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# VERDIE TO SAN CARLOS

*Recollections of a Famous Army Surgeon and His  
Observant Family on the Western Frontier, 1869 - 86*

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Illustrated and designed by Harold A. Wolfinbarger, Jr.

then on he told of the wonderful things he saw in his dreams. Mike said:

He saw in a cave many women dressed in white, and lots of children. One came to him and told him to get up and walk, and do away with all his clothing and put on new, and go and heal people when they died too. He was to sing songs, then would touch the point where he would place his hands to suck out blood. Well sir, I have often been a witness when he called on the sick, and he would sing until some spirit would tell him where the poison parts were, and he would cut the body with a piece of glass (quartz) and suck out something — a fish worm or a scorpion — which he would take out of his mouth mixed with blood, and when he showed it by the fire it would move as if alive. He said there were many more like it and if they would wait he would get them all out — and the sick person would be well in a few days. It came true enough.

After the battle of the caves, the troops and scouts, with their captives, congregated at Camp McDowell where they stayed about three weeks before proceeding to Camp Grant. Leaving McDowell early in the morning they followed the Verde River down to the Salt and, crossing near the canyon, camped for the night. Here, the scouts brought in a woman and baby. The woman related that she was part of a small band who had intended to join those in the caves, but the Salt River being so high had prevented their crossing. The next day they discovered to their horror the terrible carnage of the massacre.

Continuing their march, the troops moved up a "big wash" through the Superstition Mountains and camped near a spring. The next day they came to the Salt River again and here Mike noticed a commotion among the scouts and learned that the woman and child were missing. The poor boy was terribly lonesome again. Another spring was reached for camp that night. On the march late the next day, signs of Indians were crossed, so they camped for only a short time to prepare for a night trip. Capt. Burns gave Mike a bundle to carry "which must have been bread, coffee and sugar." Pressing on, they soon came to a rough, high hill — reaching the top about midnight — "tired out."

Left, above: *the Cave interior; ceiling is partially smoke-blackened. Splashes of lead can be seen on ceiling where bullets ricocheted.*  
Left, below: *adjacent cliffs seen from the cave's east end. Note the faint Indian trail (arrows) leading to the cave.*

Four Peaks and the headwaters of Cave Creek, but this was not substantiated.

The Doctor had very intimate knowledge of the four dead Indians, for he stated:

These were buried on the spot, and on my way back to Camp Verde, I disinterred the heads and sent the skulls to the Medical Museum,<sup>1</sup> as they showed the so-called explosive action passing through the skull, which broke it into many pieces (De Coursey 1951: Letter)."

After this trouble the line of march was changed somewhat. Sieber was in the lead with several scouts, followed by the Tontos. Then the packtrain with the soldiers as a buffer between it and the other tribes. The Doctor as usual, rode back and forth, picking up a child, or ministering to the wounded. Of course that "line" was not as orderly as the description of it might lead you to suppose. Several of the wounded were carried, for a time, slung across the shoulders as one might carry a dead deer. One or two of the more severely wounded were carried on crude litters. These were attended by several medicinemen, wailing, and singing their piercing chants.

They now worked along the east slope of the Mazatzal Range, through the Mazatzal Wilderness and eastward into Tonto Basin. Then along Tonto Creek and struck the Apache Trail where it turns up the mountain near the present Roosevelt Dam. Singlefile up this steep grade was a hard, long climb and the most grueling passage of the entire trip. Horses had to be led. The old and crippled stopped and blocked the trail. Every trooper's horse carried a crying, terrified child — hanging on "for dear life." Another mule and its load was lost, plunging into the river far below.

We crossed the Salt River with great difficulty [said the Doctor], and one morning shortly afterward, on scanning the Indians, as I always did, I saw that some of the Mojave and Yuma [Yavapai] men had their faces painted, their noses red and the rest of the face black with galena, as when prepared for war. So I went over and spoke to Captain Charlie, and, much to my surprise found him in a very belligerent mood. To my inquiry he just glared at me and said, "*kwa-wa-o-pi*, talk no."

I returned at once to our bivouac and was telling the commissioner that the Indians were ready to fight again, when a bullet came whizzing over from them as a warning. I told him to get busy or the next

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for the museum catalog description of these skulls. D.S.K.