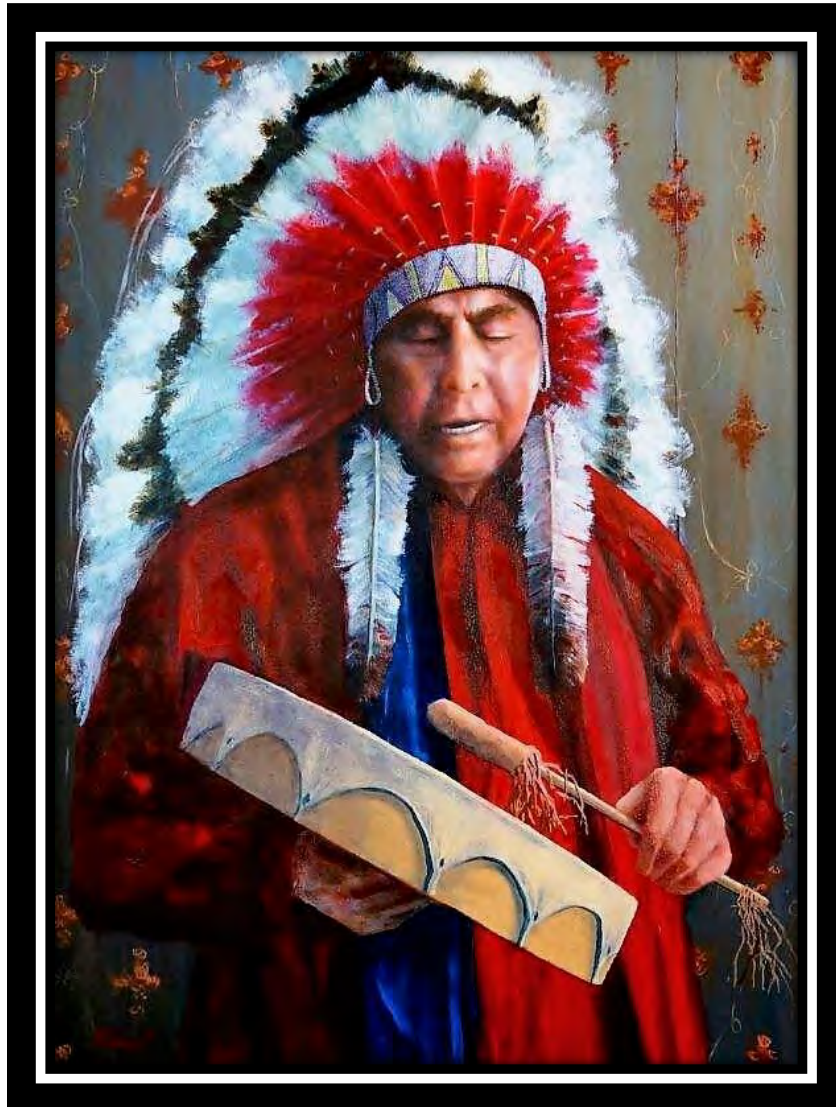


Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation



On the Edge!



Portrait of Don Parker, Great Grandson of Quanah Parker

Artist, David Townsend



David Townsend

Many of you know David Townsend, manager of Partners' Gallery, located in the Visitor's Center in Palo Duro Canyon State Park. However, many of you may not know that David is an accomplished artist with numerous awards recognizing his work, especially as a painter of portraits.

You may not know, as well, that David is also a descendent of Cherokee and Choctaw ancestry. Or that he lived on the Navajo reservation as a young boy and has maintained numerous friendships among the Navajo, Hopi, and Zuni peoples. Or that he was adopted into the Parker family as a brother on June 9, 2012, by Don Parker, great grandson of Quanah Parker. David's Comanche name is Tabe Kwi Ne (Sun Eagle).

The ceremonial ritual consisted of a cedar burning ceremony with Don Parker singing Comanche songs and a prayer said in Comanche by Buster Parker's wife

Marguerita Parker. The ceremony was held in Quanah Parker's room at the Star House, Quanah Parker's home, in Cache, Oklahoma.

In an interview with David recently, I asked him to reminisce about some of his memories concerning the Parker family. The following is a paraphrase of David's response:

As many know, Star House, Quanah Parker's home, is in very bad physical condition due to neglect by the previous and current owners. I was invited by Bruce Parker and Ardith Parker, great grandchildren of Quanah Parker, to attend a special prayer breakfast and assessment of the house by engineers and tribal leaders. It was to be, as well, a meeting ground to try to raise funds for repairs on the historical home.

I was introduced that morning by Bruce, as a member and spokesman for Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation, to bring moral and prayer support from the Foundation for Star House. I was unable to attend a second prayer breakfast later that summer. The outcome of the prayer breakfast is yet to be determined.

