Paul Mayerhoff in Apacheland

by William B. Kessel

Paul S. Mayerhoff was born in 1870 in Ripon, Wisconsin. As an adult, with the exception of eight years among the Apaches, he enjoyed a rather normal, if uneventful life as a parish pastor. He married, became involved in community affairs, continued in church work, retired. His wife Johanna died in 1955. He missed her intensely. Two years later he joined her.

Mayerhoff lived, he loved, he died. Yet he has not been forgotten. From his brief tenure among the Apache he left behind a significant legacy. The Indian missions which he and two colleagues started are still in existence. Today approximately 3,000 of the 16,000 Apaches located on the White Mountain and San Carlos Apache Indian Reservations are Lutherans. There the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod maintains ten congregations and six pastors, and four parochial schools with 22 teachers. The prehistoric and Apache artifacts Mayerhoff gathered are prized specimens in the American Indian collection of the Field Museum in Chicago. The series of articles he wrote in the 1930s in the *Beatrice Daily Sun*, a Nebraska newspaper,[i] today provide scholars and the curious with a rare glimpse of life among the Apache at the turn of the century. Paul Mayerhoff was a humble, self-effacing individual. He could laugh at his own foibles and freely admit his insecurities. At the same time he was a man of noble character who approached the Apaches on their own terms and came to love and respect them, and they him.

Historical Prelude

It was 1876—one hundred years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, twenty-five years after the founding of the Wisconsin Synod, the very year when General George Armstrong Custer made his fatal miscalculation.

One week before the battle of the Little Big Horn the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod[ii] convention met in Watertown, Wisconsin. Mission work among the American Indians was a main topic of conversation. Pastor Matter concluded, “This is the worst of times to begin an Indian mission.” For support of this thesis he pointed to the chronic Sioux Wars and noted that the Iowa Synod had decided to close its Indian mission. The convention delegates, however, held the opposite view. They argued that the white man had created many of the so-called “Indian problems” and that it was time to begin mission work. Someone made a motion to begin Indian mission work immediately. Synod President John Bading called for the vote. It passed. The operational strategy was simple yet promising. A *Reisepredigt* (missionary-at-large) would follow the tracks of the recently built Union Pacific railroad establishing mission stations along the line.

The plan, however, died in its infancy. President Bading was forced to report to the 1887 convention that the project had completely floundered and had to be officially terminated (Fredrich 1992:79-80).

Six years later, in 1883, the Wisconsin Synod convention observed the 400th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther. The pastors and delegates were still committed to doing Indian mission work and, thus, resolved “to seek out a mission society that was both orthodox and zealous in its outreach and to channel the synodical mission offerings into its coffers” (Johne and Wendland 1992:20). To this end Synod President, John Bading, appointed five synodical leaders to find such a society. Once again the plan failed to materialize. A year later the men reported that they were unable to find a suitable mission society.

Undaunted by the former setbacks the 1884 convention instructed the committee to look for a potential mission field and missionaries from within the synod itself. Specifically they were "to look for young men of piety, willing and according to human judgment able to devote themselves to the service of the mission among the heathen" (Johne and Wendland 1992:20). The mission candidates were to receive special mission training in the synod's educational institutions, and this was to be paid for out of mission offerings.

By 1889 three men were enlisted for this program, John Plocher, George Adascheck, and Paul Mayerhoff (Johne and Wendland 1992:20). Unfortunately they received no special mission training. As Fredrich (1992:99) notes, "The only difference between the prospective missionaries and other students at the synodical schools seems to have been that the former did not have to pay the customary fees."

It was now 1893—seventeen years after the Wisconsin Synod first broached the subject of working among the Indians, seventeen years after Custer's Last Stand, seven years after the Apache medicine man Geronimo finally surrendered to federal troops. Missionaries George Adascheck and John Plocher began mission work among the San Carlos Apaches of east-central Arizona.

The decision to approach the Apache with the Bible was actually the result of three converging factors: the Wisconsin Synods determination to do mission work among American Indians, a favorable government policy, and Presbyterian missionary's sage advice. In 1892 Lutheran pastors Theodore Hartwig and O. H. Koch were sent to the southwestern United States with the task of finding a tribe of Indians "where no missionary of any denomination has yet set foot" (Centennial Committee 1951:232). As the men trekked through Arizona Territory they found that mission work was already being done among several southwestern tribes. This was consistent with government policy. In order to prepare the Indians for assimilation into Anglo culture, the government pursued a three-pronged program. First the Indians were to be taught to be economically self-supporting through agriculture. Second, schools were to be opened and the children taught to read, write, and display "proper etiquette." Finally, the Indians were to be converted to Christianity (Spicer 1967). At the San Carlos Apache agency this policy was already being put into place. There Theodore G. Lemmon, the Superintendent of Schools, regularly held Sunday religious classes for all interested Apaches. Lemmon, however, felt his efforts were insufficient. In his annual report for 1890 he emphasized the need for Christian missionaries and complained that clergymen "traverse raging seas and burning deserts to the heat of Africa for missionary work,…while as thorough savages in our own country…are permitted to go to the devil in such manner as they may choose…" (Lemmon, 1890 quoted in Brown 1963:78). It is doubtful that the Lutheran pastors Hartwig and Koch read Lemmon's report. Instead they were pointed in the direction of the Apaches by the Presbyterian missionary Charles Cook. For some years Cook had been working among the Pima Indians of Sacaton, Arizona Territory. When questioned by the Lutherans, Pastor Cook told them that to date no missions had been established among the Apaches. The two pastors had heard enough. They submitted a report recommending mission work among the Apache.

