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# NUMU TEKWAPUHA NOMENEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

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## **MOTHER EARTH WATER WALK**

(Received from tribal member Lisa Pewenofkit-Powers, in Washington)

April 24, 2011: Just coming home from the Mother Earth Water Walk. Check [www.motherearthwaterwalk.com](http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com) and [www.emptyglassforwater.ca/map](http://www.emptyglassforwater.ca/map). My family has been walking since the beginning of the walk on April 10<sup>th</sup>. We walked from Olympia, Washington, over White Pass, through Yakima on to Spokane.

I walked every day for 6 days until last Sunday, including walking OVER White Pass. Can you believe that? We walked relay style for about 30 miles per day. We walked 36 miles last Sunday and that pretty much did my knee in.

It's a great, spiritual event to do something to bring attention to the condition of the water and to sacrifice for us all, for the future generations and to help heal the waters. My daughter Darkfeather continues on the Water Walk for a few more days. They made it to Montana yesterday and are on their way east toward Bad River, Wisconsin where all the waters of the 4 directions will converge in a ceremony.

Let folks know the Comanches were well represented on this Sacred Walk for the Waters on this Western Leg.

Update, May 5<sup>th</sup>: On June 12, in Bad River, Wisconsin, the Ocean Waters from the 4 directions will come together in a Healing Ceremony for all Waters. The western leg started on April 10 from Evergreen State College in Olympia WA and traveled up White Pass, down

through Yakima and on to Spokane, then over to Montana.

The Water Walkers are in Montana right now walking east toward Wisconsin. They will be in Gildford, Montana, tonight, making about 30 miles per day. Tomorrow they will end up in Havre, then on to Harlem. They will be in Osewgo (Wolf Point) on May 12, then on to North Dakota. They will be in Burlington and travel east through Minot. To see real time where they are, go to [www.emptyglassforwater.ca/map](http://www.emptyglassforwater.ca/map). It takes a moment or two to load the map. Scroll for a closer view to check the black dots as to where they are scheduled to be.

They get up at 3 a.m. and stop at lunch and walk until 4 p.m.

I understand the Blackfeet met the walkers outside Flathead and escorted them into their country with water, horses, dinners, and accommodations, and I believe, a wonderful Water Ceremony. What fabulous support! Many blessings to those wonderful folks!

This is a 4 directions Water Walk – [www.motherearthwaterwalk.com](http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com) and the culmination of the walk will be a ceremony to join and heal the waters at Bad River, Wisconsin, on June 12, 2011. The western leg is in full swing and the southern route took off on April 20, and anniversary of the oil spill in the gulf. The eastern leg started in Maine and the northern route started May 21<sup>st</sup>.

Please say prayers for strength and support for all the Water Walkers and for All the Waters of the World.

Here's a video you may want to watch: <http://vimeo.com/22464388>.

Thanks, Lisa Powers.

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### ELLIOTT CANONGE

Heard from the family of the late Elliott Canonge, who was instrumental in documenting our Comanche language in the 1950s. We were able to get a "jump start" from much of his hard work in our efforts to preserve our language.

His daughter, Gini, sent a card recently that we would like to share with you:

"My mom, Viola Canonge Frew (age 91), wanted me to write you to let you know she moved and to thank you for continuing to send her the Comanche (Language) Newsletter.

In February 2011 we moved my mom from Tucson, AZ, here to Vancouver, Washington, so that she could be near two of her children (Sue and Gini), five of her nine grandchildren and two great granddaughters. Mom wanted you to know that her latest great-granddaughter was born on April 7<sup>th</sup> and was named Ellie Marie Canonge – the name Ellie was a female version of Elliott. This is Dan Canonge's first grandchild.

Mom was so happy to see that the Comanche materials Daddy worked on over 50 years ago are still being used.

All of Viola's children are doing well. Don is a missionary with Wycliffe Bible Translators. Sanna lives in Sydney, Australia, and is an editor of Bible study materials. Sue and Gini both live in Vancouver and are active in their churches.

I am sending her new address.

(\*Written by Gini Canonge Rockan – mosquito/mutsikwa – Comanche name

given me as a young child, because I was "always buzzing around.")

What a delightful note that catches us up on the family that is still remembered by many Comanches today, especially in the Walters area.

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### COMANCHE HYMN SINGING

July 21<sup>st</sup>, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Comanche Elderly Center

Tribal members Chad Tahchawwickah and Ellen Tahhahwah will host a Comanche Hymn singing that will begin with a pot luck meal at 6:00 p.m. Everyone is asked to bring a dish to share. Singing will begin at 7:00 and participants are encouraged to bring their recorders. Plan to attend!

