

“From The President....”

“S̄m̄m̄ Oyeȳ T̄an̄ N̄an̄an̄m̄m̄n̄n̄”*Ronald Red Elk*

**COMANCHES RETURN TO TEXAS
AND COMANCHE PEAK**

by Deloris Karty

The Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee, consisting of 28 N̄m̄m̄ n̄n̄, traveled to Granbury, TX, to tour Comanche Peak, a 1200 foot high mesa, which was once a favorite camping site for the Comanche people, and is rich in Comanche and early settlers history. The site is located on property owned by Mr. Courts Cleveland.

Early recorded history reflects that the Comanches often camped in the area of Comanche Peak for extended periods of time, as water and grazing for horses was plentiful, as was wild game. When they were on the move, as on raids, they would often store provisions and supplies at the Peak. Comanche Peak had served as an observation post from which Comanches could see great distances in all directions and from which smoke signals were sent to alert other Bands of approaching travelers or danger.

The Comanche Language group traveled in caravan-style down Highway 281, toward Granbury. It was quite a site to see all of those “Comanche Tags” traveling together. Kind of like we were going on a raid into Texas. Aaaa!

Nearing Glen Rose, the group stopped off to enjoy a leisurely noon meal of Mexican food at Stephenville. The food was excellent and portions were very generous. The owner of the establishment came around to greet everyone and to make sure we were being served. Some of our ladies though he was just cute and pa?it̄ūtsi. He was well suited to move around the room and between the table, with no problem. (Rumor has it that a couple of the ladies went back on Sunday, on the pretense that they were going to church!)

Our contact person was Janet Salts Giver,

who lives in Fort Worth, but who is very familiar with the Granbury area. She was also instrumental in arranging a reception committee on the town square of Glen Rose, to welcome the Comanches to Texas, where Garrison Tahmahkera and his wife, of Dublin, TX, joined the group. Our folks from Santa Fe got lost and we kept looking for them to come to Glen Rose. However, they did catch up with us later.

Janet escorted the caravan of Comanche travelers to Camp Arrowhead, and introduced us to the camp manager and his wife (a displaced Okie), Mr. and Mrs. Stroud. Doris Stroud is an excellent cook and had a home cooked meal of stew and corn bread ready for us, after we got checked into our rooms. After eating, the group had a chance to unwind and to spend some time together. The children practiced on their songs, and the adults practiced on the Lords Prayer in Comanche. There was some dancing and hymn singing later, too.

The weather was not cooperating and threatened to rain at any time. It was overcast and cold. After a hearty breakfast, the group took to the road again, with our gracious hostess, Janet, in the lead. We toured an old Mill, saw a haunted house, and of course, took pictures, went by George Creek, and Barnard Trading Post area. Our next stop was the Dinosaur Park and Museum, and Jones Ranch, and we spent a short time on the Paluxy River to see actual dinosaur tracks in the rock slabs. We visited an actual on-going dinosaur dig in progress. The group was shown actual dinosaur bones in the process of being excavated. Comanches knew of the existence of dinosaur bones and had used them for medicinal purposes. Several of our group requested and obtained a few pieces of actual dinosaur bones.

A reception was held at the Glen Rose Library and a “light” lunch was served. The group then presented a short program in tribal costume, to demonstrate the Comanche language. Geneva Navarro and her granddaughter, Autumn, performed the Lords Prayer in sign language, while members of the group sang the words in Comanche. It was very effective. President Ron Red Elk then presented to our hostess, a letter of

support to save Comanche Peak and a Certificate of Appreciation from our organization. The children sang several songs in Comanche and used their hands to reflect actions. All of the ladies and children then danced the Honor Dance together, to the accompaniment of drumming and singing by Carney Saupitty Sr. and June Sovo. Carney then played several tunes on his flute. Our hostess and the invited guests expressed their appreciation for the presentation. Our group was joined by Linda Pelon (Dallas), of the Texas Historical Society, for the tour and the evening meal at Camp Arrowhead. She is considered an authority on Comanche history in Texas.