On October 10, 1893, missionaries John Plocher and George Adascheck arrived at the San Carlos Apache reservation. Both were from "old country," Wuertternberg and Austria respectively, and had attended Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin. Other than a short "period of tutoring by the church extension superintendent, [E.] Mayerhoff" the two missionaries received absolutely no special training to work among in the mission field, much less among the Apache (Koehler 170:198-199). This, however, was not their immediate concern.

No sooner had they arrived at the San Carlos agency than they were told that their coming had not been cleared with the military. Consequently they journeyed nine miles to the north and set up two tents. Some months later Apache chief, Cassadore, agreed to sell them 10 acres, and the church at Peridot was established (Brown 1963:79, C. Guenther nd:1).

Within two months of their arrival among the Apaches, Plocher and Adascheck began work in accordance with government expectations. They conducted religious services at the boarding school at San Carlos and visited the Indians in their camps. By summer of 1894, Adascheck was given permission to return to the east officially because of his inability to manage either the English or Apache language (Centennial Committee 1951:233). Mayerhoff (1938), however, noted "Adachek (sic) only stayed one year. He could not stand it there." Plocher stayed on the reservation and opened a mission school in Peridot. Each Sunday he conducted services at Peridot and the San Carlos boarding school which claimed an enrollment of 110 students. Twice during the week he provided religious instruction and taught the English language at the San Carlos school. The rest of the time he spent visiting the Indian camps and working among the 20 students in his Peridot school. In fact, "the Government used policemen to bring them in" (Centennial Committee 1951:233). Plocher remained at Peridot until 1899 when he returned to the east. "The work for one man alone, the whole San Carlos reservation, was too exhausting and both Mrs. Plocher and the Plocher baby girls suffered so much from heat and improper food, that Plocher was forced to ask for a change" (Mayerhoff 1938). During his six year stay among the Apaches, the missionary performed four baptisms (Centennial Committee 1951:233). A decade earlier, in 1889, three men had been appointed to be missionaries among the Indians, George Adascheck, John Plocher, and Paul Mayerhoff. The first two men had laid the ground work for Lutheranism among the San Carlos Apache. The task of converting the White Mountain Apaches of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation fell on the shoulders of Paul Mayerhoff.

The Tenderfoot

Paul Siegfried Mayerhoff was born on February 14, 1870 in Ripon, Wisconsin. His father, E. Mayerhoff, was originally from Halle, Germany, but in 1864 he moved to Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. He served pastorates in Ripon, West Bend, Forest, and Wonewoc, Wisconsin. During the 1880s he was the Wisconsin Synod's missionary-at-large (Koehler 1970:91).

As a youth Paul Mayerhoff became acquainted with some Wisconsin Indians. As he later recounted in his diary:

> Since infancy the writer had some contact with Indians. That mother would put me and my five year old sister by the garden gate, with a pot of boiled potatoes to feed the papooses as the Winnebagoes trekked by our parsonage at Ripon, Wisconsin about 1873, I barely remember. The parents related many funny happenings of those days to us later on.
>
> As a barefooted lad on the Main street of West Bend I was many a time impressed when Indians showed their marksmanship with bow and arrow, knocking big copper cents from cracks on hitching post.
>
> During my school days at Watertown contact with the Indians was imaginary as I followed plowmen around their field on an old battle ground, picking up tomahawks, arrow and spear points and occasionally a piece of virgin copper, roughly molded into an instrument of use.

> However, all this is a long cry from real contact with the savage tribe in later years. Whatever boyish romance led me and my playmates to stage Indian raids on our sisters and their dolls with tomahawk, scalping knife and blood-curdling war howl, might have had its inception in Cooper's "Leather Stocking Tales", for I never showed any desire to make the live acquaintance of Wisconsin's or any other red-skins of the U. S. For I was built on cowardly lines (Mayerhoff 1936-1937a:IV).

Also during his youth, Mayerhoff cultivated a great respect and love for the ministry and mission work from his father. Thus he enrolled at the Wisconsin Synod's, Northwestern College, and began preparing to be a pastor. In 1889 he had completed his junior year when he learned that the synod was looking for missionaries to work among the Indians. He, along with Adascheck and Plocher, volunteered. No doubt his father, the superintendent of church extension, was delighted.

While Adascheck and Plocher got their chance to be missionaries among the San Carlos Apache, Mayerhoff first had to complete his seminary training. In 1894 missionary Plocher made a reconnaissance trip to Fort Apache, about 90 miles from his Peridot home. As a result of what he saw, he recommended that the synod established a mission on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. In 1896 Paul Mayerhoff received and accepted the call to begin that work.

The self-proclaimed twenty-six year old "tenderfoot" arrived in Arizona in May. He had taken the Southern Pacific train to Bowie station and there transferred to a branch line which ended sixty miles later at a stop known as Thomas. The thermometer read 114 degrees in the shade. For the last leg of his journey, Mayerhoff's took the 40-mile stagecoach ride from Thomas to San Carlos. In his own laconic style Mayerhoff recorded the all-night experience.

> Chuck, down we go! Jerk, up we come. We careen to left, we careen to right. Seat mates collide, carom and bounce…Dust! it runs off our wheels like water! Deep! We do not stop to find bottom. There had been no rain since last July, this was May the next year. Ore wagons from Globe had dug and pulverized the valley silt to the finest of powder during that time. The jolting and seesawing at last made the tenderfoot's stomach rebellious. What followed after, only the night and desert might tell. Why rob the Apaches of such a country (Mayerhoff 1936-1937a:IV)!

The stage arrived at sunrise. After eating breakfast Mayerhoff hired an Indian to ride out to the mission and inform the missionary of his arrival. For the next four weeks Paul Mayerhoff enjoyed the hospitality of John Plocher. During that month the junior missionary learned to ride a horse, became acclimated, and learned some Apache words. Then it was off to work.

