The Indians of the Fort Apache Region

Albert B. Reagan
THE INDIANS OF THE FORT APACHE REGION

ALBERT B. REAGAN

GENERAL REMARKS

The Fort Apache region is the present home of the White Mountain Apache and San Carlos Indians, a branch of the Athapascan family. They call themselves Dine’ or Indé’, meaning “the people.” At the present time the White Mountain Apache Indians are under the Fort Apache Agency and the San Carlos Apaches under the San Carlos Agency.

THE WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE DIVISION

The White Mountain Apaches \(^1\) live on the White Mountain Apache reservation which is located in the southern part of Navajo, southwestern corner of Apache and northeastern part of Gila counties, Arizona, 86 miles from Holbrook, and 65 miles from Rice Station, the nearest railroad point. The total area of the reservation is 1,742,220 acres. The eastern and northern sections of the reserve are covered with a dense growth of timber of pine and cedar and other valuable varieties. Valuable coal lands also cover the northern part of the reservation, where considerable mining has been done. Also considerable deposits of copper, asbestos, and gold are found in different localities on the reservation, especially in the Cambrian and older pre-Cambrian rocks.

The total land under cultivation does not exceed 4000 acres. The rest of the reservation is used for grazing purposes, the largest part of which is leased by whites, the leases yielding about $70,000 per year. The estimated total value of the reservation is about $20,000,000.

In 1914 the tribe comprised 2,495 Indians, living in bands designated from A to Z. These were scattered over the reservation, a band occupying a certain valley or location.

Agriculture is practised only on a small scale and is not sufficient for the support of the tribe. The chief industry is cattle raising, the total number of cattle now exceeding 7,000 head. They also have over 8000 head of horses and burros. A move is now on foot to supply the Indians with cattle enough to replace

\(^1\) Dr. F. W. Hodge in Hand Book on American Indians (Bull. Am. Ethn. 30, part 2, page 945).
those of the white men now on the reserve through lease permits. If this could be done the White Mountain Indians would be self-supporting.

The agency is at Whiteriver, three miles north of Fort Apache. The Agency and school force is composed of 75 employees. The schools are the Fort Apache Indian (Boarding) School at Whiteriver, East Fork day school, three miles east of Fort Apache, Canyon day school, three miles west of the fort, and Cibicue day school at Cibicue. These schools combined can accommodate only about 400 pupils, which is not adequate to accommodate the number of children of school age on the reservation, though a considerable number are physically disqualified for school attendance. A day school should be erected on Carrizo creek, one at Chiddeschee on Canyon creek, and one at Lupe's camp on Salt river.

The Roosevelt Indian School is now being opened at Fort Apache for Navajo children.

The average elevation of the reservation is 5600 feet. The location is quite desirable on account of the mild winters and cool summers.

THE SAN CARLOS DIVISION

The San Carlos Indians, which are composed of the San Carlos proper and several other Apache bands including the Coyotero, Tonto and Mohave Apaches (Yavapai), live on the San Carlos reservation between the Gila and Salt rivers south of the White Mountain Apache reservation above described. The reservation contains 1,834,240 acres, of which 111,000 acres are covered with dense pine forests. About 1,500 acres are under cultivation in the San Carlos and Gila river valleys and about 7,000 more acres could be cultivated if there was sufficient water for irrigation. A move is now on foot to develop the water supply by the storage system so that all possible land can be irrigated and cropped. The crops raised are vegetables, corn, melons, alfalfa, and wheat, producing a value of about $35,000 annually.

The agency rolls at San Carlos show 2,610 names of Indians belonging to the four bands of which the tribe is now principally composed. They are splendid workers and their labor is in constant demand, but unfortunately the tulapai drink habit greatly retards their progress.

The revenue of the reservation, accumulated principally from

---

2 Dr. F. W. Hodge in "Hand Book on American Indians" mentions the San Carlos bands.
grazing permits, amounts to about $75,000 annually or enough money to about cover all the expenses of the reservation and agency, exclusive of the independent boarding school at Rice Station; the San Carlos are not a heavy charge upon congressional appropriations.

The Indians themselves have 2,500 head of cattle and thousands of ponies. Besides 44,000 head of outside cattle are grazed on 1,080,000 acres of the reservation under grazing permit, 750,000 acres being reserved for the Indian's stock.

There are about 200 miles of road used by the public on the reservation, which is maintained mainly at the expense of the reservation. A steel bridge across the San Carlos river and one across the Gila nine miles distant cost together $53,600; $100,000 more road work is needed on the reserve.

Besides the cattle and agricultural industry of the reservation, the agency has a grist mill that grinds about 60,000 pounds of flour for the Indians and about the same amount for the agency each year, besides rolling probably 300,000 pounds of barley. The government also has a saw mill, located in the forest thirty-six miles from the agency in which an engineer, a sawyer and many Indians are constantly employed throughout the year. In 1914, this mill produced 672,000 shingles, 44,442 feet of siding, 99,113 feet of planed lumber, and 295,000 feet of rough lumber.

The schools of the reservation are the Rice Station Boarding School and several day schools, which are well attended. The agency and school force consist of about 45 employees, exclusive of those employed at the Rice Station school.

Cornfields, via Ganado,
Arizona.