

# Apache Tribe

<http://www.wmat.nsn.us/>

“Dagot’ee”- Hello and welcome to the new website of the White Mountain Apache Tribe. Our home is here in eastern Arizona, where we have lived for thousands of years. We believe that we come from the Earth, and that we belong to the earth. Our beautiful home was given to us by our creator. Which is rich in tradition, resources, wildlife, and outdoor recreation.

Our home is very unique. It starts at about 2,600’ above sea level on our southwest side, and ranges all the way up to 11,400’ on the peak of Mt. Baldy on our eastern border, our most sacred mountain, providing year round recreation activities. Here on the White Mountain Apache Reservation we experience all four seasons.

Come visit us at the historical Fort Apache, where the famous Apache Scouts were once posted. Also stop by our Culture Center & Museum, and take a look at Apache life. Theodore Roosevelt boarding school resides there and is still in operation today.

Looking for fun and excitement? Hon-Dah Casino has the answer, and is located high up in the pines. With a fully functional Hotel and Conference Center, along with an arcade and a year round swimming pool, it is a great place to start. Then off to Sunrise Park Resort, which turns into a powdery paradise in the winter. During the summer, Sunrise is a dream to escape to, with scenic lift rides, a fourth of July fireworks celebration, an awesome Archery shootout and great fishing at Sunrise Lake, or one of the many other Lakes or well stocked streams. Here, on the White Mountain Apache Reservation, we are proud to produce the Apache Trout. A species found nowhere else in the world.

The White Mountain Apache Tribe is also known for its world class hunting. Our home is one of the best places in the world for Trophy Elk hunting, drawing in hunters from all over the world, to get a chance at a world class Trophy Bull Elk.

Want to get a taste of the local life? Visit the tourism site to see a list of ceremonial dances, during which visitors must abide by a visitors code of conduct. Then there is the annual Hon-Dah Pow Wow, and the 89th Annual WMAT Fair & Rodeo.

So come join us!  
“Ashoog’ “ (Thank You)

## **This land that is now the White Mountain Apache Reservation is the core of our homeland.**

We were placed here in the White Mountains by our Creator at the beginning. In this land our ancestors learned to be Ndee—The People—and we have learned from them.

There are many different nations of Apache people. We are Western Apaches, closely related to the people of San Carlos, Payson, and Camp Verde. Though there are differences in language, history, and culture, we are also related to the other Apache nations: the Chiricahua, Mescalero, Jicarrilla, Lipan, and Kiowa-Apache peoples.

When Europeans began to visit our lands, our people lived in family groups and bands, with homes and farms along all of the major watercourses: the East Fork and North Fork of the White River, on Cedar Creek, Carrizo Creek, Cibecue Creek, Oak Creek, and others. They farmed, growing corn, sunflowers, beans, squash, and other foods. They hunted deer and other game and collected abundant wild plant foods. They traveled widely, trading and raiding throughout the region and deep into Mexico. When the United States took control of New Mexico during the Mexican-American War, some of our leaders went to Santa Fe to meet with those authorities. By the time the U.S. Army came to our lands, our people knew much more about them than they did about us.

## **Fort Apache**

In July 1869 Brevet Colonel (Major) John Green of the U.S. 1st Cavalry led a scouting expedition of more than 120 troops into the White Mountains area from Camp Goodwin and Camp Grant to the south. Seeking to kill or capture any Apache people they encountered, the expedition headed north up the San Carlos River, across the Black River, and to the White River in the vicinity of the future site of Fort Apache.

Army scouts reported finding over 100 acres of cornfields along the White River. Escapa--an Apache chief that the Anglos called Miguel--visited the camp, and invited Col. Green to visit his village. Green sent Captain John Barry, urging him "if possible to exterminate the whole village."

When Captain Barry arrived at Miguel's village, however, he found white flags "flying from every hut and from every prominent point," and "the men, women and children came out to meet them and went to work at once to cut corn for their horses, and showed such a spirit of delight at meeting them that the officers [said] if they had fired upon them they would have been guilty of cold-blooded murder."