Finally, we were off to Comanche Peak and were looking forward to spending some time there. As we traveled along, the clouds were beginning to get dark and drizzly, but we hurried on. The mountain road was of loose, sandy soil and not well traveled. We drove slowly and carefully up and around the side of the mountain and finally, we were on the top. As we made certain that all vehicles were together, we began moving slowly along in a southwesterly direction, and could then see a huge fire burning, in anticipation of our arrival. The top of the Peak was covered with short prairie grass, cedar trees, cactus and a lot of cow chips and rocks! After parking and beginning our walk toward the fire, we found it hard to walk without stepping on rocks and cow chips, which were everywhere.

Almost as soon as we gathered near the fire, it began to rain hard. Mr. Cleveland welcomed us but said we would have to get off the Peak right away. There was a danger of a lightning strike and he did not want anyone to get hurt. A hurried smoking ceremony was carried out by June, who prayed in the Comanche language. Even as he was praying, the rain was putting out the fire! Very disappointing, but our time on Comanche Peak was about 15 minutes. Rain continued for the remainder of the day.

The group traveled back to Camp Arrowhead for an evening meal of brisket and home made rolls! And an excellent dessert. Janet Salts Giver spoke about the area's historical sights and of the efforts being made to preserve them. A presentation was made about the Lyman Wagon Train Battle site, with copies of a map to reflect the positions of the Comanches and their opponents. This presentation was very interesting and informative. Janet also brought a huge container of historical books, some which contained rare photographs. These were eagerly

reviewed by the group. Janet's son presented each one a copy of his painting of an Angel, which he autographed.

Our group had planned to give another costumed program in the evening and sing some more, and maybe even engage in a little hand game fun, but the rain had dampened things and some of the expected guests did not arrive. The evening was spent visiting and looking at the books. A couple of our travelers decided to return to Oklahoma that evening. We know one of our vans went looking for a pow-wow in Fort Worth, but couldn't find one.

The Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation group has been invited to return for another trip in the future to re-visit Comanche Peak and other historical sites. There are many other locations where the earlier Comanches camped for extended periods of time and where there is a lot of history to discover. This short trip only entices us to want to explore more areas in Texas, which will be considered for the future.

Comanches traveling to Granbury and Glen Rose TX were: Gloria and Vernon Cable (Cache), Verna Ann Cable and Nikki (Lawton), June Sovo (Apache), Billie and Kenneth Kreger and Penny (Cache), Tony Cable (Cache), Marie Parton (Apache), Ron and Francis Red Elk (Anadarko), Ray Niedo (Cache), Tom Cushman (Tuttle), Desirè, Chantel, Esa and Rosalie Attocknie (Apache), Geneva Navarro and granddaughter Autumn (Santa Fe NM), Edith Gordon (Indiahoma), Carney Saupitty Sr. and Carney Saupitty Jr. (Apache), Kenneth Goodin (Lawton), Lucille McClung (Cache), and Sarabeth, Alyssa, Amber and Deloris Karty (Anadarko).

We are so proud of our Comanche Cultural group for their efforts in representing the Comanche people in such a dignified and organized manner.

STATUS OF M-A PROJECT

by Barbara Goodin

The Lannan Master-Apprentice Team Project is in Year Two, and we have certainly learned a lot since we began Year One. Hopefully, it will strengthen our project and we will see the desired results.

Year One was a learning experience for everyone involved, the Language Committee and the seven teams participating. We recognized our shortcomings and strengthened the project for Year Two.

Of the first seven teams that began the project, two of those teams applied for, and were

successful, in being chosen for Year Two. One of the main obstacles we faced in Year One was the required 20 hours per week. None of the seven teams were able to complete the full 400 hours over the 20 week period.

For Year Two we were able to drop the requirement to 10 hours per week, over a 40 week period., and that has helped the teams tremendously. To date two teams have completed their 400 hours, and another team is nearing completion. Sadly, one team had to drop out due to a conflict in work schedules (one worked days, the other worked nights), but we were able to re-team that Master with another individual who attended the training sessions, and so we continue with seven teams.

The Evaluation Team, comprised of two speakers, two semi-speakers, myself as project coordinator and the president as ex-officio, have worked continuously to make the evaluation process a better tool in which we can fully recognize the level of learning for each team. After each evaluation, each Master-Apprentice team is counseled by the co-ordinator for any recommendations/comments by the evaluation team. To date the results have been positive.

