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# NUMU TEKWAPUHA NOMNEEKATU NEWSLETTER

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July-August-September 2006

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The Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee

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Editor: Barbara Goodin

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“Letter From The President”

Haa Marawekæ Næmænææ

Did you know that the Comanche language does not have an alphabet? Well, I want you to know that came as a very big surprise to me. I read that statement in the Anadarko Daily News on June 7, 2006. It seems that we have a linguist that is a member of the Comanche Nation. This Comanche linguist made that statement in the news article. By the way, this article was initiated by this linguist, beating one's own drum, so to speak.

Now the truth of the matter is that this linguist has worked with the CLCPC almost since our beginning. So why would a person make a statement that is totally false, and know that statement is an untruth, because language material has been used by this person that was developed by CLCPC.

Keta isa?aitæ. Aitæ ma.

Now to a more positive subject! The “Learning to Speak Comanche” Project. The families have gone through another evaluation process and the results were very good. All of them have a good understanding of the “Ghost” Alphabet. Aye!

They are dedicated to the principals of the project and are working to accomplish the goals so they will give their children the opportunity to be a Comanche Speaker. Keep the good work up!

Ura  
Ron Red Elk

## PARTNERSHIP

We have been involved in a partnership with the Language Office located in the Comanche Complex to convert VHS tapes to DVD format. Tomah Yeahquo, director, has been very helpful to us in our endeavors. Through the years we have recorded and video taped many activities and events, but now with new technology some of the formats we have used are becoming outdated. After visiting with Tomah and learning she had equipment to convert various formats, we sorted through our material and began having some things converted.

Some of our material dated back to the early 1990s, and some of the people involved in the activities are no longer alive. It is a bitter-sweet experience to view these tapes, but we know their legacy will live on.

We make copies of any of the tapes that Tomah wants for the tribe's collection, so she is building her tribal archives and we are getting our tapes in a more usable format for today's modern equipment.

In the process, we are also making copies for the people who appear in the tapes, and we hope they are enjoying watching them. When the process is completed we plan to make a list of the DVDs for those who might like a copy for themselves.

Some of the more interesting DVDs are a singing held back in 1991 at the Pete Coffey Memorial Church on the grounds of Eagle Park in Cache. The beautiful stained glass windows can be seen in the background, and many of the singers in attendance are no longer with us.

There are parades from various years of the Comanche Nation Fair, Language Training Sessions, trips to Palo Duro and Adobe Walls, plus Paint Rock and Santa Anna, Texas. There is story telling by some of the old story tellers, and tapes of the various sessions from the Cultural Series presented back in 1999. They featured a history of the brush dance, hand games, peyote culture, among other subjects. Very, very interesting.

We'll keep you posted on the progress of this project.

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### **ONÁÁ PROGRAM POW-WOW**

The Tribe's Onáá Program held a pow-wow in April, and the Comanche Language & Cultural Preservation Committee (CLCPC) set up a booth for the event. Throughout the afternoon and early evening, we distributed nearly 50 copies of the 12 minute Children's DVD, and about 100 of the Comanche Flash Cards and Picture Dictionary, in addition to the Comanche Sounds and Spelling System DVD. We also gave away ink pens and bumper stickers that proclaimed "N̄m̄ Tekwap̄." We handed out several brochures that told about our organization and our efforts, hoping to bring awareness to more of our Comanche people.

Onáá means "baby" in Comanche, and we enjoyed seeing all the toddlers, dressed in all their finest regalia, in the arena. What a beautiful sight! Our future! Some of them have barely learned to walk, yet they were out in the arena following hundreds of years of Comanche tradition. Mamas and grandmas were full of pride all around the arena as these little ones danced by.

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### **OK HISTORY CENTER GRAND OPENING**

The Oklahoma History Center formally held its Grand Opening in April, and Kenneth and I traveled to Oklahoma City to represent the CLCPC. Located just east of

the State Capitol, the grounds are beautiful and the building is amazing! We saw just a small portion of the center in the short hour and a half we were there. We plan to go again when we can devote an entire afternoon to touring the various displays.

The Archives are set up different in this building than in the old Oklahoma Historical Society Building, but it seems more user friendly, too. And of course, the staff was very friendly. Of particular interest to me was the Indian Archives, which were housed in the basement at the old building.

It was fun looking at some of the displays and remembering when those "antiques" were what we were using in our homes. The building was nice and cool, and there is even a restaurant on site. It's well worth planning a day to visit because everything you might need is right there.

