

Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation

Issue No. 52

On the Edge!



Mark Woommavovah

David Townsend

**Portrait of Don Parker, great grandson of Quanah Parker,
painted by David Townsend.**

Editor's Note: Mark Woommavovah was the guest speaker at the Partners annual dinner on November 2, 2024. He presented a medallion to all present, commemorating the Comanche Nation.



Mark Woommavovah, Chairman of the Comanche Nation

Partners in Palo Duro Canyon is an uplifting educational and charitable support group for Palo Duro Canyon State Park, fostering enlightenment. Palo Duro Canyon breathtakingly cuts through Comancheria, frontier lands claimed by Comanches of Peta Nocona and his extraordinary son, Chief Quanah Parker. It was one of the final hideouts for Comanche Indians led by daring War Chief Quanah Parker during the Red River War. My friend, David Townsend, adopted by the Parker family, retires after 15 exemplary years as General Manager for the Visitor's Center & Gift Shop.

#Native American Heritage Monthh
#Native Pride
#Comanche Strong



What can be said about David Townsend?

by
Eric Miller
Board Member

Apparently, just nice things. Several board members shared their thoughts for this article and, for some reason, it was all nice.

Not one bad item. No embarrassing moments ((excuse me, someone did say there was a rumor that David lost his pants while moving furniture for the Mack Dick Pavilion). No incriminating photos (although I liked the photo of David on the invite to this year's Annual Meeting.)

So, to wrap up. David wishes us well and says good-bye



Editor's note: David was adopted as a brother into the Comanche Nation. His heritage is Cherokee.



A Clean Sweep

Really? Do you think that's all there is? No Chance!

Carl Fowler remembers his generosity. Carl gave David, and the store, a 4X6 ragged Navajo rug that he had acquired for ten dollars from another party. It was used as a backdrop in one of our sales cases and still is. A few weeks later Carl was admiring a small bowl in David's own collections. David said to Carl that if he wanted it, he could have it. It's called the Comanche way.



Lea Nelson remembers David's compassion. She was on a buying trip with David. She calls it inspirational. She remembers how well he treated each Native American artist. And she remembers how much the artists loved David.

Art Schnieder remembers David's graciousness. Like many Partners members, Art frequently dropped by David's office in the back of the Visitor's Center, with or without an appointment, for a "chat." David was always gracious, friendly and generous with his time, even when there were problems to confront.

I remember my phone call with David for this article. If we were on Face Time, our smiles would have been a mile wide. Yet David was very humble as well.

There are no bad days when you work at the canyon, David explains, because you can always step outside, sit on the rock wall, take a deep breath, and relax. And he did that often.

In fact the rock wall at the Overview was a focal point for one of David's best days at the canyon. While on a concert trip, Larry Gatlin stopped by to take a break and see the canyon. David and Larry spent some time visiting while on the Overview's rock wall. That conversation led to a friendship as well

as the Gatlin Brothers' concert in the Pioneer Amphitheater in 2013.



Larry Gatlin

What are David's plans? Nothing too complicated: get back to painting, and, when Debbie retires in a year, play with the RV. Is Partners in his plans? All we have to do is call.

If he could tell his successor one thing, it would be "enjoy the ride."

"Working for Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation is much more than I ever imagined. It is a blessing I will always carry in my heart," David said.

Then we finished our short interview, and I think he headed out the backdoor to see the canyon one more time.

P.S. When I asked about the pants incident, David's reaction and confirmation was, "Oh crap! I wish I wore my belt on that day."



PDC BIRD FEEDER EXPERIMENT

By

**Haley Richardson
State Park Division
Palo Duro Canyon State Park
Trails and Resource Manager**



Haley Richardson

This experiment was conducted by two students from West Texas A&M University (WT) as part of an Ecology class under the guidance of Dr. Stevens and Dr. Maag. The following outlines the details for the bird feeder experiment.

Question and Hypothesis:

What is the food preference of the songbirds in Palo Duro Canyon State Park? The seed preference of the songbirds in Palo Duro Canyon State Park may result from factors such as seed size, nutritional value, and if it is a natural source. We expect the native birds would prefer the native seeds because they are easier to find and more abundant.

Methods

Study Guide

Palo Duro Canyon is approximately 97 km by 32 km in the central Texas Panhandle. The State Park is on the eastern edge of the Llano Estacado with an elevation of 3,500 feet above sea level. The erosion of the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River formed the canyon. The vegetation is primarily composed of mesquite-juniper communities, along with the various types of grass and cacti. In the riparian zones, cottonwoods and

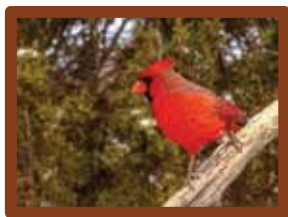
salt cedars are common. During the fall, it's common to spot songbirds such as Painted Buntings, Canyon Wrens, Western Meadowlarks, Lark Sparrows, Northern Cardinals, Bewick's Wrens, Mountain Bluebirds, and several others.

