

THIS BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR PEOPLE IS DEDICATED TO THOSE WHO WENT ON BEFORE US AND BROKE THE TRAIL AND TO THE YOUTH OF THE NATION WHO REPRESENT OUR FUTURE

## **INTRODUCTION**

Many people think history is boring and does not count for very much. But the minute you begin to forget your own history is the time you begin to lose your culture. Once you lose your history it can be very hard to get it back and other cultures will claim your heritage and rewrite your history for you.

Today after a century and a half of hard lessons the Yavapai-Apache people have a bright future. Times are good now, but it has been a hard road for your Grandparents and as far back as their Grandparents. The modern Yavapai-Apache Nation has status as a sovereign government within the larger United States government and this special arrangement is based upon our unique culture and our ancestors having original connections to this land.

This current status as a federally recognized Tribe is based solely on our history as two distinct Native cultures whose roots are found right here in central Arizona. If we lose our history we lose our distinctive culture. If we lose our distinctive culture we run the risk of losing our status as a sovereign government. Once our sovereignty is lost we become run of the mill citizens like everyone else; no reservation, no tribal courts, no Indian Health Service, no government aid, etc. Oh yes and we could also lose the charter for the casino, so there goes the per capita. So you can see even if you are not interested in history you still have a stake in keeping your culture alive.

## **LET'S GET ORIENTED**

The modern Yavapai-Apache Nation is the combination of two distinct Tribal People; the northeast Yavapai (also known sometimes as the Yavape'), some Wipukapaya and Kewevkapaya People and the Dilzhe'e Apache often referred to in books and movies as Tontos or Tonto Apache. Both of our ancestral tribes lived in the Verde Valley and the surrounding country for centuries. The Dilzhe'e lived mostly east of and the Yavapai mostly west of the Verde River, but they overlapped on both sides when they needed to. Along the River Yavapai and Apache families shared resources and even intermarried. A lot of the old timers who grew up in that way spoke both languages.

There is lots of talk about who was here first. Technically Yuman speaking people, like the Yavapai, the Hualapai and Mohave have been in the desert southwest for thousands of years and the Apaches for not quite as long. But really it does not matter too much because both Tribes were in this region for so long that it is considered the original homeland for the Yavapai and Dilzhe'e Apaches alike.

Because both People have been here for so long there are no stories about coming from other places. All people move around when they are forced to for a lot of different reasons; drought, invasion, lack of resources or simply believing the grass is greener over there. Your ancestors were so successful right here in this country that they stayed until being forced to go to San Carlos in 1875 after centuries of living successfully in this country.

Both groups lived with a light hand and silent step on the landscape leaving barely a trace for anyone to find later. Families and groups of families (bands) moved seasonally following the resources in a pattern that had been successful for centuries. Here is where the agave is best in the spring, here is where the acorn is ready in August, here is where the pinyon and deer are in October, here is where we camp in winter, here is where we go for the summer after we plant the corn and melons, etc.

Balance between understanding the natural world and what was needed to survive out on the landscape was the formula for success. Even though families moved with the seasons the People were rooted to particular places on the landscape by clan affiliation. These connections came down through the mother and the father's line and were reinforced by alliances with other families when help was needed. Everybody knew where they came from, who they were related to and who they could count on

The Elders knew where the plant medicines were, they knew the best locations for the right stones for tools and other critical knowledge such as; where to find salt, where the best mineral paints and pigments were, where a special event that happened years before and the lesson that it told. In those days daily life out on the landscape was school and the Elders where the teachers.

There was no messing around about knowledge then. You either learned what you were taught so you would have the skills to raise your own family, take care of the elderly and feed them or you didn't learn. In which case you either starved or were exiled because

you served no purpose to your People. It was not an option to be lazy. Everybody had to participate in their own survival and help their relatives when called upon.

There was no government aid, no Walmart, no pizza, no hunting license applications, no flush toilets, no diabetes, no BIA and no punch clock. Everybody depended upon everyone else being responsible. If one person did not hold up their end then everyone in the family suffered.

Personal discipline was critical to the survival of everyone. Life was good, but hard. There were rules for sure, but they were not written down, only spoken. People were tough, mentally and physically, because they had to be. You can be very proud of your ancestors; they were independent, they survived for centuries on an unforgiving landscape. They could take care of themselves and their children without the help of any outside agencies.

Today you hear a lot about freedom and responsibility, but it is only mostly talk. Our Apache and Yavapai ancestors were responsible without books full of rules and regulations and they were truly free without anybody telling them what it meant. They already knew what it meant to be free, because they lived that way.

