

AMERICAN INDIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH PROJECT

University of New Mexico

Tape Number: # 661

Tribe: Jicarilla Apache

Informant: ~~At~~ Cevero Caramillo (77^{age})

Informant's home address: Dulce, New Mexico

Band or Clan: Ollero

Date and location of interview: Dulce, New Mexico

Field Worker: Veronica Velarde

Date of transcription: ~~June 9, 1970~~ 9 - 1970

Contents: Jicarilla History

Evaluation of Interview: Offered a different point of view from that of history books which are ~~available~~ available.

Future Prospects: Will talk only to Indians about Jicarilla History.

American Indian Oral History Collection
Transcript Record

Tape Number: 661 Side: _____

Date of Taping: 6/3/70

Field Worker(s): Veronica Velarde

Location: Dulce, NM

Tribe(s): Q'uarilla Apache, Ollero Clan

Narrator/Event: Cesero Caramillo

Additional Narrator(s): _____

Subject(s): History of the Q'uarilla Apache (Translated
~~from~~ into english.)

Comments: Most of tape is in Apache, translated in
transcription

Tribal History

Tape #661
JICARILLA APACHE
Cevero Caramillo (age 77)
June 3, 1970
Interviewer-Veronica Velarde

HISTORY OF THE JICARILLA APACHES

QV. I am interviewing Cevero Caramillo, he is a member of the Apache Jicarilla tribe and he ishow old are you?'

AC. 77....

QV. He is 77 year's old, and he is going to talk about the history of the Apaches, about what he knows. You can go ahead and start talking anyway you want

AC. (Rest of tape in Jicarilla Apache) TRANSLATION

If I speak English, I stumble too much on my words. We Apaches are an unknown people with a fragmented history. Some parts are alright. The people who are smart leave. The rest of us remain behind with the council like sheep with their heads in the shade. Things are not going right with us. The council men aren't sure of themselves. They don't know what to do for the people. We the people put them there as our leaders, so we can depend on them. That's how it is suppose to be. They aren't suppose to live on the money by themselves. It is the people who like strangling sheep, who need the help not the ones ahead. The ones ahead don't really need the help. Our leaders like that they trample on the good grass and the ones coming after get nothing. It's undetermined when they will catch up. Finally we get some money but not enough to do anything with. Some talk about it, the problems, but no ones does anything about it. We are too lazy, this keeps us back. The world is getting ahead and we are left behind on the kind of, we don't help each

other. If a sheep can't make up a hill it is the duty of the shepherd to help the sheep, but our people don't do that.

Even from the beginning our people started out wrong, we went the wrong way. By luck we had some of our people educated to help us but they help the way they should. It is because of this that everything we do someone has something to say about it. Everything is discontinued. Pretty soon we will be like frogs without water. We are like frogs making a lot of noise while there is plenty of water but soon we will be like dried up frogs with no water. This seems to be our destiny.

Our leaders don't listen for us, he isn't working for us, we have no leaders. This is not good. We are going wrong. Our religion we turned away. We did this ourselves. We fight among ourselves for this reason everything is going bad. We are like lost sheep. People say we are like stray sheep.

I don't what's wrong with helping each other. That's the way it should be. We keep our stories to ourselves, we don't know how to share. It's like a movie enemy against enemy. Everything we keep to ourselves. We don't share the good word and our religion. All of these things we longer have and that is why we are in the state of dishevel. Soon we will be dried up frogs. Where do you hear happy noises--these isn't any, it is like we are dead--or we are headed towards it. That is bad. We aren't even baptized. If a man believes in his religion he has a sound mind and heart. He is able to water his fruits. All the men will raise up again like plants and be happy again. But as it is it is like a dying fire. All our former enemies are piled up because we never afraid to con-

front them. Today we are like frightened sheep herded around and dropping by the way-side. Even the hospital we are so far from it, no one is able to handle an emergency. The young men do not bother to learn the Indian medicine, so where are we? We are like in the middle of learning something. The doctors we have are in the process of learning. They practice on us. They give us old medicine from which some of us die. In every conceivable way we are not headed for better times.

Q. Would you say from long ago we started out all wrong?

A. Yes, long ago we were like deer wandering from fright, we were afraid of the whitemen since we did not obey our ways. Although the "boss" had it so we would come through all hardships, this was fine, but we still wandered from fear. We never gained a stronghold on anything against we seemed destined to get lost. We are like a tired horse. Because of this we are not doing well today. We don't know ourselves. Our children try to strive for us, I don't know if this is alright, I guess it is. Maybe this will give us a new direction to go in. If they are lucky, they will make but us older people are still looking towards the past, praying, hoping the roads will be straight for them.

