

Tribal Captives at Fort Marion

Who are the Cheyenne and Arapaho people?

The *Cheyenne* or *Tsistsistas* were the westernmost Tribes of the Algonquian family eventually migrated west and southwest toward the Great Plains beyond the Missouri River after they obtained horses. They moved near the Black Hills of South Dakota then became more nomadic following the buffalo and adapted more to the Plains and accustomed to the landscape. The early Cheyenne people were made up of two descendent Tribes, Tsistsistas and Suh'tai, who joined as one Tribe after crossing the Missouri River during their movement west. While in the Plains they eventually allied with the Arapaho and still have a lasting alliance.

The *Arapaho* or *Hinono'ei* were originally part of the Algonquian branch of people whose early ancestors may have originated somewhere along the Atlantic seaboard, reaching as far west as the Missouri River. Sometime before the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some Algonquin bands migrated westward. Originally, the Hinono'ei were made of five main bands of the Tribe. Each band had their distinct customs, traditions, and dialects. After acquiring horses, the Hinono'ei migrated throughout the Great Plains and along the front range of the Rocky Mountains. In the Black Hills country in present South Dakota they eventually met the Cheyenne and united as allies.

1875 Cheyenne and Arapaho in Florida

Following the Red River Wars, members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes were held as prisoners at Castillo de San Marcos, which was then called Fort Marion.

During their incarceration, U.S. officers admired the drawings some prisoners made and then invested in the production of multiple ledger drawings, supplying the colored pencils and military style ledger books. Then the drawings were sold as income to locals and collectors but the profits from the sale of the drawings prompted very little return for the captive artists.

Red River War: A United States military campaign starting in 1874, to displace Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, Comanche, and Caddo Tribes from the Southern Plains and force them onto reservations in Oklahoma.



The ledger drawings included in this publication were created by Cheyenne warrior Making Medicine and other unnamed artists.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY



The Fort Marion Project is a partnership between the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes and the National Park Service. The goal of this collaboration is to tell a more complete history of Fort Marion, honor the Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors who were held captive in St. Augustine, and provide opportunities for healing and better understanding of Fort Marion's long lasting legacy.

Tsistsistas (Cheyenne) and Hinono'ei (Arapaho) Today

Presently, Cheyenne and Arapaho people are made up of three federally recognized Tribes, The Northern Arapaho located in Wyoming, the Northern Cheyenne located in Montana, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho in Oklahoma. Although they are made up of three modern Tribes, historically the Cheyenne and Arapaho were two individual Tribes and with two different languages, and different but similar traditional customs. Despite many attempts at assimilation we are resilient and still maintain our culture, traditions, language and identity. We will always be a strong people and individual Indigenous nations. Throughout the history of our Cheyenne and Arapaho people and all the atrocities that affected our people

WE ARE STILL HERE!



Brochure written by Max Bear,
Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal
Historic Preservation Officer

Fort Marion Project Creator:
Norene Starr, Cheyenne and
Arapaho Tribes, Executive Special
Projects/Resource Coordinator



AMY LARNER GIROUX

Representatives from Cheyenne and Arapaho, Kiowa,
Comanche, and Caddo Tribes gather in St. Augustine

Why is Fort Marion called Castillo De San Marcos now?

Today, Fort Marion is better known by its original Spanish name, Castillo de San Marcos. The Castillo, completed in 1695 by the Spanish, is the oldest masonry fort in the United States. The national monument resides in St. Augustine, Florida, the oldest continually inhabited European settlement in the continental United States.

The fort is protected as a unit of the National Park Service. While this fort has stood for centuries under different names. It still stands today as a memorial to those captives imprisoned within its walls and the important and the difficult legacy of forced assimilation.

