

# Parker Family Heritage



**Quanah Parker** was born in approximately 1850, the son of Comanche war chief, Peta Nocona. His mother was Cynthia Ann Parker, a white woman from Parker's Fort. Taken from her family in 1836, when she was only nine years old, Cynthia Ann Parker adapted to the Comanche way of life and married Peta Nocona. Quanah was the oldest of three children. He had a brother, Pecos, and a sister Prairie Flower. Although recognizably Comanche, Quanah had his mother's gray eyes. He gained strength from his Anglo and Native American Heritage.

On December 24, 1860, after spending 24 years with the Comanche, the Texas Rangers recaptured Cynthia Ann Parker, along with her daughter, Prairie Flower. The young child died within three years of captivity. Forced to leave her husband and two sons, Cynthia Ann never recovered from the grief and loss of her family. She died of a broken heart in 1870. Quanah and his father searched over the frontier to find

Cynthia Ann, but to no avail; she had been taken at least 400 miles from where she was captured. A few years later, Peta Nocona died.

A teenage orphan, the young Quanah took refuge with the Quahadi Comanches of the Llano Estacado. During the Civil War, the Comanche lived in Comancheria, the name given to the land where the Comanche prospered. Comancheria consisted of over 250,000 square miles of land, including Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. This vast dominance of land earned the Comanche the name "The Lord of the Plains."



A natural-born leader, Quanah led the Comanche for seven years as uncontested on the Staked Plains. Between 1871-1872, 4th Calvary officer Ranald Mackenzie aggressively attacked the Comanche, but failed. On Oct. 9, 1871, Quanah and his followers raided the cavalry campsite in Blanco Canyon (approximately 45 miles east of Lubbock). The raid produced the killing of many horses, and the Comanche seemingly disappeared on the plains, only to reappear and attack again. Mackenzie gave up the search in mid-1872.



Soon after, buffalo hunters appeared on the Plains, slaughtering millions of buffalo and selling their hides for a high price to markets on the eastern coast. The buffalo hunters left the carcasses and bones behind to rot. With buffalo nearly exterminated and after suffering a heavy loss of horses and lodges at the hands of military assault, Quanah realized there was no other choice but to go to the reservation, especially when he learned that all Comanche that did not submit to reservation would be exterminated. In June 1875, Quanah chose to lead the last free Comanche people to



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# Comanche: Lords of the Plains

Native Americans played an important role in Texas frontier history. The original inhabitants of West Texas, the Comanche hunted the buffalo on the South Plains, where miles and miles of fertile grass covered the landscape.

The Comanche were nomadic people, moving from place to place in search of choice buffalo that provided for their every need—food, clothing and shelter. They were traders and controlled much of the commerce on the South Plains. They traded buffalo products, horses and captives for manufactured items and other food.

However, it was also the horse that provided a successful way of life for the Comanche. It gave them the ability to follow the buffalo herds and the advantage of being able to hunt and conduct warfare on horseback. Wealth to the Comanche was measured by the number of horses he possessed, and horses were a valuable trade.

In 1836, the Comanche people were in complete control of the Texas plains and did not welcome white men intruding upon their land. Frontier Texans coveted the Indians' land, and raids increased as the Civil War left the frontier unprotected. Finally, the federal government stepped in and ordered the Comanche to move to reservation land. The Comanche, whose name means “anyone who wants to fight me all the time,” did not go quietly.

Soon, the Comanche saw their way of life rapidly vanishing and turned to a Quahadi medicine man for leadership. Isa-tai (later known as White Eagle) promised victory over the whites and attacked a buffalo hunter's camp at Adobe Walls. The attack was unsuccessful.

Once numbering in thousands, a Comanche population census of 1875 revealed the Comanche in Texas had been reduced to 1,597. They were forced to completely restructure their society, and the last great Comanche War Chief Quanah Parker was instrumental in helping his people make that transition. Suffering a terrible loss, the Comanche people, once hunters and warriors, were becoming farmers and stockmen. Their cultural values and beliefs were constantly under attack.

Quanah Parker provided leadership to his people and promoted self-sufficiency and self-reliance. He fought fervently for peace and for his people as he did as a war chief. Quanah did not abandon his past or force his people to desert their traditions altogether. He considered himself a man who tried to do right to both the people of his tribe and to his “pale-faced friends.”



