

# *Enduring* BEAUTY

Seminole Art & Culture



From the collection of:  
I.S.K. Reeves V & Sara W. Reeves

**The Orlando Museum of Art**

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Micanopy (1780-1849) aka: Sint-Chakkee

## Foreword From the Director

### Enduring Beauty: Seminole Art and Culture

The Orlando Museum of Art (OMA) is pleased to present *Enduring Beauty: Seminole Art and Culture*, an exhibition that showcases the important Native American art collection of I.S.K. “Keith” Reeves V and Sara W. Reeves. Considered to be the largest private collection of its kind, *Enduring Beauty* is a survey of Seminole art and culture from the 1820s through the present.

*Enduring Beauty* celebrates many aspects of Seminole culture, one being the spectacular design and craftsmanship of Seminole men’s big shirts. These brilliantly colored garments decorated with appliqué and patchwork are perhaps the most iconic expressions of Seminole art. The Reeves Collection, which includes several hundreds of artifacts, provides visitors with an in-depth understanding of their meaning and stylistic development. Some of the earliest examples of Seminole creations included in the exhibition, are bandolier bags, sashes and other apparel worn by the Seminole as early as the 1820s. These are decorated with intricate beadwork in patterns that are often inspired by nature. Other artforms include dolls clothed in Seminole style, beadwork necklaces, and finely woven sweetgrass baskets with embroidery decoration.

The history of prominent Seminole leaders and the variety of their distinctive adornment can also be seen in a plethora of engravings, color lithographs, and prints dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Reeves Collection also includes an extensive number of original historic photographs of Seminole life in the Everglades and riveting portraits of proud families and noted individuals. Showcased within this comprehensive exhibition is a group of paintings by Native American artist Fred Beaver, depicting varied Seminole cultural practices such as hunting, making canoes and dancing.

This exceptional collection was formed over the course of more than 45 years, around the Reeves’ respect for the Seminole and their long history of perseverance during the formative years of the State. In an effort to remain in their Florida homeland, the Seminole faced three wars against forced Federal removal to Oklahoma. Following these wars, many Seminoles who never surrendered, secured a permanent homeland in South Florida. Today, thousands of their descendants live in the State, keeping their culture alive and contributing to the State’s rich diversity.

The Orlando Museum of Art wishes to thank Keith and Sara Reeves for sharing their collection with the public through this exhibition, which honors Florida’s Native American people, the Seminoles.

Glen Gentele  
Director and Chief Executive Officer

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Collecting Native American art embarks one on many adventures and responsibilities.

When you become passionate about art, you read all that you can, you visit museums and seek access to their archives, you speak with experts in many specialized fields and you seek the advice of fellow collectors and dealers. Many, in the process, become life-long friends and advisors. I am, in that respect, always surprised by their generosity of time and assistance.

This portion of our collection of Native American art is focused on that of the Seminole, a people that the early explorer William Bartram aptly described when writing of his travels in Florida. They (the Seminole) are

*"...proud of their valor...haughty in their dealings with strangers...and arrogant in their fierce determination to rule their own land or die in the attempt..."*

These artifacts and art pieces are from the Seminole and, what can be termed the "pre-Seminole," those people that inhabited the land we now know as Florida. They were acquired over the past 45 years and we acknowledge and thank those who made it possible to have these pieces of art come into our temporary possession, and who assisted us in learning of their importance and meaning.

Many years ago I learned about the early pre-contact people of Florida from a learned man, Art Dreeves, then the President of the Central Florida Anthropological Society. We spent hours walking fields, attending lectures and symposiums, participating in formal archaeological investigations and visiting areas of early habitation. I owe him a lifetime of gratitude for his mentorship as well as his friendship.

There are, equally, numerous professionals who have dedicated their professional careers learning and writing about the Seminole, including Patricia Wickman, Ph.D., Brent Weiseman, Ph.D., David Blackard, Patsy West, Sandra Starr, and Dorothy Downs. Many of the universities in Florida, such as the University of Florida, Florida State University and the University of South Florida, have assisted us and provided important advice and professional guidance.

There are also many dealers who have assisted us in our collection interests, and specifically those who recognized the rarity and importance of Seminole material, such as Ty and Jean Tyson, Mac Grimmer, Will Channing, Richard Melton, Jan Raber and many others too numerous to mention.

I offer particular thanks to Jerald Milanich, who generously agreed to write the section dealing with pre-history and the Seminole.

And, importantly, the Seminole people themselves, who are the artists and creators of these items and artifacts, those who made this exhibit possible. It is important to also look at these wonderful artifacts, to the extent possible, through their eyes and try to understand and appreciate why, when and how they were made. We must, in the end, thank them for what they have accomplished and for having made this exhibit become a reality.

**I.S.K. Reeves V**

## INTRODUCTION

The history of American Indians in Florida spans some sixteen thousand years. Exactly when the first native person walked south into what is now called Florida is not certain, though archaeologists have documented the presence of Indian camps on the Aucilla River around 14,000 BCE.

Over the succeeding millennia more people came, and others left. Populations increased and over the next several thousand years, settlements were established throughout the state generally moving from coastal regions to those along rivers, streams and lakes. Though the first people made their livelihood by hunting, fishing and gathering wild foods, including a wide array of plants, later Indians added to their diets with vegetables grown in domestic gardens. In the northern half of the state, especially in present day Leon and Jefferson Counties, indigenous Indians cultivated corn (maize), beans and other crops, even while they continued to hunt, fish and forage.

By 1513, when Juan Ponce de Leon explored along the Atlantic and lower Gulf of Mexico coast, approximately 350,000 Indians were living in the land that we now call Florida.

Villages, plazas, mounds and even heaps of refuse (middens), all constructed by Indians, dotted the landscape. Some of the larger towns, like the Lake Jackson site near Tallahassee, which features seven large mounds, the grandest of which measures nearly 90 by 100 yards along its rectangular base and is 36 feet high, must have been quite dramatic to view.

Throughout the state various ethnic groups, often speaking different languages, were organized into literally hundreds of political entities. Today, in museums across the state we can see numerous examples of the art and other objects fashioned from these many societies.

Despite their venerable histories, these Florida Indian societies would disappear from the landscape in the two and a half centuries following Ponce de Leon's voyage to Florida. The population of 350,000 would be decimated; victims of European cultural initiatives that brought diseases, warfare, servitude, and declining birth rates. By the 1760s the Florida Indians were gone, with only a few groups remaining in isolated areas, whose names were recorded in colonial period European documents - Timucua, Calusa, Ais, Apalachee, Teguesta, Jeaga, and hundreds of others - passed into history.



### 1. COLORED ENGRAVING: THE TIMUCUA

*Circa: originally published in 1595*

This is an early illustration of the Timucua, a major tribal entity located in Central and North Central Florida, as well as parts of Southern Georgia. This etching, based upon an original painting by Jaques LeMoyne (de Morgues) depicts Saturioua, the Chief or Cacique (holata to the Timucua) addressing his assembled leaders and major warriors before going off to war. His body is heavily tattooed and he wears a headband with feathers, as do others, with many displaying their weapons, such as wooden clubs, bows and spears. The etching carries the inscription, "Ceremony observ'd by a King of Florida Before he goes on an Expedition."

#### Collection No.: FA-1204

Size: 6 1/2" high, 8" wide



Even while the last remnants of Florida's indigenous populations were disappearing, new native groups were moving into the state from Alabama and Georgia, founding their own towns and villages. Among these newcomers were many affiliated with the Creek Confederacy, including Alabamias, Hitchitees, Koasatas, Natchez and Tuskegees, even a band of Shawnees.

One cause for the movement of Creek people into Florida was inter-tribal warfare, between the Lower Creeks (White Sticks) and the Upper Creeks (Red Sticks), as these separate divisions were known, which led to chaos and the destruction of established political and cultural structures. Initially, this migration impacted mainly northern Florida, but soon Creek and other Indians moved south into Central Florida, drawn by Florida's natural resources and the opportunities for trade with Spaniards and British colonists. Over time the newcomers developed a way of life well-suited to their new natural and political environments. In Florida, they grew more distant from their relatives who continued to live in Georgia and Alabama. They also began to be known by a new name: Seminole.

There is significant conjecture as to how the name Seminole came about; with most evidence suggesting that it comes from the Spanish word "Cimmaron" meaning "wild-run-away" or "broken off," perhaps a term used to refer to the Creek Indians who left their ancestral lands and moved south into Florida. The reality is that the Indians called Seminole were made up of several diverse tribal groups who spoke different, though related, languages, including remnants of several groups that made Florida their home for centuries. By the eighteenth century, they were united as a single tribe: The Seminole.

What is known and acknowledged is that these were a proud, resourceful and independent people. William Bartram, in his travels through parts of Florida described them as: "...proud of their valor...haughty in their dealings with strangers...and arrogant in their dealings with strangers...and arrogant in their fierce determination to rule their own land or die in the attempt..." Truer words were never spoken, as the Seminole to a very large measure, retain these attributes. They acknowledged no subservience to any colonial government, regardless of geographical location, or to economic or military pressures that they experienced from time to time. In fact, intrusion into "their" lands were met with resistance and spawned a series of military conflicts, subsequently known as the Seminole Wars.



## 2. DRAWING: SEMINOLE DANCERS

*Circa: 1838*

Reportedly the earliest image of Seminole, this is a drawing by H.W. Merrill, a second Lieutenant in the U.S. Dragoons, dated 1834. In the image, the men are shown wearing belted hunting shirts, some fringed at the bottom, others decorated, and with beaded leg garters and headbands, decorated with feathers.

### Collection No.: SE-1712

*Photograph (of drawing) courtesy of The Henry E. Huntington Library.*

Coupled with Native American/Indian expansion, we observe the establishment of a complex relationship between Native Americans and African Americans, the latter predominantly being slaves that had escaped from their "owners" and who had sensed that freedom was achievable in the most southern and remote regions of the colonies.

Some were to remain slaves to these Native Americans, but generally, these people that we now know as Seminole were provided an aspect of co-existence, with the formation of adjacent villages / towns in which each ethnic group retained their individual cultural identities, while allied in terms of protecting their territorial aspirations and cultural identity.

When Florida became part of the United States, there were demands to move the Seminole west to Indian Territory (today Oklahoma), as had been done with other Southeastern tribes, such as the Cherokees and Creeks.

Clearly the government's desire was to expand into the fertile areas of the newly created United States, to accommodate both population growth and expansionist desires. The Seminole, to their credit, not only resisted being forced from their lands, but also conducted a valiant guerrilla campaign against the United States federal troops sent against them.

The Seminole chose to fight a series of small engagements, in deep woods, swamps and along rivers, a type of non-formal warfare that disheartened their enemy. Eventually, the series of wars against the Seminole Indians became politically unpopular, economically draining, and resulted in the loss of public support. Though hundreds of Seminole ultimately were removed to Oklahoma, several hundred others remained here in Florida.

It is their descendants that today compose the Seminole and the Miccosukee Tribes of Indians of Florida, both of which have found new prosperity in the state.



### 3. LITHOGRAPH: MICANOPY

*Circa: 1913*

An engraving by Catlin, depicting Micanopy, described as the "Principal Chief...of the Seminole Tribe," whose town was called Pelac-Le-Ka-ha, situated approximately 120 miles south of Alachua, Florida. Mi-canopy was a descendant of Oconee leaders, and was against removal, based upon "...his fear of the union with the Creeks who (he) felt would control a united council, and fear that the Seminoles would be compelled to give up their slave property."

#### **Collection No.: FA-1205**

Size: 6  $\frac{5}{8}$ " high, 4  $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide





## **NORTH AMERICAN CULTURAL AREAS**

### **HISTORICAL (PRE-1900) TRIBAL AREAS**

The Seminole, as noted, are people from the Southeast, mainly from those areas adjacent to the land we call Florida. Many Creek peoples, as a result of Red Creek/White Creek warfare sought a different lifestyle in an area then devoid of native people.

Southeastern culture was both complex, ceremonial and avid, attributes which were a part of the people which came to be known as Seminole.

On the following pages pre-contact and pre-Seminole artifacts are illustrated, and subsequently progressing into those of the Seminole.



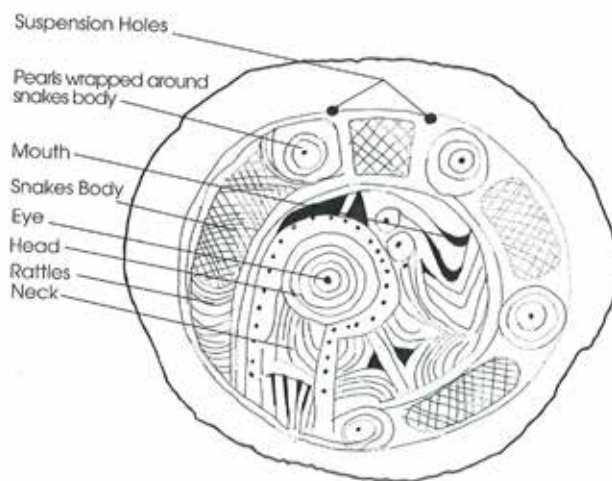
#### **4. SHELL FRAGMENT**

*Circa: 1200-1400 CE*

A Mississippian period marine shell fragment, which appears to be the elbow portion of the falconman, with elements of his feathers (wing) lightly depicted in the shell engraving. These figures were ceremonial in nature and are associated with Mississippian culture of the Spiro Site in Oklahoma. The elements below the knee were bands of freshwater pearls worn on the legs, arms and at the waist, as shown on the accompanying illustration.