On June 1, 1896, Plocher, Mayerhoff, and an Apache guide set out for the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. The horseback ride that day brought excitement but also pain. Mayerhoff (1936-1937a:IV) remembered, "to the tenderfoot it meant 50 miles of bouncing and rubbing on saddle leather to which a leg weary pony added some extra jolts from fatigue—the tenderfoot was done tender." The next morning after a 30 mile ride they arrived at Fort Apache and relaxed but for only a short time. After lunch they rode north looking for the camp of Chief Alchesay. Three years earlier a San Carlos chief named Cassadore had welcomed missionaries Plocher and Adascheck and provided the land for the Peridot mission. Now Cassadore was sending Plocher and Mayerhoff to his friend Alchesay with the message that these white men were his brothers. The next day the missionaries and their guide rode west 50 miles on horseback to Cibecue. Once again they extended Cassadore's greetings to an Apache friend, Chief Cooly. By now it was evening, the third of June.[iii] A large Independence Day celebration was planned for Fort Apache the next day. After sun-up Plocher and his guide rode on to San Carlos. Mayerhoff, meanwhile,

followed an Indian policeman bound for Fort Apache. The post commander loaned the missionary a tent bed, and mess-box until his own things could be forwarded from San Carlos.

Mayerhoff hired an Apache to haul his equipment to a site four miles east of the post. That afternoon, alone, he pitched his tent. Soon a line of Apaches on horseback half-encircled the missionary. A corpulent chief, Y-1, ordered Mayerhoff to "get out." In an unexpected flash of bravado, Mayerhoff retorted in broken Apache, "Don't tell me to get out." Y-1 indicated that he would set fire to the missionary's tent and then rode off. That night, tired, sore, and frightened, Mayerhoff (1936-1937b:V) lay in bed dozing. "thinking of home and dreaming of pleasant things far away in Wisconsin." Suddenly he was aware of someone crawling into his tent. The intruder turned out to be an Apache woman called "Christmas" who invited him to an all-night ceremonial dance taking place nearby. Still frightened but adopting the philosophy, "it is the bold who win," Mayerhoff attended. Among the hundreds of Indians in attendance two men recognized him—Chiefs Alchesay and Cooly whom he had met only days earlier.

Mayerhoff returned to his tent for a few hours sleep and then attended the festivities the next day. That evening Chief Y-1 and his followers again paraded into the missionary's camp. The chief indicated that Mayerhoff was on his land and that for two dollars he could stay for five days. Mayerhoff paid and eventually stayed for eight years. "Later on Skills Koy, the big chief of Y band and I were very good neighbors and friends" (Mayerhoff 1936-1937a:V).

The self-proclaimed tenderfoot had been on the Fort Apache reservation for less than a week. "Here was I in a strange land among a savage people without knowledge of their language excepting a few dozen words…which I could recite in rote but not use conversationally" (Mayerhoff 1936-1937a:V). Here was Paul Mayerhoff, first missionary to the White Mountain Apache.

The Missionary, The Man

Mayerhoff (1936-1937a:VI) once wrote that it was years before "I had outgrown the tenderfoot age and hardened into somebody liked, trusted, and treated as an equal by the Indians. Elsewhere he wrote (1936-1937c):

> It took many years of neighboring and inter-visiting between the Apaches and the "Innashoot [Apache word for missionary]," many hours of patient effort to get a working knowledge of their language; many ministrations; to the sick and needy; before the Apaches reserve and distrust of the white man was so far allayed that they accepted the missionary no longer as an interloper and spy, but as one of their own, a "sigissin," a brother.

These words reveal an important fact. Paul Mayerhoff had to earn the respect of the Apaches in order to succeed with his mission. He did this by learning their language and demonstrating that he was a man of compassion and honesty. In time, the Apaches accepted him as one of their own—a friend, a neighbor.

The Brilliant Linguist

A few years earlier George Adascheck resigned from the Apache mission field because he was unable to learn Apache. Paul Mayerhoff was determined not to suffer the same fate. Fortuitously, Mayerhoff had an almost unique facility for learning the language (Johne and Wendland 1992:36, 59). In 1902 John P. Koehler, a Wisconsin Synod pastor and professor, had an opportunity to visit Mayerhoff. For three weeks the former observed the missionary at work among the Apaches. He noted how skillfully Mayerhoff could take the Christian gospel message,

rethink it according to the Apache's perspective, and then articulate it in their language. Years later Koehler (1970:199) wrote:

> Mayerhoff soon acquired an unusual mastery of the native language: Cooley, an aged Indian at Cibecue then, told the present writer Mayerhoff knew more Apache than the Indians, because he could talk the dialects of both parts of the reservation. This old Indian, who fought the whites in the 70s, is not identical with the Irish squaw man of that name who on the northern boundary of the reservation on the road from Fort Apache to Holbrook ranched with two Indian wives and conducted a large inn to take care of the live tourist trade from the East brought about by the contacts of the army post officers. This Cooley, too, spoke at Mayerhoff's linguistic accomplishments; and a representative of the Smithsonian Institution, who with his wife was engaged in ethnological researches at North Fork and made inquiries of the writer about the background of the missionaries, declared that Mayerhoff was considered an authority at Washington regarding the language, traditions, and folklore of the Apaches.

While Mayerhoff soon became fluent in Apache (which was no mean feat), he did so only through much hard work. He filled ledger after ledger with Apache words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, noting grammar and syntax. Mayerhoff, thus, constructed an Apache/ English and English/Apache lexicons (Mayerhoff 1896-1904). Meanwhile he translated portions of Luther's Small Catechism into Apache (Keiser 1922:135, 137).