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### **CONVERSATIONAL DVD**

We have begun work on a second DVD for learning the Comanche language. It is a conversation DVD. We've had positive responses from the first DVD teaching the Comanche Sounds and Spelling System, and hope this will further everyone's education in the Comanche language.

We've enlisted the expertise of three of our speakers to help put this DVD together. We anticipate more teaching DVDs in the future, which will utilize even more of our speakers.

We hope to have copies of the new DVD ready before the Comanche Nation Fair in September. In the meantime, our families involved with the "Learning To Speak Comanche" project will have the first copies to be produced.

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### **COMANCHE NATION COLLEGE**

The Comanche Nation College is growing by leaps and bounds. We are proud to have been a small part in its early years by certifying the first two language teachers,

but we are even more proud that we can provide language learning material for their classes.

Not only do we provide Comanche Dictionaries and Comanche Song Books and CDs, but for this summer session we were able to provide the Comanche Sounds and Spelling System DVD for the students. Hopefully, the Conversational Comanche DVD will be ready for distribution in time for the Fall classes.

We wish our Comanche Nation College continued success for the future. To learn more about them, go to [www.cnc.cc.ok.us](http://www.cnc.cc.ok.us).

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### **BREAKING NEWS !!**

“Researchers in Belgium found that babies who were ‘swaddled’ in a blanket and placed in cribs on their backs slept longer and woke up less often. Other studies show swaddling could help reduce excessive crying and may prevent SIDS. How tightly should one swaddle? Just tight enough so the baby can’t wiggle its arms or legs, but not so tightly that breathing is restricted. Researchers suspect swaddling works partly because the restricted movement keeps babies from waking themselves.”

Duh! Indian people have been “swaddling” their babies for hundreds of years! Finally the non-Indian has discovered swaddling. Kind of like they “discovered” American, huh?

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From the Doris Duke Collection of oral histories from the Western History Collection at the University of Oklahoma in Norman: Interview with John Chibitty on August 30, 1967. Background information for Mr. Chibitty reads: “John Chibitty is a full blood Comanche and lives west of Porter Hill, Oklahoma. He is married to Dana Joyce Chibitty, who is also a full blood Comanche. His English is good considering his education only went as far as

the fourth grade. He has four children and is a member of the Methodist Church.”

Q: What is your name?

JC: My name is John Chibitty.

Q: You say you were born right around in this area? Where exactly?

JC: I was born down there at Lake Latonka. That’s where I was born...at the bottom of the lake.

Q: Did you have many people in your family?

JC: Yeah, I have my father, and mother, and grandma, and my sister and myself.

Q: What was your father’s name?

JC: My father’s name was Chibitty. “Chibitah.”

Q: Is that the right way to pronounce it?

JC: Yeah, that’s the right way – but it’s different from the way I had when I was in school. Spelled different. Where I went to school they said that was the right way to spell the name.

Q: What about your mother’s name, what was that?

JC: My mother’s name was -----\*

(\*according to the 1901 Family Records, his mother is listed as Her-nas-che).

Q: Were they both Comanche?

JC: Yeah, both of them were Comanche.

Q: Now let’s see, you said your grandmother lived with you?

JC: Yeah, we all living together.

Q: What was her name?

JC: -----\*, my grandmother’s name. Oh, they got long names. (\*the 1901 Family Records shows the only living grandmother at that time was Tassy-rappi, his father’s mother.)

Q: What did it mean, your grandmother’s name?

JC: Well, I just can’t tell you what it means.

Q: What about Chibitty? What does it mean?

JC: It seems to me like you say now – you holding something. “Chibitty” is like...holding something. The right way to spell my dad’s name is different but they

want to spell it the way they do now. It's supposed to be C-H-I-B-E-T-A. That's the way it's supposed to be. "Chibeta." Yeah.

Q: I heard that the Comanche people had a lot of tribes. I've heard of "Yapai," for one and "Kwaharæ." Was your family any one of the different tribes of Comanches?

JC: Yeah, my tribe is Yapai.

Q: Does that have a meaning?

JC: Well, I just don't know what it means. That's what they call "Yapai." In some ways they were different...the Comanches were different.

Q: What other ones were there?

JC: There's quite a few. Some of them called "Penatæka."

Q: What school did you go to?

JC: Cache Creek Mission. I was graduated in the fourth grade. That's as far as they went.

Q: I talked to Mary Paofpybitty the other day and she said she went (to school) over there.

JC: Yeah, we was in there. Some of them was about my age I guess. That's the way it was, before my dad work there. We waited around here all the time.

Q: What did your father do? Did he have land that he worked or did he have a lease man?

