
NUMU TEKWAPUHA NOMNEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

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“Letter From The President”

Back in August, when I accepted the responsibility of becoming the President of the C.L.C.P.C., I posed these questions for the members of our organization to give some thought to and to respond at a later date.

Should the Comanche language continue?

If yes, then why?

If no, then why not?

Our goal for the past 10 years has been to have every Comanche speaking Comanche.

Is this goal realistic?

If you think it is a realistic goal, then how do we accomplish it?

If you think it isn't a realistic goal, then what should we do?

If we are going to continue to function as a successful advocate for our language, then those questions need to be addressed and a careful evaluation of our past activities needs to take place. What changes can we make?

This past monthly meeting in November, we had a lengthy discussion on these issues. The results were we formed two committees:

1. To develop a language workshop.
2. To make a presentation to the CBC.

Now my question to committee members, and for that matter to all Comanches, is this: How many fluent speakers are we going to

produce and what is the time line for that production?

Do we have the time?

If you can not speak Comanche, then learn to read Comanche.

Usu tanu tsaa Waahimarui.

Ronald Red Elk

COMANCHE SOUNDS WORKSHOPS

The first series in our Comanche sounds workshops have been completed in the following communities: Anadarko, Walters, Little Washita Indian Church near Fletcher, Cache, Indiahoma, Lawton area, Comanche Complex area and the Dallas Intertribal Center.

After January 1st, 2004, more workshops will be held in area communities. To date those scheduled are:

ANADARKO – Monday, January 5th, 6:30 p.m., Anadarko High School.

LITTLE WASHITA – Wednesday, January 7th, 7:00 p.m., Little Washita Indian Church northeast of Fletcher.

WALTERS – Thursday, January 8th, 6:30 p.m., Comanche Community Center.

CACHE – pending

INDIAHOMA – pending

LAWTON – pending

COMANCHE COMPLEX – pending

For more information, and to see when other communities are scheduling their

sessions, check out “Coming Events” on our web site (see address at top of newsletter.)

!! REMINDER !!

The monthly business meeting of the Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee are held the first Tuesday of the month in the small conference room at the Comanche Nation Complex.

We invite you to come and be a part of the decisions that are made in language preservation. Be a part of the groundwork that is being laid for future generations. Be a part of our beautiful Comanche language.

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Because of rising printing costs, we may be forced to publish our Comanche Language Newsletter quarterly. We will make that determination in the near future. We want to provide the newsletter without cost to anyone who wants to receive it, and publishing every three months instead of every other month, will help us to do that.

We send as many newsletters as possible by e-mail, but problems develop when people change their internet service and don't inform us of their new e-mail address. Each time we send out notices that a new issue of the Language Newsletter is on the internet to be viewed, we received several back as not being a valid address any longer.

We also have a new 911 Emergency System in place in Comanche County that has changed all rural addresses. In the last issue I asked that those persons receiving the newsletters that have a new address please notify us. I received TWO address changes! I personally called several people to get their new address, but time doesn't permit me to call everyone. So when the post office will no longer deliver mail to that old address, we will no longer be able to send your newsletter to you. So please send us those new addresses. If you have a red check mark beside your mailing label on this issue,

we need a new address for you. Please take the time to provide that for us.

We will continue to put out stacks of newsletters in prominent places where Comanche people can pick them up – such as the Elderly Center, Housing Authority, Comanche Complex, Education Center and the Comanche Nation College.

We hope you continue to enjoy the news and stories we publish, plus the updates on language preservation.

COMANCHE CINDERELLA STORY

an original story

by Juanita Pahdopony-Mithlo

My Comanche woman's leggings/boots pre-date World War II. They have special significance to me for the following reasons: I wore them when I was selected Comanche Homecoming Princess in 1965 in Walters, Oklahoma. It was a time when it was a grandmother's responsibility to “dress” a Comanche princess and certainly she had “full say” about everything that was worn.

