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Mangas Coloradas: Chief of the Chiricahua Apaches. By Edwin R. Sweeney.

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**Mangas Coloradas: Chief of the Chiricahua Apaches.** By Edwin R. Sweeney. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. 578 pages. \$34.95 cloth.

Mangas Coloradas was one of the great chiefs of the Chiricahua Apaches in the nineteenth century. Indeed, in the middle of the century he was not so much the greatest warrior but the wisest leader, whose leadership extended beyond his own local group of Bedonkohe to embrace Chihennes, Chokonens, and Nednhis. That is, at crucial times, he was the chief of all the tribes of Chiricahua Apaches inhabiting southwestern New Mexico, southeastern Arizona, northwestern Chihuahua, and northeastern Sonora.

Sweeney concludes his fine study of this great leader in elegiac terms:

The story of the Apache Indians of the Southwest has its beginnings in the most primitive form of the age-old struggle for survival. In the very beginning the adversary was merely nature in her extremes of weather, in disease, in famine. From the time of the white man's first experience in their land it becomes an ordeal, a story inclining to tragedy. (pp. 464–465)

With the admirable meticulousness of a true scholar, Sweeney chronicles a piece of the latter part of this history, the plight of the Chiricahuas from Mexican Independence to the American Civil War. Employing government records and correspondence, personal memoirs and reflections, Sweeney patches together a narrative of Mangas Coloradas—no mean feat, considering the paucity of eye-witness accounts of the man himself.

Sweeney boldly but convincingly identifies the young Mangas with the emerging Chief Fuerte, thus filling in a large part of the early story that would simply be missing before Mangas apparently gets his nickname in 1842. Unlike previous biographers and historians, Sweeney is modest in his claims and often debunks legends that have been taken as fact, such as Mangas' putative beating at the hands of miners from Piños Altos in the late 1850s.

The biography has a clear thesis: Mangas Coloradas was not primarily bellicose but visionary, trying to do what was best for his people. Yes, he led raids, especially against the Sonorans, whom he distrusted. He did so because, as Indians and Hispanics competed for dwindling resources, raiding became at least one-third of the Apache's economy. Moreover, after centuries of encroachment on their territory—and enslavement of their people, a topic Sweeney barely mentions, though historians since Jack Forbes have shown that hostilities between Apaches and Hispanics almost always followed slave raids—the Apaches were the inveterate enemies of the Spaniards and now the Mexicans. If Mangas Coloradas never sought accommodation with the Sonorans, occasionally he would join some of the other bands in trying to reach accommodation with Chihuahua and settle peacefully around Janos in return for rations. But even this state, less bellicose compared to Sonora, again and again engaged in treachery against the Indians, from offering scalp bounties to poisoning their whiskey.

On the other hand, from the advent of General Stephen Watts Kearny's in New Mexico during the Mexican-American War, Mangas was under the illusion that he could trust the Americans. Responding especially to the enlightened Indian agent, Michael Steck, Mangas signed a treaty with America and began farming in his beloved Santa Lucía in the Gila-Mogollon area of southwestern New Mexico. He subsequently waged war on the Americans only after severe provocation: first, a viciously gratuitous attack on peaceful Chihennes farming along the Mimbres River by miners from Piños Altos led by adventurer James Tevis; second, Lieutenant George Bascom's killing of Chokonon hostages, one of whom was Cochise's brother, who barely escaped by cutting his way out of Bascom's tent; and third, Mangas' supposed beating by miners. Sweeney, however, doubts this last provocation, and can find little evidence to support it.

Sweeney also has a minor thesis. Like General George Crook in Walter Hill's 1993 film *Geronimo: An American Legend*, he believes that the army was the Chiricahua's best friend, and that it protected the Apaches from the greed of settlers and miners.

