

MICKY FREE

Strange that today there should live in isolation at the White River agency, north of Fort Apache, in Arizona, a character who innocently was the cause of a 12 years' relentless Indian war in Arizona under the leadership of a noted warrior, Cochise—Cochise, the valiant Apache who was in supreme command of the Chiricahuas, affiliated with the warlike Ojo Calientes of southern New Mexico, the friend and ally of Mangus Colorado, whose deeds of prowess and successful warfare are historical in Apacheland.

The innocent cause of murder, torture and depredations throughout the then sparsely settled country, from 1860 to 1872, is today a wandering, aged, unkempt dependent of the government, an Apache in nature, in cunning, in mind and action, knowing no other life and seeking no other status, of restless, roving disposition, and withal more cruel, more bloodthirsty and deceptive than those of common stock, for "Micky Free," as he is known, is a half-breed.

On the 30th day of September, 1849, a party of Mexicans left Santa Cruz, Sonora, Mexico, which is located about ten miles south of Lochiel, Ariz., on the present international boundary line, for Magdalena, Mexico, about 75 miles distant, to attend the annual fiesta de San Francisco. In the party, headed by Lieutenant Limon, were three females, Inez Gonzales, who was one year later rescued by John R. Bartlett of the United States boundary commission, and restored to her parents after one year's captivity among the Apaches; her aunt, Mercedes Pacheco, and a female servant named Jesus Salvador. On their way to Magdalena the party was ambushed in the Cocospera canyon by the Pinal Apache Indians. An uncle of Inez Gonzales and eight soldiers, including the lieutenant, were killed and the women and a small boy, Francisco Pacheco, were taken captives.

They were hurried to the mouth of the San Pedro river and held in captivity until they were disposed of. Inez was sold to two Santa Fe traders named Peter Blacklaws and Pedro Acheveque, who were enroute with her to Santa Fe for the purpose of disposing of her for immoral purposes when they were commanded by Mr. Bartlett of Santa Rita, N. M., June 27, 1850, to surrender her. Mercedes Pacheco was sold by the Apaches to the Navajos, taken north, and was never afterwards heard of.

Forced to Wed Apache

Jesus Salvador was retained by a member of the Pinal Apaches and forced to become his wife, which union resulted in the birth of a child—today known as "Micky Free." After years of toil and suffering, this captive woman managed to escape with her child. Below the mouth of the San Pedro river on the open plains that stretched away to the south from the Gila river, lived the peaceful tribes of the Pimas and Maricopas, deadly enemies of the Apaches. While ostensibly gathering the fruit of the sahuro along the banks of the Gila in 1845, this long-suffering woman, in whose heart there was a longing for home and kindred, slipped away from the usual group of squaws and fled down the Gila canyon. It is known that she traveled for miles before she was missed, finally reaching the open valley wherein lived the friendly Pimas.

Escapes With Child

Among them she found refuge and was later, with her child of one year, sent to Tucson and finally to the settlement on the Sonoita river near Calabasas and thence to Santa Cruz, Mexico, where she arrived in the spring of 1856.

During the negotiations under the Gadsden purchase and the survey of the boundary line, the mining operations around the San Antonio and Mowry mines north of Santa Cruz, following the evacuation of the presidios of Tucson and Tubac by the Mexican troops on March 10, 1856, a number of Americans settled in the country and many residents of Santa Cruz moved over the line in 1856-7 and settled on the Sonoita, among them Jesus Salvador and her child. In the valley of the Sonoita, about 12 miles below the army post, Ft. Buchanan, later called Crittenden, where the road that led across the foothills to the Salero mines left the river, lived in 1860 one John Ward, a pioneer who was employed in getting lumber out of the Santa Rita mountains. He was a domestic creature and found it necessary to keep a housekeeper. He selected Jesus Salvador as such and with them lived the then 6-year-old boy. John Ward was a well-known character in the Sonoita valley and the surrounding mining camps. His duties led him away from the little ranch and corral at the mouth of the dry gulch in the Sonoita valley.

