

Quanah Parker's Star House:  
A Comanche Home Along the White Man's Road

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The ramshackle old house rests on the edge of Cache, Oklahoma, amid what appears to be an abandoned Western movie set and a defunct amusement park. Called Star House for the distinctive, large white stars painted across its planes of red roofing, the deteriorating two-story structure saw far better days around the turn of the nineteenth century as the spacious abode of Chief Quanah Parker, the principal leader of the Comanche Indians. In his recent, award-winning survey on the Comanche nation, *Empire of the Summer Moon*, S. C. Gwynne extolled the 120-year-old, twelve-room historic home as one “of the great, obscure treasures of the American West.”<sup>1</sup>

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places since 1972, Star House may be obscure to most from outside southwest Oklahoma, but many area residents are familiar with its location just south of the Quanah Parker Trailway, shown on maps as U. S. Highway 62. The front of the legendary chief’s house faces northward, as if looking to its roots, some three miles to the north and on the southern edge of the Wichita Mountains. Star House was built at this site—but facing eastward toward the rising sun—some fifteen years after Quanah and his band of Quahada Comanches succumbed in spring 1875 to force from the U.S. military to settle on the reservation west of Fort Sill. During the peak years of the Cold War in the late 1950s, the federal government annexed the Star House estate and surrounding lands north of Cache to expand Fort Sill’s west artillery range. So pressure again from the military forced the relocation of Quanah’s aging house southward to its present site at the now-closed Eagle Park amusement center.

As a center of nouveau Comanche culture in the decade before and after 1900, Star House served to entertain national politicians, army generals, the British ambassador to the United States, Apache legend Geronimo, prominent Texas cattlemen, and a host of its owner’s Indian and white kinsmen and neighbors.<sup>2</sup> Several decades before the house was constructed, the government had demanded that Quanah and the Comanches exchange their horse-centered, hunter-warrior lifestyle on the plains for a sedentary, agrarian existence on the Indian reservation of southwest Oklahoma Territory. Serving as a political intermediary and astute business leader for the Comanches, the progressive Indian chief led his people into compliance—but with army general’s stars on his expansive rooftop to underscore his role as the principal leader of a great people and with traditional tepees just outside his stylish home to mark his bond with Comanche culture. Using both his blood ties to the dominant white culture and his natural leadership abilities, the half-white, gray-eyed Quanah led his tribesmen and other area reservation Indians as a transitional figure through turbulent times. He shrewdly negotiated for his people in these difficult years, easing their forced journey down the white man’s stony road. Built by Quanah initially to highlight the advancement of the area Indians, the illustrious Star House also came to symbolize his respected status and successful efforts as a middleman between the indigenous people from a vanishing era and the emergent politicians and cattlemen of the rapidly closing American frontier.

The origins of this Indian mansion on a reservation and its long journey can best be understood by explaining the rise to prominence of its founder, Quanah Parker. And the mixed-blood Comanche chief can better be known by first reviewing the wrenching story of his twice-abducted Texas pioneer mother, Cynthia Ann Parker. Many romanticized accounts of both mother and son are available, and many of the “facts” in these writings vary. Two of the more objective and comprehensive works are *Quanah Parker*, by Clyde and Grace Jackson, and *The Last Comanche Chief: The Life and Times of Quanah Parker*, by Bill Neeley. William T. Hagan’s *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief* provides additional insight on the Indian leader’s political and business activities. Almost all accounts agree on the events surrounding the first

abduction of young Cynthia Ann Parker by a band of Comanches in May 1836 near present-day Mexia, Texas, northeast of Waco. Even with the frequency of similar kidnappings on the South Plains, the capture of this nine-year-old girl still reverberates in Texas history. As one narrative of Cynthia Ann's abduction explains: "To this day, her tale continues to grip and haunt Texas like few others. There is the Alamo, there is the battle of San Jacinto, and there is Cynthia Ann Parker."<sup>3</sup>

As the blonde-haired, blue-eyed captive grew to adulthood, accounts tell of her becoming the wife of prominent Comanche war chief Peta Nocona and bearing him three children. Born around 1850, Quanah was the first of these offspring. The Jacksons' writing locates his birthplace at Cedar Lake, fifty miles southwest of Lubbock, Texas.<sup>4</sup> Yet Neeley's work provides Quanah's own belief that he was born near the Wichita Mountains in southwest Oklahoma. More significant to the young Comanche's future, his thirty-four-year-old mother, by then called Naudah by her adopted Comanche kin, was recaptured with her infant daughter in fall 1860 by a party of Texas Rangers led by Captain Lawrence Sullivan ("Sul") Ross along the Pease River near present-day Crowell, Texas. Once again violently torn from those she loved, Cynthia Ann was by then a Comanche, maybe not by blood, but in language, religion and custom. Her oldest child, Quanah, lost his father, Chief Peta Nocona, several years later and would grow to adulthood among the Comanches as a half-white orphan.<sup>5</sup>

William Hagen's account of Quanah's coming to manhood stresses how his difficult adolescence shaped his future. Initially taken in by one of his father's other wives, Quanah was soon forced to scramble for food and shelter on his own when this surrogate parent died. He also suffered slurs from some in the tribe about his mixed-blood heritage, which may have contributed to his near abandonment in an otherwise close-knit Comanche society with numerous extended families. These challenges may have motivated the young Quanah to become an overachiever among his tribe, "excelling as a hunter and warrior, being more Comanche than the full-bloods."<sup>6</sup> A seasoned battle veteran by the 1870s, Quanah helped to organize and lead the notable but unsuccessful Indian attack in June 1874 on the buffalo hunters at Adobe Walls in the Texas Panhandle. After this costly engagement and further Comanche setbacks in the Red River War of 1874-75, bands of these mounted warriors began to trickle into the reservation at Fort Sill in southwest Indian Territory. By January 1875, about a thousand Comanches were enrolled in the agency at the fort, with some of the most hardened warriors incarcerated in the post's guardhouse and icehouse. By early spring, many leaders of the Yamparika and Penetaka bands of Comanches were being praised by the army for their cooperative attitude on the reservation. The Quahada Comanches and the young warrior Quanah, however, remained aloof but increasingly beleaguered on the west Texas plains.<sup>7</sup>

This holdout Comanche band was approached in late April 1875 by a detachment under a white flag sent from Fort Sill by Colonel Ranald Mackenzie to negotiate the Indians' surrender. Soon afterward, Quanah spoke to the band in support of bowing to pressure from the military and moving onto the reservation in southwest Indian Territory. While he played a role in the decision to capitulate, he held no high ranking as a Comanche leader at this time, as is often mistakenly portrayed in many accounts of this submission to military authority by the Quahada band. As a proven military leader of courage and ability, young Quanah was able to speak with credibility and influence before the fierce band about the realities of their untenable position. After a journey eastward for several weeks, the Comanches camped out the night of June 1 about twelve miles west of Fort Sill and a few miles east of where Quanah would erect his remarkable Star House some fifteen years later. The next day the Quahada band met troops from the post and

surrendered their arms and herd of horses.<sup>8</sup> Quanah and his tribesmen began their journey down the white man's road—a rending of their nomadic culture his people had known for centuries. This new cosmos of the Comanches would in turn promote a steady rise in status and power for the mixed-breed warrior.

