

# Carroll History Journal

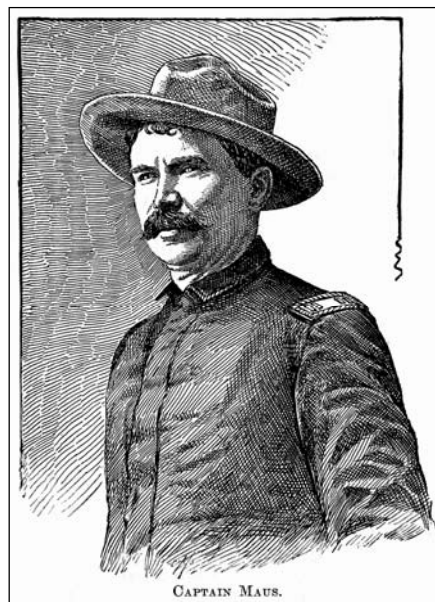
The Historical Society of Carroll County, Maryland, Inc.

## AN INDIAN FIGHTER IN NEW WINDSOR? INTRODUCING MARION PERRY MAUS

BY FRANK J. BATAVICK

The long, brutal Civil War was over, and a fractured nation mourned its president's death. The year was 1865, and as roughly 800,000 men mustered out of the Union and Confederate armies, many of them sought a fresh start. Throughout his life, Horace Greeley (1811-1872), editor of the *New-York Tribune*, advised "all who are in want of work, Go West!" And that is exactly what countless veterans did. The golden states of California, Nevada, and Oregon beckoned in each sunset, but there were ten untamed territories standing in the way, and they were far from uninhabited.

A quarter of a million Native Americans lived in the Great Plains. Some, like the Pawnee and Omaha, were farmers and dwelled along the Missouri River. Others, like the Cheyenne, Comanche, and Sioux, were nomadic warriors who hunted buffalo on horseback in the High Plains, and these tribes had no intention of surrendering their native lands without a fight. Once the pioneers managed to get through the Great Plains and head Southwest, they then had to confront the fierce Apaches who dwelled in parts of Texas and the territories of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and in northern Mexico. If the pioneers steered their wagons toward the great Northwest instead, they would meet the challenges of tribes like the Nez Perce who inhabited parts of the state of Oregon and the territories of Washington, Montana, and Idaho.



Captain Maus, Indian Fighter, as illustrated by Frederic Remington.  
(Public Domain-United States)

The U.S. government soon realized that something had to be done to guarantee the safety of the tens of thousands of settlers pursuing America's Manifest Destiny. Enter the Indian fighter and the storied soldier Marion Perry Maus (pronounced "Moss"). He enjoyed a career worthy of the Hollywood screen, and when he retired from the Army, he boxed up his medals and memories and moved to the tranquility of New Windsor, where he spent his twilight years. Though the Maus name can be found among Carroll County's earliest inhabitants and is part of the Reifsnider family tree, research shows no certain local genealogical connection to our famous subject.

Regardless, Maus was a Maryland product through and through. Born in Burnt Mills, now a section of Silver Spring, on August 25, 1849, he was the son of Mary and Isaac R. Maus. Isaac was a superintendent on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and a descendant of a soldier in the Colonial and Revolutionary Wars. Marion was one of nine children, and a younger brother, Louis Mervin Maus, followed him into the military and rose to the rank of colonel and assistant surgeon general.

As a boy, Marion Maus anxiously followed the outbreak of hostilities between North and South and became consumed by soldiers and warfare. His parents sent him to Charlotte Hall Military Academy

in St. Mary's County for his education. Now the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, the school dates to 1774 when it was founded "to provide for the liberal and pious education of the youth of this providence—the better to fit them for the discharge of their duties." Maus must have excelled there because his next stop was the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, as a member of the Class of 1874.