JC: No, there was no lease man in them times. There wasn't too many lands, this place right through here was open in them days. There wasn't no white people around here working.

Q: Did he have horses or cattle?

JC: Yeah, he had lots of cattle, horses...lots of horse. Lots of Indian ponies.

Q: Where did he get them?

JC: Well, I just don't know. I seen (them) when I grewed up. They ain't like the big horses, they small horses.

Q: Did you like to ride horses when you were younger?

JC: Yeah, my brother and me, "Knocks." (Correct Comanche spelling is "Naki," and it means "ears") Where we lived, we used to have wooden corrals. We (would) drive just

one, two year old colt. We see whoever could ride them. Little ones.

Q: Did you all break your own horses?

JC: Yeah, we break our own horse (in) them days.

Q: Was there any special way to do that, or did you just get on them until they throwed you off?

JC: We get on them and they just throw us off. He'll tell me to get on again. We catch one and then he get on it and we catch another one and we get on it. That's the way we do with them colts.

Q: Did you have any special things you did to help break them?

JC: Well, we had to catch them with a rope. You can't catch them without no rope, you know...wild ones.

Q: Did they brand them in any way?

JC: We had a brand...my father had a brand made like an arrow. (\*transcript shows a drawing of a short arrow pointing up) Just like this. Like an arrow. That's the brand we had on them horses (and) cattle.

Q: Back when you were young, did your family ever go into Fort Sill?

JC: Yeah, we go down to Fort Sill when they have them big doings down there. They used to be a big race track right there. We used to camp right along the edge of that timber where them houses (were). Then we used to go down towards them filling stations, across the railroad tracks. That's where most all the Indians used to camp.

Q: Did you bet on the races when you used to race?

JC: I was just about 9 or 10 years old when they was having those races. They must have paid them. I wasn't too old then.

Q: How old were you when you first rode a horse?

JC: Oh, I was right around 14 or 15 years old when I started riding those wild horses.

Q: Breaking (them)?

JC: Yeah. That brother of mine...we would break and drive the horses. We'd catch one and he'd say, "You ride this one." If I don't ride it, he'd make me ride it!

Q: Was he your older brother?

JC: Yeah, he was older than I am. One time he was catching them, he caught one and told me to get on it. I got on there. All we had to do was get hold of the manes, that's all we do. He wouldn't give you no rope or nothing. And the one I was riding got away...jumped over the gate and run off.

Q: While you were still on it?

JC: Yeah, still holding on...across the creek. My dad and my brother, they had to run after me and rope that horse.

Q: Did you say you have a sister in your family?

JC: Yeah, I have a sister.

Q: Was she younger than you were?

JC: Yeah, she was younger than I was. She used to live out here, too. Down there across the road.

Q: You were talking about your older brother, did you and he have any kind of special games you liked to play, do you have any stories about him?

JC: No, we don't hardly play any kind of games. He comes around from his home up here to break horses with me.

Q: About how big were you when you first went to school?

JC: Seven.

Q: You said you went to Cache Creek?

JC: Yeah, Cache Creek Mission.

Q: And graduated in four years?

JC: Yeah, I graduated from fourth grade. (Laughs.)

Q: How was that school? Can you tell me about it?

JC: Well, mostly what they taught was the Bible. When I went to school there, in the mornings we got to (do) school work then. We have meeting so long and then after that they have their school work.

Q: What kinds of things did they teach there? In your school work?

JC: Well, they teach us mostly what they learn now. Arithmetic, reading. That's what they teach us.

Q: Could you speak English when you first went to school?

JC: Nah, I didn't know what it was.

Q: How long did it take you to learn?

JC: Well, it took me quite a while to learn how to talk English. They learn me how to talk it.

Q: Did your teacher speak Comanche?

JC: Nah. I had long hair when I went in and they cut it off.

Q: Did you like going to school or did you want to be someplace else?

JC: The first time I didn't like it. You know you can't help it when they put you in, but after I got used to it, it was alright.

Q: Did you have to dress a certain way while you were there?

JC: Yeah, we had uniforms for a while. Then the government just quit giving it to them. We had uniforms when I went, some of them little short knee pants.

Q: What did you do after the fourth grade? Let's see, you were about 11 or 12 years old, right?

JC: I didn't do too much. I didn't go to school then.

Q: Was your father and mother still alive?

JC: Yeah, they was still alive.

Q: Did you live with them when you got out of school?

JC: Well, when my father died I was still in school, and I was married when my mother died.

Q: How old were you when you got married?

JC: I was 30 years old.