Quanah quickly gained the attention of authorities at Fort Sill. Upon his arrival at the military post in spring 1875, the young Comanche began inquiries about the whereabouts of his mother and younger sister, Topsanna. The veteran Indian-fighter Mackenzie held a grudging respect for the young warrior and wrote military authorities in Texas for information about the Comanche's long-separated kin. Two responses to Mackenzie's inquiry reached Fort Sill, both stating that Quanah's mother and sister had died years earlier. Because of his white heritage and interest in finding his mother, the Comanche soon became a kind of celebrity at the army post.

His attempts to bridge this cultural gap, the publicity this generated, and a marked intelligence and ambition raised his profile among the new band of detainees on the reservation. He was not recognized as a chief among the Quahada when he, his wife, Weckeah, and daughter, Nahmukuh, first arrived at their new encampment. Fort Sill Indian agent James M. Haworth designated Quanah as a band chief later in 1875, primarily to aid in the distribution of rations.<sup>9</sup> By 1878, the young leader's followers had reached ninety-three members, making it the third largest of the thirty-one Comanche bands on the reservation, just behind those led by Goat and Wild Horse. About half these "band chiefs" had been appointed by authorities at Fort Sill.<sup>10</sup> Quanah still had far to go before his eventual recognition as principal chief of the Comanches.

Yet within a few years, he was considered a progressive Indian who could be trusted by authorities at Fort Sill for assistance. Especially gratifying to government officials, Quanah frequently persuaded scattered groups of truant Comanches to return to the reservation. In summer 1877, Mackenzie sent him to his former haunts on the arid Llano Estacado in west Texas to negotiate the return of around 170 renegades who had fled the reservation at Fort Sill the previous December. The influential Comanche not only skillfully negotiated the return of the errant band; he also prevented an unnecessary attack on this large party by cleverly misdirecting a company of the Tenth Cavalry intent on the group's destruction.<sup>11</sup> Indian agent Philemon B. Hunt, who succeeded agent Haworth at Fort Sill, showed a keen interest in Quanah. After writing an inquiry in August 1878 to learn more about the Comanche's connection to the notable Parker family of Texas, Hunt next wrote Cynthia Ann's uncle and appointed guardian, Benjamin Parker. In this letter, the agent stated that he was writing "in the interest of Quinah (sic)" in regard to a possible inheritance of 1,280 acres of land that had been granted to Cynthia Parker by the Texas Legislature in the 1860s.<sup>12</sup> As late as 1881 Hunt was still futilely writing authorities in Texas about this land grant on behalf of the favored young Comanche.<sup>13</sup>

As cooperative and adaptable to the Comanches' new world as Quanah appeared to be, some evidence suggests his inner-conflict. Texas pioneer cattleman Charles Goodnight, who became one of Quanah's closest friends, told of having first met the young band chief with a large group of Comanches and Kiowas in 1878 on a hunt for scarce buffalo in the Texas Panhandle's Palo Duro Canyon. The cattleman, who coincidentally had scouted for Ross's Texas Rangers when they recaptured Quanah's mother in 1860, made an agreement with the young Comanche, trading some cattle for the Indians' "protection" of Goodnight's herd. The Texas pioneer stockman stated many years later that Quanah had told him at this initial meeting that he had no intention to return to the reservation at Fort Sill. A bellicose detachment of Tenth Cavalry in the area, however, soon convinced him to reconsider. The Comanche chief never again hunted in the Texas Panhandle, nor apparently publicly displayed any further resistance to his new life

on the reservation.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, this friendship with Goodnight—and a promise the cattleman would keep two years later—soon provided Quanah a connection with the Texas cattle industry that would promote his rise to power and wealth. His ties to this industry would also provide the earnings to help his impoverished Comanches and to build his illustrious Star House.

Quanah's temporary display of dissonance as he adapted to a sedentary life on the reservation could only be viewed as natural, considering his former lifestyle. Despite his obvious interest in the young bandleader, agent Hunt still considered the Quahadas as late as summer 1878 as "perhaps the most warlike and dangerous (of the Fort Sill reservation Indians) if not treated judiciously."<sup>15</sup> From the Medicine Lodge Creek treaty of 1867, the Comanches and Kiowas had been granted several million acres in southwest Indian Territory between the Washita River on the north and the Red River on the south. Most of the Comanches confined their activities to an area around Fort Sill, crossed by Cache Creek on the west side and Medicine Bluff Creek on the east. These boundaries could only be considered stifling to a nomadic tribe of horsemen that had ranged for centuries from Colorado and Kansas on the north to deep into Mexico on the south.

This restriction to a section of Indian Territory was difficult enough, but it came with additional shock to their culture. As the Jacksons aptly described the tribe's difficult challenges in their book: "The Comanches were expected to rise from stone age to steam in just a few months....They were called upon to embrace white man's culture—to wear his clothes, speak his language, accept his religion—but to disdain his vices."<sup>16</sup> Gone were the buffalo herds that had been central to the Comanche existence. Yet the white man's cattle herds would prove to be a substitute to ease the Indians' new journey. With millions of acres of rolling pasture, the Comanches and the other reservation tribes were poised to make this transition.

In early fall 1880, agent Hunt received a letter from Charles Goodnight requesting that Quanah be allowed to travel more than sixty miles south to take ownership of a few head of cattle. "I have for some two years past promised Quinah (sic) a good Durham Bull for the cattle which Genl McKenzie (sic) gave him," the Texas cattleman wrote, and if Quanah came to take ownership of the bull, Goodnight would give him an additional "one or two cows but not more."<sup>17</sup> Becoming a cattleman with his own herd started Quanah down the road to prosperity in the early 1880s. His negotiations with the Texas stockmen for the leasing of reservation pastures would add to his wealth and provide substantial earnings for the other reservation Indians.

Before 1884, however, Quanah and most of the tribal leaders were opposed to any kind of lease agreements with the large cattle companies on reservation lands, and he strongly expressed this at a Kiowa-Comanche-Apache council meeting in March 1880.<sup>18</sup> Still, the Indians were not against charging a toll for the Texas herds crossing their reservation lands on the drives north to the Kansas cattle towns. David Grantham, a white man who came to live among the Comanches in the early 1880s, later defended the Indians' demands for at least one head of cattle from each of the trespassing herds. These cattle drives consumed great quantities of grass and trampled large swaths of pasture, Grantham explained.<sup>19</sup>

By 1884, many of the reservation Indians had changed their minds in favor of leasing to the cattle companies, and by 1886 significant "grass money," as it came to be called, was flowing to the Comanches, Kiowas and Apaches on the reservation. Quanah led the pro-leasing faction, often in bitter disagreement with other prominent tribal leaders. In August 1884, he spoke to officials in Washington to promote the leasing arrangements, the first of his many appearances in the nation's capital. Speaking in broken English before Secretary of the Interior Henry M. Teller a few months later, the Comanche leader called the anti-leasing Indians "old

fogy” and “on the wild road yet,” and lamented their inability to see the financial advantages of these agreements.<sup>20</sup> With the blessings of the government, six-year leases on the Indian pastures were completed in 1885 with numerous cattle companies for six cents per acre annually. Quanah, by then using his mother’s last name and officially known in Washington as “Quanah Parker, chief of the Comanches,” emerged from these negotiations with new status among his tribe and grateful business acquaintances in the cattle industry.<sup>21</sup> These new friends included the cattle barons later known in north Texas and southern Oklahoma as the “Big Five”: Samuel Burk Burnett, Daniel W. Waggoner, E. C. Sugg, J. P. Addington and C. T. Herring. “In Quanah’s vision of the future, cattle were to become the Indians’ wealth, and education their hope,” Neeley’s account explains.<sup>22</sup> Although the Comanche leader clearly advocated for and benefitted from these businessmen, his relationship was not the sleazy arrangement sometimes characterized. Neeley notes that these lease transactions occurred between men of high standing in their respective communities and under scrutiny of wary government officials.<sup>23</sup>

