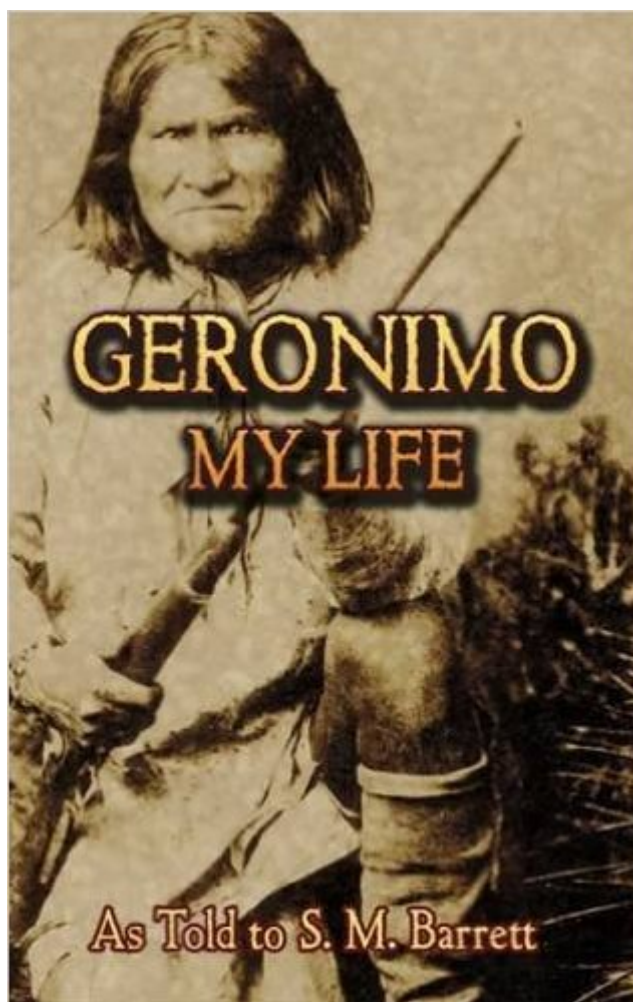


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Geronimo: My Life (Native American)



Synopsis

In this, one of Native American history's most extraordinary documents, a legendary warrior and shaman recounts the beliefs and customs of his people. Completely and utterly authentic, its captivating narrator is the most famous member of the Apache tribe: Geronimo. The spiritual and intellectual leader of the American Indians who defended their land from both Mexico and the United States for many years, Geronimo surrendered in 1886. Two decades later, while under arrest, he told his story through a native interpreter to S. M. Barrett, an Oklahoma school superintendent. Barrett explains in his introduction, "I wrote to President Roosevelt that here was an old Indian who had been held a prisoner of war for twenty years and had never been given a chance to tell his side of the story, and asked that Geronimo be granted permission to tell for publication, in his own way, the story of his life." This remarkable testament is the result. It begins with Geronimo's retelling of an Apache creation myth and his descriptions of his youth and family. He explains his military tactics as well as traditional practices, including hunting and religious rituals, and reflects upon his hope for the survival of his people and their culture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a great primary document as well as a fascinating story which almost did not get produced. Geronimo lived under house arrest (we might say parole) in Oklahoma and was visited by a native American school principal. The conversation pleased Geronimo so that the chief offered to relate his life story. The Army corporal in charge felt this inappropriate as making a hero out of a war criminal

and so refused. The principal appealed to President Theodore Roosevelt who issued appropriate orders allowing the project to proceed. Thereafter, on several sessions, the Principal (& translator) and a transcriptionist met with the chief in various places- home, field, etc.- to record Geronimo's recollections. It is a window into another way of life that Americans have tried to deny. Geronimo begins with the Apache creation myth which explains the creation of the Apache tribes but not of the other tribes with which they interacted. This is our signal as to the perspective of Geronimo's people (and people in general), narrowly focused on one's own people/needs/identity which determines the moral perspective. After 20 years in captivity, the chief has already begun to transcend this perspective. But the way of life to which Geronimo bears witness has characterized many peoples throughout the world. In a world of scarcity, people WILL die. Which people survive is often determined by their willingness take from others, even kill others to get it. Edomites are described as such in the Bible (and their territory is similar in many ways to Arizona); Caesar and Jefferson had to fight wars against peoples who made their living from piracy. Geronimo speaks with respect of his father who was a leading warrior in their division of Apaches, having learned much from him.

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