**Collection No.: SE-1701**

Size: 2 1/8" high, 3 1/4" wide



## 5. SHELL GORGET

*Circa: 1200-1300 CE*

This is a Mississippian period, man's shell gorget, depicting the rattlesnake motif. Gorgets, such as this example, were symbols of leadership and worn on ceremonial and important occasions. This example, of exceptional size, was made from the large portion of a Biscayne shell, and then engraved.

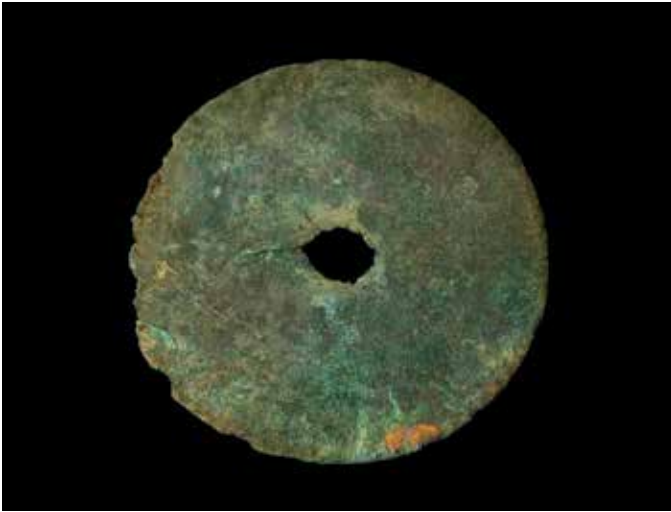
It is of the Citico style, representing the end of the stylistic sequence of rattlesnake gorgets. It is believed that most of the gorgets of this style were made in a single location, the "Williams Island Workshop," located in eastern Tennessee, west of present day Chattanooga.

The snake / rattlesnake / serpent motif was widespread throughout the southeastern United States and is associated with the underworld. It was a creature of ambiguous attributes, both feared and admired. The rattlesnake was the chief. It was the creature that is credited with saving mankind from a disease sent by the sun to destroy it.

The rear side of the gorget carries the inscription, "Post Oak Island, Knox County, TN."

**Collection No.: SE-1719**

Size: 5 ¾" diameter



## 6. PRE-CONTACT MAN'S COPPER GORGET

*Circa: 200-400 CE*

This artifact, recovered from a habitation site in Osceola County, demonstrates the establishment of trade goods between geographically separated Native peoples. Shell from the coast of Florida was traded north, while copper from the Great Lakes was traded south. This example, dating to the Mississippian period, is a man's gorget, a symbol of leadership. It is of beaten copper, with a circular hole for suspension, the outer edge with a series of small indentations.

**Collection No.: SE-1718**

Size: 3 1/4" diameter



## 7. POTTERY EFFIGY

*Circa: 1200-1400 CE*

This is a snake's head, a rattlesnake (conjecturally) whose head decorated the edge of a pottery bowl, most probably a ceremonial vessel. It is, in that context, a rare artifact that was recovered from a midden, or habitation site, in Central Florida. While similar examples are known, mainly from north Florida, few examples of this type exist, being considered to be of the Southeastern Cultural Complex.

**Collection No.: SE-1721**

Size: 2"long, 1 1/2" wide



### 8. SEMINOLE MAN'S SASH

This is an early finger-woven sash of traditional colors: deep red, black, green with interwoven white seed beads. An exceptional example, but lacking any clan identification such as the Jumper Sash (9) and the Toad Sash (13).

**Collection No.: SE-2010**

Size: 156" +/- long

## CONTACT PERIOD

As the Seminole / Creek moved into what is known as Florida, over an extended period, they came in family elements and larger clan groups. First were Creek, but other tribal entities also arrived from surrounding southeastern areas. A great deal has been written about this "in-migration" but suffice to say that these various peoples became known as Seminole, those that we now recognized as the Native People of Florida.

Initially located in a series of cultural areas, diversified geographically around the state, they were presented with the typical American dilemma, the fact that American society wanted to expand into their lands, coveting the important harbors and trade routes established over the centuries by the Spanish, and the contact opportunities with numerous population centers in Cuba and the islands.

The Seminole, through trade, had acquired much of their cultural inventory, such as guns, ammunition, trade cloth, silver and gold elements and, almost anything that they desired and which was, in most cases, "new to their eyes."

The early beadwork is a reflection of this premise of acquiring trade items that could be modified for a new function: one that was appropriate for Seminole Culture of the period. This ability, as an example, to transform trade yarn and beads into such beautiful and functional items as beaded sashes, bandolier bags, leggings, beaded tabs, etc., is one of the unique and wonderful cultural traits of the Seminole. In essence, they made items that they acquired, theirs.

It is indeed fortunate that some of this early contact material has been retained, and some with provenance as to its ownership; such is always a wonder.

Interestingly, some of these accoutrements were created for multi-functional purposes. Many have functional aspects, such as a bandolier bag that was utilized to carry bullets, flints, additional clothing, etc., while also having beaded identification that informs the knowledgeable view as to specific clan identification; thus its dual functionality. The Toad or Big Town Sash is another such "dual purpose" item. The sash was a normal beaded article of clothing, one which notified the observer of the importance of the person wearing such. The other aspect, the dual purpose element, is the depiction of numerous toads, a clear reflection or symbol of the Toad or Big Town Clan (Sopaktalgi).





10.



11.



## 9. SEMINOLE FINGER WOVEN SASH

*Circa: 1853*

This is a man's sash of wool yarn and pony beads, owned by Jumper (Ote Ema-thla), the "sense keeper" or counselor to Micanopy, the principal leader of the Seminole. Jumper was credited by Sprague as being "[...]one of the most intelligent men of the (Seminole) nation", and had come to Florida after the Creek War of 1813-1814. He was described as "[...] cunning, intelligent [...] fond of hearing himself talk and naturally endowed with great fluency of speech [...]. He attained an ascendancy over all classes, and became the most important man in council and consultations." \*

He accompanied Billy Bowlegs to New York, in 1852, and was photographed with him and others, as shown in the accompanying daguerreotype.

The sash that he wears is the same as in the photograph, being one of those few instances when an early Seminole artifact can be attributed to a specific individual.



9A.

### Collection No.: SE-712

Size: 142 5/8" long, total length, including tassels;  
25 5/8" long, length of finger woven panel, 5 5/8" wide

## 10. ENGRAVING: (Page 14)

### "BILLY BOWLEGS AND HIS SUITE OF CHIEFS"

Published in *Illustrated London News*

*Circa: 1853*

This illustration appeared in the *Illustrated London News*, on May 31, 1853 following their visit to New York. The engraving was made from a daguerreotype taken in 1852 (Exhibit No. 11), which disappeared from view for 150 plus years but was "re-discovered" in the beginning of the 21st Century. Note the different placement of the individuals, apparently based upon artistic license, but perhaps to provide Bowlegs with greater presence than in the original daguerreotype.



9B.

### Collection No.: SE-1720

Size: 9" wide, 5 1/4" high

## 11. DAGUERRETYPE (COPY) (Page 14)

### BILLY BOWLEGS AND ENTOURAGE

*Circa: 1852*

The "lost" image of Billy Bowlegs and his entourage in New York, circa 1852. The individuals in the image are identified (left to right) as Sarparkie Yoholo, John Jumper (whose sash accompanies this image), Billy Bowlegs, Chocote Tustenugee, back row: Fasatchee Emanthla and Abraham (a black Seminole). The photograph (daguerreotype), which was long thought to have been lost, was purchased years ago by Matthew Isenberg, a well-known collector of early photographic images. The wonder of this story is that two rare artifacts: a sash worn by Jumper and his image, came together for the first time.

Original: Collection of Matthew Isenberg

**Collection No. (Photographic Copy): SE-1716**



9C.

\* Sprague quoted in Thrapp, Dan L., *Encyclopedia of Frontier Biography*. University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln & London, 1988, p. 754.



## SASH IMPORTANCE

Seminole men, of this period, typically wore a sash, or several, across their chest. In this example the early and important Seminole leader, Billy Bowlegs wears one across his left shoulder. Many Seminole men wore two such sashes, one across each shoulder. In the Illustrated London News engraving (Exhibit No 10) and the accompanying photograph (Exhibit No 11), Bowlegs is wearing the same sash as in this image.

A sash was a means of defining importance and leadership. It said, to the viewer, "I am a warrior of importance," and in some examples contained emblems of Clan affiliation or identification.

By wearing a sash, you gave a message, not unlike contemporary society, whereas wearing certain articles of clothing identifies the status of an individual.

### 12. PHOTOGRAPH: BILLY BOWLEGS

*Circa: 1840s-1852*

This is an early image of Billy Bowlegs, the legendary Seminole Leader who was instrumental in resisting the takeover of Seminole lands and, in large measure, in resorting to force to protect the interests of the Seminole. This image appears to precede his trip to New York in 1852. His strength of character and willingness to "risk all" to protect the interests of the Seminole made him a popular figure in Seminole circles as well as governmental and private circles. He wears the same bandolier bag in the later group image, but holds in his right hand, a sword, suggesting that this image may have been taken in the Nation's Capital.

### Collection No.: SE-1350

Size: 2" wide, 3 1/8" high

### 13. THE TOAD or BIG TOWN SASH APALACHICOLI / TAIWA LAKO

*Circa: 1839*

This early sash depicts an important clan element: that of the Toad or Big Town Clan. Clearly the intent of the maker of this finger-woven sash was to have the wearer, a Seminole man of importance, be identified as a leader of that clan.

To our knowledge, a sash, such as this example, was not worn daily, rather limited to important events, such as clan gatherings, at ceremonial events, dances and when meeting with leaders of other clans and / or United States representatives. The intent was to impress the viewer with the position and importance of the wearer.

**Collection No.: SE-1780 \***

#### 13A. Detail: Central panel of sash.

This image is an enlargement of the central panel of the sash, illustrating the depiction of frogs or toads. These were incorporated into the sash to identify the wearer as a leader / member of the Toad or Big Town Clan.



\* Photographs courtesy of Cowans Auction House.



# **14, 15. BEADED FOBS OR TABS (PAIR)**

*Circa: 1895-1905*

A pair of finger-woven beaded fobs, each of differing design and with a color variety of seed beads, each culminating with hooped beaded elements. These were originally collected (given to) Celia S. Olmstead, one of the original school teachers in Dade County, Florida. These were attached to male clothing, such as Big Shirts or Turbans, as a decorative and colorful element.

## **Collection No.: SE-1321**

Size: 10 ½" long, 2" width of tab

## **Collection No.: SE-1322**

Size: 10 ½" long, 2" width of tab



## 16, 17. BEADED FOBS OR TABS (PAIR)

Finger-woven tabs were worn by almost all Seminole men in the early-mid period (i.e. 1875-1910). They were attached to turbans and/or primary clothing and made with two beaded elements, each with suspensions.

Their beauty was in the use of bold colors as well as their movement when the individual walked. Equally important they were a statement by the wearers partner that she considered him to be of importance to the clan and community; the tabs being an indication of that status.

### Collection No.: SE-1323

Size: 10" long, 2" width of tab

### Collection No.: SE-1324

Size: 10 ¼" long, 2" width of tab





**18. MAN'S FINGER-WOVEN BEAD BELT OR SASH**

*Circa: 1885-1890*

This early Seminole man's belt is woven in a diamond design, which is associated with rattlesnakes. Similar examples, while very rare, also show these woven panels with a series of narrow pendants culminating in wool yarn tassels, much like that in Jumper's sash (Exhibit No 9). This was originally collected (or given) by Mrs. Celia S. Olmsted. She was reported to have been one of the first school teachers in Dade County, Florida.

**Collection No.: SE-1320**

Size: 31 ½" long, 2 ½" wide



## 19. BANDOLIER BAG

Bags, such as this example, are rare and important artifacts of the Seminole. Worn by most Seminole men, and especially their leaders, they served a variety of functions: as a means to contain and carry tobacco, flints, food, clothing..."every possible thing."

This example is unique in that it carries the design of alligator heads as the primary design element. The pouch has the clan identification: Hâlpadudalqi alligator gens: hâlpada alliagator, a known Seminole Clan (see enclosed essay: **The Value of Clans in Tribal Organizations**, by Sandra Starr.)

In essence, it represented who you were to the people you encountered.

**Collection No.: SE-1320**

Size: 31 ½" long, 2 ½" wide



**Detail: Bandolier Bag**

Inner portion of the pouch, illustrating alligator heads, representing the Alligator Clan: Hâlpada Alliagator

## 20, 21, 22. MOCCASINS

These three pairs of moccasins are indicators of cultural diversity, as well as function. The upper pair, beautifully beaded are of Creek-Seminole attribution and were made for a young boy. The middle pair, beaded somewhat indifferently are Seminole and were for ceremonial events. The third pair are clearly utilitarian in function, worn for hunting or day-to-day usage.

The majority of the time the Seminole did not utilize footwear, as illustrated in numerous photographs of the period. Their feet were accustomed and hardened to the conditions, and one can understand the premise when one considers wearing close fitting leather footwear in a warm, humid environment.

It is rare, in that context, that these examples have survived. They generally were not of collecting interest, other than to trained anthropologists, not typically having the beautifully beaded decoration that accompanied bandolier bags, sashes, etc.

### 20. Creek-Seminole Moccasins

Collection No.: SE-1909

Size: 6 ½" long, 4" high

### 21. Seminole Beaded Moccasins

Collection No.: SE-1942

Size: 8 ½" long, 6" high

### 22. Seminole Moccasins

Collection No.: SE-1897

Size: 9 ¾" long, 8" high



20.



21.



22.

