

**Agreement Between the Chokonon Band of Chiricahua Apache  
and the Department of Sonora, Mexico April 23, 1850**

A Cultural and Historical Research Project by the

**Chiricahua Apache Mimbres Band Tribal Nation,**  
an Historical Indian Nation



**Mexico and its Provinces- Six Treaties 1835-1850  
U.S. - Five Treaties 1835-1872, Including Treaty of Santa Fe,  
1852**

**Agreement Between *the Chokonen Band of Chiricahua Apache*  
and the Department of Sonora**

April 23, 1850

To His Excellency, the Minister of War and of the Navy, on this date I write the following:

“No. 297 = Excellent Sir: The military commander of the settlement of Fronteras located at Bacoachi writes the following to me in his dispatch dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> of this month, and which I copy textually =

Today the Apache Valtasar el Chino is setting out for that city with the purpose of discussing with you the points contained in the worthy note of the 19<sup>th</sup> of this month dealing with Yrigoyen or the other chieftains naming a representative who will go to that place for the purpose of reaching an appropriate agreement between both parties, and of consolidating further the peace treaties that they have requested. The Chieftain *Yrigoyen* and the braves *Escriba*, *Birjan*, *Yrineo*, *Calderon*, *the Yaqui*, and *an old man from Tiguinaline* called *Cavamillo* are here with four more, which I omit in order to be brief. They are waiting here for your decision, which should be brought back by the aforesaid Chino.

The said Apache, with an escort of five men, did come before me. He gave the customary assurances of his good faith and then said that the chieftains Yrigoyen and Moraga, and the other Indians who were by that time agreed on seeking a peace, wished to consolidate it and establish themselves in their former lands, where they hoped to receive some assistance from the government so as to live peacefully with their families, and without having their children obliged to steal in order to live, being able rather to support themselves by their work. Then, in a long talk I tried to inculcate in him the best feelings towards humanity, towards a social life, towards the sacred duties which every man has in this regard, and to the contrary in which he was born. After hearing me attentively, and apparently being pleased and convinced, he agreed to honor and contribute, using his influence with those who had named him representative so that they would observe the content of their articles included in the answer which, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of the same, I directed to the commander of Bacoachi, and which are as follows:

It is true, as you indicated to me in your dispatch of the same day, that last night the Apache Valtasar el Chino came to this city with the mission of talking to me in the name of the chieftain Yrigoyen and the Apaches Calderon, Yrineo, the Yaqui, etc; and after hearing what he wanted, which was just what I had supposed, I reached an agreement with him that he will take back to the chieftains:

1<sup>st</sup>. Assuming that they are disposed to settle at the several military posts of Bacoachi, Babispe<sup>1</sup>, and Santa Cruz, they should do so immediately.

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<sup>1</sup> Today Bavispe. Goyónimo Redfeather.

2<sup>nd</sup>. For this purpose, those who wish to live at that post should come in to it, while those who wish to live at Babispe and Santa Cruz should go there, taking a passport from you, a dispatch with this note inserted for the respective commanders, and two soldiers that you will supply to accompany and introduce them.

3<sup>rd</sup>. Both the chieftains that stay here, as well as those who will go to the other posts that have been mentioned, shall give you information about their men, women and children so that orders can be given in advance for gathering the grain to support them.

4<sup>th</sup>. All of those who promptly settle themselves will have the right to receive a medium ration, beginning with the month of July and thereafter, since due to the lack of grain none can be given to them today.

5<sup>th</sup>. As a result, they assume the responsibilities they had under the Spanish government, to wit: obedience to the authorities, a ready availability for joining the troops in pursuing the broncos [renegades], respect for other people's property, and their cooperation in getting the youth to go to work, and to catch the bad ones.

6<sup>th</sup>. Those who will not accept these articles may withdraw at once to wherever they like, and from that time on they will be considered broncos.

So that news of this agreement may reach all the Indians, see to it that in addition to the explanations which el Chino himself may give, it be repeated for them by Lucia, Soledad, El Campo, and other Indians who speak Spanish, and by the Drum who, as I told you, should go to the encampment for this and other purposes already agreed on. You are to inform me promptly and completely of the results.

I have the honor of inserting it for your Excellency, for the information of his Excellency, the President; it will, nevertheless, continue to be my responsibility to report on the final results since, in spite of what has already been reported, the outcome cannot be foreseen with complete certainty, due to the audacity, double-crossing, and unreliability of the Indians.

At the same time and for the same purpose I enclose for your Excellency a copy of another dispatch which on the same day the said commander sent to me, thereby informing me of the statement given to him by a recently returned captive. The statement clarifies the true motive behind the Apaches' asking for peace, with number 2, his answer, and with number 3, another note of mine regarding the future ransoming of captives, and I hope that as regards this particular matter your Excellency will be please to issue instructions, telling me also whether the fund for feeding the Indians will support this expense, as I have provisionally ordered, because there is no other one to which it can be charged.

I offer you, as always, my loyalty and obedience."

