
NUMU TEKWAPUHA NOMENEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee
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Editor: Barbara Goodin

“Letter From The President”

I want to encourage everyone to take advantage of any of the language classes in the local communities now. We can all take part and learn.

Billie Kreger

COMMUNITY CLASSES CONTINUE THROUGHOUT COMANCHE COUNTRY

Community classes to teach the Sounds of the Comanche vowels have just been completed in **Walters**. A total of 16 students of all ages attended the month long course. All community classes will be facilitated by Billie Kreger, and in Walters she was assisted by Bud Yackeschi, speaker, and Doris Parli, student advocate from the “Learning To Speak Comanche” project.

Visitor’s from the news media attended the third class, with Scott Raines from the Lawton Constitution and Paul Harris from New York, who is the U.S. Correspondent for the British newspaper The Observer. Jolene Schonchin, editor of the Comanche Nations Newspaper, also visited and took several photos that she shared with the other reporters.

We begin community classes in **Apache** on April 7th at 6:30 p.m. at the new Comanche Nation Day Care Center at 403 East Evans. Ms. Kreger will be assisted by Rosalie Attocknie, speaker, and Carolyn Codopony, student advocate.

Lawton will be the site of the classes to be held on Tuesdays in May, with

Rita Coosewoon, speaker, and Sunny Tiger, student advocate, assisting Ms. Kreger.

In June the community classes will be offered at the Comanche Outreach office in **Norman**. Betty Pete will serve as speaker and Mia Monenerkit and George Tahdooahnippah will be the students advocates, along with Ms. Kreger.

July will see the classes held at the Cahoma Building for the **Cache & Indianhoma** communities. Shadrack Large will be the student advocate and Edith Kassanavoid Gordon will serve as the speaker consultant.

Tentative plans at this time are to have a **Comanche Language Fair** during the month of **August**, with date and time to be announced. We will invite the students from all the community classes to attend for a fun day of games, prizes and language learning. Watch the July issue of the Comanche Language Newsletter for the date, place and more details.

For further information e-mail clcpc@comanchelanguage.org or call 492-5126.

COMANCHE DICTIONARY REVISION

Work on revising our Comanche Dictionary is progressing well under the very capable hands of Dr. Daniel Gelo from the University of Texas at San Antonio. He is helping us with the two and three letter nuances that make a Comanche word complete, plus offering

his expertise on other areas of our Dictionary.

We are excited, and will keep you informed of the progress.

INDIAN TRAIL TREES

In August of 2008, the CLCPC hosted a group from The Mountain Stewards Organization out of Georgia. They are on a quest to document and photograph as many Indian Trail Trees as they can find. When they were here, there were some 1600 trees on their list. Currently they have nearly 2100 trees documented, and it keeps growing. You can go to their web site (www.mountainstewards.org) and learn more about their organization. They send out an online newsletter quarterly, and you can request to be added by going to the above web site.

At first the trees they were finding were simply bent over to point in a direction that would tell later travelers where to go for water, food, crossings, etc. Now they are finding trees that have had limbs grafted, and in some cases "faces" grafted onto trees. Their latest newsletter shows the face of a bear on a tree.

Apparently last year's ice storms have revealed even more Indian Trail Trees, with the ravaging of forests revealing additional trail trees, some broken by the ice. The newsletter shows one area with broken trees laying on the ground.

The web site itself shows the trails that the trees have revealed, which is very interesting.

They also have a "store" where you can buy all occasion cards with exquisite photographs. Some of the proceeds go to the project, and the cards are absolutely beautiful! I have some and they are appropriate for any occasion.

I recently received a press release in regards to an upcoming project:

"The Mountain Stewards of Jasper, GA and its partners, received an award of \$40,000 from the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians (EBCI) to begin locating old Indian Trails on the Cherokee Reservation and the Great Smokey Mountains National Park. According to Don Wells, President of the Mountain Stewards, the Stewards will locate and document the Cherokee trail system that has existed from 1540 to modern times. The result will be an innovative historical resource that will increase knowledge of Native American history and culture.

"The Cherokee school system and youth will receive many benefits from this project. They will learn much about their history, culture, and ecosystem from this work. Also, we will train students to use GPS technology to help validate the trails' locations," said Wells.

