

BASCOM, GEORGE NICHOLAS

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Fish Manuscript, pp. 287-289.

The hostile actions of the Apaches were greatly aggravated by bad management. The most notable of these errors was that of the attempted capture of Cochise and some others. In 1860, a party of Pinal Apaches had engaged in trade with a party of Mexicans close to the mail station at Apache Pass. There was both trade and war with the Castilion (sic), and the great trouble was; what was stolen from one Mexican found ready sale to another. The party of Indians in question ~~in question~~ had been indulging in mescal to quite an extent, and had stolen or led away with them a little boy, the child of a Mexican woman and an Irishman by descent. The name of this child was Mickey Free.³ The Mexicans demanded that the boy should be returned.⁴ A settler named John Ward, who was step-father to the boy and had driven him away in one of his

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3-. Mickey Free was born in 1855, on the Sonoita near the Mexican line. His father was an Irishman named Hughes and his mother was a Mexican woman. Both his parents were killed by Indians and Mickey and his sister carried off into captivity. Mickey had red hair and one blue eye, the other having been hooked out by a wounded deer when he was twelve years old. He later became a noted scout and interpreter under

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General Crook. After the Indian troubles ceased he went to **Fort Apache** where he has lived with the Indians being more of an Indian than an Indian himself.

4-. **John Ward** came to **Tubac** from **California** in 1857. He soon formed a partnership with a Mexican woman (the mother of **Mickey Free**) he got a hay contract from the government, while in this labor he got on one of his usual sprees drove the boy off and lost his cattle.

drunken debauches, had lost some stock (it was found afterwards that they were not stolen but had strayed away) on the **Santa Cruz** and went to the military authorities and made complaint (to **Major Steen (sic)**). **Lieutenant Bascome (sic)** a young **West Point graduate**, without any experience or knowledge in **Indian affairs**, was sent to **Apache Pass** to recover the live stock and demand the return of the child. At the **Pass**, **Bascome (sic)** met **Cochise**, the chief of the tribe, and stated the object of his mission. **Cochise**, was then at peace with the **Americans**, but was still continuing his raids into **Sonora** and was just returning from one of them when **Bascome (sic)** came to the **Pass**. He replied that his tribe had not taken the property but he would try to find and return it. The Indians stated that they knew nothing of the boy, but thought he had been taken by some of the **White Mountain Apaches**, and the light of years has proven that they told the truth. Next day, **Bascome (sic)** invited **Cochise**, his brother, and two nephews, and one or two others, to a "big talk" and they came at the appointed time. On going into the tent the

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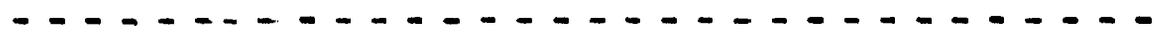
Lieutenant gave them something to eat, and then went out, ordering his men to go in and arrest them; intending to hold them as hostages for the return of the stock and boy. On the soldiers going in a desperate struggle ensued. Cochise seized a knife, slit the canvas and escaped carrying with him three bullets and a bayonet wound in the side. One chief was knocked down and spitted on a bayonet while attempting to follow. The other four were bound. There was present a man named Wallace, who appears to have been station keeper at the place and who had for a considerable time lived on good terms with the Indians, and he now proposed to visit the Apache camp and endeavor to arrange the difficulty. On his arrival among the Apaches he could obtain no intelligence of the Mexican lad; and he sent word to Bascome (sic) that as far as he could judge, the Indians were innocent of the charge made against them, adding that he himself was retained as a hostage for the safe return of the six warriors who had been captured. Cochise appeared at camp and demanded an assurance from Bascome (sic) that the prisoners had not been killed. This the Lieutenant refused to give, and Cochise rode off to his people. He found a rancher by the name of Lyons whom he took with Wallace and offered to surrender in exchange for the prisoners. Bascome (sic), however, refused to make any terms with the Apaches notwithstanding the appeals of the two men, nor would he believe Wallacets statement. He threatened to hang the six Indians that night if the boy was not instantly set free; and Cochise led his victims back

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to the **torture**. Next day another effort was made to **exchange** and **still Bascome (sic) refused**. The two captured Americans **plead** their suffering without **avail**, and at last urged **the Lieutenant** to order **him** to shoot **them**, so **that** they might be spared further **sufferings**. This, also he refused to do, **sheltering** himself and men behind the palisades of the **station**. At a favorable **moment Lyons** who was a powerful **man**, tore himself **loose** from the two **Indians** that held **him** and **succeeded** in scaling the outer wall or picketing of the **station**, when he was shot by **the soldiers**, who, in their **confusion**, **mis took** him for an **Apache**. **Cochise**, finding that **peaceful** measures would not **prevail**, and for the purpose of striking terror into the hearts of **his adversaries**, threw a loop around the neck of **Wallace** the **remaining** captive and dragged him to death in plain **view** of his **countrymen**. There was a **train** or wagons near by **which Cochise** said he would attack **if his** warriors were not **released**. He then **went**, and captured the five **men in charge** tied them to the wheels and burnt **them**. Their **cries** were **plainly** heard by the **Bascome (sic) party** and at the **station**. Signal fires were raised and next **morning** a thousand warriors surrounded **the station** and **would** have annihilated the **small force**, but for the **timely** aid of some **reinforcements** from Forts Buchanan and Breckenridge. The captive **Indians** were taken to a point near the west end of the pass and there **hung** from the **limbs** of an oak tree where their bodies were **still** hanging when the California Volunteers visited the place some two years **later**. **Cochise** and **his** band then

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took an oath **before their gods** to devote their **lives** to **vengeance**, and the **sad** history of this country for the next **ten years** tells how well they kept **it**. This was the beginning of the **first** drama of blood and rapine which devastated Southern **Arizona**. **Bascome** (sic) said, just before his death that this act was one **in his life** which he **regretted**; he never got over **it**. He was **killed** at the battle of **Val Verde** in **New Mexico**, in less than a year after the tragedy at **Apache** ⁵ **Pass**.



5-. The story of the attempted capture of **Cochise**, has been written up by many **different** authors with but little **variation**, as to the principal points. **Pumpelly**, **Across America and Asia**, p. 16. **Hilzinger**, **Treasure Land**, p. 36. **Dunn**, **Massacre of the Mountains**, p. 380. **Hinton**, **Arizona As It Is**, p. 108. **Bourke**, **On the Border with Crook**, p. 119. **Barrett**, **Geronimo's Story of His Life**, p. 117, says, "After a few days' skirmishing we attacked a freight train that **was coming** in with supplies for the **Fort**. We killed some of the men **and** captured the **others**. **These** prisoners our chief offered to trade **for** the Indians whom the **soldiers** had captured at the massacre in the **tent**. This the **officers** refused so we killed our **prisoners**, **disbanded**, and went into hiding in the **mountains**."

Cochise, in the **Apache dialect**, means "Wood."

Bascom, George N. was unmarried.
His father died January 21, 1844.

Bascom was killed February 21, 1862 in the battle of
Valverde, New Mexico, and his mother made appli-
cation for a pension.

In 1865 his mother, Mary W. Bascom was reported
in a lunatic asylum in Kentucky, and her claim for a
pension was abandoned.

Mother's original 83003.

name?
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See file of Manuel Gandara.

The New York Herald, 11/4/ 1860, 2:5

One of the officers at Fort Buchanan. —

Bascom, George C. ~~improbable~~

Sandy Parrett's MS.

Massacre of Lieut. Bascom of troop B,
1st Dragoons and his troop. Parrett was one
of the first to reach the scene.

