
NUMU TEKWAPUHA NOMNEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

P.O. Box 3610 Lawton OK 73502-3610

www.comanchelanguage.org fax: 1-580-492-5119 e-mail: clcpc@comanchelanguage.org

Editor: Barbara Goodin

“Letter From The President”

Haa Maruawekæ Numnæhæ,

Well! We`ve had our second meeting as a unified language group, and still I`m not sure if that was the real purpose of Geneva Navarro`s proposal. My concern is who sowed this seed, and was the perpetuation of Taa Numæ Tekwapæ the true motivation.

I don`t think that the Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee (CLCPC) needs to defend our past practices in our language work. Sure, we`ve had our successes and our failures. Sure, we`ve had our supporters and our critics. The one constant of our organization is that we are Comanches working for a common cause. We do not always agree as to the path to take, but we have always been able to sit down and work out a solution. `Till now!

With all the rhetoric at these first two meetings on the need to centralized all language efforts at the Comanche Nation College and all the benefits received from this action seems to be the course to take. I personally, and the CLCPC collectively, have always been inclusive in welcoming any and all who shared the same goals.

Now to the real reason for working together on the language! The approved \$100,000 funding for fiscal year 2006. To the person that was there representing the Comanche Nation College, if this is a very insignificant amount of funding, why did my comments

bring such a quick response of ridicule to that amount?

The thought of using this fund for any purpose other than its stated purpose seems to me to be illegal, or at the very least, unethical. But that seems to be the direction this group, or some members of this group, were interested in going. The General Council approved this fund for two stated purposes. The Comanche people approved these two items by a margin of 67%. Now do we as a language organization want to dismiss the General Council and the Comanches that voted their approval? I hope not!

I`m offended, but not the least bit surprised that some of those so-called language advocates did not take the time to read the “Learning to Speak Comanche” Project before dismissing it. I`m offended, but not the least bit surprised that our critics (they may call themselves language advocates) with little or no knowledge of the work that the CLCPC has accomplished, continue to dismiss those accomplishments. I`m offended, but not surprised when some of those same critics, make statements such as: “they did not let anybody know about this or that activity.”

Now on the other hand I`m extremely appreciative of those Comanches and others who give their vocal and monetary support. Statements such as: “it is always a pleasure to give financial help to a group that strives to meet their goals,” “the material that you furnish me has been great,” “the CLCPC has

accomplished so much, keep up the good work.” It is my belief that the support is much greater than the critics. The CLCPC will continue as long as we can provide a service to Taa N̄m̄m̄ Tekwap̄. We want it to continue to be a part of future generation of Comanches lives.

The CLCPC was established with a cooperative/collaborative philosophy. And we will continue to be guided by those principles. If the new language group wants to be a part of this service to Taa N̄m̄m̄ Tekwap̄ that philosophy has to be embraced.

Ronald Red Elk

(*Mr. Red Elk’s comments are regarding the two meetings that have been arranged to “consolidate” all the Comanche language efforts at the Comanche Nation College. This was brought before the General Council in April under the auspices of the Elder’s Council in the form of a resolution. The CLCPC and supposedly the College officials and Tribal Administrator were not aware this resolution was going to be presented until the General Council was in session. The CLCPC did not endorse or support this resolution.)

WE’RE LATE – WE KNOW !!

This issue of the Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Newsletter is extremely late. We apologize. My husband and I have been in the process of moving into a new home we had built, and it is amazing what you can accumulate over a 42 year period living in the same house! Especially if you live with a “pack rat.” (I’m not talking about myself, either!)

But the move is nearly completed and things are getting settled in and we are trying to get back into our normal schedule.