I had not been dancing that long. When my family received the news that I was selected, we panicked; however, my grandmother, Ida Tomah Tahmahkera, came to get me and we drove to many places to gather my regalia. She was known for her beadwork and feather work but there was simply not time to bead an entire outfit for me on such short notice. She promised to eventually exchange out my beadwork on whatever we purchased.

We hit the pawnshops! We went to “Tingley's” in Anadarko, Fort Cobb, and all over a seven county area of Comanche country looking for a Comanche buckskin dress, buckskin leggings, beadwork, etc. We saw lots of beadwork and buckskin dresses but they weren't always appropriate for a Comanche and represented other tribal regalia.

It seemed like we had spent days of traveling when we sat quietly on her screened-in porch in the country outside

Walters. She was frustrated and tired, and I was, too. We had gathered all of my regalia with the exception of my buckskin leggings.

She spoke to me in a rough tone, telling me that my feet were so “narrow” and long that we might have to “take a tire and make shoes for you.” I knew that she was frustrated and that she wanted me to cry, but instead I sat stone-faced and quiet. Finally, she asked me, “Do you mind wearing old shoes?” “No.” My heart raced. I began a prayer in my head that whatever plan she had would work for both of us.

She looked at my feet. She got up from the wooden horse bed that we were sitting on, mumbled to herself, and said, “Hmmm...they might be in the bedroom closet...” She was gone for what seemed like an eternity. When she returned, she said softly, “Are you sure you don’t mind wearing these old shoes?” “No,” I reassured her. I thought in my head that “old” meant rich with culture and certainly richer than any new shoes. She said, “These belonged to my mother.” She lovingly unrolled them. “They just might fit you,” she said in a hopeful tone. I held my breath. I didn’t want her to be disappointed if they didn’t fit, but most of all, I didn’t want her to be disappointed in me.

I prayed in my head the entire time that she unrolled them, opened the top, and began to put them on my outstretched foot and leg. They were rich, deep yellow pigment with very soft buckskin, with stiff, hand-rolled fringes; the edges had fine delicate Comanche rows of beadwork design. They had a buckskin, leathery smell. They fit! As they were slipped on my foot, my foot molded into the worn places at the ball of the foot. The thin, long leggings easily followed the contours of my foot and leg. They were made for me and we both knew it! I exhaled.

Later, we sat admiring the craftsmanship of the boots. It occurred to me that there was a thin, delicate row of intricate beadwork design that edged the top of the leggings that would not be visible beneath a

buckskin dress. I’ll never forget the stern look etched on my grandmother’s face at my question. She said in a firm manner, “No one is to see this except you – this is for your eyes only!”

Years later, the retelling of this story still brings tears to my eyes. I miss my grandmother and her strength and all of her Comanche qualities. I hope that someday I can represent the same qualities for my granddaughter.

MORE COMANCHE STORIES

**We bring you more Comanche stories from The Comanche and His Literature, a 1941 Thesis by Herwana Becker Barnard. Used with the permission of the late Glen Becker.*

THE LOST KIOWA GIRL

**told by Mow-wat
interpreted by Rachel Mow-wat
(June 1940)**

Long ago, a Kiowa Tribe was camping at the foot of a mountain, when without warning, their enemy, the Osage, appeared. The Kiowa men and women leaped to their horses and scattered in all directions. In the excitement one girl of about twelve years was left behind, with no means of escape. The Osage Chief, who was the leader of the war party, snatched her up on his horse while other members plundered the camp, taking all they could find of value.

Having captured the little girl, the chief took her to his camp. To keep her from escaping at night, he arranged her bed in the center of the teepee with those of the guards all around. For further assurance that she would not escape, he slashed the soles of her feet. Every day the tribe moved to a new camp, and as time went on they again neared the land of her people. Thought of home made her long for her father, mother and brother.