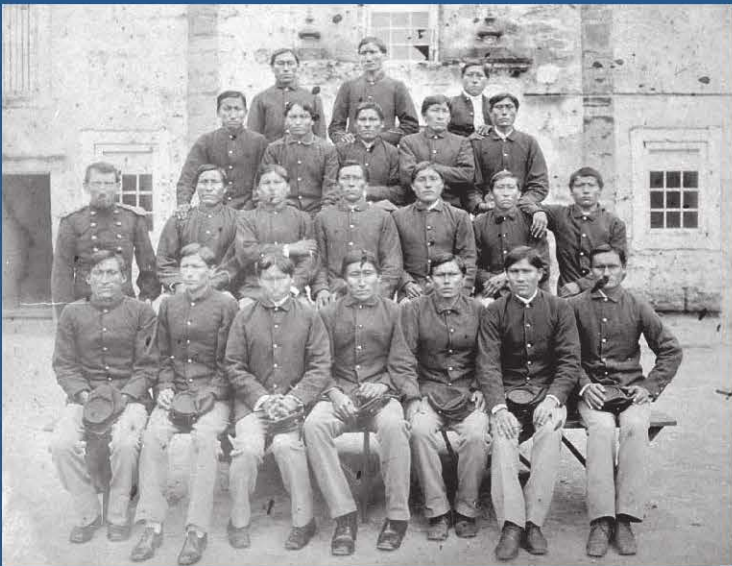


Why were Cheyenne and Arapaho “prisoners” at Fort Marion?

Since the early to mid-1800’s and the discovery of gold in the Rocky Mountains and the Black Hills of South Dakota, the original homelands of the Cheyenne and Arapaho people, the Indigenous Tribes have been on the defense of an invasion that was initiated in a land far away from the vast landscape of the North American continent with the *Doctrine of Discovery*. Plains Tribes tried to avoid conflict and pursued peace through the treaty process but never understood that process or why they had to give up most of their sacred homelands and hunting grounds. They had always opposed the efforts against them but still wanted lasting peace with the government. It all changed when the expansion west and the push for “opening the land for settlement” raged forth. The Cheyenne and Arapaho were two Plains Tribes of among many Plains Tribes, that were recipients of the full might of the United States government. As part of Manifest Destiny, which Europeans used as a divine right to claim this abundant land, it seemed necessary, many times, to remove or eliminate the original Indigenous inhabitants to open for settlement from eastern immigrant colonizers. To this day, many aspects of suppression can still be felt by the Tribal descendants of the captives or hostages that were unjustifiably sent to Fort Marion.



As a result of broken treaties and the mistreatment of the Tribes by the government, the land that belonged to the Cheyenne and Arapaho people was being rapidly invaded by immigrants, settlers, colonizers, traders, and military soldiers moving into the land. This created trespassing conflicts and disrupted the natural migrations of bison, a staple to the Indigenous diet. It also caused a disruption of the migrating of the Tribes who followed the buffalo as it moved across the land. Many Tribes had engagements with the U.S. soldiers to resist



NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES

Doctrine of Discovery: a papal policy that began in the 1400s justifying the Christian colonization of non-Christian lands and people, including the North American continent and its Indigenous people.

losing any more rightful land stated in treaties and to combat the loss of the buffalo, which were being decimated to extinction by fur traders, soldiers and sport hunters. The buffalo was the main source for food, shelter, clothing, and tools for many Tribes in the Plains. This led to many major conflicts with Cheyenne and Arapaho and the U.S. Government for many years with an innumerable loss to the population of the Tribes.

In 1874, southern Tribes including Kiowa, Apache, and Comanche allied with the Cheyenne and Arapaho and thus began what was dubbed the “Red River War” as the Tribes fought against forced removal from their homelands and being placed into reservations. Beginning in summer 1874, at least two bands of

Cheyenne warriors moved from the south into Kansas to seek revenge on the horse thieves and buffalo hunters they blamed for the Red River War. However, due to lack of force strength and low supplies to fight on the remainder of Tribal soldiers eventually surrendered in 1875. At that time it became known as the last days of the free roaming Indigenous peoples on the Plains.

General Philip Sheridan: As the U.S. Army General placed in charge of the Southern Plains area in the 1870s, Sheridan led the effort to force the Southern Plains Tribes into submission and onto reservations, using tactics of destroying food, supplies, and camps, and killing those who resisted.

Following the Red River War and the after effects, military authorities, especially General Phillip Sheridan, ordered that all the “ringleaders” of the Red River War as well as “such as who have been guilty of crimes” were to be incarcerated. At the time, the Attorney General of the United States stated that Sheridan’s commission to incarcerate the Indian leaders was illegal. However, since General Sheridan was good friends with President Ulysses S. Grant, Grant ignored the illegality of the commission and ordered the Indian leaders and those deemed worthy of a crime to be separated from their families and incarcerated many miles away from the only homeland they knew and away from all which was familiar.

What happened to the Cheyenne and Arapaho while at Fort Marion?