Long ago, it used to be that our people were together but today they are growing apart. They know now about things like talking and singing machines. (Telephones and radios). They know how to put it together and they

get paid for it. We are thankful our children can learn and make a living. This is alright. The people the world over live this way. Some would want it to be better for us. But even if things are modern there too many uncertainties exist. We get help.

STORY BEGINS ON HOW THE APACHES USED TO LIVE LONG AGO

Long ago there were no stores. We lived off the land. We had shoes and clothes. We were not cold. Even then no one was hungry. It was the whiteman who shut off our food supply. They cut off our supply by destroying-- they cut trees. We lived by the trees, we used it for clothing, coloring and medicine. In the spring food is plentiful. We begin to go with the sun. We go in its direction toward the seasons, like towards where there is no snow. We move around where the weather is best with our horses.

We move where the buffalos are. We kill it for shelter, our home, our bedding. It's meat is dried. Every part of the buffalo is put to good use. Nothing is thrown away. We depended on the buffalo. This is how we lived. Our enemies (mostly Plains Indians but others too) fought with us. They shot us and we shot back. Our enemies were not as good as we were. They weren't very strong like we were. We ran up to the top of mountains and down. This was one way we kept in shape. Our enemies were scared of us. They gained up on us. We got the best

of them. We had arrows that they were scared of. Back in our country we put a type of fat on the arrows. When this arrow is shot the receiver of the arrow dies from swelling. They were afraid of us. They would gather up many parties of Indians and wait around for us. They never got us. They couldn't get us. We got the best of them. We lived like men with many powers that is why. We lived with nature as our guide. The birds would call from a certain direction and we would move in that direction. During the winter we moved into the tall woods. Our food was there, but we had to look for it. The deer were in the woods for us, just as the birds were there if we should need them for food. It was made that way for us and we did not forget it. This is how we lived. During the times when food becomes scarce we will know (our children and grandchildren because we told them) how to survive. Our children will learn to read and write but they will still know how to survive. There are many things to eat. It grows everywhere. Its like it is growing into your mouth, it used to be. The people are their own enemies. Some people aren't people. Some people aren't even very smart. They steal cattle that is why we acquired enemies. They stole horses from us in turn. We continued to be enemies because of it. They would seek us out to fight with us. They ganged up on us and we hid up in the mountains. They never killed us all. They would tell on us to the

Army troops and with them they sided. They wanted to get us out into the plains and kill us off easily, but it didn't happen that way.

They gathered us. Our grandfathers prayed for us. From the "Gobierno" (Government--Washington D.C.) came some officials. They became friends or they signed a treaty. They gathered us and send us down to the land of the Mescaleros. They said we were too much trouble, caused too much trouble, where we lived. We went down to Mescalero. We went down there where the people understood us. (This is what the whitemen thought). They put us together about 1880. We were not quite used to the ways of the Mescaleros nor were we able to completely understand each other, (language-wise). The language was similar but not similar enough. We were down there for about 5 years. Our people got tired. Some men went to Washington (Gobierno). We were living with the Mescaleros like children. Children play together alright for awhile, but soon they begin to fight. That is how it was. It was for reasons like these that we were unable to get along.

We soon separated with permission from the U.S. Government but with children as "collateral" (For the prize of separation our children were at stake). We came back to the area around Navajo River. (Dulce). The government helped us coming back. It was they who send us down there. When we could not get along they brought us back.

The men and the children had to go to school. They were to learn and help lead us. Today we live by it, the children learned well. Many of them finished school and went on to good paying jobs. Many of them work like the whitemen. The whiteman are always on our backs for learning their ways. We don't depend on paper and books for our way of living. We use our heads to learn things. We use our heads to store the knowledge of the past. The whiteman has short memories. They always need books to remind them but even then they never remember it all because of this we always have educators (anthropologists) come around to ask us how we used to live long ago. People long ago began to drift apart because things were not as they would have liked it to be. That is how we used to live.

How do we know the past? We can tell how many years have passed by cutting down a tree and counting the rings. The pine trees. We didn't keep records on paper. The days were known by the moon (we counted them) By the moon and stars we knew the date and time in progress. By the new moon we knew the time. We counted the seasons. We knew what was happening. Even today many of us still live by it. We still know it is older people. It isn't written anywhere except in our heads. We aren't like the whiteman. He has to mark it down somewhere in order to remember. We think and use our heads Everything has a name, medicine, birds, everything. We

knew all of them. We know their characteristics. If they are dangerous we warn each other from it. There are always those who do not listen. If we tell them there is a branch sticking out and they should be careful, they will run into it anyway causing them to go blind, but they have to learn by their mistakes.