The Dedicated Pastor and Teacher

After establishing his camp and reconnoitering the area, Mayerhoff set to work. For the most part, the white people on the reservation welcomed him warmly. At Fort Apache the officers, medical staff, postmistress, and all "but the commandant, were professing Christians." They invited him to preach to them on occasion. Meanwhile the Indian agency was located four miles away at Whiteriver. It was run by a former Lutheran from Virginia. While he did not attend services at least he was accommodating. Meanwhile, the principal of the school at Whiteriver, "one Miss Hamilton, was a pleasant Presbyterian." The rest of the whites, however, were not "fired by educational ideals but by the love of adventure or the lure and the opportunities which the proximity to gold, silver, and copper mines offered to get rich quick" (Koehler 1970:200).[iv]

Mayerhoff, however, had not been called to preach to the soldiers, agents, or teachers. His mission was to convert the Apaches. Since the government policy called for the "civilization" of the Apaches through education and conversion to Christianity, Mayerhoff was allowed to preach and teach among the 60 Apache children of the Whiteriver agency boarding school (Brown 1963:81). In addition, he visited the Indians in their camps and told them Bible stories.

Jack Keyes was an Apache boy in the agency school in Whiteriver at the time. He recalled the Indians' initial reaction to Mayerhoff:

> Long ago we Indians don't know anything about missionaries. Then the first missionary came from San Carlos to Fort Apache. His name was Rev. Mayerhoff. He talked to us, but we didn't know what he meant. We Indians thought he was just another white man just talking about something. I was only a boy at that time. Few Indians at that time could understand or speak English (Keyes 1936:488).

If Mayerhoff initially had trouble communicating with the Apaches it did not seem to dampen his zeal or keep him from accomplishing his task. As soon the government granted the

mission sufficient land, he built a 12x12 foot frame home (Wehausen n.d.). In 1898 he built a 30x30 foot home for $1,100 and intended to converted the original building into a day school (Keiser 1922:137).

Even as Mayerhoff was starting to make headway on the Fort Apache Reservation, the work on the San Carlos Reservation was in jeopardy. By 1899 missionary John Plocher's wife and child were suffering very poor health. With "genuine regret" the mission board accepted his resignation. In order to preserve the work at San Carlos, missionary Mayerhoff was sent to Peridot to fill the vacancy. In February of 1900 Pastor Carl Guenther arrived. Mayerhoff stayed a few additional weeks to orient Guenther and then returned to East Fork where he resumed his activities.

Mayerhoff's services as vacancy pastor at Peridot were much appreciated. His time away from the Fort Apache Reservation, however, was not without consequence. Keiser (1922:137) assessed the situation.

> His absence from East Fork was keenly felt and very much regretted. Not only the Indians, but also the whites desired his presence. In addition to other duties, he even for a time preached every Sunday at Fort Apache to the garrison composed of about two hundred soldier, mostly colored.

Since 1896, Mayerhoff had labored among the Apaches by himself. Finally in 1902, a teacher named Otto Schoenberg was sent to the East Fork to assist him. The two of them, along with two Indians, built a 20x40 building which served as both a school and church (Keiser 1922:137). In 1903 Schoenberg opened the day school and which eventually enrolled 20 students (Brown 1963:81).

Missionary John Plocher at Peridot was bold and aggressive, a characteristic which won him the approval of synodical officials (Koehler 1970:200). On the other hand Paul Mayerhoff was more shy and deliberate, qualities which won him the approval of the Apaches. In 1902 a synod official visited him on the reservation. He described the missionary as "a man of extreme reserve. That, in one way, made him congenial to the Indians…" a (Koehler 1970:200). Mayerhoff felt much more comfortable teaching the Apaches simple Bible stories rather than confronting them with the 10 Commandments and outlining the doctrines of Christianity (Koehler 1970:200).

In addition to preaching and teaching, the missionary ministered to the physical needs of the people as best he could. During epidemics he prayed for the people and administered what remedies he had. He also attended to individuals in distress. He apparently was willing to work side-by-side with the medicine men rather than condemn them. One day, for example, Mayerhoff learned that one of his neighbors was violently ill. By the time he arrived a local medicine man and chief (H-1) was already at work. The Apache diagnosed the problem. A toad had been shot into the man's abdomen by an evil spirit.[v] Having diagnosed the situation the medicine man provided the proper ritual treatment. Mayerhoff, on the other hand, believed that the patient was suffering from stricture of the bladder. He thus administered remedies "intended to quiet the pain and clean the intestinal tract." The patient eventually recovered. Mayerhoff (1936-1937a:VIII) later whimsically wrote, "No doubt the toad bethot [bethought?] himself to behave and come out, after H. 1. and I had joined forces to lay him low."

The Friendly Competitor

Christianity, by its very nature, is confrontational. It presents only one Savior and only one way to be saved—through faith in Christ Jesus. As a Christian pastor, Paul Mayerhoff's

theological competitors were the Apache medicine men and the Mormons north of the reservation. While not exactly embracing them in a spirit of ecumenism, he, nevertheless, respected them as shown in the account of the healing outlined above.

Mayerhoff saw the Apaches as deeply spiritual people with highly trained medicine men and complex beliefs and rituals. In his later writings he went to great lengths to describe the Apache prayer life (Mayerhoff 1936-1937b:VI), girls puberty ceremony (1936-1937a:VI), and rituals associated with marriage, childbirth, sickness, death, burial and mourning (1936-1937a:VIII; 1936-1937a:VII). Mayerhoff's longest published article was the Apache view of their own origins (Mayerhoff 1936-1937c). Yet in his writings he refrained from criticism and carefully and objectively attempted to present Apache beliefs to a Christian audience. For example, in his article on Apache deities and devotion he wrote (Mayerhoff 1936-1937a:X).

