

OPINION / COMMUNITY

Nation to commemorate the Long March of 1875: Camp Verde to old San Carlos

BY DON DECKER,
YAN News

It's been 142 years since the Yavapai and the Apache people were forced marched from the Verde Valley to old San Carlos, a distance of over 190 miles.

This month, the Nation commemorates this event on February 25, Saturday at the Veteran's Park below the casino.

It was not an easy march as the walk began on February 27, 1875 under the watchful eyes of the U.S. Cavalry.

The following April, then President Grant abolished the Rio Verde Reserve in Camp Verde by Executive Order.

It had been less than 3 years ago when the land was given to the Yavapai and Apache and then taken away by a simple stroke of a pen.

A copy of this original map is on the wall at the Nation's administration office that shows the western boundaries touching present-day Paulden in the west and 10 miles on each side of the Verde River east to the steel bridge on I-17 by Middle Verde.

Based on a diary of the Surgeon Dr. Corbusier who was stationed at the Ft. Verde at the time, a thousand Yavapais and Apaches were rounded up and the walk began.

Corbusier wrote in his Army journal: *"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 the mountains. All of these 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,"* said Corbusier about the round up and march to old San Carlos.

It was a harsh winter that February and the high waters crossing what is now called Fossil Creek 20 miles east of Camp Verde and East Verde River



A scene from old San Carlos where Apaches and Yavapai lined up for food rations. Summer temperatures hovered about 100 degrees often. Notice adobe bricks architecture.

north of Payson was filled with raging waters according to Corbusier.

This was also a time of many deaths along the way. In a story told many times, one of the men in the march had carried his wife in a basket whereby, he had cut holes in the large basket so that his wife could sit inside of the basket as she was carried to old San Carlos.

This scene is depicted in a massive bronze sculpture that sits in front of the Nation's culture center today. Designed by Nez Pierce Indian artist, Doug Hyde of nearby Mayer, Arizona, the sculpture signifies the very essence of the long march to San Carlos that fateful year of 1875.

Taking just over two weeks of walking through mountainous country, cold weather conditions and the harsh treatment by the U.S. Cavalry, Yavapai and Apaches persevered at all cost to endure this march that culminated in the sandy bottom of the Gila River 15 miles southeast of present day San Carlos, home of more Apaches who were also imprisoned there as well.

Summer temperatures made it uncomfortable with the heat rising above 110 degrees on some days. There were no trees in the area and the buildings were made from adobe bricks and lumber. Food was scarce and all of the Indian prisoners there had to stand in line for hours for food rations that consisted of unhealthy food such as flour, coffee, and sugar. Photographs of these ration lines in San Carlos are part of the historical records of the Yavapai-Apache today.

Life was completely regulated by the federal government at the prison. This was a place where there was no wild game to eat, no berries to eat and life subsisted on new types of food. The old hunting styles had finally ceased. Even the religion of the people was suppressed.

In the late 1800s, a small group of Apache resistors broke out from old San Carlos and made their way into the high country in what is now Gila County north of Payson west of present day Woods Canyon Lake where a battle ensued between the U.S. Cavalry and the supposedly "renegade" Apaches who were cornered in the Big Dry Wash stone canyons. It was July 6, 1882 and various contingents of the Cavalry converged on Big Dry Wash to confront the Apaches including a group from Ft. Verde who arrived late that day after it was over.

Some historical records have different interpretations of this encounter but the fact remains, many Apaches were killed as a result of this battle at Big Dry Wash. Officially, this was the



Apache women cooking. Handsewn ribbon skirt with calico print top and buckskin boots.

last battle between the U.S. Cavalry and Indians in America.

For 25 years, the Yavapai and Apache were literally imprisoned without any recourse to return to their lands until the turn of the century when many returned little by little.

The wars of conquest in the West were over and funding of the various prisoner of war camps was coming to an end and in old San Carlos the military no longer had the authority to regulate who could come and go. As a result, more and more Yavapais and Apaches began to return to Verde Valley area. Some stopped at Payson, Gisela, Prescott into Wickenburg and Bagdad west of Prescott.

