

Geronimo



Look at this genuine Native American face: when white people saw it, they were scared to death!

Geronimo was born from an Apache tribe around 1829 near Arizona: a common Indian among many others, leading a regular life.

His early years

But the slaughter of his family by Mexicans changed him from a peaceful Indian into one of the boldest warriors of all times! He took part in numerous raids in northern Mexico and across New Mexico and Arizona. His Mexican adversaries gave him the nickname of "Geronimo", the Spanish version of the name "Jerome".

In the years to come Geronimo and his warriors began ten years of intermittent raids against white settlements, alternating with periods of peace.

Figura 1 Geronimo in 1887, photo by Ben Wittek.

In 1882, US Army General George Crook was called to Arizona to conduct a campaign against the Apaches and Geronimo surrendered in January 1884. But when he heard about his future hanging, he escaped from the San Carlos Reservation accompanied by 35 warriors, and 109 other men, women and children.

At least 5,000 white soldiers and 500 Indians were employed in the final capture of Geronimo. Five months and 1,645 miles later, Geronimo was caught in his camp on Sonora Mountains.

Exile

He was then promised an exile in Florida and a permission to return to Arizona; but this promise was never kept and Geronimo and his band were shipped to Florida and put to hard labour.

Over the years, stories of Geronimo's ferocity made him into a legend that fascinated people all over the world, and in his late years he appeared at numerous fairs, selling souvenirs and photographs of himself.

He died on February 17th, 1909, never seeing again his homeland, beloved Arizona.

Now answer these questions:

- 1) How did white people react when they encountered Geronimo?
- 2) Who gave this Native American Legend the name of Geronimo?
- 3) What did the Mexicans do to Geronimo's relatives?
- 4) Did Geronimo ever make peace with the Whites?
- 5) Who was George Crook and why did he go to Arizona?
- 6) What did Geronimo do at San Carlos Reservation and who followed him?
- 7) What did the Whites promise him when he decided to give up the fight in the Sonora Mountains?
- 8) Did the US Government keep faith to the promises it had made to Geronimo?
- 9) Why were people fascinated by Geronimo, in your opinion?
- 10) Why do you think Geronimo took part in fairies? How do you think he felt? Explain.