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A Pledge of Peace: Evidence of the Cochise-Howard Treaty Campsite

ABSTRACT

Historical maps, documents, and photographs have been combined with archaeological data to confirm the location of the Cochise-Howard treaty camp. Brigadier General Oliver Otis Howard, his escorts Lieutenant Joseph Alton Sladen and Thomas Jonathan Jeffords, and the Chiricahua Apache chief Cochise met in the foothills of the Dragoon Mountains of southern Arizona in October 1872 to negotiate the surrender and relocation of this “most troublesome Apache group” (Bailey 1999:17). Warfare between the Apache and the Americans had been ongoing for more than a decade. This meeting culminated in a peace treaty between Cochise’s Chokonen band and the United States government. Photographs of unique boulder formations confirm the treaty-negotiation location, and written landscape descriptions provide further verification. Wickiup rings, other feature types, and artifacts provide archaeological confirmation regarding the nature and spatial layout of the camp and clarify the vagaries of the historical record.

Introduction

One of the most notable Native American figures of the so-called Indian Wars in the American Southwest was Cochise, who in the third quarter of the 19th century was leader of the Chokonen band of the Chiricahua Apache that was centered in southeastern Arizona (Figure 1). General Grant’s administration “had succeeded in making peace with every tribe that was on the war path except one; that one was the Apache tribe of the notorious chieftain Cochise” (Howard 1907:445–446). Consequently, one of the most notable events relating to this period was the peace treaty consummated between Cochise and Brigadier General Oliver Otis Howard with the decisive assistance of Thomas Jonathan Jeffords. A plaque at the foot of the Dragoon Mountains has commemorated this historical event, but the on-the-ground location of the treaty conference has evaded identification for several reasons. Historical events, like these treaty talks, took place in remote areas without benefit of precise coordinates. Without some kind of physical evidence, there is generally no way to ascertain the exact location. The subtlety of the material culture relating to this prominent Native American group has precluded identification of the treaty-conference location based upon archaeological evidence until now, particularly without corroboration from other sources. Moreover, it is generally beyond the capacity of the archaeological discipline to isolate evidence that is uniquely and inimitably indicative of such a specific event.

Through a series of means, the Cochise-Howard treaty site has been now identified. Various types of evidence have been used to finally confirm the accurate location of the treaty camp. These include the combined use

![FIGURE 1. General location of the Cochise-Howard treaty site in the Greater Southwest. (Map by Erick Querubin, 2004.)](image)
of historical documents and photographs along with archaeological evidence. Notes and letters relating to two newly identified photographs purport to illustrate the location of this historic event. One of these photographs, taken 41 years later by Robert Forbes in 1913, was in the archives at the Arizona Historical Society, Tucson. The second, taken 23 years earlier by Alice Rollins Crane in 1895, was in the possession of the Sladen family of Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan. Unique rock formations were used in these two separate instances to pinpoint the subjects photographed, and both photographs share the same general location. In the process of identifying the physical locations, these images were matched to a historic journal and reports (some with original signatures) of this event. The authenticity of the photographs was also evaluated with respect to written correspondence between six different individuals (Crane, Jeffords, Forbes, John Rockfellow, Sladen, and Howard) as Crane (1895a) attempted to verify the content and legitimacy of the photographs for a book she intended to prepare on the event. Rockfellow (1913), a longstanding local resident whose family is the namesake of a dominant landform in the Dragoon Mountains, provided another account and a map. Sometime before 1913, Jeffords conveyed to him an independent and somewhat more precise source of information on the route to the treaty site. Rockfellow’s map corresponds well with first-hand accounts of the journey and treaty discussions. Information was initially provided in a journal in which Sladen kept a log of daily activities. Two distinct adaptations arose from the Sladen journal. One is a lengthy letter written by Sladen (1896a) to Crane soon after the event. The other was compiled by an aide to Sladen’s son, Fred, to which Fred added an introduction. The account here is based on this 1896 letter and original pencil notes that summarize the trip made by Sladen in the 1880s (Sweeney 1997:19).

The senior author examined archaeological evidence to further assess the conclusions drawn and to verify that the photographs were accurate depictions of the treaty-conference location, as has been attributed to them. Owing to recent progress in the identification of Chiricahua Apache material culture, the archaeological evidence was able to authenticate the presence of this group at this location and provide independent evidence that lends credibility to the photographs. By combining information from these three sources (historic records, historic photographs, and archaeological data), it is possible to correct past conventional wisdom about the location of the treaty site, make progress toward dispelling previously held notions about the nature of the Apache archaeological record, and make effective combined use of historical documentation and the archaeological record.

**Background**

The Apache were organized as a series of bands rather than as a single tribal entity. Lacking organized leadership, each band was led by an individual who was recognized for his bravery, skill, and wisdom and who maintained this status by the agreement of the band’s members (Opler 1941:462–471). [This discussion of various Apache groups follows conventional anthropological nomenclature regarding tribal and band structure, rather than that preferred by some historians.] Cochise has remained one of the best-known Apache leaders because of his prominence and his fierceness as a warrior. He is remembered for his sound judgment and diplomacy because of his willingness to negotiate and find peace with the U.S., in spite of having lost several close relatives to army treachery in 1861. A brash and inexperienced officer named George Bascom held him and his band accountable for the kidnapping of a local rancher’s son. This was the renowned Bascom Affair, which sparked a particularly violent era of Apache-American conflict.

Hostilities were further inflamed by the deceptive events surrounding the betrayal and murder in 1863 of Mangas Coloradas (“Red Sleeves”),...
Cochise’s mentor and father-in-law. Cochise, who prized truthfulness and valor, was enraged over the injustice and treachery and, as a consequence, Cochise and his people embarked upon 12 years of hostilities against the U.S. military and the settlers of southern Arizona and northern Mexico (Terrell 1974; Sweeney 1991). Throughout this period Cochise exacted vengeance:

By one scholarly estimate, for two months after the Bascom affair the avenging Indians killed an average of twenty white people every week. Another opinion was that the ten long years of his hostility cost approximately five thousand lives in raids and battles, a retribution so terrible that his earlier reputation was all but forgotten (Haley 1997:228).

If this last estimate is correct, the number represents about one-third to one-half of Arizona’s resident non-Native population in the 1860–1870 period, depending on which census data are used, or around 5% of the total population in the adjoining territories of New Mexico and Arizona. It is probable that the cost to lives on the Chokonen side was equally high. It is no wonder that popularized accounts convey colorful, although somewhat overstated, sentiments when referring to this era. “There is scarcely a mile on any road in the Territory where the traveler is not pointed out some spot which the Apaches have consecrated with the blood of a victim; nor is there a family that has not suffered in some manner from the depredations” (Cozzens 1988:84). The depredations of this dreaded leader were brought to an end with the Cochise-Howard peace treaty, undertaken in October 1872 in the shadow of the Dragoon Mountains in southeastern Arizona. The combined efforts of archaeological and historical inquiry provide evidence to confirm the location where this historic treaty was negotiated.

Historical Account

The period from 1861 (the Bascom Affair) to the eventual end of hostilities in 1872 has become popularly known as Cochise’s War. It was not a good time to be a settler in Arizona Territory. Cochise used his extraordinary influence among Apache nations to muster large war parties, frequently combining his Chokonen band with the Warm Springs band of his equally powerful father-in-law Mangas Coloradas.

On 15 July 1862, the allied leaders wrote one of the greatest chapters of the history of the Indian Wars when they ambushed Gen. James H. Carleton’s California Volunteers who were making their way through Apache Pass in an effort to head off advancing Confederate troops. Cochise knew nothing of the American Civil War at the time. He had witnessed the abandonment of several forts and was acutely aware of a marked drop in the white population. He logically concluded that the “White Eyes” were on the run because of Apache warfare effectiveness. The two-day ambush resulted in a pair of key events that had dire consequences for Cochise’s future: Mangas was gravely wounded in one of the skirmishes, and Fort Bowie sprang up within weeks to protect Apache Springs from future Indian attacks. Mangas’s brush with death served to lessen the fire in his own heart, and he returned to his former philosophy of trying to live in peace with the intruders—a position that would soon lead to his treacherous murder under a flag of truce at the hands of overzealous U.S. troops.