I have been invited and attended for twelve years the Annual Cowboy Symposium in Lubbock to participate with the Parker descendants as a member of the Quanah Parker Society, as well as a surrogate for Palo Duro Canyon and events having to do with the Canyon Gallery and Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation. This includes selling items from the Gallery.

Last June, at the invitation of the Parker family, I attended a workshop sponsored by the Texas Historical Association, at Old Mobeetie, focusing on the Red River Wars, with keynote speaker, Michael Grouer, curator for Panhandle Plains Historical Museum. Attending also was Tai Kreider, Historian and Deputy Director of

Southwest Collections at Texas Tech University. Dr. Holle Humphries, independent research professional at Texas Tech, descendants of Quanah Parker, and others.

This event was led by these historians who discussed ways in which we can improve our historical attractions on the Texas High Plains, including area museums.

Outdated historical information, wordage, and phrasing used in displays need to be evaluated, some of which were used for political gain in the past. These elements need to be made more appropriate with up-to-date new findings and research.

Our museum at the Visitor's Center has a few outdated displays. I am in the process of producing a higher quality video of one of our most popular videos at no cost to Partners. The producers of this video will make money on volume sales. (**Editor's note:** the developer of the video died in an automobile accident before the video was completed.)

I had the honor at this workshop to assist, with a Parker descendent, a cedar blessing ceremony of all the participants.

The Quanah Parker Trail is a special initiative launched by the Texas Plains Trail Region to celebrate a unique history of our area. I have had the opportunity over the last five years to participate in several locations around the Panhandle in ceremonies and dedications of the giant arrows to commemorate places that Quanah and the Lords of the Plains frequented. One arrow is located near the entrance to Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

I was invited summer before last by the Parker descendants to a dinner and presentation at the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce and United Methodist Church. Along with Quanah's descendants, I was

given a pin by the West Texas Historical Association and the Tilla Paugh Public History Fund for work and participation on the Quanah Parker Trail Project.

(Pause)

"Is this enough?"

Yes, David! I'm overwhelmed, and I've run out of space. *Cf*



**Shannon Blalock
Park Superintendent**

After Thanksgiving each year, we take a deep breath. The days get shorter, but the work lists get longer, and the Park staff charges ahead to prepare for the next busy season. We finally have time to make improvements and get organized. This year has been no different, but it does seem that the "slow season" was shorter than normal, and the word *slow* might have been a stretch.

The 2017 busy season is upon us. Special event applications are coming in, programming is in full swing, and the weekends are already picking up. We are

trending toward having yet another “busiest season” yet.

Early on in my career as a Park Superintendent, I used to get a little amped up with anxiety right about this time each year, but I don’t anymore. I often wonder about what is different now. I’ve decided the difference has a lot to do with experience, but it also has a lot to do with the people I’m surrounded by. Park staff at Palo Duro Canyon State Park are truly the best of the best. The people I work with are constantly working to improve the Park and their own skillsets.

During our downtime this year alone, we spent time together at Lake Meredith National Recreation Area learning about interpretation. We attended a Cultural Resource class, and attended the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum to learn more about the cultural history of Palo Duro Canyon. We went through a Communications and Team Building Workshop, and we attended a Landing Zone class. We did all this in an effort to be better people, which, in turn, makes us better stewards of Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

Governor Abbot announced a hiring freeze that could have had a dramatic impact on our peak-season operations, but no one overreacted. The team, Partners, concessionaires, and our volunteers brainstormed options, and put together Plans A, B and C. We’ve since learned that we will be able, after all, to hire limited seasonal help, but even if this hadn’t come to fruition, we would have been all right.

It is so reassuring to know that no matter what comes our way, we will get through it TOGETHER. When you have a group of people working towards the same goals with unbridled passion, they are

unstoppable, and unstoppable we certainly are.

Thank you for your continued support of Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Happy Spring everyone! *Sb*



PDCSP staff at Alibates National Monument

Photo by Shannon Blalock



Shannon Blalock

AJ Davis, Palo Duro Canyon Lead Ranger, Hospitalized

AJ Davis has served as the Lead Ranger of Palo Duro Canyon State Park since September 2014. He began his career with the State Park Division of Texas Parks & Wildlife Department at Dinosaur Valley State Park in July 2012.

On February 3, 2017, AJ experienced a cardiac event that led to a vehicle accident off of I-27 south of Canyon, Texas. Life-saving measures were taken within minutes of the accident, and AJ was transported to Northwest Hospital in Amarillo.

On Monday, February 6, 2017, his family had him moved to a hospital in Arlington, Texas, so that he could be surrounded by the love and support of his family.

AJ is walking and talking and continues to make positive progress each day. He has no memory of his life before the accident.