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### 'NEATH AUGUST SUN 1901

(\*Editor's Note: In 1933, members of the Lawton Business and Professional Women's Club compiled remembrances from "The 1901ers" and published 'Neath August Sun 1901'. There were many references to the Indians of this area and I received permission from Lavita Mathys to reprint excerpts from the book, which was republished in 1993. It will give you a glimpse of the life of our ancestors at a time when the white settlers were invading their country in alarming numbers. I have referenced the author and page number each excerpt that I have included here.)

**Mrs. H. Ridgley**, page 118:

"After I got acquainted with the Indians I used to do things for them. I would bake pies for their big gatherings for medicine making. I have made as many as thirty pies at once for old Pawway (Poahway). When he was going away he would bring his chickens and

put them in our pen and tie a red string around their legs so that he could tell which were his. He would bring his money to me to keep for him, and say "Comanche woman no savvy money, and white woman heavy savvy," then I would put it in the wardrobe and keep it for him.

The Indians were bad about getting everything from you that they could, and at first I was so scared of them that I thought I have to give them everything they asked for. They would wander around the house, sticking a finger in this or that and tasting it. They would come and sit down at the table and eat with us, but at first would never taste anything until they had seen me eat it first, I suppose they were afraid of being poisoned.

They got to be such a nuisance that I decided that I would change my dinner hour so that they would not be there when we got ready to eat. Five or six Indians dropping in for dinner every day was a lot of trouble. Instead of fixing dinner at twelve as I had been doing I waited until two o'clock. Just as I was ready to put it on the table, in filed the Indians. I asked them how in the world they knew I have changed my dinner hour, and they told me that they watched for the smoke in the chimney to tell when to come."

**Ira E. Carr**, page 122:

"I came to Chickasha from Jacksworth, Texas, in 1896 and stayed there two or three years, and then went south of Hobart near Saddle Mountain, and was there in 1901. At this time there was nobody but Indians near me. Indian pay day was one of the big days when about 1500 Indians would be camped at Rainy Mountain Mission where they would receive their pay from the Government. It was always paid them in cash and they would stay until

they spent all their money, it was the same way when they were issued cattle for meat. They would go to Anadarko with their families and eat and be merry until the supply was exhausted.

They all wore blankets and their hair long. The Government issued them clothes and shoes, but they would not wear them, and continued to make and wear moccasins. Very few of them live in houses and where they did live in houses you would see six or eight houses quite close together, and then possibly not another house for twenty or thirty miles." (\*Editor's Note: Today we call them "clusters.")

**Virgil Hoskins Bertram**, page 125:

"One of my first recollections of Oklahoma was the Indian. They used to drive by our homestead in Indian hacks. They always had a number of dogs and guns. Often they stopped at our house to get a drink or to warm at our fire. My, how afraid the children were of those Indians. They used to camp in a creek bottom near us. There we would see them shoot some of the numerous dogs following them, and feast on the meat. In the homestead days the Indian usually drove a team (or more likely the men and (women) rode the right side of the team, or following behind the hack. This was a custom and we were told they had followed it for years, intending to use the extra horse to run for help, if surrounded.

**Verne Bowers**, page 138:

"It was here that I first experienced the joy of eating the fine watermelons that are raised around Marlow and Rush Springs. The Indians also enjoyed them to the fullest extent. The Comanche Indians had an encampment about one mile east of Lawton. The thing which most impressed me was the number of dogs – millions it seemed."

**A.P. Galyon**, page 159:

We had the long distance telephone in our store, and one day an old Indian man had a call from an Indian at Lawton. He went into the booth and after he had finished chattering he proceeded to try to find out just how the voice of his Indian friend in Lawton got into that telephone booth in Faxon. It was an unsolved mystery for the old Indian.”

**Mrs. M.S. Simpson**, page 171:

I recall one very interesting incident that occurred which shows the great friendly feeling Mr. Simpson held for the Indians. The Indians received their “grass” money, or government checks, at Anadarko. They usually arrived in Lawton the day before the payment was scheduled and spent the night there before taking the train to Anadarko.

One time a Comanche Indian, a trader by the name of Ross, headed a group of Indians who stopped in Lawton one night on their way to Anadarko. That night a “norther” arrived. A cold wind blew and the temperature dropped. The Indians did not have sufficient clothing to protect them from the cold.

Ross came to Mr. Simpson and told him of the plight of his group. “They will freeze if they remain out in this cold,” he said. Mr. Simpson told him to bring them to the store. He did. There were about 25 men, women and children in the group. We arranged blankets and covers on the floors, and counters for them where they slept that night. We kept the fires going and obtained food for them. The following morning they were given a good breakfast and placed on the train going to Anadarko. The Indians appreciated this kindness immensely and in following years many of the older Indians recalled the event, always expressing good will to Mr.

Simpson for his friendly treatment of them in their time of need.”

