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C.M. MAYO has written widely about Mexico, Texas, and the US-Mexico borderlands. Among her works are *Metaphysical Odyssey into the Mexican Revolution: Francisco I. Madero and His Secret Book, Spiritist Manual* and the historical novel based on the true story, *The Last Prince of the Mexican Empire*, which was named a *Library Journal* Best Book of 2009. A native of El Paso, Texas, and a long-time resident of Mexico City, she is also a noted translator of Mexican literature. In 2017 she was elected a member of the Texas Institute of Letters. Her website is [www.cmmayo.com](http://www.cmmayo.com).

## GREAT POWER IN ONE:

### MISS CHARLES EMILY WILSON

*We tell our stories not just to rehearse the past but also to condition the present and, thereby, to prepare the future.*  
Bruce Jackson, *The Story Is True*

#### I.

**In our screen-enthralled world with entertainment at a click**, how easy it is to underestimate the transcendent power of an oral historian such as Miss Charles Emily Wilson of Brackettville, Texas.

Picture her as she appears in Jeff Guinn's *Our Land Before We Die: The Proud Story of the Seminole Negro*: an elderly lady on her garden-chair throne on her float in Brackettville's Seminole Days parade. It is the year 2000. Her face bright below the shadow of her broad-brimmed hat, she wears a double-strand of pearls, a flowered skirt. A big purse balances on her knees. Two children, perhaps first graders, sit each in their

folding-chair on either side of her.<sup>1</sup> Even today, after books and articles by anthropologists, historians, and journalists, and after TV reports, documentaries, YouTube videos, websites, and swirls of social media posts have appeared about the history that she preserved by telling the stories of her ancestors again and again, decade after decade, to students, to anyone interested, not many people in Texas, never mind beyond Texas, have heard of her people, never mind of her. But everyone watching that parade on that day, as she sailed by, waving, would have known exactly who she was.

"Miss Charles," they called her, "they" being family, friends, neighbors, and other descendants of Black Seminoles who had traveled to Brackettville from as far as California and Oklahoma for the annual Seminole Days celebration, and also—many being one and the same—those who had been her students in Brackettville.

The Black Seminoles of Brackettville descend from Africans of the western Sub-Saharan who fled from slavery in South Carolina and Georgia into the Florida Everglades; they also descend from American Indians, mainly Seminole, a nation that coalesced from dissident Creek tribes in early nineteenth-century Florida.<sup>2</sup>

It was in early nineteenth-century Florida that the Black Seminoles came to view themselves as Black Indians, a tribe apart, and with a proud history of both fleeing and fighting—whatever it took—for their freedom. Today their heritage is a warrior culture honed in Florida during the Seminole Wars; then in struggle and escape from Indian Territory; and in Coahuila, where many of the men served as scouts for the Mexican Army; and subsequently, in Texas, as scouts for the U.S. Army during the Indian Wars. Doug Sivad, a journalist of Black Seminole descent, recalled on his Instagram that his own

grandmother told him, "'You family wudn't no slave'... 'you a Black Injun'".<sup>3</sup> As Miss Charles' student, tribal historian Willie Warrior, put it to Guinn (rather differently than his ladylike teacher would have), "In Florida, in Mexico, here in Texas. Anybody who underestimated us got his butt kicked."<sup>4</sup>

The "Seminole scouts," as the Black Seminoles were commonly called when they served in the U.S. Army, were tremendously respected by their commanding officers. Long-time veteran of the Texas borderlands Major General Zenas R. Bliss recalled in his memoirs, "they had all the habits of Indians, were excellent hunters and trailers, and splendid fighters."<sup>5</sup> Of the sixteen Congressional Medals of Honor given to the U.S. Army's Native American scouts in the West, four went to Black Seminoles:<sup>6</sup> one to Adam Payne for gallantry in a 1874 battle against the Comanche; the others the following year to John Ward, Isaac Payne, and Pompey Factor for courageous and soldierly conduct when badly outnumbered in a skirmish with Apache on the U.S.-Mexico border by the Pecos.<sup>7</sup>

Seminole scouts were not one and the same as the "Buffalo Soldiers," so-called by the Plains Indians who found the African American soldiers' hair very like the fur of the buffalo. After the U.S. Civil War, the U.S. Army recruited African Americans for both cavalry and infantry in the Indian Wars, but during this period, while seen by many as "Buffalo soldiers," Seminole scouts considered themselves Black Indians; moreover, initially, in 1870, they had been recruited into the U.S. Army not as individual soldiers, but as a group, by an agreement their chief made with U.S. military authorities, and which included land for their tribe.

Why would Indians scout for the U.S. Army in the Indian Wars? Our contemporary concepts of racial solidarity and a long-standing tradition of novels, movies, and television shows with simplistic whites vs. Indians narratives can make it challenging to fairly consider the context for and range of scouts' motives. As military historian Thomas W. Dunlay explains in *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers*, Indian scouts, and from tribes as varied as Lipan Apache to Lakota Sioux, were attached to U.S. Army units in "virtually every Indian white conflict in the trans-Mississippi West."<sup>8</sup> Dunlay stresses, "some tribes saw the whites as useful allies against a strong Indian enemy; if they also saw such cooperation as a means of accommodation to the stronger power, they did not conceive of their actions as betrayal of any group to whom they owed loyalty. Indian history reveals innumerable tribal alliances, and changes of alliances for reasons not dissimilar to those that move supposedly more sophisticated nations."<sup>9</sup>

Black Seminoles appear under a multitude of names in the historical literature: Seminole Blacks, Black Seminole Indians, Seminole Freedmen, Negro-Indians, Seminole Negroes (pronounced *nay-gro*, as in Spanish), Seminole Negro Indians, Seminole Maroons, Afro-Seminoles, and sometimes just Seminoles— not to be confused with the nation with whom they were once allied in Florida and followed on the Trail of Tears to Indian Territory. In northern Mexico, where there is still a community in Nacimiento, Coahuila, they are known as Negros Mascogos.

