



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
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**(Texas - Comanche Indian Photograph) Tush=a=wa or Whiteknife, Pen=a=teth=ka,
Comanche Chief [Cabinet card photograph of Tosahwi, White Knife, or Tosawa;
Penateka Comanche Chief]**

Stock#: 93032
Map Maker: Soule
Date: 1875 circa
Place: Fort Sill, Indian Territory
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 4 x 6.5 inches
Price: \$ 3,500.00



Description:

Spectacular Cabinet Card of Comanche Chief Tosawa by W. S. Soule

The Peaceful Chief of Penateka Comanche Tribe

Signed the Treaty of Tehuacana Creek with the Republic of Texas

A wonderful and rare cabinet card photograph depicting Penateka Comanche chief Tosawa, or White Knife. His name is also transcribed as Tosahwi or Penateka.



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An early manuscript caption on the recto of the mount directly below the photograph reads: "*Tush=a=wa or White Knife / Pen=a=Teth=ka Comanche Chief.*" Tosawa wears an elaborately decorated Hardee hat with a prominently displayed "sheriff's star." He also sports an unidentifiable medal around his neck.

A pencil inscription on verso of mount relates an intriguing story connecting Tosawa and William Babcock Hazen, referred to as "*Gen Hazen*" in the inscription. The story refers to a house built with decaying logs, and White Knife's response to living in such an abode. It reads, in part:

*Gen Hazen built him a / house several years ago of un- / -hewn logs - after a while the / wood [was
black or on back] began to decay / and the dust fell. he left / the house in disgust - thought / and said
the Gen'l meant to put his eyes / out and it was with great / difficulty he could be persuaded / to live
in a house after.*

Tosawa, known as a peaceful chief of the Penateka Comanche tribe, was one of the signers the Treaty of Tehuacana Creek in 1844. In later years, he met Confederate General Albert Pike at Fort Cobb and purportedly swore allegiance to the Confederacy. Tosawa engaged in raids in the southwest during the 1860s, but he eventually returned to Fort Cobb and submitted to military authority.

Tosawa is credited with keeping his people out of the Red River War of 1873-1874, further bolstering his image as a peaceful chief. Richard Henry Pratt wrote in his *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904*, that General W. B. Hazen (who is mentioned in the pencil inscription on card mount verso) was put in charge of a temporary Indian Agency at Fort Cobb where "friendly" nomadic Indians were asked to assemble. Pratt adds in a footnote, "*...the Penateka Comanches of Tosawi and AsaHavey were cooperative.*"

"The only good Indian is a dead Indian"

This highly offensive and racist expression has been attributed to various historical figures, including General Philip Sheridan and General William Tecumseh Sherman. However, there is no clear evidence that either of these men ever uttered those exact words. Some have suggested that Sheridan originated the epithet in referring to Tosawa.

The phrase stems from the Indian Wars of the late 19th century, a period of violent conflict between the United States government and various Native American tribes. It reflects the genocidal attitude towards Indigenous peoples held by many Euro-Americans at the time, who saw Native Americans as obstacles to westward expansion and as "savage" and inferior beings.



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Moreover, the phrase has been used to justify violent actions against Native Americans, including massacres and forced relocation, and its continued use perpetuates harmful stereotypes.

William Stinson Soule, Noted Photographer of Native Americans

The present cabinet card bears the imprint of photographer William S. Soule, while he was posted at Fort Sill, Indian Territory. Soule was a noted photographer of the American West, especially regarded for his evocative portraits of Native Americans. He first came west in 1867 when he started working at the Army post at Fort Dodge, Kansas. In 1868 Soule moved to Fort Supply, Indian Territory, and then in 1869 he became post photographer at Fort Sill, a position he held until 1875. Consequently, we can date the present photograph to the early 1870s.

Rarity

Such iconic original photographs of noted Native American figures from the west, particularly a Comanche chief with such a distinguished personal history as White Knife, are avidly sought and quite rare in the market.

Detailed Condition:

Original albumen photograph, on card mount (cabinet card format). Some surface soiling. Dampstaining. Surface abrasion to parts of the image (mainly in lower third of image). W.S. Soule, Fort Sill, Indian Territory printed imprint on verso. Interesting pencil inscription on verso mentions Gen. Hazen (see below for transcript). Overall condition is quite good.