**Dr. Effie Turner**, page 175:

“One day we found a little dog, half starved, dirty, and scared nearly to death. We took him in, gave him all the food he could eat, petted him, and tried to make him feel at home. He seemed glad enough to stay, but paid no attention whatsoever when we talked to him, until we finally concluded that he was deaf. A few days later a party of Indians came by talking. He picked up his ears, listened a minute, then promptly deserted the white people for the Indians. He knew Indian talk, but our (talk) didn’t even interest him, so we lost a dog.”

Pre-Lawton Days, by **Miss Emsy Nason** (later Mrs. E.S. Keown), Indian Interpreter, page 203:

Fort Sill was little more than a trading post when we came from Cooke County, Texas, to live on the government reservation. I was a very young child, but I remember the post and the country surrounding it very well. My name was Emsy Nason, but as my father had died when I was quite young and mother married Mr. Daley, most people spoke of my brother and I as the Daley children. James, Daley, my stepfather, was a former Civil War Veteran and in the Union Army. He had charge of the government coal yard at Fort Sill. As I recall it now, we came here in 1873 or 1874.

Most of the time we lived on the reservation. There were few schools in the early days. I received my education in the government schools at Fort Sill. There were good government schools at Anadarko, where the Indian Agency was moved in about 1874 from the location just south and east of the Post on Cache Creek. The Agency had been in

this location a number of years, I believe, and it was moved shortly after we came here. For awhile we lived on the Miller farm, which is the first farm over Cache Creek on the south side of the road as you come from Lawton over No. 29. It is now the Samuel Mullins allotment. The old stage coach line passed by the house during the days we lived there. Our house was the only building from Fort Sill, 30 miles south to the old stage coach stand on Snake Creek. There were no other buildings from the stand until you reached the next stage stand on Red River. We lived on Blue Beaver creek for awhile, and before the opening lived for a number of years on a site which is nearly where the Lawton electric light plant now stands. Except for the Indians, we had the country to ourselves. Of course, there were travelers passing by and the cowboys often came to our house to visit. We knew most of the soldiers at the Post.

I learned to talk the Indian language by association and not by being taught to speak it. Our only neighbors were the Indian families, and my early playmates were the Indian children. Not seeing or knowing any other children, I naturally just fell into talking as they did. They were in the majority.

My stepfather, as a government scout, helped to round up the Indians and bring them onto the reservation. They had to scout all over the West to get all the Indians. It took a long time and much effort, and it was quite dangerous. When they had them on the reservation, they took their horses away from them. They sold most of the horses as stolen property. What they were not able to sell, they took seven miles west of the Post and shot. They did this to keep the Indians from recapturing the horses. While the Indians were afoot it was much easier to

guard them and keep down Indian warfare, making it much safer for the white settlers in the neighboring states. This bringing of all the Indians of the Southwest to the reservation was in 1870 or 1871, I believe.

In the very early days of the post there were a number of old rock buildings, built by the government to be used as the Indian Agency. Most of these buildings stood near the Red Store until the agency was moved away in the early seventies. The buildings were left there for some time after. The Old Adobe was a government house, across the creek east and north from the agency. It was the home of the Indian Agent. One early day trading post stood at the junction of Cache and Whiskey Creeks. Whiskey Creek flows into Cache Creek below the Red Store, coming from the northeast. The original Red Store was a frame building, and there was an old frame mill which belonged to the government, used for grinding meal and flour for the Indian rations.

I saw the Apache Indians come into this country and saw them many times, working among them a great deal while they lived here. They were an industrious and intelligent tribe of Indians.

When this country was opened for white settlement, they said it was the opening of the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservations. The Apache reservation is between Fort Sill and Chickasha. The Kiowa-Comanche reservation was the one thrown open for settlement in 1901.

I like the Comanche and Kiowa Indians very much. The Comanche carries the name of being war-like and savage. I understood the Indians so well after my work with them that I can, even now, see some of both sides of their trouble in the early days.

Of course, being among the Indians and learning the language, to understand, speak and write it, it was not hard for me to become interpreter in the Methodist and Baptist Missions for the Indians. I went into this work while quite young, and enjoyed it very much, and as interpreter learned still more of their religion, customs and history.

Many people think the Indian entirely savage and that what good qualities they do have are those forced upon them by the white people. To my way of thinking, this is not the case. They had many fine tribal rules and regulations, and a study of their history proves that many of their chieftains were diplomats. Their religious customs and ceremonies proved that they worship their Deity with great love and respect. Of course, they were not in the early days, nor are they now, so refined as the white race, but the Red Man in his great love of nature, lived along natural lines, and for himself and his people, it was very good. Their chieftains and warriors were truly brave and were always ready to defend their tribe against what was considered an enemy.

