



SMOKE SIGNALS

= THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ABSENTEE SEMINOLE TRIBE OF TEXAS =

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TRIBAL COUNCIL

Principal Chief: Lee R. Young

Assistant Chief: Louis B. Watson

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Marsha Jo Butler, Secretary

Barbara S. Hightower, Treasurer

Mary S. Young

Clarence G. Ward

Samuel R. Watson

PRINCIPAL CHIEF'S MESSAGE: Hensci, Happy New Year Seminoles. The Tribal Council will meet February 9, 2019, 1:00 PM, at the Asian Star Buffet, 9919 Colonial Square, San Antonio, TX 78240. All Tribal members are welcome to attend a Tribal Council meeting. We will be working on the scholarship program, activities and events for 2019, your input and assistance is encouraged.

TRIBAL IDENTIFICATION CARDS

Tribal Identification Cards are available with a 3 year expiration for \$20, or \$25 for 5 years. The Tribal Identification Cards, are an official means of identifying tribal members. Tribal Identification Cards do not replace any official government issued identification, they provide a means for members to display their tribal enrollment. Visit our website: <https://absenteeseminoletribe.org> under the "Resources" tab download the Tribal Identification Card information.

SEMINOLE INDIAN SCOUTS CEMETERY

On January 14, 2019, the cemetery entrance was returned to it's former appearance. The old gates were installed, and the fence re-wired to the metal poles, as they were previously. On October 5, 2018 we were informed by Augusta Pines, President, SISCA, the results of a vote from their membership was unanimous for the cemetery entrance to be returned to it's former condition. ASTT agreed to remove the masonry stone applied to renovate and improve the cemetery entrance. The community unfortunately has lost an opportunity to have an improved appearance applied to this historic cemetery.

Cemetery gates and fence restored



We extend our appreciation to, tribal member and friends who participated in the cemetery entrance project. The Tribal Council has decided we should direct future fundraising towards scholastic scholarships.

BARBARA JORDAN UIL ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP

I was recently contacted by a senior student at Comstock High School, Comstock, TX. The young man said he had applied for the Barbara Jordan UIL Essay Scholarship. He said the topic of his essay was about the Black Seminole Indian Scouts at Fort Clark. He inquired if I would agree to answer a few questions as he prepared his essay. I consented to answer his questions, and he subsequently forwarded three (3) question to me. I have included my answers to his questions here for all to read.

(Comstock, TX is located in Val Verde County approximately 20 miles Northwest of Del Rio, TX)

1. What was everyday life like for the scouts and their families at Fort Clark?

The Seminole community on Las Moras Creek south of Brackettville in Kinney County, Texas was called “The Camp”. Around 1870 some 150 Black Seminoles formed the community located south of Fort Clark. Several of the men were enlisted as Indian Scouts. In 1870 they had been organized into an Army detachment of Seminole Negro Indian Scouts, at Fort Duncan, located near Eagle Pass, TX. Despite the name, the unit included both Black Seminoles, and other Native Americans – Creek, Cherokee, Tonkaway, Yaqui and Apache Indians. The unit played a significant role in ending the Texas-Indian Wars.

Sgt. Ben July, at Seminole Negro Indian Scout, Seminole Camp, c. 1890



Around 1874 several hundred Black Seminoles from Mexico moved to the “Camp”, bringing the population to an estimated 500. A Baptist church – Mount Zion Baptist church was constructed in the Camp.

The Seminole built homes in the Mexican jacal style, using wattle and daub construction and thatched roofs. The scouts and their families also built dams and irrigation systems along Las Moras Creek for farming. The Seminoles lived on the fort until 1914, when the Seminole Negro Indian Scouts detachment was disbanded. In 1914 after the Seminole Negro Indian Scouts detachment were disorganized, the church was relocated into the town of Brackettville, TX. Some Seminoles returned to Mexico, many stayed in the Brackettville area and other areas of Texas and the United States. Still others remained, buried in the Seminole Indian Scouts Cemetery,

formed in 1872, located on FM 348, 3.1 miles SW of Brackettville TX. Among those buried there are four Seminole Scouts who were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for meritorious service and bravery: Sgt., John Ward, Trumpeter Isaac Payne, Pvt. Pompey Factor, and Pvt. Adam Paine.

One of the last remaining Seminole homes at the Camp, before destruction



Sgt. John Ward

Trumpeter Isaac Payne

Pvt. Pompey Factor

Pvt. Adam Paine



2. How did segregation affect the Black Seminole Scouts at Fort Clark?

The distinguished military service provided by the Seminole Scouts is remarkable. They are credited by historians with the achievement of ending the Texas-Indian Wars. During their history, they engaged in more than 20 major engagements with hostiles. A Seminole Scout was never killed during an engagement. Four of the Seminole Scouts were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for service and bravery.

