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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

1375 N.E. Cline Road, Elgin OK 73538-3086

www.comanchelanguage.org 1-580-492-5126 e-mail: clcpc@comanchelanguage.org

Editor: Barbara Goodin

THE FIRST INDIAN LANGUAGE PERIODICAL PUBLISHED IN THE U.S.

by Doug C. McMurtrie
(November 1933)

Jotham Meeker set up his press at the Shawanoe Baptist Mission in 1834 and one of the interesting things he undertook to print was a small "newspaper" in the language of the Shawnee Indians. This Shawnee Sun, to name it by the translation of its Indian title, was the first periodical publication to be printed in what is now Kansas, and the first in all the land to be printed wholly in an Indian language.¹

In his journal, which was preserved in the valuable collections of the Kansas Historical Society, Meeker recorded that he began "setting types on the 1st No. of the Shawanoe Sun" on February 18, 1835. On the 24th the type was put in the press and printed. Thus we know exactly the date of the erection of this rather interesting typographic landmark. The paper began with monthly issues, which became irregular, then was suspended for a period of time. The last mention of publication is 1844.

Meeker has been noted as the inventor of a method by which the sounds of the Shawnee language (and several other Indian languages) might be represented by the letters of the English alphabet.

As a creator of orthographies for the languages of the natives, Meeker was diligent and ingenious. He simply took the letters for sound that did not occur in the given Indian tongue and arbitrarily

assigned to them sounds that needed to be expressed. Crude as this system of "writing Indian" may seem, it was practical, as the Indians, even adults, learned to read by it, and even in some individual instances to write by it in their own language.

¹Isaac McCoy, History of Baptist Indian Missions (Washington, New York, and Utica, 1840), p. 488 says: "This was the first newspaper ever published exclusively in an Indian language." The Cherokee Phoenix, begun at New Echota, GA, in February, 1828, was partly in Cherokee and partly in English.

(*The above information was found at www.kshs.org/publicat/khq/index.htm)

COMANCHES IN EARLY KANSAS

(*Below is an excerpt from the Wichita Evening Eagle newspaper, page 1, November 7, 1941.)

NOTABLE CLOSING SPEECH AT HISTORICAL COUNCIL MADE BY SILVER BROOCH

Address, Which Ended A Momentous
Meeting Held North of Wichita on the
Banks of the Little Arkansas River
Seventy-Six Years Ago

By Victor Murdock

There is a very early chapter, a part of the history of the Wichita (KS) area that was stenographically recorded -- the complete verbatim proceedings of the Council held north of Wichita in October, 1865, between Chiefs or Headmen of the Comanche, Kiowas, Apaches, Cheyennes and Arapahoes

and representatives of the Great Father (President) on a delegation headed by General John B. Sanborn and including William S. Harney, Kit Carson, William W. Bent, J. H. Leavenworth, James Steele and Thomas Murphy. Every word of that council was recorded and is printed, setting out in full its sessions, which lasted from October 12 to October 24, 1865.

I intend to tell at another time what those stenographic reports chiefly reveal – many curious things by the way – but for the moment I want to set down the speech of a certain rugged individual, a Comanche Chief named To-Sa-Wi (Toshoway), the last speech made before the council formally adjourned.

To-Sa-Wi, Comanche, translated to English means Silver Brooch. It is not hard to see that the first object his father's eye fell upon after his birth was a silver brooch, probably a Spanish brooch won long before in a Rio Grande raid, and so supplying a name to an infant after the Indian custom.

During the council many speeches were made. There is a talent of eloquence in many Indians which is striking. Invariably it is emotionally expressive. There was much of that as the council proceeded. The speeches made by the commissioners appear quite drab compared with the addresses delivered by the Chiefs.

The records show Silver Brooch was not especially forensic so far as verbal flourishes went, but he was earnest beyond words. He had not been called upon to speak through the sessions. He had not pushed himself forward as orators occasionally must. Now at 10 o'clock on the morning of October 24, 1865, the final meeting was held. The last batch of prisoners had been exchanged as part of the transaction. Sanborn had announced that the treaty was ready to be closed, that permanent

peace was assured and the goods promised the Indians (presents from the government) would be delivered soon to the Indians on the Salt Plains by Colonel Leavenworth.

Thus the notable conclave neared its end. Then Iron Mountain, Comanche Chief, offered a word, to wit:

"We are very anxious to talk to you. We shiver in the wind. We want the goods sent out to us as soon as possible. Our children want something to eat. These goods came from Washington for us and we want them sent out to us."

That was too brief for a fitting valedictory. Silver Brooch was to supply that in an utterance proving he was a man with the courage of his convictions, an individual with that stamina often so tragically ignored. After Silver Brooch had spoken there was nothing further than the motion to adjourn.

