



HERITAGE GUIDE

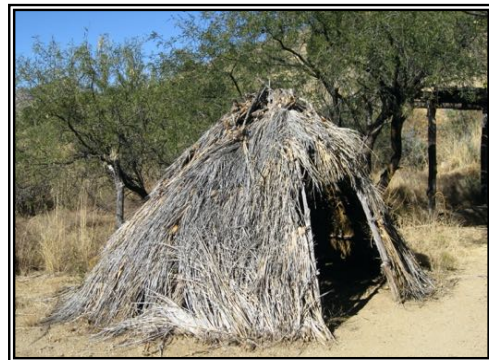


The Spanish and Mexican Periods: After the Hohokam and Before American Ranchers

Oro Valley has a long and rich history. Some periods are widely understood while others still remain a mystery. Who was here after the Hohokam residents of Honey Bee Village and the Romero Ruin left (around A.D. 1200) and before George Pusch arrived to establish a ranch in 1874?

The area became home to Western Apache people although it is unclear when they first entered Arizona. Archaeological and linguistic research indicate they were relative latecomers to the American Southwest and that their ancestors, known as Athapaskans, migrated from northern Canada. The Athapaskans are culturally distinct from the earlier Hohokam and from the Pima (Akimel O'odham) and Papago (Tohono O'odham) peoples who consider the Hohokam their ancestors.

Spain ruled what is now southern Arizona from the late 1600s until 1821. By the early 1700s Apaches had acquired horses from Spanish explorers and with them they developed raiding practices that became an important part of their economy. Riding horseback increased their territory and the amount of foodstuffs or other "booty" they could carry. Mexican settlements and other Indian villages were frequent targets.



Apache wikiup. Constructed of a pole frame with beargrass or yucca covering.

In 1752 the Spanish government established a presidio at Tubac, and a presidio in Tucson followed in 1776. Spanish documents describe Sobaipuri (Piman) people living north of Tucson in the San Pedro Valley. Many of them moved to Tucson where Spanish protection from Apache raids was provided. Spanish policy of the late 1700s also emphasized the creation of peace settlements (Establimientos de Paz) where Apaches would be given food rations in exchange for peaceful relations. Some Apaches moved close to the Tucson presidio although many stayed in the nearby mountains and canyons.

Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821 and ruled what is now Arizona. Troops stationed in Tucson occasionally pursued Apache raiders. One route ran directly north from Tucson along the western edge of the Santa Catalina Mountains crossing the Cañada del Oro in what is now Oro Valley. An 1851 report states that Apaches raided Tucson for mules, horses, sheep and cattle. Captain Agustin Romanos assembled his men and led them north in pursuit. Their pursuit proved fruitless because the raiders had retreated all the way to the Cañada del Oro without stopping.

Fur trappers began entering Arizona, and Anglo American exploration began in earnest in the late 1840s with the discovery of gold in California. The United States took possession of southern Arizona in 1854 through the Gadsden Purchase. U.S. Army records from the 1850s and 1860s provide the first detailed descriptions of Apache livelihood and territories. The Cañada del Oro crossing was frequently identified as a major point going north from Tucson.



*Painting depicts an Apache attack on a **Tully and Ochoa** freight wagon train near the Cañada del Oro in 1869. Artist is unknown.*

Apache residents had first viewed Anglo-American settlers as potential allies in their hostilities with the Mexicans, but they soon learned that the Americans wanted them to give up raiding especially into Mexico. Conflicts between the Apache and the Pima and Papago also continued into the American period after the Gadsden Purchase.

In 1871 the Camp Grant massacre occurred in which angry citizens from Tucson and their Papago allies attacked a group of Apache sleeping near Camp Grant (at the confluence of the San Pedro River and Arivaipa Creek), killing many of them and taking their children to be sold into slavery in Mexico. The Cañada del Oro played a role in the secrecy of the surprise attack because messengers were detained at the crossing. After this massacre federal and local governments made serious attempts to end hostilities.

A peace policy developed by the U.S. Army in 1871 called for the collection of all Apaches on reservations. President Grant established the Camp Grant Reservation north of Oro Valley. The reservation was soon eliminated, at the end of 1872, because new settlers wanted the land for ranching. Apaches who lived there were moved to the San Carlos Apache Reservation which still exists today.

Some Apaches were able to live in the San Pedro Valley after the reservations were established. They hunted and farmed in the Oro Valley area when the first large ranches, including Romero, Sutherland, Steam Pump and San Pedro/Feldman, were created. Soon, however, the transition to a livestock economy dominated by newly settled Americans was complete in southern Arizona. *(by Patricia Spoerl 2016).*