



The Apaches' Last Stand in Arizona

Item Type	text; Article
Authors	Barnes, Will C.
Publisher	Arizona State Historian (Phoenix, AZ)
Journal	Arizona Historical Review
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Download date	03/02/2020 17:08:21
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/10150/623489

FOREWORD

The following account describes very clearly the events of the last battle fought in Arizona on July 17, 1882, between hostile Apache Indians and United States troopers.

About a year ago the writer of the article, Will C. Barnes, now of Washington, D. C., suggested to the War Department at Washington the idea of a monument to mark properly this rather historic spot. With the able assistance of Senator Carl Hayden, the War Department agreed to the plan. Colonel H. L. Landers, of the Army War College, was ordered to visit the scene of the fight, locate the field, and make the necessary recommendations as to the location and form of the monument.

Colonel Landers visited the place early in October, 1930, in company with Forest Supervisor Ed Miller from Flagstaff, in charge of the Coconino National Forest, on which the field is located. The army officer was greatly impressed with the beauty of the location, and after making sketches of the place and studying the area, left with the statement that he would recommend a suitable monument be erected at the earliest possible moment.

This will probably be some time next spring, as soon as the mountain roads are passable. General Cruse and Colonel Morgan both assured Mr. Barnes and Colonel Landers that they would endeavor to be present when the monument was unveiled.

Under the circumstances the affair should be made of statewide attendance and interest and sponsored by some of the state patriotic organizations.

EDITOR ARIZONA HISTORICAL REVIEW.

THE APACHES' LAST STAND IN ARIZONA

THE BATTLE OF THE BIG DRY WASH

(By WILL C. BARNES)

On July 6, 1882, about sixty White Mountain Apaches swept down onto the San Carlos Agency; captured and took with them half a dozen squaws; rode up the San Carlos River and a few miles from the Agency waylaid and killed Chief of Scouts J. L. Colvig ("Cibieu Charley") and five or six of his Indian police. Colvig succeeded Chief of Scouts Sterling who had likewise been killed in an encounter with recalcitrant Apaches only four months before.

The band then rode to the north, passing to the east of Globe, then westward through the Wheatfields region above Globe, across Pleasant Valley and up by Payson and the East Verde, leaving behind a sickening trail of burned ranches and murdered settlers.

Following the news of the outbreak and Colvig's death, five separate bodies of U. S. troops were in the field after the raiders.

Troop D, 6th Cavalry, Capt. A. R. Chaffee and First Lieut. Frank E. West, were first in the field from Camp McDowell on the west side of the Basin, under orders to move to Wild Rye creek and await developments. Chaffee had with him Al Sieber and eight Tonto Indian Scouts.

Troop D 3rd Cavalry, Capt. Albert D. King and Second Lieut. Franklin D. Johnson; Troop E 3rd Cavalry, Lieut. Converse commanding; Troop I 3rd Cavalry, Lieut. Hardie commanding; Troop K 3rd Cavalry, Capt. Geo. A. Dodd commanding; Troop E 6th Cavalry, Capt. Adam Kramer and Second Lieut. Thomas Cruse commanding; Troop K 6th Cavalry, Capt. Lemuel A. Abbott and Second Lieut. Frederick G. Hodgson commanding, all under command of Major A. W. Evans, 3rd Cavalry, left Fort Apache, on the east side of the Basin, under orders to scout the country and follow the hostiles' trail vigorously.

Company E, 26 enlisted Indian Scouts, Second Lieut. George H. Morgan, 3rd Cavalry, commanding, also followed Chaffee's troop from McDowell with orders to scout the region and keep Chaffee advised of the hostiles' movements as far as possible.

Two troops of the 3rd Cavalry, Capts. Russell and Wessel commanding, hurried from Whipple Barracks near Prescott.

From Fort Verde, Troop K 6th Cavalry, 1st Lieut. Henry Kingsbury commanding and Troop A of the 3rd Cavalry, Lieut. Chase commanding, were rushed out of that post eastward on the old "Verde" or "Crook" road, which followed closely the "Rim" of the Tonto Basin, to scout for signs and intercept the hostiles if they should attempt to climb up the bold escarpment known as the "Rim of the Basin," swing around to the east and thus back into the Apache Indian Reservation and safety.

From Fort Thomas on the Gila above San Carlos went four troops of the 3rd Cavalry with Captains Drew, Vroom and Crawford, and Lieuts. Morton, Porter, Boughton and Davis, (Britton Davis).

Thus we have a record of no less than 15 troops of cavalry probably 350 men in all; one company of Indian scouts, and fully 150 pack-mules with many civilian packers, all searching the country for the hostiles and converging on them from every side.

Those who today ride over this country on well built auto roads; who drive easily from Phoenix to Payson, "under the Rim," in six hours, can have little real appreciation of the difficult task these army men faced in 1882. There is no rougher, more broken terrain in the United States. The granitic formation is peculiarly hard on horses' hoofs and a lost shoe on a cavalry horse or pack-mule means a lamed animal if not shod at once.

"A pack train of thirty packs accompanied the command from Fort Thomas," writes Lieut. Britton Davis in his very interesting book, "The Truth About Geronimo." "The mules were in poor condition, and the packers were having trouble keeping them up with the command. I was detailed to see that they did keep up. That night Drew decided on a night march. The trail led through a creek bottom with reeds and underbrush higher than a mule's head. The bell had been taken off the bell-mare for fear of alarming the hostiles. Fifteen minutes after we got into the creek bottom you could

not have heard the bells of St. Paul's Cathedral. It seemed to me there were mules scattered all over Central Arizona. They were all lost—wanted to get back to the bell-mare and determined that I should know it if their voices held out.

“That night I completed my education in pack-train profanity. What those packers said in English, Spanish, Indian, Irish and German left nothing more to be desired. We overtook the command about 10 o'clock the next morning, but left two packers still hunting for lost mules.”