Upon graduation from West Point, Maus was commissioned as a second lieutenant, assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry on the Western frontier, and attached to the command of Colonel Nelson Appleton Miles. Miles was a ferocious fighter who had distinguished himself in the Civil War at numerous battles, including Antietam and Fredericksburg. His assignment was to subdue the Northern Cheyenne and Sitting Bull's Sioux in the Black Hills of South Dakota. This mission became paramount after the 1876 massacre of General George A. Custer and the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry at Little Bighorn.

Miles' campaign was instrumental in bringing the Great Sioux War to an end in 1877, forcing Sitting Bull to flee to Canada. Miles and his troops, including Maus, were then assigned to Oregon to pacify the Nez Perce. The Nez Perce (French for "pierced nose") Indians dwelled in Oregon's Wallowa Valley and had been considered peaceful over the years because of their record of assisting and resupplying the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1804 and the Bonneville expedition in the 1830s. In 1873 the Nez Perce were granted half the Wallowa Valley by an executive order signed by President Ulysses S.



West Point yearbook photograph of Cadet Marion P. Maus. (Special Collections, United States Military Academy Library)

Grant. But, settlers continued to move into the area and clash with them, and Grant rescinded the order in 1874, leaving the tribe without a land to call its own.

When three Nez Perce were murdered by whites who went unpunished, tensions increased, and the Secretary of the Interior appointed a five-man commission in 1876 to resolve the conflict. It arranged a meeting with the powerful Chief Joseph at Fort Lapwai, but the sides failed to come to an agreement. In response, the commission ruled in May 1877 that the Nez Perce were to resettle onto a reservation in the west-central Idaho Territory within 30 days or be forced by the Army to do so. To fight back, warriors killed nine settlers in two separate incidents. On June 14, ninety soldiers left Fort Lapwai to drive the Indians onto the reservation, and the Nez Perce War of 1877 had begun.

At first, the Indians had the upper hand, beating the Army convincingly at White Bird Canyon in Idaho on June 17. Fighting continued through the summer and fall, with the Indians often besting the Army, even though they sometimes numbered just a few hundred braves versus several thousand soldiers, many hardened in battle by the Civil War. Joseph, Looking Glass, and the other chiefs of the Nez Perce decided that it would be best to head for the sanctuary of Canada, and many of the battles took place during their long march.

The official accounts mention Maus sparingly during this time. He was made chief of scouts and put in charge of a party of 32 Cheyenne and three white scouts,



Chief Joseph of the Wal-lam-wat-kain (Wallowa) band of Nez Perce Indians, 1900. (Library of Congress) (PD-US)

and on September 29 the group happened upon 15 or 20 Nez Perce warriors. After a fierce fight, two warriors lay wounded or dead, and Maus and his men had captured 14 Indian ponies. In at least one later account written by a scout, Yellowstone Kelly, Maus claimed to have also captured 14 warriors. Later that day, Miles sent Maus and five others to locate the main group of Nez Perce, for whom they searched unsuccessfully until dark.

In October, a truce had been arranged, but a frustrated Miles violated it by seizing Chief Joseph as he departed from their unsuccessful peace talks. The Nez Perce bartered Joseph's freedom with their own prisoner, Second Lieutenant Lovell H. Jerome, who had strayed into the enemy's camp during the talks. Yellowstone Kelly was an eyewitness to the event, and he described Miles, Maus, and Chief Joseph walking out to meet the Indians to make the trade, with Maus holding a white flag. They nervously made the exchange under the protective rifles of the Army camp.