Later when we came back from Mescalero our leaders confronted the government. The government must have felt sorry for us. The government said you can look up to us anytime you need help. When the army and our enemies fight with you and kill you where you go, we helped you. We will help you in whatever way we can we told the government. (with arrows) Today our children are protected by the government. There is no way we are so great. We help according to our capacity. We are not trying to get ahead of the government. The things they make we left alone but today our children know about the things and use it to their advantage. They know the language. They had succumbed to the ways of the whitemen, which explains why the whitemen's word is more powerful. Today our children live by their ways. It is uncertain how things are.

We received sheep and even food from the government so we stay with land. This was part of their plan. Many of us have left the land, livestock raising, etc. Some still make a living at it because there is profit involved

Q. WE WILL CONTINUE ANOTHER TIME, INTERVIEWEE IS TIRED

(CONTINUATION OF TAPE--June 9, 1970, Cevero Caramillo, Jicarillas coming back from Mescalero

It wasn't easy getting permission from the government to return to our own country- Some men went to Washington to negotiate plans for us to return to our land. They weren't given immediate permission. The children of the tribe were to go to school in turn for the permission. We returned when they agreed to send their children to school. Of the delegation who went to Washington only one knew how to speak Spanish. They understood they were to send their children to school for returning to the area around Navajo River. About 1897 they started returning having stayed 5 years in Mescalero. They were happy to return. The delegation came back from Washington and informed their people in Mescalero of their success in obtaining permission to return home.

- Q. While our people were in Mescalero were there any left behind in our country land?
- A. No, everyone went to Mescalero. When we received word from Washington part of the plan was that we look to the government as our guardian and we were to behave ourselves when we returned. No stealing. We will send an agency to that area. You will receive aid from the agency. They will take care of you so you can go forward. A school will also be provided. We agreed. The leaders told the people the government wanted the children to be educated. This was our agreement. The people talked it over. The people were afraid they would make it so there would be no children. They said all they

really wanted to do was to punish our children. Others said it was alright, our children would learn for us. The elders men said, "lets leave our children go and we will go to school for them". They went to school with some young man. It was alright for the younger men but the old men went to avoid having their children spanked and punished. Many people began returning from Mescalero but some ran away long before permission was given to them. They all came home one by one, some returned home by night, and others by day. Some returned with the Army to the Navajo River area. They were back in country. The people spread over the land. They lived where they wanted to near lakes and rivers.

The people began to live according to the will of Washington. We were gathered again. We got a superintendent and a secretary. We got a policement also we would behave. It was fine with many. Water was piped from the Navajo River to the school buildings, even to the bholdings of the agency. We also received rations. It was hard to get food and clothing there were no stores. Rations were distributed. The men were supplied with farm equipment. They were farm their land. Work began. The Apaches began to work, on piping in water for the schools. The police gathered the children with the help of the superintendent. Whoever didn't sent their children to school were send to jail. All children were brought in. All people were working. Some planted and built fences on the land they chose to live on.

Q. Was that when they were given allotments?

A. Yes, the land was divided. Because of the allotment there

boundaries on the land. The Apaches were all given land. Some planted, others didn't. It was similar to the situation today. Sheep and cattle were given out. The superintendent had much to say about the distribution. when the sheep and cattle were distributed, rations were stopped.

The women were given household items. Some made a living with it. Some didn't know how to use the equipment. Some cut wood instead. Some raised sheep and cattle but these people already knew how to go about it since many had cattle down in Mescalero. Many left their cattle behind when it was time to come back. Others started anew. The land was so that we could move around with the seasons. The land was bought for them with the help of the superintendent. More land was added to what we own. This allowed us to run sheep year around, during the winter we were up north and during the winter we were down south. Those that went to school were separate.

Some went to day-school with the Spanish. The Apache children fought with the Spanish children. The day-school ended. Many children were dying. Their hearts and lungs were not well. The doctor came and checked them. The doctors were send by the government. We talked with them but we didn't understand what they were talking about. They built a Sanatorium. The children were checked. Those that weren't sick we send to the boarding school. Those that were sick were kept at the sanatorium. Some children went to the mission. They went to school there.

Some time passed. The children began to learn well. They were

send on to get more education. The school got bigger. They built the public school. It was bigger. Many boys and girls went away to school. Many began to make their own livings. They left the past behind.