One of the inspectors who came out during construction (from Oklahoma City) asked us, “Why did you want to move to a

place out in the middle of nowhere?” Well, I guess that’s a fair question from a city boy. But unfortunately I didn’t have a half a day to devote to educating him on this area of our state, so I told him this land was important to us because it has been in my husband’s family for over 100 years (it was the original allotment of his grandmother, Ped-day). I don’t think that fully convinced him, but he did concede it was one of the most beautiful sites he had ever seen. Yes, we agree. That’s probably one of the reasons his grandparents chose their land where they did. Our ancestors (and I mean ALL our ancestors) were smart people, indeed.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Some items of interest caught our eye from the Lawton Constitution newspaper: April 21, 2005. “Eight apes to take part in unique, long term language research.” The article goes on to say that the apes will travel from the Language Research Center at Georgia State University to their new \$10 million dollar, 13,000 square foot home near downtown Des Moines, Iowa. It will include an 18 room home with an indoor waterfall and climbing areas 30 feet tall. (Sounds like quite some digs!)

One of the world’s leading ape-language researchers will work with the animals to teach them language, music and art. (Hmmm.) The apes will be able to cook in their own kitchen (what, no kitchen help?), tap vending machines for snacks (healthy, we hope), go for walks in the woods and communicate with researchers through computer touch-screens.

I wonder how far that \$10 million would have gone to help native people revitalize the languages that the federal government helped to extinguish?

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Tuesday, May 17, 2005:

This article is titled “Foreign languages: Young children absorb knowledge as part of everyday life.”

The writer says it’s not a far-fetched idea for parents to consider raising bilingual children in today’s environment – whether the parents speak a second language themselves or not.

A publishing company is working to develop audio components to allow new learners to see and hear words in a second language. Wonderful idea! The Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee has been using this concept since 1993!

Linda Espinosa, a professor of early childhood education at the University of Missouri-Columbia, says “Age isn’t necessarily the most important factor in learning multiple languages. You can learn as you get older as well. The issue for most people is the opportunity – the exposure and demand to communicate in another language.”

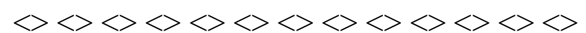
The article goes on to say that Espinosa pointed to research that showed children who learn two or more languages at a young age have higher levels of cognitive flexibility and better awareness of the use of symbols to communicate, and many have better reading skills. Bilingual children also develop a better ability to focus their attention because they have to decide when to speak what language and to whom.

The writer states that an important part of learning another language is to have language opportunities that include conversations with other speakers and to be able to read the new language. Starting out with simple words can help both adults and children become familiar with the sounds and accents of that second language, and give them the tools to move on to more sophisticated words.

Beth Butler, creator of a multimedia program to teach English to native Spanish speakers and vice versa, gives the following tips for teaching language:

- Show the value of speaking a second language. Attend events where the native language is being spoken.
- Repetition is the key. Repeat over and over and over again.
- Show confidence in the new learner by smiling to show approval.
- The journey to learning a new language should be fun, filled with music, games and creativity, not grammar and conjugating verbs.
- Don’t insist the new learner speak their new language all the time, as this demand could cause rebellion and uncooperativeness.
- Use your new language at home, and encourage appreciation for it. Involve the language as you cook, entertain or welcome friends.
- Don’t be embarrassed by an accent. Practice your new language and make it a family effort.

I found this article of particular interest because it reinforces all the concepts we have used for the revitalization of our Comanche language. We have found that in some instances one kind of teaching tool will work, but not in another instance.



An e-mail from Lawrence Earl of San Antonio gave us some interesting insight on the influence the Spanish language has had on our own Comanche language – and vice versa:

“Hello, my name is Lawrence Earl and I live in San Antonio. As a result I hear a lot of Comanche used by the Spanish. You may already know some of these but some Comanches don’t.

Here are a few words I have deciphered (hispanicizing includes genderizing).

