

SEAL OF THE SEMINOLE NATION

The design in colors on the front cover of this number of *The Chronicles* is a reproduction of the original painting of the Seminole Seal on exhibit in the Museum of the Historical Society, one of the paintings of the official seals of the Five Civilized Tribes in the history of Oklahoma. The central device of this seal shows a plumed tribesman paddling a canoe across a lake to a village where a factory (trading house) stands on the shore.

Originally a tribal division of the Creek Nation, the Seminole separated from the Creek about the middle of the Eighteenth Century to settle in Florida where the lakes and swamps of this region henceforth had a significant place in the life of the Seminole people. It was in the Everglade swamp region of Southern Florida that Seminole families found refuge and remained in hiding while their warriors fought for seven years against United States troops. This war had been precipitated by the refusal of the tribe to leave Florida during the removal of the Indians from the Southeastern States and come west to the Indian Territory in 1833-35. Most of the Seminole were finally forced to move to the Indian Territory but some of them never surrendered to the United States, remaining in Florida where their descendants have lived to this day adapting themselves to life in the swamp lands.

There is a tradition that the central device of the Seminole Seal was based on old tribal religious beliefs as well as real history when the design for the seal was adopted. Medicinal herbs and roots were purchased for the manufacture of commercial tonics, by traders among the Indians living in easy access to the places where such plants grew near lakes and streams both in Florida and the Indian Territory. This trade was brisk in early times, bringing in considerable revenue to the Indians during certain seasons of the year.

The knowledge and the use of some of the herbs and roots were held sacred by the Creek and the Seminole, in connection with certain tribal religious rites and ceremonials. These ideas had a significant place for the people in gathering and preserving the plants as well as in the journey when taking the dried products to the trading post. The whole event followed a definite pattern of procedure, and was associated with thoughts of happiness and well-being. When an official seal was planned and adopted for the nation

¹The lower right-hand ray of the central star in the Oklahoma State Seal shows the old Seminole seal, each of the four remaining rays of this five-pointed star showing the other official seals of the Five Civilized Tribes. For further reference on the history of these seals, see "Official Seals of the Five Civilized Tribes," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4 (December, 1946), pp. 357-70.

west, the scene of the plumed tribesman paddling a canoe across a lake to a trading post suggested a design representing peace and plenty for the old time Seminole.

The Seminole reposed great faith and power in a hereditary chieftain, who ruled the comparatively small tribe. Therefore, following an old tribal law, the executive of the Seminole Nation was a hereditary chief or his kinsman chosen to govern for life or, in later history, for successive terms in the office during a long period of years. Significant of this one-man rule, the outer border of the official Seminole Seal is inscribed with the words, "Executive Department of the Seminole Nation."

The separation of the Creek tribal group that became known as the Seminole and their settlement in the prairie region of present Alachua County, Florida took place around 1750. The name "Seminole" signifies "those who went off from the main part of the people," from the Creek *Semissole* which literally means "run-away." The nucleus of this immigration to Florida was from the Oconee tribe, descendants of the Hitchiti who still spoke the ancient Hitchiti language, that had moved from the Oconee River, Georgia, and settled among the Lower Creek people on the lower course of the Chattahoochee River after the Yamsee War, about 1715. Other tribal bands from the Creek confederacy joined the Seminole; the Oconee and these Hitchiti speaking allies soon became known as the Mikasuki. They were the "Red Stick" warrior division of the Seminole that bitterly opposed dealings with the white colonial interests (Spanish, French or English). Muskogee speaking bands from the Upper Creek people joined the Seminole in Florida about the time of the American Revolution; and again after the Creek War of 1813-14, at which time so many of these Creek people came as refugees among the Seminole that the population of the tribe was tripled and even the language was changed to that of the Creek (or Muskogee).

The first Seminole War took place in 1817-18, in which Andrew Jackson led a large force of American troops in an attack and the burning of the town of the Mikasuki near the lake by that name in Northern Florida. The trouble had arisen over run-away Negro slaves from Spanish Florida and from the State of Georgia who had formed a large refugee population in the Seminole country. When white men, many of them unprincipled characters, hunted down these Negro fugitives and even seized Negro slaves that belonged to some of the wealthy tribesmen, fights and killings had taken place that brought on war.