## SEMINOLE CLOTHING

Seminole clothing has been subject to an ongoing transition, primarily based upon the ability of the Seminole to adapt to new and changing conditions. Mens clothing, as an example, evolved from hunting long coats, to long shirts, to big shirts, to transitional shirts to jackets, all in the time frame of just over 100 years.

The introduction of hand crank sewing machines had a clear impact upon the use of patchwork, a unique expression of artistic expression produced by women. What is of particular note is their use of color; primarily colors of white, red, yellow, black, blue and green. They obviously had no fear, nor social restraints, related to diverse colors.

The Big Shirt, equally important, was the ideal solution to living and hunting in a basic water environment, such as is found in the Everglades. As contact expanded with white society, and by meetings and trade, it became "unfashionable" to wear the big shirt and most Seminole men elected to wear trousers with the bottom portion of the big shirt tucked into the trousers, creating a somewhat bulky appearance; thus the progression into the transitional shirt, in which the portion of the shirt, below the waist became short and without decoration, as it was easily tucked into trousers.

It is noted that this "contact influence" was such, that there is documentary evidence that men would wear traditional clothing while in camp, with non-traditional clothing, such as trousers and shoes, hidden in locations away from the camp. They could, as the expression goes, live and operate in two worlds; that of the indigenous Indian and that of Anglo society when they visited trading posts or small towns to acquire firearms, ammunition, cloth and other items for personal use.

Women, in somewhat of a contrast, had less exposure to Anglo society and the skirts and their capes evolved significantly slower. What is of interest to the viewer of early photographs, is that women are usually shown with their arms crossed at their upper waist, hiding that portion of the body from the view of non-Seminole. What did change, in both men's and women's clothing, was the design of patchwork and its complexity, evolving into an element that became, in a sense, art. Simple forms of cloth, hand-sewn into basic blocks or triangles became more and more complex; many evolving into representations of objects, those that they observed on a day-to-day basis, such as fire,

telephone poles, crawfish, man-on-horse, etc. Patchwork, in that context, became more and more intricate and a means for women to gain income when examples of the clothing were made available for sale at trading posts and at the camps that were open to visitors. This artistic practice continues today as a vibrant expression of Seminole art and has continued to evolve, with the introduction of elements such as colored rick-rack, and the creation of patchwork aprons, hats, purses, etc.

Today most Seminole men wear colorful patchwork jackets, and the women wear patchwork skirts and tops. They retain their clothing as an unmistakable means of showing their pride in Seminole culture; in essence: Enduring Art & Culture.



### 23. YOUNG TODDLER'S BIG SHIRT

*Circa: 1925-1930*

A young male toddler's big shirt of predominantly yellow fabric, contrasted with numerous colors of orange, green, white, red, dark blue, light blue, pink and black. The matching of patchwork on the arms and across the chest is an indicator of a 1920-1930 date of fabrication. Few big shirts of this size were collected by individuals and/or institutions, making this a relatively rare example.

**Collection No.: SE-1713**

Size: 18" long, 22 ½" wide, with sleeves





**24. SEMINOLE MAN'S BIG SHIRT**

*Circa: 1925*

This is a man's big shirt with patchwork bands and a predominantly green cloth background. In the 1920s, when patchwork began to be commonly employed, the men's clothing was covered with a series of stripes with few bands of patchwork. By the mid-1920s, designs were relatively restrained, with patchwork commonly limited to three to four bands, those on the sleeves being different from those on the balance of the garment.

**Collection No.: SE-908**

Size: 43 ½" long



## 25. SEMINOLE MAN'S BIG SHIRT

*Circa: 1915-1918*

A man's big shirt with appliqué work placket and button front, conjecturally representing a traditional form associated with the rattlesnake, a predominant motif in the early period of the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex. The bright red background is startling and, when mixed with contrasting colors of orange, green, black, white and blue, creates a vibrant and dramatic composition.

Collection No.: SE-1423

Size: 57 " long, 43" wide









**30. SEMINOLE YOUNG MAN'S BIG SHIRT**

*Circa: 1928-1930s*

This is a young man's big shirt with five patchwork bands. Early patchwork generally consisted of alternating squares or blocks in rectangular form, commonly in two colors. The vibrant colors made Seminole Indian patchwork unique and aesthetically pleasing, becoming "canvases" of artistic expression.

**Collection No.: SE-915**

Size: 36" long

## 26. SEMINOLE MAN'S BIG SHIRT

*Circa: 1915-1917*

A man's big shirt whose design is limited to horizontal bands of contrasting colors, with a predominantly brown colored material for the "background." Of particular interest is how the maker/artist "puckered" the uppermost fabric across the chest and back. Included with the basic solid colors are segments of patterned cloth at the wrists, around the shoulders, and at the lower portion, an indicator of an early date of fabrication.

**Collection No.: SE-1558**

Size: 49" long, 69" wide with sleeves

## 27. SEMINOLE MAN'S BIG SHIRT

*Circa: 1928-1930*

A relatively large man's big shirt of predominantly blue-green fabric with four bands of patchwork. The band at chest height is duplicated at the arms and at the bottom, and represents the beginning of patchwork, which was no longer either strictly horizontal or vertical. It utilized a wide variety of fabric colors, including green, yellow, pink, brown, light purple, black, blue, orange and light beige.

**Collection No.: SE-1464**

Size: 53" long, 67 ½" wide

## 28. SEMINOLE MAN'S BIG SHIRT

*Circa: 1920s*

A large man's big shirt with appliqué work placket and waist. Patchwork is limited to two patterns: that of triangles (fire) and the other of geometrical vertical and continuous horizontal bands. The continuation of this patchwork design on the arms is an indicator that this shirt was created in the early 1920s.

**Collection No.: SE-1264**

Size: 53" long, 65" wide with sleeves

## 29. YOUNG BOY'S BIG SHIRT

*Circa: 1928-1930s*

This is a young boy's big shirt with four rows of patchwork, two of "fire," two described as "telephone poles" or "trees." It is predominately of dark blue fabric, with contrasting colors of white, red, green, light blue and purple.

**Collection No.: SE-1714**

Size: 33 ½" long, 44 ½" wide with sleeves



## 31. SEMINOLE MAN'S TRANSITIONAL SHIRT

*Circa: 1930-1935*

A man's transitional shirt of predominantly purple background, with contrasting colors of red, yellow, black, green, pink and dark blue: a veritable "riot" of colors which, when combined, seem entirely in harmony. What is of interest is the inclusion of "fire" design patchwork on the sleeves, yet not on the chest, as would have been typical.

**Collection No.: SE-916**

Size: 30" long

## TRANSITIONAL SHIRTS

As time passed, and contact with Anglo society increased, Seminole men began to wear trousers, acquired by trade. Initially, Big Shirts were tucked into the trousers when Seminole men “went to town,” but this quickly became unsatisfactory. The Big Shirt then, as a result, evolved into a “transitional shirt,” in which the bottom half was significantly reduced in length. Distinctive bands of patchwork evolved, such as the telephone pole, man-on-horse, etc. Each the creation of the maker.

### 32. SEMINOLE MAN'S TRANSITIONAL SHIRT

*Circa: 1930-1935*

This is a man's transitional shirt with an extended “skirt.” The patchwork of this period has achieved greater complexity and illustrates positive/negative relationships. During the 1930s, designs were primarily arranged perpendicular to their borders and took the form of letters of the alphabet. The shortening of big shirts occurred during the 1930s to make the tucking of the bottom portion into pants easier.

**Collection No.: SE-916**

Size: 37" long

### 33. SEMINOLE MAN'S TRANSITIONAL SHIRT

*Circa: 1930-1935*

A man's transitional shirt of predominantly blue color with three patchwork patterns, of fire, crosses and squares on a slight diagonal. The overall size (neck to waist and width) suggests that the wearer was a large man, yet the piece appears to never have been worn, rather collected shortly after having been made.

**Collection No.: SE-1418**

Size: 31" long



32.



33.



### 34. SEMINOLE MAN'S JACKET

*Circa: 1940-1945*

Jacket with zippers to partially close the jacket, with two bands of patchwork – the topmost with a complex variation of fire using three colors on a diagonal against a red background. The lower, chest high pattern, of yellow zigzags on a similar red background.

**Collection No.: SE-2080**

Size: 27 ¼" long, 63" wide, with sleeves



34.

### 35. SEMINOLE MAN'S JACKET

*Circa: 1940-1950*

A man's jacket with four rows of patchwork, consisting of letters of the alphabet and deviations of earlier patterns. This displays one set of diagonal patchwork of the same complex elements, based upon the designs conceived by the artist.

**Collection No.: SE-2000**

Size: 27" long, 61 ¼" wide, with sleeves



35.

### 36. SEMINOLE MAN'S JACKET

*Circa: 1935-1940's*

This colorful man's jacket has a predominant color of red, with two rows of patchwork, all on a diagonal. It has a collar and button front and buttons at the waist. It shows extensive wear, particularly around the collar.

**Collection No.: SE-1241**

Size: 27" long, 64" wide, with sleeves



36.

### 37A and 37B. SEMINOLE WOMAN'S SKIRT AND CAPE

*Circa: 1915-1920*

A woman's skirt and cape, of simple form indicative of their early age. They were collected as artifacts, not as "for sale" items, based upon evidence of their obvious usage. The predominantly pink color must have created a pleasing "visual" when contrasted with the environment of palmetto, cypress and oak shrub of the Everglades.

**Collection No.: SE-2003**

Size: Skirt: 41 ½" long / Cape: 30" long



37A.



37B.





39A.

### 39A & 39B. SEMINOLE WOMAN'S SKIRT AND CAPE

*Circa: 1945-1950*

The cape of transparent blue fabric, with a bold red band at the neck of the wearer and ending in a lace like material of floral pattern.

A woman's skirt of predominantly black color with three bands of patchwork, some of which are quite complex, with bands of rickrack.

**Collection No.: SE-1473**

Size: 40" long (skirt)

23" long (cape)



39B.

### 40. SEMINOLE WOMAN'S SKIRT

*Circa: 1940's*

A woman's skirt with five bands of patchwork, including fire, tree or telephone pole and other forms placed on a diagonal. The predominant background color is yellow, yet almost every other color available is utilized, creating a vibrant and pleasing visual pallet.

**Collection No.: SE-2010**

Size: 40" long



40.

### 41. SEMINOLE WOMAN'S SKIRT

*Circa: 1950's*

This is a woman's skirt of unusual complexity and exceptional quality; the artistic expression of a person who was committed to excellence. The predominant black background is contrasted with a wide variety of colors with bands of rickrack.

**Collection No.: SE-1559**

Size: 41" long



41.



## TURBANS / HEAD COVERINGS

Seminole men wore a variety of head coverings, such as cloth wrappings, shawls wrapped around the head, fabricated "turbans" (such as these examples) as well as store-bought commercially-made hats, including conductor hats, bowlers, and so on. They were, in that respect, adaptable. The styles changed rapidly as the Seminole became progressively more exposed to Anglo society at the trading posts that specialized in serving them.

These two examples illustrate the use of patchwork over a formed cardboard base. One has attached feathers while other known examples showing that the use of feathered plumes suggests wide usage.

Seminole men seldom went unadorned, especially when on a trading trip. They wore their best clothes; colorful, intricate beaded sashes and tabs, bandolier bags and head coverings, such as these turbans.

Historical photographs show men wearing turbans that had diameters as large as two feet, representing cloth applied in numerous layers to achieve these over-scaled head coverings, perhaps as a "fashion statement" or response to a newly developed or emerging style. As time progressed the size of the head coverings reduced in circumference to eventually become the more recognized turban.

### 42. SEMINOLE MAN'S TURBAN

*Circa: 1996*

A man's turban with two attached feather plumes with one band of patchwork of the "fire" design made by Jimmie Osceola of the Seminole Tribe, Fall 1996.

**Collection No.: SE-2009**

Size: 9 1/2" +/- diameter



### 43. SEMINOLE MAN'S TURBAN

*Circa: 1950s*

A man's turban with a singular band of complex patchwork and rows of rick-rack.

**Collection No.: SE-1334**

Size: 7"- 8" diameter

Early images of Seminole hunters using a bow and arrow, and guns. These photographs may have been taken by Julian Dimock when he visited and photographed the Seminole in the early 1900s.

**44. SEMINOLE MAN HUNTING**  
**Collection No.: SE-1877**

**45. SEMINOLE MEN HUNTING**  
**Collection No.: SE-1873**





**46. PHOTOGRAPH: SEMINOLE WOMAN**

*Circa August 1910*

This is a version of Julian Dimock's photograph of the Widow of Tiger Tail, at Miami John Tigers Camp. The large white shell beads are from Busycon shell columella (the central axis) and were, in all probability, of the pre-contact period.

**Collection No.: SE-1867**

Size: 4" wide

**47. PHOTOGRAPH: "BELLES OF THE SEMINOLE"**

*Circa: 1920*

A studio photograph, identified as being of the three "Belles of the Seminole, Indian Colony near Miami." The standing women have posed with their arms held across their midriff area, which otherwise would have been exposed, an expression of personal modesty that appears in almost all early Seminole images. They all wear numerous bead strands, without which it was reported that they felt "unclothed".

**Collection No.: SE-1439**

Size: 4 ½" wide, 6 ½" high

**48. PHOTOGRAPH: SEMINOLE WOMAN AND CHILDREN**

*Circa: 1920*

This is a studio image, taken in Miami in 1920, of a young Seminole woman with, presumably, her young son and daughter, the latter holding a stuffed alligator, a studio prop. It was unusual for Seminole women to have their images taken in a studio and it is assumed that she was accompanied by her husband. The style of clothing, and that of her children, shows plain strips of patchwork with the females wearing traditional multiple strands of trade beads.