Boy Is Recaptured

One morning in early October, 1860, when Ward was away from the ranch, the little boy was trying to catch a burro on the little point that juts out into the valley about 300 yards from the house. As he attempted to overtake the burro, the chase led him into the arms of a dozen waiting Apaches, hidden in the rocks near the ranch. After securing the child, the Apaches, making sure that no one else but the mother was near the place, broke the corral and released a herd of work oxen and some horses, which they drove off. The excited mother was powerless to interfere as the Indians left in haste with her child. No attempt was made to injure the woman and it was suspected that the party was out bent on plunder more than their usual practice of murder and depredation. As soon as the alarm was sounded, Ward returned and he took up the trail and followed it to the San Pedro river. As the Chiricahua Apaches lived in the Dragoon mountains to the east of the San Pedro, it was thought that the raid had been made by them. Ward made all haste to Ft. Buchanan, where he repeated the matter to the commanding officer, Colonel Morrison, who had at his disposal two companies of the Seventh infantry. Ward demanded that the child be rescued from the Chiricahuas, who were then under control of the famous Cochise, with headquarters at the well-known Cochise stronghold in the Dragoon mountains.

Rescue Results in War

From the results that followed the attempt at rescue came a bloody war waged by Cochise and his braves. Heretofore this wise and powerful chief had been a friend, in a measure, to the whites, although many renegades, from his band whom he could not control, constituted marauding parties into Mexico and often visited the settlements on the San Pedro and the Babocomori. During the constant warfare waged by Mangus Colosado in New Mexico against the advance of the American soldiers across his territory from 1846 to 1856, Cochise was his ally and adviser, but Cochise saw the helplessness of his opposition and at the time of the advent of the But-

terfield stage and overland mail route in 1857, he concluded to suspend his hostile tactics. For several years prior to the capture of the child of Jesus Salvador, Cochise and his band lived in comparative peace with the whites and the officials of the Overland Stage company established a station in Apache Pass, the home of Cochise and his followers in 1856-7.

Col. Morrison detailed Lieutenant Bascom, a newly-made lieutenant from West Point, and 12 men under Sergeant Reuben F. Bernard, to visit Apache Pass and treat with Cochise for the return of the stolen property and the boy. Bascom was unacquainted with the Apache nature and the conditions of the country in general, more especially with the method of treating with Indians and was of such overbearing, confident disposition that advice was rejected with disdain. Bascom and detail met Cochise and a few followers at the overland stage station in Apache Pass and after explaining his wishes and making a demand for the return of the stolen property and the child, Cochise replied that he knew nothing of the depredation, but he would institute an investigation and do everything in his power to comply with the request of the lieutenant and his commanding officer. This did not meet with the approval of the hot-headed lieutenant and it appears that he did not wish to be put off and return to the post with a promise. He wanted something to show or an engagement that would do credit to his prowess and his ability to deal with the thieving, plundering Indians. He moved his camp about two miles from the state station to the San Simon side of the mountains and arranged to have a "pow-wow" with Cochise. Cochise, his brother and two nephews came to the council the next day in perfect freedom and with little thought of any differences other than that of a general talk as to the best methods of gaining information as to the real culprits, which he believed to be of some other tribe, which conclusion eventually proved correct.

Bascom Traps Cochise

Bascom, at the proper time, told Cochise and his followers that they were prisoners, meaning to hold them until his tribesmen produced the boy. They were placed in a Sibley tent and a guard placed over them, it afterwards being learned that the guards were not furnished with cartridges. Cochise, after being placed under arrest, began to realize his position, and the thought of being humiliated and subjected to the scorn of his tribe, knowing full well that neither he nor any member of his tribe committed any wrong, chafed under the restraint and, as he had his knife, which all Apaches wear in an under belt, he issued an order to his comrades and, with a vicious war cry that resounded through the silent hills, ripped open the back of the tent and made a dash for liberty. As soon as they appeared, a hand-to-hand encounter took place and in the melee Cochise was wounded in the knee by a bayonet in the hands of a soldier. However, being of a powerful physique, agile and cunning, he managed to escape in the dark to the rocks and fled to his people. The other captives were prevented from escaping and were led back under double guard. Lieutenant Bascom, hourly expecting attack, moved his camp at day light back to the stage station in the pass, where they fortified themselves. Cochise soon appeared in war paint at a point just out of gunshot and haughtily demanded his relatives, stating that he had captured two other white men and demanding assurance that the