In the meantime, the Kiowa tribe became concerned about the girl as soon as they noticed her absence in the re-

assembling of the members. Her brother, deeply moved by her loss, announced a reward to the one who should be instrumental in finding her.

“Whoever finds her and brings her back safely may marry her,” he said. The girl was a beautiful, good-natured girl and all the tribe loved her. Many brave warriors searched for her, but none was successful.

Back in the Osage camp the girl was learning the ways of her captors. With no opportunity for escape she stayed for many moons. One Osage woman in the group, whose duty it was to care for the girl, became very fond of her. Her ability to bear sorrow, suffering, and loneliness; her gentle nature; her beauty; and her patience called forth the woman’s admiration and pity. Confidentially, once, she told the girl of a safe hiding place if it should ever be her fortune to effect an escape.

“And here are some moccasins that I made myself,” she added. “Keep them where no one will see them, and when you are read to go, use them, for your feet are still sore.”

A dance one night, during a special celebration when all the members of the tribe, in their eagerness to participate, forgot about the girl captive, afforded the long-awaited opportunity to flee.

She got her moccasins, found her way through the trees to the bank of the creek, and started down the stream in the direction that the dance was being held in order to lead her pursuers off the track. Because a big rain had fallen the previous night, the stream was swollen, and logs, timber, and trash were floating with the current. She made her way to a log that was caught in a snag, crossed the stream and started in the opposite direction, upstream.

Traveling all night, she became very hungry and tired, but at dawn she saw a deer that had been killed. A coyote was eating at the flesh. After scaring the coyote away, she was able to secure some food for herself. She later found a spot shaded by thick bushes where she hid all day. Lying down,

she rested her sore feet. During the day when she might be discovered, she lay very still and waited. Thus she lived in fear and pain and weariness from day to day, traveling at night and resting in the daytime.

Within a few days, when she thought she was nearing her own country in the hills, her sore feet became infected. Tired and sick, she fell asleep and dreamed that she heard a kind voice telling her that her people were near. She dreamed that she wasn’t sick or tired. Upon waking, she saw a male buffalo at her feet.

He must have spoken to her in her sleep, for now, again, he said, “It isn’t far, my child.”

“Can you help me?” she asked. “I am tired, thirsty, hungry and sick.”

The buffalo walked around her four times, breathed on her, and licked her swollen feet. Remarkably, soon she found herself completely refreshed and well. This gave her strength to travel again. On and on she went.

She climbed to the very top of a high hill, and there searched the countryside in all directions for camps. She saw two men and three horses. “They must be hunters,” she thought, “for they have a pack horse with them.” The men waved at her, and she waved back, motioning them toward her, fearful yet hopeful that they were of a friendly tribe.

When the men reached her, strong warriors though they were, they cried at the sight of the poor girl’s condition. They fed her and wrapped her sore feet.

“And now I want to find my own people, the Kiowas,” she said.

“~~Numunuu~~,” the leader said. “We love your people. We shall bring you safely to them.”

Then she told them her long story.

They fastened her on their packhorse and began traveling slowly. It was dark when they reached the first Kiowa camp. It was a pleasant surprise to all when they found her parents there. The girl’s long, hard journey was ended, and she was happy to be back

with her many friends and her beloved family, all of whom were ready to care for her.

THE MOUNTAIN GHOST

**by Rachel Mow-wat
(July 1940)**

A girl who was both beautiful and kind was promised in marriage to the oldest of four brothers. The Medicine Man, who had been interested in her for many years, became jealous and angry.

“If you marry this boy, I’m warning you, he will not live long.” He told the girl.

Thinking that the Medicine Man surely could not be serious, she said lightly, “Well, he has three brothers.”

The Medicine Man, with his power, wished a curse upon the bridegroom. The couple lived happily for a few days. Early one morning, however, the girl found the husband gone. Where his body had lain were only his bones. She suspected the Medicine Man and blamed him for this terrible misfortune.

