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Famous American Indians

DR. CARLOS MONTEZUMA

By JOSEPH ALEXANDER, Chemawa Student

There are few stranger careers than that of Carlos Montezuma, a full-blood Mojave Apache Indian. The history of his life reads like a thrilling chapter from a dime novel. "Captured in a massacre which almost wiped out his tribe, carried off into slavery, sold to an alien, educated among those whom he had been taught to regard as blood enemies, and then to win high honors at the hands of his benefactors," was Dr. Montezuma's life in a brief statement.

Dr. Montezuma was born at Weaver's ranch, a short distance from Superior, Arizona. He was dragged about the first two or three years of his life from one place to another, as his tribe was in continuous warfare with the American soldiers. During that time he was alternately carried from the Grand Canon country to the lower reaches of Senora, Mexico. Just as it appeared that his life was to be cast in a more peaceful channel the most stirring episode of his life occurred. Arrangements were made whereby his tribe was to enter into a truce with the government. While men of the Mojave-Apache tribe were counseling with the army officers a raiding party of Pima Indians swooped down upon an unprotected camp of a large number of women and children, which was located a few miles northeast of Phoenix.

The Pima band killed all the women and children that were unable to escape. A few fleet-footed ones ran and hid and in this way saved their lives. As the Pima band was riding away the boy began crying and they found him and did not have the heart to kill him, so they took him to their village a short distance south of the Gila River in the Salt River Valley.

Dr. Montezuma's parents were victims of this massacre. He was then little more than a baby. He was kept by his captors until he was four or five years old. As a child he then attracted the attention of a Chicago man who was touring the country and he purchased him from the Pimas for thirty dollars. He took him and gave him all possible educational advantages. He

graduated from the University of Illinois, then from the medical department of the Northwestern University and later from the University of Chicago. He graduated with high honors from the University of Chicago and took up the practice of medicine in that city, where he practiced for some twenty-five years. At the time of his death he was recognized as an authority on intestinal disorders.

He was also a physician in the Indian Service for some years, during which time he was for two or more years at the Carlisle Indian School.

Dr. Montezuma passed away on Jan. 31, 1923, at McDowell, Arizona, where he had gone hoping to recover from tuberculosis. His last illness was brief. The climate of his birth state did not help him as it was hoped it would.

Funeral services were held at the First Baptist Church in Phoenix, at which Major York, of the United States Army and a personal friend of Dr. Montezuma; Colonel McClindock, State Historian of Arizona, and Reverend Dr. Percival spoke. The day following his remains were interred at McDowell. At his funeral Dr. Percival said in part:

"The life of Dr. Montezuma symbolized for us the wonderful relationship between two peoples, the red and white, the Indian and the American, the first and the last American. His life links together in a marvelous way the past and the present of our country, its oldest savagery with its newest civilization. He was not an old man, and yet within the half century of his life he has run all the gamut of primitive tribal life, of savage warfare and massacre, of capture and slavery, of travel across the great plains to the cities of the east, where he grew up with the metropolis of the middle west, studying in our schools, learning the lessons of the streets of the big city, fighting the battle for higher education, that he might go back into the slums of the city and the reservations of the west and help heal and uplift his own people and the newer immigrants to these shores. He saw the worst of our civilization, but he chose the best.

"His life becomes a two-fold lesson to us today. To the Indians he is an example of what any Indian may become who will avoid the worst and seek the best in our civilization.

"To the American he is a reminder of what capacity the Indian possesses.

"His life says to us: 'Give to my brothers the same opportunity which came to me and they, too, can be-

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