



## At Last---GERONIMO gets a MONUMENT And NOBODY BLOWS IT UP



By Oren Arnold

**C**ITIZENS near the Mexican frontier have recently erected an odd rock monument and—rather surprisingly!—it has not yet been dynamited.

It commemorates the original west-American gangster, the real tough guy of the old Southwest. His name was Geronimo.

He was an Apache Indian chieftain, and his idea of a good time was to capture a dozen palefaces and cut off their fingers and toes, pitch some of them on thorny cactus plants, and tie others over beds of glowing coals. He showed especial finesse in the destruction of white women and children.

He did those things 60-odd years ago, and the pioneers who survived him nourished their hate and multiplied it when he died, so that Geronimo's raids became a terrible memory.

When new families with new loyalties crowded into New Mexico and Arizona, however, they had memories mainly of the East. Geronimo was just a name in local history. When they got around to reading about him, they decided he was very quaint and "picturesque."

Geronimo, bloodthirsty Apache chief, shown at left, terrorized two states half a century ago. His idea of a good time was to tie palefaces over beds of glowing coals. At right, the new monument near Douglas, Ariz., which marks the spot where he surrendered.

That was all right, as a private opinion. But when the new people began saying so, a social disturbance rocked part of two great states. When the newcomers first wanted to erect a monument to Geronimo's memory, a form of war itself broke loose.

Ed McGinley (who recently died in the Arizona Pioneers' Home at the age of 107) almost had a spasm when he heard it. So did other oldtimers.

The foundation rocks were laid, in cement mortar. Cement and tools were stacked around and it is said that sketches for the statue itself were taking shape.

Then one night a loud explosion reverberated through the mountain pass. At dawn, workmen found the foundation blown to bits.

That all happened more than 15 years ago.

The new people in the state then were astounded. They had been attracted to Arizona by the rapid commercial and industrial expansion, new reclamation projects, new mining development, new tourist resorts. They had thought to become good citizens of their adopted state, by commemorating some of its historic "heroes." But—Bang!

"You ain't seen nothing, yet!" said the old-timers, speaking this time through one of their group named Clayton G. (Uncle Clay) Washburn. Mr. Washburn is a prospector, can't remember when he wasn't. He says that he was a grown man when Geronimo finally surrendered to Gen. Nelson A. Miles of the United States Army in September of 1886, and that he had personal friends tortured to death by Geronimo.

**T**HE matter of the Geronimo monument died a natural death after the dynamiting, and was forgotten by most people. Rapidly, too, the old-timers passed on.

When Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal came along, with federal money to spend on public works, the proposed Geronimo monument was revived. Dr. A. C. Lockwood of the University of Arizona faculty lent a sympathetic ear; so did a few other influential men. CWA workers were soon turned loose on the job.

Doubtless the ghosts of many a pioneer has been indignant, but the monument was completed at last. Its builders were careful, however, not to "praise" Geronimo. They simply marked the spot where he surrendered. The monument is far from its original site.

It stands beside the highway 35 miles east of Douglas, Ariz. It is 22 feet high, on a base 18 feet in diameter, is made of colorful boulders found nearby. Imbedded in it are several Indian metates (grinding stones for corn). Buried inside it in a sealed copper box are newspapers, photographs, and other records of this era.

Its builders tried to dedicate it without any more publicity than necessary, because they wanted it to endure. It has stood for several months now. Sadly enough, the fiery pioneers are gone, or impotent with their years.

One of them did come in to town at Phoenix, and declared tearfully that he would tear the blankety-blank monument down with his fingers if he could get to it.

"Might as well erect a monument to John Dillinger or Al Capone," he swore, "only they wasn't half as bad as Ge-



ronimo. I saw that Indian's band burn a farmer's home. Geronimo took the woman. He bashed out the brains of her little uns, and had a fire dance around her husband, who had fought as long as he could."

The Geronimo campaign of 1885-86 has been called the most remarkable in the history of America's Indian wars. In that campaign, 35 men and eight boys led by Geronimo defied 5000 U. S. Army troops, 500 Indian allies, and 300 or more armed civilians!

It sounds incredible, but it is recorded history. It is even more incredible to hear that Geronimo never was "captured," but eventually surrendered on invitation; this notwithstanding the many liars who later claimed to have "helped capture" Geronimo.

The wily chieftain's handful of men were the real gangsters of pioneer days, and they enjoyed just about every illegal pleasure they could conceive. Their field of operation, in New Mexico and Arizona, was roughly 200 by 400 miles.

