
NUMU TEKWAPUHA NOMENEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

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“Letter From The President”

Maruaweku Numunuu

Hina ranu hani?hutui?

Tami is half Taibo, and a quarter atabitsi, and a quarter Numu, but he is also 100% Comanche. Now, can you tell if this statement is true, or can it be true? (Please explain your response and send to clcpc@comanchelanguage.org.)

The two questions above are not trick questions. Hopefully they will be thought provoking questions.

2007 has been an interesting and eventful year, also there seems to be an increased interest in our language. The “Learning To Speak Comanche” project was very successful in exposing young Comanche families to our language, and beginning to develop speakers from those infants by flooding their little brains with the wonderful sound of our language.

The Comanche people have endorsed this Project by permitting another year of funding. We hope to have another 15 families in this project for this funding year, and we are going to have the first year families as mentors for this group. Our number one priority family will be those with an infant to six years old. We hope to start the project in October, so get your application in soon.

Ura
Ron Red Elk

“LEARNING TO SPEAK COMANCHE” Year Two

Year Two of the “Learning To Speak Comanche” project will begin in late October, after new funding has been received and preparations have been made.

We have put out notices that we are looking for 15 families with children under

the age of six to participate. We have the guidelines and an application on our web, and we have the guidelines in this newsletter so that anyone who might be interested has the opportunity to be involved.

For an application, go to our web site listed above and scroll down to “Learning To Speak Comanche” to print out the application. You can then mail it to the address listed above. You will be notified when the first Orientation Class has been scheduled.

GUIDELINES FOR

“Learning To Speak Comanche” Project

The very first thing is to determine whether it is going to be essential for you to learn this language. Without this determination there is no need to proceed. If you do not have the self motivation that “this language is important to me as a Comanche person,” you will not be successful. Now, with that said, let's begin. Meeku tanu namaka muki sumu oyetu Numu niwanu?etu.

Since the majority of us are lacking in a sufficient enough Comanche vocabulary to speak the language, the first step is to build that vocabulary so that we can begin to speak.

Components to becoming a fluent speaker

Become literate in “Taa Numu Tekwapu.”

Since there is a Comanche spelling system, learn the symbols and letters that represent the sounds of the Comanche language.

Invest in a recording device that you can play back.

Since there are so few speakers and, with their age and health, our exposure to them speaking Comanche is limited. It is so very important to record the language spoken at every opportunity.

Involve the family unit in this process.

The language needs to be re-established into the home once again.

The beginning of the end of our language was when the parents stopped using the language in their home. The babies need to hear these wonderful sounds so they may be equipped to produce those sounds and become native speakers of "Taa N̄m̄ Tekwap̄."

This three-step process sounds too simple to be successful.

However, success or failure of the efforts are determined by the individual's commitment to ownership of the language and a preconceived benefit derived from those efforts (internal motivation). Self motivation and ownership are a strong alliance in this quest to reclaim our language.

Plan of Action

Learn The Spelling System. Learning to read and write in Comanche is not as difficult as it may appear. With six to eight hours of orientation on this spelling system and an additional six to eight hours of individual work to practice listening to the sounds of Comanche. And then writing the words as you hear them. Practice reading Comanche should also take place during this time. Components two and three should be in use during this orientation period. You will also be exposed to greetings and responses, kinship terms, colors, numbers and conversational phrases.

Orientation -- Four Weeks. You have begun to build your Comanche vocabulary. The orientation session would be taken over four weeks, with an hour and a half of weekly orientation sessions. The learners would then use the rest of the week for their practice sessions.

Family Oriented. As you have probably realized, this technique of learning the language is family oriented. It is a proven fact that the children's first teachers are their parents. It is also a proven fact that children learn a language from their first teachers. The earlier children are exposed to a second language the better.

Comanche Speakers as Consultants. Speakers of the Comanche language will be utilized as consultants to these language

teams. The language teams can select any area of their family life to bring the language into use. In other words, they choose their own curriculum.

Consultants Meet with Families Monthly. A consultant will meet with these language teams for an evaluative and consultative session. These sessions could take place monthly depending on the needs of the language teams.

Team Selection. Selection of teams will be based on families with children six years old and under in the family. Pregnant women will also be included, even though they have no other children. Having both parents in the home has proven to be more successful in the language learning process, but single parent homes can also be successful and will be considered.