Using cutting-edge technology, the Indian Trails Mapping Project will combine ancient survey maps and oral histories with current surveys and modern maps. Work is currently underway extracting data from the Lt. Williams 1839 Army Map that covers Cherokee and Clay Counties, NC, and Fannin and Union Counties in GA. Previously, the Mountain Stewards have used this technology to extract Indian Trail data from old survey maps in GA, AL and SC. The computer-based technology for extracting Indian trails data from old 1600-1700 survey maps was developed by Dr. Mickey Nardo of the Mountain Stewards.

The Stewards have partnered with WildSouth, Inc. of Asheville, NC, and Moulton, AL, and the Southeastern Anthropological Institute (SAI) in Muscle Shoals, AL. Together these organizations will collect cultural and

historical data of Native American tribes in the Southeastern United States. The first project in this massive undertaking is the trail mapping in the ECBI reservation in Cherokee, NC.

The partnership of WildSouth, Mountain Stewards and SAI is also cooperating with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to locate trails that go from the Cherokee Reservation into the park property located adjacent to the ECBI reservation. Work on the project is expected to begin in April 2009.

The Mountain Stewards is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization located in Jasper, GA. The Stewards build and maintain public hiking trails throughout North Georgia.”

How very interesting that the Eastern Cherokee have allocated funds to help with this project that is so significant to their tribal history.

If you want to learn more about this fascinating project, go to the web site and read more about it. They are always looking for more researchers to help look for these very important trees.

CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL

In my research to learn more about my ancestors, I run across many interesting items. Most recent was a correspondence with Barbara Landis, who has spent a great deal of time and effort making the Carlisle Indian School (aka Carlisle Institute) records available online.

Ms. Landis sent the following site: <http://www.epix.net/~landis/Comanche.html> to help me find my great grandfather, who attended Carlisle. She even provided information for me to order his complete folder. What a gold mine!

In searching the web site, I found a list of 58 Comanche students who attended Carlisle between 1879-1918:

AHBTAY / Blanch
AHTOOWOOSARAHKE / Cecil
ALBERD / Pankin
ATTAVICH / Vera
BERNELL BERNEL
BONES / Frances
CHADUQUE / Irvine
CHARKE / Peter
CHARKO / Hattie
CHAWIFS / CHAWIP
HOWARD / HOWARD WHITEWOLF
CONEWOOP / Gilbert
CONOVER / ALENA YETSA TISSATE
CONOVER / ANDREW JACKSON
CONOVER / Eleane
CONOVER / J.
COX / Nellie
ESAPOYHET
EYAWAT / William
HANNENO
KOMAH / Amos
KOMAH / Moses
 aka George ESADOOAH
KOMAH / Ray
KOMAH / Walter
KOSNAH / Walter A
LE BARRE / John
LE BARRE / Lewis
MADDOX / Harriet
MARTIN / Henry
MICHECOBA / Ethel
MONO[A]HSY / Neal (Neil)
NORTON / TAHQUECHIESAPORENE
PAHROWDEUP / Johnson [MOETAH]
PANKIN
PARKER / Esther (Ester)
PARKER / Gabe
PARKER / Harold
PARKER / Juanadu [Wanada]
PARKER / Laura NEEDLE
PARROKA / Percy
PEAWO / Nora
PEAWO / Wilbur A.
PERDESOPY (PERDOSOPHY) Emily
POCO / Marcus

POHXICUT (POHOXICUT) / Preston
PUEBLO / Frank
ROSS / CHEOPIE
TAAWAYITE / Henry PRATT
TAH-DOOH-NIT-PAH / Michael
TAHKAPUER / Eugene
TIVIS / William M.
TOPETCHY / Hattie
WELLA / Mattie Rosy
WELLS / Alfred
WELLS / Katie WATSEKARDY
WELLS / Otto
WHITE WOLF
WOOTHAHEWAITTY / Owen
(*all spelling from the web site)

The following individuals are listed as having photographs available of them:

Ai-sia-tim-me, John
Chadoque, Irvine
Comanches, Pawnees, Nez Percés
Cheyenne, and Arapahoes arrived at Carlisle, Oct. 22, 1883
Esapoyhet, Eustace
Eyawat, William
Parker, Esther
Parker, Juanada (Guanada)
Parker, Quanah
Principal Chief of Comanches
Pohoxicut, Preston
Tivis, William
Wells, Otto
White Horse
Wild Horse and Interpreter
White Wolf
COOS BAY
Wasson, Daisy
Wasson, George

Ordering information is available on the web site.

