
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”

Numunuu

1. How many of you have used **taa Numu tepwapu** today?
2. How many of you have never used our language?
3. Is it important that the language and its use be maintained?

Ihka taa Numu tekwapu tsa ai nuusukatü, miitsi ma watsikütui.

Our language is very sick, it is dying. In a very short time it is going to be dead. We will no longer be The People.

Numunuu

What were your answers to the three questions above? If you had a negative answer for all three, then you are now officially a Taibo.

Numunuu

If you had a positive response to any one of them, there is still hope that you will remain a Comanche and receive a per cap. That's an interesting concept – only Comanches that use the language would receive the per capita payment!

Numunuu

Learning a second language is not easy, but our parents and our grandparents learned a second language – English – so why don't we start using taa tekwapu?

Taibo?nuu

When the last Comanche speaker leaves us, this is what we will become.

(*reprinted from Anampa Achukma/Good News language newsletter, September 2005. To subscribe: holabitubbe@gmail.com)

“MAKING IT PERSONAL”

Dr. A.G. (Oneroa) Stewart

“I have been taken to task with a challenge to my professorial approach to teaching and learning. Frequently my students will exclaim: “but you have it so easy. You know the language. You don't have a problem with the reception we get when we try to use the language.”

Then what follows are the sad stories of those learners who are making brave efforts in actively preserving the language. My reply is that they may never be able to completely change other's attitudes of derision but we all need to stick to our guns with our own determination to make the language survive. There are so many out there who (pity them) just don't get a desire to learn another language.

They might accept something continental, something c'est la vie, so you can one day navigate your way around the Paris Metro. But when you are found out to be learning another language from your own country you get the strange looks and tones from those still stuck in the establishment. Perhaps it's even worse when it's someone from your own family. They just don't seem to care.

There are all sorts of reasons why people choose to learn a second language, especially an indigenous language. For some it is the language of their ancestors, for others it is the language of their friends,

family, partner, the street, or maybe even the odd boss, who learns the language quietly, so he can understand the cheeky vibes of his hard-case employees.

Start small, think big. Just saying one word is powerful. Then you add another. And another. Before long you have many words to say, just as you learned your first words as a child. Saying the hellos are usually the first and easiest to learn but are also the most important, especially if you initiate the greeting. Don't wait for someone else to start. If you are first to use the language then you have succeeded in your own mind both to learn and use, and of course you have set the pattern for the good byes and future meetings. You have determined who you are.

You are now on the way of a journey for the rest of your life. Don't get all worried because you don't know this or that word or can't yet string a sentence together. Never mind because I know that you have an inquiring mind, full of questions for this and that (back to your second childhood?). It is important because you have determined and dared to think that the world is not flat. You will definitely not fall off into the abyss but into an exciting discovery of another land, language and culture. The journey is not easy, it's definitely a long one, but untold riches will fill your mind."

Dr. A.G. (Oneroa) Stewart
Manager of Maori Education
Research and Development
Bay of Plenty Polytechnic
Tauranga, New Zealand.

PROLIFERATION

George Ann Gregory, editor of the Anampa Achukma/Good News newsletter wrote: "Another part of the success (of language revitalization) is *proliferation*. While language nests have received much press, it is not the only activity being used to revitalize languages. It takes an all out onslaught against the loss." We agree. It

takes all of us working in an all out onslaught to save our language.

LANGUAGE CONFERENCE

The CLCPC, in conjunction with the Comanche Museum and Cultural Program, will sponsor a Comanche Language Conference on Saturday, November 12th, 2005, in the New Conference Room at the Comanche Complex. Pre-registration is required in order to obtain a lunch ticket for the free noon meal, and for the door prizes to be given away throughout the day.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

8:00-9:00 a.m. Registration
(Coffee and Donuts while they last)
9:00 Opening Prayer in Comanche
Welcome, Introduction and
Purpose of Conference
10:00 President Ronald Red Elk
10:30 First Presentation
11:15 Second Presentation
Noon Lunch (must have pre-registered)
(provided by Comanche Museum)
1:00 Third Presentation
1:45 Forth Presentation
2:30 Final Presentation
3:15 Summary and Wrap-Up

Presentations will be given by individuals who work with Comanche language programs and will focus on the Comanche Dictionary spelling system, teaching young people, language programs currently being offered, and the needs of language programs to strengthen them.