Later the girl married the second brother secretly, but the Medicine Man discovered the truth in a clever manner. As official camp caller he would yell, “Come to my camp. Smoke. Tell stories. Come to my camp.” If the suspected bridegroom did not appear, he would know that the marriage had occurred. Then in the ceremonial circle the irate man “made medicine” that the new bridegroom should not live long.

Soon worms came to the body of the second husband, eating his flesh and leaving nothing but the bones for his wife to view the next morning.

The third brother suffered the same end.

The fourth one, very troubled in spirit, didn’t know what to do. He knew that young men often went to the mountaintop for help, or information or power. He needed all three. That evening he climbed to the top of a nearby mountain. On the way he met a coyote.

“Could you help me?” his troubled spirit asked. He received no answer and traveled on, downhearted. He then met an owl.

“Owl,” he said, “you are wise. Tell me what to do.” Again he received no answer, and he journeyed on to the top of the mountain. There he remained all night.

The Mountain Ghost appeared before him in a vision as he slept. He spoke with a voice of wisdom.

“Go back tomorrow without fear. Provide yourself with a large buffalo hide to sleep on. Then when the Medicine Man calls, go and join the circle and watch him as they go through the rituals. When they smoke, take his cigarette butt, draw a circle in the sand and rub the butt there. When the ceremony is over, go to your buffalo hide and sleep on it peacefully, knowing that the worms will not come to you. The Medicine Man will die instead.”

He did as he was directed and found that the Mountain Ghost had spoken truthfully. The worms came to the Medicine Man that night. Only his bones were found the next morning.

The couple lived happily for a many, many years.

A CHRISTMAS STORY

**by Barbara Goodin
written December 4, 2000**

What wonderful memories Christmas brings to mind. Growing up in the country between Cyril and Cement (Caddo County), our Christmas centered around my grandparent’s home. It was a huge, two-story home built in the 1930s. It had a wonderful brick fireplace that took center stage at Christmas time as all we youngsters sat around watching the fire dance along the wood logs as they burned.

My grandparents raised four children and had sixteen grandchildren, so I had no shortage of siblings and cousins during the holidays.

My grandpa (Frank Bosin) was Kiowa, born just before 1900. Grandma (Ada Tivis

Bosin) was Comanche, born just after 1900. Each spoke their native language fluently. They both saw many changes in their lifetimes. Grandpa grew up when riding horse back was the primary means of transportation. In her later year, Grandma flew on a jet to California.

Their early lives were very simple, but after reaching school age they were each sent to St. Patrick's Mission school in Anadarko. There they were taught about Christianity and learned about the meaning of Christmas.

My grandfather was an extraordinary man. He instilled in each of us the true meaning of Christmas.

Just before Christmas we would go to the creek to choose just the right cedar tree to cut. If it touched the eight foot ceiling in their house, that was even better! It was decorated to perfection (nothing store-bought that I can remember except colorful glass balls and icicles — we grandkids didn't think it was complete until as many icicles as possible was thrown on!). Brightly wrapped packages mysteriously appeared from under beds, out of closets and down from the attic!

Grandma had a habit of wrapping gifts and not putting a name on them thinking she would remember who should get that particular shape package with that particular wrapping paper. She hoped that would discourage "snooping," and most of the time it did. But just as often, she forgot who was supposed to get which package, and we had many good laughs as we unwrapped presents later.

On Christmas Eve we all gathered at their house with great anticipation. Each year Grandpa told us the story of Jesus and why we celebrated Christmas Day. It was the grandkid's job to then sing Christmas songs — as many as we could think of. Afterwards we opened presents (exchanging those that were supposed to go to someone else!), munched on delicious snacks and finally made our way back to our respective homes for the night.

The next morning we hurriedly ate breakfast so we could go back to my grandparent's home, which was filled with the wonderful aroma of a fresh cedar tree and Christmas dinner! Nothing store-bought on the table then either, everything was homemade from scratch. A day of visiting and playing with cousins, and having snowball fights if the weather cooperated. But mostly a day of being part of a wonderful, loving family, and a dream that life would always be that uncomplicated.