"Around here," descendant Windy Goodloe told me when I visited Brackettville, "people just say Seminole."<sup>10</sup>

**Charles Emily Wilson was born on May 16, 1910**<sup>11</sup> in Seminole Camp, on the grounds of Fort Clark, a hike across the road from the tiny town of Brackettville. Her mother, Rebecca July Wilson, was the daughter of Sampson July, a Florida-born Black Seminole leader who—then still living—he would die on the day of Charles' eighth birthday—had been among the first of the U.S. Army Seminole Scouts. Charles' father, Billy Wilson, a Black Creek,<sup>12</sup> was then serving as a Seminole scout, as were several of her uncles. By this time, however, the Apache and Comanche, and other indigenous had been removed from Texas to reservations in New Mexico and Oklahoma. Only a dozen Seminole Scouts remained on the payroll at Fort Clark.<sup>13</sup>

Rebecca July Wilson had a grade school education, and she encouraged her daughters, Charles and Dorothy, to become the first of their people to go to college.

In the Black Seminole community, as Miss Charles recalled in an interview with Guinn, "we mostly spoke Gullah." A Creole of English, Spanish, French, Arabic, and a cornucopia of languages from the west coast of Africa, including Ibo, Mandinka, Yoruba, and Wolof,<sup>14</sup> Gullah originated in western Africa and developed further on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, among the enslaved people on the Southern plantations in the 18th century. Teachers in Brackettville's "colored" school, as it was then termed, disapproved of what locally was called "Seminole." "They said that was primitive talk," Miss Charles recalled in an interview with Guinn. "We were supposed to only speak English. But at home everyone spoke Gullah, which was a comfort to the old people and a way of retaining our heritage."<sup>15</sup>

At Huston-Tillotson College in Austin she majored in elementary education and

library science, then earned her masters in bilingual education (Spanish being the second language, which many Black Seminoles spoke fluently) from Prairie View A & M College in Houston.<sup>16</sup> This was the time of Jim Crow,<sup>17</sup> the system of legal codes introduced in the South in the late 19th century that enforced racial segregation; these colleges were for African Americans, those for whites being closed to Charles, and when she returned to Brackettville to teach, it was in the "colored" elementary school, George Washington Carver. A tiny school for a close-knit community. Texas Ranger Lee Young, a relative, and in the 1950s Miss Charles' student from first through fourth grades, recalls in his memoir, "Everybody was related to everybody, just about."<sup>18</sup> Miss Charles had studied bilingual education because she especially wanted to help the Mexican Black children who had come to Brackettville without any English (moving across the border was far easier than it is today). As she told one interviewer, "The other children would laugh at them and I wanted to hit them on the head."<sup>19</sup> The bilingual Young recalls that, in addition to "trying to drill reading, writing, and arithmetic into us," Miss Charles "educated us all about the scouts"<sup>20</sup>— a history ignored in all other Texas schools.<sup>21</sup> Miss Charles also served as school librarian and, for two years, as the principal of Brackettville's African American high school.<sup>22</sup> Miss Charles was in her middle age when, after the historic Supreme Court rulings of the 1950s, she became one of the first African American schoolteachers in Texas to teach to a desegregated classroom, in Brackettville High School. She retired in 1979,<sup>23</sup> having made a remarkable career as a borderlands Texas educator. But as an oral historian who made it her life's work to preserve the heritage of a cross-border maroon culture, a shinningly unique piece in the great mosaic of

African American and Native American and Military history, and a history vital to understanding the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, and vital also to understanding Florida, Oklahoma, northern Mexico, and broader Texas histories—and the Indian Wars—Miss Charles was mightily more than this.

**First, a word on the term "oral historian."** Usually this refers to an historian who interviews people about events they may have participated in, witnessed, or heard about, and about various subjects and people they recall. Less commonly, an "oral historian" is one, such as Miss Charles, who has assumed or been assigned the special task of preserving a heritage by formal, rehearsed recitations. As archaeologist Shirley Boteler Mock explains in her book, *Dreaming with the Ancestors: Black Seminole Women in Texas and Mexico*, this is memory "cultivated and systemized for recall, an inheritance".<sup>24</sup>

Learning and recounting these histories takes skill, heart, and stamina, but also, crucially, an audience willing to listen, to care, and to remember. Writes Bruce Jackson in *The Story Is True*, an insightful meditation on the art and meaning of telling stories, "The American West is a great canvas upon which myriads of stories are told."<sup>25</sup> But whose stories? How much of the real is left out of the imaginative, and how much does the imaginative influence what we believe to be real? Texas is no exception in that its textbooks, popular histories, entertainments and confections of boosterism have tended to align with its status quo. In Miss Charles' lifetime that status quo did not value such stories as the ones she had to tell. And Brackettville was no exception in Texas when, in the decades after World War II, commercial television transformed community and

family life. "Television about did our history in," Miss Charles told Guinn. "That, and those video-game things."<sup>26</sup>

Unrecorded in print or electronic media, most such oral narratives as Miss Charles', whether formally rehearsed or not, are fragile, homespun things that will die along with their tellers, or perhaps survive, in ever-sparser shreds of anecdote, another generation or two. Nonetheless, for there are examples from every corner of the globe, even a fabulously detailed and complex story, before being recorded, can be carried by memory and voice over vast swaths of time.<sup>27</sup>

Second, a word about Brackettville. This sunbaked, sleepy town some two dozen miles from the U.S.-Mexico border grew up with Fort Clark, which was founded in 1852 in what the Spanish called the *ciénega*, or wetlands created by the springs they named Las Moras after the mulberries that grew there. These springs had attracted hunters since time immemorial.

In the nineteenth century, the Comanche camped at Las Moras on their treks into and out of Chihuahua and Coahuila, where they wrought devastation, as elsewhere in Texas, with their raids for horses and human captives. Fort Clark was one in a cordon of U.S. Cavalry forts established to protect the Lower Military Road between San Antonio and El Paso, and the US-Mexico border, newly drawn at the Rio Grande after the US-Mexico War. With the outbreak of the U.S. Civil War in 1861, along with other forts in slave-state Texas, Fort Clark was occupied by the Confederate Army. But after Emancipation and Texas' restoration to the Union, in the Indian Wars of the 1870s, Fort Clark enjoyed its brightest moment in the historical spotlight. It was then home to the



elite Fourth Cavalry commanded by Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie, and to the Ninth and Tenth U.S. Cavalry of African-American "Buffalo Soldiers," and, under the command of "The Whirlwind," Lt. John Lapham Bullis, the Black Seminole scouts. Deactivated after World War II, the old fort is now a gated resort community known as Fort Clark Springs, the parade ground criss-crossed by golf carts, and the limestone guardhouse a museum.