For pre-registration you may fax your name, address and phone number to 580-492-5119, or you may call Dr. Reaves Nahwooks at 580-246-3529 to register.

Taa Nuumu Tekwa Unuu (Pahdopony '04)

Soobesuu tsa tekwa?eetu
Unuu nuu tekwa?eyu
Sube Nuumunuu mai?ai

Ʋnə tekwa?eyu
Pihna kama waiku nania
Ʋkitsi se hait̥si taka
Nəm̥ tekwa?eyu
Taa Nəm̥ Tekwap̥?ha tsa t̥yai miar̥
Subet̥ ma

translation:

**The Loss of our Language
(See How Deep The Water Is '04)**

A long time ago
When animals
Could talk,
The language
Of the People
Was spoken,
Sweet – like sugar.

Today, few speak
Comanche.
Its loss – a bitter lesson.
That is all.

*Dedicated in loving memory of Sam
Pahdopony, September 22, 1919 – August
17, 2005.

STOLEN GIRL

A Cheyenne Story

Submitted by Nita Pahdopony-Mithlo

(an original story)

A young Cheyenne girl had gone to bed early on a bright and moonlit night. She noticed a figure outside her tipi and it caught her attention. The silhouette cast a shadow – robust build with a prominent nose and regalia very different than the clothing worn by her people. She got up from her bed of furs and searched for her tool pouch that contained her awl. She used it to pole a tiny hole in the tipi wall and look at the stranger outside her tipi.

The stranger outside appeared to be handsome and certainly interesting. She decided to get dressed and go out to meet him. They talked and visited as the night wore on. He had a different smell that reminded her of the woody scent from the

forest. The stranger asked her to go with him to meet his family who lived a night's ride away. "Yes," she answered and she returned to the tipi for her pouches: her knife, awl, medicine bag and rouge. She didn't take anything else.

They rode off into the night in an eastward direction and they continued to ride for most of the night. In the meantime, the young girl's family returned to the tipi to find her missing. Her father, a fierce leader who was known to be very strict, was willing to allow her to marry anyone who could find her. The tribal warriors rode out in the four directions to find the leader's daughter.

The young girl and stranger arrived at a bluff overlooking his camp, at the edge of the forest. There were many tipis below. Although it was still dark, the camp was lit up with fires and they could see the gathering of people in the center of the camp. The girl could see that all of the people had the same profile – long noses and robust builds. The stranger threw open the tipi flap. The women were seated in one half of the circle and the men were seated in the other half. There were many furs, hides, and collections of small items around the tipi. The tipi cover was richly decorated with the war exploits and painted history of the tipi owner.

The young girl took a seat among the women. She looked at all of the many collections of items in the tipi. She listened to the beautiful songs and she fell into a deep sleep. Meanwhile, back in her own camp, the sun was coming up and her father noted that his daughter was stolen by one captor and taken on one horse traveling toward the east.

The sun was high in the sky when the young girl awakened. She looked out to see the edge of the woods but she was unable to move. She could move her head to see her feet below here. At her feet were many tiny objects: tiny furs, hides and collections of small items. She looked out of the hole in

the tree and saw someone from her tribe riding past and she called to him.

This is the very first time that the humans began trading with the pack rats.

Pahdopony

I WAS ALWAYS DIFFERENT

submitted by Kerry Kennington

I never knew my great grandmother. She died long before I was born. She was Comanche. Even though we never met, I have always felt close to her. And I have always been different.

I always wished I looked Indian like my father and brother. I always wanted long straight hair like my brother's, but mine is curly. I felt different.

As a child growing up in north Texas, I would sometimes visit Medicine Mounds with my friends. They would enjoy rolling down the hillside. I felt something different. To be there was more like a religious experience to me. I was different.

All my life I have walked with my face to the ground hoping to one day find an arrowhead. I never did. People would say "walk over there, we find them all the time." But when I would look, there were none to be found. Maybe I thought finding an arrowhead would bring me closer to my ancestors. But I never found one.

Most people I have known look into the eyes of the person they are speaking to. Not me. I always look directly at the mouth. I have always been different that way. Some would ask me, "What color are that girl's eyes?" I would say I don't know. They would say, "But you were just talking to her." I know, but I didn't notice. I always look at the lips. I am different that way.

