
NUMU TEKWAPUHA NOMNEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

Editor: Barbara Goodin

"Letter From The President"

by Ronald Red Elk

Haa, maꞤaweka NꞤmꞤnꞤꞤ. The CL&CPC sponsored a trip to West Texas on June 25th, 26th & 27th, 1999. The purpose of the trip was twofold. (1) To take part in the 125th Anniversary activities of the Red River War of 1874-1875. These activities were sponsored by the Texas Historical Commission, Panhandle Plains Museum and Hutchinson County Museum. (2) To visit the monument erected to honor the fallen Comanches of the Adobe Walls Battle of June 27, 1874.

On April 28, 1939, the site was visited by the last known survivors of the battle, John Timbo and Yellowfish. These elder Comanche warriors were requesting a monument or marker to be placed at the battle site in honor of their fallen comrades. They wanted this done by June 27th, the anniversary of the battle, so that a celebration could be held on that date to commemorate the event. With this accomplished a number of their tribesmen came to the site for the celebration.

60 years after the erection of this monument, approximately 40 Comanches, many descendants of those Comanche warriors, came to honor their memory. More on this later.

The CL&CPC has established a good relationship with the Panhandle Plains Museum and the Hutchinson County Museum from previous visits. From this association and their knowledge of our interest in Comanche history and customs, they extended an invitation to our group to participate in their activities on this 125th Anniversary.

Hutchinson County Museum provided a reception prior to leaving for the Adobe Walls site. Also, lunch was served by them on our return from the site. Kenneth Goodin and Carney Saupitty Sr. gave a brief presentation for our hosts before our departure to Canyon, Texas. The Panhandle Plains Museum and their President's Council hosted a dinner for our group and special recognition was given to the descendants of the Adobe Walls Battle. A special presentation was given by Brett Cruse on their discoveries of the

investigations of the Red River War Battle sites. The CL&CPC has traveled to several areas of historical significance to Comanches. In these travels our hosts have always been very gracious and hospitable. This occasion was no exception--our hosts made us feel as welcomed, honored guests.

Now! the ceremony that was conducted at the Adobe Walls site. A special thanks to the following elders for their guidance and participation to keep this a traditional Comanche ceremony: Rosalie Attocknie, Carney Saupitty Sr., Geneva Navarro, Ray Niedo, Marie Parton, Lucille McClung and Theresa Saupitty. A prayer offering was given by Ray Niedo. Geneva Navarro gave an account of the participation of her great-great grandfather, Chief Wild Horse, in the battle. Rosalie Attocknie gave the history of the traditional Comanche memorial songs that were to be sung by our group. It was during the singing of these songs that I felt the group of Comanches gathered there were as one NꞤmꞤnꞤꞤ.

It was a spiritual moment where all our personal feelings and biases were forgotten and we were the "People" cooperating in honoring our ancestors. It was such a brief moment! Was I the only one that had that feeling? I hope not! Itsa taa NꞤmꞤ pu?e. Haa, sunitꞤ u.

MISSION STATEMENT

COMANCHE LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

To foster a cooperative relationship among federal, state, and tribal agencies, schools, parents and others for the preservation and promotion of the Comanche language and culture, to change the direction of the Comanche language--from near extinction--and to take our language of heritage into the future.

ELDERS SPEND TIME WITH CHILDREN

The Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee was pleased to provide speakers, snacks, food and learning materials for the Tribe's 1999 Summer Camp. Two sessions were planned for this year. The first session began Monday, June 14th through the 24th. The second session begins July 12th through the 22nd. Call 357-3449 to register.

Mrs. Lucille McClung, Cache, kept the attentions of the 8-13 year olds, while Theresa Saupitty (sitting in the back) observed for her presentation later that same day. Mrs. McClung went through the set of 48 Comanche flash cards with the summer campers and then each child was given a set to take home. There were several campers who knew many of the Comanche words because they had participated in the Language Committee's language camps in previous years. It made those of us present feel very good to know our efforts to preserve our beautiful language are indeed worthwhile.

During the second week of camp, copies of a Nūmūnū Reader for June were distributed, along with a Picture Dictionary. Plans are to make these same contributions for the second session.