Alongside the entrance drive up to the main gate, US-90 roars by: RVs, motorcycles, Border Patrol vehicles, and cargo trucks barreling west, in the direction of California, or east, towards San Antonio. In all directions stretch untold miles of rattlesnake-infested brushland and desert. Having crossed it in his inspection tour of the borderlands, General Philip Sheridan had reason to quip, "If I owned Texas and Hell, I would rent out Texas and live in Hell."<sup>28</sup> As they near the entrance to Fort Clark Springs on the south side of the highway, their radios and airconditioners blasting, most drivers keep a foot pressed to the gas pedal. But in the days when travelers rode in on a wagon, on a mule, or had to walk, they had a keen appreciation for Fort Clark, nestled in there among live oaks and pecan trees and lush grasses, rich with deer, fox, javelina, ducks, quail, even turkeys. An oasis.

As Willie Warrior told Guinn, "Some of the old ones who made it from Florida to Indian Territory to Mexico to Texas said this place reminded them of Florida."<sup>29</sup>

## II.

**Of the times before her grandfathers, Miss Charles told Guinn, "They all wanted to come south... To Florida."<sup>30</sup>**

Las Floridas, they called it then. Corn, beans, oranges, peanuts, pumpkins, rice, and sweet potatoes grew in abundance; there were many animals, fish, and skies filled with birds. For Africans enslaved on the British colonial plantations in Georgia and South Carolina in the late 17th century came the quickly-spread news of the chance that, if they could survive the attempt to get to Florida, by the Spanish King's Edict of 1693, they could live in freedom. The Spanish had been in Florida since the 16th century, and here and elsewhere in the Americas they made use of slave labor,<sup>31</sup> both indigenous and African; however, by the late 17th century, after catastrophic epidemics and enemy raids, the population across the entire peninsula had collapsed. (Hence the Spanish also invited Creeks, based in the region of present-day Georgia and Alabama, to settle in Florida, and a wave of immigrations ensued.) As enemies of the British—and the British were already shipping indigo, rice, tobacco and other slave-produced commodities out of nearby Charleston—the Spanish celebrated to see them lose valuable labor, and they welcomed the Africans' skills and what they could contribute to the defense of Spanish Florida.

Florida's Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, better known as Mose, founded in 1738, was the first free African American settlement in North America. Sited on the Atlantic coast two miles north of the Spanish colony's capital at St. Augustine, Fort Mose and its heavily armed Africans served as a stronghold against British attack. The Spanish considered Mose on par with an Indian mission town; its inhabitants had accepted

baptism and a Franciscan missionary.<sup>32</sup> Over the next decades increasing numbers of Africans escaped into Spanish Florida, both along the coasts and deep into the interior of the peninsula, many finding sanctuary with the Creek (some of which groups were eventually to become the Seminole).

But Florida was not, after all, the land of freedom. Over the 18th century, even as it devolved into a theater of raids and wars, the question of who ruled the peninsula, and the consequent status of runaway slaves and their children, was decided in palaces beyond the sea. By treaties, variously, Florida went to Great Britain, in exchange for Havana, Cuba, in 1763; two decades later, Florida found itself back under Spanish rule; then 1817-1818 brought the First Seminole War, in which U.S. General Andrew Jackson chased out the British and destroyed Seminole and Black Seminole villages. In 1819, the United States purchased Florida from the Spanish for five million dollars. Now Southern settlers and their plantations would move in. Always the slave-owners had vociferously objected to their property being able to escape into Florida. Slave raids into Florida stepped up. And what to do about the Indian villages and farms that were already there? The brutal answer was the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which authorized the U.S. President, then Andrew Jackson, to force the Seminole, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Creek —the so-called "Civilized Tribes" of the Southeast region— to resettle on prairie lands assigned to them in the distant west of Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma).<sup>33</sup> As for the Blacks, they were to return to slavery, whether with their Indian owners to Indian Territory; in Florida; or back where they came from in the South— or to whomever, wherever they might be sold.

In Florida the Seminole and the Black Seminoles stood together in a blood-soaked, seven-year guerilla war against the U.S. Army.<sup>34</sup> To the Seminole, some Black Seminoles were not only their slaves, but kin in some cases, and above all, allies.

Slaveowners considered Africans allying with Seminoles a grave threat. For the South, and the neighboring Caribbean islands, with their economies dependent on slave-labor-fueled commodity production, the possibility of the enslaved peoples' uprising was an ever-present dread. Fresh in collective memory were the massive revolt on French Saint-Domingue in the 1790s that resulted in an independent Haiti; Gabriel Prosser's conspiracy in Richmond in 1800; and the 1811 Louisiana uprising and march on New Orleans.<sup>35</sup> Nat Turner's revolt would rock Virginia in 1831.

For the United States, its Spanish purchase was a crucial piece in the transatlantic geopolitical game. Of Florida, wrote veteran officer John T. Sprague in his classic 1848 *The Origin, Progress and Conclusion of the Florida War*, "[i]t may yet be the stronghold of a powerful foe, who might increase his strength by introducing blacks from neighboring states, to join his standard."<sup>36</sup>

In the United States, though abolitionists such as Ohio Congressman Joshua Reed Giddings vociferously objected, the policy was to not call attention to slave unrest; better call this Florida conflict an "Indian War." But military officers were under no illusions that the U.S. Army had been sent to Florida for what was, in large part, as they called it, "a negro war." As U.S. Major General Thomas Sidney Jesup warned, "if it be not speedily put down, the south will feel the effects of it on their slave population before the end of the next season."<sup>37</sup>

"We were never slaves," Miss Charles told Mock.<sup>38</sup> In a way this was true because the Black Seminoles considered themselves free, whether self-liberated into Florida (and later, into Mexico) or born free, and the matrilineal Seminole, although claiming some Black Seminoles as slaves, oftentimes married Black Seminoles and recognized their children. Until after they were forcibly removed to Indian Territory, the Seminole generally did not practice chattel slavery as U.S. law and custom understood it.<sup>39</sup>

Indian enslavement, broadly defined, was an age-old practice throughout the Western Hemisphere, both centuries before and long after the arrival of the Europeans and Africans in the late fifteenth century. Well into the late nineteenth century,<sup>40</sup> those of European and/or other descent enslaved Indians—this suppressed history being the main focus of Andrés Reséndez's recent path-breaking work, *The Other Slavery*—but also, Indians enslaved other Indians, and some Indians enslaved non-Indians, whether white, black, or as with the Comanches, Mexicans of any one of a number of racial categories.