> Like all aboriginal people, the Apache had his tribal gods, which he loved and and reverenced or feared and worshiped. These gods dominated his thoughts and life so intimately, that every undertaking, be it for war, the chase, or for peaceful and pleasurable activities, must be begun by an appeal to his gods for a sign of approval or disapproval…
>
> We missionaries continually confronted the attitude among them that the white man's god was good for the white man and the Apache's gods were sufficient for his needs. The white man's god would not hear the Indian, while the Indians' gods could be persuaded to hear them and do according to their petitions. So why should they accept our gods and abandon their own…

Mayerhoff showed similar tolerance for the Mormon people. One July he and two companions decided to ride north to investigate the rumors of a "petrified forest." After three hard days of riding they approached the Mormon settlement of Snowflake. The travelers were scruffy, tired and out of food. "We might have looked rather like desperadoes or road-agents with our arsenals of pistols, rifles and shotguns. Presently to our camp saundered a bewhiskered patriarch for an interview on the subject: whence, who and whither-bound? He was the bishop of the stake, as we found later" (Mayerhoff 1936-1937b:V). The bishop welcomed them into the community and fed them. A week or so later the three travelers enjoyed the hospitality of some different Mormons. Mayerhoff was impressed by their hospitality and the way they handled those who violated church rules.

The Meek Romantic

The word "romantic" paints two different pictures. On the one hand it can refers to a person who is out of touch with reality, vague, or illogical. On the other hand it connotes a lover of chivalry and adventure, a person looking for something exciting and, at the same time, noble. Mayerhoff was a romantic in the latter sense.

In his youth Paul pretended to be a fierce Indian warrior of the type portrayed in Cooper's "Leather Stocking Tales." As a theological student he volunteered to work with such fierce Indians. Once among the Apache, and in the midst of danger and privation, he maintained his spirit of optimism and adventure. Mayerhoff was not arrogant or proud. He was not given to reckless abandon. Rather, he was timid, often frightened, occasionally uncertain of himself. Yet, he had the ability to rise to the occasion—to laugh at himself and overcome obstacles. A few incidents from his memoirs serve as examples.

He had been in Arizona territory for only one month. During that time he started learning how to ride a horse. One day he rode out on an errand. He was warned by Plocher not to tarry in

a valley which was home to a particularly quarrelsome band of Apaches. He tried to hurry by their dwellings "expecting a friendly arrow at any moment to puncture my skin." Presently, however, his horse stumbled and animal and rider fell to the ground. Immediately he was surrounded by Apaches. Mayerhoff recalled, they "Helped me to straighten out and I suppose had a gleeful laugh at the tenderfoot afterwards. From then on the Indian bugaboo departed from me" (Mayerhoff 1936-1937a IV).

As previously noted, only weeks later Mayerhoff pitched his tent at East Fork and was confronted by a 250 pound Apache chief, Y-1. The missionary stood his ground although trembling from fear.

By the next year, 1897, Mayerhoff lived in a 12x12 foot cabin. One afternoon an inebriated Apache ran through the door and hid behind a stove. Outside an Apache was loading a shell into his single shot Springfield rifle. Mayerhoff immediately locked the door and then grabbed a magazine, sat down, and nonchalantly began reading. The man peered through the window and saw Mayerhoff, but not the Apache. He tried the locked door and then continued on his search. The man behind the stove had earlier been at a drinking party where he hit his wife in the head with a rock apparently killing her. The man with the rifle was her father coming to kill his son-in-law for this offense. Mayerhoff went to the scene of the crime and found the woman alive. He dressed her wounds, but noted that the Indians were not pleased by his presence. A woman came at him with a knife but was stopped by the son of a chief. "I was glad to leave with a whole skin. This was the only time I felt myself in danger among my Apache neighbors" (Mayerhoff 1936-1937b:III).

While these and similar episodes do not necessarily portray a stalwart, brave, heroic figure, they, nevertheless, do not reveal the "coward" which Mayerhoff claimed to be. Instead they show a quick thinking, resourceful individual involved in a great adventure.

The Open-Minded Thinker

Paul Mayerhoff grew up during the era of the Indian wars. The newspapers of the day and the historians portrayed the native Americans as cruel and blood thirsty. From such sources Mayerhoff formulated a mental picture of what the Apaches were like earlier that century:

> The Apache eked out a living by the chase and a little agriculture. He was a hunter. But constant raids for pillage and plunder with murder and torture as a special amusement on the way, were another and easier way of making his living…
>
> Whatever could be said against all the other Indian tribes in Arizona, the outstanding fact was that by inclination and the tribal education thru centuries the Apaches were as hoard of murderous thieves and looked forward to a struggle with all whites as a natural means of subsistence" (Mayerhoff 1936-1937a:1).

By the time Mayerhoff arrived at San Carlos in 1896 the Apaches had been "pacified." Nevertheless, he was filled with trepidation. The very night he arrived on the reservation by stagecoach he fully expected to die "in the clutches of savages" (Mayerhoff 1936-1937a:IV).