Captain Chaffee was the first to cut the hostiles' trail above Payson on the East Verde. He knew the command from Fort Apache under Major Evans (“Beans” Evans the men called him) was some miles distant and sent word by a courier that he could use another troop of cavalry.

Troop I 3rd Cavalry, under Lieut. Converse, made an all-night ride and reached Chaffee at daylight of July 17, 1882, the day of the fight. Morgan and his company of Indian scouts had previously overtaken and joined Chaffee's command and went with I Troop.

The Indians had evidently planned to climb out of the Basin and slip along the Crook Trail on the Rim and reach the sheltering deeps of their reservation, a comparatively few miles to the east. They chose a most rugged and hazardous section of the 2,000 foot cliff which forms the Rim at the head of the East Verde. The place is known today as the “Tunnel Hill,” due to the fact that in 1885 a company from Globe established a camp here and began to dig a tunnel which they claimed was to be part of a railroad from Globe to Flagstaff. It may be seen today, a bore in solid rock, 16 feet square at the entrance and about 112 feet long. It is very close to Zane Grey's cabin.

Up this tremendous cliff those hostiles forced their bare-footed ponies. Half way up they could view the whole country as from an airplane. They realized, of course, troops must be after them.

Chaffee's troopers of the 6th rode white and gray horses. So did the troopers of Converse's command of the 3rd. These white horses showed among the green pines below like a long line of geese.

The hostiles did not count them. They felt themselves able to whip one troop of cavalry. It never occurred to them that in the U. S. Army there might be more than one white horse

troop. Moreover, so secure did they feel that they failed to look farther back on their trail hence they did not see several more cavalry troops riding blacks and bays; nor Lieut. Morgan's company of Indian scouts, with Al Sieber at their head, slipping along under the pines, hungry wolves, eager for a feast or a fight.

On top of the hill the Indians rode boldly to the north. A few miles from General Springs, not far from the present Forest Service's "Pinchot" Ranger Station, the trail plunged abruptly into one of the numerous canyons that form the head waters of East Clear Creek. It was a veritable maze of deep, precipitous canyons surrounded by a heavy pine forest, but fairly level and free of underbrush at that time. Here the wily Apaches thought to give Chaffee and his troopers the surprise of their lives.

They built rock and log breastworks at the head of the canyon down which the trail led, assuming that the soldiers would ride blindly into the trap, and scattered in single file down the rough trail, fall easy victims to the Apache rifle fire.

Unfortunately for their plans, they quite overlooked the presence with the soldiers of Al Sieber and the 32 or more Tonto scouts. Chaffee pushed them ahead of his command to uncover just such a trap. This they soon did and then the tables were turned.

The following account of the fight is taken from Britton Davis' recent book, "The Truth About Geronimo," by permission of the Yale University Press, and also with Gen. Cruse's consent.

"For the following description of the fight, the most successful our troops ever had with the Apache after they had obtained modern arms, I am indebted to General, then Lieutenant, Thomas Cruse, U. S. Army, Retired, whose gallantry in this action won him the 'Congressional Medal of Honor.'

"The hostiles had seen Chaffee's troop, which was mounted on white horses, and had kept it under observation from about three o'clock until dark. They counted his men and concluded to ambush him the next day under circumstances favorable to themselves. But they had not seen the Fort Apache column at all, and their watchers reported the next morning that Chaffee's troop was still alone.

"Colonel Evans told Chaffee to keep ahead the next morning as if he were acting alone and he would follow at day break. Troop I, Converse, Third Cavalry, also on white horses, would be in the lead at the head of our column, so that if the Indians did stop to fight Chaffee he would have two troops on white horses to engage them at once and the other troops could be placed to the best advantage as they came up.

"At daylight on July 17, we moved out cautiously and saw Chaffee climb the rim of the basin unopposed; then we followed, reached General's Spring and saw signs of the hostile camp of the night before; then went on, cursing our luck over the prospect of a tedious campaign in the rough, waterless Navaho country. About a mile farther a mounted courier from Chaffee dashed up. Converse with his white horse troop rushed forward at a gallop, and word was passed along that the Indians were camped on the far side of a deep crack in the earth, a branch of Canon Diablo (Big Dry Wash), with all arrangements to give Chaffee the fight of his life.

"The location was about three miles from where we were, and as we rapidly approached we could hear casual shots and an occasional volley crash.

"Sieber and the scouts located the hostiles on the far side of the chasm. Chaffee then dismounted his troop and sent a few men forward to the brink. When these were seen the hostiles opened fire then Converse galloped up, dismounted almost in plain view of the hostiles, sent his horses to the rear and advanced in line of skirmishers along the edge of the canon as if intending to go down the trail. Both troops and hostiles then opened up a heavy fire across the canon.

"The scene of action was in a heavy pine forest, thickly set with large pine trees (park-like, with no underbrush or shrubbery whatever) on a high mesa at the summit of the Mogollon Range. Across this mesa from east to west ran a gigantic slash in the face of the earth, a volcanic crack, some seven hundred yards across and about one thousand feet deep, with almost perpendicular walls for miles on either side of the very steep trail which led to the Navaho country. This crossing point was held by the hostiles and their fire covered every foot of the trail, descending and ascending.

"Colonel Evans and his troops rode up and quickly dismounted about three hundred yards from the brink of the canon. Chaffee reported to him, outlined the situation, and started to suggest some dispositions of the troops. Evans stopped him; told him to dispose of the troops as he saw best and gave him full control, saying that he, Chaffee, had located the Indians and it was his fight.

"This was one of the most unselfish actions of relinquishing command that ever came to my notice during a long career in the army; because, mind you, Chaffee was not only Evans' junior (a captain) but also belonged to another cavalry regiment, the Sixth, while Colonel Evans belonged to the Third, and there is always rivalry for honors between regiments so thrown together.