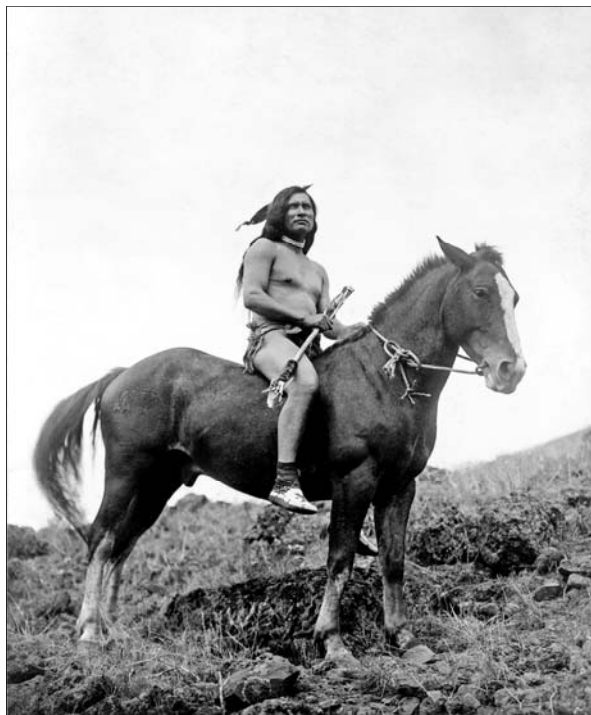
By October, the Nez Perce had traveled more than 1,100 miles with their women and children in tow, and they were hungry, weary, and cold. When they reached Bear Paw Mountain in Montana Territory, they engaged the Army for the last time from late September through early October 1877. After a number of skirmishes, Chief Joseph, with 380 Nez Perce, finally surrendered to Colonel Miles and his superior, General Oliver O. Howard. Chief White Bird and some other Indians managed to escape to



Monument to Nez Perce Indian Wars, graves of soldiers and civilian scouts killed, White Bird Canyon, Idaho, c.1883. (National Archives and Records Administration) (PD-US)

Canada to join Sitting Bull and the Sioux. It was at this moment of bitter defeat that Joseph is credited with delivering a poetic and heart-breaking speech to none other than the 27-year-old Second Lieutenant Maus. Joseph's words ended with the famous lament, "Hear me, my chiefs! I am tired. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever."

After the conclusion of the Nez Perce war, Maus was promoted to first lieutenant in 1879. He was assigned to Texas in 1880 and to the Arizona Territory in 1882. But it was in 1885 that he faced his biggest challenge: the capture of the notorious Apache chief Geronimo. He and his band of guerillas were making bloody raids into Arizona, slaughtering whites, friendly Indians, and cattle, and then disappearing into Mexico's rugged Sierra Madre Mountains where they had established a base camp.



Geronimo's Apache name was Goyathlay, meaning "the one who yawns," but his exploits left little room for sleep or boredom. Legend has it that Mexican soldiers dubbed him Geronimo as they pleaded with San Jerónimo, or St. Jerome, for help and protection during a battle on the saint's feast day. Geronimo was fighting the invasion of the Apache

Nez Perce Warrior. Photograph by Edward S. Curtis, c.1910. (U.S. Copyright Office) (PD-US)

Geronimo. Photograph by Ben Wittick, 1877.  
(National Archives and Records Administration) (PD-US)



Amidst the sudden confusion of languages, too many anxious trigger fingers, and the presence of Apache scouts whom the Mexicans took for hostiles, shots rang out. The Mexican commander, Major Mauricio Corredor, and a number of the scouts were killed, and Crawford lay dying with a head wound. Maus suddenly found himself in charge, and he quickly redeployed his scouts and managed to fend off the superior Mexican force.

When Maus began the journey back to the U.S. seeking care for the wounded, he was approached by an Indian woman who told him Geronimo wanted to talk. Maus arranged a meeting with him and some other chiefs, including

ancestral lands in Mexico and Arizona by whites, and he became especially vengeful when Spanish troops killed his mother, wife, and three children in 1858. In battle, he appeared invulnerable to bullets, and legends grew about his suspected magical powers.

Brigadier General George Crook sent two forces on the November 1885 mission. One was to go into the state of Chihuahua, and the second, commanded by Captain Emmet Crawford, 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry, Maus, and three other officers, was sent to the state of Sonora. Maus was given command of a battalion of 100 hand-picked Apache scouts who were familiar with the terrain. The cat and mouse game had begun, and the chase spilled over into 1886.