WATCHING THE PRO'S AT WORK

by Bud Yackeschi & Bill Southard

For three mornings during April, the Yackeschi/Southard Comanche Language Immersion Team observed and assisted two students from the Baptist Bible Translation Institute as they worked with Comanche language master Ray Niedo. Staffed by professional linguists, the Institute, located near Bowie, TX, provides language and technical linguistics training for prospective Christian missionaries to non-English-speaking countries.

The students, Zanya Mast and Jenna Fields, were nearing the end of a year-long course at the Institute. One was scheduled for work in Southeast Asia, with the other going to an Islamic nation in Africa.

The purpose of the students' sessions with Ray Niedo was not to learn Comanche, but to sharpen their skill at "hearing" and recognizing unique speech sounds of unfamiliar languages. Their expertise, and that of Institute Director Charles Turner, was evident. After listening to Ray, then whispering among themselves with such questions as "Was that a glottal? Was that a voiceless vowel?", the two young women were, by the

second morning, holding basic conversations in Comanche!

It was a most impressive, and humbling, demonstration of language training, skill, and dedication. We look forward to participating in more sessions with the Institute.

A COMANCHE PROPHET

There was once a Comanche Chief who could see the Hawk or Eagle, when no one else could see them. He could converse with them on occasion. He said they were way up in the sky, near the Sun, when they spoke to him. He was blind, but had extraordinary perception and great spiritual wisdom.

The Comanche Chief told his people that the Hawk had told him there was going to be a great change coming on the land. There were many white people moving across the lands and that when they came everything they touched would turn white. After each time when he was told about the coming of the white people, he would develop white spots on his body and would be ill for several days.

As white civilization began to move across Indian country, the young Indian children were taken away to school. They had to learn the white man's language and their own language was being lost. They had to learn the white man's way of living, of setting up a different house, of their mode of traveling, of cooking and preserving food, and the use of the white man's medicine.

The Comanche Chief's prophecy had come true. Everything the white man touched was changed and became white.

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE STATUS REPORT

---Still Spoken Here, but for How Long?

Although 175 Indian languages are still spoken in the United States, and all of them are in danger of disappearing, some are more endangered than others.

---Some children are being raised in the language; still spoken by parents and the elderly: 20 languages.

EXAMPLES: The majority of these languages are in New Mexico and Arizona, such as Navajo, Western Apache, Hopi, Zuni and Havasupai-Hualapai. Others include Choctaw in Mississippi, Yupik in Alaska, Cherokee in Oklahoma and Lakota-Dakota in the northern Plains.

---Spoken by parents and the elderly: 30 languages.

EXAMPLES: Crow and Cheyenne in Montana, Mesquakie in Iowa, Jicarilla Apache in New Mexico and Gwich'in in northeastern Alaska.

---Spoken almost entirely by the elderly: 70 languages.

EXAMPLES: Tlingit in the Alaskan Panhandle, Passamaquoddy in Maine, Winnebago in Nebraska, Oneida and Seneca in upstate New York, Hidatsa in North Dakota, **Comanche in Oklahoma**, Yuma in California, Nez Perce in Oregon and Kalispel, Yakima and Makah in Washington.

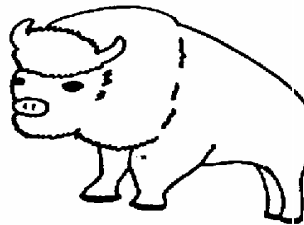
---Spoken by fewer than 10 elderly tribal members: 55 languages.

EXAMPLES: Eyak in south-central Alaska, Penobscot in Maine, Tuscarora in New York, Mandan in North Dakota, Delaware, Iowa, Pawnee and Wichita in Oklahoma, Chehalis, Clallam, Cowlitz and Snohomish in Washington, Omaha in Nebraska and Washoe in California.

* Source: Dr. Michael Krauss, Director of the Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

COMANCHE ELDER GETS NEW PHONE

Recently the Comanche Language Committee made a request to Randi Nott, our benefactor, (our term, not hers) in Illinois for a special telephone for elder Ray Niedo. He is very hard of hearing and although he wears a hearing aid, he still misses much of the conversation around him. In addition, he's had to have laser surgery on his eyes and experiences blurred vision.



Ray is participating in the Lannan Master-Apprentice Team Project and must rely on his telephone to set up sessions with his apprentice. If he was very far from his telephone he couldn't even hear it ringing! So the idea was born to try to find a phone with an amplifier, plus large numbers that he could easily read. Hence the request to Randi.