Apaches saw Mangas’s death in 1863 as “the greatest of wrongs,” and it deepened Cochise’s hatred and distrust of Americans. For nine more years, Cochise outfought and outmaneuvered troops from Fort Bowie on one side of the border to various locations in Mexico on the other. He killed settlers and military personnel from the U.S. and Mexico wherever he encountered them in a desperate bid to hold on to his land, protect his dwindling band, and...
right the wrongs that both invaders had brought upon him.

The Apaches were losing ground, and Cochise was painfully aware of it. His band could not replace lost warriors fast enough, while the invaders seemed to rain from the skies. His band was continually on the run, making the act of existence a hardship. One of his favorite retreats, the place in the Dragoon Mountains that had become known to the whites as "Cochise’s Stronghold," was no longer a safe haven. It was too near Fort Bowie, and his people were afraid even to make fires at night to cook their food or warm their meager shelters. By 1869, he began to look for ways to find peace. Throughout the years, several well-meaning individuals had attempted to find a peaceful solution to the Indian conflict. It was not until later, in 1869, that Cochise spoke to a U.S. officer for the first time since the Bascom Affair, when Captain Frank W. Perry set out to find him in the Dragoons for a talk. Cochise told the officer: "I have not one hundred Indians now. Ten years ago I had 1000" (Sweeney 1991:262–264). The fact that Cochise agreed to speak to Perry was significant. Up to that time, it was widely believed that any man who laid eyes on Cochise would not live to tell about it. Still, the war raged on, and Cochise committed some of his most brutal raids in the following year, fully convinced that the U.S. government could not be trusted and had meant only to wipe him and his people from the face of the earth.

Still, the inevitability of defeat must have been weighing heavily on Cochise’s mind. He visited Camp Mogollon (later to be Fort Apache) in 1870 to look into the possibility of moving his band to the reservation there, but he was apparently not comfortable with being in Western Apache territory (in what is today northern Arizona) where his influence was less than it was than farther south. Later the same year, Cochise showed up at the Cañada Alamosa reservation, never quite settling there but staying occasionally long enough to resupply his band with U.S. government rations. It is here that many believe Cochise first came into contact with Jeffords, who would soon become his only true non-Native friend.

Jeffords himself told two conflicting stories about how he met Cochise. The most popular is now a part of Western legend and the theme of the movie and television series Broken Arrow, where Jeffords rides alone into Cochise’s camp in a quest to engineer a ceasefire for his mail-riding employees (Sweeney 1991:283–303). Jeffords was called "Red Beard" by the Apaches because of his sandy whiskers and long reddish hair. He first came to Arizona Territory in 1859 and then functioned as a dispatch rider for the U.S. Army, conveying messages from Fort Thorn, New Mexico Territory, to General Carleton in Tucson. Afterward, he drove the Butterfield stage for 16 months between Fort Bowie and Tucson, giving up his position because of the danger associated with the job: 14 of his drivers in 16 months had been killed at the hand of the Chiricahua. Becoming a trader to the Indians, he learned the language and met with Cochise to establish a truce, founding an enduring friendship and respect between the two men but also providing the basis for accusations about his "cozy" relationship with the Chiricahua, which infuriated many of the other frontiersmen.

In 1872, Howard confronted Jeffords as he returned with a troop of cavalry, having acted as a scout in search of hostile Apaches (Seymour 1975:106–112; Sweeney 1997). Howard wanted Jeffords to escort him to a meeting with Cochise, to which of course Jeffords agreed. After the treaty negotiations were completed, Jeffords served as the first Indian agent to the Chiricahua, initially situated in the Sulphur Spring Valley. In 1875 the agency was moved to the Siphon Canyon location (Schuetz 1986:1–2). Howard was the second U.S. emissary of peace to be sent by the government. He was a distinguished and deeply religious man who had won prestige and lost an arm in the Civil War. He knew that Cochise was the key to peace in the Southwest and was driven in a quest to find him. With his young and courageous aide de camp, Lieutenant Sladen, Howard set about his task with no fear of failure, owing to a belief that God was behind Howard’s work.

Finding Cochise, however, was not the simple matter Howard may have envisioned. He and his small party spent long weeks and months chasing rumor and hearsay in an attempt to track Cochise and his people down. They eventually heard of a "mysterious white man" who had apparently made friends with Cochise and who could find him if anyone could (Sweeney 1991:351). This, of course, was
Jeffords—who by this time had won Cochise’s trust and friendship.

Howard found Jeffords at the fort near Hatch, New Mexico Territory, and persuaded him to lead the party to Cochise. Although Jeffords was known and respected by Cochise, he appreciated the perils of escorting U.S. military men into the Chokonen stronghold. He insisted that Howard go with him alone. Howard agreed in principle but insisted that Sladen be present—a fact that modern historians celebrate because of Sladen’s daily journal entries. This account of the entire two-week stay with Cochise was compiled into a volume entitled *Making Peace with Cochise* (Sweeney 1997), and two versions exist in archival form. For further insurance, Jeffords rounded up two young Apaches for guides (Ponce and Chie), both related to Cochise. All others in Howard’s party veered off to Fort Bowie when they approached the Dos Cabezas Mountains.

When Cochise left Cañada Alamosa for good in 1872, it was doubtless with the intent to do the best he could, without help from the government, whom he still could not bring himself to trust. Every official who had made a promise to him had broken it, usually in ways that spelled death or misery to his people. Coincidentally, however, it was this same year that the U.S. government, under the leadership of President Ulysses S. Grant, would try to implement a new peace policy.

On the evening of 29 September 1872, the small group finally arrived at the eastern flanks of the Dragoon Mountains where the men made a dry camp near present-day Pearce (Sweeney 1997:148, note 80). Everyone in the party, including the young Indians, was anxious and somewhat fearful at this point. Only Howard expressed content, relying on his unshakable faith. The next morning, the men crossed over the Dragoons using Middlemarch Pass, stopping at a pleasant little spring on the western side of the range. This is one of the locations apparently photographed in 1895 by Crane in the company of Jeffords, although whether this photograph still exists is unknown (reference to it is made in a letter from Crane [1895a] to Howard).

Without taking time to rest, Chie (one of the Apache guides) told Jeffords in Spanish that he would “go to the old chief’s camp” (Howard 1894:2). Sometime later, two Indian children, astride a single Indian pony, and Chie appeared out of the jagged rocks (Howard 1872; Sladen 1896a, 1896b:24). Howard (1872) stated that the Indians pointed the way the group was to go but would never ride ahead of it. The route taken was drawn on a map many years later by Rockfellow (1913), an acquaintance of Jeffords. The path wound around the outside of the mountains and then probably ascended Slavin Gulch up into a high valley that was surrounded by cliffs and characterized by the presence of a cienega (marsh). This description is consistent with the narrative given by both Sladen in his journals and Howard in an article written within weeks of their return. The Indian boys “led” them to “what you might well call a natural fortification” (Howard 1872:4). The area described fits well with the cienega, which can be found at the top end of Slavin Gulch. A group of Apaches greeted them in this protected area, but Cochise was not among them. The American party was dismayed at the prospect of having to wait another night before learning how the group was to be received by the great chief.

The much-anticipated meeting took place the next day, 1 October 1872. After posing a series of questions to everyone in the party, Cochise convinced himself of Howard’s candor and good intentions. At this point, he led the group to another camp—the major focus of this article. Sladen (1896b:30; Sweeney 1997:66) wrote, “it was in a recess made by projecting spurs, the mountain walls around it being broken and seamed and rugged, and the ground about scattered with broken and detached boulders and rocks.”