This is the speech by Silver Brooch which concluded the most momentous of all meetings held in the Wichita Vicinage:

"When the whites made treaty I was there and made peace with them. When this war first broke out between the North and the South all my friends went away and left me alone and made war against me because I would not go. A-sha-hab-beet came back and made friends with me and by this and their work this present peace has been made. Last winter when they made treaty in Texas I gave up five prisoners and the hearts of the whites were glad and they have given you your prisoners and your hearts are glad. The Texans had some children of mine (as) prisoners, and promised to give them up, but I have not got them yet. When these Indians came in here after doing bad you gave them your hands and hugged them, and didn't notice me. I have always been for peace. I want you

not to forget my prisoners and to be sure and get them for me. I came up to the treaty last August and could not get anything. My head chief went to Fort Smith for goods and could not get any there. So I do not know where I belong. I came here to see what you would do for me after I have worked so hard for peace. I want to know whether you want me to go on the Plains and do like other Indians and then you will give me presents and goods wherever I go. The Great Father at Washington promised me presents some time ago, such as houses, farming utensils, grain, and I have got none yet. I think before I get any of them I will die an old man, as I am pretty old now.”

The Council then adjourned.

(*following is an excerpt from the “Diary of Samuel A. Kingman at Indian Treaty in 1865” who was with the party meeting with the Indians for the signing of the Medicine Lodge Treaty in Kansas in 1865. The entire diary can be read at www.kshs.org/publicat/khq/index.htm in the November 1932, #5 issue)

KIOWA AND COMANCHE AGENCY

11MO-27-1865 (Nov 27, 1865)

We started our journey, saw Mt Scott in the south. Dined at the Cache Creek and, bearing around to the East & South East of the Wichita Mountains we came to Medicine Lodge Creek which joins Cache Creek at Ft. Sill, which we reached at sunset & passed on a mile further to the Agency & were kindly entertained by Laurie Tatum. Most of the Indians are upon the hunt. Their annuity goods are not here. Left Fort Harker (on November) 7th and may be two months on the road (350 miles) ox team probably.

The treaty provides for the goods to be delivered on the 15th of the 10th

month, just when the Indians need them, as their clothing is then much worn. After this time when the Indians are getting good robes they do not so much need their clothing. Robes \$10. Best.

The annuity goods are transported by the military and they have so much to do of their own that it is always very late before they reach the Indians goods. It would be better for the Interior Department to do its own freighting, for it has to pay for it any way and is so much longer about it.

The Military ordered the man of whom they bought beef to turn the whole amount contracted for at one time. The contract had bound him to deliver a few at a time as they were wanted at 2 3/8 cents gross. But as he turned over the entire amount (4000 head) at once, it has cost \$15,000 to herd them. The Indians get so much buffalo that they do not want much beef. The trader did not gain the whole \$15,000 because he had to be in a hurry to fill his contract and he would not have bought the whole at once and so would not have been at the entire expense of herding.

Little Heart, the Kiowa Chief who is said to have killed the Mexican at Camp Supply on the night of about the 29th or 30th of 6 months ago, has recently died, out upon the plains.

11mo-28th (Nov 28, 1865)

Cloudy morning-&c (sic)

Nearly all the bands of these Indians have been engaged in raiding this year and quite a number of the Wichita & affiliated bands, The Qua-ha-dee (Kwaharꞩ) or Roving Comanches have never come in upon the reservation, never drawn rations and declare that they never will come in. This band is a nucleus. Its size is very variable depending upon how many of other

bands may join them temporarily for raiding purposes, thus the blame is thrown upon the Kwaharú when in reality it is mostly members of other bands.

The Mexican influence is also very bad. Many Mexicans are amongst them as Indians. They go down into Mexico and get guns and ammunition and tell the Indians that they have a great Father in their country as big as the one at Washington and much kinder to the Indian because he will let them have all the ammunition and c(?) they can buy and does not care how much they raid upon the Texans.

The Wild Apaches of New Mexico, now camped on (the) Head Waters of (the) Brazos, are coming amongst these Indians, as the Government is fighting them there and that is an additional reason for solicitude and of probable future trouble.

The Comanche 10 years ago were in Texas and farming and herding to a considerable extent. But the Texans drove them from the country and killed their Agent upon his return. The Indians will not forget all this. They laugh at the Kiowas and Apaches and call them cowards and women, and in this way they induce them to join their raids. They moreover say that when they are quiet the Government does not do much for them, but when they go to war then they are well treated and have many presents. (They) say they can always tell when they will have an abundance of presents and when they will have very few.

Very many of them were sick last year and died and they thought they must kill somebody for that also.