**Collection No.: SE-1463**

Size: 6 ½" wide, 10 ¼" high

## EARLY PHOTOGRAPHY

The Seminole, having fought three wars against the U.S., in an attempt to resist losing their homeland, captured the imagination of American society. These were a people who fiercely defended their land, few were captured and even fewer ever surrendered. Initially, artists attempted to depict the Seminole and their lifestyle by using hand colored engravings, in black and white images published in newspapers and weekly magazines.

This artform was followed by early photography, mainly as a result of studio portraits obtained when Seminole leaders visited trading posts, larger towns, or when meeting with U.S. officials in the nation's capital. These images allow the viewer the opportunity to closely observe clothing, to identify individuals and, in one wonderful instance, to definitively identify an individual (Jumper) and an important part of his accoutrements (The Jumper Sash). This is, unfortunately, a rare instance but as we gain greater access to more and more photographic images we will be presented with more equally memorable instances.

During the early 1900s, a well respected photographer, Julian Dimock was provided with the opportunity to visit several remote Seminole camps in South Florida. His images, recently "rediscovered" were published in an excellent publication\*, and provide us with insight into this early period of Seminole life and culture. Years ago I was able to acquire, at auction, several glass images of Seminole, which were subsequently identified as being part of these same images from the photographic trip by Dimock. "A treasure found," can only be the operable expression.

The photographing of the Seminole became almost an industry. While not as dramatic to some, as compared to the images of Plains cultures, they were accessible to numerous Anglo visitors to Florida, clearly in keeping with its growing reputation as a tourist state.

Today, in our collection, are hundreds of photographic images of the Seminole, dating from the 1850s to 1950-1960 period. Early images are rare, those more recent and more readily obtainable, but all are important in helping researchers and collectors identify cultural changes, the evolution of clothing styles and, importantly, to identify individual Seminole cultural events and individuals.

\* Milanich, Jerald T., and Nina J. Root. *Hidden Seminoles: Julian Dimock's Historic Florida Photographs*. Gainesville, University Press of Florida: 2011.





47.



48.



49.



50.



#### 49. PHOTOGRAPH: SEMINOLE FAMILY

*Circa: 1910-1915*

This family image was taken in Chokoloskee (south of Everglades City), identified as Ingram Billie, his wife Ruby Billy and their son, Jimmie Billy. Ingram Billie was of the Panther Clan, who subsequently owned an attraction along the Tamiami Trail with his camp, located along Turner's River, consisting of ten to twenty individuals. Ruby Billy is identified on the reverse side of this image, as Charlie Tiger Tail's sister.

**Collection No.: SE-1715**

Image Size: 5" high, 3 1/8" wide

#### 50. PHOTOGRAPH: SEMINOLE WOMEN POUNDING CORN

*Circa: 1910-1915*

In this early photograph, the two women are using a hollowed log as a container for dried corn, while pounding it to crush the corn for the subsequent making of Sofkee, a traditional food / drink of every Seminole household.

**Collection No.: SE-1632**

Image Size: 5 7/8" high, 4 1/8" wide

#### 51. PHOTOGRAPH:

**BILLY CONA-PATCHEE (LITTLE BILLY)**

*Circa: 1910-1915*

This is an early photograph of Little Billy (Billy Conapatchee), also known as Billy Corn Patch, with his daughter, Mrs. Charlie Cypress. Little Billy was the father of two great medicine men, Ingram Billy and Josie Billy. Billy Conapatchee became a close friend to the trader Frank Brown and had learned to read and write while living with Captain F.A. Hendry of Ft. Myers. He was killed by lightning in the early 1920s or late teens. In the photograph, he wears a large shirt decorated with appliqué work with two crossed finger-woven sashes with tassels. His daughter is adorned with bossed circular silver brooches and a large safety pin.

**Collection No.: SE-1211**

Image Size: 5 1/2" high, 2 3/4" wide

#### 52. PHOTOGRAPH:

**CHARLIE TIGER TAIL, AND OTHER SEMINOLES**

*Circa: Early 20th century*

This is a group photograph of five Seminoles, with H.D. Girtman, a well-known trader. The two Seminole males, one wearing a turban with feather attachments, the other a trade "conductor's hat" with feather attachment, are identified as Charlie Tiger Tail and Willie Billie. The three women, as noted on the back of the photograph, are Nitanke, Olla Lee, and Follee Tikee. The two younger women (left and center) are identified as the sisters of Tiger Tail. The women's clothing is traditional for the period and illustrates the extensive usage of beaded coin necklaces, bossed circular silver brooches and appliqué-work on their skirts. This is the only known image of Girtman, a trader who was respected and trusted by the Seminoles who came to his trading post.

**Collection No.: SE-1210**

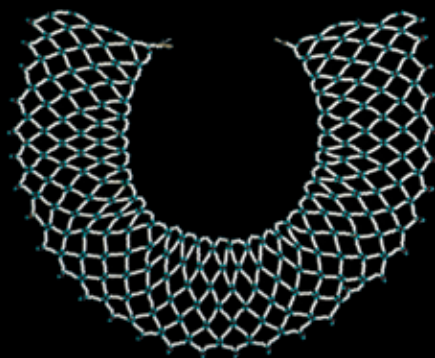
Image Size: 5 1/2" high, 3 7/8" wide







53.



54.



55.



56.

### 53-58. SEMINOLE WOMAN'S NECKLACES

*Circa: 1960-1980*

A woman's beaded necklace, of the type called "Saturday Money," reflective of the premise of being able to make an artifact, without a lengthy time frame required, which could then be sold for "enough money for Saturday night." These six examples reflect the vibrant use of color that is also employed in their patchwork clothing. The spider web weave is used, in many examples, to create diamond shapes, a motif with historical precedence in Seminole culture.

**Collection No.: SE-1426** (predominant colors: white & green)

**Collection No.: SE-1526** (predominant color: white)

**Collection No.: SE-1438** (predominant color: white)

**Collection No.: SE-1427** (predominant colors: white & blue)

**Collection No.: SE-1501** (predominant color: white)

**Collection No.: SE-1435** (predominant color: red)

### 59. MALE SEMINOLE DOLL (Overleaf)

*Circa: 1935-1940*

A large male doll of palmetto fiber with articulated arms, legs and feet. He wears a big shirt with three bands of patchwork of geometric forms. He is, in all respects, the typical male Seminole, standing tall, erect with shoulders thrown back.

**Collection No.: SE-2180**

Image Size: 16" high

### 60A. SEMINOLE MALE DOLL (Overleaf)

*Circa: 1930s*

This wood-carved male doll is dressed with a traditional patchwork big shirt of the period. The five patchwork bands correspond to a full size big shirt and utilize similar design motifs. The doll is carved from a single block of wood with movable arms, an unusual feature for Seminole dolls. It appears to have been collected with the accompanying female doll. (Catalogue number 61B).

**Collection No.: SE-907**

Image Size: 14 ½" high

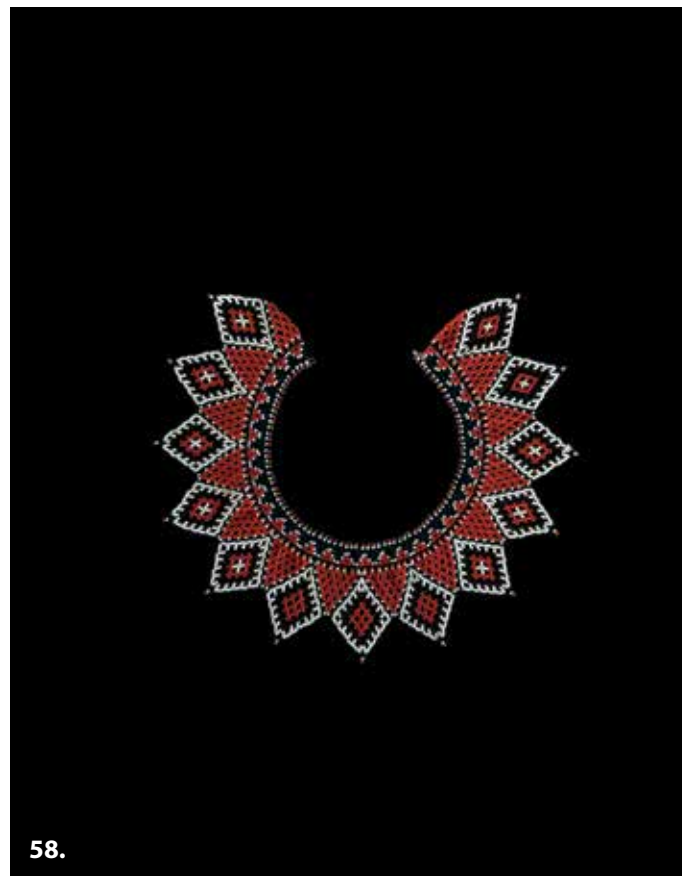
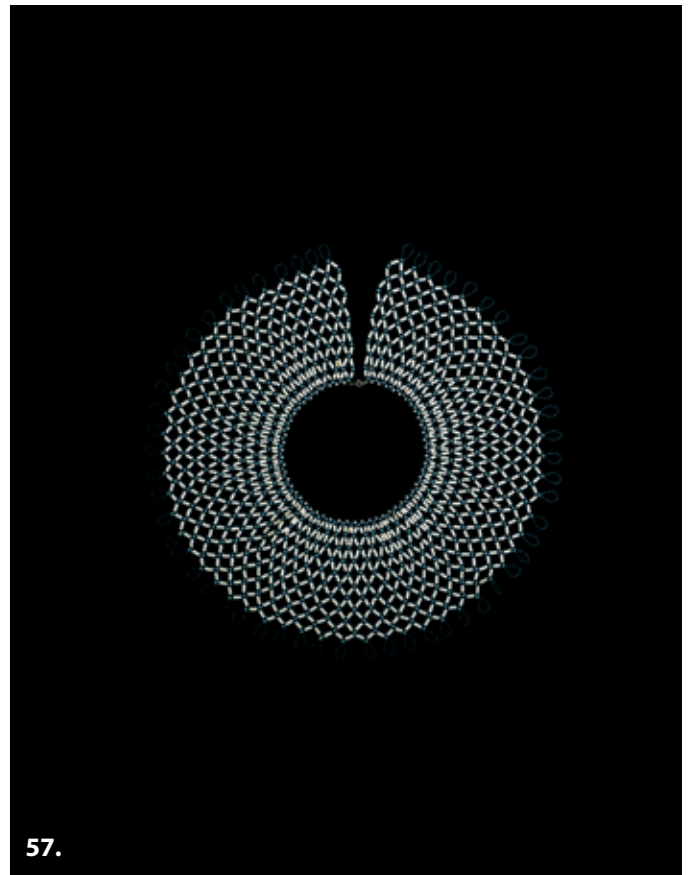
### 60B. SEMINOLE FEMALE DOLL (Overleaf)

*Circa: 1930s*

This carved wooden doll is dressed with a traditional Seminole patchwork on the skirt and cloth stripes on the cape. Multiple glass bead necklaces are at the neck, typical of Seminole adornment of the period. The doll contains the handwritten inscription "Property of Miss Edith Bench. This doll (Seminole) attended the General Convention at Atlantic City, New Jersey, October 1934."

**Collection No.: SE-907**

Image Size: 14 ½" high



## SEMINOLE DOLLS

The Seminole people, have long produced dolls, initially for utilization by their own children, subsequently made for sale to tourists as yet another means of acquiring income. Initially these dolls were sticks, some covered with rags, which evolved into wooden carved figures (predominately female) that were covered with clothing of patchwork. In some instances these dolls were made entirely of wood, with the clothing being painted onto the wooden form.

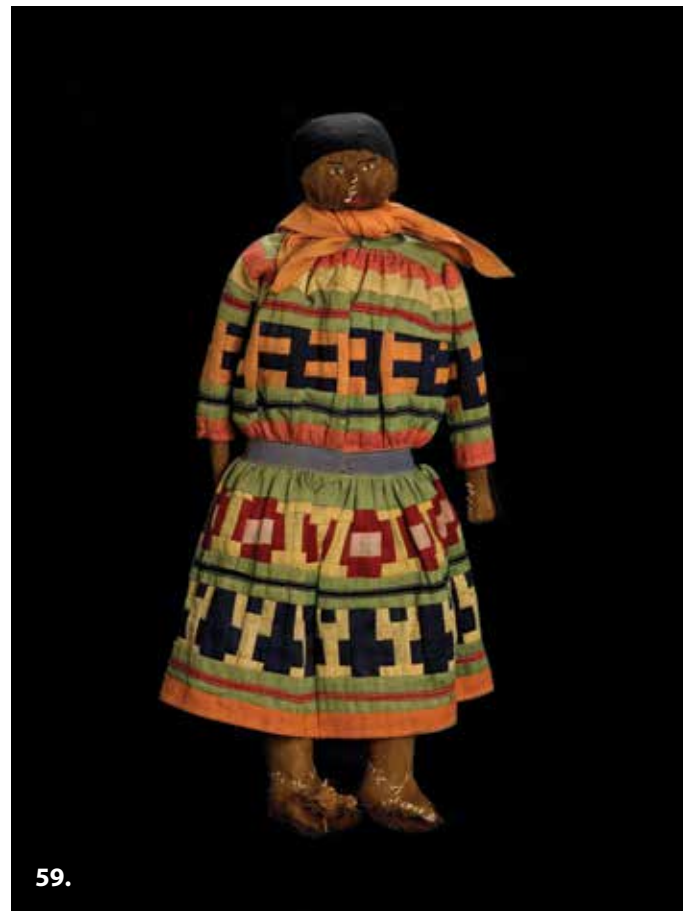
Dolls soon evolved into a more quickly-made palmetto form, most over a basic cardboard circular form. Complexity of the applied clothing (including turbans on male dolls) varied significantly based upon the skill and attention to detail of the artist/maker. Wooden dolls are rare, especially when compared to the thousands of palmetto dolls that became the must-buy tourist item.