Almost immediately upon arriving at this camp, Howard was given specific instructions by the Apache leader to go back to Fort Bowie and order that no hostile actions be taken against the Indians while the peace talks were in progress. Several of Cochise’s “captains” were out on raids, and he wanted assurance that they would not be harmed as they made their way back, for runners were about to be sent to recall as many as possible. Howard suggested they send Sladen, but Cochise said that the troops would listen to a general and may not heed the command of a lesser officer. Furthermore, Cochise wanted Sladen and Jeffords to stay
behind with him in camp—a tactic that would guarantee the general’s return. Chic, one of the two Apaches who had been their guides, volunteered to accompany Howard to the fort. Sladen (1896b:31; Sweeney 1997:68) wrote: “From the flat top of a large boulder I sat smoking and watched them for miles as they skirted the mountain, now disappearing behind a clump of trees or bushes or in some arroyo or depression, and again appearing, till, at last, they wound behind a projecting point and were entirely lost to view.”

This rock is featured prominently in Sladen’s (1896a, 1896b) writings, one of the many details that allows association of this historical event with the archaeological site. Other characteristics conveyed in the historical record, such as photographs taken a few years later, provide further evidence to augment this perspective.

Historical Photographic Documentation

The approximate location of Cochise’s campsite at the time of Howard’s visit has long been known to be somewhere along the western foothills of the Dragoon Mountains. It was known to be in the general vicinity of “West Stronghold Canyon,” but there was no definite on-the-ground evidence of the actual location. One reason for this ambiguity is that the historical accounts pertaining to the trip and the camp itself are vague, allowing for multiple interpretations. There are numerous washes, boulders, and springs that provide several options and numerous competing interpretations. Moreover, two photographs show different locations for the treaty site. Forbes took the first publicly known photograph in 1913. This image purports to show the “site of the peace treaty” (Figure 2) (Forbes 1913). This claim was based upon information Forbes received from Billy Fourr, a local rancher who, in turn, had been shown the site years earlier by Jeffords (Sweeney 1997:158[note 121]).

William Gillespie, an archaeologist with the USDA Forest Service and long interested in Apache archaeology, located the group of rocks on the ground that is shown in the Forbes photograph. He found the setting in 1995 while specifically researching the location of this historic treaty conference. The place shown in the photograph is situated about 300 m (300 yd.) from the foothills, out on a plain, unprotected but for a few trees and low boulder outcrops (Figure 3). He showed this location to Sweeney who included this photograph.
in *Making Peace with Cochise* (Sweeney 1997:90,151[note 96],158[note 121]), where it is described as the treaty location.

When the second photograph surfaced (taken by Crane) that was said to depict the location of the treaty (Figure 4), additional curiosity was aroused regarding the related locations of this historic event. Edwin Sweeney, one of Cochise’s biographers, sent a photocopy of this second photograph to an acquaintance who he knew to be an Apache history buff—George Robertson, the second author of this article. Sweeney had examined the photograph at the home of the grandson of Joseph Alton Sladen while doing the research for his *Making Peace with Cochise* volume (Sweeney 1997). The photograph had been in the Sladen family since the mid-1960s, when a descendant of Howard mailed it to Frank Sladen, Sr., the son of Joseph Sladen and the father of Frank Sladen.

Research by Sweeney had revealed that Howard received the photo in 1895 from Crane, a noted writer, humanitarian, adventuress, and a good friend of Jeffords. Sweeney uncovered a letter from Crane to Howard, which explained that she took the photograph with her “Kodak” while on a five-week camping trip with her friend Jeffords to “Apache land,” as she called it (Crane 1895a). In this same letter, she mentioned that it was upon this rock that Cochise and Howard stood together to announce to the band that peace had indeed been decided upon.

The Crane photograph (Figure 4) is of a large boulder formation. On the reverse side, in Crane’s handwriting, is the notation (Crane 1985b):

> The big rock a few feet south of the “cathedral” where Capt. [Jeffords] said you and Cochise had many a talk over peace making. Captain calls it the rock on which peace was made as he says it was here that Cochise began to really and seriously consider the matter with you.

This message, in addition to descriptions in Sladen’s journal and other material written by Howard, clearly identifies this formation as the centerpiece of Cochise’s personal campsite. Howard (1896:3) wrote: “You have located the cathedral, or Cathedral Rock, all right.”
This statement presents the probability that the “Cathedral Rock” is the “big rock,” or a part of that multiboulder formation. When Crane wrote, on the back of the picture, “a few feet south of the cathedral,” she was probably noting that one of those rocks is Cathedral Rock and that the highest rock is the “big rock,” which is indeed a few feet away.

In addition to the “big rock,” Sladen makes several references in his journal, which was written while in camp with Cochise, to the “large flat boulder” that Cochise favored to the point that he would sit on it for hours with Jeffords, smoking and “talking things over in Spanish” (Sladen 1896b; Sweeney 1997). Sladen specified that from this rock one could see in every direction—a detail that implies considerable height, elevation, or both. “From the flat top of a large boulder I sat smoking and watched them for miles as they skirted the mountain” (Sladen 1896b:31).

Robertson spent many hours walking the foothills of the Dragoons in search of the distinctive “big rock” in the Crane photograph, and the unique outline of the boulders was the only reliable guide. Persistence prevailed, and after a year and one-half of searching, Robertson eventually discovered the location of the rock shown in the Crane photograph, but the exact angle from which the photograph was taken was now obscured by vegetation (Figure 5).

Jeffords apparently showed at least three people three different locations over the years (Crane, Fourr, and Rockfellow). Each of these locations is in the same general area, suggesting that because the peace agreement evolved over a few days’ worth of meetings, the participants may have used more than one of these closely related locations. This notion is consistent with the way Apache camps were laid out and used. Referred to as rancherías in the historical record, these dwelling locations tended to sprawl across the landscape, with wickiups and rockshelters scattered among the boulders and trees and activity areas often set in spatially distinct areas. Consequently, it would not be surprising if places situated many tens of yards apart were included in the same settlement. This settlement pattern
has been demonstrated for the Apache elsewhere in the southern Southwest (Seymour 2002), and it seems true for the treaty site based upon the on-the-ground layout. This concept of landscape use may also be suggested by the Sladen (1896b:45) account: “one and all, men, women, and children taking the greatest interest in it [the peace talk] and they gathered, on the appointed day, from all the different Indian camps in that vicinity.” The different Indian camps that may have been discrete locations in Sladen’s view may have been sections within one large ranchería.

On-the-ground inspection indicates that while both the Forbes and Crane photographs show different settings, they are in essentially the same area. The photographs depict formations that are within 300 m of one another. Both of these locations have been examined by the senior author for archaeological evidence of the Apache camp and the presence of the U.S. military. [The actual location is being withheld from this publication to protect the resource. Qualified professionals can request information on the site location from staff at the Coronado National Forest.]

Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that both of the photographs depict the treaty location, broadly defined. The Crane photograph (Figure 4) shows what is probably a portion of the shelter inhabited by Cochise and the “Cathedral Rock” or “big rock.” Jeffords told Crane (1985a) that Cochise and Howard had stood upon the “big rock” to announce to the band that peace had been decided upon. This rock is situated adjacent to the flat boulder that was a favored sitting area for Cochise, as was referenced above (Figure 6).

The 1913 Forbes photograph (Figure 2) would show a portion of the location where all the Apache gathered around as negotiations were underway. “The formal meeting took place beneath the shade of a broad spreading tree near at hand; that is, as many sat within the shade as could get within its agreeable cover, and the others gathered in circle after circle on the outside” (Sladen 1896b:45).

The area surrounding the location shown in the Forbes photograph is consistent with this description from which it is clear that these
particular meetings did not occur on the flat rock or on the rocks shown in Crane’s photograph. No trees shade the top of the high boulders shown in the photograph; moreover, if the participants had used the flat rock that was shaded, it is likely that Sladen would again have specifically mentioned the flat rock he referred to so often, but he did not in this instance. One or more adjoining boulder outcrops, not included in the Forbes photo, could also have been the actual location of this meeting as it would lend itself effectively to a large group (Cochise had called in his 12 captains; while not all were able to attend, those 10 that did probably did not come alone).

