

Recently Discovered 1866 Apache Warrior's Winchester Rifle Found in Desert, Begins Museum Tour

An Ancient Apache Relic, Hidden in an Arizona Desert Canyon, Found by a Cowboy Herding Cattle, Begins Museum Tour in Tombstone, Arizona.

TUCSON, ARIZONA, UNITED STATES, May 3, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A recent discovery of an 1866 Winchester "Yellowboy" rifle that had been found in the Southwestern Arizona desert

Dragoon Mountains has inspired a focus of speculation, not just for Winchester rifle fans and history enthusiasts, but for all those whose minds are drawn to the allure and wonder of an unsolvable mystery. The remarkable existence and extraordinary survival of this ancient relic creates in the mind a sense of intrigue and wonder, a desire to indulge one's imagination, to conjure and perceive the possibility of what might have been.

“

I should never have surrendered. I should have fought till I was the last man alive.”

Gayahkla (Geronimo)

The famous 1866 "Yellowboy" Winchester was the first repeating rifle made by Winchester. It has been called "The Gun That Won the West". During the Apache wars in Southwestern Arizona, a weapon of this kind would be a most valuable asset to an Apache warrior. The Dragoon Mountains were the exclusive hideout, sanctuary and

fortress of the warring Apache. No cowboy, Calvary, or white man ever entered or even dared to go near the Dragoon Mountains during the Apache Wars unless they were ready to fight.

This most intriguing mystery begins during the "Apache Wars" when an 1866 Model Winchester "Yellowboy" Rifle, along with some Apache arrows and other Native American items, were hidden in a crevice in a large rock formation, leading into a canyon at the base of the Dragoon Mountains, by an Apache Warrior. The location, perfect for fast retrieval.

For some unknown reason, the Apache Warrior that hid the rifle never returned to reclaim his



Apache "Yellowboy" rifle, exactly as it was found in the desert in the late 1800's. The wooden stock is noticeably weathered by time and the harsh desert environment. The steel octagon barrel eventually covered, by a coat of rust.

rifle and possessions. Why? That will forever remain a mystery. Perhaps he gave up to the reservation life, or perhaps he fell to the fate of many Apache Warrior, to die on the warpath. Over time, the Winchester's octagon steel barrel began to rust, the wooden stock and forearm began to weather. What lives it had saved or those taken were now only a shadow of it's past.

It would be many years later that an Arizonan cowboy that worked for the Chiricahua Cattle Company was chasing strays at the base of the Dragoon Mountains and found the old Winchester "Yellowboy" rifle lying on the ground. Years of harsh desert weather had eroded the hidden entrance of the crevice where the "Yellowboy" had been stored. Eventually the weather undermined the base of the crevice which then allowed the ancient relic to fall down onto the desert below.

That cowboy, Joe Rice, kept the arrows and other Native American items that lay hidden with the Winchester. One day, however, low on cash and requiring medicine, the cowboy Joe Rice traded the rifle to a Mrs. Christy Johnson. She and her husband Leslie owned the Johnson Drug Store at the corner of Speedway and Park in early Tucson.

The Winchester was put away and forgotten till about the late 1950's or early 1960's. Mrs. Johnson then sold the old Winchester to a man she knew in Tucson named Tom Black. A private man, living alone for many years, Mr. Black also kept the rifle hidden away in a closet with his collection of valuable antique rifles. Mr. Black was a good man and passed a few years ago. It was only recently that the old rifle case was opened to reveal and again discover the mystery of this amazing 154 year old rifle.

It has been determined that this Apache Warrior's "Yellowboy" rifle should be shared and available for view to all Arizonans, as well as curious visitors. It was decided that the best way to do this would be to display the Apache's "Yellowboy" rifle with a tour of Arizona museums.

Standing in the streets of the infamous town of Tombstone, Arizona looking northeast, spread across the near horizon, rise the majestic Dragoon Mountains. Since the Dragoon Mountains was the location where the Apache "Yellowboy" rifle was first discovered by the cowboy Joe Rice, it was felt that Tombstone would be the most appropriate place to begin the museum tour. As of April 16, 2023 in the museum area of the Hotel Tombstone, the Apache "Yellowboy" rifle is on display for the public's enjoyment.

For more details, including an in depth history and photos of the Apache Yellowboy, please visit [my website](#).

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The Apache Yellowboy

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