"Chaffee got busy at once; ordered Kramer and Cruse with Troop E, Sixth Cavalry, his (Chaffee's) own troop, Sixth Cavalry, commanded by Lieutenant Frank West, and part of the Indian scouts under Sieber to go cautiously to the right of the trail and cross where possible about a mile to the east. When the far side of the canon had been gained they were to form for attack and close in on the main trail. Converse and his troop were told to keep up a heavy fire across the chasm. Troop K, Sixth Cavalry, Captain L. A. Abbott and Lieutenant F. G. Hodgson; Troop E, Third Cavalry, Lieutenants F. H. Hardie and F. C. (Friday) Johnson, and the remainder of the Indian scouts under Lieutenant George H. Morgan, Third Cavalry, were sent across the canon to the west and then to move east.

"A small group from each troop was left with the pack-trains and led horses to protect them from surprise should any of the hostiles succeed in gaining our side of the canon unperceived.

"These movements began about three o'clock in the afternoon and the sun was shining brightly. As we moved out, we heard that Converse had been shot in the head and was being brought in. I saw him as we passed and rushed up for a second and spoke to him. He said something was the matter with his eye but thought it would soon pass.

"Poor fellow, it has never passed. A 44 calibre bullet had struck a piece of lava rock, split it in two, and one-half had penetrated the eye, wedging itself firmly in the eye socket where, in spite of the ministrations of the noted

surgeons of the world, it has remained ever since. He is still living, a colonel on the retired list after a most useful life to the government, punctured at periods by almost unbearable pain from that wound.

"Our column finally found a place where we could climb down the precipitous side of the chasm and had gained the beautiful stream that flowed at the bottom when someone exclaimed and pointed up. Every star was plainly visible in the sky at three-thirty in the afternoon.

"By dint of strenuous climbing we finally reached the crest on the other side, formed a skirmish line, I troop on the right with Sieber and his scouts, and moved rapidly forward. Just as we started we heard the crash of several volleys and knew that the other encircling column was in action. Sieber and his Indians with I Troop ran into the Indian herd just then and as the hostile herd guards' attention had been attracted by the firing in the other direction, our people soon placed them hors de combat. The scouts rounded up the ponies, placed them behind our column with a guard, left them there and moved on.

"The other column, Abbott's, finally negotiated the descent into the canon and started up the other side. When almost at the top it ran into a party of Indians coming down a little side ravine with the evident intention of getting to the rear of what they supposed was Chaffee's white-horse troop still keeping up a fire from the edge of the canon on the other side. As they thought there could be no opposition on their side they were proceeding rapidly and without the usual precautions when Abbott opened fire on them. Several were killed and wounded and all were thoroughly stampeded.

"The fugitives, rushing back for their main camp and the pony herd, were joined by those of the camp who had been firing across the canon. They were sure there was something wrong but could not tell what. As this main body of the hostiles came sweeping through the woods, we saw them and at first imagined they were trying to rush us and recapture the pony herd, but as a matter of fact they were totally unaware of our being there until we fired directly into them, causing further casualties, which drove them back.

"West had swept the right of his line across the Navaho trail by this time so that line of retreat was cut off. We then

swung our line in a semicircle toward the Indians' camp, driving the hostiles in front of us and penning them against the edge of the canon.

"By this time, five o'clock, and the shadows heavy in the dense forest, I found myself in command of the left flank of Troop E, next to the brink of the canon and probably two hundred yards in front of what had been the main camp of the hostiles, indicated only by some scattered blankets, cooking utensils, etc. Sieber was by my side.

"As our line closed in there was a furious burst of fire from the hostiles, causing several casualties among the troops, among others, Lieutenant Morgan, Third Cavalry, who had joined West after his Indian scouts had been left behind the line; and Sergeant Conn, Troop E, Sixth. As the line advanced from tree to tree, Morgan had chances to fire at hostiles several times and finally dropped one. Elated over his success he called out, "I got him." In doing this he exposed his position to another Indian in the same nest who thereupon fired and got Morgan through the arm, into the side and apparently through both lungs. The soldiers got the Indian.

"We thought sure that Morgan would die that night but he is still living and in good health, a colonel on the retired list. The surgeon (Dr.—later Colonel Ewing) found that when the bullet broke the arm bone its force was so lessened that it did not break the rib, as from the hole made we supposed it had, but slid around it under the skin and lodged in the muscles of the back, where it was finally dug out and presented to Morgan.

"Sergeant Conn was a character in the Sixth Cavalry and had been with the regiment for about twenty years. The bullet hit him full in the throat, made a ghastly hole, pushed aside the jugular vein (so the surgeon claimed), grazed the vertebra and passed out, leaving a hole as big as a silver dollar; all this in the neck that wore a number thirteen collar.

"In the meantime I had pushed forward with Sieber, whom I saw kill three hostiles as they were creeping to the edge of the canon to drop over. He would say, "There he goes," then bang would go his rifle. The Indian that I had never seen, strain my eyes as I might, would, when hit throw up his arms as if trying to seize some support, then under the impetus of his rush, plunge forward on his

head and roll over several times. One, shot near the brink, plunged clear over and it seemed to me kept falling for ten minutes.

"It was now about five-thirty and getting dusk; only about seventy-five yards and a little ravine some seven feet deep separated me and my men from the Indians in the camp. I knew that unless the camp was taken pretty quick the Indians would escape under cover of darkness, so I resolved to cross the ravine and take it. I told Sieber that I was going to do it, and much to my surprise he hastily remonstrated.

" 'Don't you do it, Lieutenant; don't you do it; there are lots of Indians over there and they will get you sure.' "

" 'Why, Al, you have killed every one of them,' " I replied, and instructed my men what to do. They were to rush forward to the ravine, halt under cover, then, when ordered, were to advance at a run into the camp with some cartridges in hand, guns loaded. We did just that and had no casualties, due, I think, to the fact that Captain Kramer's men and Sieber smothered the hostiles with their fire.

