

A century ago the Pimas were often at war with the Apaches to the east and the Yumas and Mohaves to the west. Sotoyea, Chief of the Pimas, had distinguished himself in numerous battles and attended with unusual good fortune in every engagement he was considered quite invulnerable by his tribesmen and by his enemies as well. As the head of Pimas and Papagoes he once saved Tucson from an Apache attack that threatened its total annihilation. In a hard fought battle with the Apaches near the newly constructed diversion dam on the Gila, Sotoyea received his first bullet wound which proved his last as well. The Apaches on learning that the Pima Chief was shot, turned his horses to the east and beat a hasty retreat. Sotoyea was cremated on the field of battle and his warriors returned to their villages now known as Casa Blanca.

The good chief had no son to take the leadership and after the customary disposition of his cattle, horses, camp and other belongings, his worthy lieutenant, Cula Azule, was chosen leader. The customary ceremonial smoke with the sub-chiefs confirmed the selection. The new chief grew in favor as new problems arose, surrounded with enemies of his race and with white soldiers and emigrants passing up and down the Gila at all seasons of the year, diplomacy as well as bravery was a requisite for leadership.

Witness and party to the selection of Cula Azule for chief was a son and man of his own heart, Antonio Azule, who was born in the year 1817 or 1818. Where the father went the son accompanied. What the father did the son supported. They fought the Yumas and Mohaves, depleting the enemy and strengthening their union with the Maricopas. To the white soldiers or emigrants they gave food, lodging or escort, as conditions required. As Cula Azule

bowed to old age, tribal leadership was assumed by the well trained son, Antonio.

During the Mexican war the Pimas were neutral. General Kearney in the early fall of 1846 passed down the Gila and his chronicles speak in high praises of the Pimas and of their good leader. In December, 1846, Colonel Cooke, with a Mormon Battalion of about three hundred fifty men reached the Pimas desert following the Kearney Brigade. On the eighteenth day they camped on the Gila where the Pimas, advised of their coming through General Kearney, supplied the hungry battalion with corn, beans and flour. A few Army mules, Indian goods, and letters left by the Kearney expedition were delivered to Colonel Cooke. The Mexican garrison at Tucson learned of the military cache with the Pimas and contrived to take the mules and letters but the decisive word and prompt action of Antonio Azule short-circuited their plans and their enthusiasm waned. Like all leaders of record, Azule cherished an ideal for which he was always servant. He wanted peace with the white race with the firm conviction that it promised the betterment of his people. In support of this ideal he often took chances of making himself unpopular with his own people. His experience and environment gave him background for good judgment and once on the trail he never lost it, nor permitted his people in the majority to do so.

Colonel Cooke and his battalion appreciated the reception and relief extended to them by Azule and his people. Five days were spent with these desert people and their hospitality did not weaken with their diminishing stores. On December twenty-third march was resumed and at the home of Antonio Azule where a season before Kearney had spoken, Colonel Cooke, in the presence of his battalion and a host of Indians, pronounced the Pimas as the happiest and most prosperous of the many tribes he had seen, and

predicted their happiness and prosperity as continuous with their adherence to the principles of industry, honesty and cheerfulness which they manifested. Their love of peace, he said could be but half insurance for their safety-- the other half lay in their preparation and united front in resisting aggression. With best wishes for this homeloving people at this Gatehead of Pinaland, and confirming their mutual faith and confidence, Colonel Cooke extended three ewes and lambs to the chief as the one practical donation he could give to a worthy people.

Ten years later, 1857, Antonio Azule, at forty, headed the united forces of Pimas and Maricopas in a decisive battle against the Yumas and Mohaves at Maricopa Wells, in which it is said but three of two hundred warriors escaped to tell the story of the battle. Not a few Indians among the victors and vanquished attribute the out come to the favoritism of Montezuma, through Nature 's profile of him so near, whose silent tongue, closed eye, and deaf ear could no longer permit tribal antipathies that cost many lives. Just what part the clear cutgigantic profile seen against the azure sky had on the warring hordes, is conjectional, but this much we know - Antonio Azule, the victorious tribes, and union with the Maricopas, was again strengthened.

Tribal disputes were greater problems with Azule than war with the enemy. Dissection between two brothers, at one time threqt ened tribal di ssolut ion. As master of the situation the wise leader slipped between the contending brothers end said "Men of the same blood must not bring disgrace upon themselves and their tribe, Better die defeated at the hands of the Apache than take the life of a brother tribesman."

The Apaches continued their depredations and t he Pimas, the settlers, and emigrants were victims to daily atrocities. Civil War in the East was hardly reflected in Arizona, save in general uneasiness, high prices and depleted

stores, increasing idleness and greater frequency of raids of the Apaches and the Mexican desperados as well.

When a man in his early twenties, John D. Walker crossed the Arizona desert, meeting the Pimas and observing their stores of corn, beans and wheat in his course. Later, as a wagonmaster in the Fifth Regiment of the California Infantry, he returned to the Pima Villages for their surplus grain which was invaluable relief and support to the California Volunteers on the border. After his discharge Walker returned to the Gila Valley and in 1866 as Captain, enlisted and organized a company of Pima Indians with Antonio Azule as his first lieutenant. Under date of April fifth, 1866, report was made of an engagement with the Apaches, in which two hundred sixty volunteer Pimas and forty enlisted men of Company B., First Infantry, Arizona Volunteers, killed twenty-five Apaches, captured sixteen prisoners and eight horses. Burdened legislators and conflicting legislation defeated support of the Arizona Volunteers and the company was soon abandoned with little thanks and less pay, leaving Arizona again unprotected from Indians and Mexicans.

Walker was a friend to the Pimas. Repeated campfire stories to this day vouch for his common sense, patriotism and generosity, Character is contagious and if Walker contracted some tribal traits his associate Indians, which included Antonio Azule, profited by the association.

In the early eighties when Apaches, Mohaves and other southwestern Indians were yielding to a general movement to revive customs, practices and delinquencies which contact with civilization had forced them to discontinue, there was a general uneasiness in the territory. The Apaches led in the movement and unfortunately there were Pimas who would follow the craze. On one occasion a number of Indians with painted faces appeared before Agent Wheeler and defied molestation in their tribal rites. Through an interpreter the Agent directed the Indians to wash the paint from their faces if they wanted a conference on

any subject. Cent ending Indians who had guns attempted to use them in forcing their issues. At that Antonio Azule rose and, after three bows to the sun in the heavens, with hand to his heart he said in a strong voice: "God, my Father, You *alone can prevent trouble*. Please prevent it," and to the Indians he said "You do not good in this way. You know how Crow Head killed the White Robes, how the soldiers trailed him and his people to the Estrella Mountains, and how the defeated chief offered his life that his children and people might not starve. Quiet down, use reason, and talk together or the soldiers, will pour down on us like beans from a bag." The emergency had its master and our records give too few of the many such instances where divergent parties of the tribe yielded to his common sense arguments.

The usefulness of Antonio Azule grew with his years and his influence was not confined to Pinaland. His Indian name, "ER-VAH-AH-TOE-KA" interpreted "Spreads out" is significant of the character and influence of the chief. He consistently supported the Government policies, asked for schools for his people, urged enlistment in industrial pursuits and favored the trail of Jesus for his tribe. He died October 1st, 1909, exceeding four score and ten years in age.