Year Two of this Three Year project will end near or before August 1st. After a break, applications for masters and apprentices will again be taken and arrangements for Year Three training will be finalized.

The task of reviving our language is tremendous. Seven apprentices each project year may not seem like a lot, but those seven individuals touch the lives of many others around them — family, friends, neighbors. And so the cycle continues.

COMANCHES TO TRAIN OTHERS

Members of the Comanche Language Committee's Master-Apprentice Team Project have been asked to help train the Eastern Shawnee tribe for their language immersion program. Dr. Leanne Hinton, University of California at Berkeley, will act as coordinator for the training session. A tentative date has been set for the end of May.

NOBLE JR. HIGH STUDENTS VISIT

Students from the gifted and talented program from Noble Jr. High School visited the Lawton area on Thursday, April 15th. Mr. Hal Cleary coordinated the day with Barbara and Kenneth Goodin, who had previously hosted another group of his students. When the

Comanche Language Committee heard of their visit, they offered to serve a traditional lunch to the group, which included six students and four advisors.

After a visit to the Fort Sill Museum and the Museum of the Great Plain in Lawton, the group was treated to a meal of Indian tacos in the old trading post located inside the fort at the Lawton Museum. Members volunteering their time and efforts were Billie Kreger (fry bread maker deluxe!), Deloris Karty, Verna Ann Cable, Esa Attocknie, Gloria and Vernon Cable, Rosalie Attocknie, Jo Vickers and Barbara and Kenneth Goodin. None of the visitors had eaten Indian tacos before, but the ladies gently guided everyone in the proper layering procedure! The group was joined by the director and assistant director of the Museum in the trading post surrounded by furs, pelts, beads and other trade goods. The visitors were fascinated to hear the Comanche language spoken and seemed reluctant to leave when that part of the tour concluded.

Although the good ol' Oklahoma wind was at its best that day, the group next visited the Chief's Knoll at Fort Sill Cemetery, the Otipoby Comanche Cemetery and the Apache Cemetery to make "headstone rubbings." On the way to the Tribal Headquarters, a stop was made along the road to point out Medicine Bluffs, of which pictures were taken.

At the Tribal Headquarters the group was taken to the new conference room where the speech of Comanche Chief Ten Bears is etched on a huge buffalo hide. Old pictures line the walls and tell the story of early Comanche life. Nita Pahdapyony-Mithlo, tribal administrator, welcomed the group and answered their questions.

After a couple of enjoyable Comanche stories, the group departed for their ride home, and hopefully, good remembrances of the Comanche people they met and the beautiful language they heard while in the presence of our speakers.

NAIWA MEETING AT FORT COBB

The Oklahoma Chapter of the North American Indian Women's Association held a local monthly meeting in Fort Cobb on April 17th, to plan for the National Conference in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Those in attendance included Julia Mahseet, Angie Wells, Dorothy Snake, Joyce Hinse, Shirley French, Mary Frances and Deloris Karty, together with Alyssa and Amber.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the ladies asked Alyssa and Amber to sing some Comanche songs. The girls sang songs they learned from the

Comanche language and Cultural Preservation program. The ladies were very complimentary of the language preservation program and that children are being included on a level where they can learn and understand the Comanche language.

RICHARD CODOPONY JR. HONORED

Richard Codopony Jr. (Apache) was recently honored by the United Nations for his work in preserving the Comanche language. He was presented a framed certificate written in the Comanche language (of which he translated and wrote out himself!) It was the Fifth Celebration of the United Nations, honoring those who work to preserve their languages. Richard served as an apprentice for Carney Saupitty Sr., Comanche Master, who also attended the celebration, in addition to Richard's wife Anita and two children, Ron Red Elk, president, and Carney Saupitty Jr. It was held in Tulsa on Saturday, February 27th.

Richard serves as the "Word Speller" for the Language Committee's work in developing our own Comanche Dictionary, put together by Comanche people.

We are all very proud of Richard for receiving this prestigious award. Tsaatʉ ʉnʉ tʉrʉ ai?etʉ!