"As we rushed forward on the other side of the ravine I soon discovered that, as Sieber had said, there were lots of Indians there, and we had business on our hands. But I had with me Sergeant Horan, Sergeant Martin, and six or eight other old-timers whom such things did not disconcert in the least. Things were going slap-bang when suddenly not over six feet away was an Indian with his gun leveled directly at me. It seemed he could not miss, so raising my gun, I stood awaiting the shock of the bullet. He was nervous and jerked the trigger sufficiently to barely miss me and hit a young Scotchman, McLellan, just to my left, and probably a foot in the rear. McLellan fell, I fired and threw myself to the ground.

"Sieber, Captain Kramer and several others saw me go down and thought for sure I had been hit. I found I was not but saw McLellan lying almost beside me and asked if he was hit; he replied, 'Yes, sir, through the arm; I think it is broken.'

"I told him to lie quietly, and we would get back to the ravine. In a lull, I rose up and found he was unconscious; dragged him back about twenty feet where the slope pro-

ted us; rested a little, then back a little farther. Finally Sergeant Horan and myself got him to the bottom of the ravine.

"In going back with McLellan, Abbott's men saw several hostiles rise up to fire, whom they had not seen before. Every man in the line turned loose on them, not knowing that I was in their direct line of fire at two hundred yards distance, and the way the air was filled with bullets showed that they were coming close inside their target. Several pieces of gravel and small fragments of rock or lead struck me in the face, making it bleed. I was sure that I was hit and would soon collapse. Kramer's men swarmed into the hostiles but darkness soon came on and the fight was over.

"I grabbed some blankets from the Indian camp and made a nice bed for McLellan, but the bullet had smashed his rib and gone through both lungs. He passed away quietly about an hour later."

This concludes General Cruse's statement. From notes the writer, then military telegraph operator at Fort Apache, made at Fort Apache in discussing the fight with officers and men of the command, army records at Washington, and also in later years, General Cruse and Colonel Morgan, the following particulars of the fight are given:

About dark the day of the fight a terrible thunder storm such as are common in the mountains of Northern Arizona, swept across the country. The rain turned to hail which covered the ground four or five inches deep. When they found poor Conn he was half buried in hail. Under these difficult conditions the Indians slipped away during the night; nearly all afoot. It was not more than twenty miles to the Apache Reservation line where they were secure from further attack or punishment.

A night guard or patrol under the command of Lieut. Hodgson, 6th Cavalry, was left on the battle field while the rest of the command moved back and made camp on an open flat a short distance from the canyon.

Early next morning, July 18, Hodgson's men heard groans as from a wounded man. A wounded Apache at bay is a dangerous person. The men cautiously investigated the vicinity from which the groans seemed to come. While they were doing this a shot came from a sort of breastwork of rocks on the edge of the canyon. They hunted cover and locating the point by

the rising powder smoke (there was no smokeless powder then), they fired at the rocks. Two or three more shots came from the "nest," then ceased.

The troopers blazed away at it for some minutes, then charged. Curled up behind it they found a young Apache squaw—the hostiles had but five or six women with them—with a young baby by her side together with a very old woman who seemingly had taken no part in the firing.

The girl pulled a knife from her belt and attacked the soldiers fiercely. When she was overpowered and disarmed she had a rifle. The three shots she fired were her last cartridges. She proved to have a bullet through her leg above the knee which had broken and shattered the bone.

The men rigged up a rough litter of pine saplings, and with a soldier carrying the baby, got the poor thing down the rough trail to the bottom and up and out the other side to the camp. It must have been a terrible ordeal but she stood it without a groan.

The following day, September 19, the army surgeons amputated her leg close to the thigh, doing it without anesthetics or stimulants of any kind. The soldiers who helped in the operation said they never saw such fortitude and apparent indifference to pain as that young Apache squaw displayed.

On September 20, 1882, the troops, having made their wounded as comfortable as possible, buried the dead, shod a lot of the horses and pack-mules that had lost shoes, and started for their separate posts.

The column from Fort Apache took a gentle saddle-mule, covered the army saddle with many folds of blanket, making a sort of broad seat on which they placed the wounded woman. With a soldier to lead the mule, her baby at her breast, she rode for seven long hot days across those rough mountains to Fort Apache.

The writer saw her not so long afterward hobbling around the post with a crutch. Eventually they fitted her up with a "peg-leg" with which she got about very nicely.

The casualties to the troops were: First Sergeant Taylor, D Troop 3rd Cavalry, wounded in the arm; Sergeant Daniel Conn, E Troop, 6th Cavalry, shot through the neck. I saw him a few years since, hale and hearty, at the Soldiers' Home near Washington, D. C. Private Joseph McLellan, of the same troop,

died on the field from a shot through the lungs. Privates Timothy Foley, James Muleca and John Witt, of K Troop, 6th Cavalry, all were badly wounded, but they recovered.

Private Pete of the Indian Scouts was instantly killed by a bullet through the head very early in the battle.

Second Lieutenant George H. Morgan, 3rd Cavalry, and Second Lieutenant George L. Converse, Jr., 3rd Cavalry, were both severely wounded as told by General Cruse.

The two officers were sent from the battle to the nearest military post, Fort Verde, where everything possible was done for them. Later Converse was sent east for further treatment.

As I recall it, there was no surgeon with the command until two, hurriedly summoned by Chaffee, reached the battle-ground from Fort Verde the day after the fight.

Converse's father was a congressman from Ohio. When the facts were learned he quickly secured the passage of a law authorizing additional army surgeons at such frontier posts and also prohibiting the movement of U. S. troops after hostiles unless accompanied by a surgeon.