With the grass money flowing, the leading Indian on the reservation began construction of his famed Star House in 1890, ostensibly to reflect the advancement of his people.<sup>24</sup> It also, of course, underscored Quanah’s own growing wealth and influence. As early as 1882, he had started plans to build a modest home on his west Cache Creek holdings some eighteen miles west of Fort Sill, but little came of this.<sup>25</sup> By the time of these first plans, a number of leading chiefs already lived in houses, with the earliest built in 1876 following Colonel Mackenzie’s orders for ten of these simple structures. Quanah had not been selected at that time because of his status as a recent hostile.<sup>26</sup> He had continued throughout the 1880s to live in the traditional tepee and summer brush arbor of the Comanches, while rising to the leading position among the reservation tribes. Agent Hunt had written the commissioner of Indian affairs as far back as summer 1881 for authority to build twenty more two-room “Indian Houses” at a cost not to exceed \$100 each. The agent justified this expenditure as “one of the most effective means of localizing the Indians and subduing the inclination of constantly changing his place of abode.”<sup>27</sup> Hunt shared the belief of many Washington officials that eliminating the mobile Indian encampments would bring them a big step closer to the government’s sedentary, agricultural ideal.

Quanah’s plans for his stately ranch house on the plains would perfectly conform to this government ideal—and then some. But almost paradoxically, the Comanche met stiff resistance from Indian Commissioner T. J. Morgan in his attempts to gain government support for a permanent home. The commissioner’s refusal stemmed from his view that Quanah’s household of five wives in 1890 exhibited a lack of “civilizing,” and the Washington bureaucrat wrote that he did “not think the proposition admits of discussion.”<sup>28</sup> Even without government support, the Comanche bought \$1,000 worth of lumber early in the year and contracted to have a two-story, ten-room house built. Although the noteworthy structure was essentially completed by fall 1890, Quanah and new Indian agent C. E. Adams continually and unsuccessfully lobbied Commissioner Morgan for financial assistance until late 1891.<sup>29</sup>

Letters from agent Adams to the commissioner asking for at least partial funding of the Indian leader’s house provide insight into both the stubborn, angling negotiating skills of Quanah and the social issues of the reservation in the early 1890s. Adams wrote the commissioner in Washington in July 1890 that construction was underway and requested \$500 to help pay for labor as Quanah was “an Indian who deserves some assistance from the Government.”<sup>30</sup> In November, Adams again wrote the commissioner that the Comanche’s “excellent” house had been completed at a cost of \$2,000, but that Quanah lacked \$500 in his payment for the

construction. “If there is any possible way in which this money could be allowed it would gratify me very much,” the agent pleaded, obviously much on the side of the Comanche.<sup>31</sup> Earlier that summer, Adams had become concerned with Indians on the reservation holding their “medicine dance,” more commonly called the “ghost dance” and feared by government officials as leading to insurrection among reservation Indians throughout the plains.<sup>32</sup> Quanah’s suppression of ghost dancing, at least among the Comanches, ingratiated him further with the agent, who in February 1891 reported to the commissioner that “Quanah Parker had so used his influence that very little dancing has been carried on by his people.”<sup>33</sup> Ahpeatone, a prominent Kiowa on the reservation, had also denounced these dancing ceremonies and “had a great influence on the Kiowas, who are now pretty well settled on the question of the Ghost dance,” Adams reported to the commissioner in March 1891.<sup>34</sup> The agent requested \$500 to build Ahpeatone a simple house for his “services.”<sup>35</sup>

The Kiowa leader’s aid to the government may have merited greater reward in the eyes of the commissioner in Washington than the efforts of Quanah—with his embarrassment of wives—but two Indian agents and the obstinate Comanche outmaneuvered the straight-laced Indian commissioner. In departing agent Adams’s last attempt to obtain official funding, he asserted in a letter to the commissioner in August 1891 that “Quanah certainly deserves assistance, as he is progressive and attentive to the interests of his people.”<sup>36</sup> With this letter, Adams enclosed a personal written request from the Comanche to the commissioner.<sup>37</sup> This correspondence was sent a year before the chief began construction of a sizable wrap-around porch as an addition to the completed Star House. This porch project, contractor W. A. Brewer told new Indian agent George D. Day, would take two workers up to six weeks to build. In a letter to Day, the concerned Brewer related that Quanah had said that he expected the government to pay for this work as he had never received previous assistance for a house, as had many other prominent Indians.<sup>38</sup> In a follow-up letter to the agent in October 1892, the contractor related that he had charged \$60 for labor for the completed porch. Although the worker believed his labors worth more than his charges, the hard-bargaining Quanah had agreed to pay only \$10 of his own money, with the government to pay the remaining \$50.<sup>39</sup> The construction of the porch occurred amid several communications from agent Day to the Indian commissioner in Washington with various funding requests related to other Indian housing projects. In an apparent response to a request by Commissioner Morgan, the agent provided in October 1892 a listing of forty-two Indians who had received government assistance for housing. Perhaps to Morgan’s consternation, Quanah’s name appeared on this listing, near the bottom and seemingly as inconspicuous as agent Day could make it.<sup>40</sup>

Most historical accounts attribute funding of the Comanche chief’s house to cattleman Burk Burnett and some of the other Texas stockmen. Neeley’s biography of Quanah credits Burnett, with additional contributions from others of the Big Five cattlemen. Yet the author’s credibility concerning the origins of Star House is tarnished somewhat by his counterfactual timing of the house’s construction in the mid-1880s.<sup>41</sup> Hagan’s account states that area stockmen made “substantial contributions” to pay for the house, as they wanted to stay in the good graces of their primary business connection, who had helped them to obtain grazing leases.<sup>42</sup> Unquestionably Quanah’s business relationship with these cattlemen enabled the building of Star House by providing him with much of the necessary funds—directly with cash gifts or indirectly through lease payments for his private pasturage—but his dealings with the stockmen also brought substantial earnings to the other Indians on the reservation. Also in the Comanche’s defense, the correspondence of agent Day at Fort Sill and the contractor who built the porch

evidence that some of the project came directly from Quanah's pocketbook and some from government funds—despite Commissioner Morgan's best efforts to prevent it. Obtaining the resources to build Star House was not so much a blatant case of influence peddling as it was a demonstration of Quanah's business and political modus operandi: stubbornly pushing to reach his objectives using a combination of personal connections and political leverage.