Kevin Mulroy explains in his book about the Black Seminoles, *Freedom on the Border*, that in Florida the Seminole "associated servitude with capture in warfare rather than an organized system of labor" and they "considered managing slaves beneath the dignity of a warrior and alien to their culture."<sup>41</sup> In Florida the Black Seminoles' relationship to the Seminole might more accurately be described as a kind of vassalage, in which Black Seminoles, some of whom were part-Seminole, some of whom were claimed as slaves and some not, paid tribute in provisions and each nation, living for the most part

separately, and heavily armed, provided protection to the other.<sup>42</sup> That the relationship between the Seminole and Black Seminoles was a complex one is reflected also in one staff officer's report to the U.S. Secretary of War: "The negroes are intelligent, speak the English language... They fear being made slaves under the American government and will omit nothing to increase or keep alive mistrust among the Indians, whom they in fact govern."<sup>43</sup>

"I know what my mother and father told me, which was what their parents told them, and so on back through the generations," Miss Charles told Guinn. "For the first part, the names don't matter much."<sup>44</sup>

But with the Second Seminole War, from 1835 to 1842, names emerge.

Osceola. Incandescently famous in his time. Born Billy Powell of mixed Scottish, English, African and Creek descent,<sup>45</sup> as Osceola he led the Seminole at the outbreak of the war. Seminole: a name derived from the Spanish *cimarrón*, or wild one.<sup>46</sup> George Catlin captured the young warrior's charisma in his 1838 portrait on stone, for a lithograph, in which two luscious ostrich plumes adorn his turban and, most unusually for a portrait of that century (and unlike the original oil that hangs in the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery in Washington DC), Osceola's eyes seem to dance, and he is smiling. We can surely believe Second Lieutenant Woodburne Potter that Osceola had "a peculiar and shrill war yell."<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately, it seems Catlin neglected to paint Osceola's bodyguard of some fifty Black Seminole warriors.<sup>48</sup>

Abraham.

"Abraham was our first great one,"<sup>49</sup> Willie Warrior told Guinn. A full-blooded African,<sup>50</sup> as a child Abraham was the slave of a Spanish doctor in Pensacola; he escaped to live among the Seminole. He married the widow of a Seminole chief, founded the Black Seminole town of Peliklakaha, near present-day Gainesville, and became a leader in the Second Seminole War, fighting alongside Osceola. Abraham spoke English and served the Seminole chiefs as their translator.<sup>51</sup> An engraving in abolitionist Ohio Congressman Joshua Reed Giddings' 1858 *The Exiles of Florida*—a landmark book in the lead-up to the U.S. Civil War and Emancipation—shows Abraham in Seminole dress.<sup>52</sup> More telling is the daguerrotype group portrait of the Seminole delegation to Washington in 1853, in which Abraham, beturbaned, exuding good humor, together with Seminole chief Fasatchee Emathla, looms above four other chiefs, all in their regalia and squeezed into a sofa. A drawing based on this group portrait was also published in the *Illustrated London News*.<sup>53</sup>

John Horse, or as he was known in Florida, Juan Cavallo, and in Mexico, Juan Caballo.

Born of an African mother and Seminole chief Charles Cavallo (Imotley),<sup>54</sup> he was a chief in the Second Seminole War. After defeat, and removal to Indian Territory, John Horse rebelled, and became the Moses of his people. "A genius," Willie Warrior called John Horse<sup>55</sup> and, argues scholar J.B. Bird, "the most successful black freedom fighter in U.S. history." John Horse spoke English, Gullah, Spanish, and Seminole. In Florida he translated for the Seminole chiefs in their dealings with the U.S. authorities, traveling to Washington DC twice.<sup>56</sup> He also translated for the US Army. He was six feet tall and,

writes Porter, had "a jaunty air that would fix your attention at sight."<sup>57</sup> John Horse's portrait appears in Giddings' *The Exiles of Florida*: he wears a turban with feathers, an open-necked but long-sleeved and skirted blouse, breeches with ribbons at the knees, and, tucked in his belt, a ferocious-looking dagger.<sup>58</sup> John Horse would have also carried a musket and, into battle, an axe.

U.S. authorities aimed to separate Black Seminoles from the Seminole, and return as many of the blacks as possible to those who claimed to have been their owners. Unclaimed blacks could be considered war plunder and sold. For Black Seminoles the prospect of hard labor on a plantation was horrifying, but more so that their families could be torn apart, husbands from wives, from parents, children, siblings, never to be seen again.

The Second Seminole War erupted in 1835, in tall grass and pinewoods near Great Wahoo Swamp when Seminoles and Black Seminoles massacred Major Francis L. Dade and 105—all but three—of his men.<sup>59</sup> Years later, when Black Seminoles had joined the U.S. Army in Texas as scouts, the Dade Massacre was still sharp in living memory. Some of the officers had known those who served in the Seminole Wars; Black Seminoles, so dangerous, and from exotic Florida, must have been a source of some fascination. Recalled Major General Zenas R. Bliss, "They never would tell us any of the particulars of the massacre."<sup>60</sup>

In the end, in Florida, the U.S. Army crushed the Seminoles. The Black Seminoles surrendered on Major General Thomas S. Jesup's promise of freedom in Indian Territory.



And so, following the Seminole, most of the Black Seminoles made the terrible journey of more than a thousand miles to this strange land west, beyond the Mississippi River.