Indians were alive. Bascom refused to assure him and Cochise rode off to join his forces. When Bascom approached the stage station early in the morning, two straggling Apaches, who had evidently arrived from Sonora, appeared at the station and were immediately captured and also placed under guard. During the night, while they were awaiting developments, another Indian came and, from the plunder in his possession, evidently was one of a band from Mexico. He, too, was taken in charge by order of Bascom, making in all seven prisoners. In the valley, Cochise came across two Americans named Jordan and Lyons, whom they made prisoners and the next day took them within hailing distance of the troops and offered to surrender them in exchange for the two nephews of Cochise. The exchange was flatly refused and the poor fellows were taken back with a prospect of being tortured unmercifully. That day the station keeper, named Wallace, who understood the Apache language somewhat, thought he could effect some kind of a settlement and on the strength of his former associations with Cochise and his tribe around the station, where they had often congregated, traded and received favors, he strolled away from the camp and, before he was aware of his position, he was forcibly made a captive also.

Lets Men Be Tortured

The Indians led the captives to within hailing distance of the soldiers and they pleaded and begged that the exchange be made, and upon refusal, they begged that they might be shot, stating that they had been tortured to bring them into condition to plead and beg for exchange with all their force, knowing that their refusal meant repeated torture and death. To these appeals, this heartless, uncompromising upstart turned a deaf ear and further in trenched himself and men behind the rock walls of the stage station. As the Apaches led the captives forward to enlist the sympathies of the officer, they did not notice the eager and earnest watchful of Lyons, a powerful, athletic specimen of western youth. All of a sudden, he broke loose from two Indians who lightly held him and made a dash for the station. The Indians, in alarm, started after him and in the confusion that attended his escape he tried to scale the outer wall and as his head appeared on the top and his body almost over its rough surface, he was filled with a dozen bullets from the soldiers within, his body falling at the feet of the man who refused him liberty and life a moment before—Lieutenant Bascom. Sad, indeed, were the thoughts of the brave soldiers within, when they saw their mistake—soldiers who were not in accord with the methods of the unfeeling lieutenant. This was especially true of Sergeant Bernard, who refused to obey orders, was court-martialed and afterward acquitted.

Cochise and his band with the other captives retreated far enough to escape the bullets of the soldiers' rifles, but not far enough but what the lieutenant and his troop could see the tragedy that was about to be enacted and hear the pleatings of Wallace and his companion.

Wallace Is First Victim

Wallace was the first victim of the vicious warriors who in vain had sought to end their differences in a peaceful way. Wallace was roped by a powerful Indian who rode a stalwart animal, and, as the rope circled over his head, he gave a great cry of despair and a last appeal to the watching soldiers. As the tightening rope clutched his body, he fell in a heap, only to be dragged and jerked along the stony earth until his shapeless form was crushed and mangled,

dragged and redragged in the open space for the benefit of the shrinking soldiers, whose commanding officer would not raise a hand to stop.

Signal Fires Blaze

That evening the mountain tops sparkled and flashed with the signal fires of the Apaches. The call to arms had been sent out to the Apache nation, but also word had been dispatched to Ft. Buchanan by the now thoroughly frightened Bascom. Retreating down the pass to the Sulphur Springs valley, they came upon the hanging bodies of three Americans, two more having been captured since the roping and death of Wallace and Lyons, a ghastly reminder to the lieutenant on his retreat to Fort Buchanan, and the forerunner of the evil spirit of the Apache, the beginning of a bloody era, the sign of relentless, vigorous and unceasing warfare on the whites of a none too thickly settled country. Lieutenant Bascom stopped his command, and, picking out an oak tree, which, it is said, is still standing, gave orders that it be stripped for the reception of the Indian prisoners and with little ceremony, seven Apaches were hung. The command pushed ahead, leaving behind the swinging bodies as a token of revenge, but a needless revenge, a deed that would have been avoided by the use of a little discretion, judgment and policy.