As time passed Mayerhoff observed the Apaches and his attitude toward them changed. He came to see the Apache as warm and even noble people. One of his neighbors at East Fork was a man named Micky Free. During the 1870s some Apaches attacked a wagon train passing through their territory. The Indians killed all the strangers except a "small red haired, blue eyed, freckled baby boy, Micky Free, whom they took captive and raised as an Apache. Mayerhoff (1936-1937b:VIII) wrote:

> You may ask: how was he treated by his foster-parents? Did a jealous, shrewish hag of a squaw beat him, starve him, force him to do her menial labors for her in every kind of weather and begrudge him place to warm by her fire? Did a brutal buck take his ill nature out on him, because he was of the hated pale faced race, that were robbing the Indian of his hunting grounds, streams, hills and valleys? I would say: no! Never have I seen an Apache or his squaw strike or abuse a child. Rather their great love of children and kindly, tolerant treatment of them, would assure me that the little Irish captive slave received the same consideration."

Elsewhere, Mayerhoff (1936-1937a:VII) reiterated this point. "To a children loving people, like the Apaches, childbirth is a happy event."

In an article on the family, Mayerhoff (1936-1937a:VII) commented on Apache morality.

> I have heard the statement and read it in print; no virtue in the Indian women, young and old; above the age of 8 to 10 years no pure maidens might be found. Most emphatically I disagree with such unproven views. Rather was I very much impelled to a contrary view by my observations; i.e. that little sex immorality prevailed among the Apache and immoral practices were not the rule among the younger set.

If Mayerhoff came to view the Apaches in a favorable light, he also saw some shadows tall on his own race. He eventually agreed with the historian Bancroft that the Apache Wars of the 1860s were caused by the white man's "government for its halfway measures, desultory warfare and lack of definite policy" (Mayerhoff 1936-1937a:I). He decried the death and destruction visited upon the Apaches in the infamous Camp Grant Massacre of 1871. "Such acts destroyed good will and trust of the Apache and fostered hatred and feelings of revenge" (Mayerhoff 1936-1937a:I). The reservation system was established to protect the Indians from such wanton destruction (Kessel 1976:51-52).[vi] However, Mayerhoff realized that the reservations were, in fact, prisons, and the Apache were federal prisoners (Mayerhoff 1937). He remarked (1936-1937a:III):

> At last we find the Apache, the last warlike tribe of our land, conquered and confined to a reservation under military guard—1886 writes "finis" to Apache freedom. They were practically prisoners of war in a vast prison compound, until such time as was deemed wise by the government to grant privileges or citizenship.

Meanwhile the missionary believed that even the most notorious Apache renegades, like the Apache Kid and Massey, were themselves victims of corruption and circumstance.

> The military government imposed upon them was supposed to be fair and just, but circumstances were such that arbitrariness and harshness of those in authority and command came to the fore. The Indians' viewpoint was seldom considered. Naturally the Indians were not pleased then and individual independent spirits openly showed resentment and rebellion. Next followed arrest and confinement in the guardhouse to squelch such spirit of independence. The result was that in such cases a fairly good Indian was sometimes converted into a surly, bad Indian. After his term of confinement, revenge was brooding within him. It took little provocation after that for him to go on the rampage and suddenly turn renegade. With Mexico his destination and atrocities enroute to his credit (Mayerhoff 1936-1937b:IV).

Finally, Mayerhoff (1936-1937a:VIII) realized that a deadly although inadvertent effect of Anglo contact with the Apaches. "Just how immune to disease the Apaches were, when unrestricted nomads, is hard to say…The white men's diseases, especially tuberculosis, took the heaviest toll of life among them in later years."

The Untrained Anthropologist

It must be noted at the onset that Paul Mayerhoff was not a trained ethnographer or archaeologist. This did not deter him, however, from carefully observing, faithfully describing, and curiously pondering the culture and artifacts around him. The Fort Apache Indian Reservation is dotted with ruins of prehistoric people. During his eight years among the Indians, Mayerhoff visited numerous cliff and surface dwellings. On one occasion, for example, he was in a cave looking for a secret exit when he found a burial vault.

> [It]…contained 10 bodies lying in a semicircle, their feet all in the direction to the center of the room. These bodies were of course skeletons, some showed part mummification, on some of the skulls traces of hair could be seen. The pelvic bones showed both sexes were represented and the skeletons were of adults of medium height. All three rooms showed use for the same purpose. Altogether we found 20 skeletons (Mayerhoff 1936-1937b:XI).

Mayerhoff informed the Field Museum of Natural History at Chicago of his findings. Eventually an archaeologist visited him. Unfortunately by this time vandals had broken into the burial chamber, destroyed some things, and carried others away. Mayerhoff responded, "Can you beat it? The people that were guilty of this were not Indians, they were whites! It is one thing to collect things in the interest of archaeology and historical research, vandalizing is quite something else" (Mayerhoff 1936-1937b:XI). Mayerhoff himself amassed a large collection of Apache articles which he donated to the Field Museum. Meanwhile he wondered who the prehistoric people were, from whence they came, and why they left?

If Mayerhoff was fascinated by the prehistoric people, his inquisitive mind was especially focused on the Apache. He took notes on what he saw and heard and later recorded numerous aspects of Apache life. He was fascinated by virtually everything the Apache did—from gambling to farming to feuding. One day one of his Apache neighbors headed toward the stream for his spring sweat bath. Mayerhoff recorded the event in exquisite detail, a portion of which reads as follows.

> Washing body, face and hands has little importance to him the year round. With the cold season washing stop entirely. Thru the winter a protective coat of tallow, dirt and skin secretions close up all pores of the skin [to provide warmth]. When spring arrives only a drastic treatment, such as the bath in the sweat-house, will soften, loosen and slough off such a covering of filth (Mayerhoff 1936-1937b:VII).

The description continues to describe the construction of the sweat bath, sprinkling of water on hot stones to produce steam, abrasive use of sand on the skin, and the shampoo with suds from the pounded roots of the "Spanish bayonet" cactus.

