



*with Dr. Albert E. Burke*

**The Monster  
Slayer  
PART I**

This was the beginning of the end. For the Navajo and Apache Indian nations, this was a last ditch fight to save something. It was an important fight—but not many Americans knew about it then or know about it now—because this happened in July, 1863. At the very moment Colonel Kit Carson led his Federal troops against these men here in the territory of Arizona, off in the east Americans were fighting another last ditch battle to save something—at a place called Gettysburg, in Pennsylvania. That Civil War battle crowded this Indian battle out of the headlines—and out of the history books. But—that Indian war in our history was as important a part of the American story as the Civil War. More important in some ways, this minute, because those Navajos and Apaches were badly frightened men when they fought that battle back in 1863. They were not afraid of Kit Carson or his troops. They were not afraid of the White Man. They were afraid of an idea white settlers had carried into their lives. From coast to coast, practically all Indians reacted to that idea the same way. They saw in it a deadly danger—not just to them, but—in the long run, to you too. A long run which reaches right out of that Arizona battlefield in the 18ws into your life now in the 1960's—as we will probe that idea now in—The Monster Slayer.

These came back. They survived, as the descendants of the Navajo who made the long walk of 1864. The long walk took them away from here after they were defeated by Kit Carson. It was a 300 mile walk, and as these people can tell you about it today—it was a death march to a place called Basque Redondo. 8,500 of these people—men, women and children—made that march into Basque Redondo. Four years later—despite a heavy birth rate—only 7,000 Navajo's came out, to return here. They died at Basque Redondo—in thousands—as human beings have always died, in concentration camps.

But there was something special about their dying in that concentration camp in our history. The record is there—on the files of our department of the Interior—to show that they were starved and maltreated. The record shows that Americans then considered 12 cents a day enough to spend on each Indian prisoner for food, clothes and some kind of shelter. It was about as easy to keep a human being alive at the Basque Redondo then on 12 cents a day, as it would be now—and hunger, disease and exposure did their work. Navajos died—but not all of them: not so many, for such obvious reasons.

There were other reasons, which had to do with the fact that not all of the Navajo people made that long march into captivity back in 1864. Part of the Navajo people stayed behind, in these canyons—on this land. Changing Woman was left behind, for example. So were Monster Slayer and his brother, Born to Water. A very long time ago, Changing Woman was born here. She was born in a place called The Blessing Way, somewhere among these canyons, and for the Navajo people, this marked the beginning of life. In her time Changing Woman gave birth to Monster Slayer and Born to Water, who took their places among the gods. Monster Slayer came to earth here to protect men from the destructive forces—the monsters who were gradually destroying them, and the world. Monster Slayer did his job, with the help of the gods, just before Changing Woman gave birth again—this time to a new race of men—the Navajo. The Navajos were made here. Changing Woman made them of the stuff of this land. She made them of its soil, its rock, its plants and animals, its water and its mountains. This was not just land. It was a-living part of the people: part of their bodies ... part of their minds. As soon as they were old enough to understand, every Navajo was made to know this—in ceremonial dances; in special growing-up ceremonies for children. Through these ceremonies, on this land, they were close to things that made them a nation—close to their history, their traditions, their beliefs. All were rooted here. All are parts of this place. This was their source of life.

And it was that part of the Navajo that did not make the long walk

into captivity in 1864. Cut off from their roots—cut off from their source of life in their homeland, they died 300 miles away at Basque Redondo.

Americans in 1863 didn't know these facts about the Indian, nor did they know that the Navajos who rode out to battle Kit Carson that July had called on their gods—Monster Slayer in particular—for a repeat performance of history. They saw in those Federal troops, and in the white-skinned prospectors, hunters and settlers moving west, the return of the destructive forces that almost destroyed man, and the world, before the Navajo were born into it. They saw it in what they knew was happening to these animals on the great plains to the east. There had been about 50 million bison—buffalo on the lands of what were to become the United States. So many that early records of the railroads tell about trains stranded for hours as just one herd made its way across the tracks—one herd stretching as far as the eye could see. Hunters from the east began killing these animals in the 1830's. Some of the reasons for the slaughter that followed made sense. In the Indian wars, it did make sense to destroy the buffalo, because that animal was the basis for the way of the life of the plains Indians. When the buffalo was finished, so were the plains Indians,—but the Buffalo Bills of that time in the west didn't kill as many as 300 buffalo in one day to make an early America safe against Indians. They killed for what they described as the "sport of it". When they finished that "sport", there were exactly 22 plains buffalo left, in a small herd, hidden away in Yellowstone National Park. 50 million buffalo were wiped out—as the Indian saw it then—by destructive forces.