Q. When did you work at school, when did it begin?

A. I worked there 8 years.

Q. Would you care to talk about it?

A. I don't remember when the sanatorium began. (To his wife) Do you remember? You were there. (Again to his wife): When did the school under the mountain begin?

Wife. I don't remember

A. 1909 that school began but the sanatorium was built in the 1920's.

Wife. My father used to say that school on the reservation began in 1901. I didn't see it. Many big people went to school. They started to school.

A. The school began in 1909 it was the day-school that started in 1909 The mission school.

Q. What mission was this? Who was it runned by? Presbyterians?

A. It was the Methodist. I don't remember, I have it written somewhere. 1920 the sanatorium began. There were many Apaches then.

Q. Were the people having tuberculosis?

A. Yes. Heart trouble and all kinds. 1920 and there on. I don't remember. The population of the Apaches was reduced to about 400. From Washington a delegation came. Missionaries came too. Apaches were gatehred and asked what they should do. The people didn't understand what the whitemen were asking them. They talked about little things like the bad roads leading to their homes or

waterholes that broke through all the time. No one thought about the sanatorium. I worked at the sanatorium. I cared for the children. I listened to what was going on. The children were picked, the sick ones. The well ones were sent to the mission. The janitor left so I took over his job. Later the people who took care of the children left so I became the boys advisor for 8 years.

Q. Was it because you understood Apaches that they made you boys advisor?

A. Yes. they couldn't find another man then. I was going to church and that was why they chose me. They talked about it at the Mission. The Apaches blamed me. They said ever since I got in there the children were confined to their beds. they said I was a bad choice for the position.

The population was small. There were many people when they came back from the land of the Mescaleros. Many were sick, that is why we had the sanatorium. The mission school ended.

Q. When did it end?

A. It ended in 1940. In about 1939 the government school began.

Q. Did you work at the mission school or only at the sanatorium.

A. Only at the sanatorium. I went to church. I began to preach at the church.

Q. The children who went to church, were they christianized or was their faith in the Great Spirit greater?

A. They believed both ways, I suppose, I can't really say. Some were baptized. 200 or more were baptized at the Dutch Reform Church about 1915. Before this we went to the Day school with the Spanish. It didn't last long. All the Spanish moved away.

Q. Were there many Spanish people?

A. No, not many. Between the Spanish and Indians students there were not many at all. Some Apaches went to school at La Jara Day School. We were to all learn. The public school was built. Spanish and white children were allowed to come. Today it is still here, it is fine. Many go on to high school. Others go on to college but never back to help.

We were told that we are not well nourished in a report from Washington. We had poor blood. At this time no Apaches married outside their tribe. Many were not strong. It said we all confused. Many churches came in. The first was Dutch Reform followed by the Baptist, then the Assembly of God and then the Mormons. No one really believed. This made them mad. Some of us were paid for understanding English. Sometimes when I listened to whitemen I didn't understand. In 1915 I went to the mission I listened to what the preacher talked. When they sang it was alright. I sat in the corner. The children came from the school. The preacher called me forward and said "you stand here so you can be the interpreter". I didn't understand English. I was afraid and began to shake. My people said to me, "go ahead and talk for us (in English). I didn't know what to say. When everyone left the church I remained behind. There I remembered what my grandfathers had to say about our religion. They said to pray with the pollen and to put some on your head and in your mouth. I also put some on my feet. I made it the whole place a yellowish color with pollen.

The symposium from where the preacher spoke was where God was, I

used to think. I thought I could pray to God with pollen at the symposium. I, too wanted to speak to God. I didn't know where God was.

When services were over, when there was an interpreter we understood otherwise we didn't understand. Some of lessons I did not like. Many of my people drank alcohol and fought. It was for people like this that I resented the BIBLE. The Bible said not to use alcohol, it was the cause of trouble. Since I was the interpreter, I would leave the church with much resentment. I felt the church was degrading my people. When I got home I was mad. My people were degraded in church for drinking alcohol and fighting I disliked them for it. I refused to shake their hands when I left the church. They would say, "We'll see you next Sunday" but I still resented them. Sometimes there would be a good lesson. I was happy then. I would hurry home and tell my grandparents and parents about it. It was because I was an interpreter that I got by. I didn't understand English very well at all, but they called me the interpreter. Sometimes I wondered how I would interpret. Sometimes I thought the preacher had some alcohol to drink before he began his sermon. I thought I would go to Edith (Colo.) and get myself a pint. I thought I would drink it all before I went to church, so when the preacher asked me to come forward I would not be scared but I didn't do it. I knew it was best to stand up like a man, instead I didn't know English well.

