

1238 W. Palo Verde Drive
Phoenix, Arizona
June 19

Dear Stanley Vestal;

I'm asking Bill Gulick to forward this because I do not have your address. What I'd like, if you'll be gracious enough to offer it, is advice.

I have a contract to write THE STORY OF GERONIMO for Grosset Dunlap's Signature Books and I suppose I needn't tell you that it is, at the same time, one of the most difficult and one of the most interesting assignments I've ever had. Unfortunately Geronimo kept no diary and those who've written about him - at least in the books I've read so far - seem very prejudiced. I just don't believe that Geronimo was all black and that the soldiers and various civilians whose prime objective was to take him out of circulation, were all white.

Odd Halseth, with whom I suppose you are acquainted, has offered the most authentic advice and background material to date. Odd is the Curator of Phoenix's Pueblo Grande Museum, but even he wouldn't pretend to answer some questions.

One fact I'd like to unravel is why he was called Geronimo. His Apache name was Golikay (I'm not sure of the spelling) and Geronimo, or Jerome, is supposedly a name given him by the Mexicans. According to the version I have, the Apaches were attacking some Mexican soldiers and Geronimo kept running in to kill Mexicans in hand to hand combat and each time he came some Mexican would say, "Here comes Geronimo!" Odd doubts that and so do I; personally I'm more inclined to think that, angered with Cochise because of the peace treaty Cochise made with the white men, Geronimo severed final ties with his former tribe by giving himself a new name too.

While mentioning Cochise, did he make peace with the whites because he knew that his Chiricahua Apaches could not continue to resist anyhow?

Another point I'd like to clarify is the massacre that supposedly occurred outside the Mexican town which the Apaches knew as Kas-Kai-Ye and was called Janos by the Mexicans. According to the information at my disposal, a party of Apaches, led by Mangus Colorados, went to Janos to trade and I've pretty well substantiated the fact that, during brief intervals of peace, they did trade with Mexicans as well as with other tribes; I even have lists of trade goods. According to the story I have, while the warriors were trading, Mexican soldiers from other towns attacked their encampment and massacred everyone, among whom were Geronimo's mother, wife, and three small children. Only eighty warriors, with few arms and not much of anything else, survived. Mangus Colorados rallied them, they made a forced march back into