Lieutenants Morgan and Converse both were at once retired from active service. It was their first, and last, Indian fight.

Within a week after the troops had returned to Fort Apache, scouts reported the presence in nearby White Mountain Indian camps of a number of Indians badly wounded in the fight. The commanding officer, being a wise soldier, and well acquainted with the habits and peculiarities of the Indian Service, instead of sending a troop of cavalry after them first wired the department commander, General Crook, at Prescott, for orders. Crook sent the wire to the division commander at San Francisco; he, in turn, asked army headquarters at Washington for orders, which, in its turn, took it up with the officials of the Indian service.

In the course of time came a brief dispatch from Washington to the effect that no Indians who were living on the reservations peacefully were to be interfered with regardless of their past history. The Indian Rights Association was in the saddle, as usual, and nothing was done to the renegade Indians.

Within six months we were discussing the fight with Indians living around Fort Apache who took part in the fight. They told us many of the details.

It was from some of them that we understood how they were misled as to the size of Chaffee's command. They declared they saw only the white horse troopers and believed no other soldiers were near.

Lieut. Cruse told me he was directed by Chaffee the next morning after the battle, July 18, to make as close a count of the dead on the battleground as he could. He found and marked 22 dead bodies, but believed a number of others were in inaccessible places among the rocks where his men were unable to locate them.

As a matter of fact civilians who came on the field after the troops left claimed to have found several that Cruse had missed.

According to war department records, only five troops of Cavalry—D and I troops of the 3rd; D, E, and I troops of the 6th, and Morgan's Indian scouts, E company, were engaged in the fight. The others arrived on the field the morning of the 18th, after the battle was over.

Major Evans in his official report called it the "Battle of the Big Dry Wash". It was said to be a branch of the Canyon Diablo. This was because it was so designated on the only map then available. On Sitgreaves' map of 1851, and on Smith's Military map of 1879, it is called Big Dry Fork. On both it seems to flow into the Canyon Diablo.

It is now known to be an eastern tributary of East Clear Creek which, in turn, empties into the Little Colorado River about three miles east of Winslow, on the Santa Fe. The battleground is on the extreme eastern end of the Coconino National Forest in Coconino County.

On present day forest maps the battlefield covered the northern end of what is shown as Battle-Ground Ridge. This ridge ends at the point where the Canyon heads, in which the fighting occurred. Battle-Ground Ridge is about three and one-half miles northeast of General's Spring, near the Rim, and some eight or ten miles southeast of the U. S. Ranger Station in Long Valley.

Return of Troops to Fort Apache

The troops from Fort Apache returned there on the afternoon of July 27, 1882. I stood in the doorway of the old log telegraph office as they marched in review past the commanding officer standing on the walk in front of it. The wounded

squaw was with the pack train, rather excited and pleased at the attention she attracted. Every one geyed most unmercifully the soldier trooper who, astride of his horse, carried the baby done up in a willow papoose basket one of the Indian scouts had made for it.

The 6th cavalrymen rode western horses of California stock. Small, active, surefooted animals, with good hard hoofs and used to rustling their food at night hobbled out on the range. I think every Sixth cavalryman came back to Apache on the same mount he left with.

On the other hand, the 3rd cavalry, which had but recently come to Arizona from Fort Hayes, Kansas, were mounted on big fine-boned Kentucky bred animals. They had huge and very brittle hoofs and let one of them lose a shoe and unless reshod at once, they went dead lame and had to be left behind. Also, they knew absolutely nothing about "hobbles" and rustling for their forage on the range at night after a hard day's march.

In the command that passed us a number of the men and at least one officer of the Third Regiment were riding Indian ponies captured from the hostiles. Their mounts had played out. Also a large number of those handsome cavalry horses from Old Kentucky were limping along; just about able to make the post and no more. Practically every troop of the Third lost horses on the trip from various causes. I have before me a copy of the muster-roll for July, 1882, of D troop of the 3rd. It states that Captain King on arrival at Fort Apache called for a board of survey: "To relieve him from responsibility for seven troop-horses lost during the campaign." All the other troops of this regiment had about the same luck with their mounts.

The Globe "Rangers"

A day or two after the outbreak of 1882, a small party of citizens around Globe organized what was called the "Globe Rangers". Amid much local enthusiasm and with much criticism of the military authorities for their failure to protect the settlers, they started after the hostiles. The second or third night out they camped at a cattle ranch on Salt River, put some of their horses in the corral near the cabin, and hobbled the others out to graze on the nearby range.

About daylight the next morning the Indians raided the place, fired a few shots into the cabin to wake the sleeping

warriors, and let them know they were around, then skipped out with all the horses in the corral and every animal they could find on the outside range.

Two or three of the men mounted on what animals they could pick up, followed the Indians, arriving at the battle-ground after all was over.

Of these Lieutenant Davis writes:

"The morning after the fight two of these men appeared in our camp looking for their horse stock. They began claiming every good horse in the herd that our troops had captured from the Indians.

"I was standing beside Chaffee who with his hands in his pockets, was letting them go as far as they would, but getting madder and madder every minute. Finally one of them claimed Chaffee's own saddle mare and his companion backed him up in the claim.

"Then the air around us took on a blue tinge. The two sneaked out under Chaffee's barrage. They got no horses. A few hours later the rightful owner of the horses they had been claiming, the wounded Sigsbee brother (Lt. Davis erroneously calls him Bixby. W. C. B.) came into camp and recovered his stock."

Indian Scalps

As a matter of fact, several officers present at the fight told me that a number of citizens who had heard of the battle put in an appearance a day or two later and proceeded to loot the dead Indians' corpses and their camp, including taking off their scalps.

Major Chaffee, however, promptly suppressed this, but they hung around until the troopers left and then scalped and robbed the dead bodies to their hearts' content.