Just as the Black Seminoles had feared, in Indian Territory, as encouraged by Creek Indian overlords and a scheming proslavery Bureau of Indian Affairs subagent, the Seminole practice of slavery quickly began changing into something very like that in the South. Slave hunters moved in, Creek and Cherokee among them.<sup>61</sup> John Horse's own sister lost two of her children to slavers.<sup>62</sup> Some army officers tried to protect the Black Seminoles, but formidable proslavery forces checked them. In 1848 the U.S. Attorney General ruled—that ruling smiled upon by U.S. President James K. Polk—that the Black Seminoles were slaves of the Seminole, thereby annulling previous assurances of freedom by the U.S. military in Florida. Soon such became the general degradation in Indian Territory that any child of any apparent African blood could be grabbed and sold for whiskey.<sup>63</sup>

In this awful year of 1848 in Indian Territory, the U.S. Civil War and Emancipation lay more than a dozen years in the mists of the future. Yet tectonic political and social shifts were underway. That same year the US-Mexican War concluded with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, imperiling the delicate political balance of free and slave-states, as Brobdingnabian tracts of Mexican territory came under the stars and stripes—including California. Perhaps the Black Seminoles in Indian Territory heard about that mad scramble on the news of gold discovered at Sutter's Mill. To give an idea of things, sensible fortune-seekers did not simply head west; they traveled to California out of New Orleans or ports on the eastern seaboard, avoiding the stupendous *terra*

*incognita* of the continent's interior by sailing an even more stupendous distance, rounding the horn of South America. In 1848 it would be yet another year until a U.S. Army wagon train (with a tag-along gaggle of goldrushers) trail-blazed the Lower Military Road from San Antonio to El Paso, what historian Chris Hale calls "an extraordinary feat"<sup>64</sup> through "some of the harshest terrain and most brutal conditions found anywhere in North America."<sup>65</sup> When this same landscape was traversed not long afterwards by Abbé Domenech, that sober French missionary priest reported gruesome scenes, among them, a panther attack on his horse and coming upon the bodies of seven scalped Mexicans. "Black vultures were bearing away in their beaks pieces of human flesh."<sup>66</sup>

In 1848 Texas celebrated its second year as the last slave state to join the United States. Texas had previously been an independent, albeit flat-broke, republic, and before that, a Mexican colony, many of its leading citizens land-hungry immigrants from the United States. In 1848 most Texan settlements, sparse and insecure, clung to its Gulf coast and inland around Austin and San Antonio. Texas was, in essence, the western frontier of the commodity-producing hinterland of the British and North Atlantic industrial revolution in cotton cloth production. As for slavery, Stephen F. Austin had put the stance of his colonists crudely, in a private letter: "Nothing is wanted but money, and negroes are necessary to make it."<sup>67</sup> But perhaps John "Rip" Ford, one of the most colorful figures in Texas' frontier history, and an unapologetic slaver, expressed the proslavery attitude most succinctly: "It was an institution sanctioned by the Bible, and it had all the authority of time to uphold it."<sup>68</sup>

But authority on the part of the Texas state government did not reach far in 1848. Whomever might affix some signatures and a wax seal to a piece of paper stating otherwise, large and, for the most part, water-starved regions of Texas remained, and would remain for many years to come, *Apachería* and *Comanchería*.

Where could the Black Seminoles go?

### III.

**"They chose Mexico," Miss Charles says, "because it was supposed to be free."**

She appears in the 1991 documentary film "Black Warriors of the Seminole,"<sup>69</sup> her voice soft, sweet, yet owning the clarity to command a roomful of children.

To be sure, Mexico had and continues to have its own racial distinctions and tensions, and Indian slavery was then a widespread practice, but when it came to chattel slavery and race, many of Mexico's laws and proclamations could not have been more radically in contrast to those of the antebellum South. For example, the 1821 Plan de Iguala, the founding document in Mexico's Independence from Spain, authored by "The Liberator," Agustín de Iturbide, a *criollo* of Spanish descent who would soon become Emperor, and his then-ally Vicente Guerrero, who was of both African and Indian descent, guaranteed that all inhabitants of what had formerly been New Spain, whether European, African, or Indian, would now, under the flag of Mexico, be citizens whose persons and property would be respected and protected.<sup>70</sup>

In Mexico chattel slavery had been outlawed and, in the carousel of nineteenth-century Mexican political upheavals, more than once: in 1829 by President Vicente Guerrero, only to be reversed with his overthrow; chattel slavery was outlawed again in 1837. And indeed, the uncertainty over slavery's legality was a core grievance in the rebellion by slave-owning colonists that resulted in Texas' independence from Mexico in 1836.

Desperate in Indian Territory, John Horse allied with Coacoochee, or Wild Cat, who was then, as Guinn describes him, "a sort of tribal prince" of the Seminole.<sup>71</sup> Chafing under the Creek and dissatisfied with Seminole leadership, Wild Cat wanted to found a new nation under himself as chief. In Mexico Wild Cat made a deal. If he could bring his people and the Black Seminoles, the men could serve the Mexican Army, scouting and fighting the Apache and other indigenous raiders and bandits, and their peoples would be given land.

Miss Charles' grandparents knew Wild Cat. John Horse was her grandfather Sampson July's brother-in-law.<sup>72</sup> She told Guinn, "These are the words told to me, no more and no less."<sup>73</sup>

"We want our land before we die," John Horse said to Wild Cat. "*Our* land. Not the right to live on yours."<sup>74</sup>

Mexico lay on the other side of nearly a thousand miles of slave-state Texas. It would be a hellish, very possibly catastrophic, journey of several months just to reach the Mexican border.