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I transcribe it for your Excellency, attaching also for your information the three copies for your knowledge. Please accept my due esteem and respect.

God and Liberty, Arispe.

April 30, 1850

José Maria

Elias Gonsales

[Translated from the original Spanish document. Italics original]

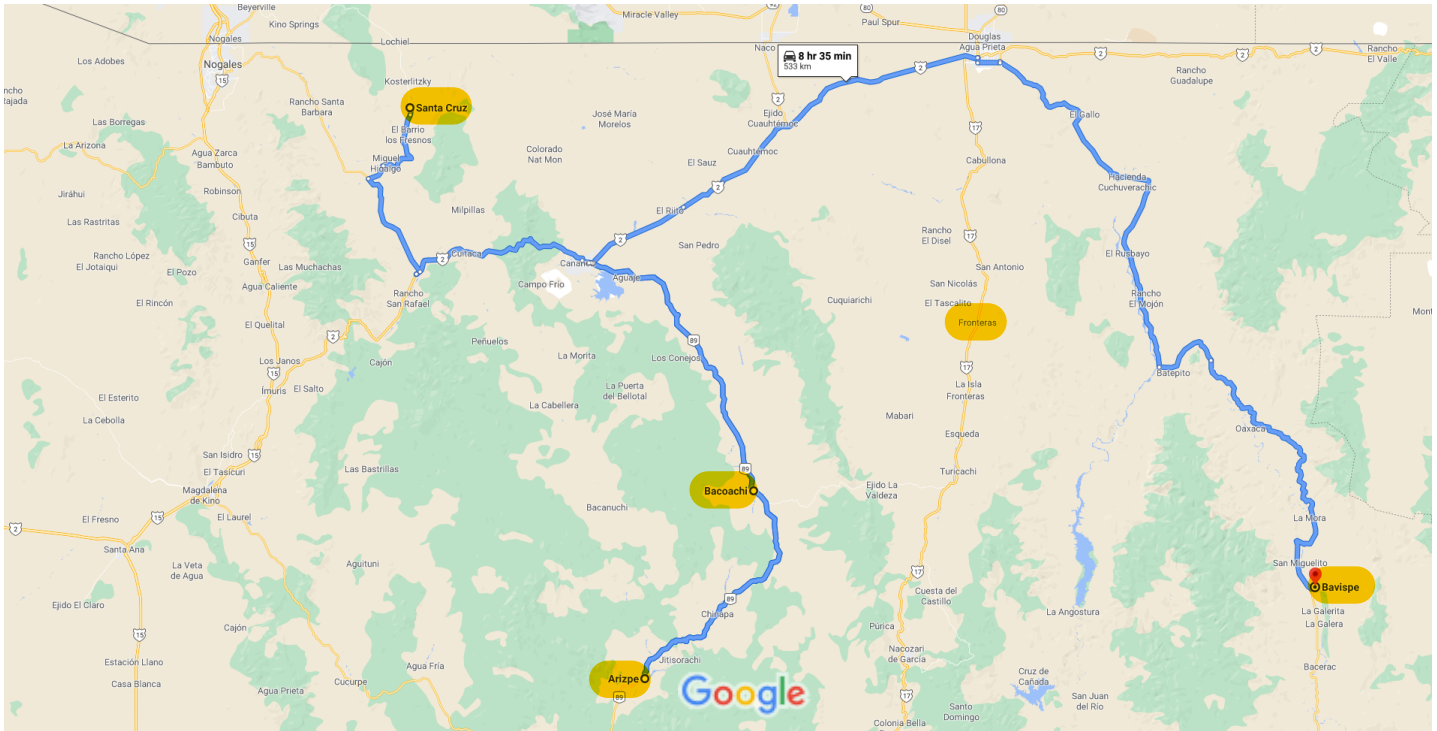
SOURCE: *Ramo Militar*, July 3, 1850, Archivo Historico del Estado de Sonora, Hermosilla, Mexico, folder 221.

[Comment:

Indian treaties were used by many countries to achieve peace with Indians and/or secure the loyalty of Indians in combat with enemies of the dominant, treaty partner. This treaty is of both varieties. In exchange for rations (Article 4<sup>th</sup>, “medium rations”), the Indians agreed to be loyal to Sonora (Article 5<sup>th</sup>, “ready availability for joining the troops in pursuing the broncos [renegades]”) and to be at peace with Sonora (“Apaches’ asking for peace”). This treaty is typical of Mexico’s view of Apache as unworthy of assimilation. The author of the treaty reported that the outcome of the treaty “cannot be foreseen with complete certainty, due to the audacity, double-crossing, and unreliability of the Indians.” Mexico and its northern provinces preferred extermination rather than assimilation. When neither was perceived as realistic, Mexico was motivated to enter into the Treaties of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Gadsden Purchase, to shift the “Indian problem” from Mexico to the United States.

For geographical perspective, see the attached map of Sonora.

Transcript of treaty prepared by, and comment prepared by, Goyónimo Redfeather, Attorney General for Chiricahua Apache Mimbres Band, 02-24-2021.]



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