When Randi learned of Ray's situation she called the Hearing Health Center in Naperville, where she lives. After gathering information they faxed their recommendations to her. She next contacted the Illinois Pioneer Club with a request for funding to provide an Ameriphone for Ray. Two weeks later she received a check from Pioneers and purchased the phone on the same day. The next week she flew to Oklahoma to attend the monthly meeting of the CL&CPC, where she presented Ray with the telephone. It was a complete surprise to him, as we didn't want him disappointed in case the phone couldn't be provided.

Ray is thrilled with his new phone, as seen in the above picture, and especially likes the feature that allows him to press one button and reach

anyone on his speed dial. His family/friend's names were written in large letters so he can easily see them.

The Illinois Pioneer Club (Crossroads Chapter #135) is a chapter of Lucent Telephone Pioneers. Pioneers is a philanthropic organization which supports a wide range of worthwhile causes around the world. This organization has supported the work of the CL&CPC since 1994 with donations such as:

1. lap robes for elderly Comanches (1995 & 1996)
2. scrap fabric for the Comanche Elderly Center to make quilts (1996)
3. funds to help underwrite the cost of the Comanche Picture Dictionary (1994)
4. funds to help underwrite the cost of the documentary NUMU TEPWAPU (1995)
5. funds for the first "Comanche Kids" video pilot (1997)
6. funds to purchase the Ameriphone for Ray Niedo (1999)

We of the CL&CPC appreciate the Illinois Pioneers Club and their generosity. And in particular we appreciate Randi Nott, champion of our efforts to preserve our language. Ura, Randi!

ANNUAL BUFFALO BURGER COOK-OUT

The annual Lawton-Fort Sill Co-Op buffalo burger cook-out has been scheduled for Saturday, September 18 at Co-Op Park on Fort Sill. The public is invited to buffalo burgers and all the fixin's served up by the platter full starting at noon until 5 p.m. Attention, Comanches. **Buffalo!!**

VISIT TO WEST TEXAS MUSEUMS

by Deloris Karty

We had a grand time going to the Hutchinson County Museum and the Pan Handle Great Plains Historical Museum on June 15, 16 and 17.

The Hutchinson County Museum had planned a nice luncheon and reception at the Museum, which we missed. We had a slight delay in leaving Oklahoma and had lunch in Sayre OK before heading toward Borger TX.

However, the people at the Museum were so gracious and brought people back together to greet us. We asked the Adobe Walls Dancers to join us in our dance presentation. Ed Benz, Museum Director, was presented items from the Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation

Committee as well as a beaded ball cap. Our friend, Two Dogs, was presented with a Medicine Pouch, which he immediately tied to his belt and wore the rest of the day. Small medicine pouches were given to the Adobe Walls Dancers and two children, who were dressed in Comanche style. The Warrior Spirit stick, which was earlier smoked and blessed on our trip to Comanche Peak, was presented to the Stinnett Public School, during the reception. Other Comanche articles were donated to the Hutchinson County Museum for permanent display. Among those articles were dolls, a small child's cradle, moccasins, beaded bag, and a Gourd Dance sash.

Geneva Navarro and her daughter Jan Solis, and granddaughter, Autumn (all from New Mexico), gave the Lord's Prayer in sign language, with the rest of the group singing the words in Comanche. We may still need some practice, but it went over very well.

Carney Saupitty Sr. talked a little about his flute and played for the spectators, outside by the teepee. It was very effective and well received. Carney also sang for the group as they performed the various dances, including the beginning Flag Song. Our dance presentation was brief and included an explanation of the Buffalo, Scalp, Victory and Round Dances. Ed Benz and Two Dogs joined in the Round Dance and didn't want to stop dancing. We all had fun and didn't get too tired.

We traveled on to Amarillo, where we stayed overnight at the Travel Lodge West, a very nice place. For our evening meal, several of us tried Chinese food, which was great. Our eyes were just a little slanted by the time we finished our meal, but adjusted right away to that good old Comanche look by bedtime.

Rising early, we headed for MacDonald's and then on to Canyon and (with a little time for getting back on the right track) we made it to Pan Handle Museum about 9:15 a.m. The staff at the Museum was ready for us and we had an opportunity to look around a little. In fact, some of our group went right up to the third floor and started looking at pictures. It takes time to get dressed, so the children started getting ready, and the ladies, too. We were finally ready on time and went downstairs where we were to meet with the Museum Director and others. To our surprise, there were a lot of people seated around waiting for us!