Contained in this exhibit are examples of several types, wooden dolls, as well as palmetto dolls, covered with cloth patchwork. They vary significantly in size, from less than an inch to one exceptional example that is over 20" in height.

Deaconess Bedell, an early advocate and supporter of the Seminoles, established a craft program, part of which was dedicated to improving quality and exploring new venues that would produce income for the Seminoles. She is credited with the introduction of the palmetto "man-on-horse" doll, yet few examples of this unique and complex doll remain, perhaps as few as a dozen. Fortunately, over the years, a few examples of this rare doll form have been acquired for our collection, including one example on which a very small female doll has been attached.

An amusing anecdote tells of Deaconess Bedell's demands that dolls be very accurate and well made. She was insistent that the dolls, above all, truly represent the Seminole People. To her chagrin, after one tirade of hers for greater accuracy, she was subsequently presented with a male doll that was anatomically correct, in great detail. That incident led the Deaconess to modify her insistence for complete and 100% accuracy.

Dolls are perhaps the most recognizable of all Seminole artifacts and help the collector and researcher to understand clothing style evolution.





**61. SEMINOLE FEMALE DOLL**

*Circa: 1940's*

A wood-carved and painted female doll with articulated arms. She is dressed in a skirt, under-blouse and cape with several strands of beads around her neck. Her facial features are carved and painted, as is her hair. Her body is a piece of cut (circular) cypress branch.

**Collection No.: SE-1700**

Size: 9 1/8" high



## 62. MALE SEMINOLE DOLL

*Circa: 1920-1930*

A large male doll of palmetto fiber over a cardboard form, including the oversized feet. He wears a traditional big shirt with two patchwork patterns: the uppermost of "fire," the lower of "man-on-horse." He wears a wonderful turban with a (simulated) silver band. His kerchief/bandana secured at the neck with an orange band of beads.

**Collection No.: SE-1311**

Size: 20 1/4" high

## 63. SEMINOLE FEMALE DOLL

*Circa: 1930-1940*

A large female doll with a long skirt covered, partially, with a blue cape. She has five strands of translucent beads at her neck. Her hair style, of the period, is expressive and stylish. While dolls were typically, almost exclusively, made for sale, they still illustrated the artistic excellence of the artist/maker, as well as her attention and concern for detail.

**Collection No.: SE-2101**

Size: 15 1/2" high







**64. SEMINOLE DOLL: MAN AND HORSE**

*Circa: 1940*

This is a palmetto doll depicting a male Seminole dressed in a big shirt, astride a horse, also of palmetto fiber. The complexity of making a doll of this detail must have been a lengthy undertaking and, reportedly, only 12 or so, such examples are known to exist, all of which were (conjecturally) made by the same individual. The image of a man on a horse is, in all probability, a response to the period when Seminole men were raising cattle and were no longer primarily dedicated to hunting.

**Collection No.: SE-1308**

Size: 11 ½" high, 12" long



65.

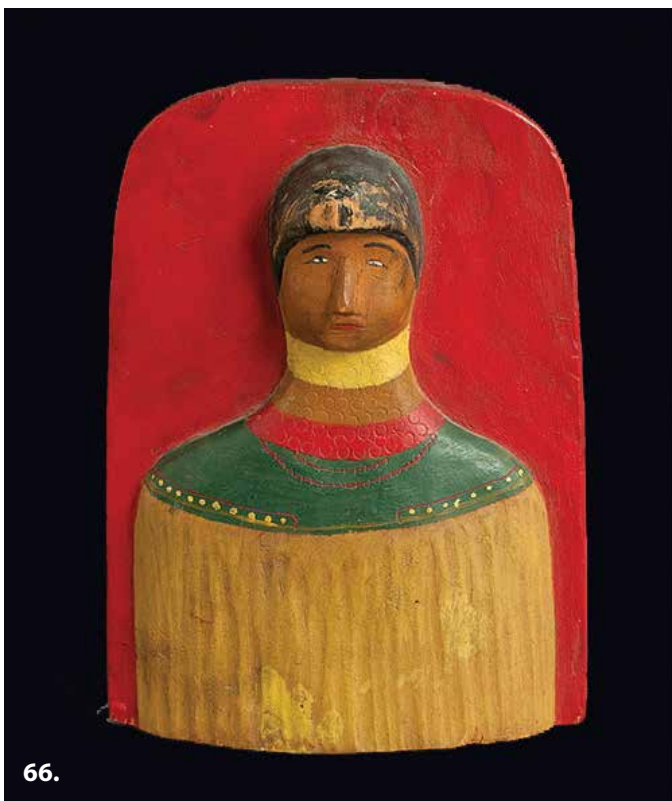
#### 65. SEMINOLE WOOD PLAQUE: FAMILY

*Circa:1939*

This carved polychrome plaque of wood illustrates the typical Seminole scene of a family going to trade. The male, attired in a patchwork big shirt, poles the canoe, next to him is his wife with a traditional hairstyle of the period, and a young daughter. Near the center is a load of goods, either to be used for trade or trade goods themselves. The final figure is a dog, head now missing. Brightly colored, and carved in detail, this is an excellent example of Seminole art attributed to Robert Billy. Written in pencil on the reverse is the notation "Made by Robert Billy, to Bishop (Rt. Rev. John D.) Wing, Christmas, 1939." The handwriting is attributed to Deaconess Harriet M. Bedell.

**Collection No.: SE-1209**

Size: 18 1/4" long, 7" high



66.

#### 66. SEMINOLE WOOD PLAQUE: WOMAN

*Circa:1939*

A carved, polychrome plaque of wood, depicting a Seminole woman with cape, adorned with (painted) silver elements.

**Collection No.: SE-1813**

Size: 4 1/2" wide, 5 7/8" high

#### 67. SOFKEE SPOON

*Circa:1915-1920*

A traditional wooden sofkee\* spoon with carved lip on the underside of the handle to hold it in place while in the large container or kettle in which sofkee was cooked. This example carries the handwritten documentation, "This spoon was made by Tiger Tail Chief of the Symanole (sic) Tribe of Klemita (sic) Indians." This reference is presumed to refer to Jack Tiger Tail who was killed in 1922, reputedly by a idaponathil: a Seminole resident of his camp, in retribution for an (act) committed by Tiger Tail. He had been a popular and well respected Seminole whose funeral, in Miami City, was attended by hundreds of mourners

**Collection No.: SE-1262**

Size: 19 1/4" long

### 68. SOFKEE SPOON

*Circa: 1928-1929*

A well worn example of a sofkee spoon, reputed to have been acquired from the abandoned camp of Cory Osceola, one of the representatives or leaders of Big Towns. Sofkee is the traditional vegetable drink of Southeastern Indians, made with mashed or pounded corn that is then boiled in water. It may also contain mashed pumpkins or tomatoes, with the most common form being made only with corn.

**Collection No.: SE-1614**

Size: 18 3/4" long

### 69. SOFKEE SPOON

*Circa: 1928-1929*

This spoon was also acquired from the camp of Cory Osceola in the late 1920s, by Bill Piper, an Anglo who used to go there to feed alligators. Traditionally, Sofkee, when prepared and cooked, was first eaten by men, but served as meal/drink throughout the day and evening, enjoyed by all.

**Collection No.: SE-1615**

Size: 20" long

### 70. SOFKEE SPOON

*Circa: 1950s*

A large, well carved and smoothed sofkee spoon, collected prior to usage and of the type crafted for sale at the various "camps" along the Tamiami Trail that crosses Florida. Sofkee was the basic and primary food/drink preferred by the Seminole and utilized as a variety of ingredients, but the preferred primary vegetable was mashed corn cooked with water.

**Collection No.: SE-1659**

Size: 24" long

### 71. SEMINOLE ALLIGATOR FETISH

*Circa: 1880-1900*

An alligator fetish, consisting of an immature alligator head and two separate feet of differing size, each tightly wrapped in fringed and dyed leather and combined with a hide string. Alligator fetishes, such as this example, would have been utilized, or worn, by a medicine man in a religious context and kept in a medicine bag or pouch when not used.

**Collection No.: SE-1669**

Size: Length of Head: 3" Length of Claws: 3", 2 1/2"

### 72. ALLIGATOR TOOTH NECKLACE

*Circa: 1800s*

A necklace of 21 drilled alligator teeth, varying in size, worn ritually by a male, as a symbol of hunting process or a talisman. The alligator was "religiously important because of their large size and ferocious behavior" which are attributes associated with supernatural power. Acquired from the E.G. Barnhill Collection, Barnhill being an early collector of Seminole and pre-Seminole artifacts. The piercing of the teeth for suspension appears to have been carved, rather than drilled, an indicator that is from the early contact period.

**Collection No.: SE-1317**

Size: 3/4" to 1 3/4" long



67, 68, 69, 70.



71.



72.

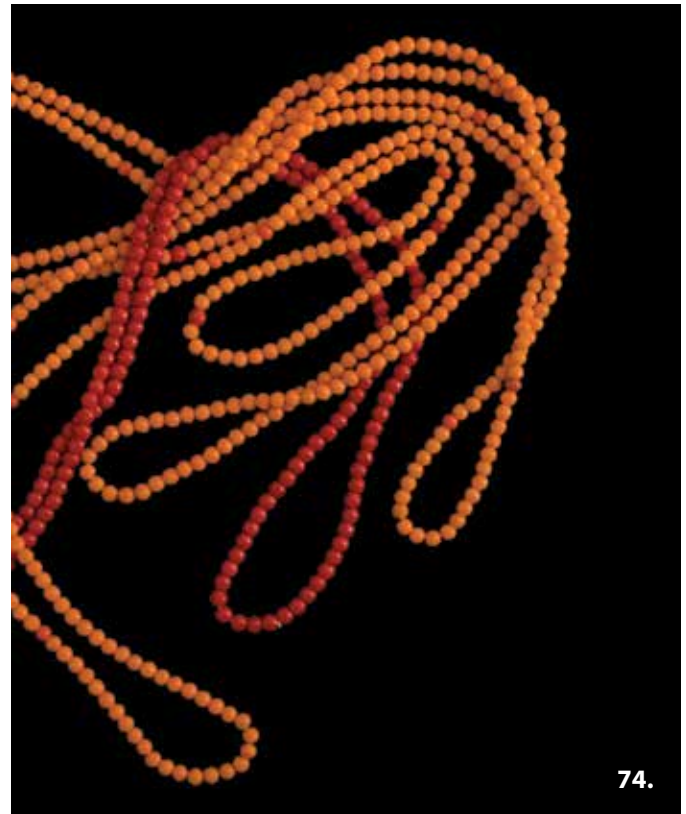
\* Sofkee, also called sofki, sofkey, etc., was what the Creek and Seminole people called the corn-based food. It is a sour corn drink or soup and generally included other ingredients such as pieces of meat or fish.

\*\* Randolph J. Widmer quoted in Power, Susan C., *Early Art of the Southeastern Indians: Feathered Serpents & Winged Beings*. University of Georgia Press: Athens & London: 2004, p.104.

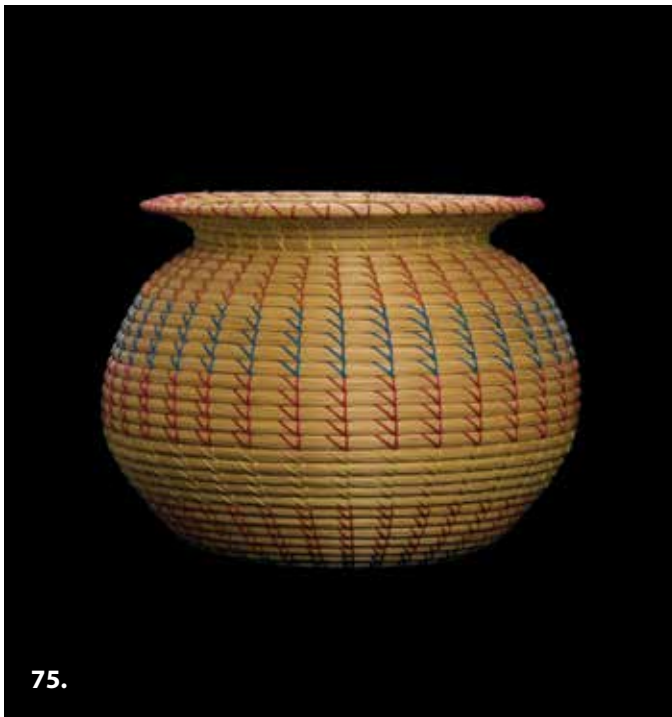




73.



74.



75.

### 75. SEMINOLE BASKET

*Circa: late 20th Century*

A large basket of excellent craftsmanship, made by Almira Billy, utilizing sweet grass coils connected with embroidery thread in vibrant colors of blue, orange, yellow and red in five coil segments. The oval shape is well formed and an impressive example of the artist's attention to detail.

**Collection No.: SE-1257**

Size: 8 1/8" high, 11" wide

### 73. BOSSED CIRCULAR BROOCHES

*Circa: 1915-1920*

A "set" of ten silver bossed coins, with a traditional raised line and plain edge (some being made with scalloped edges), in convex form with two punched holes for attachment to a cape, as worn by women.