They complain that the Government shows a want (*probably meant lack*) of confidence in them in regard to the beef contract, which Col. Lee ordered to be closed at once. On the 1st of the 7th

month, when the Commissary was turned over to Agent Tatum, a few were selected and weighed and the others estimated by the weight of these. One lot was appraised by two men, one of whom was selected by Agent Tatum, and the other by the man who sold the cattle and the other lot was appraised by two military men who were considered to be good judges.

About 1,000 head were sold to the Cheyenne & Arapahoe Agency. Another thousand have been used here, and there are about 2,000 now on hand. There is a regular account kept with the mill and the product of the mill in toll is applied for any expenses which may be necessary about the mill or house. A full account being kept, but not put upon the department books, because it would have to go upon the property return and would give much more trouble. The wheat is ground and sold to the Military for horse feed, as there are no flour mill or bolt. There are about 800 bushels sold at \$3.00 (5 cents per pound). There is also a fair crop of corn, but this will be necessary to feed the mules.

The rations turned over to Lawrie Tatum by N. D. Badgeon on the 11th month, 1869, which had apparently been issued, were sold for over \$4,466 and entered upon his books and applied for the benefit of the Indians, as is clearly shown by his books in the office. The house built by Col. Boone for an Agency is turned into a farmer's house because it is too far away across the Creek for the Agent's house and is just where it is wanted for a farmer's house. It is adobe and no rock at the bottom. He has built an Agent's house out of the money appropriated for the putting up of houses for employees and built it where it is much more convenient. These matters all seem to be entirely correct, although upon the department reports they are not exhibited.

11th mo-29th (Nov 29, 1865)

Edward Earle and myself have examined carefully the books & accounts of Agent Tatum and we do not discover anything that is not entirely correct and straightforward. He believes that he will have ample funds for all his estimates of the current fiscal year. There is a balance of the \$20,000 appropriation not yet expended, amounting to over \$6000, some of which he wishes to be used for educational purposes and some for assisting in erecting houses for chiefs.

Charles Ehresman (is) Interpreter for Kiowas Comanches & Apaches. Kiowa Chiefs are Lone Wolf, Kicking Bird and Tumbling Bird, Pacer-Apache.

Lone Wolf complains of the withholding of ammunition, thinks it's because the government wants to take advantage of them. Complains of Gen. Nelson driving them away from the vicinity of Camp Supply. Said they went there because they were so sickly near the Agency and that is why they gave up farming. They thought something was wrong or else they would not be sick and die and so they wanted to try their old way of living again. Complains that their annuity goods had not come and wants E. H to give them some presents, that their women are naked and they want tobacco, blankets and kettles and a great many other things. Complains that the Texans kill so many of them that they want to kill some Texans, also. Again and again he calls for powder and lead, thinks we are big enough Chiefs to give them a little to go hunting. Has been waiting two days to see us and when he heard last night that we had come, they were all so glad they could not sleep that we were all big Captains from Washington and he thought we might give them a little for killing birds, turkeys, deer and buffalo.

Lone Wolf says that none of the Kiowa will go and none of the Apaches (will go) to the Grand Council. He will not talk about anything but ammunition. He says if they go to the Council all their words will fall to the ground. The white people won't pay any attention to them. Then they persistently demand presents of clothing, etc. E. H offered them tobacco and apples, (but) they said they did not want them, they wanted clothes and thought he might go to the traders and buy some. E. H. told him he did not have money. They said he might go to the trader's and borrow some and pay the trader when the annuity goods came, that they did not expect the goods would be here until winter was over or summer had come and they said it is cold now and they want goods now. They have always been used to have big chiefs give them something when they come. They think it strange we do not give something to them.

Kiowas	1896
Apaches	300
Comanches	<u>2742</u>

	4938
Quahadas	<u>1000</u>

Total 5938

Satanta complains of ammunition being withheld, says that he wants Enoch to tell his Great Father at Washington that if he will move Texas farther off (then) he will not raid there any more, that he wants Camp Supply removed and he wants ammunition. He says they raided last summer because they could not get ammunition. That they think the white people want to fall upon them and destroy them and that is why they will not let them have ammunition. He says he does not want to go to Washington, but wants E. H to tell his Great Father what he says and

then if he will send him some ammunition, perhaps after a while he will go to Washington and see him.

There were Sioux Indians here last summer. Gen. B. H. Grierson believes that the troubles last summer were the result of a preconcerted arrangement between the Sioux and all the plains Indians for a general Indian war. But as Red Cloud went to Washington and the thing was broken up, the difficulties in this vicinity did not amount to much. He seems disposed not to use his soldiers except in extreme necessity.