A description of Cochise’s home and its relation to the flat rock (Figure 6) and big rock (Figures 4 and 5) provide supporting evidence that the Crane photograph depicts the rockshelter inhabited by Cochise, adjacent to the flat rock and adjacent to the “Cathedral Rock”:

Riding up to a large flat boulder, we dismounted and the old Chief, pointing to the shade of a tree behind the stone, said “Thi-cow-ah,” my home (Sladen 1896b:31). … I was bidden into the recess behind a huge boulder, where the old Chief made his home (Sladen 1896b:38) … we all seated ourselves upon the large flat boulder, where Cochise spent most of his time. (Sladen 1896b:39). When they rode up they went at once to the stone where Cochise was seated, dismounted and sat down upon the ground, with great deliberation, and without any demonstration of emotion of any kind, they report to the Chief. … He rose to his feet, leaped to the ground, and as the returned warrior rose to his feet the Chief dealt him a violent blow upon his head that knocked him to the ground (Sladen 1896b:40). (The warrior had failed to bring in an antelope for dinner, which required Cochise to accomplish this task.)

These passages provide several key pieces of evidence shown in the Crane photograph regarding the flat rock adjacent to the boulder outcrop that hosts Cochise’s home. It is possible to ride up to the flat rock in this area, to sit in front of it and hold a conversation, and to leap from it to the ground. It is not possible to do so from the top of the boulder outcrop depicted in the Crane photograph—the big rock or Cathedral Rock. There is only one rockshelter in this immediate vicinity that requires going behind
the recess of a huge boulder. Other rockshelters are present, but they are farther away. Moreover, there are no rockshelters or shallow recesses immediately adjacent to outcrops shown in the Forbes photograph. Consequently, it seems that the photographs depict Cochise’s home (Crane) and the location of the negotiations (Forbes). The flat rock was Cochise’s preferred sitting area, and this flat rock is located adjacent to and to the left (south) of Cochise’s rockshelter. The rocks depicted in the Crane photograph (above the rockshelter) correspond to the “Cathedral Rock” and, according to what Jeffords told Crane, also represent the place where Cochise and Howard stood when Cochise proclaimed to his people that peace had been achieved. He announced, “The white man and the Indian are to drink of the same water, and eat of the same bread, and be at peace” (Howard 1872:8).

Archaeological Evidence of an Apache Camp

Epic historical events, such as the surrender proceedings of the famous Apache chief Cochise can conjure images of monumental architecture and a rich incident-specific artifact assemblage. Yet, more often than not, such larger-than-life events are marked only by the passage of time, with most actual traces having vanished as the last horseman mounted and began the march down the sloping plain into the shimmering heat. As for the Cochise-Howard treaty site (AR 03-05-01-215, AR 03-05-01-406, AR 03-05-01-491), many archaeologists and historians have assumed that all signs of the Cochise-Howard negotiations had long since dissipated into the desert. Yet, sufficient evidence of this noteworthy event has survived the ages so that what the photographs are inferred to depict can be confirmed archaeologically (Figure 7).

Absent “Cochise was here” signage, what evidence could convincingly argue for the presence of this historic Chokonen Apache leader? Definitive identification of Apache material culture has been a long-term problem because it is subtle and because of the myth among archaeologists that the Apache left evidence at their sites too subtle to recognize. Archaeologists interested in finding evidence of the Chiricahua Apache have lamented the fact that, other than Native-made artifacts made out of European materials or battlefield spoils, evidence of this band has avoided detection. Moreover, the Apache did not settle in the same types of locations that people do who are secure in their environment and free of worry of attack. Consequently, discovering the settlement pattern of these Apache has been particularly difficult.

As it happens, recent research elsewhere has led to the identification of some of the basic diagnostic indicators of Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache material culture (Seymour 2002, 2003, 2004). Structures and other feature types, the presence of the indigenous artifact assemblage, and an occasional possible military artifact provide key data leading to the identification of the Cochise-Howard treaty site as a specific location in the Dragoon Mountains. Moreover, a model of Apache settlement patterns provides a basis for locating habitation sites and interpreting those that are found, including providing insights into the nature of the Cochise-Howard treaty site.

Specific evidence of Cochise himself is not expected at this site. No one knows if Cochise made his tools a distinctive way or whether he had his wives arrange the interior of his rockshelter in a particular manner. Instead, the
historical descriptions and photographs that specifically indicate this locale provide evidence pointing expressly to Cochise and his band. Archaeology provides verification of the presence of Apache material culture and can describe the way residents used the boulder-strewn landscape. History provides the content of the event, whereas archaeology provides the context for the meeting and the substance of the setting.

Two types of archaeological evidence are present on this site. The first type of evidence includes the Native-made and Native-used artifacts and features. The second is evidence of the Americans (including Howard, Jeffords, and Sladen), the supply wagons, and the supplies themselves. With respect to the first, evidence of Apache material culture is described in three sections below, but the reader is referred to other publications for a more detailed description of this complex of material culture traits (Seymour 2002, 2003).

Shelters

The Chiricahua Apache are known to have left what is considered meager evidence of their presence on habitation sites. Structural remains, such as wickiup rings, often leave unobtrusive traces, and in many instances the Chiricahua simply bedded down in an oval or elongated clearing, moving rocks aside. Yet, even these ephemeral activities and low-impact constructions leave imprints, despite the fact that powers of perception have not been honed to recognize such subtle manifestations; however, research focusing on this specific issue over the last few years has shown that such traces are actually abundant (Seymour 2002, 2003, 2004).

The often-inconspicuous nature of Apache material culture relates to the temporary or transitory nature of sites. This is apparent from Sladen’s (1896b:41–42) account of events surrounding the treaty. As Howard and a small military escort returned from Fort Bowie, Cochise called for removal of the group to a slope-side camp:

We were still on the steep slope of the mountain. Beneath our feet was nothing but shelving rock, and it was difficult to find a foot hold [sic] for myself, much less for my horse. I supposed, at first, that the halt was merely to take breath, but as the Indians unsaddled I saw that we were to bivouac here. The mountain heights still towered above us, with projecting rocks and crags on either hand, and the shadows covered us in like a black cloud. Not an inch of level ground could I discover in the darkness, and I was afraid my horse would not be able to retain his footing, but following the example of the Indians, I unsaddled, and left him standing. … Spreading out my blanket, I lay down upon the steep hillside, moving here and there a stone a little larger than the rest, as it made its projections uncomfortably manifest in my back, and working around until I made a depression for my hips, I lighted a pipe, wrapped myself in my blanket against the piercing cold of the mountain. No fire was allowed, nor, indeed, so far as I could discover, was there either material or space for one. I could hear the subdued voices of the Indians, and the occasional neighing of the horses, but the stillness of the camp was noticeable. Each one seemed to drop down and make his bed, where his or her horse stopped (Sladen 1896b:41–42).

Similar Apache camp-making behavior may be reflected in the description of the mountain camp occupied the night before reaching the treaty site. Howard (1894:4) stated, “the bright scene ended when our party broke up, the women and the old men went away to the sloping debris for their night-camps.”

It is also apparent from the historical record that sometimes Indians placed grass or other vegetation in the clearing to serve as bedding. As early as the 1600s, Spaniards mentioned this type of feature. During the campaign against the Pima (O’odham) uprising in 1695, Juan Fernandez de la Fuente of the Presidio of Janos noted that “The scouts counted some forty heaps of ashes from campfires and several straw beds” (Polzer and Burrell 1971:266). These were likely summer beds used by the Chiricahua Apache and other nomadic and mobile groups, where exposure to the open air would be welcome.

The Chokonen also commonly used natural rockshelters. These are frequently found in the ranges of southeastern Arizona where granite boulders have tumbled together to form numerous convenient refuges. The open-ended shelters funnel air through the shaded opening, providing a cool haven from the summer heat. Cochise himself used one of these rockshelters at the treaty camp.