Legible on the rear side is the remnant of the original coin stamping, indicating that these examples were made from silver dimes and quarters dating to the first quarter of the 20th century.

**Collection No.: SE-1413**

Size: Varies from 1" to 1 3/16" diameter

### 74. WOMEN'S BEAD NECKLACES

*Circa: 1930s*

Four strands of beads, originally acquired by trade and traditionally worn around the neck of Seminole women. Necklaces such as these were worn in multiple strands on a daily, even continual basis, with women indicating that they felt naked if they were without them. Photographs from the 19th and early 20th century indicated that as many as two hundred strands were worn, weighing as much as twelve pounds.

These examples were collected by a friend of Deaconess Harriet M. Bedell, who encouraged Seminole craft work and sold items such as this to provide funds for the individual craftspersons.

**Collection Nos.: SE-1490, SE-1491, SE-1492, SE-1493**

Size: Varies from 15" to 23" long



76.

## SEMINOLE BASKETS

The Seminole, like most Native American entities, especially those located in the Southeast, have utilized baskets throughout their history. Evidence of such is observed in archaeological records, including impressions of such in the earliest known pottery shards.

There are three basic types of Seminole baskets; those associated with food, such as those utilized for gathering berries and fruits; those whose function was to carry a variety of items and those that were constructed as sifters, generally a flat-bottomed tray with open wicker work for sifting material.

Today, the most recognized basket is the circular saw grass whose primary means of attachment is colored thread. These baskets vary significantly in size - from very small to exceptionally large; the latter clearly made by the artist as a work of art, not as a functioning article. Equally so, almost all baskets being made today are produced as an art form to be sold to collectors, or more often to Anglos who visit the Seminole at locations where they display their work for sale.

Baskets are a unique and expressive art form and are as common today as the palmetto dolls - both art forms being the primary source of income for Seminole women, and a few men. Coupled with Seminole patchwork clothing, the true art forms are quintessentially Seminole and, in all probability, will remain central to Seminole Culture for the foreseeable future.

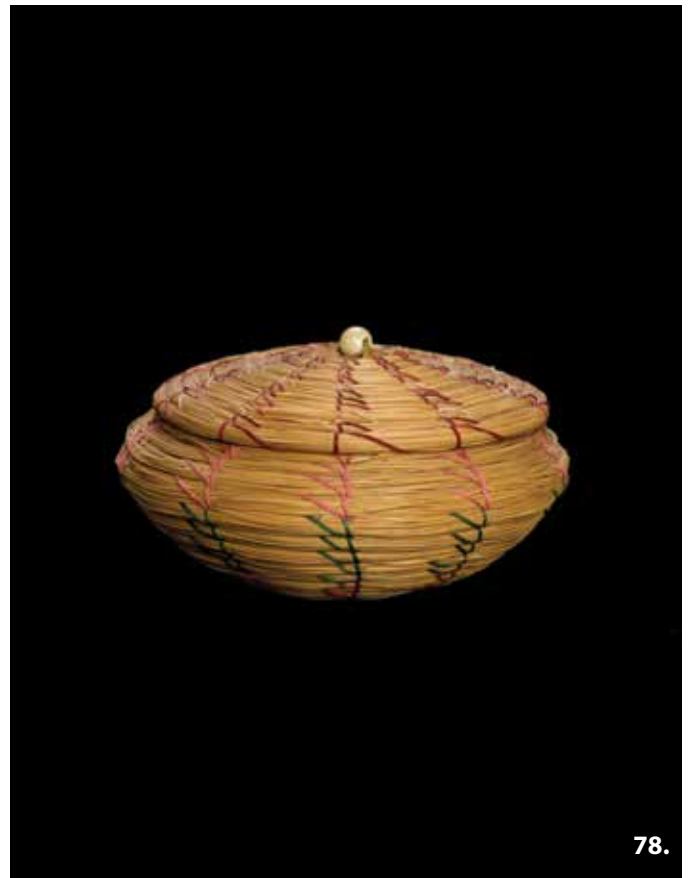
### 76. LARGE BASKET

*Circa: 1990-2010*

A large scale and exceptionally executed basket with lid, adorned by the head of a Seminole woman. The artist/maker is at present unknown, and it is hoped that Seminoles who view this exhibit will recognize the maker of this excellent basket. The strands of sweet grass (*muhlenbergia filipes*), after coiling, are secured to each other with embroidery thread, in colors predetermined by the maker. The grass is collected generally in Brighton and around Okeechobee during the rainy season.

**Collection No.: SE-1913**

Size: 12 1/2" high, 21" +/- wide





## 77. SEMINOLE BASKET

*Circa: 1950s*

An open basket of shallow depth with two integral sweet grass handles, secured with various colors of embroidery thread. The base is covered with large pieces of palmetto fiber over a cardboard or wood base.

**Collection No.: SE-1710**

Size: 11" wide, 4" high

## 78. SEMINOLE BASKET

*Circa: 1930s*

Basket, coiled with sweet grass and colored embroidery thread, with similar lid and bead finial, and palmetto-fiber base covering a cardboard foundation. Typically, these baskets were made for sale and exhibit excellent craftsmanship.

**Collection No.: SE-1624**

Size: 5 ½" wide, 3" high

## 79. SEMINOLE BASKET

*Circa: mid-early 20th century*

A finely made, small-scale sweet grass basket with fitted lid. Varying numbers of coils secured with embroidery thread in colors of blue, red, orange, black and green; all much faded with age.

**Collection No.: SE-1429**

Size: 4 ½" wide, 3" high

## 80. SEMINOLE BASKET

*Circa: mid-20th century*

A large basket of typical coiled sweet grass, with varying numbers of coils (3 to 5) connected with embroidery thread in colors of dark blue, green, red, yellow, gray and purple. It is circular with a flattened top, culminating in an upturned lip.

**Collection No.: SE-1623**

Size: 13" wide, 8" high

## 81. BILLY BOWLEGS, aka HALPUDA MIKKO

*Circa: 1858*

An early photographic image of Billy Bowlegs, probably taken during a visit to the nation's capital, as he is holding a typical photographers prop: a sword. He is adorned with a beaded bandolier bag and large medal, a typical gift given to Seminole leaders when they came to Washington. He was also known as Billy Bolek, Holata Micco, Halpatter-Mico, Halbutta Micco and Halpuda Mikko, meaning in Seminole "Alligator Chief."

While one of the last Seminole leaders to resist, he eventually moved to Indian Territory (present day Oklahoma)

**Collection No.: SE-2139**

Size: 8" wide, 10" high

## SEMINOLE LEADERS

It is a difficult premise to isolate and identify the early leaders of the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes of Indians of Florida. We are aware of those few individuals with whom white society (soldiers, interpreters and governmental officials) had contact, but clearly there were many that made decisions, those who were clan leaders, and never known.

In some cases those that were identified were "captured" by artists and are recognizable to researchers. Some, like Osceola, Billy Bowlegs, Micanopy, etc., gained international fame and were, as a result, depicted by numerous artists, most of which never actually ever saw them. Osceola, as an example, became a legend, the basis of hundreds of articles as a result of capturing the imagination of the viewing and reading public.

A few such individuals that are known, from historical information and depictions of their countenance, are contained in this exhibit. We can only wish that there were more.



81.



## 82. INK DRAWING: OSCEOLA

*Circa: 1840s*

An original sepia ink drawing of Osceola, in typical stance, holding a rifle. It is similar in nature and composition to numerous images produced during this period when he became famous for his resistance to US soldiers attempting to have him, and his followers, leave Florida for the Indian Territory.

**Collection No.: FA-308**

Size: 4 ½" wide, 7 ¼" high

## 83. ETCHING: OSCEOLA

*Circa: 1840s*

A similar image of Osceola, described as "leader of the Seminoles during the War against the United States." A copy of a Curtis painting, it was widely published in journals, newspapers and books.

**Collection No.: SE-2023**

Size: 4 ½" wide, 6" high

## 84. LITHOGRAPH: OSCEOLA

**Published by Daniel and James G. Clark**

*Circa: 1842*

This is considered to be one of the best images of Osceola, identified on the hand-colored lithograph as "Asseola, A Seminole Leader." He proudly stands, holding his rifle, wearing a "plain shirt" of patterned material, belted at the waist with a beaded panel and wearing a beaded sash with elongated bead strips, culminating in wool. His head covering reflects a style of cloth/fabric turban with feather attachments.

Note the artist's use of Plains Indians tepees in the background, whereas no such housing type existed in the lands occupied by the Seminole.

**Collection No.: FA-150**

Size: 11 ½" wide, 17 ¼" long



## 85. OIL PAINTING: OSCEOLA

*Circa: 1840s*

A painting on wood panel showing Osceola in typical fashion, wearing a plumed headdress and head covering of red trade cloth. He is adorned by three silver gorgets, as well as a beaded bandolier bag of the period. He wears a trade cloth coat, as well as a kerchief(s) at his neck.

**Collection No.: FA-1206**

Image Size: 8" wide, 10" long



## OSCEOLA

More than 170 years after his death in 1838, Osceola, the Seminole leader, is one of the most famous figures in Florida's past. His renown stems in part from his capture by federal troops in Florida in 1837 while under a white flag of truce. That incident and Osceola's death while imprisoned at Fort Sumter in South Carolina were viewed by a large segment of the American public, as a blemish on the country's honor.

Following his death, Osceola's popularity soared. Towns, counties, schools, hotels, children, and even steamboats where all named in his honor. Color portraits and drawings of Osceola still hang in galleries and reproductions are still sold on postcards in museum shops.

Though he was a great leader who remains an important icon today to both American Indians and non-Indians in Florida, the story of Osceola is only a small part of the rich Seminole Indians legacy. That legacy includes the tools, baskets, weapons, and clothing fashioned by Seminole men and women, objects and designs that can be traced back to pre-Columbian times, but which are uniquely Seminole. Perhaps the best example is the distinctive styles of clothing worn by Seminole men and women throughout much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Portraits of Osceola show him wearing those clothes and accoutrements.

To our modern eye, Seminole Osceola's outfits and those of other Seminole people are works of art. Today we honor them in museum exhibits. To the Seminole Indians, however, art and utilitarian objects were not separate realms. In Seminole life, beliefs, art, ritual, and social relationships are intimately entwined.

*Enduring Beauty: Seminole Art & Culture* offers insight into the craftsmanship of the Seminole and the complexity of the Seminole way of life, as well as the merging of art and belief in everyday objects. The patchwork clothing, the intricate symbols on beaded sashes, and the detailed designs in the warp and weft of cane baskets offer a small portal through which we can develop greater appreciation for the Seminole and their legacy. What would Florida be today without Osceola and the Seminole Indians?

**Jerald T. Milanich**  
*Curator Emeritus*  
Florida Museum of Natural History







86.

*Chitsee-yoholo*



87.

*YAHU-HAJO.*

**86. HAND COLORED LITHOGRAPH:  
CHITTEE-YOHOLO, A Seminole Leader**

*Circa: 1838*

Chitsee-Yoholo has been translated as "the snake that makes a noise." "...there is an expression of fierceness in the (his) countenance indicative of a race living in perpetual hostility." \*

aka: Chewasti Emathla "the classy warrior" and Olocta Tustennuge "the blue warrior."

**Collection No.: SE-1977**

Size: 5 ½" wide

**87. HAND COLORED LITHOGRAPH:  
YAHU-HAJO, A Seminole War Leader**

**Collection No.: SE- 2083**

Size: 6" wide

**88. HAND COLORED LITHOGRAPH:  
JULCEE MATHLA, A Seminole War Leader**

*Circa: 1826-1848*

**Collection No.: SE-1979**

Size: 7 ½" wide



88.

*Julcee mathla*

\* M'Kenney, Thomas L. and James Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes of North America with Bibliographical Sketches and Anecdotes of the Principal Chiefs*. Published by Frederick W. Greenough, Philadelphia: 1838. Vol. 1, p. 311.

## TUKOSE EMATHLA

He was a Miccosukee tribal leader of significant importance in the "Seminole Nation." His name has numerous variations in the literature of the period, including:

- Tukose E Mathla
- Tukosee-Mathla
- Tuko-See-Mathla
- John Hicks (name he was known by, "according to whites")

In 1826, as a reflection of his importance in Seminole Tribal Society, he was inaugurated as the "Supreme Chief of the Seminole Nation" an event attended by some 3,000 individuals, Seminole as well as non-Seminole. Following that event (the next day) he appeared at the agent's quarters, where George McCall, who was in attendance, noted his observations about Tukose Emathla:

"The most sumptuous habiliments you can imagine: His flock or coat was of the finest quality and advanced with a quantity of silver ornaments around his neck, arm and wrists, with a gorgeous head-dress of colored shawls. He wore hide moccasins and wool leggings with woven quarters and a bandolier. His bearing was that of a Chief indeed [...]."

While he initially resisted efforts to migrate with his clan to Oklahoma, he subsequently determined that such a move was inevitable. He thus came into conflict with Osceola and those that fiercely demanded they fight to remain in their Florida homeland. According to accounts, he was killed by Osceola, who took coins that Tukose Emathla had obtained from the sale of his cattle, and "threw them onto the ground," as a clear display of contempt. Whatever the circumstances, he was greatly admired by Anglo and many Seminole and was the subject of numerous images, that were popularly published in the east and which received wide distribution.