Reign of Terrorism

The result of the indiscretion of an inexperienced lieutenant was far-reaching and terrible. Ranches and homes were destroyed, pioneers and prospectors ambushed, mutilated and tortured. Stock was run off and business abandoned in the settled portions of the San Pedro, Sonoita and Santa Cruz. Mining operations were suspended and people compelled to flock to the inhabited towns, which numbered but a few, Tubac and Tucson being the only places of note. Cochise threw his turban and, as of old, a tribal regulation and sacred custom circled around it with chanted mutterings of threat and revenge, and with the point of his carbine raised the fiery colored turban in the air from whence it was placed upon his brow with words of defiance to the whites, never again to be removed unless by the hand of an enemy or the kindred of a tribe. Such was the custom of the Apaches and this vow was taken by the followers of Cochise and how well the threat and vows were carried out was evidenced by the numerous victims that fell during the bloody war that covered a period of 12 long years. The troops were inadequate as a protection to the settlers, as there were only two posts in all the vast territory now known as Arizona, but then as a part of New Mexico, one of these being on the Sonoita and called Ft. Buchanan, and the other on the San Pedro river near the mouth of the Arivapai, known as Ft. Breckenridge and afterwards called Old Camp Grant. The stage lines were abandoned on account of the little protection afforded and in July, 1861, shortly after the beginning of the Civil war, the troops of the two posts unceremoniously abandoned the country to the mercy of the Apaches and the renegade filibusters from the state of Sonora. In July, 1861, the federal troops in the territory marched towards the east, reaching Cook's Springs in New Mexico in August, where they learned that the Texas troops were coming. Without waiting to hear of their numbers or to defend the people of a loyal territory, they marched in haste to Ft. Craig on the Rio Grande, burning their wagons and spiking their cannon.

Federals Retreat

This retreat of the federal troops was taken by the Apaches as an evidence of the abandonment of Apache-land on account of the progress of the Apaches, and so to make their success complete, the warlike bands renewed their efforts to exterminate the few remaining whites.

Texans in Tucson

On February 20, 1862, Colonel Hunter and his Texas force entered Tucson, but retreated to the Rio Grande on the approach of the California column, which entered Tucson on the 20th day of May, 1862. During all this time the settlers were without protection and the Apaches were free to roam and kill and plunder. It was not until the California troops entered the territory that any effort was made to cope with the wily Apaches, but Colonel Carleton, in command, realized that steps had to be taken and through his efforts troops were stationed throughout New Mexico and the newly organized territory of Arizona, which was effected December 29, 1863, at Navajo Springs in the northern part of the territory, the seat of government being later moved to Prescott. Cochise and his famous ally, Mangus Colorado, the brave and gifted chieftain of the Warm Springs or Mimbres Apaches of the vicinity of Santa Rita, N. M., combined to stay the advance of Colonel Carleton and his forces.

Battle of Apache Pass

Battle after battle was fought in the stronghold of the famous warriors, notably the fierce and bloody struggle in Apache Pass in the Chiricahua mountains, later the site of Camp Bowie. All through the southern country murder and rapine were rampant, business paralyzed and homes abandoned. The ruthless Cochise, whose sense of honor had been sorely wounded by imprisonment and whose word had been doubted, spread terror and destruction throughout the now abandoned and pillaged country. Arizona was in its inception a death trap for travelers and pioneers. In its infancy in 1863, the land of sunshine and precious metals, with balmy clime and valleys of productive soil, was a dreary waste, infested by bands of bloody marauders, an empire in itself, but filled with a horde of painted devils, whose desire for revenge and to retard the advancement of the whites, made it a series of valleys of death, and its mountain passes a series of death traps, to enter which meant torture, ultimate death and certain mutilation at the hands of the bloody Apaches.

In 1866, after the close of the Civil war, the Union troops again took up the task of subduing the fierce and rapacious Apaches, but the relentless Cochise was not so tractable as the soldiers had anticipated. He asked no quarter and gave none and for years he and his followers raided at will—at times resting in peace, again setting forth in deadly attack on unsuspecting settlers, appearing at different places at intervals until the few remaining stockmen were in constant dread and rode and worked with rifle in hand, as did the plowmen of the Sonoita and the San Pedro turn their furrows with a carbine on the plowshare, while on the hilltops were seated silent sentinels to watch the advance of the dreaded enemy.

General Howard Arrives

Year after year this dread and fear caused the pioneers to watch and wait until the government sent Gen. O. O. Howard to treat with Cochise. In 1872, after years of constant warfare, General Howard successfully treated with Cochise and he and his tribe settled at Sulphur Springs on a reservation set apart for them. At the head of this agency was placed

the veteran Indian agent, Captain Jeffords, and his assistant, Fred Hughes. Here they remained until May, 1876, when they were removed to San Carlos on account of their proximity to Mexico, which was an incentive to their raiding down into that fruitful country.