As much power and influence as Quanah held in the 1890s and as well as he and his extended family lived at Star House, this period also had its challenges. Looming over Quanah and the reservation, the General Allotment Act of 1887, commonly known as the Dawes act, threatened further upheaval in Indian society through "allotment in severalty." Under government pressure, a big part of the reservation lands held in common by the tribes was to be allocated to individual Indians in 160-acre parcels, and the "surplus" lands ultimately opened to white settlement. Another step down the road to allotment was taken in 1889 with formation of the federal Jerome Commission, tasked with negotiating the cession of much of the various Indian tribes' lands west of the ninety-sixth degree of longitude and in Indian Territory at the time.

The commissioners arrived at Fort Sill in September 1892, about the time Quanah was finishing his large porch project at Star House. Quanah played the key role in these negotiations, which concerned primarily the amount to be paid to the Indians for their surplus lands after the individual allotments. Both the Texas cattlemen and the Comanche chief, who personally controlled as much as 44,000 acres of pasturage at the time, stood to lose substantially with this breakup of the Indians' vast landholdings, which were in southern Oklahoma Territory by 1892. Well schooled from years of dealing with the tough-negotiating stockmen, the Comanche leader distinguished himself, surprising and often embarrassing the commissioners with his clear understanding of and probing questions about this difficult agreement being forced on the Indians.<sup>43</sup>

Quanah eventually agreed to the Jerome Commission's offer of 160-acre allotments for each Indian on the reservation and \$2 million for the surplus lands. As Hagan explains, the Comanche chief "was shrewd enough to recognize that fighting a delaying action and trying to get the government's offer sweetened somewhat was the most that the Indians could hope to accomplish."<sup>44</sup> Congress pondered for eight years before ratifying the Jerome Agreement in 1900, and just a few months after this Quanah led a delegation of Indians to Washington to meet with President William McKinley to discuss the matter. The Indians' conference with the president proved only perfunctory: when Quanah raised his hand to speak, he was allowed to say little more than "white man not treat Indian right" before the delegation was preemptively ushered out. But the grass money continued to flow freely for nearly a decade at the end of negotiations with the commission in 1892.<sup>45</sup>

As American businesses scrambled for profits through the waning years of the Gilded Age in the 1890s, Quanah enjoyed his peak of power and influence in his celebrated Star House. Living much like a country squire, he was well established by the early 1890s as the best-known chief on the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache reservation, which by this time included some 1,600 Comanches, 1,150 Kiowas, and 325 Apaches.<sup>46</sup> A photograph of the Comanche chief around 1895 shows him hand-on-hip, leaning smugly against a support post on the front porch of Star House with his wife, Tonarcy. Wearing a stylish Western hat, vest and trousers, but with traditional braids trailing down his front, Quanah looks the part of the well-to-do, bicultural statesman-rancher that he was.<sup>47</sup> During his lifetime, Quanah recognized seven wives but never had more than five at one time. Each wife's room at Star House was furnished identically to



show impartiality. Frequently taking his wives with him to town or on local excursions, the Comanche rancher traveled in his large stagecoach pulled by four mules.<sup>48</sup>

A striking photograph of Quanah's house around 1893 reveals a shiny, white clapboard house—at that time without the stars on the roof—a tall picket fence encircling the structure, and what appears to be a gazebo near the front entrance on the east side.<sup>49</sup> Inside the stately home, a photo taken about 1892 of Quanah seated near a portrait of his mother reveals the carpeted floor and Victorian wallpaper on the interior.<sup>50</sup> When a cattleman asked Quanah after Star House had been completed what he could contribute to the elegant abode, the Comanche leader promptly replied that he was in need of a roller-top desk and swivel chair.<sup>51</sup> Probably around 1894, Star House took on the appearance that would give rise to its name. By one account this resulted from Quanah's meeting of a U.S. army general and the Indian's inquiry as to the significance of the stars on the officer's uniform. Told that these symbolized command of a large number of troops, the Comanche chief soon painted large white stars on his rooftop to represent his own leadership of a sizable people.<sup>52</sup>

In July 1901, 21,000 new homesteaders registered at Fort Sill for land, just before the new town of Lawton sprang up in August. All that remained of the vast Indian landholdings in southwest Oklahoma Territory were their individual 160-acre allotments and 480,000 acres of communal property. This tribal land was reserved for the younger generation of Indians and divided into four tracts, the largest the 400,000 acres comprising the Big Pasture along the Red River border.<sup>53</sup> The opening of southwest Oklahoma Territory to settlement in 1901 and slow retreat of the Texas cattlemen's lease money thereafter reduced the personal wealth and power of Quanah. His celebrity status and fame, however, continued unabated. By the time of his death in 1911, the former Quahada Comanche war leader had met at least four U. S. presidents and made numerous trips to the nation's capital.<sup>54</sup>

President Theodore Roosevelt took a personal liking to Quanah, after inviting him, the Apache warrior Geronimo, and several other prominent Indians to ride horseback in full native American regalia in his inaugural parade in March 1905. The Comanche leader reciprocated Roosevelt's hospitality, serving as host, along with the Burnetts and Waggoners, for the president's five-day hunting trip in the Big Pasture early the next month.<sup>55</sup> Quanah greeted Roosevelt upon his arrival in Frederick, Oklahoma, and the president shared his speaker's stand with the celebrated Indian. Shelter for the hunting party, aptly called "Camp Roosevelt," was set up in the Big Pasture east of Frederick where the Isadore town site was later established.<sup>56</sup> Visiting with the president, Quanah discussed the plight of the diminished Indians of southern Oklahoma Territory and their desire to retain more of their remaining lands. His discussions with Roosevelt may have contributed to several significant concessions from the government regarding the impending takeover of the remaining 480,000 acres of the Indians' holdings. Roosevelt later wrote fondly of Quanah in an account of the hunting trip: "...in his youth a bitter foe of the whites, now painfully teaching his people to travel the white man's stony road."<sup>57</sup>

Star House became a "beacon to the curious," as Hagen relates, with those from various walks of life seeking to chat with its famed owner and perhaps to receive a well-prepared meal during their visit. "To them he was a visible reminder of a period that was receding rapidly into history and that each passing year was being refined into a brave and exciting frontier saga, cleansed of its greed and violence."<sup>58</sup> His dinner guests included such disparate notables as his aged neighbor Geronimo, corralled nearby at Fort Sill, to the eminent British Ambassador James Bryce, who dropped by to dine with the old chief in 1907 while on a train tour of the southwest United States. That Quanah had become somewhat jaded by the limelight of celebrity can be

discerned from a later account by one of his daughters of the chief's waiting at the Cache train station for the British diplomat's arrival. As the celebrated Comanche paced back and forth in the arrival area, some Indians happened by and asked him why he was there. Quanah replied in his broken English: "I got to meet some bastard from England." Probably not intending to sound petulant, the Comanche and many of the reservation Indians used the often-vulgar vernacular of the Fort Sill soldiers from whom they had learned much of their conversational English.<sup>59</sup>