Natchez, and Geronimo asked Maus why he had come. Maus answered, "I came to capture or destroy you and your band." Geronimo supposedly rose and shook his hand, congratulating him for his honesty. Maus explained that they should surrender to him because the Mexican Army was bent on killing them in the field. Geronimo promised to discuss surrendering with General Crook in "two moons"

The best account of these events is in Maus' own words, published as part of General Miles' 1896 memoir. After Crawford's force had penetrated more than 200 miles into the mountains, it discovered the Apache camp and decided to raid it at dawn. But braying Apache burros betrayed their presence, and the carbines of Indian look-outs punctuated the half-light with fire. This spurred most of the Apaches to escape into the craggy surroundings before Crawford could mount an attack. Meanwhile, Mexican soldiers, also on a quest for Geronimo and Apache scalps, came upon the scene.

and offered his wife, a chief, a brave, another chief's wife, and some of their children as collateral. Maus accepted and took off with his captives.

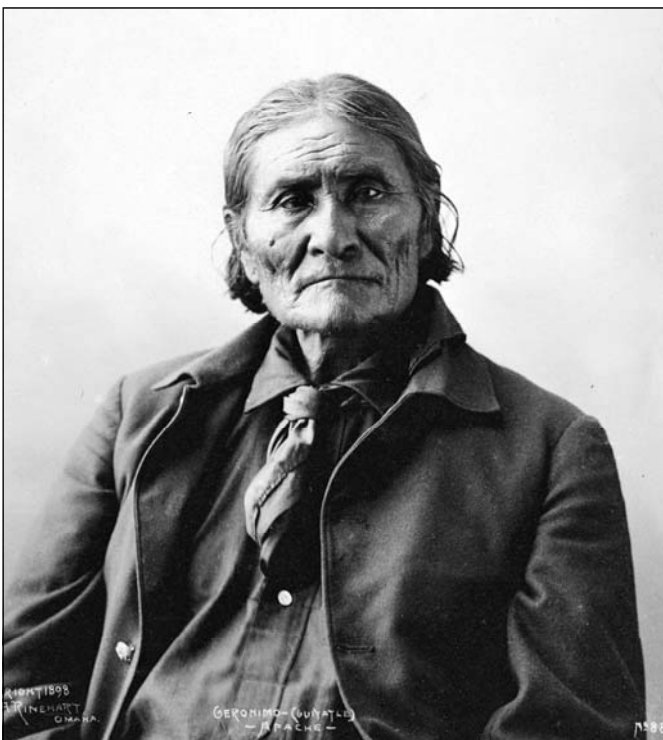
Almost as soon as Maus returned to the New Mexico Territory after a trek of more than 1,000 miles, General Crook sent him back out to locate Geronimo. His emissaries again sought out Maus, who instructed them to return with the chief. When they did, Geronimo and Maus spoke almost daily while awaiting the arrival of General Crook. Then, after a night of revelry and drinking



Maus shooting at Apache fleeing surprise attack, as illustrated by Frederic Remington. (PD-US)

the intoxicating mescal, Geronimo and a small group escaped once again into the mountains. Perhaps Maus had given him too much deference as a chief by not putting him in chains and believing the arrival of Crook was imminent. Thus, the wily Apache had outsmarted the U.S. again and, in the process, disposed of his wife and a rival chief. Regardless, Maus was to gain some fame for “capturing” Geronimo, albeit for a short period of time. General Crook was not so fortunate. The War Department reprimanded him for the failed mission, and he resigned his command.

It is revealing of Maus’ character that his account does not mention a moment of exceptional bravery that became part of the official record of the Apache campaign. During the Army’s long hunt for Geronimo, he and his warriors ambushed Maus and his scouts in a narrow pass. One of the accompanying troopers was wounded and lay exposed to additional gunfire. Maus, who had taken cover behind a rock, crawled out and dragged him to safety, shooting and killing several Apaches who rushed to stop him. He then caught sight of Geronimo himself high above. Maus took aim and fired. The bullet just missed the chief’s head, ricocheting off a covering rock and showering debris over his face. Temporarily blinded, he called for his band to retreat.