Green returned to the White Mountains in November, and met again with the Apache leaders Escapa (Miguel), Eskininla (Diablo), Pedro, and Eskiltesela. They agreed to the creation of a military post and reservation, and directed Green to the confluence of the East and North Forks of the White River:

I have selected a site for a military post on the White Mountain River which is the finest I ever saw. The climate is delicious, and said by the Indians to be perfectly healthy, free from all malaria. Excellently well wooded and watered. It seems as though this one corner of Arizona were almost its garden spot, the beauty of its scenery, the fertility of its soil and facilities for irrigation are not surpassed by any place that ever came under my observation. Building material of fine pine timber is available within eight miles of this site. There is also plenty of limestone within a reasonable distance.

This post would be of the greatest advantage for the following reasons: It would compel the White Mountain Indians to live on their reservation or be driven from their beautiful country which they almost worship. It would stop their traffic in corn with the hostile tribes, they could not plant an acre of ground without our permission as we know every spot of it. It would make a good scouting post, being adjacent to hostile bands on either side. Also a good supply depot for Scouting expeditions from other posts, and in fact, I believe, would do more to end the Apache War than anything else.

The following spring troops from the 21st Infantry and 1st Cavalry were ordered to establish "a camp on the White Mountain River ." On May 16, 1870 they began construction of Camp Ord.

Over the course of the next year, the remaining troops at Camp Goodwin moved to the site, and the camp would be renamed Camp Mogollon, then Camp Thomas , and finally, Camp Apache . The post was designated Fort Apache in 1879.

The Army abandoned Fort Apache in 1922. In 1923 the site became the home of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Theodore Roosevelt Indian Boarding School . First intended to serve Diné (Navajo) children, by the 1930s a majority of students at the school were Apache. Today T.R. School continues to serve as a middle school, under the administration of a school board selected by the Tribal Council.

## **Apache Scouts**

After Geronimo's surrender, there was less of a need for Indian scouts and, in 1891 the number of scouts apportioned to Arizona was limited to fifty. By 1915 only 24 remained in service. It appears that an additional 17 Apache scouts were enlisted to join Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing's Punitive Expedition into Mexico because in 1916 the number rose to 39, and in 1917 fell back to 22. Apache scouts from Fort Huachuca accompanied the 10th Cavalry and others from Fort Apache joined the 11th Cavalry on their long scouts into Mexico in search of the bandit/revolutionary, Pancho Villa.

During the Punitive Expedition in 1916, twenty Indian scouts were sent down from Fort Apache to join the 11th Cavalry. They arrived too late to take part in the search for Villa which had been suspended due to the protests of the Carranza government about the U. S. presence on Mexican soil. But they did have ample opportunity to show their tracking skills. Captain James A. Shannon with the 11th wrote an article in the *journal of the U. S. Cavalry Association* for April 1917, entitled "With the Apache Scouts in Mexico." He described their cautious way of operating.

The Indian cannot be beaten at his own game. But in order to get results, he must be allowed to play that game in his own way. You tell a troop of white soldiers there is an enemy a thousand yards in your front and they will go straight at him without questions. The Indian under the same circumstance wants to look it all over first. He wants to go to one side and take a look. Then to the other side and take a look. He is like a wild animal stalking its prey. Before he advances he wants to know just what is in his front. This extreme caution which we don't like to see in the white man, is one of the qualities that makes him a perfect scout. It would be almost impossible to surprise an outfit that had a detachment of Apache scouts in its front. They do not lack courage by any means. They have taken part in some little affairs in Mexico that required plenty of courage, but they must be allowed to do things in their own way. The Apaches had a centuries-old hatred of Mexicans and it surfaced during the expedition. Shannon recalled an evening when they encountered some government troops. ...As we approached this outfit and opened a conversation with them, Sergeant Chicken (First Sergeant of the Scouts) fingered his gun nervously and gave vent in one sentence to the Indians' whole idea of the Mexican

