**There was so much open land that there was no need to harm others. But, after the Civil War, life here changed. The Western Movement brought the desire for power for some, and greed took over for others. The Apache stood in the way of progress, many thought.”**

**“Geronimo and Victoria led efforts to stop losing their sacred area to white settlers. Geronimo (1829-1909) was born in present-day New Mexico at the headwaters of the Gila River. He was the last warrior fighting for the Chiricahua Apache tribe.**

**Geronimo became famous for standing against the United States government and holding out the longest. He was a great spiritual leader and shaman. Many Apache chiefs sought him for his wisdom, and it was said he had supernatural powers. He could see into the future. He could walk “without creating footprints.” He could keep the dawn from rising to protect his people.**

**In 1913, two hundred Geronimo followers arrived at the reservation. They were held prisoners at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. They became members of the Mescalero Apache Tribe when it was reorganized under the provisions of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act.”**

**“Victorio was a chief of the Warm Springs Apache. When his people were removed from their ancestral home to the San Carlos, Arizona, dislocation reservation, Victorio bolted for Mexico with a group of followers. He and his people terrorized the border country with continual raids. Victorio always managed to elude his pursuers.**

**In October 1880, Victoria died at Tres Castillo while waiting for a small raiding party to acquire ammunition. Victorio was surprised when General Joaquin Terrazas and his army attacked Victorio and his band of 78 Apache.**

**Three months later, all his descendants surrendered. For example, his sister was also known as a “shield to her people.” History has it that Lozen used her powers in battle to learn the enemy’s movements, which helped each band of Apache to avoid capture successfully. After Victoria's death, Lozen continued to ride with Chief Nana and eventually joined forces with Geronimo's band until she finally surrendered with her last band of Apache in 1886. She died of an illness in Mount Vernon Barracks in Mobile, AL. Today, Lozen’s descendants reside on the Mescalero Apache Reservation near Ruidoso, New Mexico.”**

**“That is a bit of your history and philosophy lesson today,” Charlie stated. “I am ready to start exploring for artifacts if you don’t mind.”**

**They dismounted to rest their tired saddle-sore butts. Charlie looked upward and saw two Aplomado Falcons flying in their synchronized sky dance. “**

**“Joey, are there any myths about the Aplomado Falcons in the Apache culture?”**

**“I am not sure, but I know: this Falcon is incredibly beautiful with colorful feathers. Until the 1930s, they were everywhere in New Mexico and doing well. Then, with the rampant use of pesticides that caused devastation by making their eggshells so thin they could not hatch. But the use of DDT was banned.”**

**In the Apache way of life, there has always been a long-standing belief in the dark and light sides and magic. This is similar to the Navajo Skinwalker’s shapeshifting myth. Their shadows were believed to wander far across the American cultural landscape and were reduced to mere werewolves. The concept of Skinwalkers emerged as shadowy creatures in today’s Navajos beliefs.**

**Whereas the Apache thought Cloud-eaters were giant monsters who lived in a great mountain in the east. They were translucent, with many eyes and large, trailing tentacles.**

**They had an endless appetite for clouds, so each morning, they stood on the peak of the nearby mountain, opened their gigantic mouths, and swallowed each cloud that appeared on the horizon; therefore, it did not rain.**

**And there is misery in the dark side of life, and nothing progresses for the Apache. Here, in the light of life, there was happiness. The spirits created peace and harmony for our people.**

**One oral myth passed down is that Ahaiyute lived with his grandmother. He was strong like the sun and fast as a deer. He listened as his grandmother complained about the drought. He had to do something.”**

**The myth is told like this: Joey said, “I will slay the monster, then it will rain, and our corn fields will grow the food,” Ahaiyute said.**

**“Be careful,” his grandmother cried. “Cloud-eaters are dangerous. Even the bravest and strongest warriors have been powerless against them.”**

**Ahaiyute chose his largest bow and longest arrows. He was ready to do battle.**

**“Take these four feathers and guard them, for they are great treasures. The red one will lead you along the right path. The blue feather will let you talk with the animals. The yellow one will allow you to make yourself small as the tiniest creature, and the black feather will give you strength.”**

**He put the blue, yellow, and black feathers in his pocket. The red one went into his hair. He whispered thanks to her. And he started walking east. Ahaiyute walked for the longest time. The land was parched, and where once stood straight corn stalks, now only brown curled stems lay on the ground. The birds were too hungry to chirp, and the animals were too weak to run for food.**

**The hot sun was relentless. He grew hungry, thirsty, and tired when he saw a gopher standing beside its hole. The blue and yellow feather was placed in his hair, and he shrank to the size of a gopher.**

**“You are strong and brave to wander in this heat with such power,” the gopher exclaimed. “Where are you going? Come into my hole; you can take my underground passageway to the Cloud-eaters,” the gopher said. “You will find food and water. I will lead you to the monsters.”**

**The gopher tunneled until they heard the sleeping monsters breathing below them. The gopher broke ground. He began gnawing at the fur of the monster’s heart. That Cloud-eater opened his eyes. “What do you think you are doing here?”**

**“Peace, peace, Grandfather,” the gopher replied. “I have taken a little of your hair for my nest. You will not miss it!” He scampered back to his tunnel.**

**“Quick, before the monster wakes, take your bow down my tunnel and shoot your arrows into his heart. My tunnel leads directly to his heart. You should kill him with your first arrow.” Ahaiyute placed the black feather in his hair, walked out of the tunnel, raised his bow, and carefully aimed at the monster’s heart. The bowstring was still humming when the Cloud-eater roared. The sound echoed throughout the mountain and made the earth tremble. Dirt and rocks crashed around Ahaiyute and the gopher as the monster thrashed this way and that. Finally, silence prevailed. The Cloud-eater ate his last cloud. “Now the rains will come,” he shouted.**

**Ahaiyute retrieved his arrow and walked with the gopher to the tunnel entrance. He looked up and saw a heavy layer of dark clouds covering the sun. It began to rain big drops. His trod became a stream of rushing water. The earth’s hunger for water was satisfied.**

**He grinned with delight. He accomplished what he set out to do. He saved his people and became a hero.**

**The Act of Congress created six all-black regiments known as “The Buffalo Soldiers.” This nickname was derived from their dark, curly hair resembling buffalo fur. Their bravery and ferocity in battle gained them high marks and praise.**

**The Buffalo Soldiers’ primary duty was to support the nation’s westward expansion by protecting settlers, building roads, and guarding the U.S. mail. They were stationed throughout the Southwest.**

**They served west of the Mississippi River because many whites did not want to see armed black soldiers in or near their communities. At times, they suffered violence and death at the hands of whites.**