

Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation
Issue No. 43

On the Edge!



Photo by Katharina Siemens

**Ron Parker and Carol Williams
The Birthplace of Quanah Parker**

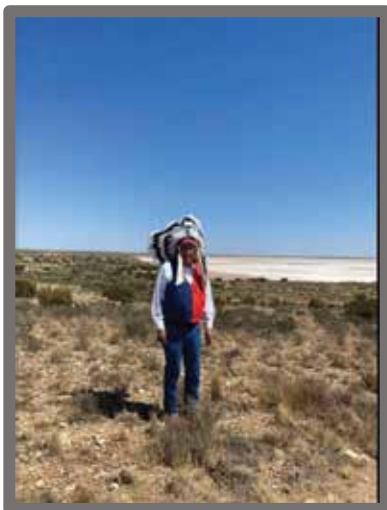
Editor's Note: Much of the following information was taken from the Seminole Sentinel. Photos courtesy of Katharina Siemens. **Carol Williams is on the Board of Partner's in Palo Duro.**
Inscription on monument erected by the State of Texas in 1936

It reads:

CEDAR LAKE
OR LAGUNA SABINAS ^ LARGEST
ALKALI LAKE ON PLAINS ^ OLD INDIAN CAMP AND
BURIAL SITE ^ BIRTHPLACE OF QUANAH
PARKER ^ A SKIRMISH BETWEEN INDIANS
AND UNITED STATES CAVALRY UNDER
COMMAD OF LIEUTENANT JOHN L. BULLIS
TOOK PLACE HERE IN OCTOBER. 1875

The property is owned by Carol Williams. Cedar Lake, where the monument is located, is near Seagraves, Texas. Ron Parker was there to commemorate the birthplace of his Great Grandfather, Quanah Parker. Also represented were the local governments and the Seminole Sentinel. Carol and husband, Doug Messer, were in attendance as well.

Ron is believed to be the first of Quanah's descendants to visit the birthplace of his great grandfather.



Native American Heritage Month at Palo Duro Canyon
By
Bradley Kliemann, Park Interpreter

November is Native American Heritage Month. Although it will be December by the time you're reading this, anytime of year is a great time to celebrate the heritage of the lands we stand on and the contributions of Native American and indigenous peoples on the places we live and work in. Through its 30 plus years of history, Native American History Month has provided a way to celebrate the contributions of these individuals all across the continent.

Over 100 years ago, Native American Heritage Month began as a single-day celebration to celebrate the “First Americans.” The very first statewide celebration of what was known as “American Indian Day” at the time, occurred on the second Saturday in May 1916 by New York Governor, Charles S. Whitman. Many states continued this trend through the century, and several states continue the trend of having a regular day dedicated to celebrating Native American Heritage, oftentimes on or near Columbus Day. However, it wasn’t until 1960 when November was dedicated Native American Heritage Month at the federal level.

This year, the Department of the Interior chose “Revitalizing Indigenous Connections” the theme for this year’s Native American Heritage Month: “They have committed to the theme with their historic renaming effort (removing ‘sq_”), by protecting ancestral homelands, preserving native languages, using transparent and accountable policing practices, facilitating respectful return of artifacts and remains, keeping waste sources clean, building climate resistance, focusing on culturally significant healthy eating habits, and connecting tribal communities through the internet.” While all of us as individuals may not be able to implement all these changes, we can still be advocates for these same initiatives in our own circles.

Besides being advocates for “Revitalizing Indigenous Connections,” we can celebrate Native American History Month in the Panhandle of Texas by remembering the people who roamed the plains before us. From groups, such as the Folsom and Clovis people groups to the Kiowa Apaches and Comanches who became feared warriors among the tall, yellow

grasses, people have seen Palo Duro Canyon as sacred ground and a place of solace and refuge. By keeping our canyon in pristine shape, we celebrate Native American Heritage Month, keeping our canyon the sacred place it is to so many.



**Bradley Kliemann
Park Interpreter**



Ron Parker



Lisa Jackson
Partners Board Member

A Texas Tornado and the CCC

It was a bright and sunny morning when the first company of Civilian Construction Corps (CCC) enrollees arrived at their new campsite situated on the rim of Palo Duro Canyon. They came under Franklin Delano Roosevelt's CCC program to build Palo Duro State Park. The initial three CCC companies, consisting of two hundred war veterans each, arrived on 12, July, 1933.