A number of these so-called "Rangers" followed the command over to Fort Apache and a few days afterwards I myself saw half dozen freshly taken Indian scalps in the hands of soldiers around the post. They had purchased them from these civilian warriors.

Apaches Don't Scalp

It should always be remembered that the Apaches do not nor never did scalp their dead enemies. Many of the 6th cavalrymen had served on the plains where the Indians did scalp their fallen foes. From them they had learned how to preserve

scalps according to Indian practice. A small wooden hoop about six inches in diameter, such as ladies use for making fancy work upon, was first made. Inside this hoop the fresh scalp was stretched by sewing it along the edges and over the hoop with heavy thread or twine, just as small hides are stretched for tanning purposes. Several well-cured Apache scalps fixed up in this original form, with the original owner's long black hair attached, were peddled around the post and offered at ten dollars each.

Hostiles Not Buried

There has been considerable criticism of the military forces for not burying the dead hostiles after the battle. This was practically impossible. The country there was very rocky, they had no suitable tools for this purpose and the bodies were widely scattered over the terrain, amid the rocks and deep fissures of the rough canyons where the fight took place. They buried their own dead, which was about as far as they could go under such conditions.

(Letters from civilians who saw the battlefield soon after it was over)

C. P. Wingfield, of Humboldt, writes:

"In regard to the battle between U. S. troops and Apache Indians. It was fought on the point between General's Spring Canyon and Miller Canyon and in some small canyons on the east bank of East Clear Creek. I think you have the date right, July 17, 1882. The battle started about 11 o'clock a. m., and lasted two or three hours. It was a pretty hot fight for one or two hours; then the Indians began to scatter and shoot wild. They reported about forty Indians killed and about that many got away through side canyons. I mean warriors—they had quite a number of children and squaws with them. They all managed to make their escape in some way. Some were picked up by U. S. Troops about 35 miles north of there. All had guns and tried to put up a fight. (This is an error on Mr. Wingfield's part, or at least the officers made no report of such an incident. W. C. B.)

"This fight took place about Rock Crossing or near there, and about ten miles from the Rim of Tonto Basin—not on Canyon Diablo. Battle-Ground Ridge is the place. I was with the pack-train and about half a mile back of the firing line. I have been in Clear Creek Canyon at all times of the day but never remember seeing stars in the daytime.

"The Indians came up out of Tonto Basin where the Tunnel Road comes up to General's Spring; went out west on the big flat ridge and pitched camp; rolled some big oak logs together and built a big fire, then killed two mules and a horse and had a big barbecue.

"The fire was still burning when we came up that night. Al Sieber sent out two Indian scouts to spy on the Indians and report their movements. They came into camp sometime before daylight the day of the fight and reported they—the Indians—had made camp and were fortifying and preparing to fight. The packers were given orders to get the pack-mules as soon as it was light enough to see, and proceed to pack up the camp outfit and follow after the troops with all haste, which we did.

"If you have been on the rim of Tonto Basin at General's Spring, you know you can see pretty well down into the Basin.

"Well, those Indians could look off down there and see what we called the "White Horse Troop" mounted on gray horses. They supposed that was all that was after them, so they thought they would fortify and the soldiers would ride right into their nest and they—the Indians—would massacre the whole troop. So an Indian said that got back to the reservation. They did not know there were two companies of cavalry and one company of Indian scouts after them. The Indians said all they could see from the top of the hill were the white horses.

"Casualties on the troops' side, one private killed and Lieut. Morgan shot through the lungs below the heart. We packed him up to the Fort Apache and Camp Verde Road, and from there hauled them all to Verde in a government ambulance.

"Next day the lieutenant was taken to Fort Whipple and got well. He was killed in the Philippines afterwards. (Col. Morgan please take notice. W. C. B.) The troops rode to the top of the mountain and dismounted. Every fourth man held horses. Then they charged down the hill as fast as they could—Indian scouts and troops, Lt. Morgan in the lead. The Indians got excited and were shooting high. The bullets were cutting the tops off the pine trees up where we were with the pack-train.

"Right in the thickest part of the fight one of Al Sieber's scouts saw two of his brothers and his father with the Indians. He threw his gun down and started to run to his folks. Sieber

told him to halt. He did not heed him. Sieber raised his rifle and fired, shooting him in the back of the head. The trooper that was killed on the battle-field was buried there and the grave marked with stones.

"I, was there in the summer of 1886, four years afterward and saw the grave, also found the skeleton of an Indian in a cave about half a mile up the canyon from the battle ground.

"Humboldt, Arizona,

"August 18 1929."

(Considering Mr. Wingfield writes wholly from memory, this account fits very nicely into the official and other accounts written at the time, besides giving several additional incidents not elsewhere recorded. W. C. B.)

Fred W. Croxen, at that time forest ranger stationed at Payson, Arizona, in the Tonto Basin, has written the following account of the incidents concerning this battle. It is published by his permission.

"The last real Indian raid in Arizona occurred in the summer of 1882. This was started by a band of renegade Indians concerned with the fight at Cibecue where Captain Hentig and several soldiers were killed. This occurred on Cibecue Creek on the Apache Indian Reservation on August 30, 1881, and such an occurrence could only be followed by further trouble.

"Eighty-six Indians ran away from the reservation and went in a westerly direction through Pleasant Valley where they killed several horses and stole others belonging to the Tewksbury family and Al Rose. After leaving Pleasant Valley the Indians went in a northwesterly direction next attempting to raid the Bar X Ranch, which is about nine miles from Pleasant Valley. This ranch was occupied by Bob and Will Sigsbee at that time. There was a man with them, a Swiss by the name of Louie Houdon, who had discovered a rich mineral deposit in Spring Creek Canyon, directly under Diamond Butte.