I have never believed in organized religion. I have all my life felt that religion is between one person and God. It is up to the individual to find a relationship with the Holy Spirit. Not to be told what that relationship is by some third party. I have always been different that way.

I have never appreciated formal ceremony. I wore blue jeans when I got married. I am a highly paid mechanical engineer, but I wear blue jeans and a t-shirt to work everyday. I can't even wear a tie without written instructions because I have done it so few times.

I have recently, thanks to the internet, been able to research my family history. Thanks to the CLCPC I have learned much about the Comanche people. To tell you the truth, before that I thought (Comanches) were probably all gone.

I have begun to learn the language of my ancestors. I have begun to learn of their traditional beliefs. I have begun to see that maybe I am not that different.

I have read that a young Comanche would be sent off on his own to find God. I have learned that the Comanche people were not as enamored with formal and elaborate ceremony as many other people. And maybe most amazing of all, the Comanche language includes silent vowels which require one to look at the speaker's mouth in order to understand them.

Maybe I am not that different after all. Maybe I am more Comanche than my family tree would lead you to believe. But I do know that I have finally found my arrowhead. My arrowhead is in learning taa N̄m̄m̄ tekwap̄ and now I walk with my face to the sky.

COMANCHE CULTURE

Tradition Comanche Attire

Piitsikwina:

The apron worn by Comanche women over their traditional dress.

Saabe:

A fabric insert sewn down the side of a traditional Comanche dress that extends one inch beyond the dress length, and tapers to about three inches in width at the bottom.

Ekasukwe:

A traditional half red, half blue narrow blanket worn over the shoulders of Comanche men during the gourd dance.

The red half is worn on the right side and the blue half is worn over the heart. Also worn by the men during winter time peyote meetings.

Saabara:

A half, or partial, sheet worn by men during peyote meetings held in the summer time.

Kusa:

Men's leggings that extend above the knee.

Narapoke:

Women's leggings that come to the knee, with a flap that folds over with fringe.

TEXAS METEORITE

In the September 2005 issue of this newsletter we had a comment regarding the location of a meteorite we have called the Comanche Meteorite.

We received the following from our friend Montie Guthrie in Texas:

"The September Newsletter has a letter asking about the Comanche Meteorite. Here is some info. I went this past summer to Austin (TX) specifically to see it and the treaty that (Comanche Chief) Santa Anna signed at Fredericksburg. I saw them both. The tip of my finger was separated from the 'X' (Santa Anna) made by 1/8th inch of glass and 1/8th inch of argon gas. Cold chills!!

The meteorite was more disappointing. J. Emmor Harston says it was on Santa Anna's peaks in a cave until the cave collapsed. Comanche women dug it out and travoised it north. (Robert S.) Neighbors* knew about it and at some point talked the Comanche into letting him have it for safekeeping. In Austin it is called the Wichita meteorite. The Texas State Museum is on the University of Texas Campus, but they know nothing of the Neighbor's story."

Montie also sent the following web site: <http://texasnativeskies.org> for a story about the meteorite. Scroll down to "Medicine Stones" for two copyrighted articles about it. (*Editor's Note: Robert S. Neighbors was the Indian Agent who escorted the Comanches from the Comanche Brazos

Reservation in Texas to safety in Oklahoma when white settlers threatened to kill them. There are two thick documents (donated by Comanche tribal member Jo Vickers) in the research room of the Lawton Public Library that will give you insight into the lives of our ancestors during that very sad time in their lives.

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who contacted us with your support after our last two newsletters. Please know that it is people like YOU who make all our efforts worthwhile. We appreciate each and every one of you. Ura.

ATTENTION COMANCHE VETERANS

If you are a 100% service connected disabled veteran, effective July 1, 2005, you are eligible for exemption from all Oklahoma sales tax. You must contact the Oklahoma Tax Commission at toll free 1-800-522-8165 to request an application for a sales tax exemption card. If you are eligible for this tax relief, please take the time to apply.

HAND GAME SONGS

The Comanche Nation Museum recently sponsored a Hand Game Tournament prior to the Comanche Nation Fair.

We thought it would be interesting to share some of the songs we have documented:

EKA MURAA

(Red Mule [He Has "Pull!"])

Eka Mura?a, Eka Mura?a,

Eka Mura?a haitsikatu

(Red Mule is my friend.)