situation: "Heap much Mexican, shoot 'em all!" There was no fine distinctions in their minds between friendly Mexicans and unfriendly, Carranzistas and Villistas, *de facto* troops and bandits. To their direct minds there was only one line of conduct-"Heap much Mexican, shoot 'em all!" They had to be watched pretty carefully when out of camp to be kept from putting this principle into practice. The Apache scouts proved useful in tracking American deserters and on at least one occasion located some of the *villistas*. They picked up the trail of some stolen American horses that were two or three days old. Shannon writes: They started off on the trail and after going a short distance came to a rocky stretch where the trail was hard to follow. They circled out like a pack of hounds and soon one of them gave a grunt and all the rest went over where he was and started off again. After a while the trail seemed to divide, so the detachment split up into two parties following the two trails. After about an hour or so, one of these parties overtook the *villistas* in a very narrow ravine. They shot two of them, and on account of the narrowness of the pass, unfortunately shot two of the horses, one of which proved to be the private horse of Lieutenant Ely of the Fifth Cavalry. They recovered one government horse and got some Mexican saddles, rifles, etc.

The Apache scouts were not trained or drilled to maneuver as the soldiers of the army. Their operations were in accordance with the Apache's natural habits of scouting and fighting. The only directions given by the military were general in nature for the requirements of the movements of the troops. On the march small groups of the scouts were out several miles on the flanks and in front, keeping occasional contacts with the main body. At night most of them came in, leaving a few of the scouts posted as lookouts. An Apache never wanted to be surprised, and all of their movements were based on that principle. They approached ridges and high ground with extreme caution, peeking around, looking as far ahead as possible, using cover, and keeping exposure to the minimum. In a fight they did not believe in charging and battling against all odds, which was the quality of many of the Indians of the Plains. Always they sought for an advantage over the foe, and retreated rather than expose themselves to gun fire. These characteristics made the Apache an invaluable scout in the field for operations with troops. Likewise it accounts for the fact that small numbers of hostile Apaches were able to thwart the efforts of the army in so many instances....

During my service in 1918 at Fort Apache the scouts wore cavalry issue clothing shoes and leggins, but some retained the wide car belt of their own construction and design. An emblem U.S.S. for United State Scouts was fastened on the front of the issue campaign hat. The regulation emblem was crossed arrows on a disc with the initials U.S.S.; but I never saw such a design on the scouts' uniform nor in the Quartermaster supply room.

Lieutenant Wharfield talked about some of the scouts who stood out in his memory.

At Fort Apache I had excellent relationships with Chicken. We hunted together for a few days on Willow Creek, branch of the Black River. He was on a manhunt with me after a trooper, who went AWOL and was hiking southward toward Globe. The scouts successfully tracked the soldier. We apprehended him near the lower White River bridge, close to Tom Wanslee's trading store. In addition to those trips together, there were many other routine contacts at the fort. He, of course, did not handle the first sergeant's paperwork; that was done by white soldiers of the Quartermaster Detachment, but I always gave him the orders and other matters regarding the scouts for him to execute and pass along. He was a good leader, and a highly respected man at the fort.

The separate units of Indian Scouts which had existed since 1866 were discontinued on June 30, 1921, and since that time the Apaches were carried on the Detached Enlisted Men's List.

### **White Mountain Apache Tribe Today**

The White Mountain Apache Tribe now consists of approximately 15,000 members. Many live here on our Tribal lands, but others live and work all over the country and the world. The majority of the population lives in and around Whiteriver, the seat of Tribal government, with others residing in the communities of Cibecue, Carrizo, Cedar Creek, Forestdale, Hon-Dah, McNary, East Fork, and Seven Mile.

The Whiteriver Unified School District and the Cibecue Community School offer public education. Other educational institutions include the Theodore Roosevelt School and John F. Kennedy School operated by the Indian Education Division of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the East Fork Lutheran Mission School. Higher Ed opportunities are available through the regional Northland Pioneer College, which has a center at Whiteriver. Many Apache young people attend Arizona 's three state universities and other schools and colleges around the country.

Our reservation consists of 1.67 million acres (over 2,600 square miles) in east-central Arizona . It ranges in elevation from 2,600 feet in the Salt River Canyon on the southwest corner of the reservation to over 11,400 feet at the top of Mount Baldy , one of our sacred peaks. It includes some of the richest wildlife habitats in the state, and more than 400 miles of streams. It is home to the Apache trout, a species brought back from the brink of extinction through the efforts of the Tribe and many partners. Through the Tribe's Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation Division, many recreational opportunities are available on the reservation.