### **SO WHAT HAPPENED?**

As you know the world is a big place and people move around. Some are looking for more space, some are escaping the problems where they come from, some looking for gold, some for adventure, and some for all of the above.

For whatever reason Spaniards moving north out of Mexico crossed into Arizona just after 1540 and for over 300 years they dominated the trade and warfare in the region. But most of this influence is to the south around Tucson, east toward Pueblo country and farther west. The Spanish have very little to do with central and northern Arizona spending most of their time and energies in the better watered areas of New Mexico, along the Rio Grand and coastal California. So the Dilzhe'e and Yavapai never felt the direct effect of Imperial Spanish rule even though the Spanish crown claimed all of your original homelands as part of their empire. The Apaches did however raid into Old Mexico on a yearly basis.

In 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War and official ownership of your lands passed to the American federal government in Washington D.C. Once again other people in other places were extending the control of their vision over our culture without consultation or input from us.

It was now almost 1850 and the ambitions and greed of a few men in Washington D.C. would from this point forward determine the course of our history and the other Native Peoples of the region. In 1852 the Treaty of Santa Fe stated that the Apache lands of Arizona would be left alone and the Dilzhe'e were guaranteed peace and safety in their own country. The government did not know who the Yavapai People were at that time

and no treaty was ever made with them. The government of course reneged on the Treaty of Santa Fe. It was not worth the paper it was written on

The American government was nothing like the Spanish or Mexican one. The Americans were organized and had plans to steamroller through the southwest; laying down railroads, digging mines, tapping the springs, grazing thousands of head of cattle, building towns, dams, bridges and so on. The use of the landscape would be reconfigured to suit the needs of the new aggressive culture. This meant removing Tribal People and their cultures from their homelands to make room for the cattle. Anyone opposing the change would be wiped out; everyone else would be gobbled up. Meaning they would be assimilated or confined to a specific place designated for that purpose.

In 1848 gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in California and "forty-niners" by the thousands began crossing Arizona on the southern route to the gold fields. These newcomers brought with them; European diseases, they encroached on treaty lands, they killed wild game they did not need and claimed the land around springs and along creeks to use for livestock.

A lot of these fortune seekers ran out of supplies, patience or simply broke down and just stayed in Arizona Territory instead of going all the way to California. By the mid 1850's settlers were streaming into the territory and the friction and violence began across Apache country to the south and east before finally encompassing the entire region after the American Civil War (1861-1865).

In 1863 gold was discovered on Lynx Creek in Prescott right in the middle of the old Yavapai Homeland. This discovery marked the beginning of the end for traditional Yavapai culture in the region. Within two years of the gold being discovered Yavapai People were being hunted down like animals in their own country.

History is more complex than describing wars, but from 1863 through 1873 our ancestors were subjected to the constant and brutal wars of conquest conducted by the American government across the traditional Dilzhe'e and Yavapai Homelands.

By 1871 the federal government believed they had central Arizona under control and by Executive Order, President Grant established a series of "Military Reserves" across Arizona Territory for all of the various Tribal People who had "come in" or surrendered. The Rio Verde Reserve was just one of these set asides and consisted of 800 square miles along the Verde River from Camp Verde up river to the old wagon crossing from Prescott to Santa Fe near Drake. The Rio Verde Reserve was established for the Apaches and Yavapai that surrendered east of the river and a separate parcel was set up at Camp Date Creek near Prescott to hold the Yavapai who surrendered on the other side of the mountains.

By 1873 the army thought it would be more efficient to have all of the 'prisoners of war' in one location instead of in two places so during that spring the rest of the Yavapai still

west of Mingus were brought over the mountain and dumped onto the Rio Verde Reserve. Often times these people were called Apache Yumas, or Mohave-Apache. There were small groups of other Indian People thrown into the whole disaster as well. Family and band sized groups of Southern Paiutes, Mohaves, Chemehuevi's and Hualapais were moving into the central parts of Arizona trying to escape the holocaust swirling around the region in their own homelands bordering the Colorado River. It was during this time several Navajo brothers moved into upper Oak Creek Canyon and set up residence. Eventually they married ladies from our People and had families. This was at the place still called Indian Gardens today.

Today those 800 square miles of the Rio Verde Reserve seem like a lot of land, but for your ancestors who had around 20,000 square miles of traditional lands under their control it was like piling a dozen people in an elevator. 800 square miles was enough room for about 10 families to live on in the old style by hunting and collecting what they required to be healthy and free.



Note the Location of the Modern Towns for Scale.

