache families – though they still consider themselves of the Chiricahua band.

The Alamo band is the only living Native American group that is a blend of Navajo and Apache tribes. Due to their isolation from both the Navajo and Mescalero nations, the Alamo people have maintained an authentic traditional and linguistic heritage of their

respective tribes.

The original inhabitants of Socorro County, the Warm Springs band of the Chiricahuas, are actually alive and well and still living at Alamo. The combined Navajo and Apache people makes Alamo the second largest community in Socorro County with a population approaching 2,000.

Though Alamo is a remote community in northwest Socorro County, her people, both Navajo and Apache, still maintain their original heritage and culture, being descendants of a long line of Apache warriors.

Some of the references used in this article:

White Mountain and San Carlos Apache Tribes (owns Fort Apache); Mescalero Apache Cultural Center; Fort Sill Historical Society; "Apache Prisoners in Fort Marion," by Herbert Welsh; "Recollections of a Warm Spring Apache," by Eve Ball, "The Apaches" by Donald Worcester; and interviews with Ellyn Big Rope at Mescalero, and Jackson Pino, Beverly Pino and Lee Ganadonegro at Alamo.