Geronimo, Chiricahua Apache leader. Photograph by Frank A. Rinehart, 1898. (Rinehart Indian Photographs collection, Haskell Indian Nations University) (PD-US)

Soon after this episode, Geronimo had the panache to send a letter to General Crook, recommending that Maus be officially awarded for his actions and noting that his bravery and marksmanship were the difference between life and death for the soldiers.

Geronimo finally surrendered in 1886. However, the terms of his incarceration were quite liberal, and his notoriety made him a major attraction at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis where he sold souvenirs. Still a prisoner of war, he even rode in President Theodore Roosevelt’s inaugural parade in 1905.

Maus received the Silver Star for gallantry and was promoted to captain in 1890. He then became a combatant in the 1890-1894 campaign against the Sioux Indians and was twice wounded.

The efforts of the Army to subdue the Native American population are full of tales of heroism and adventure, but they also mark a troubling chapter in American history. This was never truer than at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, considered the last battle of the Indian Wars, if it can even be called a battle. In 1890, a detachment of the U.S. 7th Cavalry Regiment went into a Lakota camp at Wounded Knee Creek to disarm the Indians. A scuffle broke out, and then a shot was fired. The cavalry panicked and started shooting rifles, pistols, and cannon from all sides, killing men, women, and children, as well as some of their fellow soldiers. By the time it was over, 175 Lakota lay dead and 51 were wounded. Twenty-five soldiers also died. This horrific day still lives in infamy in the memory of all Indian nations.

Maus was on the command staff assigned to investigate the massacre, one of the worst in American history. His commanding general was none other than Nelson Miles, and he and Maus visited the site the next day. Miles described it as “The most abominable criminal military blunder . . .”

In November 1894 Maus belatedly received the nation’s highest military award—the Congressional

Medal of Honor for “most distinguished gallantry in action with hostile Apaches led by Geronimo and Natchez.” It was not until January 21, 1907, that the Indian Wars Medal was established by the War Department. Maus, Miles, and others were then decorated for their brave service in the Indian Campaigns between 1865 and 1891.

Marion Maus remained close friends with Miles who had become the Commanding General of the U.S. Army. Maus served as an aide to him in Washington from 1897 to 1899. They went on an inspection tour of Europe where they witnessed the Greco-Turkish War and maneuvers of the Russian, German, and French armies. During the Spanish American War, Miles commanded forces in Cuba where he saw the surrender of Santiago de Cuba in 1898 and led the invasion of Puerto Rico. That same year, Maus was promoted to lieutenant colonel and sent with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, to Mindanao in the Philippines, seeing considerable action subduing insurrectionists and the fierce Moro tribesmen along the Taraca River.

In June 1899, Maus found time to wed Mattie Lindsay Poor, a socialite from Skaneateles, New York, whom he met in Washington, D.C. More than 3,400 wedding invitations were mailed, and the *Skaneateles Free Press* dubbed it, “One of the most brilliant social events in the history of Skaneateles.” The bridegroom and seven ushers arrived in the private railroad car of General Miles. The dashing Major John “Black Jack” Pershing, future general and commander of the American forces in France in World War I, danced with many of the ladies at the reception.

After their wedding, the couple took up residence in the Hotel Richelieu in San Francisco. There Maus served as the Inspector General of California and the military Department of the Columbia. In 1904 he was promoted to colonel of the 20<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry and was again sent to the Philippines. Returning to California in 1906, Maus was temporary commander of the Division of the Pacific and directed the troops that maintained order after the April 18<sup>th</sup> San Francisco earthquake that claimed 3,000 lives and devastated 80 percent of the city.