"My mother and daddy told me about it over and over," Miss Charles told Guinn. "I could never hear it enough."<sup>75</sup>

In the fall of 1849 John Horse and his some 200 Black Seminoles started from Indian Territory, following Wild Cat and his some 100 Seminoles. There would be little and sometimes no water, uncertain forage, limited ammunition for their muskets. They had nothing so luxurious as a prairie schooner; they piled their food, tools, and worldly goods onto their *carretas*, or two-wheeled carts. Among them were elderly, pregnant women, babies. They would cross hills, gullies, rivers, march through freezing rain and wind in a land of rattlesnakes, wolves, poisonous centipedes. A sky for buzzards. And when the horses died, as Willie Warrior told Guinn, many of the carts had to be pulled by the men.<sup>76</sup>

By a seeming miracle John Horse and his people escaped the slavers, but just before crossing the "Freedom River," the Rio Grande, into Piedras Negras, while the men were out hunting, Comanches descended on the camp. The Comanches could have sold any black they captured for 50 dollars a head<sup>77</sup>; instead, they massacred sixty-eight women, children, elderly, and several horses. (Undoubtedly, this bitter memory fueled the Black Seminoles scouts' ferocity when, under the command of Colonel Ranald S. MacKenzie, they helped render the Comanches' epic, final defeat in Palo Duro Canyon, 1874.) A second group of Black Seminoles that tried to follow the next summer was decimated by Creek slavers while still some fifty miles within Indian Territory;<sup>78</sup> a third convoy lost all its women and children, with the exception of one boy, in an Indian attack, presumably Comanche.<sup>79</sup>

The Comanche had migrated into the region from the distant northwest, arriving in the eighteenth century as mounted raiders and buffalo hunters. They clashed with the Apache—arrivals from the northwest of some three centuries earlier—with other indigenous, and with Spanish colonists, and Texians. These Comanche attacks of such violence—which often included mutilation of the dead, rapes, torture, including torture of children, and kidnapping women and children—had become endemic across northern Mexico since the early 1830s, and had transformed the region, to quote historian Brian DeLay, "into a vast theater of hatred, terror, and staggering loss for independent Indians and Mexicans alike. By the eve of the U.S. invasion [1846] these varied conflicts spanned all or parts of ten [Mexican] states. They had claimed thousands of Mexican and Indian lives, made tens of thousands more painful and often wretched, ruined northern Mexico's economy, stalled its demographic growth, and depopulated much of its countryside."<sup>80</sup> Hence, by the late 1840s, when the U.S. Army invaded northern Mexico, what they were really invading was, to quote Pekka Hämäläinen in *The Comanche Empire*, "the shatterbelt of Native American power."<sup>81</sup>

The Spanish had been warring, negotiating, placating, evangelizing, and warring again with the indigenous in this area since the sixteenth century. When Wild Cat's Seminoles and John Horse's Black Seminoles crossed from Eagle Pass, Texas into Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico in 1850, the Mexican Army was fighting the Apaches, Comanches, and others and—echoes of Spanish Florida—they warmly welcomed the help of these experienced fighters. As promised, the Mexican Army gave them food, seeds, tools, muskets and ammunition, some cattle, money, and what they most wanted,

their land. And all of them, Seminole and Black Seminoles, were granted Mexican citizenship.<sup>82</sup>

**"My people don't get happy endings,"<sup>83</sup> Miss Charles told Guinn.**

As Florida had been, now Mexico became a magnet for people escaping their enslavement; slaveowners thought it both right and good to put an end to that. Through the 1850s the slavers glommed especially thick onto Eagle Pass, just across the Rio Grande from Piedras Negras, and they did not respect any Mexican border. To protect the Black Seminoles, who were proving invaluable to the Mexican Army in its raids against the Apache, Comanche, and others, the Mexican authorities gave them new land some sixty-five miles further inland in Nacimiento. Water there proved scarce. And then Wild Cat died in a small pox epidemic in 1857. Thereafter, with ongoing raids by slavers, Indian attacks, the tumult of Mexican civil wars and the French invasion, John Horse and his people found themselves increasingly hard-pressed and miserable. The Mexican governor insisted they move hundreds of miles south, to Laguna de Parras. Apaches attacked their village. By 1866 John Horse was in his fifties. His second-in-command, Florida-born John Kibbetts,<sup>84</sup> had moved with some of his people back to Nacimiento—but now their neighbors were not Seminole but Kickapoo who had recently arrived from Indian Territory,<sup>85</sup> taking the land with better water and more fertile soil.<sup>86</sup>

By 1870 Mexico looked less appealing. Five years earlier, with the end of the Civil War, slavery had been abolished throughout the United States. Now some Black Seminoles thought it would be best to return to Indian Territory. Meanwhile, the U.S.

Army had turned its attentions west with the Indian Wars; in Texas its prime mandate was to clear the region of Apaches, Comanches, and outlaws and so secure the US-Mexico border and trade arteries to California. In Eagle Pass, the commander of Fort Duncan, Captain Frank Perry, knew what an asset experienced trackers and fighters such as the Black Seminoles could be. Captain Perry rode down to Nacimiento to negotiate with John Kibbetts.<sup>87</sup> (Porter tells us that John Horse did not participate in the negotiations, for he had gone to Mexico City to see about questions of their land and approval for their leaving Mexico. John Horse also came to Brackettville, although given his age, not as a scout himself. Porter also tells us that while in Mexico City, John Horse "served as interpreter for Major Zenas R. Bliss in his attempts to persuade the Kickapoo to relocate to the United States.")<sup>88</sup>

Apparently no one in the Black Seminole community, then or later, questioned whether or not there was land for the tribe as part of the agreement for the men to scout for the U.S. Army. Miss Charles told Guinn, "Whyever would they give up land they already had to come back to Texas, and then not have land of their own anymore? There is no question. Don't try to tell me there is. They wouldn't have come back to Texas otherwise."<sup>89</sup>

**In the documentary film "Black Warriors of the Seminole" Miss Charles** leads a group of descendants to the site of Seminole Camp by Las Moras Creek, once part of Fort Clark and since the 1970s the gated resort community of Fort Clark Springs. The camera lingers on the water, mirror for oak and pecan trees and a pellucid winter sky. Miss Charles, in dark



glasses, seems ghost-like, wrapped head and shoulders in a cream-colored shawl. They come to a sunny, shadow-framed patch of meadow. There is no trace of the house Miss Charles was born in— nor any of the thatched chink cottages, what they called *jacales*, as in Mexico. Nor of the gardens, the sheds, the cooking pits, the church.<sup>90</sup> In 1914 the U.S. Army, having cut the scouts from its rolls, evicted the scouts and their families. By official orders from Fort Clark headquarters, a named few members of the community were permitted to remain "until the older people pass away in the course of nature."<sup>91</sup>