Jaded or not, Quanah's serving as host to the British ambassador for dinner at Star House was reported by a *New York Times* newspaper account as a cordial and elegant affair the evening of June 24. The ambassador was accompanied on his train excursion by former Missouri Governor David Francis; a federal judge, coincidentally named James Parker; and the president of the Frisco Railroad, whose rail line the small group was traveling. Dinner was served late in the evening at "the beautiful spacious house," according to the newspaper account, and "the party was wined and dined and plied with the conventionalities of the modern code. Chief Parker's three wives served the courses and never was a menu more faultlessly handled."<sup>60</sup> The news story relates Quanah's passing around his "peace pipe" after the meal—which might be explained as a bit of literary license by the writer or the worldly Comanche's provision of what his naïve visitors usually expected.<sup>61</sup> The well-prepared, multi-course meal was normal fare for guests, as Quanah employed a young Russian-born housekeeper from about 1901 to 1911 to oversee the preparation of the meals.<sup>62</sup> Dining silverware and other items reserved for special company were kept in the room of Quanah's wife Tonarcy. The wives and housekeeper ensured that the household was always clean and orderly.<sup>63</sup>

In the final years of his life, the lord of Star House manor lived comfortably while overseeing his 2,240 acres of pasture and farmland, where he grew corn and raised cattle and hogs.<sup>64</sup> By 1907 the well-furnished ranch house had a telephone installed, which allowed convenient conversations with Indian agents.<sup>65</sup> Showing signs of age, the seventeen-year-old Star House's exterior was repaired and repainted about the time the telephone was installed.<sup>66</sup> In 1910, the year before Quanah died, his family household included his wives Tonarcy and Topay, and his two youngest sons: Chee, two; and Kelsey, twelve.<sup>67</sup> He had separated from several of his wives in his later years. His first wife, Weckeah, left in the early 1900s, explaining simply: "Too many wives."<sup>68</sup>

Perhaps sensing his own mortality in 1909, the Comanche chief sought help to relocate his mother's grave closer to his home. Cynthia Ann Parker's remains were located at Old Forterville Cemetery in Anderson County, Texas, and moved to Post Oak Mission cemetery, a few miles west of Star House.<sup>69</sup> Oklahoma Congressman Scott Ferris sponsored the legislation that authorized the secretary of the interior to spend \$1,000 for this task. On December 4, 1910, the Comanche leader gave a brief statement at his mother's reburial, remarking that she "loved Indians so well no want to go back to folks....All same people anyway."<sup>70</sup> The next month and probably for the last time, Quanah wrote his old friend Charles Goodnight, whom he addressed as "Mister Charlie," asking for the cattleman's help with officials in Texas to secure the elusive property granted to Cynthia Parker nearly fifty years earlier by the state legislature.<sup>71</sup> Less than two months later, the Comanche chief's body lay beside his mother's at Post Oak Mission.

Quanah took ill in late February 1911 while on a visit to a group of Cheyenne Indians near Hammon, Oklahoma. Feeling his death near, Quanah insisted on being taken home quickly by train from Elk City to Cache. After being rushed home from the train station around noon on February 23, he died within a few minutes of his arrival at Star House. The many attendees at his funeral two days later at Post Oak Mission formed "a procession of hacks, buggies, wagons,

automobiles and pedestrians several miles long.”<sup>72</sup> The official cause of death was listed as heart failure brought on by rheumatism.<sup>73</sup>

The long line of mourners at the Comanche chief’s funeral demonstrated both his fame and his many friends. Most later written assessments of Quanah leadership have been positive. Neeley states that his role as principal chief of the Comanches was earned through his “integrity, intelligence, and force of character, along with his willingness to work within the system.”<sup>74</sup> The Comanche, Hagan writes, had proved early on at the reservation “to be the very model of the broker or political middleman, with one foot on the white man’s road and the other on the old Comanche trail.”<sup>75</sup> Hagan concedes that Quanah had natural leadership skills but still attributes much of his rise to power and influence among the Comanches to his mixed blood, which changed his behavior and affected how he was viewed by white authorities.<sup>76</sup> In her book, *A Comanche Life*, Oklahoma native LaDonna Harris remembers that her Comanche grandparents, who had lived on the reservation during Quanah’s years, expressed different views of him as a leader. Her grandfather, who was from the Yamparika Comanche band, criticized Quanah for benefitting personally from his position. But her grandmother, who had been born in a tepee beside Star House, viewed the Comanche leader quite favorably. Harris, former wife of U.S. Senator Fred Harris of Oklahoma, says that she admired Quanah for his leadership and believed that he “fit that transitional period...”<sup>77</sup>

Few could reasonably deny that Quanah gained personally from his position, but evidence abounds of his generosity with his wealth. Knox Beal, a white man who had lived with the Comanches at a young age and been adopted by Quanah, said that the chief’s largesse had greatly depleted his once great cattle herd by the time of his death. “When a person became hungry he fed them,” Beal said many years after Quanah’s death. “He could not stand to see anyone of his tribe go hungry.”<sup>78</sup> After Quanah, the government allowed no other chiefs among the reservation, instead forming a committee of three representatives to conduct the Indians’ business.<sup>79</sup>

Following the chief’s passing, Star House continued its own journey without its illustrious founder and no longer at the center of Comanche tribal events and culture. Quanah died without a will, but by agreement of the lawful heirs, his wife Topay and their two children would remain in possession of his residence. She was to forfeit this privilege, however, in the event of her remarriage.<sup>80</sup> His legally recognized wife, Tonarcy, moved out of Star House and had a house built on her own allotment. Quanah’s sixteen living children were also named as lawful heirs to his estate.<sup>81</sup> Topay soon began vacating the house for periods of time, leaving it open to curiosity seekers in her absence.<sup>82</sup> Within a few years, Star House had fallen into disrepair, and Quanah’s daughter, Laura Parker Birdsong, began efforts to purchase the house as her residence and to save it from ruin. Topay, who still lived in the house sporadically, initially tried to block the sale of the house.<sup>83</sup> In summer 1919, after considerable legal wrangling, Birdsong purchased Star House and the 160 acres for \$3,500, about \$1,000 more than appraised value.<sup>84</sup> Although she maintained the house as her residence, she sold the house and land early in 1922 to her teenage daughter, Anona Birdsong, a minor at the time.<sup>85</sup>

Star House receded from the public eye for several decades, a quiet country residence witnessing Oklahoma’s Dust Bowl years and a resurgence of nearby military activity as the country prepared for war. Quanah Parker’s memory was honored in 1936, when a lake in the Wichita National Forest, now the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge, was named for the old chief after the construction of a dam by the Civilian Conservation Corps a few miles north of Star House. Laura Birdsong arranged the program for the dedication ceremony at the

lake, which was attended by a number of Quanah's nine living children at the time. During World War II, the sounds of massed troops and vehicles could be heard near Quanah's old residence, as units from Fort Sill underwent maneuvers at nearby Camp Doris in the Wichita Mountains.<sup>86</sup>

Star House once again took on the role of a social center when the Parker family began holding their annual reunion at the homestead in 1950 and 1951, with attendance of between seventy-five and one hundred family members. Quanah's aging children and grandchildren had begun these yearly affairs starting in 1949, with the first held at Quanah Parker Lake. In 1953, the all-white Texas side of the Parker family invited their distant Comanche relatives to venture south for a reunion at old Fort Parker near Mexia, Texas.<sup>87</sup> In September 1954, the white Texas Parkers traveled north to join the Oklahoma Parkers for the reunion at Craterville Park northeast of Cache, drawing several hundred attendees. Distant relatives from all over the country were housed at the Boy Scout headquarters at the amusement park, with nearby Star House no doubt an object of interest to many of the visitors.<sup>88</sup>