Numerous rockshelters and clearings in the rocks at the Cochise-Howard treaty site provide subtle evidence of use but are not as diagnostic of the Apache presence as wickiups. Extensive artifact collecting, numerous instances
of reuse by recreationalists, cattle grazing, and the location of these natural shelters on the hill slope where downslope erosion is excessive have degraded the quality of an already scant archaeological record.

Yet, based on historical descriptions of the shelter and its relation to other terrain features (not described herein), it is possible to ascertain the location of Cochise’s shelter, which is pictured in Figure 8 and is described historically as follows by Howard (1894:6):

> Just to my right, twenty or thirty yards distant, was the house of Cochise. It consisted of sandstone rock, twenty feet high, having one perpendicular side, and near it a large-sized scrub oak. One or two boughs had been cut and laid up against the tree to thicken the shade—being the only artificial work about his house. A place for sleeping, a little longer than a man, was hollowed out in the ground. So much for the house. The furniture consisted of two or three buckskins, tanned with the hair on them; two or three blankets, long used; some bows and arrows, a rifle, and two or three saddles and bridles; an “ollo” [sic], a kind of earthen jar for water; a little water-proof basket, two or three knives, and one small tin pail to make coffee in. The provisions on hand hung upon a branch of the oak—some fresh deer meat and some jerked venison, either deer or antelope. They had also mescal, and a seed resembling that of the pumpkin, but smaller, for which I learned no name. I forgot to mention a pile of Indian horse-shoes [sic].

The wickiup rings present are key in identifying this site as a uniquely Apache camp. Shown in Figure 9, these rock outlines provide evidence
that the Apache were present at this location. Consistent with the historical record, two of these features are present at the Cochise-Howard treaty site. Sladen’s (1896b:31) account of his stay among Cochise’s band states, “they had no tents, no tepees, and only in a few instances had they troubled themselves to construct the usual wickiup,—a rude shelter of brush covered with leaves or grass.”

These wickiup rings are positioned on the plain at the fringe of a wash at the Cochise-Howard treaty site where there are few natural boulder shelters, thereby necessitating the construction of at least minimal accommodation to guard against the cool October night air. Cobbles and pebbles outline the location of these wickiups. These rocks mark the perimeter of the structures and were probably used to anchor the ends of branches that were bent to form a dome-shaped superstructure or a lean-to. Many forms of these have been found within Chiricahua Apache territory, but the type present at the Cochise-Howard treaty site consists of a single alignment of rocks that are spaced 25–50 cm apart. The rocks outline a clearing that functioned as the interior of the structure. The curvilinear alignment intersects a natural granite outcrop that forms the back wall of the structure.

Even when structure outlines and rockshelters were used, most activities likely occurred out of doors, particularly during favorable weather. Many accounts of encounters with Cochise’s band mention meeting or sitting with Indians under the shade of trees:

We approached a group of Indians under a tree, and after some introductions and friendly greetings, we unsaddled our animals and camped beneath the friendly oak that were scattered about (Sladen 1896b:26). A circle was formed under the shade of an oak and the whole band gathered about, interested in the proceedings (Sladen 1896b:28).

Other Features

Other feature types are represented on the Cochise-Howard treaty site, including cairns, marker stones, rock walls, a fire pit in a rockshelter, and rock art (Figure 10). None of these additional features is definitively Apache, but all are feature types (excluding the rock art) commonly found on other Apache habitation sites throughout the southern Southwest. Their presence on this site, along with other clearly Apache feature types (e.g., wickiups), suggests that they are in fact related to the Apache occupation.

Several cairns and marker stones of different types are present. While some are recent, marking the trail to the site by locals, others are lichen-covered, indicating their relatively great age. Typically, marker stones are represented by a single rock and are used to indicate the direction to travel to the camp. Multiple-rock cairns are represented by a number of examples, and their precise function is unknown. Some were likely caches; others may have been shrines or defensive features. Here they may simply be markers set by later visitors, such as Fourr or Crane, to commemorate this spot.

Numerous rock walls are present that are short segments of stacked rocks set between boulders. In most instances, these seem to be structural, closing off a gap between boulders or at the end of the rockshelter so that the space was partially enclosed. A linear rock wall on the floor of the rockshelter thought to be Cochise’s runs parallel to the sides of the shelter. Only one other wall of this type is known, in a rockshelter in the Dragoons above an ambush site, and it could be indicative of a feature type constructed by this band, perhaps a base for a bed platform.

Although there is evidence that numerous forest fires have occurred in the Dragoon Mountains, fire pits are still visible in some locations. Those found in rocky crevices or in rockshelters have been preserved because forest fires have generally not impacted these areas, owing to the fact that they are generally devoid of vegetation. Recreationalists and undocumented aliens have also built fires inside many shelters in these and other mountain ranges in southeastern Arizona, making it difficult to distinguish between these more-recent fire pits and those used by the Apache. Yet, at the Cochise-Howard treaty site, one fire pit in particular is unusual because the basin-shaped feature is lined with relatively flat rocks. Chunks of charcoal in the feature and burned rocks partially covered with sediment will provide future opportunities for radiocarbon and luminescence dating if the charcoal and burned rocks are collected and preserved.
Artifacts

Apache sites are known for their paucity of artifacts and recognizable features, but in reality this is an exaggeration. Although some short-term camps and limited-use sites may contain few artifacts, many habitation sites that were occupied repeatedly contain hundreds, sometimes thousands, of artifacts (Figure 11). These larger habitation sites or rancherías tend to be secluded hilltop settlements that represent the coalescence of several groups. As José Cortés (1989:65) stated:

By chance it happens that sometimes many rancherías come together at one place in search of certain fruits that abound in one given location or another. Others are gathered together by prior plan or design with the notion of forming a body for their defense or with the idea of holding one of their ceremonies or where
they gather for the hunt. At these ceremonies, they often decide upon some plan to attack their enemies. In such instances, not only do the rancherías of one group combine, but also often two or more whole tribes will congregate.

These base camps were often high-elevation settlements (Betzinez and Nye 1959). Sources refer to the hilltop and high-elevation rancherías occupied by various Apache bands (Betzinez and Nye 1959:85; Ball 1970:22; Sweeney 1991, 1992), although Geronimo apparently preferred less mountainous areas (Betzinez and Nye 1959:97), a pattern that is reflected in the lower-elevation camps depicted in C. S. Fly’s photographs (Hayes 1991; Van Orden 1991). Several of these are now known in the Chiricahua and Mescalero areas, and they possess large and varied feature and artifact assemblages (Seymour 2004).

Even sites used on a more limited basis may contain a surprising number of artifacts, particularly early sites in which the same group repeatedly reoccupied the location seasonally. An example of this is the Dragoon Mountain site that dates to the A.D. 1400s. This site possesses only two structures, along with roasting pits, but has 18 artifacts in the structure area alone, and others are present on the adjacent slopes between this main locus and other features. In other instances, especially on later sites, artifacts are located at some distance (often hundreds of meters) from the structures. This probably reflects differences in the way the landscape is used among mobile groups, particularly those involved in raiding. This pattern seems to be indicative of people who were on their guard, attempting not to be surprised by the opposing military.

The Long Canyon Tipi Ring site (FB 17020/ LA 139028) in the Organ Mountains provides an example of this strategy from Mescalero Apache territory (Seymour 2002). The tipi rings on this site are situated on the valley floor at a bend in the wash and behind a projecting ridge. An artifact scatter is about 150 m to the east and on a low knoll, still well within the valley, far below the top of the canyon walls. Stone tools, debitage, and cores are abundant on this knoll, particularly on the portion of the knoll that is within sight of a prominent peak a mile to the north. The peak is above a saddle and overlooks several major canyons that provide passage through the Organ Mountains. On the top of the peak is a cairn, and on the east side of the peak there is a rectilinear rock alignment that is inferred to be a lookout station. The sentinel would guard access through the saddle to the north and from the south through the canyon. The tipi rings would be fully hidden by topography, allowing escape of noncombatants through side canyons.