Arriving first, a company mustered out of Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, began the arduous task of erecting Sibley-styled tents for their company's temporary housing. These surplus and musty WWI era tents, with a singular, central ridge pole, housed twenty-five men each.

While the campsite construction began, two more CCC companies arrived later in the afternoon. One can only imagine the impression the Texas Panhandle made upon these men, who came from Houston,

Beaumont, Orange, and Port Aransas. Along the way to their destination, their transports passed through fairly monotonous plains before arriving to the point when the featureless landscape broke away, revealing a kaleidoscope of the color and interesting rock formations of Palo Duro Canyon.

Unfortunately, the sunny Panhandle day turned into a serious weather event during the afternoon. As the men from South Texas arrived, a small tornado ripped through the newly constructed campsite, forcing men to dodge falling ridge poles and debris. In all, thirteen men suffered minor injuries. The two most severe injuries consisted of one man's broken arm and another who suffered lacerations caused when the storm's fury propelled him into a barb-wire fence.

Amazingly enough, the U.S. Army served the first evening meal on time for six hundred men despite the earlier disarray of the camp. This event served as a testament to the determination and efficiency of Army personnel and CCC enrollees.

The introduction of the CCC enrollees to the awe-inspiring canyon and the fury of a Texas Tornado, all in one day, made their initiation to the Texas Panhandle complete. *Lj*



Sibley Tent



**Jack Sorenson
(Read on)**

Jack Sorenson, local artist, Son of the Palo Duro, and long-time supporter of Partners in Palo Duro Canyon has this past year been invited to become a member of Cowboy Artists of America. This is the highest honor an artist of western art can achieve. Cowboy Artists of America is limited to twenty-five members and membership is by invitation only.

Jack began his career by being born and reared on the rim of Palo Duro Canyon. As a young man, he was a horse trainer (not bronco buster) and trained more than ninety horses to become polite members of society. His father, Jim Sorenson, said that he had never seen anyone who could gentle a horse as smoothly and as well as his son. In some circles he would probably be described as a “horse whisperer because of his extraordinary way with horses.

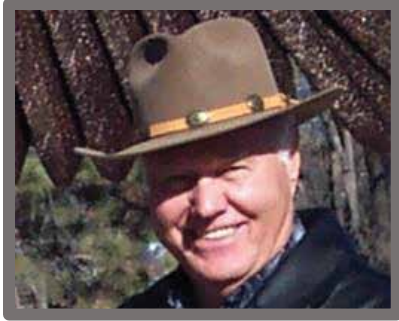
At a relatively young age, Jack was riding his horse alongside a road near Palo Duro Canyon when he was stopped by a local artist who asked Jack to pose for him. After seeing the result of the artist’s work, Jack said to himself, “I can do that.” And he did!

Partner’s is proud to have Jack as our devoted partner. Each year he contributes a painting for raffle at our annual dinner in November. The lucky winner has an artwork worth two to three times more than its value before Jack became a member of Cowboy Artists of America. *Cf*

Way to go, Jack!



Christmas Rush
By
Jack Sorenson



Editor' Notebook

The loneliest Christmas Eve I have ever spent was in 1955 in the Paris, France, railroad station. My buddy and I were returning to the 30th Taam Army airfield near Hoppstaden, Germany. I was an army airplane mechanic and Jerry was a helicopter mechanic, and instead of taking our Christmas leave to go home, we decided to see as much of Europe as we could while we were stationed there courtesy of Uncle Sam.

We were returning to Germany from Spain. We had purchased roundtrip tickets before we had left Hoppstaden—a wise decision. We had spent time in Paris on our way to Barcelona to visit the *Moulin Rouge* and *Folies Bergere*. (Lena Horne was the star attraction at the *Moulin Rouge*.)

After spending a week in Barcelona seeing the sights and other attractions, we arrived in Paris on Christmas Eve. Our train to Germany didn't leave until Christmas morning. We had just enough money to eat a sandwich and drink what passed for Coca Cola for our Christmas Eve dinner. We spent the night sleeping on a concrete, railroad bench.

Remembering that night in 1955 and thinking of Indian Heritage Month (November), I began to contemplate: What was December 25 to the Comanche, Cheyenne, and Kiowa Apache who spent

their winters in Palo Duro Canyon? Just another day, I suspect.

According to Wikipedia, the Comanche did not believe in a creator god; They believed they were descended from animals, such as the wolf. For the modern Comanche, many have an abiding faith in God and his Son. However, the Comanche have not abandoned their tribal rituals. I have been blessed twice in the Comanche language by a great grandson of Quanah Parker, Don Parker, blessed with an eagle feather and cedar smoke because of my military service. This ceremonial act I cherish, even though I am not a member of the Comanche people.