Just because I was the interpreter that didn't mean I knew more than my people. I thought about it when the whiteman spoke to me he always had to do it in front of my people. I often wondered what

was wrong in talking to me in privacy. I thought I would learn English better that way. I stopped and thought it over. How would I learn English better. I went up to the mountains where there were no people around. I went to the thickest part of the woods. I would carry a gun. I sat down and looked around very cautiously. I acted like a fugitive who killed someone. There I would practice my English but when the birds chirped I would stop. There in the woods I learned my English, I would repeat over and over, "hello", "good-bye" and "good morning". they were the key words. I didn't know if my pronounciations were correct but I worked at it. I would come home after practicing. My mother would ask where I was. I would not tell her. She would say she was looking for me to get some wood and water. I thought maybe she followed me and listend to me. She didn't follow me though. I was ashamed of mother, because I was trying to learn English. That was how I learned English. That was how I learned English. Many people weren't bothered in learning English but it really bothered me. I was about 16 then. I went to the boarding school with your grandfather.

Q. How old were you when you went to school?

A. 18

Q. Were some you you married?

A. Yes.

Q. Did they go to school on their own free will?

A. No, they were forced to go to school. Mr. Koteen was my partner in school we were about the same age. Once we ate alot of crackers we both got sick. We didn't behave ourselves. We got gum all over

the place. We all didn't understand English.

Q. How did you speak to the whitemen?

A. We didn't speak to them.

Q. Well how did you get along?

A. Well some knew a few words and we would help each other.

Q. What did you do at school.

A. We read. We ate and washed our clothes. Other tall Indians took care of us. We took care of our living quarters. WE had to bring wood in for the stove. We were transfered to the day-school.

Q. Did you come to school from home?

A. Yes, we came from home. My partner who died and I, we would go to school together. We hid from my mother and went to school.

Q. (To grandmother) What about when you were in school did some of you already understand English?

A. (Grandma) Well when we were in school we all acted very crazy.

Q. How and why did you act crazy?

A. Well it was so much the younger children as it was the older children. It was crazy in that the older children would eat without us and we used to cry because we were hungry. They would divide us into groups. they would give us milk in the morning and evening. The men who cooked say, "the poor children, let's make them our concern and ask for more food for them. they look very poor (mal-nutrition)." Finally they would separate us from the older children and feed us separately. We felt better from there on. At first everything was so confussing and disorganized. We would go to boys building and ask for our brothers because we used to be hungry. Some of our brothers would go down to the store and buy us cookies

and apples. The bigger girls would take them away from us and we would cry. When we were given extras the older children would take the meat away from us. They didn't care, they used to tell us a big gray cloud was going to come and all little children are going to die along with their mothers but not us. The little children began running away. Soon I discovered I left there alone with my brother Norman at school. The white lady Miss Lombart came to me and said, "where are the children?" I wasn't sure I understood her and I didn't know English. I don't remember how I got to school but I remember I was already there. I did what all the other children did. Norman said, "sister, let's go home, all of our people have left". He said he heard this from Ignacio Martinez. I asked Ignacio where everyone went. He said everyone left. (He spoke as if he were a Navajo). There were taken home by their parents and relatives.

Q. Did the whitemen know they left school?

A. I don't know, but I remember they were brought back by the police but only some of them came back. Maybe some of them died ever since then. Norman and I started home. We weren't sure which way was home. Someone's grandmother just happened to be at the store. We said, "grandma where did all the people go?" She said 'many of her children have already returned from school. She said "who are your parents?". We didn't know our parents name. Another man came forward and said, they are (Naming my fathers) children. I really didn't know what was going on. Norman and I continued our journey home. The whitemen asked another man to take us home.

Q. Where was your home?

A. I'm not sure, I think it was at Stone Lake. He said to us, "where is your home?" We didn't know, "where your house?". There was another Apache boy with us and he told the man wanted to know where we lived? I told him, "yes", because that's about all I know. The whiteman took us somewhere. He just let us off near a camp. We went over to the camp and asked them if they knew where our parents lived. They said they lived across the way, but a man named Alisto lived there. He didn't know who our parents were, so by night he was asking people if they knew who's children we were. We left and went to another camp. Our aunt recognized us. She was Tom's mother. She said our parents went to white house.

Q. What is white house?

A. Santa Clara. She said they moved to Santa Clara. We didn't know where to go. Norman said sister, I think are going to get lost. I have no shoes except these that they gave me when I first started school. How was I to know when he went to school. The man who's camp we had just come from to made some shoes for Norman from rawhide. Louva took us home.

END OF TAPE