When they returned to the Verde Valley at the turn of the century, the Yavapai and Apaches saw the many ranches that were established along the Verde River. Everywhere, the settlers and farmers, ranchers, merchants, teachers and government workers occupied the traditional lands that once belonged to the Yavapai and Apache.

The returning Yavapai and Apache settled back in their traditional lands by fitting in as best as they could considering what had happened 1875.

Phoenix had become a bustling city and other towns such as Flagstaff had a cross-country railroad going across their town which brought in more outsiders.

By 1915 several acres had been set-aside in Middle Verde for the Yavapai and Apache families. This same process occurred in Prescott.

The 1934 Indian Reorganization Act was enacted in Washington, D.C. and the subsequent ratification of the tribal constitution in 1937 solidified the social and political organization of the Yavapai and Apache.

Through WWII in the 1940s brought special recognition of Yavapai and

Apache soldiers who went off to fight in foreign wars overseas defending the very country that denied their ancestors the very freedom they were defending.

Besides the greatest change for the Yavapai-Apache Nation in the establishment of the Constitution in 1992 giving the official name of "Yavapai-Apache Nation", the Cliff Castle Casino was started in 1995 which changed the economic picture of the Yavapai-Apache Nation.

From the profits of the casino, a per capita payment was established which continues to share the profits from the casino on an annual basis to every member of the Nation. In addition, a special account set-aside for juveniles who are not adult age that receive the proceeds from the casino.

The surrounding communities of the Yavapai-Apache Nation also receive a small portion of the casino's proceeds each year. For the 2017 year, the towns of Camp Verde, Sedona, Cottonwood, Clarkdale, Jerome and Yavapai County office in Cottonwood will receive a 12% set aside in revenue sharing (average of \$18,000 each) beginning February 14.

A new 122 -room casino hotel is being constructed that will be opening in April this year that will welcome a new addition to the casino building above the old hotel.

The commemoration of the survivors of the 1875 is a momentous occasion to be acknowledged by the Yavapai-Apache Nation on February 25, 2017.

Editor's note: Parts of the details in this story came from a publication entitled "A Short History of the Yavapai-Apache Nation" authored by Vincent Randall, Apache culture director and Chris Coder, YAN archeologist-@2003 which is available from the Nation. Contact Judie Piner: jpiner@yan-tribe.org



DON
DECKER
From the Editor

This issue marks a special edition about the mapping of the march that occurred

on February 25, 1875 when the Yavapai and Apache people were forced marched from Verde Valley to old San Carlos, a distance of 190 miles.

This past December, during a 2-week period, a small group of Yavapai-Apache began their walk eastward toward old San Carlos to identify the traditional trail of 1875 and to use modern technology to measure and document the estimated location of this trail.

There were some real challenges along the way that consisted of traversing ravines, washes, creeks, mountain passes and facing the cold elements of winter.

The enclosed report was encouraged and fully supported by the current administration to fully inform you about the documentation that was conducted by the Nation's cultural departments and the Preservation and Technology department.

We hope that these stories will help you in finding out more about the history of our people-the Yavapai-Apache.

Don Decker, Editor

Exodus Day-February 25, Saturday

Schedule of Events: To held at the Veteran's Park below the casino

Saturday, February 25- 6:00 A.M.

Morning blessing by Apache and Yavapai spiritual leaders in Boynton Canyon located at Enchantment Resort (West Sedona/exit on Dry Creek Road on 89A and follow signs west 4 miles to Enchantment Resort)

10 A.M. -11:20 Memorial march starting at the Veteran's Park below casino and ends at culture center 2 blocks east.

-honor songs with Yavapai and Apache singers for runners from San Carlos.

11-20-1 P.M. Community lunch by the Nation, welcome, introductions

1-5 p.m. Cultural events with Yavapai traditional gourd and bird dancing.

* Previous day on February 24, Friday at 1 p.m. a luncheon for elders at the Recreation Center in Middle Verde.

**Social dance in Middle Verde with Harold Kenton singers from San Carlos. Sundown.

***Discounted rooms available \$61.99 at Hotel at Cliff Castle Casino 928-567-6611 for room reservations.