Experimental Procedure:

This observation will take place over 1 to 2 hours, with the use of a game camera if necessary. Once all materials are gathered, we will set up bird feeders with different types of bird seed for 24 hours. No direct observation will occur during this period, only regular refills, to allow the birds to acclimate to the change in environment. Finally, we will observe and record the different songbirds visiting the feeders for approximately one hour per day over 2 to 3 days.

To determine if there is no association between bird species and the types of bird seed they prefer, we will use a chi-squared test. All other statistical analyses will be conducted in Excel.

In summary, the bird feeders were in place for a few days while the team conducted their equipment within the Park. We now await to hear back from the students on the results of their experiment. This arrangement has been fully approved by the resource manager.



Ann Coberley

Ageless

The east side of my patio
is shaded from morning sun
by a Juniper tree,
a twisted, gnarled old thing
full of tiny berries
that we pick for cabbage soup.

Junipers can live
for several hundred years
and I wish this one could speak
of all it has seen
in a more audible language
than its number of tree rings.

There are probabilities
given where it grows,
tales of buffalo herds and
Indian battles, tattooed Kiowas,
Comanche full moon raids
and early Anglo settlers.

But for now it shades me
as it has for twenty years,
observing how I grow older
while it remains sturdy and strong,
oblivious to time and
unconcerned with its passing.

They Came Again

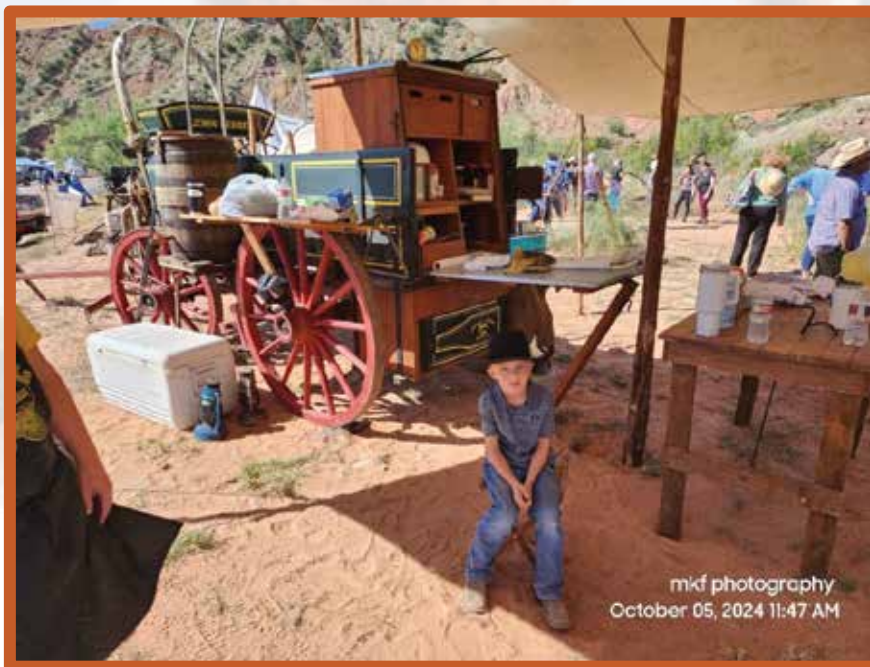
They came again. Who? Eleven chuckwagons to reprise the 100th birthday of Texas Parks and Wildlife in September 2023. As always, the chicken-fried steak complete with mashed potatoes and peach cobbler came with the wagons drawn by more modern horsepower—pickup trucks. And, as before, along came the booths showcasing the Native American relics and western paraphernalia. If only Charles Goodnight could see how his invention has evolved—without evolving.



Photo by Mary Fowler

If you want to see the chuckwagon as it was originally used, you should visit the Saint's Roost Museum in Clarendon, Texas. The museum has numerous pictures of working cowboys on the JA Ranch, Charles Goodnight's ranch, including the chuckwagon. Goodnight's invention provided a pantry for the foodstuffs needed for the cook to prepare meals for the cowboys. On the range miles from the ranch headquarters, the chuckwagon was a practical solution to feeding the men. The popularity of this creation was found in other ranches as they created their own chuckwagons based

on the design of Goodnight. Who doesn't like chicken-fried steak and peach cobbler? If you don't, you must have come from another planet. Can't you smell the aroma!



Photos by Mary Fowler





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“Christmas Rush”

Artist, Jack Sorenson. Member: Cowboys Artists of America

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