In looking over the site, I found a photograph of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Indian children taken in front of a huge, stately looking building. As I looked at the faces, I could not help but feel a sadness. This is what the United States government did to our

beautiful ancestors. Ms. Landis makes a statement that says:

“It is our purpose to respectfully honor those students and their descendants who lived the experiment, to celebrate with those who prospered from it, and to grieve with those whose lives were diminished by it.”

Thank you, Ms. Landis, for those heartfelt words.

In other parts of the web site I found an actual slide show of photographs, which brought mixed emotions. The photos in tribal regalia were exquisite, the photos in “civilized” clothes left me wondering what those young minds were thinking at that time. There was a photo of a “Guard House” and I wondered what infraction a young Indian would have to commit to be delegated to the Guard House?

Further in the photo section is a list of Comanches, but no photo. They were: Pankin, Alberd, Chawip and Peter Charko.

Under the National Archives pictures of Native Americans Indians in the U.S. I found:

#73, a photo of Shoshoni at Fort Washakie WY;
#86 photo taken near Fort Sill OK;
#106, Lookingglass, a Nez Percé Chief;
#108, Asa Havi (Bird Chief) Milky Way, Comanche; and
#116, Quanah Parker.

There is a list by Indian Nations of those who were taken to Carlisle, and it totals 10,605 in number. There are 58 Comanche, 65 Kiowa and 269 Apache listed.

Visit www.carlisleindianschool.org to learn more, and e-mail blandis@epix.net to be added to a weekly transcription of the Indian Helper newsletter.

Again, thank you (Ura) to Barbara Landis.

THROUGH NATIVE EYES

A fellow tribal member sent this from the March-April 2009 issue of Native Peoples magazine: "America Through Native Eyes," Begins April 13 at 9 p.m. (check your local listing for correct time here) on www.pbs.org/weshallremain.

April 13: After the Mayflower;

April 20: Tecumseh's Vision;

April 27: Trail of Tears;

May 4: Geronimo; and

May 11: Wounded Knee.

GOOD NEWS NEWSLETTER

The January 2009 issue of Good News / Anampa Achukma Newsletter reads: "...after the event, discussions drifted to individual problems with learning a language. One common phenomenon that second language learners often face is criticism from elders and native speakers. That is why elders and speakers need to be educated in their importance to the process and learn patience with those who are making the effort to learn their own language. Be patient with new learners, and never miss an opportunity to participate in using your own language." Excellent advice!
(holabitubbe@gmail.com to subscribe)

"WHEN IT'S GONE, IT'S GONE"

Thirteen students from the Norman High School Native American Club were honored by the OK State Education Department for a documentary about dying native languages.

As reported in News From Indian Country, Friday, January 16, 2009, most of the speakers in the video were in their 80s and have witnessed their language dying as younger generations are being raised speaking English.

"Mosiah Bluecloud, a former Norman High School student, said working on the documentary changed his life. "I felt sad as I listened to them talk about their children," he said. "It kind of made me feel helpless." Bluecloud, a Kickapoo, changed his major at the University of Oklahoma to linguistics, and wants to become fluent in his native language.

Desa Dawson, director of world languages for the state education department, said Oklahoma has 39 federally recognized tribes, and many are losing their languages with few fluent speakers left.

Dawson said she's received comments from high school and college language teachers across the state who have shown the video in their classes and used it to start discussions about the cultural importance of language. The video has struck a cord with people, and they get emotional about it, she said.

"You express your culture through your language, and without that language, it makes it that much more difficult to maintain your culture." Says Dawson."

I have tried to locate a copy of the video for our use with our Comanche language preservation, but have not been successful as of this date.

NATIVE AMERICANS FIND THEIR VOICE

by Paul Harris

(*reprint from The Observer
(<http://observer.co.uk>)

In the unlikely surroundings of a cluttered art room in a rural Oklahoma high school, a dying language was being given the kiss of life.

