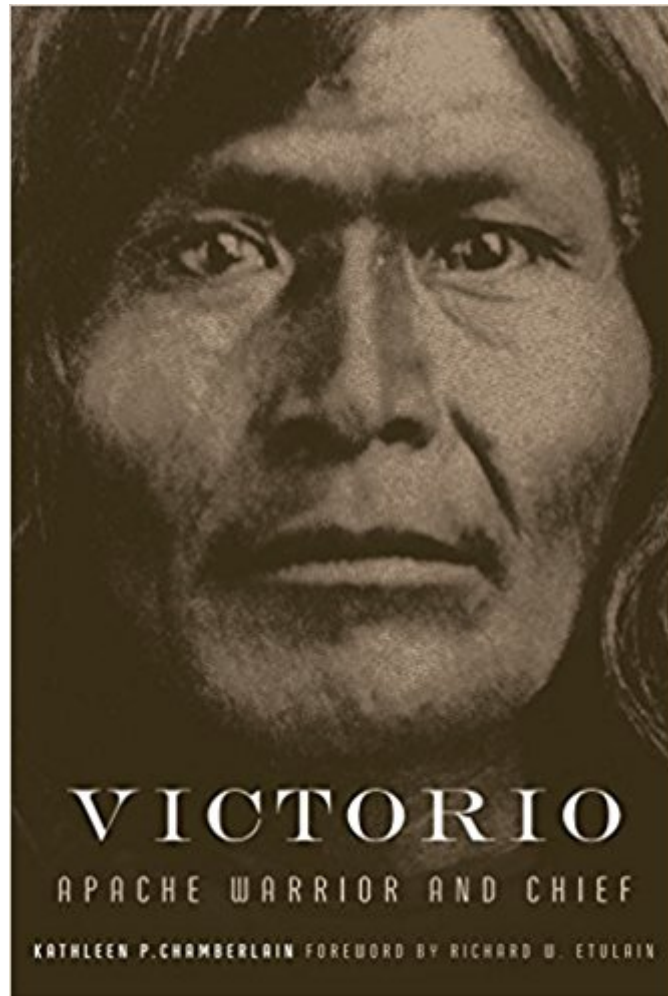


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Victorio: Apache Warrior And Chief (The Oklahoma Western Biographies)



Synopsis

A steadfast champion of his people during the wars with encroaching Anglo-Americans, the Apache chief Victorio deserves as much attention as his better-known contemporaries Cochise and Geronimo. In presenting the story of this nineteenth-century Warm Springs Apache warrior, Kathleen P. Chamberlain expands our understanding of Victorio's role in the Apache wars and brings him into the center of events. Although there is little documentation of Victorio's life outside military records, Chamberlain draws on ethnographic sources to surmise his childhood and adolescence and to depict traditional Warm Springs Apache social, religious, and economic life. Reconstructing Victorio's life beyond the military conflicts that have since come to define him, she interprets his character and actions not only as whites viewed them but also as the logical outcome of his upbringing and worldview. Chamberlain's Victorio is a pragmatic leader and a profoundly spiritual man. Caught in the absurdities of post-Civil War Indian policy, Victorio struggled with the glaring disconnect between the U.S. government's vision for Indians and their own physical, psychological, and spiritual needs. Graced with historic photos of Victorio, other Apaches, and U.S. military leaders, this biography portrays Victorio as a leader who sought a peaceful homeland for his people in the face of wrongheaded decisions from Washington. It is the most nearly complete and balanced picture yet to emerge of a Native leader caught in the conflicts and compromises of the nineteenth-century Southwest.

Book Information

Series: The Oklahoma Western Biographies (Book 22)

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: University of Oklahoma Press; First Edition edition (October 1, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0806138432

ISBN-13: 978-0806138435

Product Dimensions: 9.4 x 6.6 x 0.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #597,794 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #86 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Regional Canada #201 in Books > History > Americas > Canada > First Nations #257 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Native American

Customer Reviews

Kathleen P. Chamberlain, Professor Emerita of History at Eastern Michigan University, is the author of *In the Shadow of Billy the Kid: Susan McSween and the Lincoln County War* and *Under Sacred Ground: A History of Navajo Oil, 1922-1982*.

The revenant, a novel of survival in the early 1830s. Interesting story published before by other writers and on Wikipedia. Lacks style. A narrative account of a historical fact.