### 89. TUKOSE EMATHLA

Identified, on the original illustration as: "A Seminole Leader:  
"Supreme Chief of the Seminole Nations"

**Collection No.: SE-2090**

Size: 19 5/8" wide, 26 1/4" long



## MODERN SEMINOLE ART

The Seminole are a “viable” people, by which I mean they continue to create new forms to depict their lives, clothing and art. They are not, in that respect, “captured” in an art form that they reproduce over and over. Contrast their ingenuity with that of some modern Pueblo peoples who generally limit their artistic passion to pottery forms that remain constant. The Seminole do, however, continue to make dolls and baskets, much like they have for the past 50-70 years, but they equally explore, or seek, new means to express their life style.

It is of interest to note that they too have been subject to exploitation, i.e. others have co-opted their art and countenance, such as the bisque dolls of Seminole Individuals, most probably made in Japan.

Some forms are frankly inexplicable, as to their intent, such as the sequined forms of Seminole women, circa 1940-1950 (90. & 91.). They are accurate depictions of typically well-dressed Seminole women. Were they made for attachment to clothing? Were they, in fact, even made by a Seminole?

Musa Isle, as an example, was an Indian village; a Seminole “encampment” that was created as one of the first tourist attractions in South Florida. It showed “live Seminoles,” performing various dances and activities, most of which had little to do with actual Seminole culture. Items were sold, such as bisque figures, that were produced elsewhere, as well as felt pendants and hats, carvings, etc.

That was part of survival.



90.

91.

### 90. & 91. SEQUINED FEMALE FIGURES

These are hand-sewn images of female Seminole women, wearing clothing and hair styles of the 1930-1940 period. Apparently they were originally applied to an article of clothing and subsequently removed to be reused for some future (unknown) purpose. Six of these examples were acquired for our collection, with no provenance or stated function.

The women wear typical Seminole hair styles, strands of beads at the neck and wear long capes, as well as full skirts with bands of color and simulated patchwork.

Were they made by a Seminole? One can only surmise, as they are not known in the collecting history of the Seminole.

**90. SE-1533;** 14" +/- long

**91. SE-1535;** 14" +/- long



## 92. SEMINOLE WOMAN'S BARRETTE

A fully beaded image of a Seminole woman on hide with commercial clasp on back for attachment as a hair barrette.

**Collection No.: SE-1904**

Size: 4 3/4" high

## 93. SEMINOLE WOMAN'S NECKLACE

A necklace of green trade cloth with a central beaded element depicting a Seminole woman, similar to that shown in 91A (perhaps by the same artist / maker).

**Collection No.: SE-1914**

Size: 2 1/2" wide, 17 1/2" long



92, 93.

## 94A. FEMALE SALT & PEPPER SHAKER

A porcelain replication of a traditional Seminole woman, marked "Seminole Indian Florida," probably made in Japan.

**Collection No.: SE-2039A**

Size: 5" +/- high

## 94B. MALE SALT & PEPPER SHAKER

The male figure, matched with 92, he wears trousers, a patchwork jacket and is similarly marked as the Female.

**Collection No.: SE-2039**

Size: 5" +/- high



94A, 94B.

## 95. PUBLICATION: BUFFALO BILL

An early French publication of popular distribution, of a series of the adventures of Buffalo Bill, entitled: "Buffalo Bill's Florida Foes or Hunting Down the Seminole."

**Collection No.: FA-301**

Size: 8 3/4" wide, 11" high



95.



**96. PHOTOGRAPH: SEMINOLE MAN AND SISTERS**

*Circa: 1902*

This is a studio image of "Billy Bowlegs and Sisters." Note the abundance of silver jewelry worn by the two oldest sisters, each standing in the traditional pose, with their arms covering their mid-section, a projection of personal modesty.

**Collection No.: SE-1654**

Size: 6" wide, 7 7/8" high



## RESEARCH ESSAYS

Through the auspices of a grant endowment\* at the Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, Gainesville two scholars of Seminole History have authored the following papers, which are herein published:

- **The Role of Color in the Seminole World: A Personal Odyssey to Understanding** by *Patricia Riles Wickman, Ph.D.*
- **The Value of Clans in Tribal Organization** by *Sandra Starr, Starr Research*

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### 97. SILVER GORGET: OSCEOLA

**Collection No.: SE-2004**

Size: 5  $\frac{3}{8}$ " long

In the numerous illustrations of Osceola, he is typically shown wearing three gorgets. Could this be one of those?

\*Annually, the Reeves Family endows a research program at the Museum of Natural History, (University of Florida, Gainesville), the purpose of which is to engage noted scholars of Seminole art and history in additional research, and to subsequently publish their findings. The intent is to increase our knowledge of this unique culture, and to do so in a scholarly endeavor.



## **The Role of Color in the Seminole World:**

A Personal Odyssey to Understanding

*By Patricia Riles Wickman, Ph.D.*

Color has many uses in the world of humans, no less among the Natives of Florida than among any other group anywhere. It indicates status. It symbolizes rules and actions without the use of words. It carries history and historic understandings that unify a people across space and time. Its meanings reach deep into the human psyche and bind people in ways that even words cannot. Colors hold both peace and war. They signify life and death. They can last forever.

As soon as the first Europeans arrived in what is now the southeastern United States, they began to comment upon the interests and practices of the Native peoples they met in this land that the Spaniards soon would call *La Florida*. Items, from deer-hide capes to pendants and utilitarian wares and wooden carved masks, were the canvases for their art, and the color palettes they used were broad as Nature could provide. But the colors they used, and the items they used them upon, held far more than artistic significance. The Native peoples of the lower Southeast – the ancestors of the people we know today as the Seminoles (a word that non-Indians have imposed upon them) were wonderfully inventive and creative, and their creativity held meanings that non-Natives could not ever completely understand. Their world and their view of it were as different from the world that non-Natives know as a circle is from a line.

In the non-Native, Euro-American world, the line represents a linear world, of separate parts, each consistently unfolding over time. Parts of that world are represented as “politics,” “religion,” “economics,” or even as “history.” Not so, in the world of the Natives. Their world is a circle – a single, unified entity that they do not view as appropriate to take apart. This reality is reflected in their lexicons. The two languages that still exist today are Maskókî, commonly called Creek, and Hitchiti, today known as Miccosukee. In neither of these languages do the Indians have words for many of those parts of life as it is viewed in the linear world. They do not, for example, have a word for “deadline.” They do not even have a specific word for “love.” There is a culture where actions really do speak louder than words.

The answer to the question of color and its cultural values all began for the Ancestors, thousands of years ago, with the coming of The Four Teachers. These were *hilswa hay*, or *hill's haya* (both surviving “Seminole” languages—Maskókî and Hitchiti – will contract phrases regularly). These were The People of the Light. This light, however, didn't mean only brilliance of color but, even more important, Enlightenment. First, because there were four, they illustrated the power of four: the elements, the cardinal directions, the primary colors, and the rituals. Earth, air, fire, and water compromised the seen world. North, South, West, and East oriented their lives and incorporated the unseen world, and the connection between the two worlds was represented by Medicine. The four primary colors described their lives; red is the color of blood, and war. White is the state of peace. Yellow is the representation of living beings. Black is the absence of life. Together these are all incorporated into the realm of Medicine, and given force by the rituals, centering on the songs or chants, that instill in the plants the powers of the universe – the seen and the unseen world.

The Four Teachers left the people with a world of beliefs and actions that confirmed and reconfirmed these beliefs. For centuries, the four primary colors ordered, and continue to order, the four facets of their world. Their meanings are inviolate but it is only at this moment in time that some of the traditions surrounding their uses are beginning to be relaxed, although we may realize that even these traditions have evolved over so much time.

With the coming of the Europeans, trade beads of Italian glass enlarged their color palette but never replaced the values they had been taught. European textiles added complexity of their lives, with a broader range of natural colors, even as Europeans Catholic clothing requirements imposed evolving styles. Nevertheless, the centuries (at least), infants have received a single white bead at four months, indicating that they have passed the first test of viability. They have weathered the first period of infant mortality threats and are ready to be named to take up their journey to adulthood. Over the ensuing years women will be given more and colorful beads for necklaces, to mark that journey. This system will reach its zenith in the first half of the 20th century, and begin to decline for adult women but not for infants.

Every individual is born into a Clan – an extended family whose membership is passed down by the Mother. Each clan has a totem, a symbol, that is theirs for life. Tradition dictates that Clan symbols should not be used in art, but some women (and men) have begun to use them in the 20th century, in patchwork and beading. Basket makers have increased their varieties of shapes and sizes, as well as the colors of their ornamentation, as thread colors have increased over the same period, with the inception of aniline dyes, and as they have begun to ‘borrow’ styles and shapes from the non-Native populations ever growing around them. Nevertheless, certain requirements remain.

For example, no woman will make a lid for a basket unless she has passed through menopause: she may close her baskets only when her womb is closed. If there is a death in her Clan, she must not begin any new projects until a grieving time of four moons is over. And, above all else, both women and men artisans must be careful lest certain of the four primary colors in the Circle of Life touch each other. This would surely bring calamity. Just as certain color restrictions apply, others do not, and my story of the blue beads illustrates this reality nicely.

For years I had heard the archaeologists speak of “Seminole” sites around the state. The major identifier of such sites was, for them, the presence and prevalence of a certain type of color of beads. These were classic “trade beads” – glass, sometimes faceted, and of a particular high blue color; made in Italy, and traded by the Europeans for valuable deer hides and other animal skins, during Florida’s Colonial periods. This, the researchers said, was a dividing line between Seminole and non-Seminole sites. Strange, I thought, that identification and classification of a site should rely so heavily on one artifact.

So, not too many months after I had been honored with an invitation to live among the people themselves, on the Big Cypress “Res” (Reservation), I began to ask questions. This didn’t occur soon. First, the elders have to satisfy themselves that any non-Indian is listening respectfully, and respectful of the information, and planning to stick around long enough to hear the answers they choose to share. Anything else would be impertinent, and they have been bombarded with impertinent questions all their lives. Each time I asked, however, there was no answer. “What is the cultural value of blue glass trade beads?” I would say. They would look at me blankly. But I kept asking. Finally, I asked an individual with whom I had become sufficiently friendly that I knew he would surely have some kind of answer. But he still surprised me. “You’re always thinking inside the box!” he said with a smile. “You have to get out of that box! It isn’t that blue has any special value at all. It’s just the opposite. It’s that it has NO value!” I was temporarily speechless. “Medicine colors have very special values,” he said, “and are only supposed to be used in certain circumstances and positions, even relative to each other. But the blue beads have no Medicine value; they’re ‘free’ to use in any way. They’re just pretty!”

What a great lesson that was. In fact, it ‘colored’ every other thought I would ever have about the Indian people who live, and had lived for many centuries, on the other side of a cultural divide that I would have to learn to straddle. I realized that I could never learn to live there completely, but I had to, at least, learn to appreciate the cultural landscape. Otherwise, I would be practicing what I call “Coke machine anthropology.” That’s when a researcher (anthropologist or historian) is so fixated on her own assumption, and determined to anticipate her own answers, that she metaphorically drops a coin (a question) into the person (who she thinks of as nothing more than a machine), and expects answer to roll out.

But that’s not how it works. Respect doesn’t mean simply listening. It means hearing the other person, in their own contexts, and appreciate their own right to have their own context. And that was the moment when I began to get other answers, as well, and the process of understanding just began to spread exponentially through everything I thought and heard. It is my hope that this exhibit – the collection of many, many years by a single, caring couple who have enjoyed their own journey to understanding, will help you to expand your understanding of another – and fascinating – culture; and the more we learn of others the more we may learn of ourselves.

## The Value of Clans in Tribal Organization

By Sandra Starr, Starr Research

The sash (No. 13) you are observing is a representative of one of many opportunities that Native Americans have used to present, in zoomorphic form (taking the form of an animal), their particular family name, kinship group, band or extended social organization. This one is said to have been taken as loot by an American soldier during the 2nd Seminole War, 1835-1842.

Not unique to the Seminole and their Miami area counterparts, the Miccosukee, many tribes who settle in the Southeast *"practiced a form of social organization based on matrilineal clans, wherein they traced their lineages through their mother's families and were born into the same clan as their mothers. The matrilineal clan system shaped daily life. Older clan members transmitted specialized knowledge to the younger generations. Young boys learned to hunt from their mother's brothers (and other maternal uncles) as they shared the same clan, instead of from their fathers who belonged to separate clans. For southeastern Indians, the term father carried respect, but no obedience in the manner familiar to Europeans [...] Likewise, women passed down knowledge about plants, agriculture and female-specific rituals only within their own clan. Europeans struggled to understand their method of social organization, primarily because it often clashed with their own particular worldview."* **(Florida Memory online<sup>1</sup>)**

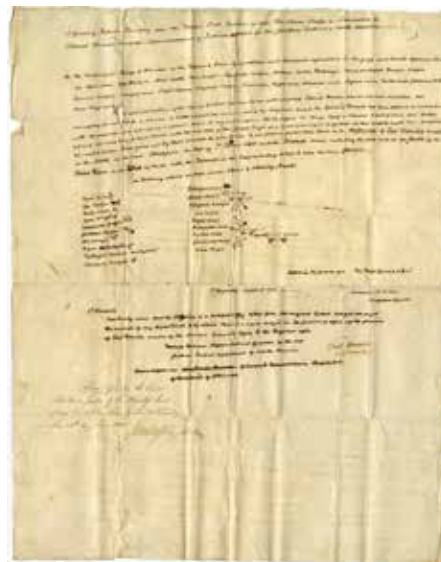
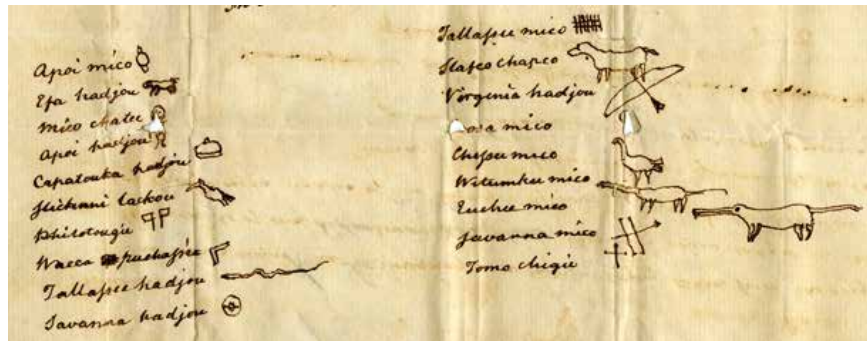
After invasions of Europeans into Florida in the 16th century, very few distinctive groups remained. The land virtually empty, "bands of Indian people who primarily lived along the creeks and rivers in Georgia and Alabama began moving into the uninhabited region." **(Downs)**. A "confederacy" of Native people referred to as the Creeks by the British colonial traders, also allowed British and Scottish intermarriage within their most powerful families. "Although the nuclear family was the primary social unit, the Seminoles retained the Creek tradition of close ties with their matrilineal clan relatives. Clans often determined household arrangements, with settlements made up of women all related and the same clan living in several houses built around a central square. Their husbands were from another clan. Clan continued to play a major role in Seminole social organization, living patterns, and culture in this matrilineal society." **(Downs)**.

