

Dear Friends of the Texas Plains Trail Region and Quanah Parker Trail,

It is a pleasure to announce that on Friday, July 26, 2013, Charles A. Smith will install QPT Giant Arrows in Stratford, Texas (Sherman County) and Channing, Texas (Hartley County).

The research and installation for the QPT arrows were initiated and arranged by Kathy Allen of Stratford, and, Dinkie Parman of Channing assisted by Kristine Olsen of Dalhart.

Invaluable research and references to help both counties were provided by Randy Vance of the TTU Southwest Collection, Sami Simpson of the Bailey and Cochran County Historical Commissions, and Dr. Clint Chambers, on the board of directors for the historic national Santa Fe Trail.

Time and locations are cited below:

1. 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.: Stratford QPT arrow installation

Location: Sherman County Depot Museum at 17 N Main St

-- 11:30 a.m. -12:30 a.m.: break for lunch

-- 12:30 noon - 2:00 p.m.: Travel to Channing (extra time allotted here for refueling, etc.)*

2. 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.: Channing arrow installation

Location: XIT General Office Building, 500 Main Street

Please come and join us if you can!

Both counties stake their claim for inclusion on the QPT primarily by virtue of the fact they were included in the territory known in the 19th century as "The Comancheria".

Sherman County:

In Stratford, Kathy Allen ferreted out from the Sherman County History the fact that in the post-reservation period, people reported seeing Indians traveling westward through the county with very poor horses and saddles, then a while later, returning eastward with *much better* horses and saddles!

The inference is that these Indians may have included Comanches who were continuing their long-established trade in horses with traffickers in New Mexico and Colorado. Pekka Hamalainen in "Comanche Empire" (2008) noted the economic mainstay provided to the Comanches of this important trade in horses.

When traveling west from off the reservation, they did not head due west by cutting across the Oklahoma Panhandle known as "No Man's Land" which lacked reliable water resources.

Pauline Hodges of the No Man's Land Museum in Beaver County OK, confirmed at the West Texas Historical Association meeting this April, that the lack of reliable water resources would have discouraged anyone from departing from the Comanche and Kiowa Indian reservation territory and traveling westward across the Oklahoma Panhandle. The logical course for anyone traveling westward headed toward New Mexico and Colorado would be to descend south -- such as into Sherman County. From here, they would follow familiar water trailways along tributaries of the Canadian River, to include the Beaver North Canadian River, Frisco Creek, and Coldwater Creek. In order to link up with familiar trade routes leading to trade and horse market destinations in New Mexico and Colorado.

In addition, Sami Simpson had noted from a 1902 Texas General Land Office map for Sherman County, that two old trails were marked on the map that cross Sherman County leading from the northeast to the southwest: Coldwater Wagon Road, and Mabry's **Tascosa** Coldwater Trail, both of which appear to be possible tributary trails that provided travel links to the historic Tascosa Trail -- and old Tascosa.

As Dan Gelo and Wayne Pate note "Indian Trail of Texas" (2003), old Tascosa was a "legendary meeting spot for Indians and Comanchero traders on an easy ford of the Canadian River" (p. 168). The Tascosa trail and its ancillary trail routes existed as Indian trails long before commandeered by Anglo Texans.

This evidence suggests a possible route that might have been followed by Indians traveling from the northeast out of Oklahoma down through the southwest, to link up with the Tascosa Trail familiar to them, to lead them on to trade market destinations in New Mexico and Colorado.

Although the identity of the Indians observed traveling across Sherman County cannot be definitively established, these accounts, in addition to the Indian artifacts maintained in the Sherman County Museum, provide sufficient documented evidence to indicate 19th century presence of Indians in the area of Sherman County, which would have included the Comanches, as the lands of present-day Sherman County were included in their territory of "The Comancheria".

Hartley County:

Hartley County, like Dallam and Oldham counties, was traversed by Comanches and other Plains Indians in the course of their travels across the northwest panhandle of Texas to raid the Santa Fe trail, trade stolen goods and horses in Colorado, and travel as a matter of course north/south to Kansas, and east/west into New Mexico.

Indeed, it is known that Quanah Parker traveled north to Kansas to attend the Medicine Lodge Treaty in 1867, and north near to present-day Dalhart to sign a treaty with Ute Indians circa 1877. On both journeys, it is possible he may have crossed through Hartley County on his way north, following the trail out of old Tascosa, or, the water trailway leading from the Canadian River north along the Rita Blanca Creek.

An interview over lunch with Dr. Clint Chambers, on the board of directors for the historic national Santa Fe Trail, concurred that the Comanches and other Indians would have regularly criss-crossed the region of the northwest corner of the Texas Panhandle where Dallam and Hartley counties are located, to conduct raids on the Santa Fe Trail.

As the trail crossed through the Comancheria, which Comanches regarded as their territory, they demanded or else confiscated tribute goods from travelers.

(See): https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Fe_Trail.

Indeed, Dr. Chambers noted, this is the reason forts were constructed at either end and near to the trail: it was to provide military protection from such raids for travelers and freight moving across the Santa Fe Trail. He noted there were also alternate routes of the Santa Fe Trail established to avoid Indian raids during different times of the year.

A major water trailway Indians would have followed that courses through Hartley County from Texas, heading northwest to the Santa Fe Trail, is Rita Blanca Creek, which as it flows from out of the north is called Rock or Carrizo Creek. It is marked on the Santa Fe Trail map that can be seen at:

<http://www.santafetrail.org/interactive-trail-map/>

In the end, Hartley County was part of The Comancheria before it was part of the XIT Ranch established in the 1880s, so we know that the Comanches and their allies of the Southern Plains tribes dominated the land until the resolution to the Red River Wars in 1875.

Respectfully submitted,
Holle Humphries
on behalf of the
Quanah Parker Trail
for the Texas Plains Trail Region