Self-Motivation. As has been mentioned, self motivation and ownership is the key to the success or failure of this language learning process. And as the Comanche people have shown by their lack of involvement in trying to learn to speak Comanche, then there is a need for some external motivation. That external motivation would come in the form of compensation for their successful efforts in learning to speak Comanche. All of us have experienced external motivation, working for a good grade in school, doing a good job on the job for the salary you receive. Now external motivation can evolve into internal motivation. A sense of pride in graduation, advanced degrees, promotion on the job. Now the motivation becomes internal, the pride in a job well done or in the accomplishments. Could this be the catalyst that gives us the ownership, the pride that our language will survive within us? I believe this will give the Comanche people the empowerment to speak "Taa N̄m̄ Tekwap̄" once again.

Consultant Speaker Selection. The criterion for selection of the fluent speakers will be based on their ability to speak Comanche for a period of five to seven minutes telling of themselves, while speaking only in Comanche. The spelling consultants will demonstrate their ability to hear and write the Comanche language correctly.

The application process for the families and consultants is currently taking place.

There will be 15 families in this second year project.

1. The orientation sessions for learning to read and write Comanche will commence immediately. These sessions would be scheduled for one day a week for an hour and a half for four weeks.

Expected learner outcomes for the four weeks: 15 sets of parents will become proficient in reading and writing Comanche. Both parents and children will become accustomed to hearing Comanche spoken and begin building their vocabulary.

2. The use of a recording and play back device is vitally important to the success of this project.

Expected learner outcomes: 15 families will learn to use this device both in recording and listening to Comanche spoken. The parents will play back and listen to the sounds of the language, they then will write down what they hear. They in turn will read to their children what they have transcribed. The families will learn to make this part of their daily lives and schedule this time as family time.

3. The families will be given kinship terms, colors, numbers, greetings and responses, and conversational phrases during the spelling orientation sessions.

Expected learner outcomes: The families will learn to start communicating with each other in Comanche. They will learn to hear the sounds of the language and use the letters that represent those sounds.

4. The families will also use the infant CDs that the tribal language program has produced. These CDs will have programmed a how-to-use booklet for the parents. These CDs will be played in the presence of the infants so they can hear the sounds of the language.

Expected learner outcome: The parents and children will learn to hear the sounds of the language and will get additional practice reading from the accompanying booklet. The infants will start processing the sounds of the language.

5. The first consultative/evaluative session will take place after the first month of family language learning. At this time it will be determined how well the families did on the expected learner outcomes previously mentioned. It will also be determined at this

time if they are successfully progressing in the learning of the language and using the language in their daily lives, so that they may be compensated for their efforts.

6. Planning for the following month's curriculum for each family will take place at this time. These consultative-evaluative sessions will be scheduled following each month's work at the convenience of each individual family participating in this project.

GRAND OPENING COMANCHE NATIONAL MUSEUM

The Grand Opening for the Comanche National Museum will be held Thursday, September 27th at 3:00 p.m. at 701 N.W. Ferris Avenue in Lawton.

The first exhibit will feature early Comanche Churches.

Martina Minthorn and staff have been working diligently getting the building ready for the opening, so plan to attend and see what a wonderful job they have all done.

2007 COMANCHE NATION FAIR

The Comanche Nation Fair of 2007 is upon us, with plans in the making for several months now.

Many of you have received the schedule of events in the Tribal Newspaper, or you can go to the tribe's web site and see it, so I won't go into detail here.

But I do want you to know that we will be set up at the Fair along the north side of the arena. We will have our language learning material there, along with applications for Year Two of the "Learning To Speak Comanche" Project. Be sure you stop by and say Hello.

The carnival rides will again be FREE for all children this year, no matter who you are. The only restrictions will be those the carnival itself imposes, such as height requirements for certain rides.

The Children's Sunday School Class from Petarsy Methodist Church will be present Sunday morning during the church services to show everyone all they've learned. If you'll remember, I bragged about them last Christmas because their entire Christmas program was in Comanche! Only the adults used English –

all the kids spoke or sang in Comanche! It was wonderful.

I plan to have Christmas CDs available at the Fair, which has four songs that have been translated into Comanche with the words written out. That way you can see the words as you listen to them being sung on the CD. See you at the Fair!

DAUGHTER OF DAWN

An original silent movie has been acquired by the Oklahoma Historical Society and is being restored. What is unique about this particular film is that it has an all Indian cast, filmed in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. Made in 1920, some of the cast members include Esther LeBarre, White Parker, Hunting Horse, Wanada Parker, Jack Sankadota, Alice Apekaum, Old Man Saupitty, Slim Tyebo, Old Lady Sunrise and Oscar Yellow Wolf.

