

Albert "Al" Sieber

It has been said that Al Sieber took part in more Indian battles and killed more red adversaries than Daniel Boone, Jim Bridger, and Kit Carson combined. Yet he was as well respected and loved by the Indians as any scout in history. On February 29, 1844, he was the ninth child born to Johann and Katherina Sieber in the little hamlet of Mingolsheim, Germany. His father died the year after Sieber was born, and the family immigrated to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, while he was still a young boy. After several years in Pennsylvania, Sieber and his mother moved to Minnesota. After the Civil War broke out he enlisted in Company B, 1st Minnesota Infantry, and fought in such battles as Fredericksburg, Antietam and Gettysburg where he was badly wounded.

After the war, he joined the westward movement, going to California, Nevada, and back to California. In 1868, he drove some horses from San Bernardino to Prescott, Arizona, where he began participating in Indian-hunting expeditions to control depredation. When General Crook began organizing a force for his offensive against hostile Yavapai and Apache Indians in 1871-1872, Sieber signed on as a packer and soon became chief of scouts. On September 25, 1872, he participated in the Muchas Cañones fight on the Santa Maria River in which several rancherias of hostiles were destroyed. Sieber led more than 80 Hualapai scouts during this operation and was commended by Crook in General Order 32. He continued scouting for Crook during 1872-1873, when he was again commended in Crook's General Order 14 of April 9, 1873. He was then



assigned for several years to Camp Verde where he fought alongside Lieutenant Wayne Schuyler. Their main adversary was Chief Delshay, also known as Red Ant, a notorious chief of a band of Tonto Apaches. A \$50 bounty was placed on Delshay's head. Three Tonto scouts were sent out after him and they returned with a part of a scalp with his distinctive ear attached. One of Indian Agent John Clum's policemen brought in a head as evidence that he had killed Delshay. Both parties were paid the reward.

Sieber continued his scouting duties throughout the 1870s and in 1876 was responsible for ensuring that depredating Indians did not flee the San Carlos Reservation and escape to Mexico through Sulphur Springs Valley. In early spring of 1882, he discovered that Juh, an Apache war leader, had left Mexico and was returning to the San Carlos Reservation where he forced Loco, another chief, and several hundred Apaches to follow him back to Mexico. Al Sieber, as chief of scouts, led an Army command into Sonora where they fought in a large battle.

Juh managed to escape only to later fall off a horse and die. It was undetermined whether from drunkenness or a heart attack. In the summer of 1882, Sieber was again on scout for the Army and trailed a group of marauding Apaches into Big Dry Wash. This would be the same group that killed some of the Meadows family in Pleasant Valley. Sieber discovered that the Indians had set an ambush for the soldiers, so he sprang a trap of his own and a terrific battle ensued. It turned out to be the last major battle with Apaches in Arizona. One soldier and one of Sieber's Indian scouts were killed on the Army side and sixteen hostiles were killed, half of those from Sieber's gun. One account says that the Indian scout, Private Pete, was killed when he saw two of his brothers and his father with the Indians. He threw down his weapon and ran to them. Sieber told him to halt and when he did not, Sieber shot him in the back of his head.

In 1883, General Crook selected Sieber as chief of scouts for his Sierra Madre Expedition deep into the heart of Mexico in pursuit of Geronimo and the Chiricahua Apaches. After the expedition, he was assigned to scouting and police duties on the San Carlos Reservation. He had a close friend, the Apache Kid (Photo at right), whom



he had trained as a scout and loved as the son he never had. One day the Kid got drunk and killed the Indian that had killed his father. The Kid was placed under arrest and during a breakout Sieber was shot in the left foot by a .45-70 slug. That was enough bullet to kill a buffalo and he was permanently crippled. The Kid did not do the shooting, but Sieber never forgave him and the Kid was never captured again. Sieber was never married and was naturalized as a citizen in Globe on October 30, 1889. In December, 1890, he was fired as chief of scouts by Major John Bullis and, though the reason is not known, it may be that Sieber had been involved in a dispute between Bullis and another civilian.

Sieber then became engaged in prospecting and assorted other frontier activities. In 1903, construction on the Roosevelt Dam began and he worked there off and on for the rest of his life. He had a crew of Apaches working on the road alongside the dam and the soon-to-be lake. On February 19, 1907, the crew had been trying all day to get a huge boulder of about six or seven tons to roll down the mountain. Not wanting to leave the job undone, Sieber hobbled down the hill and began to probe at the boulder with a stick. Suddenly it began to roll and he was crushed to death. Some rumors were that the Apaches caused it to roll on him, but there was no reason to believe that to be the truth.



Al Sieber Monument on the shore of Lake Roosevelt and near the dam. The monument had to be moved to accommodate road construction. It is now across the road and about 100 yards from the actual site which has been lost to history.

Al is buried in the "Old Section" of Globe Cemetery, among some of the leading names in Globe history and Arizona pioneers.



Al Sieber's gravesite and Tombstone

For a complete history on this fascinating Arizona pioneer and historical character, and to learn more about the Apache Kid, I highly recommend Dan Thrapp's book *Al Sieber: Chief of Scouts*, the source of this story.