Today it not only has become fashionable but also politically correct to denounce the army for exhibiting a lack of understanding and compassion for the Indians whom they were charged with either controlling or subjugating. . . . Mangas Coloradas's people probably trusted the military far more than they did the civilians and miners who had swallowed up their territory. (p. 380)

Indeed, when the combination of Indian agent, superintendent for Indian Affairs of the Territory of New Mexico, governor of that territory, commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C., the Senate (which ratified treaties), and the president was in benevolent alignment, then the army, itself under the right commander, could be a friend to the Indians. But just as in Mexico, where the genocidal urge against Apaches came not only from American adventurers and scalpers but also from governors and generals, American treachery came not just from the miners at Piños Altos, who attacked peaceful Chihennes, if not Mangas Coloradas himself, and adventurers like Jack Swilling, who betrayed Mangas into the hands of the army, but from army officers like George Nicholas Bascom and James Henry Carleton and Joseph Rodman West. Lieutenant Bascom, in his zealous quest to retrieve an Anglo captive, could even be excused for inexperience, stupidity, and officiousness in his attempt to hold Cochise hostage. But generals Carleton and West, in their blind pursuit of a policy of chastisement and even extermination, as Sweeney himself admits, were, like many of the Mexicans, genocidal racists. The Hispanic conquerors at least made a hypocritical pretense of baptizing captives before they executed them. For the Americans the Apaches were not souls to be saved; they were children to be fed or, if enough rations could not be found for them, to be exterminated. After all, they were not really considered people. If they had been considered so, the United States and Mexico would not have conducted a treaty negotiating the

Chiricahua territory without even consulting them—as if they did not even exist. The Mexicans, though conquered, were fellow Europeans, fellow Christians.

Mangas Coloradas, who came in to talk peace, was murdered in the middle of the night in captivity by the United States Army, which allowed itself to be the agent not just of Manifest Destiny but of the Lockean principle that those who did not turn the earth to account had no right to it. Thus much can be inferred from Sweeney's restrained text, for example, when he writes of the civilians who opposed the creation of a reservation for the Chiricahuas on choice land: "After all, they must have reasoned, what if this proposed reservation contained valuable minerals? Would those not go to waste in the domain of the barbaric Apaches?" (p. 393)

What Sweeney finally cannot bring himself to say or even imply is that Victorio alone among the Chiricahua chiefs finally understood that there could be no accommodation with the European, that total war was the only alternative, if suicidal—what Mangas Coloradas called "war to the knife." Despite Mangas'—and later Cochise's—attempts at accommodation, where is the Chiricahua Reservation? In the period after Mangas Coloradas, the greed of the miners at Piños Altos was succeeded by the greed of southern Arizonans; the massive punitive campaign of General Benjamin Bonneville against the Bedonkohes and Chihennes in 1857, which Sweeney dubs "the first and the last of its kind in Apache warfare," was duplicated and outdone by General Nelson Miles' even more massive punitive campaign against Geronimo in 1885 and 1886 (p. 354). The settlers and the army both wanted total revenge against these most formidable freedom fighters, a revenge that virtually obliterated the Chiricahuas. The closest the Chiricahuas could ever get to their homeland after being held for a quarter of a century as prisoners of war was the reservation of their often hostile relations, the Mescaleros, in southeastern New Mexico. It is as if the mangled corpse of Mangas Coloradas still wanders the ghostly terrain of his appropriated country alone, alienated, unappeased.

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**No Borders.** By Joseph Bruchac. Duluth: Holy Cow! Press, 1999. 100 pages. \$12.95 paper.

To say that Joseph Bruchac is only a Native American writer would be to put limits on the scope of his work. Since his first collection, *Indian Mountain and Other Poems* (1971), Bruchac's output has been wide-ranging. While his Abenaki heritage, its myths, traditions, and accompanying ideology, play an influential role in his writing, his vision in *No Borders*, his most recent, major collection of poetry since *Near the Mountains* (1987), is surely global. In *No Borders*, Bruchac writes with the ease of an experienced poet, demonstrating a keen awareness for the subtle nuances of language. *No Borders* is not a