But the People had no choice other than to make the best of a bad situation. They had been promised food rations and farming tools, but never received the amount or quality of what was promised. In fact as late as 1950, some of the old timers were complaining to the BIA men at the monthly meeting, “Hey, when are we going to get those tools and shovels you promised us?” (personal communication Vincent Randall)

Those first two winters on the Reserve (1872 and 1873) a lot of the young and the old died of , influenza, malaria, whooping cough and other introduced diseases that were caused by cramming too many people into such a small place. Not to mention bad water, unhealthy and inadequate rations. Also the government had no tolerance for the old religion, so the army would find out who the spiritual leaders were, then take the Holy Men out at night into the desert and shoot them so there would be nobody to pass on the old knowledge and songs. The songs were very important. Today the government will deny they ever did this, but there are still Elders in Camp Verde and Clarkdale who heard these stories from their Grandparents and know they are true.

## **EXODUS**

Despite the death and complete disruption of the old way of life the People survived and made do with what little they were given or could scrounge. They even had some good success in farming along the river. They supplied the cavalry with hay, the soldiers with vegetables and a few had gardens for themselves. They were so successful in fact it cut into the profits of the government contractors in Tucson that supplied the army with hay and food.

Just like today the government was more concerned with the happiness of their contractors than the promises made to Indians and after pressure from the contractors President Grant rescinded (abolished) the Rio Verde Reserve by Executive Order in April 1875 the month after your ancestors were removed from their home country. But it was really even more complicated than that. The government simply used the contractor issue as an excuse to remove the People from the Valley. What the government wanted was the water for the new settlers and their livestock. There was not room enough for the new Americans with their cattle and the First Americans in the Valley. So our ancestors were removed to a dry place far away to make room. The important lesson here is that the River is the key to the Valley and our water rights today must be protected and preserved for the Nations future

Thus in less than three years the land given to the Dilzhe’e and Yavapai was taken away for a second time and all of the People were force marched to the concentration camp at San Carlos.

An army Doctor (Corbusier) was present on the awful journey and describes the trip as follows;

*“.....that band was composed of all ages, from babes in arms to old men; the sick and the lame, and pregnant women; all with burdens, on foot and discouraged; slow, stubborn*

*cattle to be driven over rough mountain trails. All of these with inadequate clothing-worn-out shoes or moccasins, or none at all-and snow at every turn. It was a cruel, cruel undertaking, and the marvel of it is that any of them reached their destination.”*

This criminal event is what you have come to call Exodus Day commemorating the departure on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 1875 of your ancestors on that terrible 180 mile journey.

## **EXILE**

An entire generation of Yavapai, Dilzhe'e and hundreds of other Apaches were born and raised at San Carlos. From 1875 to 1900 it was the temporary home of our People. While our ancestors stagnated at San Carlos as Prisoners of War, our homelands were confiscated by the federal government and doled out to the new settlers.

It was at San Carlos where the old way of mobile hunting and gathering ceased as a way of life. Life was completely regulated by the Army; food rations, permits to leave the reservation, who could be a scout and suppression of traditional religion. During these years the healthy traditional diet was replaced with a nutritionally useless diet of coffee, scrawny beef, white flour and sugar. It was this diet that put our people on the road to diabetes.

Vincent Randall relates a story from those times his Grandmother told him. The Apaches were sick from eating the unhealthy Inaah food so her family would sneak off the reservation during the night so they could collect the traditional foods they missed. If they were caught they could have been shot.

It was also at San Carlos where people lost their old names. The army personnel and employees of the Indian Service could not speak Yavapai or Apache let alone pronounce the names of people. One of the major changes on the road to civilization was the shedding of old names for new Anglo ones. This was accomplished over a number of years beginning in the 1880's. During each annual census names would be changed in conjunction with church services in the form of baptismal names.



Waiting In Line For Rations At San Carlos

The very old folks were not forced to change their names, but with each new baby there was pressure to have them baptized and given a Christian name. Often times the child was given one of his or her parents or Grandparents traditional names as a last name. This can be seen happening year after year on the San Carlos census rolls. A couple of examples on the Yavapai side are the corruptions of Kw'al to Quail/Kwail and the old man Ba na ha having his whole name turned into his children's last name of Bonnaha with Christian names attached to the front. On the Apache side the Anglo officers and census men could not even pronounce, let alone spell the names so a lot of Apaches got names like Smith or Joe Tonto or Smiley and so on.



Women Hauling Wood To Camp. This Was Also A Way To Make A Little Extra Cash For Cloth And Other Necessities Of Life.

So over the course of about twenty-five years from 1870 to 1895 our ancestors were; (1) Expelled from their lands, (2) Force marched to a prison camp in alien terrain, (3) Had their names taken from them and (4) Turned into strangers in their own lands when they returned home to the Verde Valley and other locations such as Prescott and Payson. Not much worse can happen to anyone. Yet they survived, because they were tough and you can be very proud of that. Remember you carry that legacy with you. It is your history, not someone else's.