While these reunions generated renewed interest in Quanah's old house, the aging residence faced one of its greatest perils when Cold War imperatives prompted Congress in 1955 to authorize the acquisition of 20,320 acres of private land north of Cache for expansion of Fort Sill's west firing range.<sup>89</sup> This area included Quanah's old 160-acre land allotment, so Star House would soon face demolition or relocation, as would the gravesites of Quanah and his mother at nearby Post Oak Mission.<sup>90</sup> At the 1956 reunion at Craterville Park, Quanah's children spoke against an attempt by a Texas Boy Scouts group to move the gravesites to Fort Parker. Perhaps owing to this strife, Laura Birdsong cancelled the planned open house at her Star House residence during the 1956 reunion.<sup>91</sup>

Major General Thomas E. de Shazo, Fort Sill commander, and the Parker family reached an agreement late in December 1956, with the military paying \$38,150 to owner Anona Birdsong Wilkinson for the 160-acre allotment that included Star House.<sup>92</sup> In addition, the army offered to rebury Quanah and his mother at the post cemetery.<sup>93</sup> The price per acre for the allotment was double the average paid for any of the surrounding lands.<sup>94</sup> On January 10, 1957, Star House was cut into sections and workers began its relocation to the Roach property in the northwest section of Cache. Laura Birdsong, then seventy-two years old, posed outside the house for a newspaper photo as it was moved. She declared that the army had been "very kind and considerate" despite the forced relocation.<sup>95</sup> A few weeks later, Birdsong presented the Fort Sill Museum a collection of Quanah's personal items, many of which had been at Star House since the previous century. Included in these relics were the ceremonial suit that the chief had worn at President Theodore Roosevelt's inaugural parade in 1905 and a brooch that had been buried with Quanah in 1911. Birdsong had found this brooch on the ground shortly after her father's grave had been robbed in 1915.<sup>96</sup> Quanah and his mother were reburied August 9, 1957, at the post cemetery at Fort Sill, with some 600 attendees enduring the intense afternoon heat.<sup>97</sup> The Comanche leader would wander no more, but Star House's journey continued.

For more than a year the old house deteriorated in its new location without benefit of a foundation. Twice it caught fire and Herbert Woesner Jr., a nearby neighbor, joined the Cache volunteer fire department to rescue Star House.<sup>98</sup> Woesner, an amateur anthropologist and historian, cared passionately about Quanah's historic home and in 1958 negotiated with Laura Birdsong to take possession of the imperiled structure.<sup>99</sup> Once again Star House was moved, this time only about a half mile from the Roach property and onto Woesner's acreage on the northwest corner of Cache.<sup>100</sup> Here the house underwent a long-term refurbishing project by its

new owner, under direction of Parker family members. Woesner said at the time that he hoped to restore it back to its original condition in detail, but he struggled to obtain authentic materials to match those from the past. While undergoing this work, the house was available for tours from Parker family members who attended the annual reunion in August 1960 at nearby Camp Eagle.<sup>101</sup>

By the mid-1960s, Star House was joined by several other historical structures as part of a frontier-style amusement park on the multi-acre tract by then known as Eagle Park, a family business owned by Woesner, his mother, and his sister. Other notable buildings included an 1872 “picket house” from Fort Sill’s early days, the Frisco Railroad Cache depot—where Quanah had met the British ambassador—and the Saddle Mountain Indian Mission school and church, both dating from around 1900.<sup>102</sup> Visits to Star House continued to be a part of the annual Parker family gatherings, and by 1980 Eagle Park served as host site for the annual reunions.<sup>103</sup> Over the years a number of amusement rides had been added to the park, and Star House was viewed with curiosity by thousands of visitors. But by the mid-1980s, Woesner was having a difficult time keeping up the park with his few part-time workers.<sup>104</sup> Rising insurance costs and consumer protection laws finally forced Woesner to close the gates to Eagle Park in 1986. Still, he hoped at the time to dispose of the amusement rides and then to begin tours of the historical buildings.<sup>105</sup>

Despite the creeping dilapidation of Eagle Park after its closing, Star House and its surrounding grounds continued to be a gathering place for the Parker family reunions and a site of interest to outside groups. Woesner’s fondness for historical buildings was matched by his strong commitment to the Parker family, and he gained the respect and friendship of Quanah’s descendants. Owing partly to his insistence on complete authenticity in materials, he resisted attempts by outside groups to help maintain Star House. The old house continued to deteriorate but still maintained its impressive profile around 2004 when several Texas businessmen affiliated with the Fort Worth stockyards visited Woesner. The Texas businessmen offered \$2 million for Star House, according to Towana Spivey, former director of the Fort Sill National Historic Landmark Museum. Quanah Parker had been elevated to “founding father status” in Texas history, Spivey said, and Star House had become a symbol of the Comanche’s new standing in the Lone Star State. Woesner, however, turned down this offer from the Texans. Interest by another Texas group was shown around 2010 when Texas country-western singer Red Steagall, who represented a group affiliated with Abilene Christian University, paid a visit to Star House in hopes of purchasing the structure and moving it to Abilene.<sup>106</sup>

Herbert Woesner’s death in 2008 left his nephew, Wayne Gipson of Cache, as caretaker for Star House and the other aging historical buildings at the long-closed Eagle Park. With help from a volunteer, Gipson continued to schedule tours of Star House. By 2007, Quanah’s old house had been placed on the list of Oklahoma’s Most Endangered Historic Places, a roster sponsored by Preservation Oklahoma Inc. and the State Historic Preservation Office.<sup>107</sup> Like his uncle before him, Gipson still welcomed the Parker descendants to Star House for their annual reunions on the grounds around their forefather’s home.<sup>108</sup>

Originally built by Quanah Parker as a symbol of the advancement of his native people, Star House had also stood as a tribute to his stature and success as a leader of the Comanches and other area tribes. Much like the Indians he led, the half-white, half-Comanche chief traveled between two worlds as the twentieth century dawned. In those years he lived as a celebrated, country gentleman in a stylish ranch house of the dominant white culture—but with distinct memories of buffalo hunts on the Llano Estacado and summer moons on “the wild road.” The earlier memories of their nomadic lifestyle have now dimmed in Comanche culture, but Star

House continues to represent to Quanah's descendants their transitional journey down the white man's road. More recently Star House took on new symbolism for many in Texas, whose ancestors so long ago lost a pioneer child to the Comanches, only to wrest her back years later—no longer as Cynthia Ann Parker, but as Naudah, the Comanche mother of Quanah. In the modern lore of the Lone Star State, the mixed-blood Comanche's house has come to represent his standing as a “founding father.” Quanah rests in his grave on Chiefs Knoll at Fort Sill's post cemetery. Star House continues its journey down history's restless road.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> S. C. Gwynne, *Empire of the Summer Moon* (New York: Scribner, 2010) 302.

<sup>2</sup> A plaque with a list of distinguished dinner guests is displayed in the dining room at Star House.