Q: Did you have any jobs between the time you got out of school and the time you got married?

JC: Sometimes I worked in the harvest fields, thrashing field. Pitch hay to them...them big old thrashing machines. They use four men to take grain into the thrashing, four men – two on each side.

Q: How much did you get paid for that?

JC: \$1 – something like that.

Q: Did you have any other kind of job?

JC: Back during the World War I, I worked at the (Rock) Crusher. I worked there five years.

Q: Did you go in World War I or World War II?

JC: No, I didn't go. I was Class 4 when World War I was going on...I was too old for World War II.

Q: What church do you go to now?

JC: I go to the Methodist Church here.

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An interview with Sarah Pohocsucut, dated March 5, 1968. Background information reads: Sarah Pohocsucut was born in 1896. She has lived in Comanche County all of her life. She was seven years old when Lawton, OK, came into existence as a small tent town which was about a mile from where they were living at that time. Her father was Comanche Jack, early day United States Deputy Marshal before Statehood.

### **FATHER HELPS CAPTURE HORSE THIEVES**

My father told me that one time he was summoned to the Indian office and was told that he was going to be included in the posse that was going after these thieves, white men, I guess. They went west after them, and finally, way out on the plains, they came to a dugout. The rest of the posse was running after the horses that was corralled there.

I imagine there was a guard that saw the people coming, and told the people that were in the dugout eating their meal. So they got out and got away. The posse came to this dugout, and another deputy told my father, "You go in and see." So he went down in the dugout, he kicked the door open and there was a big commotion in there. He thought they were in there, but there was a big old cat jumped and tore something down.

Well, he saw the table and said they just got through eating. Where they went, we don't know.

When they got out and went on farther, a few miles up the creek, they got them. They

had a fight there, killing each other. I don't know how many they killed but they got the horses all back and brought them to Fort Sill.

Those were Indian horses that the Government got the Indians and then told them to turn over their horses. They had them corralled somewhere and the white men took them, stole them, and was taking them west. They killed some of the men and brought some of them back as prisoners.

### **WENT WITH FATHER TO GUTHRIE IN A STAGE COACH**

Many times I went on trips as a little girl. One day my father was subpoenaed to go to Guthrie, wherever that was. I was too little to understand. We went on a stagecoach from Fort Sill to Guthrie, Oklahoma.

When they were having court, I sat there and looked around. I didn't know what was going on, but when they got through, this man came to my father and slapped him on the back and said, "Well, hello, Comanche. I haven't seen you for a long time, ever since we fought the outlaw men many times." They stopped and shook hands and talked about what they did years ago.

I have witnessed a lot of things, because I shook hands with Wyatt Earp. I think he was a wonderful man – a wonderful lawman. Many times I have talked to a lot of men like that and I always thought what wonderful people they were.

### **HOW INDIAN GIRLS WERE TAUGHT TO DO THINGS**

Girls were taught to cook and taught to sew something, and they were trained to tan hides and put up teepees and pack the travois. They were taught to sew shoes – moccasins they called them – and learned a lot of things that a woman could do.

They could go to the creek and bring their wood on their backs. Lot of things that we learned to do was just like going to

school. So we are just as human as anybody that could be taught.

All the things the Indians do is what they learned from the old people. We are a race of people that God made and we are here to live the way we like to live, on the prairie.

But the white man got us and put us in houses and learned to do what every they tell us to do. Lota things like sewing and cooking and learning how to write.

My wishes are that all my children learn the white way because they are going to live with the white people. The old Indian ways are gone. I am an old lady and I will live my life the way I want, because I am almost through with this world.

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### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(\*please note: because of methane gas and mold found in the Higher Education Building at the Comanche Complex, many organizational meetings are being scheduled elsewhere that would normally meet at the Complex.)

**Tuesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>:** Monthly Business Meeting of the CLCPC, 6:30 p.m., Cahoma Building west of Cache.

**Tuesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>:** Shoshone Reunion Planning Meeting, 6:30 p.m. Comanche Nation College.

**Tuesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>:** Monthly Business Meeting of the CLCPC, 6:30 p.m., Complex Gymnasium.

**Tuesday, August 8<sup>th</sup>:** Shoshone Reunion Planning Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

**Monday-Wednesday, September 25-27<sup>th</sup>:** Shoshone Nations Reunion, Comanche Complex.

**Thursday-Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup>-October 1<sup>st</sup>:** Comanche Nation Fair, Comanche Complex Grounds.

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### 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. \$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 "N̄m̄m̄ Tekwap̄" 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).*

*Note: We give discounts to enrolled Comanche tribal members.*