A 19th-century site (AR 03-05-01-291) in the East Stronghold area of the Dragoon Mountains provides a parallel example of this separation of work areas and habitation areas. At this site, roasting pits occupy the flat, tree-covered expanses, whereas the structures (rock rings) are situated on the mountain slope, interspersed among the boulders, about 100 m away.

These examples provide evidence of changes through time and differences among geographic areas (relating to remoteness and accessibility) in the amount of material culture associated with habitation sites and the spatial relationship between structures and work areas. It is becoming clear that later Apache camps tend to contain fewer flaked-stone artifacts than earlier campsites. In part, this relates to the desire to remain inconspicuous, but probably more salient is the fact that by the later half of the 19th century, the Chiricahua had substituted glass and metal artifacts for those made with locally derived materials. Because these glass and metal tools were more durable and hence more valuable for repeated use, they were often transported from location to location, leaving less waste and fewer broken implements in the archaeological record. The difficulty in recognizing the traces of use on these implements can also lead to an under-representation of these tool forms. At the Cochise-Howard treaty site, a fragmented, worked brown (amber-colored) glass scraper found in the vicinity of the Forbes photograph location and the wickiups provides evidence of the Apache presence (Figure 11). These later glass tools (including scrapers and spokeshaves) often mimic the earlier stone forms, and the morphology of the glass tools can be remarkably consistent from site to site.

Whether the Native-made artifacts on non-European materials are located near structures or a hundred meters away, they have not generally been recognized as diagnostic of the Apache. Seymour (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004), however, has described the Chiricahua and Mescalero (Cerro Rojo Complex) Apache flaked stone,
ground stone, and ceramic assemblages across a number of sites in southern Arizona and New Mexico. Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the Cerro Rojo Complex assemblage is the stylistic consistency of various flaked-stone tool forms. These include both formally crafted and expedient flake-tool forms. For this reason, the assemblage may be viewed as containing both crudely and skillfully crafted tool forms. The crudeness likely represents preference rather than lack of ability, as was noted by James Gunner-son (1960:167). Raw material availability is also a relevant issue because it corresponds with tool types created and abundance of artifacts present in any given location. Where raw materials were abundant, many expedient tools were made, and abundant debitage was produced. Even in these settings, however, the higher-quality materials were often obtained from specific distant sources. Under such circumstances, the cores were used quite extensively, often to the point of exhaustion. Blade flaking and bipolar techniques were used to maximize use of material and to prevent waste, particularly when small cores were available. In these ways, less material was used, and smaller flakes were removed that were then formed into formal tools. This process led to what Charles Borden (1952:32) has referred to as a thrifty use of materials.

Certain types of tools, such as flake knives, gravers, and triangular perforators were made on widely available, coarser-grained materials. This material choice likely added to tool durability. These seem to have been improvised on simple flakes, but the form of the flake was deliberate, with a specific template removed from the core to expedite the creation of the intended tool. Added retouch sometimes increased the durability of the cutting edge or accentuated the projection, but on informal tools, this flaking was minimal. Some of these more hastily crafted tools were made on fine-grained materials, as was usually the case with spokeshaves and certain perforating tools.

In contrast, a subset of finely retouched tools (end scrapers, side scrapers, projectile points, formal bifacial knives, and drills) represents a greater investment in labor. Fine-grained materials were used, and the resulting forms, with uniformly flaked edges, show the skill of the knappers. Among these formal tools are projectile points, which include both side-notched and tri-

notched forms. Some relatively broad specimens have affinities to Desert Side-notched types, whereas others are narrower and unusually thinner and are most similar to the Plains forms.

Although diagnostic tools can pinpoint an Apache presence, it is more effective to examine the assemblage as a whole. While a generally expedient approach was used to manufacture tools, there are more formal aspects to the assemblage that are easily separated from earlier ceramic period assemblages. Even though tools of the same general functions are found in assemblages of other groups throughout the area (e.g., perforators, spokeshaves, and knives), certain finely crafted tools are distinctive in their stylistic character, in the materials used for their manufacture, and in the waste products. Consequently, the co-occurrence of particular types of debitage with these diagnostic tool forms bolsters the case and supplements the total assemblage.

Ground-stone artifacts include scavenged prehistoric manos and metates, hastily crafted slab metates that are thinner and smaller than most prehistoric forms, and small unshaped cobbles used as manos or hand stones. Slab metates on large bedrock boulders (e.g., grinding slicks) are also common. Arrow shaft straighteners, whetstones, fire starters, and pounders have also been recorded.

Contrary to popular belief, some Chiricahua Apache sites contain pottery. This pottery is distinctive from prehistoric wares but can be distinguished only when subtle attributes are considered. Pottery consists of a variety of plainwares, including some that were made by the Apache and some that were obtained through raiding or trade. Some variation in plainwares results from the intermixing of groups. Surface treatments, temper and clay types, and construction techniques indicate that both processes—the intermixing of groups and procurement of vessels from other groups—contributed to the varied nature of the ceramic assemblages found on both large and small Cerro Rojo Complex sites. In the 19th century, Native-made ceramic vessels were replaced for the most part by metal and glass containers.

Armed with this information, it is possible to associate some of the flaked- and ground-stone artifacts on the Cochise-Howard treaty site and adjacent areas with the Apache occupation, as shown in Figure 12. The two most diagnostic
artifacts include a small perforator made on a silicified limestone burinated flake (one of the most diagnostic Apache tool forms) and a fragment of a sandstone fire starter. Other items include finely retouched side- and end scrapers, bifacial thinning flakes made on fine-grained materials, and miscellaneous ground stone.

Two small light prehistoric scatters are present, as can sometimes be expected on Apache sites. Many Apache sites, including this one, are dual or multicomponent sites—a circumstance that often masks the Apache component. The character of the location (e.g., presence of water, vegetation, view, and so on) accounts for this correspondence of camping locations; certain locations were more desirable and therefore were repeatedly inhabited over time. Moreover, as noted by Grenville Goodwin and Keith Basso (1971:231; also Lange and Riley 1970:101), the Western Apache of northern Arizona frequently collected artifacts from prehistoric sites for reuse, and whole and fragmentary vessels were probably no exception. Evidence of such reuse of construction materials and artifacts has been identified elsewhere (Gregory 1981; Seymour 2001, 2003), but no definite evidence of this type of recycling is evident on the Cochise-Howard treaty site. Rather, the presence of these prehistoric scatters seems incidental, except perhaps for the single instance of an Archaic point; the point is highly worn, as is often the case with earlier points that have been collected and saved for different uses (sometimes reworked) by later peoples.
Spatial Layout

Evidence of Apache activity is scattered across the hillside, amidst the boulders, and on the flats. Wickiup rings, rockshelters, cairns, marker stones, and low walls are spread out, occupying choice locations among the boulders and trees. Expanses of open terrain without boulders and with only a few trees are generally devoid of artifacts and features. This layout has the effect of producing several distinct loci, clustered in areas with rock outcrops and along the mountainside. In the main portion of the site, all cultural areas are within a 500 m-diameter area, but there may be 30–50 m between loci. From an archaeological standpoint, these are several distinct sites; but from a behavioral perspective, this is one large ranchería. As was noted above, this sprawling characteristic is entirely consistent with the way many Apache camps were laid out.

Ethnographic data (Ball 1970) and historical photographs from the 1800s show that houses are arranged in clusters. Clusters of residential features, representing extended families, are often visible as two or more neighboring sites or, in large sites, as distinct loci. One Apache-specific factor affecting the spatial distribution of structures is the requisite avoidance between a husband and certain of his wife’s relatives (Opler 1941:164). Mother-in-law avoidance would require that the married couple situate their residence in a place where the husband would not inadvertently encounter the female relative. Also, different social groups may have occupied the spatially distinct house clusters (or occupied rockshelters) found at the treaty site. The extended families of each of Cochise’s 10 captains attending the meeting may have camped in different sectors. Similarly, as was noted above, work areas and other types of activity areas were often located at a considerable distance from the main habitation area—a practice that may account for some of the discrete artifact clusters found on the Cochise-Howard treaty site.