In his writings Mayerhoff often moved beyond plain description. He offered plausible explanations for Apache behavior. He not infrequently asked the Apaches themselves to interpret what they were doing. On several occasions Mayerhoff watched Apache ceremonies featuring masked dancers. Not only did he refrained from calling the dancers by the ethnocentric term "Devil" but provided an explanation of their moves.[vii]

> Their dance will interpret the behavior of the buck deer in rutting time…The bodies [of the dancers] are painted white on the chest and darker shades on back, a fringe of evergreens around their loins, and a pendent elongation to simulate a tail…Then the play of the dancers begins: jumping, cavorting, pawing, strutting, stiffly, waving wands,

imaginary battle between foes and the favor of the female of the species (Mayerhoff 1936-1937a:VI).

The Writer

Pastor Mayerhoff had a fascination with languages and words. He spoke German, English, and Apache. Meanwhile he had a flair for writing. During the 1930 he recorded his experiences among the Apache in a local newspaper. He carefully chose his words, phrases, clauses and sentences to produce vivid images.[viii]

A good example of Mayerhoff writing style is found in "An Apache's Story of Origin of their Red-Skinned Race" (1936-1937c). One day one of the missionaries close friends and neighbors, Chief Moseby, told him the Apache origin story. Instead of merely reproducing the story on paper, Mayerhoff took some literary liberties. He created a scene with four Apache women sitting under a ramada next to their homes. They speak and tell Moseby's story.

> Let us give them names! They shall be Myth, Legend, Tradition and History. Myth, the great-grandmother, speaks of far away memories of those distant times her ancestral mothers related to her. Then Legend, her daughter, and Tradition, her granddaughter, and lastly History, her great-granddaughter, add to the tale and it becomes a fixed record of the possible origin and migrations of the Apache Indians.
>
> "She-chew-yeh," "Ancient Mother," tell us again the story of long ago, before our people lived here; we love to hear it over and over," pleaded the children!
>
> "Ha-oh," "See-day," Sit! "Go-den-jahd," Be still! Then we each will tell you a part of the story!
>
> The children, quivering anticipation, wide-eyed, awed, snuggle down before the ancient woman, hang on her lips as in soft and gutteral monotone she unfolds her tale. "She-chin-ay"! my little one, Myth begins: In the long ago our people…

Mayerhoff the writer of prose was also Mayerhoff the poet. His poem, "Day on the Desert" (1936-1937f) speaks for itself.

> Lonely rider jogging o'er a desert trail
> Packing-horse clopping, clopping in the lead;
> Dust-devils start up, whirl and sail;
> Sun blasts down upon his head;
> Hoof-thuds stir up dusty sands
> Choke his lungs, coat his face and hands.
>
> Starting out at peep-o'day
> Weary hours he must ride
> Pushing o'er the endless way;
> Wash, arroyo, ledge and rock-slide,
> Boulders, tallus, canons, hollows,
> In and out, up and down, zig and zag he follows.
>
> Sun-up saw him off this day.
> Endless miles to fill his going,
> Plodding over the trackless way.
> Parched blasts, shriveling, undoing
> Dry up horse and rider's strength;

But the shelter looms at length.

Sundown finds him round a crop-ledge.
A still climb; wood, food, and water
On the murderous desert's edge
Bring new strength to horse and rider.
Friendly, rimming, timbers rampart
Bars out desert wild and angered.

Relief at hand to man and beast
Toil of trail is now forgotten;
After food a place to rest
'Neath the wheeling stars of heaven.
Morning will take care of morrow's cumber
Man and horse dead in dreamless slumber.

Farewell and Memories

Paul Mayerhoff lived among the Apaches for eight years. He came to regard them as friends and neighbors. For all intents and purposes he seemed to have made his permanent home in the mountains of Arizona. Yet, he requested to be recalled from the mission field.

The reason or reasons why Mayerhoff left the Apache mission field and even the date of his departure are clouded in mystery. The written histories of the early Apache mission contain only tantalizing statements but not full disclosure. One Wisconsin Synod history simply states that in 1903 he "asked to be relieved of his duties" (Centennial Committee 1951:236). Another history (Fredrich 1992:98-100) suggests that Mayerhoff, because of his language abilities served well until 1903 and then he "requested a release from his mission post to assume a parish pastorate." Still another author notes his proficiency in the Apache language and then states, "What a resource person he could be for new men sent to the field" (Johne and Wendland 1992:28). But he did not become such a research person and he left the mission station. John P. Koehler, who visited Mayerhoff in 1903, provides this provocative information (1970:201).

> But Mayerhoff finally lost heart and decided to leave the mission. Koehler's suggestion to the commission that Mayerhoff's linguistic talents should be employed in tutoring the missionaries in the Apache language and translating portions of the Scriptures was rejected as impracticable. So Mayerhoff left the reservation in 1903.

Keiser (1922:139) alone mentions that "As the heavy work had ruined Rev. Mayerhoff's health, he was forced to leave in the summer of 1903, having spent seven years in the Christianization of the Apaches."

In various places in his writings Mayerhoff (Mayerhoff 1936-1937a:V; 1937; 1938) claimed to have worked among the Apaches for eight years, from 1896 to 1904 (not 1903). Curiously, in none of his many writings did he explain his reason for his leaving the Apache reservation. But leave he did.

Mayerhoff may have left the Apaches, but the Apaches never left him. They were never far from his thoughts and prayers. During the 1930s he wrote 27 articles for the local Nebraska newspaper, the *Beatrice Daily Sun*. The articles constitute his memoirs of life among the Apache. In a letter dated March 7, 1938, he wrote to Alfred Burdette, an Apache who served as an interpreter for the Lutheran missionaries. He remarked, "I am now 68 years old and for my

age in fair health. My one great desire is to make a visit to Apache land and see with my own eyes, that God has loved the Apaches so much that He sent His missionaries to them with the message of the Savior and has given them helpers of the native Apaches to proclaim Salvation thru Jesus to their own people" (Mayerhoff 1938).