Line-up of Company B, Camp Verde Scouts, circa 1880.

### **THE RETURN HOME**

By the 1890's the United States wars of conquest in the west were over and the government in Washington had other fish to fry. The funding and focus required by the Army or Indian Service to administer reservations as prisoner of war camps was drying up. Many established Reserves quit operating and Indian People were simply allowed to leave. That was the case at San Carlos. San Carlos remained an official reservation, but there was no longer military authority to enforce who came and went. When people realized that they could leave, a lot of them did just that. Families and individuals began the long walks back to their home country; Payson, Camp Verde, Red Rock Country, from Prescott down hill to Wickenburg and even westward towards Bagdad (Arizona).



## **BACK HOME AGAIN**

Some people took two years to make it home, stopping at one place for a season, stopping at another for six months to work on a road or dam project, stopping at another place because of a new baby being born or an old person being sick. One way or another many people made it back to where they or their parents had lived before the wars and the forced Exodus. When they came back into their old homelands they were in for a shock. In the twenty-five years that had passed since the removal the old places had filled up with settlers; farmers, ranchers, merchants, teamsters, teachers and government workers were everywhere. All of the best land and springs were spoken for and instead of returning to their own lands our ancestors were pushed to the margins and treated as second class citizens. Once again the hardship was not over and they were forced to make the best of a bad situation. But at least they “were home” in some degree.



circa 1942

By 1905 dozens of Yavapai and Dilzhe'e families were living in the nooks and crannies of the old home country. Families were situated mostly around the Verde Valley from Clarkdale to Fossil Creek and from Red Rock Country through Mormon Lake, but beyond as well, stretching from old Tolkapaya country to the southwest of Prescott to Dilzhe'e country this side of Cibecue. But these people had no official place to go and were considered squatters wherever they set up camp. Even though most of the returned Indian people were working steadily at the smelter, on roads, on the Fossil Creek flume, in local mines, the dam at Roosevelt and as maids, laundresses, wet nurses, and cooks. The problem was one of control. The government wanted to know where the People were

and what they were up to. This was impossible with everybody spread out on the landscape.

Local governments and white citizens were and are obsessed with ownership and possession of lands. If someone is just floating around the landscape then trouble was sure to follow. Taking the lands, changing everyone's names and religion was not enough, a complete lifestyle makeover was needed and the local citizenry forced the government to take action.

Around 1906 the government appointed a school superintendent to oversee the welfare of "the Camp Verde Apaches" which meant all of the Indians in the Valley; Yavapai and Dilzhe'e alike.

In 1908 the superintendent complained to the government that he had "Indians spread out in family camps for over 100 miles from Ash Fork to Turkey Creek" and no means of counting them or keeping track of their coming and going.

At this time he requested funds to purchase a few acres in Middle Verde to build a school and establish a good well so there would be a safe place for families to come to and a place to educate the children. This strategy worked and by 1915 there were several acres in Middle Verde set aside for "the Apache Community of the Verde Valley", which of course consisted of Dilzhe'e and Yavapai families. This same process occurred in Prescott and Payson as well, but at later times. In the case of Payson they did not have their own land until 1972.

(Middle Verde-old days, Hugo Bonaha)



The acquisition of the trust lands in Middle Verde at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century marked a new beginning for those who survived the wars and the generation of exile at San Carlos. Now there was a place for tribal people in the Verde Country to call their own and as small as it was it was better than nothing. It provided a safe haven and the base on which the modern Yavapai-Apache Nation took hold.

A lot of the men had been scouts in the campaigns against Geronimo and they had government pensions and in many cases allotments of ten acres, which gave them economic freedom and status in the community. Many of you probably know about a Great Grandfather or Great Uncle who was a scout.

The next generation of Yavapai-Apache children were raised in their own country and although their lives were extremely different from their Grandparents they at least had a place to call home. And most importantly the wars were over, at least the wars being fought against Indian People. There are of course many kinds of war; cultural, economic and educational to name a few.

For the Indian children living in the Valley they were able to attend Indian Day Schools in Middle Verde and Clarkdale from around 1910 to the late 1920's. At that time the Yavapai and Dilzhe'e children were to be mainstreamed into Public schools run by the state of Arizona instead of the Federal government, because Indian parents were paying sales, wheel and local taxes. So at Clemenceau, Mayer, Fossil Creek (Irving), Beaver Creek and Cottonwood the children began to attend public school. Indian children were attending public school everywhere in the Valley except at Camp Verde, which refused to allow Yavapai or Apache children into the classroom. This cause legal wrangling that went on for years and can be attributed to a single cause, unfortunately that cause was racism. In those days tribal children from Camp Verde were either sent to Phoenix Indian School or a boarding school out of state.

