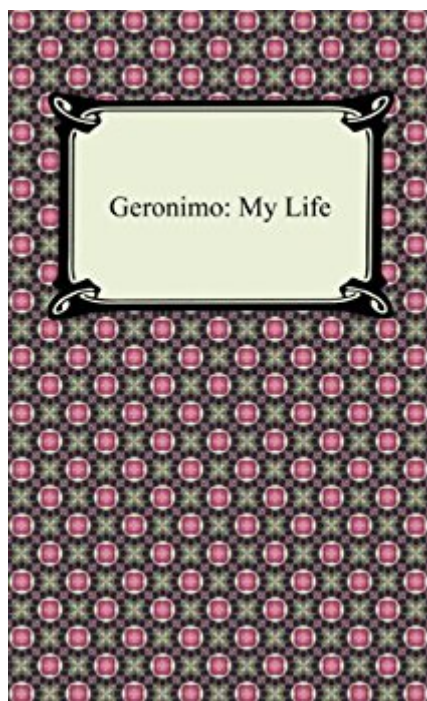


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Geronimo: My Life



Synopsis

Geronimo, one of the greatest Apache warriors and American legends, gives his firsthand account of his life in the aptly named autobiography "Geronimo's Story of His Life." The famous chief orally told his story to S.M. Barrett, a Superintendent of Education in Oklahoma, and Barrett published the book with little to no deviations from Geronimo's interview. This is extraordinary, considering that many propaganda campaigns were created against Geronimo in an attempt to rally the American public against the Native Americans. "Geronimo's Story of His Life" tells the warrior's side of the story about his time fighting the Mexicans for land, surrendering to the American government, being used as a carnival and fair sideshow attraction, and his deep love for his people and their land. Geronimo's dedication to peace between the American government and the Apache people is obvious with the warrior's diplomatic words and actions after his surrender; even when the American government broke the peace treaty to allow his people to move to Florida unhindered, Geronimo remained honorable and maintained his side of the bargain. Also present is a deep knowledge, respect, and description of Apache traditions, written with the hope of explaining these cultural aspects to a white American audience. "Geronimo's Story of His Life" is simply an outstanding memoir which helped bridge the gap between Apache and American relations in a difficult time in American history.

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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