The Fall 1999 issue of the Chronicles of Oklahoma has an article about the film written by Leo Kelley.

Just prior to the "Comanche Family Tree Day" held at the Comanche Complex on August 20th, I received a call from the Historical Society asking if they could attend in the hopes of talking to some of the descendants of the cast listed above. I welcomed them, and they were able to gain some information they didn't have previously.

Plans are to have a "premiere" of sorts once the film is renovated, hopefully in this area of Oklahoma, since this is where filming took place.

So watch the newspapers for that announcement.

(Editor's Note: I ran across a reprint of a book written in 1934 by Rev. A.E. Butterfield, who was the first minister to come into the Little Washita area. I am using excerpts from the book to give you an idea of how early events transpired and what he saw through his own eyes, many years ago. I thought it would be fitting with Churches and Christianity being the focus of our first Comanche National Museum Exhibit, opening on September 27th.)

COMANCHE, KIOWA and APACHE MISSIONS: Forty-Two Years Ago and Now (1934)

by Rev. A.E. Butterfield

Having read two books on missions among these Indians, one by a Baptist woman, the other by a Methodist preacher, and seeing that the reader would be led to think that these two authors were the first ones preaching to these people, I decided to give some history of the work as I knew it then and as I know it now, in 1934. Some dates may not be exactly correct and some minister's names may be overlooked, as I am giving this history from memory.

The Quakers, or Friends, as the Indians still call them, began work at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, about 1870. They discontinued the work in about three years.

About 1878 or 1879 the Northwest Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, sent Rev. Stump Ashby among the Comanches at Ft. Sill. The Mission was discontinued after one year.

In about 1888, I think it was, Rev. J.J. Methvin was sent to Anadarko. About 1890 the Women's Board of Missions of the M.E. Church South, established a school at Anadarko with Rev. J.J. Methvin in charge.

(About) 1892 Rev. Mr. Fate of the Presbyterian Church built a school four miles east of Anadarko. Priest Isadore built a school two miles south of the then Anadarko. And about this time the Reformed Presbyterians built a school 20 miles west of what is the town of Apache with Rev. Mr. Carruthers in charge.

On Dec. 24, 1892, I came to Anadarko. At this time William Brewer was at Ft. Sill as our representative. I followed him there. Miss Helen Brewster was placed there by our Women's Board as camp worker in 1894. She wrought well. She is spoken kindly of by the Indians until this day.

In 1895 or 1896 Mr. Cophelt of the Mennonites visited me and I helped him obtain a permit and grant of land on Post Oak creek some six miles northeast of what is now Indianahoma.

In 1897 Miss Crawford of the Baptist Church began work at Saddle Mountain.

Near this time Rev. Mr. Deyo established a Mission for the Baptist Church

about ten miles southwest of Ft. Sill. J.G. Forester followed me at Ft. Sill. Then came B.F. Gassoway, and then M.A. Clark. The latter served from 1904 to 1912 at Ft. Sill. We now have 13 full blood Indian preachers, seven of them serving pastoral charges in the same territory that I traveled and worked.

During January, February, and the first of March, (in Anadarko) my wife was busy with her school work and I doing what I could, walking from teepee to teepee, talking to and praying with whatever Kiowas as would listen to me. I had to use an interpreter when I could get one to talk for me.

During this time we learned of a large number of Indians south of Anadarko known as the Big Looking Glass band of Comanches, among whom was no preacher. We became interested in them and gave up the school and borrowed a wagon and team and moved into the little parsonage built by the Women's Board on the Little Washita River. Our nearest white neighbors were at Anadarko 20 miles north, Rush Springs 18 miles south, Ft. Sill 18 miles west, and Ninnekah 20 miles east.

We were among people who did not have enough food to keep them from distressing hunger, and they had no money. The government contracted in the Treaty to feed and clothe them for 33 years if they would stay on the reservation. But they were getting only a little more than half enough to eat. They were of the opinion that all whites had lots of money and plenty to eat and to spare to the hungry ones around. So they expected to eat with us and that we would have some money and some old clothes for them. Many times they ate the horses and cattle that had died and many other things to revolting to mention.

I did not understand the Indians' dialect and they did not understand my language, and it was hard for one who could interpret for me. At that time only a few had been to school enough to translate English into the Indian dialect. Most of the parents were bitterly opposed to their children going to school. The Government would round up all the boys and girls from (age) seven to fourteen years old and keep them in school nine months.