In spite of providing safety and protection for settlers and their livestock, some settlers did not appreciate the Black Seminoles living near their community. Some promoted an unpopular idea for the Seminole Scouts disbandment. Black Seminoles were unfairly treated by civilians and law enforcement.

The Black Seminole Chief – John Horse, also known as John Caballo, John Cowaya, or Gopher John, was a dominant personality for over 50 years. He counseled Seminole leaders (he spoke Muscogee, Spanish and English), he served as an agent of the U.S. government. He was a Colonel in the Mexican Army. He traveled to Washington D.C. to plead the Black Seminole interests before President Polk, he traveled to Mexico City to plead before President Porfirio Diaz. He fought against the U.S. during the Second Seminole War, and he survived four attempts on his life, and being captured by slave-hunters.

In an incident May 1876 Chief John Horse was badly wounded and the scout Titus Payne was killed as they were returning to Fort Clark. John Horse was riding his horse "American" and Payne was walking alongside. There was no effort to catch the killers, the outlaw John King Fisher was suspected of being responsible. Fisher was a horse thief and cattle rustler and well known for his hatred of the Black Seminoles. The shooting created unrest among the Black Seminoles and over the course of the next few months several Black Seminoles returned to Mexico.

John Horse recovered from his wounds at the Camp, and returned to Mexico when he was able to ride. In 1882 John Horse traveled by horseback to Mexico City, to meet with President Porfirio Diaz, to re-negotiate the Nacimiento land grant. While in Mexico City he becomes sick, and dies in a military hospital. He is buried in Mexico City. The man whom assassins could not kill – succumbs to pneumonia.

Today the Seminole in Mexico – called Mascogos, continue to live on the reservation granted to them in 1850 by the Mexican government. Their reservation is near the Kickapoo reservation.

3. Did any of John Ward's, Isaac Payne's, or Pompey Factor's descendants serve in the military and/or receive any honors?

Following disbandment of the Seminole Negro Indian Scout detachment, many former scouts continued military service. Several served in Cuba and the Philippines.

The scouts left behind a legacy of military service, and community service. In the scout community, there were certain surnames that were well known. Of the 152 scouts that served between 1870 and 1914, there were seventeen "Wilson's, eleven "Payne's, eight "July's, seven "Factor's, seven "Bowleg's, six "Washington's, six "Daniels's, and six "Bruner's.

Many descendants of the scouts, male and female have had distinguished military careers. Many today continue to serve in the military.

The Black Seminole have distinguished themselves in many professions, including the military, education, and law enforcement to name a few. Black Seminole Lee Young, a veteran of the U.S. Navy was appointed a Texas Ranger in 1988. In 2013 he published his book. "Lee Young: Memoirs of a Black Seminole Texas Ranger".

Steve Warrior, a U. S. Air Force pilot was on the Air Force Basketball Team and played in a tournament in Washington D.C. While on a Pentagon tour he saw the wall of all the Medal of Honor winners and saw the names of the four Seminole Scouts who received the Medal of Honor.

Descendant – George Henry White, who retired from the U.S. Army, was recently buried at the Seminole Indian Scouts Cemetery on November 27, 2018.

George Henry White



JUDGE ROY BEAN VISITOR CENTER - HISTORICAL AND TRAVEL FAIR

We have been requested to again participate in the Judge Roy Bean Center, Historical and Travel Fair.

Date: Thursday, March 28, 2019

Time: 10 AM to 2 PM

Location: Judge Roy Bean Visitor Center, Langtry, TX

Audience: Travelers & local school children on field trips



These members are celebrating birthdays in the month of February

Loretta A. Benson – Feb 1
Kathleen D. Spain – Feb 1
Pacia R. Carter – Feb 4
Clarence G. Ward - Feb 5
Luther W. Ward – Feb 5
Barbara Jo Lewis – Feb 6
Kinsley M. Aguilera – Feb 10
Carlos J. Page – Feb 16

Arga M. Carter – Feb 17
Priscilla A. Dittmer – Feb 21
Phillip M. Dixon - Feb 22
Mitya L. Quick - Feb 23
Isabella G. Meza - Feb 24
Mark A. Hicks – Feb 24
Sylvia A. Lewis – Feb 25
Rosalind R. Tabora – Feb 28



CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If you change residence, get a new telephone number, new email address, or any other changes in contact information. Be certain and forward your new information to our office. We don't want anyone missing out on any information on our tribal organization, projects, events, by not receiving their tribal mail

The greatest gift we can give to our ancestors is to preserve their heritage and legacy. Never give up!, continue the struggle. "If there is no struggle, there is no progress" Frederick Douglass.



Absentee Seminole Tribe
of Texas

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