The Spanish Treaty of 1819, providing the cession of Florida, brought the Seminole under the jurisdiction of the United States. A census made in 1823 under the auspices of the War Department showed that there were 4,833 Seminole in Florida, an approximately

accurate count in the light of population figures of the tribe given some years later by the United States Office of Indian Affairs, Georgia still incensed over the run-away slave issue demanded that the Seminole be moved out of the rich agricultural region in Florida to another part of the country. The Seminole, referred to as the "Florida Indians," signed a treaty with United States commissioners meeting at Moultrie Creek, Florida Territory in 1823, concluded September 18 (ratified January 2, 1824), providing for the cession of all tribal lands in Florida except for a reservation in Central Florida where the tribesmen and their families should henceforth make their homes. Pushed out of their rich agricultural region to the reservation in the swamp country, the Seminole were soon reduced to near starvation and still suffered from white outlaw attacks and seizure of Negro slaves. Finally, following the Indian Removal Act passed by Congress and signed by President Jackson (May, 1830), another treaty was signed by the Seminole chiefs at Payne's landing on May 9, 1832, providing for the cession of the Seminole Reservation in Central Florida to the United States and for the removal of the tribe to the Indian Territory if they could find a suitable location in the Creek country there. Six Seminole leaders² made the journey west to examine this new country and were induced by their Agent to sign another treaty at Fort Gibson (April 12, 1833) providing for the settlement of the Seminole in a tract in the Creek Nation, lying between the Canadian and the North Canadian rivers and extending west to a north-south line twenty-five miles west of the mouth of Little River. The Seminole people bitterly opposed these two treaties since this new western tract was already settled by the Creek and bordered the Plains where "wild Indian tribes" were at war.

In 1835, the second and Great Seminole War began, this year marking the end of the stipulated period in which the tribal members were to have made ready to go west. The war lasted until August, 1842, costing the United States the lives of approximately 1,500 American soldiers, many civilians and \$20,000,000 in money. The war was one of attrition with atrocities committed by both sides.

Seminole families fled deeper and deeper into the swamps where they existed in a starving condition as their homes were burned, their fields laid waste and their cattle and Negro slaves killed and captured. A black passage in United States military annals was the seizure of Osceola, the Seminole leader and his followers through treachery under a white flag of truce, by General Thomas S. Jesup goaded by demands of hysterical white people to end the war at

²These Seminoles were in order as their names appear on the Treaty at Fort Gibson, 1833: Takos Emathla, Holasi Emathla, Jumper, Coa Harjo, Charley Emathla, Yaha Harjo, Nehathloco representing Foke-Luste-Harjo ("Black Deer"). Portraits of some of these leaders are shown in McKenney and Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes of North America*, (Philadelphia, 1842).

once. This happened early (December, 1837) in the war. Osceola died as a prisoner in Fort Moultrie, South Carolina, in January, 1838.

The Seminole leaders in this period were Mikanopi,⁵ hereditary ruler and descendant of the ancient Oconee, ranked as head chief of the tribe, owner of considerable property, a man of ability and prestige. Jumper, a descendant of the old Yamassee chieftains, was the intelligent and most influential leader in the tribal councils. Alligator, of the ancient Yamassee, was a shrewd, sensible leader in the council. Holati Emathla, chief of the Mikasuki, was closely identified with his son, Charlie Emathla (courageous and practical) and Takos Emathla (John Hicks), a Mikasuki chief who was strongly in favor of removal to the west. Coa Cochee (Wild Cat), son of a Seminole chief of the St. Johns River region, was a young leader of unusual personality and promise. Osceola was a Creek (and part Scot), noted for undaunted courage, from the Upper Creek town of Tallahassee.