In the time of her grandparents and parents, here by Las Moras Creek, with water for crops and animals, and with the meagre but steady pay of the scouts, it had been possible to eke out a living and care for their elderly. But with the Apache and Comanche removed to reservations, the army no longer had need for Indian scouts. But what to do about the people living on this land, their "reservation" they called it? After much buck-passing among various bureaucrats of various agencies, it was determined by a First Assistant Secretary of the Interior that the Black Seminoles were not Indians, but blacks, and therefore, if the U.S. military wanted to evict them from fort property, the U.S. government could do nothing for them.<sup>92</sup>

As for their treaty that promised them their land? There were stories, people who claimed to have seen, even touched the precious piece of paper. The ugly history of the US government breaking its treaties with Native American nations is well-known, however, those treaties remain on record in the National Archives.<sup>93</sup> It seems that what Captain Perry and John Kibbetts had made was a handshake deal that may have included some serious misunderstandings. Or perhaps there was some documentation? "I really

don't think there was a treaty," Miss Charles told Eric Emmerson Strong, the historian who has looked most carefully into this issue. "There's been too many people looking for it."<sup>94</sup>

From the scene in the meadow by Las Moras Creek, the documentary film suddenly cuts to Miss Charles seated on a sofa. She wears a rose-pink dress, her owl-like glasses. Her soft voice low, grim: "The army kept them, until it was peaceful enough. And after, they didn't need them any longer..." She shifts heavily, to the front of the sofa. "Well, they just put them off. They told them they had to leave." The film cuts now to a trio of golfers—one twists into an elegant swing, then, as the camera pulls back, the men take up their clubs and stroll briskly across the widening green—Miss Charles' voice continuing: "That was our land, and they shouldn't have taken it."

Years before, in another interview, Miss Charles said of the eviction from Seminole Camp by the U.S. Army, "I can still see those old ladies weeping, just weeping."<sup>95</sup> She was four years old. The soldiers had come with crowbars and sledgehammers.<sup>96</sup>

Times had been tough before the eviction. Some Black Seminoles had returned to Mexico, some to Oklahoma, some moved as far away as California. After 1914, Miss Charles' father, like many other men cast out of the oasis, found work as a ranch hand.

In Brackettville, "it was a good life," Miss Charles said in an interview cited by Mock. "We cooked Mexican foods as part of the tradition of Mexico. Toys? If we didn't have dolls they'd carve faces on sticks for us. We played marbles, baseball, made up

games, and used broken plates to play kitchen... I walked to school with my little lunch in a pack, cornbread and red tea. It was a long walk for a little girl."<sup>97</sup>

Her mother, Rebecca July Wilson, owned a café that served black and white patrons alike, many of them soldiers from Fort Clark.<sup>98</sup> Fort Clark expanded with World War I, and again with World War II. In 1944 12,000 troops were stationed at Fort Clark prior to deployment to Europe. But Fort Clark had always been a horse cavalry post, and in 1946, well into the age of armored tanks, jeeps, and trucks, it was inactivated.<sup>99</sup>

Sleepy as it was, in the 1950s Brackettville had a thunderblast of Hollywood when *The Alamo*, directed by and starring John Wayne as Davy Crockett, was filmed on an elaborate set built on a ranch just outside town.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Wilson determined to keep the history of the Black Seminoles and the scouts alive.

A photograph of Mrs. Wilson taken in 1955 appears in Mock's *Dreaming with the Ancestors*. Her hair snow-white and her handsome face, though weary, radiating strength, she holds up a set of photographs of the scouts, including, according to the caption, one of her father, Sampson July.<sup>100</sup> It is difficult to make out these photographs within a photograph, impossible to know which one is Sampson July: A pair of men in uniform; a pair of men on their mounts; another, badly faded, of a man in a hat, perhaps on a horse?

Sampson July, born in Florida, who lived through the Second Seminole War; and then lived through the Trail of Tears to Indian Territory; the exodus to Mexico; who

fought in *la guerra contra los bárbaros*; who served with the scouts in the Indian Wars,<sup>101</sup> and, in his old age, would see his family's removal from Seminole Camp.

But back to Seminole Camp. In Kenneth Porter's *The Black Seminoles*, courtesy of Miss Charles, we find another photograph of Sampson July, in front of his *jacal*, together with several other family members including his son, standing at attention, Sergeant Ben July. Sampson July is elderly now, we know, but planted like a pharaoh on his chair, facing the camera with shoulders square, even in this small, blurry image he projects an unusual martial power.

Seminole Camp is no more, but since 1872 the Black Seminoles have kept their cemetery. John Horse is not there; he died on another trip to Mexico City in 1883.<sup>102</sup> But Sampson July is buried here, and John Kibbetts, and many other scouts, including the Congressional Medal of Honor recipients— Adam Payne, John Ward, Isaac Payne, and Pompey Factor—each of these four graves enclosed with its own pearl-white fence. Generations of Daniels, Factors, Goodloes, Julys, Perrymans, Warriors, and others. And then there are the graves of Miss Charles' father, Billy Wilson; her mother, Rebecca July Wilson; a brother and a sister; and herself.

This cemetery has focal importance for the Black Seminole community. It was in the 1950s that Miss Charles and Deacon "Uncle" Tony Wilson started the Seminole Indian Scouts Cemetery Association (SISCA), to care for the graves.<sup>103</sup> After her mother's death in 1962, Miss Charles took on leading the annual Seminole Days celebration<sup>104</sup> with its cakewalks, dancing, sing-alongs, storytelling and speeches about the history of the Black Seminoles and the scouts.<sup>105</sup> She started the parade in 1985.<sup>106</sup> Under a new generation,

SISCA continues, caring for the graves; a museum housed in the historic George Washington Carver School where Miss Charles taught so many generations of students; organizing Seminole Days on the third weekend of September; and on the third weekend of June, Juneteenth, the commemoration of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of June 19, 1863, first celebrated in Texas on June 19, 1866.