<sup>3</sup> Jan Reid, "One Who Was Found," in *Tales of Texas: Episodes in the History of the Red River Border*, ed. Michael L. Collins (Wichita Falls, Texas: Midwestern State University Press, 2005), 28.

<sup>4</sup> Clyde L. and Grace Jackson, *Quanah Parker* (New York: Exposition Press, 1963), 18.

<sup>5</sup> Bill Neeley, *The Last Comanche Chief: The Life and Times of Quanah Parker* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1995), 13, 32, 45-6, 53.

<sup>6</sup> William T. Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 11.

<sup>7</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 12-4.

<sup>8</sup> Neeley, *The Last Comanche Chief*, 142-6.

<sup>9</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 15, 21-4.

<sup>10</sup> A. C. Williams to P. B. Hunt, July 22, 1878, Indian History, Culture and Acculturation—Chiefs (1864-1930), Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.

<sup>11</sup> Neeley, *The Last Comanche Chief*, 148-52.

<sup>12</sup> P. B. Hunt to Benjamin Parker, September 4, 1878, Letter Press Book, vol. 6, Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.

<sup>13</sup> P. B. Hunt to L. H. Miller, April 5, 1881, Letter Press Book, vol. 9, Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.

<sup>14</sup> J. Evetts Haley, *Charles Goodnight: Cowman and Plainsman* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1949), 306-12.

<sup>15</sup> P. B. Hunt to E. A. Hayt, June 29, 1878, Letter Press Book, vol. 5, Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.

<sup>16</sup> Jackson, *Quanah Parker*, 114-7.

<sup>17</sup> Chas. Goodnight to P. B. Hunt, September 25, 1880, Ella Cox Lutz Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.

<sup>18</sup> Minutes of Council Meeting, March 12, 1880, Letter Press Book, vol. 11, Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.

<sup>19</sup> "Comanches Adopted Dave Grantham Into Their Tribe 33 Years Ago," *The Hobart Democrat-Chief*, August 4, 1925, 16.

<sup>20</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 38.

<sup>21</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 37-9.

<sup>22</sup> Neeley, *The Last Comanche Chief*, 177.

<sup>23</sup> Neeley, *The Last Comanche Chief*, 195.

<sup>24</sup> Francis E. Leupp, "Odd Characteristics of Quanah Parker," *Sturm's Oklahoma Magazine* XII, no. 3 (May 1911), 17.

<sup>25</sup> C. F. Doane to Col. Hunt, December 4, 1882, Indian History, Culture and Acculturation—Quanah Parker (1880-1911), Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.

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- <sup>26</sup> Jackson, *Quanah Parker*, 128.
- <sup>27</sup> P. B. Hunt to Indian commissioner, July 22, 1881, Letter Press Book, vol. 9, Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.
- <sup>28</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 43.
- <sup>29</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 43-4.
- <sup>30</sup> C. E. Adams to the Indian commissioner, July 18, 1890, Letter Press Book, vol. 33, Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.
- <sup>31</sup> C. E. Adams to the Indian commissioner, November 8, 1890, Letter Press Book, vol. 35, Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.
- <sup>32</sup> C. E. Adams to D. J. M Wood, July 20, 1890, Letter Press Book, vol. 33, Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.
- <sup>33</sup> C. E. Adams to the Indian commissioner, February 4, 1891, Letter Press Book, vol. 35, Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.
- <sup>34</sup> C. E. Adams to the Indian commissioner, March 21, 1891, Letter Press Book, vol. 36, Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>36</sup> C. E. Adams to the Indian commissioner, August 29, 1891, Letter Press Book, vol. 36, Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> W. A. Brewer to Mr. Day, August 31, 1892, Indian History, Culture and Acculturation—Quanah Parker (1880-1911), Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.
- <sup>39</sup> W. A. Brewer to Mr. Day, October 9, 1892, Indian History, Culture and Acculturation—Quanah Parker (1880-1911), Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.
- <sup>40</sup> G. D. Day to Indian commissioner, October 19, 1892, Letter Press Book, vol. 38, Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.
- <sup>41</sup> Neeley, *The Last Comanche Chief*, 197, 200.
- <sup>42</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 44.
- <sup>43</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 62-9.
- <sup>44</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 72.
- <sup>45</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 72, 106.
- <sup>46</sup> C. E. Adams to Thomas J. Morgan, October 16, 1889, Letter Press Book, vol. 33, Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.
- <sup>47</sup> Photo captioned “Quanah Parker and wife, Tonicy (sic) on veranda of the Parker home.” Quanah Parker photo collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.
- <sup>48</sup> Daniel A. Becker, “Comanche Civilization; History of Quanah Parker,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* vol. 1, no. 3 (June 1923): 246.
- <sup>49</sup> Photo captioned “Quanah Parker’s house before stars were painted on the roofs.” Quanah Parker photo collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.
- <sup>50</sup> Photo captioned “Quanah Parker in his home at Fort Sill sitting near a portrait of Cynthia Ann Parker....1891-93.” Quanah Parker photo collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.
- <sup>51</sup> Leupp, “Odd Characteristics of Quanah Parker,” 17.
- <sup>52</sup> Audrey Routh, “Chief Quanah’s Star House and Its 4-Year Trek,” *Oklahoma’s Orbit* (insert of *Sunday Oklahoman*), October 13, 1963, p. 17.
- <sup>53</sup> Neeley, *The Last Comanche Chief*, 217.



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- <sup>54</sup> In Zoe Tilghman's book, *Quanah, The Eagle of the Comanches* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Harlow Publishing Company, 1938) she writes of Quanah's meetings with President Chester A. Arthur and President Benjamin Harrison, in addition to other historians' writings on his meetings with President William McKinley and President Theodore Roosevelt.
- <sup>55</sup> Neeley, *The Last Comanche Chief*, 219.
- <sup>56</sup> Brian Lee Smith, "Theodore Roosevelt Visits Oklahoma," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, vol. 51, no. 3 (fall, 1973), 272.
- <sup>57</sup> Neeley, *The Last Comanche Chief*, 219-20.
- <sup>58</sup> Hagen, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 127.
- <sup>59</sup> "The Parker Reunion, 1966" *Texana*, vol. 4 (Summer, 1966), 194. Quanah Parker folder, Genealogical Records, Lawton Public Library, Lawton, Oklahoma.
- <sup>60</sup> "A Millionaire Indian Chief," *The New York Times*, June 30, 1907, pt. 5, p. 3.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>62</sup> Anna Gomez to Ophelia Vestal, interview, December 13, 1937, Indian-Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma, vol. 34, pgs. 400-1.
- <sup>63</sup> Etta Martin to Zaidee Bland interview, July 12, 1937, Blair, Oklahoma, vol. 60, pgs. 452-3, Indian-Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.
- <sup>64</sup> "Quanah Last to Surrender," *The Lawton Daily News*, February 24, 1911, 1.
- <sup>65</sup> Hagen, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 109.
- <sup>66</sup> Block-Miller Lumber Company to J. P. Blackburn, July 9, 1906, Indian History, Culture and Acculturation—Quanah Parker (1880-1911), Kiowa Agency files, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.
- <sup>67</sup> 13th Census of the United States: 1910—Indian Population of Oklahoma, Comanches, Quanah Township, May 20, 1910, Quanah Parker folder, Genealogical Records, Lawton Public Library, Lawton, Oklahoma.
- <sup>68</sup> Hagen, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 115.
- <sup>69</sup> Jackson, *Quanah Parker*, 159.
- <sup>70</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 119-20.
- <sup>71</sup> Quanah Parker to Charles Goodnight, January 7, 1911, Ella Cox Lutz Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma. (copy courtesy of Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon City, Texas)
- <sup>72</sup> Mack Young, "Quanah Parker, Last Comanche Chief, Died Near Cache 50 Years Ago Today," *The Lawton Constitution*, February 23, 1961, 6.
- <sup>73</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 121.
- <sup>74</sup> Neeley, *The Last Comanche Chief*, 176.
- <sup>75</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 51.
- <sup>76</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 133.
- <sup>77</sup> LaDonna Harris, *A Comanche Life* (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, 2000), 11.
- <sup>78</sup> Knox Beal to R. B. Thomas, interview, November 5, 1937, Cache, Oklahoma, vol. 6, pg. 3, Indian-Pioneer Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.
- <sup>79</sup> Jackson, *Quanah Parker*, 167.
- <sup>80</sup> Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief*, 122.
- <sup>81</sup> S. Hilton to Lieutenant Ernest Stecker, May 29, 1911, Quanah Parker's estate file, Southwest Branch of the National Archives, Fort Worth, Texas.