# Quanah Parker

## Man of Two Worlds



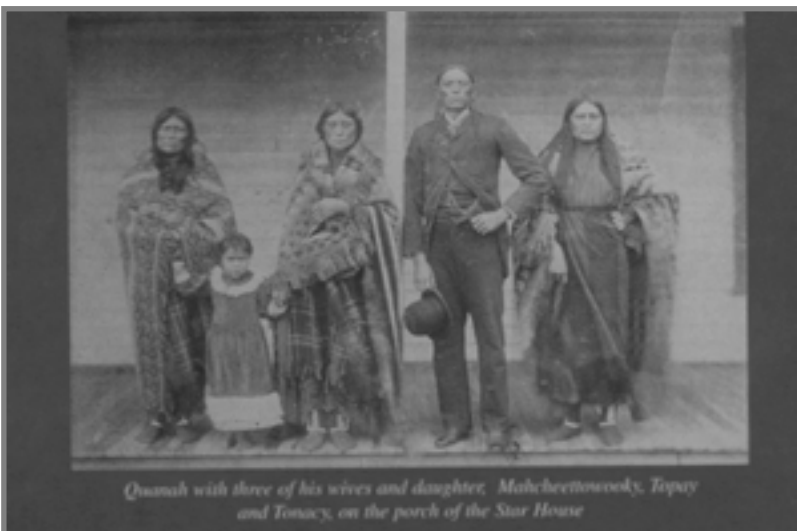
Quanah Parker's life is the story of one of America's greatest leaders. Common to Native American customs, where the identity of a man is conveyed in a single word, Quanah represented strength and dignity of the eagle. Quanah was a warrior who possessed the vision to take his people from the life of freedom on the Southern Plains and helped them adjust to reservation life.

Quanah Parker provided his people with determined leadership. He led by example and promoted self-sufficiency and self-reliance. He fought fervently for peace for his people. As time passed on the reservation, Quanah served not only as chief of the Comanche but also as sheriff and a tribal court judge. He lobbied against Congress and pleaded the cause of the Comanche Nation. Among his friends were cattlemen Charles Goodnight, Burk Burnett and President Theodore Roosevelt.



Possibly the wealthiest Indian in America during his lifetime, Quanah Parker was also a successful cattle rancher, businessman, accomplished horseman and able leader.

Quanah is pictured here with three of his seven wives and one of his 22 children on the porch of the Star House in Fort Still, Oklahoma.



*Quanah with three of his wives and daughter, Macheetowood, Topay and Tomacy, on the porch of the Star House*

# Quanah Parker

## Man of Two Worlds

### Objectives

TLW identify Quanah Parker as the last of the Comanche War Chiefs and recognize his contributions as a peacemaker between the Comanche Nation and Texas cattlemen. TLW write a descriptive poem about Quanah's leadership.

### TEKS

Geography 4.9, Social Studies 4.23, History 4.4

### Building Background

- Read and discuss Comanche: Lord of the Plains. Describe Comanche life on the South Plains with and without the presence of the buffalo. Using the activity sheet, discuss the cause and effect of different events in the Comanche history.

### Procedure

- Study the historical photographs of Quanah Parker. As a group, list ways Quanah maintained his Native American heritage. List how he adapted to the white man's ways to promote peaceful living among the Comanche people. Make a word map that tells the story of Quanah Parker and his leadership in both the Native American and Anglo worlds.
- Read about Quanah Parker's family heritage and make a timeline of his life. Add adjectives and phrases to the class mind map.
- With a partner, make a list of words or phrases to describe Quanah Parker as a great leader among the Comanche people and the white man.
- Model the beautiful language that can be used to describe a person by writing a cinquain. As a group, write a cinquain about a chosen subject.
- The students will write a cinquain about Quanah Parker's life. Illustrate.
- Using the Internet, textbooks or other resources, research the customs, traditions and lifestyle of today's Comanche people. In what ways do Comanche culture and language affect our world?

### Extend

Write about it!

Pretend you are a writer for the local newspaper. Write an obituary for Quanah Parker and tell of his impact as a leader among the Comanche people and ranching industry.

Sample cinquain:

River  
Clear wonderful  
Slapping, whirling, flowing  
The river is cold.  
Water

# Comanche: Lords of the Plains

## Cause

## Effect

- Comanche hunted buffalo on the plains.
- The horse changed the way the Comanche lived.
- The white men coveted the Comanche's land.
- The government ordered the Comanche to move to reservation land.
- Quanah parker fought for his people.

# Quanah Parker

## Last Comanche Chief

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Noun

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Adjective (describing the noun)

---

Adjective

---

Gerund (action describing the noun)

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Gerund

---

Gerund

---

One complete, related sentence

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Noun (synonym of noun in line 1)

First line: 2 syllables, 1 word, giving the title  
Second line: 4 syllables, 2 words, describing the title  
Third line: 6 syllables, 3 words, expressing action  
Fourth line: 8 syllables, 4 words, expressing a feeling  
Fifth line: 2 syllables, another word, or synonym of the title



**Quanah Parker**  
**Born-1850**  
**Died Feb. 23, 1911**



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On his tombstone it is written:

Resting here until day breaks  
And shadows fall and darkness disappears  
is

Quanah Parker  
Last Chief on the Comanches  
Born-1850  
Died Feb. 23, 1911

Do not stand at my grave and weep  
I am not there, I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow  
I am the diamond glint in the snow  
I am the sunlight on the ripened rain.  
When you wake in the morning hush.  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
of quiet birds in circling flight.  
I am the soft starlight at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and weep.  
I am not there, I do not sleep.

Ai!