Often time's families would move to Cottonwood or Clarkdale for the school year to make sure their children could stay at home.





## **TRANSITION**

The next 25 years (1916-1941) were marked by the relative economic prosperity of the 1920's followed by the Great Depression (1929-1940) and World War II (1941-45). The economic boom of the Twenties did not mean too much to Indian people because they were mostly working at the low end jobs. Just as the Great Depression did not affect Indian people to as large extent because they were pretty poor to start out with. The two big events of this era for Yavapai-Apache history were the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which established the Yavapai-Apache Tribe as a federally recognized entity and Americas entrance into World War II in December of 1941. These two events did much to shape modern Yavapai-Apache history since the initial wars of conquest, which took your country from you.

The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, and the subsequent ratification of the Yavapai-Apache Tribal Constitution in February of 1937, actually brought us further into the federal realm of federal money and politics in tandem with the assurance of sovereignty. Then as the Great Depression closed, World War II changed everything for almost everyone. Until the War many Tribal People moved freely between; the Verde Valley and San Carlos, Middle Verde and Prescott, Prescott and Fort McDowell and Payson and back again. Beginning in 1934 that movement started to slow down and by 1950 or so the

BIA pretty much had everybody situated on the rolls at one place or another and that made it harder to jump around the reservations.

World War II brought Yavapai-Apache men into the mainstream of American life. What had begun as a tradition of serving as scouts for the Army (between 1872 and 1915) ended with the wars of conquest and the border skirmishes with Mexico. These men learned the benefit of the wages, status and greater opportunity that came with federal service. Many families lived off of these scout pensions for years after San Carlos and it is a very interesting part of your history. Almost all of these scouts died between 1928 and 1935, Jim Ketchum, George Russell, John Nasta, Green Hat, Major Smiley (actually a sergeant), Don Juan and Mocat to name just a few were highly regarded even in the white community. So your People have not only the distinction of being survivors, but the reputation as a Warrior People as well.

During World War II Yavapai-Apache men from the Verde Valley saw action all over the world, where they were regarded as fine soldiers and in many cases heroes. Many of these men were the nephews, sons or grandsons of scouts. Several were killed in the Pacific fighting Japan.

David Sine served in the Bush Masters, an elite unit that fought jungle warfare in New Guinea and the Philippines. Ned Russell fought with the Marines in the Hell of Iwo Jima, Ted Smith Sr. fought across Sicily with General Patton and saw intense action up the boot of Italy where he won a Bronze Star for bravery. He was a combat Sergeant at the age of 19. These three men are still alive, a wealth of knowledge and source of great pride to the community. Harry Hood Sr. and Buddy Smith were both killed in action in the Pacific Theatre. There are many more men like these too numerous to mention. In fact Ira Hayes (a Pima man from Phoenix) was one of the Marines to raise the American flag on Mount Surabachi, (Iwo Jima).

Because of men like them Tribal people across America gained immense respect from the mainstream white culture. That respect carried over into the years after the war. These veterans went to college on the G.I. Bill, they got good jobs and worked all over the country without fear or worry of the intense discrimination experienced by their parents and by many of their relatives who stayed "down on the rez" after the War.

But official Tribal status and the opportunities created for the survivors of World War II did not make it easy for everyone. Men also served in Korea and Viet Nam and they came home to situations that were often racist and full of the bitter pill of second class citizenship. Being Yavapai-Apache between World War II and 1995 was no cake walk, but the communities, which make up the Nation (changed from Tribe to Nation in 1992) hung together and were moving forward even if only by one inch at a time.

## **TODAY**

At least for the younger generation the biggest event since World War II in your world was the opening of Cliff Castle Casino in 1996. Money changes everything for better and for worse. For anyone born after 1985 the opportunities you will have are completely different than anyone who has come before you. Your lives will be dramatically different

than the lives of your Grandparents just as their lives were radically different from their own Grandparents. And that is the one constant in the world, CHANGE. History never stops it is always changing. History did not end when our ancestors went to San Carlos and it did not end when Ted Smith Sr. wiped out that German machine gun nest in Italy.



## **TOMORROW**

History is going on right now. Yavapai-Apache history is happening with each passing day. Your job is to decide what kind of impact you are going to have on it or if you are going to let it fade away and pass you by. If you allow it to fade away your culture disappears with it and when that happens something fine in this world will be lost that cannot be brought back. It is up to you!