The United States Government could not have chosen a better country for the Indian Territory. Its mild climate and natural resources and the abundance of wild game were many reasons why the Indians love it so much.

When the Government negotiated the Jerome Treaty with the Indians (this is the treaty in which the government purchased the reservation land from the Indians) I served as Indian interpreter for the government secret service. The treaty was in charge of General Jerome from Washington, and was signed at the Red Store. The government gave each man, woman and child a quarter section of land, some money and some stock, and allowed the Indians to adopt so many white people. The Comanche

adopted me, and I was given an allotment. I chose the place where I am now living, a beautiful quarter section with a pretty view of Mount Scott. My home is built on a high knoll, and slopes down to the creek, bordered with native timber. My husband, E.S. Keown, passed away about four years ago. During his lifetime he helped farm and improve the allotment, and always loved the place. We have been happy and contented here. I now have my niece, one of George Myers' daughters, living with me, so with her as a companion I am not so lonesome.

There are many interesting Indian stories of the early days in this country. The Post, the different Indian Missions, the Indian Agency and the Old Original Red Store, -- all have an interesting past history.

I will tell you part of the story of one little Indian boy. Jack Mullins was a full-blood Comanche Indian. He was reared by a white man by the name of Samuel Mullins. Mullins took Jack when he was a small boy, perhaps about seven years of age. Jack knew he was an Indian, but did not know to which tribe he belonged. He had been captured by the Wichita Indians in warfare with the Comanche. The Comanche in an exchange of prisoners bought Jack back, then again in warfare down in Texas the Comanches lost Jack. He was away from his people during this time, and did not remember them well. Mullins was amongst those helping to quell the uprising. He saw this little Indian boy, was afraid he would be killed, and decided to save his life, then he wanted to keep him and raise him. So he took him to San Antonio and later into Mexico rearing him among the white people, educating him in the public schools. Jack had been branded while he was a captive of the Wichitas, three blood red crosses on the forehead

above the eye. He liked to live among the white people. Didn't care to go back to his own, and especially not if he had to live their life. As a young man he came into the Kiowa-Comanche country to live. He worked for awhile for the Holmes Dairy, a small dairy west of the Post. This dairy made an object of selling its product to the families at Fort Sill. Jack did not try to become acquainted with the Indians in the country, nor to learn their history. He didn't care to find out who he was.

An old Indian trail led past the dairy. Many Indians traveled along this trail into the Wichitas. One morning while Jack was milking in the cow lot some Indian women were riding by. He glanced up at them, and one looking his way, saw him in the face. She seemed to recognize him immediately, and jumped down from her horse and came running into the cow lot, and threw her arms about Jack's neck. He pushed her back. She wasn't a very appealing sight. The Indians were having hard times at that time and didn't have much food. The woman insisted on embracing Jack and screaming and went on talking, making her signs, talking her language, unknown to Jack. He didn't want to talk to her. He tried to make her go away, and when she saw she couldn't make him understand, she climbed back on her horse and the Indians turned back to Fort Sill. She went to General McKenzie who took her to the Indian interpreter, D.A. McCloskey. McCloskey went with her to see Jack and succeeded in making him know that the woman was his Indian mother. The brand of the Wichitas helped to prove it, but even after it was definitely proven that the woman was his mother, Jack was not much excited about it. The Indian mother was overjoyed, but the son, while he always respected her, never loved her enough

to go back to his tribe or to the savage way of living. She had believed him dead all these years, but still never ceased her search for her son until it ended in the cow lot that morning. Jack secured a government position at a good salary. His work was among the Indians. He was always good to them and was a great help to them. He married an Indian girl, Chi u beah. Their son, Samuel Mullins, now lives in a neat little cottage, a new home, built on the Jack Mullins allotment. Samuel was reared in the Carothers Mission after his mother's death. Samuel's wife is a white girl, a school teacher in the public schools before her marriage to Samuel. I was well acquainted with Jack Mullins, and with the man who raised him, and with Jack's wife. Some time when I come into Lawton on Highway No. 29 I will stop and call on young Samuel Mullins and his wife. Maybe we will talk a little Comanche.

I am a busy farm woman, but I always find time to chat awhile with callers. Pioneers are always welcome at my home.

Of course, there has been a great change since the country opened up. When I see the great fine cars go by on the graded roads, I cannot help but recall the old stage coach days, the excitement in the post when the stage pulled in bringing mail, express and passengers, and the Prairie Schooner Days, when they came by the thousands across the plains, following the old trails to the Great West, and the days of the Opening of the Reservation, when they came in every sort of vehicle, strangers all, soon to become friends and neighbors. Some days I can recall these incidents better than at other times. I am a pioneer, and to the true pioneer, those early days were the real days.

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