Having followed anthropology and sociology in college, I appreciate the intermingling of fact, ethnology, and oral tradition interwoven throughout this latest biography of Victorio. And would easily recommend this book to other readers. That said, the book I still prefer is Dan L. Thrapp's 1974 monumental study. Here's a few thoughts why: In many chapters of this newer book, Victorio's existence is relegated to the background, while in the forefront general, traditional Apache history and culture are recited. In doing this oft times the author seems to use words such as "may be", "may have", or "undoubtedly" in place of concrete historical fact. Since a paucity of fact admittedly exists for much of Victorio's life, any sidestep from fact could reasonably lead directly to errors resulting in misleading conclusions. With Victorio being such an atypical Apache warrior it cannot necessarily be stated, removed from known fact, just what his early life would have been like. And sadly many facts of Victorio's daily, early life just are not available. If Victorio, for example, similar to Crazy Horse of the Oglala Lakota, was not the 'normal' Apache, then his entire life, as true with Crazy Horse as well, probably defied in many ways rather than conformed to the Apache cultural norm. As in the case of Geronimo, which the author cites, a warrior could exhibit at times deviate behavior rather than the Apache cultural norm and not only get away with it, but at times be admired or feared because of it. As such the application of the words "may be", "may have", or "undoubtedly", simply may fall far short when attempting to link Victorio's behavior to other Apache children or warriors. We just do not know the exact details constituting the early life of Victorio, much less many details of his later life. Although the Apache have an oral tradition as examined by Eve Ball and others, that tradition much of the time does not help us on our fact finding quest. Though I enjoy Dan L. Thrapp's scholarly works, I find no reason not to recommend this book to others. However, my reading taste runs rather to a more military approach to biography as contained in Dan L. Thrapp's works. His book on Victorio is also more voluminous in pages and maps, and offers several more photographs to bolster the text. And though this author understandably feels her recent book the superior work, I cannot agree. While most excellent, her newer biography does not, in this reader's opinion, surpass Dan L. Thrapp's earlier, elegant time-honored work. However, reading both of these

studies on Victorio can only aid our understanding of this very remarkable person of history. Semper Fi.

A very much needed and appreciated biography that was done with an unbiased and true outlook towards a person in our native American history whose story long needed to be told. The book gives as much detail as possible with the scant writings/knowledge available on the subject. Never the less the author does a masterful job of it. Truly intriguing in the sense that it need not have turned out the way it did for Victorio or his people. Victorio was without a doubt a master strategist who sought above all a home and peace for his people. Shows how much things have and have and have not changed when it comes to dealing with the less fortunate in the world. I was very impressed and went through the book really fast as the southwest, it's people and history remain endlessly fascinating to me.

Excellent historical look into the life and tribulations of an Apache Leader that historians have ignored. Great insight to the Indian Wars of New Mexico and Arizona. Explains the relationships of the government agents, military, and the Apache tribal leaders to include the ventures into the Mexican territories. Well documented history of Apache culture. Respectfully, Bert J. Terrazas

A good composite of what has already been recorded. Well written, easy to read book is all that can be expected due to the dearth of information on the man most of his contemporaries said was their greatest chief.

Great read!

Too bad he got lost in the history pages....we need to keep his legend alive.

Overall this book is an adequate overview of Victorio's life -- impressive when one takes into account the dearth of information about him. However, there are a couple of items that brought my review from a five or four star down to a three. Like one of the other reviewers, I found that Chamberlain would make educated guesses about what Victorio's thoughts might have been. Even though they are prefaced with "perhaps," "possibly" or "must have," it is disconcerting. An example of this is on page 205 where Chamberlain obliquely suggests what Victorio's last thoughts might have been: "As Victorio prayed to Ussen, he also must have thought about Warm Springs, the place

the Creator made specifically for his Apache people." No matter how reasonable this might sound, I think it would have been better served for Chamberlain not to dabble in these presumptions which she does throughout the book. Another stumbling block is the occasional awkward sentence which pops up from time to time. Although not numerous, there are enough of them to make it a pattern and not an aberration. There is also some sloppy grammar, especially the overuse of commas, particularly at the end of the book. To be fair, this would fall under the domain of the publisher. Despite all this, I would still recommend this book. Chamberlain does a decent job of describing the plight of the Apaches, especially the depiction of the ghastly San Carlos reservation. Chamberlain is also masterful at times in describing the despair of Apaches on the run in a terribly hostile environment with women and children in tow. Last but not least, credit must be given to Chamberlain for the impressive array of sources and her ability to put them in a neat, chronological order, no small task considering the scattered condition of some of the sources.

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