Those who were selected were transported to St. Augustine, Florida and placed under the care of Captain Richard Henry Pratt, who would later go on to found the Carlisle Indian Industrial Institute. He also is known for the infamous quote “Kill the Indian, save the man” which is in reference to the forced assimilation of Indigenous people into white culture. They were sent by train but along the route they were displayed to local townspeople on train station stops as “captured savages”. This ultimately made a profit for those who were able to benefit and none of the captives were ever compensated. Once they arrived in Florida they were stripped of their traditional clothing and had their hair cut, which is taboo to do so unless when grieving death. They were forced to learn English, march and conduct themselves as soldiers, but were not regarded as soldiers.

Capt. Pratt (second row, far left) with prisoners in military uniform, 1878

When did the Cheyenne and Arapaho go to Fort Marion?

The Indians were brought to or surrendered at the Cheyenne Agency at Darlington near present day Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Reservation in Oklahoma. The commanding officer at the time Lieutenant Colonel Thomas H. Neill was assigned to watch over all of the incoming Indian “prisoners”. Based on identification of the “ring leaders” and warriors involved a total of 33 Cheyenne and 2 Arapaho were selected to be imprisoned, including a large number of chiefs, mostly chosen based on the unsubstantiated testimony of white men. After these identifications, selection for which warriors were to be incarcerated became random. During the detaining of the selectees, at one point, Lieutenant Colonel Niell reportedly became visibly and belligerently intoxicated and in order to fulfill his quota, randomly picked the eighteen random men to be incarcerated. All the selected warriors were put in the guardhouse until they could be brought by train from Oklahoma to Fort Marion, Florida, where they were to be incarcerated.

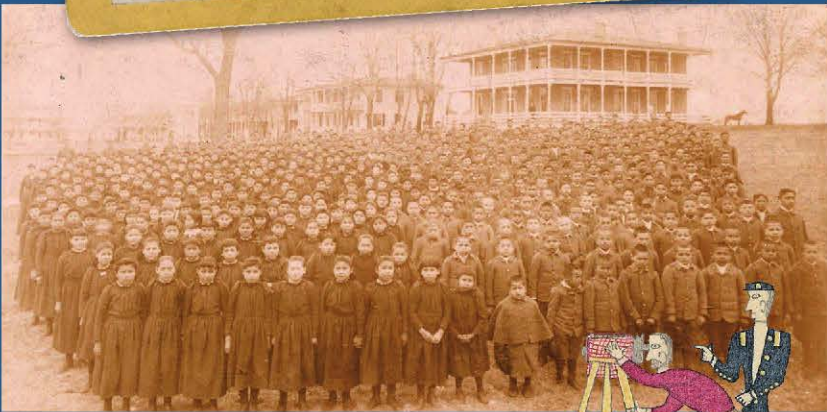
On April 6, 1875, the Cheyenne and Arapaho “prisoners” were led to be shackled for their upcoming journey to Fort Marion in Florida. They were taken one by one to a blacksmith who would put a shackle on their legs. Nearby Cheyenne women, upon seeing the shackling, began loudly chanting native war songs. Black Horse, one of the prisoners, kicked the blacksmith as he was about to be shackled, and



A Prisoner of War (POW) is a person who is held captive by a belligerent power during or immediately after an armed conflict.

jumped onto a nearby horse to escape. He fled towards the nearby village just north of the Canadian River, where U.S. soldiers followed and shot him and supposedly killed him. Black Horse had survived the ordeal, but was unable to tell the camp what was happening. Since previous attacks resulting in massacres happened in years prior, the village assumed something similar was happening again and decided to flee. Many guards raced towards the nearby village but could not enter due to the Tribe’s Dog Soldiers who stayed behind to buy the rest of the camp time to flee. The U.S. Sixth Calvary rode up and opened fired into the village. Captain William A. Rafferty and his men started to move towards the retreating warriors upon a sand hill, However, unbeknownst to him,

the Cheyenne warriors acquired firearms, previously stashed, and opened fire upon him causing Rafferty and his men to retreat. More U.S. soldiers arrived from the Tenth Calvary; however, the Cheyenne held them off until Colonel Neill arrived with a Gatling gun, breaking up the Dog Soldiers position. This was the first time in recorded history that the Gatling gun was used west of the Mississippi River. However, just as Colonel Neill ordered his men to advance, the Dog Soldiers opened fire once more and with nightfall coming, Neill commanded a retreat. Some in the Cheyenne camp (mostly men) decided to head north to further escape from the U.S. military. General John Pope offered amnesty from the sand hill fight for all those who would come back to Cheyenne-Arapahoe Agency, which many of the women from the village did.



Top: Indigenous prisoners at Fort Marion; above: Indigenous students at Carlisle Indian Industrial School



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