Another difficulty was that every man of them was religious after their (own) manner of worship.

My first attendance at their religious service was in June of 1893. Chief Looking Glass had been a regular attendant at my meetings. He invited me to attend one of his meetings. I was glad to go and learned from William Tivis, my best interpreter, how to observe their rules during the service.

I stayed until 2 a.m. when I went home, and returned about 7 a.m. Soon after this a woman brought a pan of food, and then three other women did likewise. Four men kneeled around this food and for nearly an hour they had some kind of thanksgiving service. After this all came around and ate this food and then went out and lay down on the scaffold under the arbor. In a very short time they were all asleep and the first one to wake had been asleep twenty-two hours. Then for three or four days their bodies were so sore that they could do but little."

(Editor's Note: Rev. Butterfield goes on to tell some of the stories he heard from the Comanches, and ends with a letter from White Parker, who was then the oldest living son of Quanah Parker and a pastor of one of the Comanche churches. I will quote from Parker's letter:)

"Some sixty years ago the very mention of a Comanche would cause a Texan to begin to shake with fright. At that time a bitter war was being waged against the whites who were encroaching on their hunting grounds. The plains had always belonged to us, and although we were roamers, that particular part of the country had been ours for generations. The Comanches at that time were the bravest of all Indians, holding themselves superior to all other tribes. Always the finest of horsemen, theirs were wonderful physiques. Perhaps their nomadic life kept them fit. Camping for a short time where game was plentiful, before the grounds were polluted, they were moving on, following where the buffalo were leading. With a diet suited for their activities, and the few simple remedies known by the medicine man, only the fittest survived. The early contact with the white people introduced many unknown ailments to our people and troubles began to oppress the tribe.

In the olden days we went in clans or bands. Everything was shared in common. The future was left to provide for itself. Today (1934) one may travel through the part of Oklahoma where Comanches live and see well built bungalows, nicely furnished. If you should stop, you would be greeted with real hospitality and would perhaps find the family listening to a victrola (if it was in the cool of the evening) or tuned in to some (radio) station, listening to what was going on in the world. Perhaps the mother or a grown daughter would excuse herself to see how the pressure cooker was getting along. For now we are beginning to look out for the future. So you see that now we are a progressive people. The younger generation that has been to school, are able to carry off any situation that may arise in social life.

I am very proud of the physical and social advancement of my people, but for some reason the spiritual growth, without which the two are worthless, has not kept pace.

The Indian was naturally religious. Even before the coming of the white man they had a belief in a Supreme Being, who created all things. They surely seemed to be feeling out after Him if happily they might find Him. The paths were dark with superstition and ignorance.

While they knew there was a Great Spirit, they worshipped all things of nature. Solitary fasting and prayer always prepared the warrior for a great feat, also the medicine man was given power by the same preparation. Perhaps the early Protestant missionaries did not understand our devout religious nature. It may have been that there were so few words in our language to interpret the Bible. At any rate, for years, about the only understanding of being a Christian was to be baptized and join the church. Public prayer was emphasized but the teaching of secret prayer was neglected. A few years ago a real revival was started among our people who had thought they were Christians before. More praying was being done with some fasting. Now there has been real spiritual advancement made, although slowly. We are learning real self-denial is necessary to bear the cross of Jesus.

Although growth is slow and not what I would desire, still paganism is yielding to the light of the Gospel. Much needs to be done yet but "The Light of the World" is still pleading to enter the darkened lives of many of the Comanche people.

Co-worker, pray for us,
Yours in His service,
White Parker"

(*Editor: Here is a modern day story that makes you think, could this be?)

THE COYOTE AND THE MOUSE

by Kerry Kennington

One night I was sitting outside in the shadow of my home, listening to the sounds of the night, when the full moon reappeared from behind a cloud. The sudden bright moonlight revealed a coyote a short distance from me. I could see that the coyote had a mouse in its mouth with the tail hanging out to the side. I decided to greet the coyote. I said to him, "Maruawe."

The coyote stopped in his tracks. He looked surprised and he said to me, "What?" As he spoke, the mouse jumped from his mouth and ran off into the safety of the brush.

Surprised myself, I asked, "Coyotes speak English?"

The coyote said, "Some do, most don't." "But how is it that you speak the ancient language?"