1. Gringo, of course, is prairie dog, New Mexicans;

2. Pinchi wedo* is pitsibetu (pronounced “peeshee...bela” in “The Searchers” movie, unweaned Texans, and Mexicans were;
3. Pinchi carbon(-ii*), milk goat people, pitsi kaburunuu. It’s easy to see why they think “pinchi”/pitsi is an adjective (considered vulgar in Spanglish but not in Tex-Mex.;
4. Pachuco, otter or “doesn’t want to work, only want to play:”
5. Moracon, mule going in circles, murakoni, often confused with their own Spanish word manicomio – madhouse;
6. Nacatecena, rock for cooking food, a tortilla griddle;
7. Pocho/pocha, used as “not Mexican enough, too white,” smooth complectaed, pahtsi, (no facial hair – an Indian?);
8. Mura, muro, bura, buro, mule/ “slave”;
9. Tortillia means omelet in Spain, tohtiiyah;
10. Teka Molino, means teak milling in Spanish, taco restaurant in San Antonio, Molini is a taco kitchen only, and the verb;
11. Molino, means bakery in Santa Fe (the further away from these two trading posts you get, the less likely you are to find these uses), tuhka ma buni, “look at the food”, (street vendors trying to get the Comanche tourist dollars?);
12. Orale/odalay, vato/maruawe, beti(?);
- 13 & 14. Mommy-Poppy, nami, pabi;
- 15-16. Ruka and Sotawea, girlfriend(?);

If you ask them (people who are using these words) what these words mean, a lot of times they will tell you that they don’t know. I want to tell them (sometimes), “If you don’t know what it means, don’t say it.” But it’s always good for a laugh.

Any “Spanish” word that ends with a short I is probably Comanche. I’m sure there are more Comanche words in common use, so if you can’t find a [good] definition in a Spanish dictionary...it’s probably Comanche?

And why not? A single Indian dialect that was, 200 years ago, more widespread in northern Mexico and the western U.S. than

Spanish (from Durango MX to Wind River WY and Texas to California).

I just thought I would pass this along in case anyone is interested. I find our history and culture to be extremely fascinating, and I love to share my findings and observances. Ura, L. Earl.

*At the “battle” of Walker’s Creek, the Texas Rangers say the Comanches were trying to get them to come out of hiding and fight by taunting them in Spanish ...“pitsibetu?Wedo is now being re-hispanicized, “guero” is the “new” pronunciation. Cabron is male goat in Spanish.

(*Editor’s note: Thank you, Mr. Earl, for allowing us to reprint your message.)

5 INCH AC/DC TV GIVEN AWAY

Beginning in January this year, the Comanche Language Committee officers and members scheduled community meetings to talk about the “Learning To Speak Comanche Project” we were proposing for the April General Council. We did several things to encourage attendance, one of which was to have a drawing for a 5 inch ac/dc TV just in time for storm season!

Our winner was Alicia Kahrahrhah Wilson, who attended the Indianhoma meeting in February. I personally delivered the television set (which was a gift to our group) to her at her office in the Comanche Complex. She has since told me that her and her co-workers have used it during the notorious Oklahoma Spring storms to keep alert on the weather situation – which can change dramatically here in Oklahoma. We’re glad it is being put to such good use, and we hope it continues to keep them safe.

Congratulations again, Alicia!

MEDICINE LODGE TREATY

Many events occurred in the 1800s that altered the way of life for the Comanche

people. The Treaty of Medicine Lodge, the Battle of Adobe Walls, the Jerome Agreement and the Oklahoma land openings were but a few of the events.

The Treaty of Medicine Lodge, signed in 1867, promised protection from the hunters who were killing off the buffalo (for their hides), provided for schools and churches, permitted railroads to be built, and took 38.5 million acres in return for a three million acre reservation. Reservation life for the Comanches began in 1869 and ended in 1901 when land allotments were given out.

Following is the translation of the speech given by Comanche Chief Ten Bears at the signing of the Treaty of Medicine Lodge in Kansas on October 20, 1867.