By the 1950s he had retired and was living in Washington State. Still his thoughts were among the Apaches. On June 4, 1954 he wrote to Rev. E. Edgar Guenther the senior missionary on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. Mayerhoff (1954) remarked,

> You know it is now 50 years ago, that I took over a "Reisefuedgen" [traveling preacher] call to Nebraska district of the Wisconsin Synod in 1904. My memory is fading, too. One thing is sure and clear in my mind, that I always felt homesick for my Apache friends and neighbors, and if I was young enough and able, would head off for White River and East Fork, and Cibicue and Peridot, all the places where I have spent eight years of discomfort and enjoyment of these hardships among these dear people to me!

On December 27, 1956 Paul's wife, Johanna, died. They were married on October 11, 1904 in Butte, Nebraska. She died in Burlington, Washington, fifty-two years later. Apparently their marriage was not blessed with children. Paul noted, "When I made the Funeral arrangements, I requested that Johanna's friends should not tax themselves heavily with flower prices. It would suit me far better to make a contribution of money that could be assigned to some mission work" (Mayerhoff 1956). The response was generous. He collected $40 for the orphanage which had been started by missionary Guenther many years earlier. Rather than dwell on his loss, Mayerhoff determined to continue raising money for missions. Old and frail he visited various Ladies Aid groups and Bible Classes, spoke about the Apache mission, and elicited small donation. He set a personal goal of raising $100 by these talks. In the months ahead he spoke at dozens of churches and collected more than he expected. He also carried on a healthy correspondence with Pastor Guenther, writing more than two dozen letters, sending money and, in return, asking for information about the Apaches as well as Apache crafts to show his audiences. Mayerhoff also rewrote his will and eventually provided $2000 to be used for construction of a house where pastors and officials could stay when they visited the Apache missions.

In October of 1957 Mayerhoff moved into a rest home in Stanwood, Washington. In characteristic fashion he wrote an enthusiastic letter to E. Edgar Guenther first describing the wonderful facility and then remarking:

> Well, I am 87 and 8 months along, hope to live to my next birthday Feb. 20, 1958.
>
> Now I am naturally curious to know how that Memorial Home at East Fork White River is coming on. So if you have time drop me a line.
>
> My best wishes to you and mother [Mrs. E. E. Guenther] and all other missionary. God bless and keep you all in health and successful labor for the Lord and the Apaches.
>
> Greetings and *Gott sei bei euch allen beib umdd Seele, sinnen und Uerstandt wegend als bei Gott allein konnt ihr wohl behuht und bewahert sein!* (God be with you all, body and soul, disposition and reason since through God alone you can be shielded and protected!]
>
> *In Liebe ener alter* [In love, your old]
>
> Inashoot Hasstin [Apache for "elderly missionary")
>
> Paul S. Mayerhoff

Two days before Thanksgiving in 1957 Paul Mayerhoff died. Funeral services were held on November 29, 1957 in Burlington, Washington. Paul's niece, Mrs. Albert Boettcher (1957) wrote to tell missionary Guenther the news. She noted that Mayerhoff's eyesight and hearing were failing but his mind was still sharp right up to the end. His one wish was to visit the reservation, although his age and bad heart made such a trip impossible. "But all his love was for the Apache mission."

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[i] During the 1930s Mayerhoff lived in Beatrice, Nebraska, and wrote numerous articles for the local newspaper, the *Beatrice Daily Sun*. Near the end of his life he sent his scrapbook containing the articles along with photography and various documents to the Rev. E. Edgar Guenther. According to Mayerhoff, these articles (see References Cited) constituted his autobiography. In 1972 Guenther's widow, Minnie, entrusted the Mayerhoff materials to the care of William B. Kessel.

[ii] The Lutheran body known today as the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod traces its beginnings to the German Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Wisconsin, organized on May 26, 1850. By 1892 it was known as the Federation of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Other States. For the sake of convenience and in order to avoid confusion the current synod name is used throughout this paper.

[iii] The chronology followed here comes from a newspaper article written by Mayerhoff (1936-1937a:IV). Elsewhere (Mayerhoff 1938) he stated that he rode from Cibecue to Fort Apache on July third.

[iv] Koehler's description is somewhat problematic. First, Mayerhoff (1938) maintained that in 1896 the Whiteriver Agency did not exist. Instead Fort Apache was a sub-agency managed from San Carlos. At some time later the agency was moved to Fort Apache. Perhaps by 1902 when Koehler visited Mayerhoff the move had already been made. Second, it seems surprising that a woman was the principal of the boarding school. If this is correct she may have been one of the first women to hold such a position.

[v] The Apaches recognized three major forms of witchcraft. A witch could poison a person, cast a spell, or shoot an object into an individual creating a sharp pain. It is possible that Mayerhoff is here describing the latter form of witchcraft (see Basso:1969; Kessel 1976:40-42).

[vi] For a summary of Apache/Anglo contact between 1830 and 1881 and especially the conditions on the reservations see Kessel 1976:46-61.

[vii] While the "Gahn" or "Devil" dance of the Apaches has attracted considerable attention from anthropologists, this explanation may be unique.

[viii] While Mayerhoff was an able communicator, his written presentation was not flawless. Some of his English syntax reflected German sentence structure, his spelling was often phonetic, and his use of punctuation marks left much to be desired. None of this, however, detracted from his ability to tell a story.