I replied, "If by the ancient language you mean Numu Tekwapu, I am learning the language of my ancestors with the help of some friends of mine who are Numunuu."

The coyote said, "These are words that I have not heard in a very long time." "I was beginning to think I would never hear them again."

"But what of you," I asked the coyote, "I have read that long ago animals could speak, but I never thought it would be in English."

The coyote sat on the ground and replied, "When the Outsiders came here and built their roads and houses, most of the coyotes just moved farther away." "I did not want to leave my home, so I stayed." "I realized that to survive, I needed to learn

the language of the Outsiders.” “I watched and listened until I was able to understand.”

“What of the others,” I asked him, “do they still speak?”

“No, not many,” the coyote replied. “When all animals could speak they spoke the ancient language just as the human beings of that time did.” “Since the ancient language is no longer used, most animals have forgotten how to speak.”

“I am sorry to hear that,” I said. “If the ancient language was spoken again by the People, do you think the animals might learn to speak again as well?”

The coyote replied, “Maybe, if it is not too late.” It has been a long, long time and learning to speak is very difficult.” “We have barely enough time in a day to even find a good meal, and as you see I have lost my dinner for this evening.” “I must be on my way to find another.”

“Thank you for talking to me,” I said, as the coyote rose to his feet, “and I hope that if enough people learn the ancient language then maybe the animals will again decide to speak to us.” The coyote nodded his head and walked off into the trees.

I went back into my home and lay down on my bed. As I was about to fall asleep I heard a tiny voice in my ear say, “Ura.” When I turned my head toward the sound all I saw was a thin grey tail slide off into the shadows.

CLCPC MOTTO

Soobesų

Nųmųnųnų sųmųoyetų nųmų niwųnų?etų.

Ukitsi nųmų tųasų nųmųniwųnųhutui.

Ubynitų tųasų Nųmųniwųnųhutuinų.

by Carney Saupitty Sr.

Translation:

A long time ago we spoke Comanche.

Today we speak Comanche.

We will speak Comanche forever.

PRODUCTS FOR SALE

Comanche Dictionary. Compiled entirely by Comanche people, this dictionary contains over 6,000 Comanche words with

Comanche to English and English to Comanche sections. \$30 plus \$5 s&h.

Comanche Lessons, set #1. A set of four Comanche Lessons, complete with a word list for each lesson and a CD. \$20 plus \$5 s&h.

Picture Dictionary. 26 page Primer explains the Comanche alphabet and sound of each letter. Includes a CD. \$12 plus \$3 s&h.

Comanche Song Book. Collection of 116 songs written in Comanche with an English translation, plus a set of 3 CDs of the songs. \$20 plus \$5 s&h.

Comanche Flash Cards Set. Three sets of 48 Flash Cards using simple Comanche words, accompanied by a CD. \$12 plus \$3 s&h for all three sets.

Comanche Language Tee-Shirts. Comanche language logo in full color on left chest. Available in solid red or royal blue. Children’s sizes small (6-8), medium (10-12), and large (12-14), \$10; Adult sizes small through XL \$12; Adult sizes 2X and 3X \$15. Specify color and size when ordering and add \$5 per shirt s&h.

Authentic Handmade Comanche Dolls. Beautiful 20” soft bodied dolls, dressed in traditional clothing. Both girl and boy dolls available. \$40 each plus \$5 s&h. (Special Order: Allow 6-8 weeks delivery.)

Tote Bags. Navy with red trim. 16”x12”x5” with back pocket. Front has the Comanche Language logo. \$12 plus \$5 s&h.

Ball Caps. Royal blue with red bill and Language Logo on front. \$10 plus \$5 s&h.

Lapel Pins. 1 inch round Cloisonne pin with colorful C.L.C.P.C. logo and “Nųmų Tekwapų” in center. \$5 includes s&h.

New Lapel Pin. 1 1/8” Silk screened lapel pin with clear epoxy finish. Exact replica of our colorful CLCPC logo complete with feathers, on gold plating. \$5 includes s&h.

*Please send orders with check or money order to: **CLCPC Attn: Barbara Goodin, 1375 N.E. Cline Road, Elgin OK 73538.** Orders will be shipped the following day, most by Priority Mail. Please include your e-mail address when ordering in case we need to contact you. If ordering multiple items contact us first at www.comanchelanguage.org, as we can usually ship more items less than quoted here.

Attention Tribal Members: Please contact us before sending in your order, as we give discounts to enrolled Comanches.