CHIEF TEN BEARS'S SPEECH

Medicine Lodge, Kansas

October 20, 1867

“My heart is filled with joy when I see you here, as the brooks fill with water when the snows melt in the spring; and I feel glad as the ponies do when the fresh grass starts in the beginning of the year. I heard of your coming when I was many sleeps away, and I made but few camps before I met you. I knew that you had come to do good to me and to my people. I looked for benefits which would last forever, and so my face shines with joy as I look upon you. My people have never first drawn a bow or fired a gun against the whites. There has been trouble on the line between us, and my young men have danced the war dance. But it was not begun by us. It was you who sent out the first soldier and we who sent out the second. Two years ago, I came upon this road, following the buffalo, that my wives and children might have their cheeks plump and their bodies warm. But the soldiers fired on us, and since that time there has been a noise like that of a thunderstorm, and we have not known which way to go. So it

was upon the Canadian. Nor have we been made to cry once alone. The blue-dressed soldiers and the Utes came from out of the night when it was dark and still, and for camp-fires they lit our lodges. Instead of hunting game they killed my braves, and the warriors of the tribe cut short their hair for the dead.

So it was in Texas. They made sorrow come in our camps, and we went out like the buffalo bulls when the cows are attacked. When we found them we killed them, and their scalps hang in our lodges. The Comanches are not weak and blind, like the pups of a dog when seven sleeps old. They are strong and far-sighted, like grown horses. We took their road and we went on it. The white women cried and our women laughed.

But there are things which you have said to me which I do not like. They were not sweet like sugar, but bitter like gourds. You said that you wanted to put us upon a reservation, to build us houses and make us medicine lodges. I do not want them. I was born upon the prairie, where the wind blew free and there was nothing to break the light of the sun. I was born where there were no enclosures and everything drew a free breath. I want to die there and not within walls. I know every stream and every wood between the Rio-Grande and the Arkansas. I have hunted and lived over that country. I live like my fathers before me and like them I lived happily.

When I was at Washington the Great Father told me that all the Comanche land was ours, and that no one should hinder us in living upon it. So, why do you ask us to leave the rivers, and sun, and the wind, and live in houses? Do not ask us to give up the buffalo for the sheep. The young men have heard talk of this, and it has made them sad

and angry. Do not speak of it more. I love to carry out the talk I get from the Great Father. When I get goods and presents, I and my people feel glad, since it shows that he holds us in his eye.

If the Texans had kept out of my country, there might have been peace. But that which you now say we must live in, is too small. The Texans have taken away the places where the grass grew the thickest and the timber was the best. Had we kept that, we might have done the things you ask. But it is too late. The whites have the country we loved, and we only wish to wander on the prairie until we die. Any good thing you say to me shall not be forgotten. I shall carry it as near to my heart as my children, and it shall be as often on my tongue as the name of the Great Spirit. I want no blood upon my land to stain the grass. I want it all clear and pure, and I wish it so that all who go through among my people may find peace when they come in and leave it when they go out.”

We have the list of those who signed this treaty, and we have retained the spelling used in our resource document. You will have to look carefully to find your ancestor's name. That is only one of the great things about our Comanche spelling system now – the names will always be spelled the same, not as in earlier times when names and words were spelled as the writer thought they should be spelled.

The Comanche signers of the Treaty of Medicine Lodge were:

Ten Elks – Pariase'a (Parry-wah-say-men)
Painted Lips – Ti'pinadon (Tep-pe-navon)
Silver Broach – Ta'sawl (To-sa-in, To-she-wi)
Standing Head Feather – Siachi'nika (Cear-chi-neka)
Gaps In The Woods – Howia (Ho-we-are)
Horse's Back, or Sore-Backed-Horse – Tayakwoip (Tir-ha-yah-guahip)

Wolf's Name or Wolf's Noise – Isana'naka (Es-a-nanaca)

Little Horn – Atestisti (Ah-te-es-ta)

Iron Mountain – Puiwi-toya-bi (Pooh-yah-to-yeh-be)

Dog Fat – Sa'ri'yo (Sad-dy-yo)

Because we have many Comanches who also have Kiowa blood and Apache blood due to intermarriage, we will include the signers from those tribes also:

Kiowa signers of the Treaty of Medicine Lodge were:

Setting Bear, Sa-tank (Set-a'ngye)

White Bear, Sa-tan-ta (Set-t'aunte)

Black Bird or Black Eagle – Guato-kongya (Wa-toh-konk)

Kicking Bird or Kicking Eagle – T'ene'ango'pte (Ton-a-en-ko)

Spoiled Saddle Blanket – Taka'i-bodal

Woman Heart – Manyi'-ten (Ma-ye-tin)

Lone Bear or One Bear – Set-pa'go (Sit-par-ga / Sa-pa-ga)

Stumbling Bear or Pushing Bear – Set-imkia (Sa-tim-gear)

Crow Bonnet or The Crow – Baa'-bohon (Corbeau)

Bear Lying Down – Set-ema'i (Sa-ta-more)

Apache signers of the Treaty of Medicine Lodge:

Wolf's Sleeve – Babi'-pa (Mah-vip-pah)

Poor Bear – Guan te-ka'na (Kin zhon-ta-co)

Bad Luck – Cho'ashita (Cho-se-ta)

Brave Man – Nah-tan

Iron Shirt – Ba zhe-ech

White Horn – Ti'lo'takai (Til-la-ka)

(*Editor's Note: the March 2005 issue of this newsletter has a complete list of all 456 Comanche signers of the Jerome Agreement. This list can be found on our web site at: www.comanchelanguage.org, then click on Language Newsletter.)

NAMES OF STREAMS & MOUNTAINS

From Comanche Land by J. Emmor Harston

“While acting as guides and various groups of early Spanish explorers, the Comanches gave to the white men the Indian names for most of the streams and for prominent landmarks seen.

Some of those original names have interesting stories associated with them. That the flavor may be preserved, this information is presented in condensed form.

In the great transitional period of early Texas history, many errors were made; most of them in the change from Indian language, poorly interpreted, into badly spelled Spanish, then into often unfounded conclusions.”

Editor: Four columns give the present name, the name given by Comanches or other tribes, the English translation and remarks. Each entry here will include information in all four columns.

Arkansas River, Au-kaw Kis-saw, “Where Crossing Is,” (White man’s corruption of Wichita words (Ark).

Brazos River, To-hopt Pah-e-hona, “Blue Water River,” (many deep blue eddies)

Cimarron River, Nokona Paehona, “Wanderer’s River,” (“A crazy white man soldier wandered up this stream.”)

Colorado River, Ta-quoip Pah-e-hona, “Talking Water River,” (Water running over rocks.)

Mount Sheridan, Koo-e-va Asa Choma, translation Mount Asa Chomo, (Star with a long tail—a comet. Chief Asa Chomo was buried in this place.)

North Canadian River, Currum Pah, “Beaver Creek,” (Capt. Black Beaver’s Delaware scouts camped there with Gen. Marcy.)

North Fork of the Red River, Nodema Pah-e-hona, “Trading River,” (Often called Trader’s Springs).

Pecos River, Pa-co-as Te-hu-as, “River of Fishes,” (Once named Ona, meaning Salty).

Red River, Eckhoft Paehona, “Water Colored by Clay,” (Stream cuts through red clay beds).

Rio Grande, Quannah Coth-cho Pah, “Stinking Buffalo River,” (Comanches killed buffalo that crossed the river and could not be driven back).

*We will print more names at a later date.

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. \$34 incl. 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. Primer explains the Comanche alphabet and sound of each letter. \$15 includes s&h and your choice of audio cassette or CD.

Comanche Song Book. Collection of 116 songs written in Comanche with an English translation, plus set of 3 CDs of songs. \$30 plus \$5 s&h.

Comanche Flash Cards Set. Three sets of 48 flash cards each with simple Comanche words. \$15 includes s&h and your choice of audio cassette or CD.

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 & add \$4 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 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 \$4 s&h.

Ball Caps. Royal blue with red bill and Language Logo on front. \$10 plus \$4 s&h.

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

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