“Jingle Bells”

by Velma Akoneto

Waahima, waahima, Na okitu nanu.
Taa narumi?a pahipuka tu na okitu nanu.
(sing several times)



“Joy To The World”

by Deacon Topetchy

Tsaa nusukaa, Taa narumi tsa kima.
Oyetu tanu ura urarui. Tamu u kamakuna,
U pihiku habitu. Nanusuwuka?itu,
Nanusuwuka?itu,Nanusuwuka?iku
u tai kamukatu.



“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

by Harry Wauhdooh

Oyetạka kima, Tsaaṭa tsa tai wəhpiṭa?i

U nipana?ai taṇa ṣaṃa oyetạ.

Kimatsi u puni, God, ta tua tsa piṭa?i.

Chorus:

U wakatuka kima, U wakatuka kima,

U wakatuka kimatsi tai makwitso?aiṭa.



“Silent Night”

by Harry Wauhdooh

Tsaa ta tukani, Puha tukani.

Tatsinupi muyaṇakẉ.

Tenaṇa u wakatu kima.

Taa naṛami?a naṇsutaiḳa.

God ta tua tsa piṭa?i. God ta tua tsa piṭa?i.



TSAA NUUSUKAṬ WAA HIMAṚ !!
(Merry Christmas)

CHRISTMAS IDEAS

Wondering what to get for that hard-to-buy-for-person that has everything? We have the answer!

A limited number of white polo shirts will be available in selected sizes just in time for Christmas giving. They have the Comanche language logo on the left front chest and “Ṇaṃa Tekwap̣” on the left sleeve. At this time we have medium, large, XL and 2XL sizes. And if you order soon, your gift will arrive in plenty of time for Christmas. Cost is \$20 + 4 s&h.

We also have a good stock of our solid red and royal blue tee-shirts on hand. See our “Products For Sale” for a complete list of prices.

PRODUCTS FOR SALE

New Comanche Dictionary.

Compiled entirely by Comanche people, this dictionary contains over 6,000 Comanche words with Comanche to English and English to Comanche sections. \$34 includes s&h.

Comanche Lessons, set #1. A set of four Comanche Lessons, complete with a word list for each lesson. Specify audio cassette or CD when ordering. If we don't receive your preference, we will automatically send an audio cassette. \$25 includes s&h.

Picture Dictionary. A primer for learning the language explains the Comanche alphabet and the sound of each letter. \$10 includes s&h.

Comanche Song Book. Collection of 116 songs written in Comanche with an English translation for each song. \$10 plus \$3 s&h.

Comanche Flash Cards, set #1. A set of 48 cards showing a picture and the spelling of simple Comanche words. \$5 includes s&h.

Comanche Flash Cards, set #2. A complete new set of 48 different cards. \$5 includes s&h.

Comanche Flash Cards, set #3. Now available! \$5 includes s&h.

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 plus \$3.50 s&h; Adult sizes small through XL \$12 plus \$3.50 s&h; Adult sizes 2X and 3X \$15 plus \$3.50 s&h. Specify color and size when ordering.

Authentic Handmade Comanche Dolls. Beautiful 20" soft bodied dolls, dressed in traditional clothing. Both girl and boy dolls available. \$40 each plus \$3.50 s&h. (Special Orders Only, 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 \$3.50 s&h.

Ball Caps. Three styles: Men's royal blue with red bill; Men's turquoise with southwest design on bill; and Lady's solid royal blue, all with Language Logo on front. \$10 plus \$3.50 s&h.

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

Note: If you are ordering multiple items, please e-mail us a list of items you will be ordering so we can give you a better price on shipping and handling. Our e-mail address is:

clepc@comanchelanguage.org.

**Please include your e-mail address when ordering in case we need to contact you.*