Eka Mura?a haitsikatu

[keep repeating]

PISUNI?A HAITSIKATU

(Skunk is my friend.)

[He has power to distract!]

Pisuni?a haitsikaṭ (Skunk is my friend)
[keep repeating]

A MAN STANDING ON A HILL

Nah heni yoo, heni [chant]
Nah heni yoo, heni [chant]
Ana ma wənəḳiṭ.
(He's standing up there)
Waapini ma nabunikiṭ
(He looks like a cedar tree)

CHANT SONG

Yu. Ha. Heeni. Yu. Ha. Heeni. [chant]
(keep repeating)

FLAPPING SLEEVES SONG

Hibabakina he, he. Hibabakina heena
(Their sleeves are flapping in the wind)
Hibabakina he, he. Hibabakina heeyu
Hibabakina heeyu haana. [chant]

FLIRT SONG

Taa sooyu kaaku
(There are a lot of us in here.)
Naiṣbunikiṇ
(A certain one has flirting eyes.)
Taa sooyu kaaku
(There are a lot of us in here.)
Naiṣbunikiṇ, hee neeyu.
(A certain one has flirting eyes.)

ANOTHER CHANT SONG

Ya he, he yaa hee haana,
Ya he he, he ya hee haa na.
Ya ha?u haa na.
Ya hee haa na
Ya he he, he ya hee haana,
Ya ha?u haa na.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SONG

In Comanche

Eya heya heya (chant)
Ʊ pahip̣ma ẉpiṭi
(it's when you were born)
Ṇṇuse Ʊ Kamaḳṭ
(And we love you)
Eya heya heya (chant)

(*If anyone knows who translated the following song, please let us know.

COMANCHE SONG

(to the tune of)

“GOD BE WITH YOU”

Ṭaṣ kwasiḳ taha naṛ ura?ruikatu
God tsa pu kasa tuka Ʊ watsiṭḳ kaṭ u
Nohi na Ʊ suwaiṇ na u Ʊ haniḳni mi?arui
Ṭaṣ kwasiḳ taha naṛ ura?rui
Naṛ ura?rui, Naṛ ura?rui
Jesus nape tuka taha naṛ ura?rui
Naṛ ura?rui, Naṛ ura?rui
Jesus nape tuka taha naṛ ura?rui.

TSAA ṆSUKAṬ WAA HIMAṚ !!



“Jingle Bells”

by Velma Akoneto

Waahima, waahima, Na okiṭ ṇṇ.
Taa naṛmi?a pahip̣ka ṭ na okiṭ ṇṇ.
(sing several times)



“Joy To The World”

by Deacon Topetchy

Tsaa ṇsukaa, Taa naṛmi tsa kima.
Oyeṭ taṇ ura urarui. Taṃ u kamaḳna,
U pihiḳ habiṭ. Naṇsuẉka?iṭ,
Naṇsuẉka?iṭ, Naṇsuẉka?iku
u tai kamaḳṭ.



“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

by Harry Wauhdooh

Oyetaka kima, Tsaatu tsa tai wəhpitu?i
U nipana?ai tanu sumu oyetau.

Kimutsi u puni, God, ta tua tsa pitu?i.

Chorus:

U wakatuka kima, U wakatuka kima,
U wakatuka kimutsi tai makwitso?aitu.



“Silent Night”

by Harry Wauhdooh

Tsaa ta tukani, Puha tukani.

Tatsinupi muyunakwu.

Tenanu u wakatu kima.

Taa narumi?a nanusutaiku.

God ta tua tsa pitu?i. God ta tua tsa pitu?i.



TSAA NUUSUKATu WAA HIMARu !!
(Merry Christmas)

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 "Numu Tekwapu" written in center. \$5 includes s&h.

**Please include your e-mail address when ordering in case we need to contact you. Contact us if ordering multiple items, as we can usually ship cheaper than quoted here (e-mail address at top of newsletter).*

Mahatma Gandhi once said: "The various religions are like different roads converging on the same point. What difference does it make if we follow different routes, provided we arrive at the same destination."

We would like to take literary license and say **“The various methods of teaching Comanche are like different roads converging on the same point. What**

difference does it make if we follow different routes, provided we arrive at the same destination.”

Wise man, that Gandhi.