"Houdon had come up to the ranch to get the Sigsbees to help him do some work on his claim. Early that morning, Bob Sigsbee and Houdon were up on the ridge east of the house wrangling their saddle and pack-horses when they were attacked by Indians, both being killed.

"Will Sigsbee, hearing the shots and suspecting what they meant, grabbed a water-bucket, ran to the spring, filled it and ran back to the house, which was an adobe with thick walls.

"This house, by the way, is still in use as the headquarter's ranch house. As Will ran to the door, an Indian shot at him. He slipped and the Indian no doubt thought he was hit. This made the Indian rather careless and Sigsbee was fortunate enough to kill one in a very short time as he raised his head up through the forks of a walnut tree a short distance from the house. Sigsbee was besieged for three days, during which time he killed an Indian who tried to cut the saddle from a dead mule in front of the house—killed by the Indians—and got another Indian hiding behind a stump on an elevation several yards east of the house. I am told the Indians found the troops were after them and left, which was a great relief to poor Sigsbee in the house for it broke the siege. When the troops came they buried the two white men on the ridge where they fell. Their bodies still rest in those hastily made graves.

"After leaving the Sigsbee Ranch the Indians continued in the same direction, next coming to the Isadore Christopher place. Christopher was a Frenchman; had settled the place and swore he would stay there and make a stake or lose his life in the attempt. He did stay in spite of the many hardships and made himself wealthy.

"At this place the Indians burned the two log houses, all he had built at the time. Fortunately, Christopher was away at the time and no doubt escaped death at the Indians' hands in that way.

"The soldiers were on their trail so close that they came to the still smouldering ruins of the cabins. Christopher had killed a bear and the carcass was hanging in one of the cabins. The soldiers saw this body in the fire and were sure Christopher had been killed and burned. After leaving the Christopher place the Indians went in a westerly direction, passing north of the Diamond Rim, over the old Indian trail, past what was then known as the Jim Roberts place—now owned by Zane Grey, the writer. They went on west, passing near the present E. F. Pyle Ranch and camped on the East Verde, on what is now the old Belluzzi Ranch.

"From here a part of them went down the East Verde nearly five miles and attacked the Meadows family, at what is now known as the Hendershot place.

"Jim Burchett and John Kerr had already ridden out from Globe and warned the settlers at Marysville, Payson, and surrounding country. The people had been fortunate up at Payson. Tiring of this inaction, old man Meadows determined

to return to their place on the East Verde, saying he didn't believe there was an Indian outbreak and if there was, the bullet had not yet been cast that could kill him. So the family returned home.

"Henry, one of the Meadows boys, was at the army post of Camp Verde, and returned home to warn his people of the Indian outbreak. He arrived there about eleven p. m. and as all were in bed and asleep he did not waken them, thinking the Indians were far away from there.

"As day was breaking the father heard the dogs barking on the north side of the house. He thought it was a bear after their stock, some of which had been left in the corral.

"Taking his Long Tom calibre-fifty rifle, he went out to learn the trouble. As he walked round the top of a pine tree that had fallen there, he was shot by two Indians, a ball piercing each breast and coming out at the back. The boys heard the shots, grabbed rifles and cartridge belts and ran outside. Henry was shot between the bones of his forearm and another bullet hit the cartridge belt in his hand exploding three cartridges and driving one, brass end foremost, into his groin.

"Doc Massey and John Grey, who first settled the Cold Springs Ranch, were notified by messenger from Payson that the Indians were on the war-path. They rode to the Meadows Ranch and Mrs. Meadows told them her husband had been killed and the two boys wounded. They rode to Payson and notified the men who went to their relief. They buried the father and hauled the rest of the family to the Siddle place, farther down the East Verde. The old man they buried under the floor of the cabin so the Indians would not find and mutilate the body should they return. His body was removed a few years later to the Payson public cemetery where it still lies in the Meadows plot.

"Major A. R. Chaffee, at Camp McDowell, near the mouth of the Verde River, who was in command of Troop I, the White Horse Troop of the Sixth United States cavalry, had received notice from San Carlos that the Indians were out. He left for Pleasant Valley arriving behind the Indians, and learned of their depredations near that place.

"It is not known whether he brought his Indian scouts from McDowell or not (He did, W. C. B.). Old-timers, however, say he brought forty soldiers and forty Indian scouts with him, together with his pack-train. Al Sieber, Pat Kehoe and Mickey

Free, all noted scouts of the time, were also with the troops, having come from San Carlos and caught up with them, according to Tom Horn, who claims to have been chief of scouts at the time. (He was not chief of scouts, however. W. C. B.)

"Chaffee took their trail, and when they found they had climbed the Tonto Rim at the head of the East Verde over what is now known as the Old Tunnel Road, he allowed his men only time to eat and feed their horses. They took the trail up over the rim and jumped the Indians at General's Spring, where the battle opened up and was fought down what is now known as Battle-Ground Ridge.

"The Indians were putting on a big feed and jerking meat when the soldiers jumped their camp. They had also stolen a little fat mare belonging to the Tewksbury family. Before fleeing from the soldiers the Indians stabbed this mare to death with their knives for no other apparent reason than to show their cruel and savage nature. Chaffee had been on so many Indian campaigns in Arizona, that he gave the order to shoot to kill. Eighty out of the eighty-six Indians were accounted for and only six captured, some of them badly shot up. (This is an error according to Lieut. Cruse's statement. W. C. B.)

"A Colonel Evans, of the 3rd Cavalry, was on the trail of the Indians with soldiers from Camp Verde (Apache? W. C. B.) but was too late to join in the fight. Had he been in the battle he would have assumed command as he was Chaffee's superior in rank. But Chaffee was commended (by Evans) for his method of attack and advanced for it.

"One soldier was killed near the close of the battle at what is known as Rock Crossing, on East Clear Creek. His body was buried in a lonely grave on the rim of the canyon, unmarked and forgotten, but that of a soldier nevertheless.