Prayers for cognitive improvement are needed and appreciated. He is deeply loved by so many, including his family at Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

(Editor’s note: The cruise control on AJ’s pickup was on when AJ suffered his cardiac event. Three miracles occurred: AJ’s unconscious body somehow released the cruise control; a young man, Brett Phillips, heading to a basketball game in Happy, Texas, followed the slowing, erratically moving pickup until it stopped against a fence post, then waved down an oncoming vehicle for help; the occupants of the vehicle were Shannon and Andy, Shannon’s, husband, and they immediately began life-saving treatment.)



AJ Davis



**Jeff Davis
Park Interpreter**

Volunteerism and the CCC

The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, asked, “What is the essence of life?” and then answered his own question: “To serve others and to do good.” English statesman, Winston Churchill stated, “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” Putting an even finer point on the matter, physicist Albert Einstein once said, “Only a life lived for others is a life worth living.”

As one of the largest, busiest and most successful state parks in all of Texas, Palo Duro Canyon State Park is an amazing place. But we are only able to reach the levels of greatness that we do thanks to our many dedicated volunteers. From staffing the Visitor Center to cleaning restrooms, to building and maintaining trails, to helping our visitors from around the world, our volunteers have a hand in nearly every aspect of the running and stewarding of the Park. They are a vital part of our team.

To encourage ever more volunteerism, the Park has recently created the Canyon Conservation Corps [not to be confused with the Civilian Conservation Corps created during the Great Depression]. We

hope to build a standing group of interested and motivated volunteers who will help serve Palo Duro Canyon State Park on a regular basis. To get involved, simply join the group on Facebook at [https://www.facebook.com/groups/CanyonC](https://www.facebook.com/groups/CanyonConservation)
[onservation](https://www.facebook.com/groups/CanyonConservation).

Volunteering is one of humanity's greatest goods. Time is the one resource that we have an absolute finite amount of, and choosing selflessly to give some of it for the benefit of others is good for the organization, good for the beneficiaries, and even better for the volunteers themselves.

Join us!

(**Editor's note:** Jeff Davis and AJ Davis are not related.)



Forty-five miles to the 19th Century

Forty-five miles east of Amarillo lies the small town of Goodnight. If you are familiar with the history of the Texas Panhandle and Palo Duro Canyon, the name is no mystery to you. Charles Goodnight, Texas Ranger, trail blazer with Oliver Loving (Goodnight-Loving Trail), founder of the first ranch in

the Texas Panhandle and Palo Duro Canyon, preserver of the plains bison (with prompting from wife, Mary Ann (Molly), and, and—the list goes on.

A replica of Goodnight's first home, a dugout, is located in Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Another replica is located near the Goodnight House south of Highway 287 at Goodnight, Texas. And it is of the Goodnight House that I write.

Many of you know that the home that Goodnight and Mary Ann lived in during their last years has been recently restored. A new visitor center has been built with modern displays and historical information about the Goodnights and the JA Ranch, named after John Adair, an English financier, who provided the financing for the ranch.

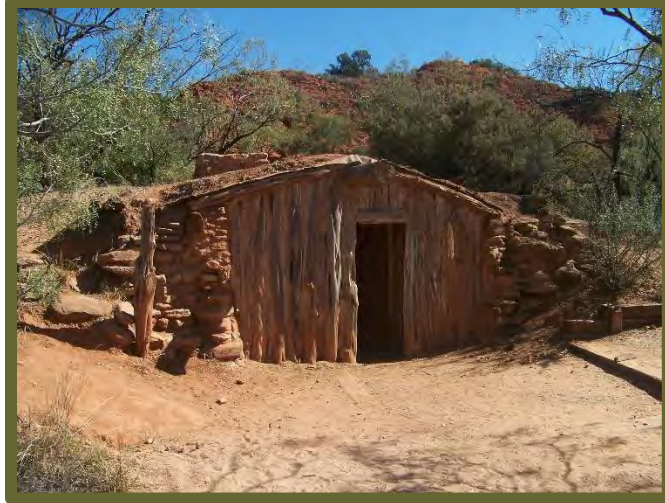
The restoration of the house came about when a group of volunteers with the Armstrong County Museum located in Claude, Texas, raised funds for the restoration. Led by Montie Goodin, who was born on the ranch and whose mother was the housekeeper for the Goodnights, Anne Christian, and other dedicated volunteers, the money was collected without the museum going into debt.

Tours of the house and grounds are led by local residents who are exceptionally knowledgeable about the history of the house, the grounds, and the area. Information is available at (855) 880-6499.

Approximately a mile east of the town of Goodnight is the local cemetery where Charles and Mary Ann are buried. If you should visit the grave site, you will find a quaint, unique little burial ground that is, in itself, worth visiting. You should go to both.

Cf





Goodnight Dugout



Goodnight House (Before Restoration)



Goodnight House After Restoration
Photos by Editor



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**“Memory”
David Townsend**

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