

FARRAR NEWS, OCTOBER 1998, INSERT

The following article was written by Joseph V. Farrar, Jr. (Newsletter Editor) as an insert to the October 1998 Newsletter. The article is a follow up on the Article of Interest for January 1998 in which Mr. Farrar detailed his search for the connection between the Indian Chief Quanah Parker, and the Farrar family. The article is also the completion of a question posed to readers in an earlier edition of the Newsletter.

Quanah Parker

With this issue we bring our Quanah poser competition to a close. Although not one essay was submitted, therefore no money winner, your editor is aware some of you did do a little research, a little reading, even waltzed the Web. That was the intent; to bestir a little interest, learn a little history, see where we fit and how it touches us.

Quanah, as we see from our research, is not in our line. He is, as best can be determined, in the line of Isaiah (Ike) Farrar, of Flat Creek, Bedford County, Tennessee, who descends through James Franklin Farrar, also of Flat Creek. James Franklin Farrar married (2) Sara Jane Parker, 13 October 1859, daughter of Joseph and Faner (Howard) Parker, also of Flat Creek. Folklore has it that all previous records concerning this Parker family have been lost due to courthouse and home fires, etc.

It is known a John Parker, a stern, God fearing preacher with an extended family and a following, moved into Bedford County in the early 1800's, stayed a spell, then moved to Cole County, Illinois and, later still, to the fringes of the Texas frontier in 1833 where they built their large, palisaded encampment, Fort Parker, now a State Park.

It was here in 1835 the Indians raided, killing, maiming, ransacking, and taking six captives. Cynthia Ann Parker, ten years old, daughter of Silas and Lucinda (Duty) Parker, granddaughter to the old patriarch John, was one of them. As a slave she suffered much physical torment but was later adopted by an Indian family. At this tender age she quickly adapted to the Indian culture and lost her Anglo heritage. During this period numerous failing attempts were made to locate her. When eventually found it was too late. She had married a young warrior chief, Peta Nocano, and refused repatriation. They had three children: Pecos, Quanah, and Prairie Flower. Little is known of Pecos. It is thought he died as a young warrior.

Quanah earned his warrior status as a youth going on many raids. Due to his prowess and leadership abilities he soon attained followers then, later, his own tribe as a warrior chief. They fought for survival, to save their Comanche culture and their hunting grounds, the Comancheria.

During the mid to late 1800's, when the US government was rounding up all the Plains Indians and forcing them onto reservations, Quanah and his tribe fought on with no intention of surrender. In 1860 Quanah had his tribe in winter camp along the Pease river in NW Texas. Winter ... when the Indians did not raid. Food was scarce. Most of the buffalo had been slaughtered by the Whites. On 18 December, when Quanah and most of his braves were away hunting meat, with only old men, women and children

remaining in camp, the Rangers and their cohorts struck. Slaughter followed. Cynthia Ann, with Prairie Flower in her arms, fleeing on horseback, almost shot by her pursuer when, losing her winter cape, he realized she was not Indian, taking her alive. Later relatives were notified and they came to return her. Cynthia Ann was in deep depression not knowing what happened to her husband and son. Within two years Prairie Flower died of a sickness. In grief and loneliness Cynthia Ann died soon after.

Quanah and his large tribe (approximately 20,000) continued their defiance of the Great White Father. But, with the rapid insertion of settlers and the Army sweeping clean the Comancheria, they were fighting a lost cause. In the cold winter of 1874/75 with his tribe dwindled (approximately 1,000), sick and starving, he offered to bring them in, which he was allowed to do and on his own terms.

Quanah, always a leader, rapidly learned the white man's language. He was continued as the primary Chief and acting intermediary between the Indian Agency and the Tribes. He organized an Indian police force and was generally successful keeping the young and hyperactive braves docile and learning to be gardeners and raisers of meat rather than hunter and nomadic free roving souls; at the same time striving to maintain the basic Indian culture. It was during this period he became friendly with prominent cattle barons and, with the backing of the local Indian Agency, leased reservation lands for the grazing of their cattle; thus generating extra monies for the Tribes. He built huge Star House with separate rooms for each of his seven wives. He also built his Railroad. A short line that originated in Quanah, a town in NW Texas, just off the reservation, named in his honor, and terminated in Fort Worth.

Quanah also made many trips to Washington, sometimes under the auspices of the local Indian Agency, sometimes of the cattle barons, to lobby for their interest, but, to Quanah, always in the interest of the Indians. he was befriended by President Theodore Roosevelt, whom Quanah invited out for a hunt. This well known great outdoorsman took him up on it.

Early on during this period Quanah first learned of his white heritage and accepted his mothers name, Parker, as his surname. Concerned, he made numerous writing attempts to contact his white relatives. Eventually learning of her demise he, later still and with help, was able to have her bones disinterred and re-buried on the reservation.

Quanah, diligent and unswerving in all his efforts; normally wearing the white man's garb, black suit and tie; donning Indian regalia for Council Meetings and other special and festive occasions; was befriended by most and respected by all. On 23 February 1911, shortly after returning to Star House from a business trip, complaining of chest pains, he died, lying on a couch while being administered to ... with his boots off.

Quanah now, with his mother, Cynthia Ann, and his sister, Prairie Flower, lie beneath large granite monuments in the chief's Knoll in the Post Cemetery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Quanah ... the last great Chief of the Comanche.

Joe Farrar