"There is a story current in this country now, that a squaw was wounded in this battle, having one leg shattered. She was captured after a day or two at what is known as Hunter Spring on Blue Ridge, about two miles northwest of Rock Crossing, and when captured she asked the soldiers to cut the other leg off so she could walk again. The leg wasn't cut off. Tom Horn mentions a squaw in his book which is probably the same squaw, but does not tell about her asking to have both legs cut off, although he says the surgeons amputated one leg when they brought her back to camp. This squaw according to Horn had a papoose concealed in the rocks and brush and made a big

fuss until the soldiers looked and found it, bringing it along with them.

"It is said by reliable parties that for several years after this battle skeletons of Indians, wounded and later dying, could be seen in the shallow caves along East Clear Creek from the Rock Crossing up to what is now known as Jones' Crossing.

"As previously stated, when the people of Payson and vicinity heard of the Indian outbreak, they "forted up" at the Siddle Place, an adobe house on land now owned by August Pieper. The married men and families held the fort while the single men did scout duty.

"Some of the single men caught up with the troops and were in the battle down the Battle-Ground Ridge and Rock Crossing.

"The scene of this battle has ever since been known as Battle-Ground Ridge, and the canyon on the west side of this ridge, where the pack-trains made camp and the troops camped after the fight, is now known as Cracker Box Canyon, because of the cracker boxes left there when the camp was broken up after the fight.

"A part of one of these old boxes was nailed to a tree and the writer saw it, old and weather-worn, thirty-five years after the battle.

"One of the Indian scouts who took part in the battle resides now in Payson. He is Henry Irving, but his command of English is so poor that it is impossible to get an account of it from him. He claims to have killed two Indians in the battle.

"Most of the above account was given me by William Craig, who still resides in Payson, Arizona, and who helped move the Meadows family after the shooting of their father and the sons. Other parts have been gathered from time to time from old residents and from stories told by the older inhabitants to the younger generation, and from Tom Horn's book. Some may be in error, the greater part is just as it happened. However, it is the account of the fight as remembered by the old-timers and recited by them after more than forty-five years have passed away.

"Mr. Craig recently told me that shortly after this fight, six wild Apache Indians came into San Carlos and gave up. These Indians, four bucks and two squaws, had been in hiding on the head of Deer Creek, on the east side of the Mazatzal

Mountains in Tonto Basin. They had never before been to an agency and no record of them had ever been made. They would not have given up but they realized after the disastrous fight on Battle-Ground Ridge that their time would come before long and they would probably be captured or killed—the latter in all likelihood. They were the very last wild Indians to give up in the Tonto Basin country.

“Payson, Arizona, July 28, 1929.”

COMMENTS BY W. C. B.

These two personal narratives, written by men who took part in those early Arizona days, are invaluable from the historian's point of view. They offer an entirely different point of view from the official and military reports upon which much of our early Arizona history is based.

If in some particulars they do not fit exactly into the facts as generally accepted, we can be very lenient with them, remembering that these matters happened nearly fifty years ago and that the human memory is very unreliable after a lapse of years. Moreover, most of these old timers were grown men in 1882, hence must now have many, many years of life behind them.

The story of old man Christopher's bear left hanging in the log cabin is well recalled. One version of it is to the effect that the soldiers really thought it was a human body and so buried the charred remains in a grave near the burned cabin without ever realizing they were performing the last sad rites over the remains of a bear. The civilians of those days were inclined to poke fun at the army people.

Tom Horn was not chief of scouts at this time. He was a packer in one of the pack-trains—at San Carlos, if my memory serves me right. Reliable army officers have told me Horn was not in the fight, but was with the pack-trains back of the lines. The quartermaster records at Washington have been searched for Horn's record as a scout. They show that the one and only time he was employed by the U. S. Government as a scout was “at Fort Bowie, Arizona, from October 13, 1885, to September 30, 1886.” This was during Miles' Geronimo campaign in Mexico. His long yarn in his book telling of his presence at the Battle of Cibicue is an outrageous, barefaced lie from start to finish. I knew every soldier, officer, packer and scout who took part in that fight. I saw the command

leave Fort Apache and met it four or five miles west of the post the afternoon they returned from the unfortunate affair.

Tom Horn was not with the command at any time. General Cruse says his yarn about the Cibicue fight was false from beginning to end.

The soldier and Indian scout killed and buried on the Dry Wash battle-field were taken up by the military authorities a few years later and moved to Fort Apache, where they were laid away with a full military funeral in the post cemetery.

I established a cattle-camp at the head of West Chevelon Canyon in 1887 a few miles east of the field and rode over to the battle-field several times in the following years. There were then plenty of skeleton, skulls, etc., of both humans and animals, scattered around on the ground. Most of them, however, were carried off eventually by visitors to the scene.

The cracker box mentioned was still on the tree, just as told by Mr. Craig. These boxes, by the way, were those in which hardtack for the troops in the field was packed. They used a lot of hardtack in those days.

The muster roll of company E Indian scouts, a copy of which I have before me, shows no Indian named "Irving." But there is one named "Henry" on the list, and its an easy matter to guess that he was later called "Henry Irving." Anyhow, that's a fairly good guess.

The story of the six wild, broncho Apaches that gave themselves up after the battle is an interesting one. I never before heard it. Probably it is based on facts. Stranger things than that happened in those days.

One thing always stands out in my memory of this fight. It is the fact that the company of Indian scouts that took part in it were, in larger part, relatives, friends and members of the same band of Apaches from which came the renegades—the White Mountain Apaches. That only one deserted to the enemy during the fight is a fine tribute to their loyalty to the government which they were serving as enlisted men.

NOTE: Quotations from Britton Davis' book, "The Truth About Geronimo," were used by permission of the publishers, the Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut.

W. C. B.