United States agents began organizing for the removal of the Seminole from Florida in 1835, the first party of immigrants arriving in the Indian Territory the following year under the leadership of Chief Holati Emathla who died enroute near the Choctaw Agency (Skullyville) in the summer of 1836. These immigrants traveled on west and settled near Little River, north of the Canadian, where their community became known as Fokeluste Harjo ("Black Dirt") after their influential leader by this name. Jumper died of tuberculosis in the spring of 1838 at New Orleans en route to the Indian Territory. According to the report in this year through the Office of Indian Affairs, there were 3,565 Seminole in the Indian Territory but another authoritative report states by the end of 1838 their population was far lower, many hundreds having died from disease and hardships en route and in the new country west. One-third, or less, of the tribe still carried on the war in Florida.

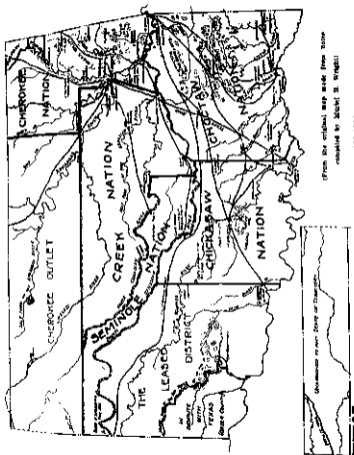
In June, 1838, soon after the arrival of Chief Mikanopi with a company of his tribesmen and their families, a council was held at Fort Gibson with the Creek chiefs, in which the location of the Seminole in the Creek nation was discussed. The region that had been assigned to them was already occupied by the Upper Creek "towns" leaving only a hazardous location on the western border near the Plains tribes. In their plight, the Seminole encamped in the vicinity of Fort Gibson in a miserable condition some of them remaining there for several years. At the close of war in Florida (1842), more of the Seminole were brought west though several hundred remained in the Everglade region.

⁵Swanwick (*The Indians of Southeastern United States*, Bur. Amer. Ethn. Bulletin 137 [1945]) gives the spelling of this name as *Mikanopi*, and variations appear in other publications.

In 1845, a treaty signed by the United States commissioners and delegations of the Seminole and the Creek provided that the Seminole could settle anywhere they wished in the new country under the Creek laws and government, an arrangement that never proved satisfactory since many of the Creek people were unfriendly neighbors and friction arose when they seized Seminole slaves claiming them as their own Negroes. Seminole settlements by 1849 were located in the valley of the Deep Fork south to the Canadian River in what are now are adjoining parts of Okfuskee, Hughes and Seminole counties. Chief Mikanopi died in 1849, and was succeeded in the chieftaincy by his nephew, Jim Jumper (son of Jumper). Coa Coochee or Wild Cat, who had been Mikanopi's principal advisor and who had never accepted the laws of the Creek Nation, left the Indian Territory with a large party of his Seminole tribesmen and some Negroes for Mexico where he was later honored for his part in Indian wars on the side of Mexico.

A treaty with the Creek Nation in 1856 finally provided acession of Creek lands to the Seminole where they could establish their own government and laws. The tract of an estimated 2,169,090 acres lay north of the Canadian River to the North Canadian and the south line of the Cherokee Outlet, extending west from the 97th Meridian to the 100th Meridian, West Longitude. The Seminole Agency and the Seminole Council house a few miles west were located in the vicinity of present Wauvette in Pottawatomie County. Organization of the Seminole Government was under way by 1859, with John Jumper as Principal Chief, who had succeeded to the position at the death of his relative, Chief Jim Jumper some years before. Advancement of the Seminole Nation, however, was interrupted by the outbreak of the War between the States. On August 1, 1861, Commissioner Albert Pike concluded a treaty with the Seminole at their council house in behalf of the Confederate States, signed by John Jumper as Principal Chief and twelve town chiefs. John Chupco, a town chief, refused to sign the Confederate treaty. He with the members of his town, together with town chief Billy Bowlegs and his followers, soon joined the forces of the Creek leader Opothlayahola, in Kansas where they served during the War in the Indian Home Guard troops of the Union Army. Chief John Jumper led the southern Seminole forces that served in the Confederate Army during the War period, having organized the Seminole Battalion in 1861 which served with distinction in the battles fought in the Indian Territory and in which he himself attained the rank of colonel.