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- <sup>82</sup> Mrs. A. C. Birdsong to Lieutenant Ernest Stecker, April 24, 1911, Quanah Parker's estate file, Southwest Branch of the National Archives, Fort Worth, Texas.
- <sup>83</sup> C. V. Stinchecum to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 16, 1916, Quanah Parker's estate file, Southwest Branch of the National Archives, Fort Worth, Texas.
- <sup>84</sup> C. F. Hawke to Secretary of the Interior, July 15, 1919, Quanah Parker's estate file, Southwest Branch of the National Archives, Fort Worth, Texas.
- <sup>85</sup> A. G. Wilson to Ben LeBarre, April 13, 1922, Quanah Parker's estate file, Southwest Branch of the National Archives, Fort Worth, Texas.
- <sup>86</sup> Lawton Business and Professional Woman's Club, *'Neath August Sun—1901* (N. T. Plummer Printing Company: Anadarko, Oklahoma, 1933), 10.
- <sup>87</sup> "Quanah Parker Clan Reunion Slated in Texas," *The Lawton Constitution*, July 1, 1953, 5.
- <sup>88</sup> "Fifth Annual Reunion of Quanah Parker Descendants Is Scheduled at Craterville," *The Lawton Constitution*, July 25, 1954, 11.
- <sup>89</sup> "Quanah's Kin Plan to Fight Grave Moving," *The Lawton Constitution*, September 3, 1956, 1.
- <sup>90</sup> "Comanche Chief's Kin Slate Annual Reunion," *The Lawton Constitution*, August 26, 1956, 1.
- <sup>91</sup> "Quanah, Mother to Remain Here," *The Lawton Constitution*, August 30, 1956, 1.
- <sup>92</sup> Book 444, page 598, County Clerk's records, Comanche County Courthouse, Lawton, Oklahoma.
- <sup>93</sup> "Sill, Refuge Offer Sites for Quanah's Grave," *The Lawton Constitution*, September 6, 1956, 1.
- <sup>94</sup> "Parker Section Brings \$64,020 in Land Deal," *The Lawton Constitution*, December 30, 1956, 1.
- <sup>95</sup> "End of an Era," *The Lawton Constitution*, January 10, 1957, 1.
- <sup>96</sup> "Quanah Parker Relics Given to Sill Museum," *The Lawton Constitution*, January 29, 1957, 1.
- <sup>97</sup> "Quanah, Mother Reburied at Sill," *The Lawton Constitution*, August 11, 1957, 6.
- <sup>98</sup> Routh, "Chief Quanah's Star House and Its 4-Year Trek," 17.
- <sup>99</sup> Scott Rains, "History in Peril," *The Lawton Constitution*, January 30, 2007, 1B.
- <sup>100</sup> Routh, "Chief Quanah's Star House and Its 4-Year Trek," 17.
- <sup>101</sup> "Indian Chief's Family Starts Area Reunion," *The Lawton Constitution*, August 7, 1960, 1.
- <sup>102</sup> Francis Thetford, "Eagle Park's Prominence As Frontier City Grows," *The Daily Oklahoman*, May 21, 1967, 26.
- <sup>103</sup> "Quanah Parker Relatives Hold Family Reunion," *The Lawton Constitution*, July 27, 1980, 5.
- <sup>104</sup> Joan M. Biskupic, "City Group Restoring 'Faded' Amusement Park," *The Sunday Oklahoman*, June 3, 1984, 10.
- <sup>105</sup> Mark Hutchison, "History Hidden Among Ruins of Cache Carnival Park," *The Daily Oklahoman*, November 6, 1989, 4.
- <sup>106</sup> Interview with Fort Sill museum director Towana Spivey by author, December 16, 2011, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.
- <sup>107</sup> Rains, "History in Peril," 1B.
- <sup>108</sup> Interview with Wayne Gipson by author, January 25, 2012, Cache, Oklahoma.

During the latter years of his life, Quanah Parker was the best known of all the Comanche, and his is still a name to conjure with in Texas more than a century after his death. He was born around 1852, the son of war chief Peta Nocona and a white woman named Cynthia Ann Parker, who was captured in 1836 during a raid at Fort Parker.Â But he never abandoned the Comanche ways. As his biographer William T. Hagan writes, he had "one foot on the white man's road and the other on the old Comanche trail." There is little reliable information about Quanah's early life. When he was approximately nine, Cynthia Ann was recaptured by whites at the Battle of Pease River, in present-day Foard County; two years after that his father died. The Quanah Parker Star House, with stars painted on its roof, is located in the city of Cache, county of Comanche, in the U.S. state of Oklahoma. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places listings in Comanche County, Oklahoma, in 1970.Â After Comanche chief Quanah Parker's surrender in 1875, he lived for many years in a reservation tipi. Parker decided that he needed living quarters more befitting his status among the Comanches, and more suitable to his position as a spokesperson for the white cattle owners.Â In his formal wallpapered dining room with its wood-burning stove, Parker entertained white business associates, celebrities and tribal members alike. Among his celebrated visitors was Theodore Roosevelt. Parker's house was where he lived with his family and entertained many notable guests. Texas cattlemen who had successful dealings with Parker built him this large home in 1890. It is known still known as the Star House for its roof decorations. Quanah's mother Cynthia Ann Parker died before he surrendered, but he later kept her picture by his bed. Star House The Star House today belongs to Wayne Gipson and his sister, who inherited it from their uncle, who obtained it through a trade with Quanah Parker's daughter in the 1950s. Quanah's daughter left the future of Star House up to the Gipson's... The Quanah Parker Star House, with stars painted on its roof, is located in the city of Cache, county of Comanche, in the U.S. state of Oklahoma. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places listings in Comanche County, Oklahoma, in 1970. After Comanche chief Quanah Parker's surrender in 1875, he lived for many years in a reservation tipi. Parker decided that he needed living quarters more befitting his status among the Comanches, and more suitable to his position as a spokesperson for the