

COCHISE

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A Chiricahua Apache chief, son and successor of Nachi. Although constantly at feud with the Mexicans, he gave no trouble to the Americans until after he went, in 1861, under a flag of truce, to the camp of a party of soldiers to deny that his tribe had abducted a white child. The commanding officer was angered by this and ordered the visiting chiefs seized and bound because they would not confess. One was killed and four were caught, but Cochise, cutting through the side of a tent, made his escape with three bullets in his body and immediately began hostilities to avenge his companions, who were hanged by the Federal troops. The troops were forced to retreat, and white settlements in Arizona were laid waste.

Soon afterward the military posts were abandoned, the troops being recalled to take part in the Civil War. This convinced the Apache that they needed only to fight to prevent Americans from settling in their country. Cochise and Mangas Coloradas defended Apache pass in SE Arizona against the Californians, who marched under General Carleton to reopen communication between the Pacific coast and the East. The howitzers of the California volunteers put the Apache to flight. When U.S. troops returned to resume the occupancy of the country after the close of the Civil War, a war of extermination was carried on against the Apache.

Cochise did not surrender until September, 1871. When orders came to transfer his people from Cañada Alamosa to the new Tularosa reservation, in New Mexico, he escaped with a band of 200 in the spring of 1872, and his example was followed by 600 others. After the Chiricahua reservation was established in Arizona, in the summer of 1872, he came in, and there died in peace June 8, 1874. He was succeeded as chief by his son Taza. The southeasternmost county of Arizona bears Cochise's name.