



UPLEGGER, FRANCIS J.

Apache Missionary For 45 Years Dies. SAN CARLOS - The Rev. Francis J. Uplegger, who devoted 45 of his 96 years to Lutheran missionary work with the Apache Indians, died Saturday in his home on the San Carlos Reservation. Mr. Uplegger was the first resident missionary with the Apaches, establishing his mission in Rice, predecessor of San Carlos, in 1919. For 45 years he taught religion and languages to the Apaches on the reservation. The Indians taught him their language, too. A youth of 19 when he arrived in America in 1887, Mr. Uplegger studied for the ministry in a Lutheran seminary in St. Louis. He spent 77 years in Lutheran church work. He returned briefly to his native Germany in 1889 to become pastor of a Hamburg congregation. There after, he was pastor of many churches in Germany, Denmark and the United States. But his life's work was with the Indians of Arizona. Many years after he built his tiny, two-room house on the reservation and began educating the Indians, Uplegger explained why his family chose to conduct its ministry work on a barren desert: "It is simple to explain. Missionaries were called to go out into every section of God's earth to preach and teach the Gospel. The San Carlos Apaches have become, in a way, our people. Their color may differ, but their souls are the same." The early years were difficult. The Indians were reluctant to accept the ways of white man and skeptical of his ideas on education of Apache children. But Mr. Uplegger persisted. "Our work, like the work of missionaries the world over, may not bear immediate fruit," the pastor conceded. "But as one calls into the woods, so the echo comes back." Fluent in nine languages, Mr. Uplegger labored 10 years to translate thousands of English words into Apache, so he could communicate better with the Indians at his mission. "I wanted to be able to preach to the Indians in their own language," he explained once to a reporters. "I wanted to talk to them in words both they and I understood." Son Alfred took over as pastor of the Grace Lutheran Church on the reservation when the elder Uplegger grew too old for the rigorous duties. Other members of the family also are in the ministry here. Collectively, the family has contributed 160 years of work to the San Carlos Apaches. The Rev. Mr. Uplegger's body will lie in state in Globe tomorrow evening and Wednesday afternoon at Walker's Mortuary. The body will lie in state in the San Carlos Mission from Wednesday evening to Thursday noon. Funeral services will be ducted at 2 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church, with the burial in Peridot Cemetery. The Rev. E. A. Sitz of Tucson, head of the Arizona-California Lutheran sector, will officiate. Surviving Mr. Uplegger are his son, the Rev. Alfred M. Uplegger, San Carlos; three daughters, Mrs. Johanna Rosin of Peridot, Gertrude and Dorothea, both of San Carlos; a grandson, Rupert Rosin of Caledonia, Wis.; a granddaughter, Mrs. Rachael Hinton of Waterford, Ohio, and six great-grandchildren.

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