Poor-Maus Wedding Party, Skaneateles, N.Y., 1899. (Halstead-Maus Photograph Collection, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania)

President Theodore Roosevelt promoted Maus to Brigadier General in 1906, and he then commanded the Northwest’s Department of the Columbia until 1911 when he assumed command of a brigade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division in San Antonio, Texas. His next stop was as commander of a brigade of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division at Albany, New York, from which he retired in 1913.

After his many exotic travels and assignments, Maus chose to return to his native state and took up residence in Rockville, Maryland. He was a member of the Order of Veterans of Indian Wars and presumably stayed busy with related activities. In 1913 Maus and Miles starred in a documentary with William “Buffalo Bill” Cody about the Indian campaign titled *Wars of Civilization*. Produced with the assistance of the Department of War, the film used 1,000 Sioux as extras to recreate a number of famous battles, including Wounded Knee.



Viewing hostile Indian camp (left to right) Buffalo Bill Cody, General Nelson A. Miles, Captain Frank Baldwin, and Captain Marion P. Maus, 1891. (John C. H. Grabill Collection, Library of Congress) (Wikimedia Commons, PD-US)

Maryland food. Their comings and goings were regularly reported in the society columns of local papers. The inn closed to the general public in 1927, but one of the surviving Dielman sisters, Carolina, continued to offer accommodations to friends and special visitors like the Mauses long after this date.

Old-time New Windsor residents remembered the retired general taking walks around town and attending services at St. Paul United Methodist Church across from the inn. Maus also rode

about in a fancy, blue Jordan roadster with a canvas top, running boards, and a large spotlight. Frequently, local resident Sam Hill dressed in livery and took the wheel as he chauffeured the Mauses throughout the county, often with the top down.

Maus apparently began to have health problems by 1924. The *Frederick Post* reported on August 6 that he had been driving his roadster down the city's Market Street "in a reckless and mysterious manner and crashed into an obstacle at the Baltimore and Ohio Station." Police initially thought he had been drinking, but a Dr. McCurdy diagnosed him with apoplexy. Authorities contacted Mrs. Maus in New Windsor, and she admitted that he had not been feeling well that morning and a few months previous had "had a slight stroke of paralysis." She asked that he be taken to a hospital, and he was sent to Walter Reed in Washington.

Maus was to enjoy another six years of retirement before peacefully dying in his sleep at the Dielman Inn on February 9, 1930, at age 80. He was survived by his wife, Mattie Lindsay; one brother, Colonel L. M. Maus; and a sister, Mrs. James F. Allen. Maus and Lindsay had no children. Maus was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. His wife, who died in 1936, is buried with him.

Around 1917 Maus and his wife came for a stay at the genteel 43-room Dielman Inn in New Windsor. They must have enjoyed their time there because they returned every summer until 1930. Their quarters were two rooms on the second floor of a brick section of the inn fronting High Street, only accessible by outside steps leading to a balcony door.

Operated by the Louis W. Dielman family, the inn attracted visitors from Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington seeking to escape the summer heat. Guests staged plays, played games, sang songs, went horseback riding through the countryside, and enjoyed the inn's boxwood gardens and fresh



Postcard of Dielman Inn, New Windsor, c.1912. The Mauses stayed in the building at far right. (New Windsor Heritage)

Maus' cinematic-like life is reminiscent of *Zelig*, a 1983 mock documentary written and directed by Woody Allen. The title character has an uncanny knack for meeting historic personalities of the 1920s, from Charles Lindbergh to Charlie Chaplin. Marion Perry Maus was a *Zelig*-like character who came to know Geronimo, Chief Joseph, Black Jack Pershing, and Buffalo Bill and to participate in a litany of epic events from Wounded Knee and the Spanish American War to the 1906 San Francisco



Brigadier General Marion P. Maus, c.1912. Note Congressional Medal of Honor suspended from collar. (George Grantham Bain Collection, Library of Congress)

earthquake. Talking with Maus must have been like reading a primer of late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century American history. How fortunate for the guests of New Windsor's Dielman Inn to sit down and dine with such a living legend.

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