The Director introduced us and explained that many of the people were a church group touring

the area and just happened to be at the Museum on this day. But we repeated our presentation of the Lord's Prayer and dances, with explanation, but this time Geneva's grandson Jackie and Matthew did the War Dance, and Penny Cable sang the Comanche Numbers Song and Old MacDonald. She did a great job! We are very proud of her, and the young men, too.

BEAUTIFUL COMANCHE WOMEN

We had lunch at a Mexican place around the corner from the Museum. (I wonder why we always manage a Mexican dinner!?) We were invited to the beautiful home of Tim and Drena McMenamy for the evening, and did they have a great meal prepared for us!! Her husband did a great job of cooking hamburgers and hot dogs on the grill! The group had a wonderful time visiting and finally started singing Comanche hymns. It was a great evening!

We didn't want to quit, but realized we might be keeping our hosts up, as it was nearing midnight, so we said our farewells and headed back to bed in Amarillo. This time will be retained in our hearts and minds for a long time. It could have been a great record on tape, too, if I had operated my tape recorder properly.

We have requested copies of the videos taken by the Hutchinson County Museum and the Pan Handle Museum, so we will have those as a matter of record.

We had a wonderful time, and on the way home even had time to stop at a roadside stand and buy homemade preserves and apple cider. (We didn't open the cider yet!) (*Others traveling were: Carney Saupitty Jr., Billie and Josie Kreger, Margaret Poahway, Gloria and Vernon Cable, and Edith Gordon.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Taa ahpu tomoba?ah tu,
Nansuwukaitu u nahnia.
U tekwapuha pitaruibe,
Siku sokoba?a tomoba?atu waiku.
Nami maaka sika tabeni,
Numi tasuuna aiku numi hanipu katu.
Keta ai numi petsuru, tsa ku numi muhne.
Oyo ruru narami, mohats ku numi kamakutu.
Numi sutai, U suni.
Amen

LANNAN M-A TEAM PROJECT

Year Two of the Lannan Master-Apprentice Team Project will conclude on Saturday, August 31, 1999, with a final evaluation of all teams. Activities will begin at 10:00 a.m. in the auditorium of the Great Plains Museum in Lawton. Each Apprentice will make a 10-20 minute presentation on any subject(s) of their choice. After lunch at noon, the afternoon will be spent listening to stories (in Comanche) told by each of the seven Masters. Time permitting, others may tell stories until the event concludes at 3 p.m.

“S̄m̄m̄ Oyeȳ T̄an̄ N̄an̄n̄m̄m̄n̄n̄”
Ronald Red Elk

LANGUAGE & CULTURAL PANEL

On Tuesday, July 20th at 7:00 p.m. the Museum of the Great Plains and the Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee will sponsor a “Language and Cultural Preservation Panel.” The panel discussion will be held in the Museum auditorium at 601 N.W. Ferris, Lawton.

This will be an invitation only event, so if you would like to receive an invitation, please contact us as soon as possible. There is a limited number of seats available and we would like as many Comanches as would like to attend to be present. Contact us at the mailing address or e-mail address at the top of this newsletter.

INDIAN TACOS SERVED

The Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee provided Indian Tacos for Cameron University's Upward Bound students on June 18th. The meals were in conjunction with Cultural Diversity Day at Cameron.

Barbara Coker mixed up the fry bread dough and Deloris Karty and Rosalie Attocknie helped fry it up. Meanwhile Barbara and Kenneth Goodin were cooking and mixing the meat, beans and seasonings. Verna Cable and daughter Nikki Brewer were busy chopping lettuce, tomatoes and onions, and fixing individual containers of picante sauce.

It all came together when the above mentioned, joined by Esa Attocknie, began assembling the Indian tacos and preparing them for distribution to 100 participants. According to Verna Ann, the taco meals were deemed a huge success and

proclaimed “the best” by avid taco eaters!

The money earned from this venture will be used for upcoming activities planned by the Language Committee. Anybody need the recipe for 100 Indian tacos?

FALL ENCAMPMENT ANNOUNCED

The dates for the Fall Encampment of the CL&CPC have been set for Thursday, October 7th through Sunday, October 10th. The event will be held on the grounds of the Great Plains Museum, Lawton. More details in September Newsletter.