The Red and White towns of the original Creek Confederacy in Georgia and Alabama "were related in some obscure way to clan groupings. The White were peace clans, while the Teiloki [Red] were concerned with war, although the adjective Red was not usually applied." **(Debo 14)** According to historian Debo, who cites the *Indian Journal of 1877* for this note of information, the Creek had a legend (one of many) for the foundation of clan relationships that revolves around a dense fog that caused the ancestors to wander around in the darkness. They kept the families tightly grouped as not to lose each other. These groupings gathered together forming large bands. After an east wind blew the fog away, the band nearest the east and recognized the light became the Wind Clan, the leaders. "The other bands took the names of the birds or animals that were found with them when the fog broke. All agreed never to desert their clans even for the sake of blood relatives, but to treat all members as 'people of one flesh.'" **(Debo 15)** The clan system seems quite understandable then to identify one's particular close family in ceremonies as well as politics. An early example of the use of clan identity is this land grant from 1783 where the Creeks, with no written alphabet, and accustomed to oral agreements, used their clan images to endorse their agreement on paper, as signatures. This method of "signing" is found within most American Indian / EuroAmerican / American government documents and treaties, with the sign of an X for the signature as an alternative. "This document, found among records related to *Fatio v. Dewees* (1838), represents an enclosure originally submitted by H. Lee IV to Florida territorial judge Augustus Brevoort Woodward in September 1824. Lee sought Woodward's assistance in securing claim to property purchased by his father, General Henry Lee, from Thomas Brown in 1817. On March 1, 1783, several "Kings and Warriors" representing Upper Creek, Lower Creek and Seminole towns affixed their names and family marks to a document granting British Indian Agent Thomas Brown substantial territory west of St. Augustine, Florida." **(Florida Memory)**

Ethnohistorian, Dr. Patricia Wickman, links one value of clan apparatus within tribes who have "orally codified cultures" to the historical clue of one's creation story or "cosmic past," "the ability of its members to hold its elements within the living memory of each generation, without recourse to written codification." Even if each clan has their own way of recounting it.



Wickman notes that the clan system flexibility allows for extended groups not necessarily linked by blood or marriage, but might include "fictive kin," namely others that are accepted as kin by "affection, concern, obligation, and responsibility." (US Legal Inc)



## THE IMPORTANCE OF "TOWNS" ABOVE "CLANS" IN COLONIAL TIMES

When looking for the origination of the formation of clans within the early Creek Confederacy, an alliance of loosely gathered bands, one finds that towns were large enough to have a central square usable as a ceremonial center and meeting place rose to be more important as they attracted and became affiliated with the most powerful leaders. "Without the town [emphasis my own]... Creek society would not have existed." (Piker) "He [Piker] challenges the primacy of the clans in Creek social organization, asserting that 'the people of Okfuskee, like their neighbors through Creek country, were first and foremost members of a particular town.'" (LeMaster re:Piker 10) "As Piker points out, while previous scholars have acknowledged that, for most Native Americans in the colonial period, the "tribe" or "confederacy" played only a peripheral role in daily life [...] The town (talway), Piker explains, 'consisted of people who shared a square ground and a fire.'" As the center of this extended community, Okfuskee 'contained the full Creek complement of civil, military and religions specialists; it controlled the productive resources necessary for its own reproduction and that of its people; and it was linked to the other-than-human beings on which all life depended' (LeMaster re:Piker). The town served an important unifying function as Apalachicola was a Pease or White Town during the Big Town Massacre in the 1760s. "Since the diasporas that commenced after the "Big Town Massacre," the Creeks of north Florida's forefathers were often called "refugee Creeks" by the other Towns." "It [Apalachicola] is also the name of an important Tribal Town, "Thlopthlocco," also called Big Town." "Many believed it to be an original daughter town to old Apalachicola according to Remus Cook, Tallahassee, and Reuben Cook, Thlopthlocco."

## CLAN NAMES AND SYMBOLS

"Totemic clans are known by names that reaffirm the people's beliefs about their alliance with the first ancestors such as Panther, Bird, and Otter, or Wind clans ties with the supernatural and are the basis of many myths and legends." (**Downs**) There are many accounts of the names of Southeastern clans. One account lists the Toad Clan as a subdivision of the Potato Clan.

- Ahalagili, Potato Clan
- Halpatalgi, Alligator Clan
- Wotkalgi, Raccoon Clan
- Sopkatalgi, Toad Clan (**Hewitt**)

One states that "among the Cows Creek Seminoles there were five matrilineal exogamous clans in existence about fifteen years ago; the Panther, Deer, Bird, and Snake clans were totemic, while the Tallahassee ("old town") clan was not. In addition there were several represented by Mikulski Indians living with the Cow Creek group. There were the Otter, Bear, and Tawalako ("big town"); the latter was not totemic." (**Peithmann**)

Dr. James Goss of Texas Tech University claims that "there are 12 Miccosukee-Seminole clans today (Buswell 1972), although not all are represented on every reservation or in every community. These are: Panther, Wildcat, Deer, Bear, Wolf well in Creek Society. "At the town level, the factions and centripetal forces unleashed by individuals and clan interests were harnessed to whatever degree possible... [T]owns became... the loci of discussion, meditation and reconciliation which make interclan relations, and thus Creek life, possible" (**LeMaster re: Piker 10**)

When the Land Grant from the Upper Creeks, Lower Creeks and Seminoles to Thomas Brown, March 1, 1783 was created, the signators were "leading men from Creek and Seminole towns. High ranking men carried a war or diplomatic title and identified themselves with a town [emphasis mine]. For example Tallassee Mico, was a Mico, or leading man, from the town of Tallassee. Because of the inclusion of clan symbols alongside town affiliations and title, this document raises questions about tribal and national identity in the Revolutionary Era." (**Florida Memory**)

### BIG TOWN/ "APALACHICOLI"

#### a.k.a Talwa Lako/A White or Peace Town

The sash in consideration, which clearly displays the Frog or Toad Clan, links itself to the "Big Town" of Apalachicoli, as the Big Town clan name is preferred. "The name [Apalachicoli] was applied by the Spaniards from a very early period to the Lower Creeks [...] It is used in its general sense in the very earliest place in the Spanish records in which the names occurs, a letter dated August 22, 1639, and in the same way in letters of 1686 and 1688. From this the Spaniards evidently extended it over of the whole latter [the town itself]. That the town was considered important is shown by the Creek name which it bears, Talwa lako, "Big Town," and from Bartram's statement that it was the leading White or Peace town." (**Swanton 129**) That "...Apalachicola, a Hitchiti-speaking town, had a similar prominence as a 'big town' among the Lower Creeks." (**Hudson 374**), is a piece of evidence that the sash may be of Miccosukee origin as the Miccosukee, a Lower Creek tribe, speak Mikasuke, a derivative of Hitchiti, and did indeed fight in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Seminole Wars against the United States (Tiger) during which the sash was to be found. Gopher; Bird, Little Bird, Wind, Otter, Snake, Big Town (Toad/Frog. Other clans such as Alligators, Crocodile, Little Black snake (Billy Bowlegs' clan), Eagle (Osceola's clan), have become extinct with the passing of the last clan member to the spirit world." (**Goss**) But the most complete list was obtained by Albert Gatschet from Judge G. W. Stidham:

Nokósalgi bear gens; from nokósi bear.

Itchúalgi deer gens, from itchu deer.

Kátalgi panther gens; kátsa panther, cougar.

Koákotaslgi wild-cat gens; koá-kotchi wild car.

Kunipalgi skunk gens' kúno, kono skunk.

Wótkalgi raccoon gens; wó'tko raccoon.

Yahálgi wolf gens; yáha wolf.

Tsúlagi fox gens; tsúla fox.

Itch' hásulagi beaver gens; itch hádua beaver.

Osáinalgí otter gens; osána otter.

Hálpadalgi alligator gens' hálpada alligator.

Fúsualgi bird gens' fúsua forest bird.

Itamalgi, Támalgi, (?) cf. támkita to fly.

Sopákatali toad gens; sopáktu toad .

Tákusaklgi mole gens; táku mole.

Atchialgi maize gens; átachi maize.

Ahalaxalgi sweet potato gens; aha sweet potato, long march-potato.

Hútalgalgi winds gens; hótali wind.

Akatayatsalgi (signification unknown).

(-algi is the sign of collective plurality of the okla of Cha'hta.)

The following gentes are now extinct, but still occur in war names:

Pahósalgi; occurs in names like Pahós'-hádsho

Okilisa; cf Killis-tamaha. See Chahta Indians

'Lá' log-algi fish gens; ' lá' lo fish, occurs in war names like 'Lá' lo yahóla, etc.

Tchukótalgi, perhaps consolidated with another gens; it stood in a close connection with the Sopáktalgi. Also pronounced Tsuxodi; Chief Chicote is named after it.

Odshisalgí hickory nuts gens; ó'dshi hickory nug. Some believe this gens represented the people of Odshisi town, p. 71.

Oktchúnualgi salt gens; oktchúnua salt.

Isfánalgi; seems analogous to the Ispáni phratry and gens of the Chicasas.

Wá' hlakalgi; cf. Hú' li-wá' hli, town name.

Muxlasalgi; said to mean 'people of Muklása town'; cf. Imuklásha, under Cha'hta.

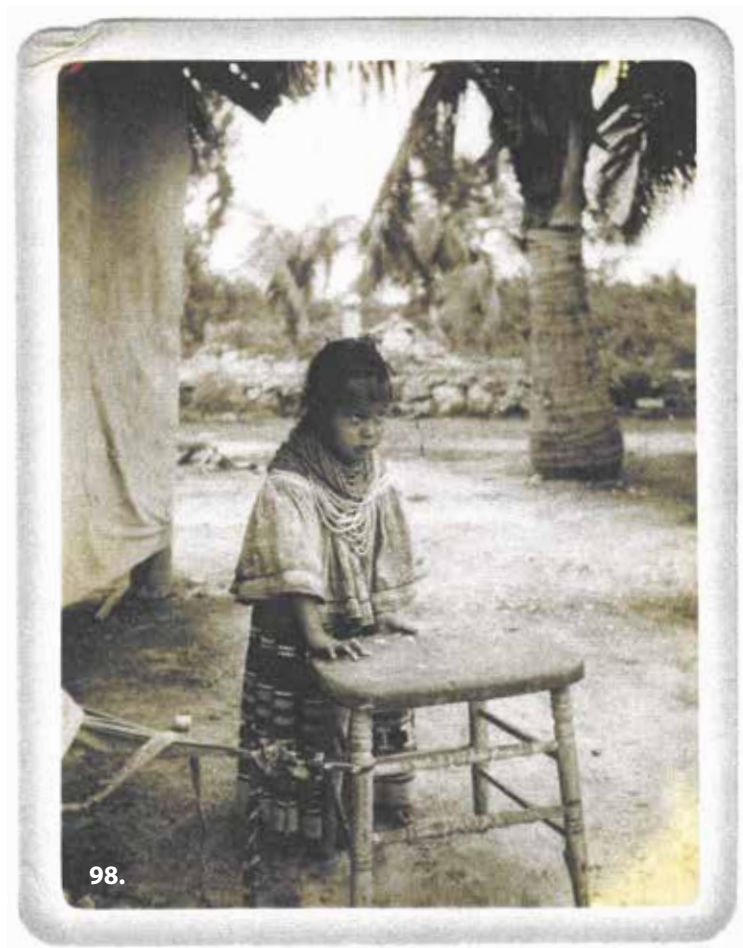
## TOADS AND FROGS

"When the sun is eclipsed, the Seminoles believe that a toad frog comes and gradually eats away the sun's surface until it completely disappears. They fire guns (formerly arrows) at the toad frog to prevent the eclipse. When Josie Billie was a small boy, he remembers that people at his father's camp shot off guns and raised a great clamor when either the sun or the moon suffered eclipse." Today, the Miami Miccosukee refer to the Tamiami Trail as the "Toad." (Peithmann)

Notes:

1. <https://www.floridamemory.com/exhibits/floridahighlights/creeks/>





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*Circa 1937*

This photographic image is of a young girl, at the entrance to her family camp. It is her "look" that speaks to the premise of "...who are these people that came to look at us..."

On the back of the photo is written "Indian Village near Miami, 1937."

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