Evidence of the Military Presence

Few clues remain that point to the presence of the military at this location. Sladen’s (1896:36b; Sweeney 1997) account mentions rolling up in a blanket under a tree, suggesting that a tent outline is not to be expected. The Americans remarked that they left with all of their equipment, so it is expected that only minimal evidence of the military presence would exist. Furthermore, Cochise ensured that the belongings of the visitors were not tampered with or pilfered. Careful inspection of the surface has revealed only a few metal artifacts that can be tentatively attributed to the military. Several 19th-century army-issue rifle and carbine cartridge cases have been found in the area, but only one of these, a .56-caliber Spencer cartridge case lacking a headstamp, was in use by the army at the time of the Howard-Cochise meeting. Because no battle ensued, cartridge cases would not be expected in any number at this site. Many other items, including horseshoes and horseshoe nails, are not military-specific but could date to the time of the treaty meeting. Other items that may have once been present have been removed from the site by various processes, including trash collection efforts and unauthorized collectors.

Implications

The extant record for the Cochise-Howard peace treaty is particularly rich, providing details that are useful for locating the site and for drawing broader inferences regarding this event. By overlaying the historical documents onto the archaeological record, it is possible to see why Cochise was described as “incomparable as a leader and a strategist” (Lockwood 1987:108).

Shrewd Vigilance

Elsewhere, models constructed for Apache site location have been presented and proven effective in a number of in-field situations, resulting in the discovery of numerous large and small habitation sites (Seymour 1995, 2002; Harlan and Seymour 1996). These models draw on ethnographic, historical, and anthropological data to establish a behavioral baseline and to identify the likely material culture, spatial, and settlement pattern correlates of various Apache groups. Mountain Retreat and Plains models have been devised to predict and account for settlement patterns and site layout in each of these zones, which present different challenges due to contrasting occupational histories,
resources, and landscape features. By applying these models, numerous Apache sites have been identified throughout the southern Southwest and Trans-Pecos region.

The Chiricahua adaptation is subsumed under the Mountain Retreat model; as such, raiding was an indispensable part of adaptation, even from the earliest times. (Settlement patterns related to Geronimo are excluded from this model, as he preferred to occupy lower elevations, regardless of season or circumstance [Betzinez and Nye 1959:97].) The Chiricahua attempted to remain hidden to avoid discovery and reprisals; consequently, choices regarding settlement location differed from more affable populations that depended upon agriculture and, by necessity, were situated near arable land. Because of the possibility of surprise, the Chiricahua alternately gathered at interchangeable rancherías in widely separated mountain ranges. These serial base camps hosted hundreds of people and were protected by the rugged rocky mountains, convoluted canyons, and remote settings. Ramparts and defensive walls were often constructed to add to the defensibility of the location. These large rancherías were situated with respect to prominent landmarks, and they functioned as places to assemble before a large raid, as regrouping areas in case an enemy attacked, or as places to reorganize once a raid was completed. During the cold winter months, groups lived in small, dispersed foothill and valley “camps.” Because concern for safety and security were paramount, hilltop and foothill sites were situated with reference to particular topographic features, while other types of terrain and landscape features were specifically avoided. These patterns changed through time as enemy military tactics changed and population sizes increased because the nature of the threat changed. The material and spatial correlates of these differences can be overlaid on the landscape to produce a reliable predictive model.

Interestingly, the location of the treaty site is not consistent with the precepts of the Chiricahua Apache model (i.e., the Mountain Retreat model), particularly in an area so close to well-traveled trails of white settlers and the military. One could argue that the extreme pressures experienced by Cochise and his band precluded adherence to the same rules that applied to other bands in earlier times. Yet, variance from the model occurs in ways that are not consistent with an increased threat or greater attention to military incursions. In light of this fact, a logical explanation for this divergence is that the treaty camp was established specifically for this historic meeting, rather than being a regularly used camp or ranchería. This would explain the limited number of features and the low artifact densities in relation to the 400–500 people who were estimated to have been present.

Tensions were high at this time, and Cochise would not have exposed himself and his people (particularly in such large numbers) to risk by living in these low-lying areas on the flanks of the mountains, within reach of the Tucson-to-Fort Bowie trail and the San Pedro crossing. Nor is it likely that Cochise would invite the military into the heart of his mountain fortress. He would not have allowed potentially hostile visitors into secret locations, even after having fully evaluated their potential threat. Until peace was consummated, all present were at risk. The reality existed that if peace did not work out, all locations revealed to the visitors would have to be permanently abandoned, unless the Americans involved were killed.

One reason to favor this interpretation is that Cochise exhibited this type of precaution throughout the military visit. He had been exposed to treachery by the U.S. and Mexico before, the Bascom Affair and the execution of Mangas being the most indelible of the events in Cochise’s memory. The historical accounts regarding this peace treaty inadvertently provide evidence of how Cochise and his people exercised caution. The archaeological record also supports this. Even the first meeting with Cochise’s people inside the mountains is an illustration of the care taken. Chie went ahead and made the initial contact, while two boys were sent back (probably with Chie) to summon the visitors (Howard 1872:3–4; Sladen 1896b:24), providing sufficient time to prepare the residents for their visitors. These boys were probably novices, being trained in the ways of warriors.

One of Morris Opler’s (1941:70) informants noted, “many a young boy at fourteen was as well trained and dangerous as a soldier.” The treaty party was then led to another meeting place, “winding among the foothills” (Sladen 1896b:26), rather than north “over rocks
and hills into the jagged vastness” (Howard 1872:3) as Chie had traveled when he went north to make the initial contact toward Rock-fellow Dome from Middlemarch Pass. This more rocky and rough route centers on a number of Apache camps and defensive features (known archaeological sites), indicating that this was one of the key routes between rancherías (Seymour and Harlan 1996). The clustering of Apache sites in this area, the prominence of the landmarks, the rockiness of the terrain, and the nature of the canyons and ridges, all conform to the model of Apache site location summarized above (Seymour 1995, 2002; Harlan and Seymour 1996).

After “winding among the foothills” they “struck a bed of a crooked stream,” probably Slavin Gulch, and eventually came to a valley with a spring that lay inside the mountains where they were greeted by old men, women, and children. This has been previously interpreted to mean that there was an extant Apache camp here; yet, nowhere in the record does it specifically state that there was an established camp. Wickiups and inhabited rockshelters are specifically mentioned at two other locations (the treaty site and the lookout above Dragoon Springs) but not here. Howard (1894:4) notes as he arrived at the location that “the inhabitants were the old men, women and children,” suggesting by the word “inhabitants” that it was in fact an existing camp. An archaeological site, however, has not been found in the valley bottom. This is not surprising in the context of what is known about Apache settlement patterns, because the Apache tended not to camp too near water sources, particularly in this later period. So while the valley bottom is the historically mentioned location of the encounter, it is constructive to entertain the idea that the camp was against the rocks on the slopes or on the tops of surrounding hills—placement that would be consistent with the site-location and land-use model and with the positioning of contemporaneous Apache sites. This would mean that the Apache group was not at their camp when they welcomed the visitors but had come down from their camp to this neutral meeting place. Cochise may have waited in this higher camp while the entourage approached, observing the behavior of his visitors. In an article prepared for *The Voice*, Howard (1894:4) notes, “the bright scene ended when our party broke up, the women and the old men went away to the sloping debris for their night-camps.” This is consistent with the notion that their shelters (whether natural or constructed) were located among the rocks but does not resolve this issue of whether this was a customary camp.

Here in this mountain valley, Cochise sized up Howard before moving on to the camp where the rest of the band gathered. The initial meeting was seemingly at a neutral location that was easily defended with multiple escape routes. Moreover, it isolated the visitors from recruiting help if the meeting soured.