Cochise, the dreaded chieftain, whose history was one of strife and warfare, was withal a brave and considerate man, according to the men who came in contact with him, before and after his disagreement with Bascom. He was generous, considerate, and known to favor the whites to a certain extent. His man had friends among the whites who would trust him with their lives and depend upon his word. This famous chief, whose name is blended with the history of Arizona and whose remarkable career is impressed upon the memory of the pioneers of Arizona, marked with bloodshed and suffering, died a natural death June 8, 1874, at Sulphur Springs, near the present town of Cochise on the Southern Pacific railway, between the Cochise stronghold in the Dragoon mountains and the celebrated Apache Pass in the Chiricahua mountains. His remains are buried in a cave in the famous Cochise stronghold, an impassable barrier of rock and earth, whose spiral peaks top the sky line as you gaze on the towering Dragons to the east of the river San Pedro.

What Happened to Mickey

During his sojourn on the reservation and before he died, Cochise told the truth about the captive child. A party of Coyoters, or what are commonly called White Mountain Apaches, were on a plundering expedition and in the course of their travels they journeyed along the north bank of the Sonoita and in the foothills of the southern slope of the Santa Rita mountains. Reaching the ranch house of Ward, they sought to run off the stock, and in their successful efforts they took the boy with them as a captive, not knowing his true nature. They drove the stock far beyond the Gila river and into the White mountains, where they raised the boy, in the band controlled by the far-famed chieftain, Pedro. Cochise offered no excuse for his actions during the 12 long years that he waged a relentless warfare against the whites, believing that he had cause to be revenged. His word was doubted by a child. He was imprisoned and humiliated by an infant. His relatives were held as a ransom by a youth. He, a chieftain, whose word was law and whose tongue never had a crook in it, was doubted and his peaceful words construed into a lie about the whereabouts of a Mexican child.

Half-Breed's Atavism

This wandering half-breed, whose being caused the woful events of a decade, today lives the life of a wild and restless Apache. In the year 1880 the writer was detailed to enumerate the Apaches on the San Carlos reservation and the pick of three interpreters was given him—Plute Bill, Navajo Bill and Micky Free. It was a gamble as to who was the best, but from later events there was

a decided preference in the matter of treachery and utter uselessness in the choice of Micky Free, for he deserted the outfit before the party reached Ft. Apache. During the days and nights en route a study of the individual revealed the make-up of this indolent creature and a more repulsive object could not be imagined, for in his youth, as a result of a fierce combat with a bear, Micky Free had lost the sight of one eye. He was of small stature, slim and with long, tawny hair, straight, ragged and unkempt. He usually allowed his hair to fall over the affected eye, but his appearance with a defective eye, his ugly features and sneering countenance, gave him a decidedly repulsive appearance. His associations around San Carlos gave him an opportunity to pick up a little English and on many occasions he was used to advantage as an interpreter and finally was given a position as first sergeant of Indian scouts and while his reputation was not of the best and his honesty rated low, he proved to be a good scout. In a conversation, now over 25 years ago, Micky Free said that he had a faint recollection of his home on the Sonoita and that he remembers the long, long ride that he took when he was captured. Other than this he remembered nothing, and, so far as his condition at San Carlos was concerned, he was satisfied with the roaming, free and easy life that the reservation afforded, such as gambling, riding and the reception of the ample rations issued by the government.

Evil Disposition

Thus we find today among the burdens of our government a character of note whose life story has never been told, innocently the cause of strife and bitter warfare, a wandering refugee among the Apaches near White river. He is an Apache at heart, a cruel warrior and a treacherous foe, unreliable and not particularly honest. Many whites who braved the dangers of a new country in the days since 1860, have fallen—soldiers, citizens, prospectors and stockmen. Indian chieftains and braves of many tribes have fallen by the bullets of a race of pathfinders—hewers of the trails that beget civilization, subduers of the wilderness, home makers of dreary wastes, desert plains and mountain valleys, seekers of precious metals to give a golden gift to a prosperous nation, pioneers who gave up their lives in the burning heat of a summer's sun upon the treeless wastes that the trail might be passed in safety by the women and children.

You find pioneers who live today in every county of Arizona with scars of knife wounds inflicted, with bullets in their limbs, aged, stooped and faltering from the wounds of Apache arrows, wrinkled and with whitened hair from the blasts of the sweeping, burning winds of the water-shadeless desert; yet today there is left in solitude and freedom, in the wilds of the most beautiful spot in all Arizona—the White mountains—the creature of circumstances, with a life of freedom and without care—the half-breed, Micky Free.

(Continued Next Sunday)