We dined today (29th) with Gen. Grierson and had much interesting conversation on the subject of the Indians and their management. He proposes to concentrate the troops at Fort Sill. He objects to setting a part of the Kiowa reservation to the Wichita, says all the Indians object to it and that it will lead to difficulty, but that those Indians are welcome to remain, only the Kiowa do not want any of their territory cut off. They will say that next another part will be set off to some other Indians and then another until they will have nothing left. The Wichita (and others) used to live here near these Mountains and consider that this is just the place for them, that it is their home, but are willing to remain on the Washita River.

The Comanche, Caddo, Waco, etc. were located on the Brazos River near Camp Cooper: 99° Long 33' Latitude in 1855, and in 1859 they were driven out of the country by the Texans.

URA, COMANCHE PEOPLE

Thank you, Comanche Voters, who passed our Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation (CLCPC) Budget by nearly 73% in April for the 2010-2011 Fiscal Year. It took a combination of both absentee voters and local voters to bring us to that number. We thank you.

What this tells me is that we have many people out there who understand what we do and hopefully utilize our services. But it also tells me we have some people who don't have a concept of what we do, and have not availed themselves of our services even though our services are FREE to enrolled tribal members.

Our budget this year went from the \$25,000 that it has been since 1993 (except for last year when it was \$30,000) to \$39,000 for fiscal year 2010-2011.

We added additional money to cover production of our Newly Revised Comanche Language Dictionary and the accompanying DVD that we send out with the Dictionary. However, that production cannot start until after October 1, 2010, when the funds are made available to us.

We spent countless hours with our Comanche speakers working on the revised edition of our Dictionary, yet it is always a "works in progress." Dr. Daniel Gelo from the University of Texas at San Antonio was a tremendous help to us.

Of the 34 speakers who have helped us along the way, only 15 are still surviving. Of those, many have health issues and transportation issues so they are not always able to meet with us. But for each moment of help they have given, we are eternally grateful. The fluent Comanche speakers in our tribe are our TRUE Comanche Treasures. And each time we lose one, we lose a wealth of information that is forever lost.

We are not reprinting the list of CDs and DVDs we have made available to tribal members in this newsletter because of the amount of room it takes. But you can get that list from our web site in the April 2010 issue. If you don't have access to a computer, we will

gladly mail out the list to you if you will request it.

We continue to mail out the Beginner's Packets to tribal members. We have the Comanche Hymnal Books that we distribute, along with three CDs that let you listen to the songs as you are learning them.

The only thing we require for you to receive any of the language learning material is that you are an enrolled tribal member and provide your CDIB number and current mailing address. When you provide that, the material is free to you.

We submit a yearly report for the booklet published each year for General Council, and have an annual report printed in the Comanche Nation newspaper to make all tribal members aware of the services we provide.

In April we provided language material for a Comanche family Reunion with 44 different families, 23 of those with children age 12 and under.

Throughout the years we have provided Hymnals to all the Comanche Churches at one time or another. We are happy to do that.

But getting back to what I started out with – thank you, Comanche People. We could not be successful without you.

CHIEF WILD HORSE

*(*Editor's Note: the Chronicles of Comanche County, Spring 1959 issue, page 58, had a story about the dedication of Comanche Chief Wild Horse's Headstone in April of 1959. Ten pages long, the article has the speeches given that day, two photographs and the genealogy of Wild Horse. You can find copies of this publication in the Research Room of the Lawton Public Library. I have taken excerpts from a section titled "Miscellaneous Papers About Wild*

Horse." I left the spelling as it was in the article.)

Dec. 1874: Tabernanica, Red Foot and Cheevers have come in to Fort Sill.

Feb. 1, 1875: Big Bow surrendered with 17 of his people at Ft. Sill, Jan. 28.

April 19, 1875: This afternoon Mowa and Wild Horse came in with 175 men, women and children, 600-800 horses.

Oct. 1875: Kiowa-Comanche Agency Number of People by Bands

Quohada Comanche:

Wild Horse – 114 people

Essie Toit – 33 people

White Eagle – 82 people

Black Beard – 84 people

Mowawa – 57 people

Ka welcone – 57 people

Blue Blanket – 53 people

Naconie Comanches:

Horseback – 122 people

Younicutt – 72 people

White Wolf – 42 people

May 26, 1880: Wild Horse was given permission a week earlier to occupy the old school building near Ft. Sill.

Nov 7, 1890: Authorization to expend no more than \$500 to purchase material and labor for construction of a dwelling for Wild Horse, Comanche Chief.

Feb. 3, 1890: Rev. Joshua, an educated Kiowa Indian, requested permission for Quanah Parker, Black Horse, Wild Horse and White Eagle, chiefs and head-men of the Comanche Indians; and Stumbling Bear, Two Hatchets and Bob Polandt, chiefs and head-men of the Kiowa Indians, to visit Washington this month. They paid their own expenses and took an interpreter.

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