I assume that Native Americans observe the birth of Christ as a universal event, not a tribal custom of other Americans. All of us celebrate the 25th of December as the time when Jesus was born into this world. It is a good time to celebrate His birth, even though we don't really know His real birth date. After all, it isn't the day we observe; it is the birth.

To my Native American friends, my fellow members of Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation, my fellow Board members and Palo Duro Canyon State Park staff, and to all the peoples of the world, I wish you the "peace that passes all understanding."

A special message to my wife and family: I love you. *Cf*

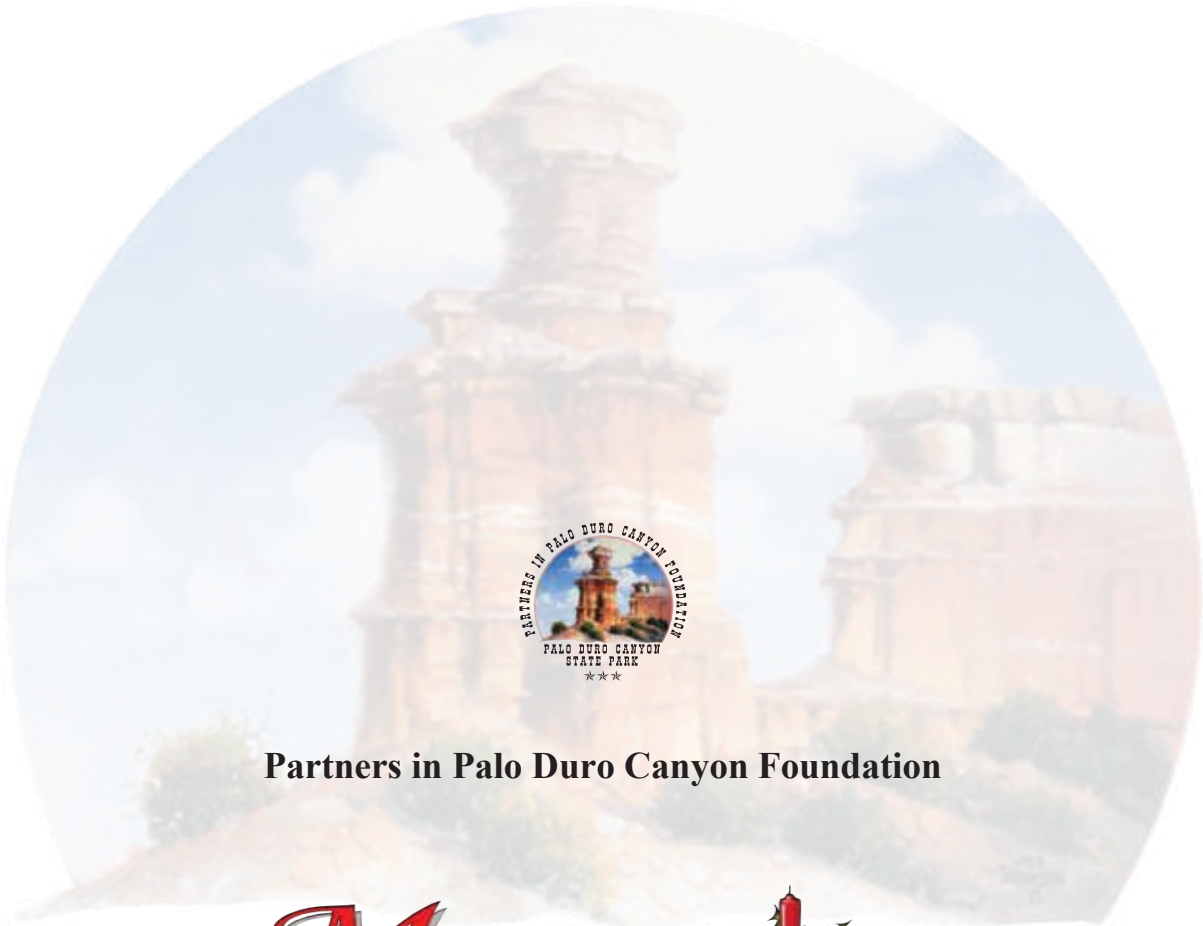


Photo by
David Townsend



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Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation

Merry  
Christmas

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