Bud Yackeshi got to his feet in front of 20 or so fellow members of his Comanche tribe and recited a blessing.

"We ask you to be here, Lord, for us and the people who speak here tonight," he said in the language of his ancestors. Then the Comanche lesson began.

Across America, similar scenes are being played out as Native American tribes try to revive their languages, many of which are on the edge of extinction. Efforts range from college courses and immersion schools for young people to simply recording the languages before the last native speakers die.

In Wyoming, the Arapaho tribe have set up a school to educate their children in their native language, not English. Tribal colleges from South Dakota to Michigan to Minnesota are doing courses in Indian languages. To many Americans, the development comes as a surprise. Most people think of trying to save exotic languages as something that happens in Africa or South American jungles.

In Oklahoma, the 14,000-strong Comanche people, who little more than a century ago were rulers of the Great Plains, are trying to pull back their language from the brink. The Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee (CLCPC) has created a dictionary, developed language courses and CDs of Comanche songs and holds annual courses in Oklahoma towns in which large numbers of Comanche live. The group has also taught the language to some families, even going as far as to give financial incentives for some to teach their children Comanche.

"We tell these parents to follow their little ones around and expose them to as much Comanche as possible," said Ronald Red Elk, a leader of the CLCPC.

At the school in Walters, the group of students represented a generational cross-section of the tribe, from young children to their parents and two elders. As a teacher recited the words for the

numbers 1 to 10 in Comanche, the group repeated them and wrote them down.

It has been more than a generation since Comanche was spoken as a family language, and it is difficult. For example, the Comanche equivalent to the English phrase "Happy birthday" is to say: "We are glad for the day that you fell out." As with many Indian languages, the number of native speakers of Comanche is small and all are old. Perhaps fewer than 100 native Comanche speakers are still alive and none is under 60. The language was brought low by a deliberate policy of eradication by white authorities, who set up boarding schools where Indian children were punished for speaking their language.

In Walters, Jeanine Collins wept as she described how her grandmother had not passed on the language because she had been beaten in school for it. "The first English words she learned were 'Yes, Ma'am'," Collins said. Collins' sister, Diane Fowler, was also attending the Comanche class and she was determined to pass the language on in her family. "I am passing it on to my children. Any word that I know, they know," she said.

The language is certainly embraced as a source of pride. "It is an identity matter for our tribe. It is the glue that holds our entire culture together. Without it, we are not Comanche," said Red Elk.

It also might have a more practical purpose for Native Americans. America's many Indian tribes are treated as sovereign nations, giving them rights that other ethnic groups do not have. That includes the lucrative business of running Indian casinos. "One day, the federal government might start to wonder, why do we treat you as

sovereign? The language helps keep us distinct," said Red Elk.

There is a potent cultural reason, too. The last remaining native speakers of Comanche are a rich resource of language, lore and tradition, scattered in the forgotten corners of Oklahoma. One such place lies at the end of an isolated country road a few miles from Indianola, where Edith Kassanavold, 90, lives in her bungalow. The tiny but sprightly Comanche woman said she did not speak English until she went to school. She talks vividly of her grandmother, who told her of the great buffalo hunts her family used to take part in. She is a living link to a past that is just a few generations ago. "I have a beautiful language, I am blessed," she said. "We want to keep our language alive."

No one thinks it will be easy. But there are signs of hope. Red Elk tells a story of a young Comanche girl whose first word was not "mother", but the Comanche equivalent, "pia".

In Walters, one of the students is 13-year-old Chelsea Fodder. She admits she struggles with it, but says it is getting easier. "It is important to learn it," she said. Her mother and father try to speak a few words and phrases in their home.

It is impossible to say if the tribe's efforts will succeed. Some are pessimistic. Others say more people are speaking it now than have for years. As the class in Walters comes to an end, the two dozen or so students start to sing Comanche hymns. For the moment, at least, the language is still alive.

"Sumu Oyetu Tana Nananumunuu"
(We Are All Related)

Ronald Red Elk

PRODUCTS FOR SALE

Comanche Dictionary. 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.

Lapel Pins. 1 inch round Cloisonne pin with colorful C.L.C.P.C. logo and "Nuu Tekwapi" 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 Note:** We give discounts to enrolled Comanche Tribal Members. Contact us before ordering (see top of newsletter).