The Indian saw that force too in what was happening in these places; first in New England, the lake states, to finally reach across the continent into the western forests on the Pacific coast. This nation rode to power on wood, for everything from clipper ships, through covered wagons, railroad ties and houses. The Indian could understand the white man's need for wood, but he could not understand the way he went about getting it. He left nothing behind. He destroyed entire forests to get at the trees he wanted. His rule was to "cut out and get out" and the record of his work can be seen today in thousands of acres of dead stumps and burned over lands in the Lake States, in the Pacific northwest, and in New England—where no good seed trees were left behind to give the forest a chance to come back. The forest Indian was, of course, destroyed along with those trees. As the Indian saw it—by destructive forces.

The kind of force a group of Indians living in what was called the Indian Territory in 1886 knew better perhaps than any of the Indian Tribes and nations who fought against it. Those Indians were the Cherokees and, in 1886, they were visited by a United States Senator from Massachusetts named Dawes—Henry L. Dawes. The Senator was concerned about the fact

that the Indian, defeated and placed out of the way on reservation lands that weren't considered to be useful or valuable—the Indian was still a problem. Most of them were a tax problem mainly, because somehow on those reservation lands they weren't adjusting to their defeat and doing as the American settler was doing across our part of North America by 1886, homesteading on privately owned farms and ranches, supporting themselves, making progress. The Indians didn't seem to be interested. Why not? There had to be a reason. There had to be a way to change the Indian into good Americans. Senator Dawes went west to investigate the matter. And while he was there he wrote a letter.

That letter just about finished the American Indian. It was intended to. It led directly to legislation in Congress in 1887 under the Senator's name, which made the word of the United States government worthless on every treaty signed with the Indian before that time. It took away from the Indian about 80 million acres of land which had been set aside for them as reservations by treaty; by an interesting coincidence very soon after that word got around that there was oil in the Indian territory—in that part of it which the Cherokees and Choctaws called Auklah-Humma. Senator Dawes' letter of 1886 did all that—and a bit more. It made very clear the shape of the destructive force practically all Indians had seen, and feared, in the Kit Carsons, the Buffalo Bills, and the men like Dawes—the destructive force they fought tooth and nail from one end of this land to the other. The destructive force the Senator put in that letter in 1886 in these words. Quote—"the head chief of the Cherokee told us that there was not a family of that whole nation that did not have a home of its own. There was not a pauper in the Cherokee nation, and the nation did not owe a dollar. Yet the defect of their system is apparent. They have got as far as they can go, because they own their land in common. There is no selfishness here, which is at the bottom of civilization. Till their people give up their lands, and divide them among their citizens so that each can own the land he cultivates, they will not make progress"—unquote.

The Senator from Massachusetts then headed back to Washington where he drafted the legislation that was to civilize the Cherokee, by giving them a taste of the selfishness he saw as the basis for civilization. It would be a joke—a travesty of the American story to say that all Americans practiced this kind of civilization as we moved through time into power, and riches, and greatness—to be what we are today. But it would be simply dishonest to say that there were not men like this in the American story—to wipe the buffalo off the face of the earth and see it as a sport: to wipe out forests with no concern about what came after—for their children: to lead out of that kind of yesterday in this kind of today, where in the 1950's and the

1960's, people like these gathered together in several western states to speak before several congressional investigating committees about a little known—critical problem . . . on which it would be no exaggeration to say the survival of this nation could depend.

How does it do it? How does this computer mechanism work to spot a moving target—work out its speed, its direction and where it's headed—then capture or destroy it, all in about 1/20th of a second. How does it do it?

That question has quite a few slide rules and dissecting knives working hard—and overtime—in the laboratories of several countries, this minute. Because, what goes on in the head of the praying mantis in nature, to pick a moving target out of the air, one among a number of things moving in several directions at once—what goes on in that living thing in nature to do that job has now become a matter of life or death to these living things a long way removed from nature.

Since August, 1957, they've had a top priority problem to work out and some of those machines are the result of their efforts so far—but not very good results. Since the first Soviet intercontinental Ballistic missile was reported workable in August 1957, their problem has been—find such missiles in flight. Work out a system to detect it—at the same time work out its speed, where it's headed and its location—in time to destroy it. The machines we now have do that job, but unfortunately, a bit more. Their electronic eyes pick up not only possible missiles, but everything else in the atmosphere and beyond too, clouds, birds, meteorites, planes, even electronic echoes bounced off the moon. A missile may be in that mess, but detecting it is the problem. What's needed is an electronic eye that can pick a particular moving target out of many possible things over the earth's surface—and hold it.