Judging the sincerity of the general, Cochise decided to proceed with the negotiations. Yet, Cochise still exercised caution. When going from the mountain valley camp to the treaty camp, the group was led in a roundabout way, around the outside of the mountains (Figure 13) (Rockfellow 1913). As Sladen (1896b:30) notes, “Cochise invited us to go with him to his own camp some three to four miles away. We rode out through the Canon [sic], at the opposite end from our entrance [probably through Slavin Gulch], and skirting the base of the mountains.” A direct route between the locations is only about two to three miles, rather than the three to four miles noted by Sladen, indicating that the Apache did not divulge the numerous short cuts and trails through the mountains nor their favored and concealed camping locations. The camp Cochise brought them to was not a stronghold, and although the treaty camp was fortified with natural defensive features, many more favorable and secure locations existed within the mountains. These latter locations were being reserved for the future, should the peace negotiations not succeed. In the meantime, had negotiations soured, the Apache would have dispersed and traveled at once to the safety of other ranges.

The setting of the treaty camp indicates that while Cochise was committed to the success of the peace negotiations, he was also prepared for betrayal. The site is positioned to provide defense from a northern approach, and it is situated among the boulders, within the trees, and against the mountainside that provided routes of escape and concealment for his people.

In case there was any doubt in Sladen’s mind about Chiricahua strength, Cochise brought him
FIGURE 13. John Rockfellow map of Sulphur Spring Valley, showing route of Cochise-Howard treaty expedition. (Courtesy of Arizona Historical Society/Tucson, MS 694-Box 2-F20.)
to a high-elevation lookout where they could see Dragoon Springs and the road between Camp Bowie and Tucson (Sladen 1896b:33–35). This side trip was very likely designed to show Sladen that the Apaches had the ability to slay those below at will, a point that was not lost on him. Cochise was ensuring that the treaty party did not see him as being at a disadvantage before entering into negotiations.

The warmth of Cochise and the friendliness of the young Na-Chise (Naiche, Cochise’s youngest son) were received as generous hospitality, as no doubt they were intended. Yet, it was no mistake that Cochise asked to keep Sladen and Jeffords with him in the mountains, as hostages, while Howard went to Fort Bowie to order the military back to its post. During this waiting period, Sladen and Jeffords were kept near Cochise’s side most of the time, traveling to outposts or sitting with him. When not near Cochise, his son monitored Sladen and Jeffords, even during the night. Even Sladen (1896b:37) remarked at how

I was again disturbed, this time by some one tugging at my blanket, and trying to share it with me. ... I found it was the old Chief’s son, Na-Chise, a boy of 14 or 15, whose only protection was his breech cloth, and who was trying to get some shelter from the keen mountain night air, under the protecting folds of my saddle blanket. “Mucho frio, Captain, mucho frio,” he kept repeating. ... This boy, Na-Chise, became a favorite of mine, during the two weeks we remained with this people, and he evidently conceived a fondness for me, for he became my ever present companion, never leaving me for scarcely a moment alone, and following me about wherever I went.

How clever the host, and whether or not Na-Chise, a novice warrior, was let in on the plan, his presence ensured that there would be no escape or treachery. If duplicity had been planned, the ever-present companionship of some member of the band would have foiled it.

Sladen did not miss the astute tactics displayed by Cochise when Howard and his soldiers were sighted along the road from Fort Bowie on their return trip. Cochise hastily moved camp, the entire ranchería moving north, up a steep slope that had cover and escape routes and provided a decisive military advantage. This left the group near at hand, with a clear view of approaching military personnel but protected from surprise attack in case the U.S. military had changed its course. Sixteenth- and 17th-century Apache habitation sites that were established temporarily near pueblos to conduct trade, such as at Pueblo Blanco (LA 51) in the Salinas area of New Mexico, were commonly situated on excessively abrupt slopes and on elevated terrain. These are positioned not only to benefit from the presence of suitable building material but also so that potential attackers would be at a disadvantage in proceeding upslope. Visitors also could readily observe activities in the pueblo at a safe standoff distance. Sladen (1896b:43) wrote, “soldiers had been seen, the night before, Jeffords had said, and so the Chief had sought this place of safety. I thought this did not display much confidence in his hostages, but it was not in Cochise’s crafty mind to take the slightest risk of any attack where he could not hold the points of advantage.” Howard (1872:4) was also aware of this cunning, for while negotiating the new reservation location, Cochise’s “eye flashed, and the thought struck me that he wanted to get possession of a controlling point.”

Although Cochise trusted Jeffords, he knew that military agendas could change abruptly. This precautionary stance is reflected in the move to higher ground and when they went to meet the officers from Camp Bowie at Dragoon Springs. Howard (1872:8) recognized the shrewd leadership of Cochise in the following remarks:

On arriving at Dragoon Springs he located his command with apparent carelessness, but really in such a way that every man could have been under cover in three minutes in a little ravine, and in three minutes more, if necessary, could have passed behind a round hill into the mountains without danger. Cochise said to Jeffords [sic], “We know your party and trust it; but these people from Camp Bowie we do not know. How long have you known them?” Jeffords [sic] said, “I never saw them.” This was all the conversation that preceded the taking of good military positions.

**Personal Trust and Honor**

Clearly, Cochise understood the personal nature of the success or failure of the treaty, just as Howard had understood that Jeffords’s integrity was key in the success of the mission. Sweeney (1997:7) has argued that

it was Howard and Sladen’s presence—their actions; their persistence in searching for Cochise; their conviction that both sides must make peace; their honesty
and openness with Cochise and his people; and their courage in placing their lives in the hands of Cochise, whom they knew only by reputation—that ultimately gained the confidence of the apprehensive chief.

While no doubt these personal qualities were key in allowing the peace process to proceed—to “put them at their ease” (Sladen 1896a:24)—it was Jeffords’s integrity and his personal relationship with Cochise (and vice versa) that eased suspicion throughout the process. Cochise had been ready for peace but had not been convinced of the whites’ good intentions; indecisiveness, red tape, bureaucracy, rumors, and changes in plans had derailed previous efforts. Whereas Howard went forth believing his involvement in the peace process was God’s will, perhaps providing an extra dose of courage, Jeffords approached the parley with eyes wide open. Jeffords’s perspective may have been more in line with General Crook’s who thought Howard “sanctimonious, naïve, and peace-hungry” (Sweeney 1997:17). While there is no doubt about the contribution made by the military participants (who were under direct orders from President Grant), it was Jeffords whose personal reputation and livelihood were at stake. He had to trust not only the Chiricahua but also the U.S. military, whose purpose and procedure, he knew from personal experience, could change at the drop of the hat. As Sweeney (1997:5) noted, “many army officers had disliked him for his unconventional methods and his close relationship with the Apaches; these men did all they could to malign his character.” These ill feelings have led to the idea that Jeffords supplied Cochise with ammunition in exchange for stolen livestock (Terrell 1974:298), or such acts may have contributed to his lack of popularity. Regardless, Cochise had confidence in Jeffords, and by the act of leading Howard and his entourage to the Dragoon Mountains, Jeffords was telling Cochise that he had confidence in Howard and Sladen and in the process underway.

It is equally fitting not to forget the role the two Apache guides, Ponce and Chie, played in the success of the process. As Sweeney (1997:136) so eloquently notes, “it seems ironic that the hanging of Chie’s father [during the Bascom Affair] was one of the events that began the war, and Chie’s efforts with General Howard helped end the long conflict.” This peace conference was important in the overall federal government peace policy and to the federal recognition of the Chokonen as a distinct nation.

Conclusions

Use of carefully researched historical records and photographs in combination with archaeological data has proven to be a successful approach in identifying the rocks where Cochise and Howard agreed upon and announced a peace strategy. Although Council Rocks has been the officially recognized location of the peace treaty, a different place can now be firmly established as the specific historic locale. Based on the unique character of the rock formations, historic photographs pinpoint this location. Any questions as to the authenticity or applicability of these photographs are addressed by the use of archaeological data. These archaeological data confirm the presence of an Apache camp in the locality indicated by historic documents and photographs, and these same data help reconcile the questions posed by that incomplete record. Only in recent years has the nature of the indigenous Chiricahua Apache material culture assemblage been understood from the standpoint of Native-made structures and artifacts. These advances have allowed researchers to confirm and hone historically derived conclusions and to enrich the hue of that record.

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