At the close of the War, John Chupco recognized by the Government agents as the principal chief of the Seminole Nation signed the Seminole Treaty of 1866 at Washington, D. C., with the United States. The same document was signed by John F. Brown, lately a lieutenant in the Confederate Army and son-in-law of Chief



John Jumper, representing the southern Seminole. The new treaty based on penalties for the recent alignment with the Confederacy provided the cession of all the Seminole lands (the tract of 2,162,080 acres) to the United States at a price of approximately fifteen cents an acre and the purchase by the Seminole of a 200,000 acre tract from the Creek Nation at fifty cents an acre. This tract together with an additional 175,000 acres, later necessarily purchased from the Creek Nation at one dollar an acre, because of an error in the Government survey of the Creek boundary, comprised the Seminole Nation until statehood, approximating present Seminole County, Oklahoma.

During the reconstruction period after the War to the close of the 1870's, there were two head chiefs in the nation: John Chupco (died 1881), chief of the Northern faction of the Seminoles; and John Jumper (died 1896), chief of the Northern or majority group. Chief Jumper resigned in 1877 to devote himself to the Baptist ministry among his people, and was succeeded in office by John F. Brown who served as Principal Chief of the Seminole Nation until the time of his death in 1919, except for one term (1902-1904) when Hulputta Micco was elected to serve. The sister of John F. Brown, always referred to as "Governor Brown" as a prominent citizen of Oklahoma, was Mrs. Alice Brown Davis, a leader in Seminole education and official business who was appointed Principal Chief of the Seminole by the President of the United States in 1922 in closing some tribal land affairs. Since the death of Mrs. Davis, other appointed Seminole chiefs to promote welfare and business interests of the tribe relating to the United States Indian Office have been the late George Harjo, Marcy Cully and the present principal chief Phillip Walker.

The Seminole bands came from the different parts of the country where they had been refugeed during the war and were settled 1868 in the land assigned them by the Treaty of 1866. The tribal government was established along the lines of constitutional forms, and Wetoka was designated the capital of the Nation. This Seminole government consisted of an elected principal chief, a national council constituting the legislative and judicial departments and a body of light-horsemen that served as the police force which had the reputation as the best law-enforcing body in the Indian Territory. The Council was composed of forty-two members, three each from the fourteen "towns" or communities in the nation, twelve being Indian towns and two separate towns for Negro freedmen who had been granted citizenship in the Nation by the terms of the Treaty of 1866. The Seminole was the smallest (population varied from 2,000 to 3,000 at different times after 1846) of the Five Civilized Tribes in the Indian Territory were the last of these Five Tribes to organize their government in this region.



JOHN F. BROWN

John F. Brown, referred to as "Governor Brown," served as Principal Chief of the Seminole Nation from 1877-1902 and 1902 to his death in 1913.



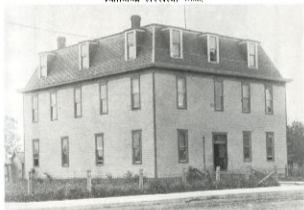
**CHIEF JOHN JUMPER,
SEMINOLE NATION.**



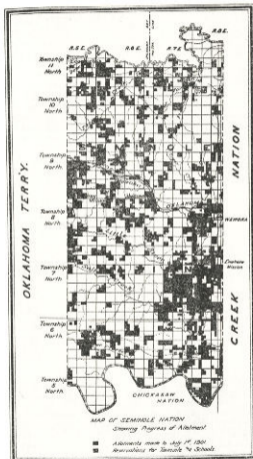
**JOHN CHITTO, CHIEF
OF THE NORTHERN SEMINOLES**



**Kauaiuka Boarding School for Semioke Girls.
Building erected, 1893.**



Semioke Council House, Capitol of the Semioke Nation, at Wewaka.



Map of the Seminole Nation, 1901.