Well that kind of gadget exists, and one of the scientists working on that assignment literally fell over it in broad daylight—or rather, stepped on it one weekend when he found he just had to get away from that problem, and he headed for some relaxation here—in this very special place out in one of our western states. This was not a special place about 100 years ago, but it is today because there aren't many places like it left in these United States. Scattered around this nation today are some 80 such places, which are today pretty much as they were before the Buffalo Bills of our history began killing off the buffalo and the elk and the many other kinds of wild life that can still be found here—on lands that were not cut over to stumps and weed trees—or eaten away by cattle or sheep, as about 95% of the rest of the nation has been so far. That missile scientist who headed for this place to get out from under the pressure of his life and death assignment

for some vital rest, was only one among the 60 million people who, as the 1960's began, went to state-owned or federally-owned places like this to rest and relax too. In process of which they spent an estimated 25 billion dollars for fishing and hunting licenses, and all kinds of recreation equipment. In today's America, growing in population by about 3 million every year, recreation is big business—and in a critically, little understood way—in the nation's few remaining wilderness areas—it's survival business too.

In one of those remaining wilderness areas, while fishing a mountain stream, that missile scientist's attention was drawn to an insect like this on the branch of a tree close by. He realized at once that the mechanism to do the job he'd been trying to do for years already existed. The praying mantis he watched that day started him on the new science of bionics—and in several of our top laboratories this minute, and the Soviet Union's and Britain's and in France—this little fellow is the focus of some of the best research minds in the world: to find out how he does it. How he spots a moving target—among many moving things—disregards the rest—works out its speed, its direction and where it's headed—then gets it, in a fraction of a second. The answer, out of a primitive untouched wilderness, into a very developed scientific present. In which there is a moral which most of the men and women who attended these congressional hearings in their home states during the 1950's and 1960's missed completely. Hearings that were held to decide what ought to be done about some very old-fashioned ideas earlier Americans had about setting aside parts of the United States for the recreational needs of future Americans—and a fairly new idea up before the United States in 1962, to set aside parts of our existing national forests, the most primitive parts—about 2% of this nation—as permanent wilderness areas. To be left exactly as they are, except under certain very exceptional conditions, for future Americans to know: to know what this incredibly blessed land of ours was like before it was changed into the rich and powerful nation it is now.

Most of the men and women who attended those hearings didn't think much of the idea. They knew nothing about wilderness areas as incredibly valuable natural laboratories, in which over thousands of years the answers to all kinds of problems we've just begun to tackle on the sciences have already been worked out. And not just in building computer mechanisms to detect enemy intercontinental missiles. In those wilderness areas that remain in what's called a balanced, organized dynamic system—using energy from the sun to use, and reuse water, air and minerals to keep the greatest possible number of things alive, to in turn support human life. We hardly know how that system is set up, how or why it works, and it can't be duplicated in any laboratory. It exists only under natural conditions, which we've discovered almost too late to be of any help to a world busting at the seams

with people. This planet passed the 3 billion population mark in 1962, and the way it's growing now in less than 100 years it will pass the 7 billion mark. The answer to feeding that number of people exists—if scientists can unlock the workings of that balanced, organized, dynamic system in nature. Our wilderness areas are the most important places to study those workings, because we have the sciences and technology so close by to put what we learn to use.

Most of the men and women who attended those congressional hearings to fight the Wilderness Bill in 1962 didn't know these facts. They didn't know the facts that led to the setting up of those Wilderness Areas, and National Parks and Forest in the first place, either. Their history books didn't tell them much about the time of the land grabs—when companies were set up, backed heavily by foreign money, which got control of millions of acres of American Forest Land, and mineral deposits, and farmlands through fraud, in a way that came very close to wrecking the American story. It was to keep America's land from being gobbled up by such companies, foreign-owned or American-owned, that the idea began under Presidents Harrison and Cleveland to set aside some of that land—to keep it for the American people—first as National Forests, then as National Parks and now Wilderness areas.

Most of those people who fought the Wilderness bill in 1962 didn't know that kind of history, but they did use the same arguments against the idea that was used in our history by the men who wanted the timber, the minerals, the grasses and farmlands then. What good is a Wilderness Area, today's Americans asked again and again at those hearings? They are valuable because timber is valuable now, because minerals are needed now, because grasslands mean good prices for steaks now. What good is land if it's not used?

From the beginning, it was that idea—that land had no value if the things that were on it or in it had no money value—it was that idea that first baffled the Indian then frightened him into the Indian Wars of American history. The Indian simply couldn't see land that way—as property—to be used as long as it had trees on it, or minerals in it—then tossed aside as so much useless junk when those things were gone.

One hundred years before that American Missile scientist found the answer to a very modern problem in a very primitive place, the American Indian knew that that kind of tie between today and yesterday existed, that there were answers in the past to problems and questions being asked today. Oh, he didn't know it in terms of physics, or chemistry, or electronics—he knew it in terms of his religious beliefs: he knew it in terms of his traditions

and his history. He knew it because he saw the land under his feet as a continuously valuable thing on which past, present and future all existed together. As, in fact, they do—for you too—there. Where's that? What's that? We will get into that in Part 2 of *The Monster Slayer*.