FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Gatewood and Geronimo
Louis Kraft
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The origins of the politically incorrect and slightly racist story of the airplane about to crash unless lightened is explained in this authoritative volume on westward settlers vs. the Indians. As the story goes, one passenger crying “remember the Maine” jumped without a parachute, and a Californian crying “there’s gold in them there hills” jumps and finally a Texan stands up and cries “Geronimo”—and throws out three Indians. Especially in the late 1800s Indians and South West Apache Indians in particular were known as marauding, murderous bands that were not contained by the army’s efforts to ship them to Florida reservations.

Into this mixture of “chase and contain” stepped Second Lieutenant Charles Gatewood, known as Bay-chen-daysen (meaning long nose) by the Apaches. Gatewood was even-handed and principled and known by fellow officers as cool, quiet, courageous and firm when convinced of right, but intolerant of wrong. While considering the opinions of his Indian charges on the San Carlos Indian Reservation in Arizona, he incurred the wrath of elected civilian officials and immediate superiors by fighting the red-tape to keep the white-eye’s promises. Gatewood developed a working relationship, even to some, a friendship with Geronimo, the recalcitrant Apache chief that would not stay contained. Geronimo crossed the boarder into Mexico where he ambushed Mexicans and Americans across the boarder at will. Even while suffering from painful arthritis Gatewood helped track and convince Geronimo to surrender unconditionally.

This is a story of a man putting his reputation and on several occasions his life on the line to do his duty to settlers and Apaches. The story is sometimes uneven, trying to parallel the lives of Geronimo and Gatewood, bringing them together at salient moments.

Louis Kraft is an independent historian that authored Custer and the Cheyennes: George Armstrong Custer's Winter Campaign on the Southern Plain. Neither Gatewood nor Geronimo lived happily ever after. Gatewood died from his hard life at a young age and Geronimo lived to see another change of address, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. After failing in his attempt to persuade Teddy Roosevelt to move back home, he died of alcohol related diseases in 1909.

Harry Willems