The area shown comprised the Seminole Country, 1886-1901.

The Seminole chiefs in their first meetings with United States government agents were interested in schools for their children. The Treaty of 1823 provided the establishment of Seminole school near the agency in Florida. Seminole boys were sent to the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky where the interest of the Elkhorn Baptist Association prevailed, the first group—eight fine looking Seminole boys about ten to twelve years old—arrived on December 24, 1830. Other Seminole boys attended this Academy through the years. A plea for a Seminole school in the Indian Territory brought the opening of their first school in this country near the Agency in 1844, with John Demo as teacher, a young Seminole who had experienced a romantic sea-faring life as a lad and later had opportunities of schooling through the Mariner's Church in Philadelphia. The first Seminole mission school was called Oak Ridge, a boarding school opened in 1848 under the auspices of the Presbyterian Mission Board, with Reverend John Lilley in charge, the site of which is about three miles southeast of present Holdenville, in Hughes County. The Presbyterian missionary, Reverend James R. Ramsey, established four schools in the Nation in 1868, and later also opened a boarding school for Seminole girls, known as Wewoka Mission, about two miles north of Wewoka. Missionaries of the Methodist Indian Mission Conference established the Sasakwa Female Academy among the Seminole in 1884. Baptist Missionaries had begun work among the Seminole around 1850, and this church has a large and influential membership among the Seminole people today. The oldest Baptist church organization in the old Seminole Nation is the Spring Church, the location of this modern Indian church building and grounds being about two miles west of Sasakwa in Seminole County, where Colonel John Jumper was pastor at the time of his death. He had always been zealous for the education of the Seminole children. Two national academies were established by the Seminole Council, with the erection of two handsome buildings, exact replicas at a cost of about \$65,000 each: The first was "Mekasakey Academy" opened for Seminole boys in 1891, located about three miles southwest of present Seminole, in Seminole County; the second was Emahaka Academy (referred to locally as "Emahaka Mission"), the school opened in 1894 for girls.

Seminole men, women and children were allotted lands in severalty under the Seminole Agreement concluded with the United States Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes ("Dawes Commission) and signed December 27, 1897. At the close of the Seminole government ten years later, official documents and papers of this Indian nation and the old die of the Seminole Seal were taken to the Five Civilized Tribes Agency as the depository for the United States government at Muskogee.⁴ The painting made from the im-

⁴The constitution and laws of the Seminole Nation were never published in book form. The first written law of the Seminole was passed by the Council at the Seminole Agency, in Florida, in 1825, relating to the rights of children in in-



Visiting Mission Group to the Florida Seminoles, 1901, Seated left to right: Mrs. A. J. Brown, Mrs. Alice B. Davis, Lizzie Brumer, Irene Davis, Lucy Brown, Mrs. George Scott, standing, left to right, Dan Long, A. J. Brown, John Wesley, George Scott, Sissy Long.

press of this old die, shown here in colors on the cover of *The Chronicles*, is a symbol of the history, lore and promise of a remarkable Indian nation—the Seminole—in establishing social institutions and a new form of government along the lines of old tribal customs as a law-abiding, peaceful people.⁴

- -The Editor

heriting property belonging to the father. The first Seminole constitution providing the organization of the Nation west was adopted soon after the Treaty of 1856 but the text of this document was lost. The original manuscript of acts of the Seminole Council for the years 1884, 1886, 1887, 1893 have been kept in the old records of the Five Civilized Tribes Agency at Muskogee. The original manuscripts in the native language (Creek), of acts of the Seminole Council passed at meetings in the old Seminole capitol at Wewoka from 1897 to 1903, bound in a volume, form a valuable historical relic in the Indian Archives of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

⁴ References on Seminole history are found in the following: Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal*, (Norman, 1932), and *Five Civilized Tribes* (Norman, 1934); John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians and Their Neighbors*, Bur. Amer. Ethn., Bulletin 73 (1922); Edwin C. McReynolds, *A History of the Sevier State* (Norman, 1935); Muriel H. Wright, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma* (Norman, 1951).