"Seminole Indian" in the name Seminole Indian Scouts Cemetery Association is sometimes confusing. Officially the U.S. Army called the scouts "Seminole Negro Indian scouts," but informally they were often referred to as "Seminole Scouts." Miss Charles' student, tribal historian Willie Warrior, insisted to Guinn that it should be "The Black Seminole Indian Scouts Association."<sup>107</sup> There is now a Seminole Negro Indian Scouts Museum. And the official Seminole Indian Scouts Cemetery Association webpage, [www.seminolecemeteryassociation.com](http://www.seminolecemeteryassociation.com)<sup>108</sup> features a navy-blue and gold flag (these the colors of the Buffalo Soldiers) that reads "Seminole Negro Indian Scout Association."

The official website also features a photograph of Miss Charles, seated primly on her chair, in her pearls and a Texas sky-blue blouse, and underneath, what she told Guinn and he included in his book, *Our Land Before We Die*: "There is great power in one. This is what I always want, that one more person should know our story."<sup>109</sup>

**"It is our freedom that makes us different," Miss Charles said,** her words the epigraph of Kenneth Porter's masterwork, *The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-Seeking People*.<sup>110</sup> "In all our travels," said Miss Charles, "we have never lost an awareness of our identity and a pride in our freedom."

Four years short of having lived the span of a century, on July 24, 2006, Miss Charles Emily Wilson breathed her last. She never published a book herself, but Miss Charles is quoted in, thanked, mentioned, and/or her picture appears in almost everything ever published on the Black Seminoles. She gave her time open-handedly, telling the history of the Black Seminoles not only to her pupils— among them, Willie Warrior and Lee Young and so many members of SISCA— but to many others in Brackettville, and to journalists and scholars from afar. Descendant Windy Goodloe remembered, "she could and would sit and talk to anyone. She never rushed. The most important thing about her is that she was selfless. She worked tirelessly to promote the association and the history of the scouts."<sup>111</sup>

When Miss Charles was in her eighties she traveled to Washington DC for the 1992 Smithsonian Festival of Folk Life, which recognized the Black Seminoles. This was a crowning event for her, and in her formal statement she said, "We have given our loyalty and our skill to our country, and we have contributed to its history."<sup>112</sup>

# # #

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<sup>1</sup> Jeff Guinn, *Our Land Before We Die: The Proud Story of the Seminole Negro* (Jeremy P. Tarcher / Penguin, 2002), p. 352.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., *Africans and Seminoles: From Removal to Emancipation* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1977), p.3.

See also Kenneth W. Porter, *The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-Seeking People*, revised and edited by Alcione M. Amos and Thomas P. Setter (University Press of Florida, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Doug Sivad < [https://www.instagram.com/p/BH0\\_ftmhZCX/](https://www.instagram.com/p/BH0_ftmhZCX/) > July 14, 2016; retrieved October 11, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Guinn, p. 14 and p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> Zenas Randall Bliss, *The Reminiscences of Major General Zenas R. Bliss, 1854-1876: From the Texas Frontier to the Civil War and Back Again*, edited by Thomas T. Smith, Jerry D. Thompson, Robert Wooster, and Ben E. Pingnot (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2007), p. 431.

<sup>6</sup> Porter, p. 214.

<sup>7</sup> See Guinn, pp. 261-262 and pp. 269-271.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers: Indian Scouts and Auxiliaries with the United States Army, 1860-90* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982).

<sup>9</sup> Dunlay, p.5.

<sup>10</sup> Interview, Brackettville, October 21, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> As recorded on her tombstone in the Seminole Indian Scouts Cemetery, Brackettville, Texas.

<sup>12</sup> Shirley Boteler Mock, *Dreaming with the Ancestors: Black Seminole Women in Texas and Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), p. 72.

<sup>13</sup> Mock, p. 144.

<sup>14</sup> According to Lorenzo Dow Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (University of South Carolina Press, 2002), p.2, these are "Wolof, Malinke, Mandinka, Bambara, Fula, Mende, Vai, Twim Fante, Gām, Ewe, Fon, Yoruba, Bini, Hausa, Ibo, Ibido, Efik, Kongo, Umbundu, Kimbundu, and a few others." Originally published by University of Chicago Press in 1949, Turner's studies of Gullah speakers in the 1930s in the Sea Islands off Georgia and South Carolina is considered a landmark book in linguistic studies. Among his other degrees, Turner earned his PhD from the University of Chicago in 1926; he became the first full-time African American professor at Roosevelt College in 1946 and was a pioneer of African American Studies. See *University of Chicago Magazine*, Jason Kelly, "Legacy: Lorenzo Dow Turner, PhD '26," Nov-Dec, 2010, online edition, < <http://magazine.uchicago.edu/1012/features/legacy.shtml> > Retrieved June 25, 2019.

<sup>15</sup> Guinn, pp. 340-341.

<sup>16</sup> Mock, pp.148-149; Guinn, pp. 343-344 and p. 338: "Most of the tribe spoke fluent Spanish."

<sup>17</sup> "Jim Crow" refers to the period from 1877-1965 when racial segregation laws were in effect in the South. The name is taken from a minstrel show of the 19th century, *Jump Jim Crow*, which ridiculed African Americans.

<sup>18</sup> Lee Young, and Nita Thurman. *Lee Young: Memoirs of a Black Seminole Texas Ranger* (McKinney, Texas: Old Alton Press, 2013), p. 46.

<sup>19</sup> Mock, p. 150.

<sup>20</sup> Young, p. 36.

<sup>21</sup> Guinn, pp

<sup>22</sup> Mock, p, 151.

<sup>23</sup> Mock, p. 154.

<sup>24</sup> Mock, p. 17.

<sup>25</sup> Bruce Jackson, *The Story Is True: The Art and Meaning of Telling Stories* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), p. 162.

<sup>26</sup> Guinn, p. 349.

<sup>27</sup> One example, roughly contemporary to Miss Charles and her grandparents, is recounted in the book *Chevato: The Story of the Apache Warrior Who Captured Herman Lehmann* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007) in which, with Nancy McGown Minor, oral historian William Chebahtah tells the story of his grandfather, a Lipan Apache from Mexico, which his father and then he, in turn, had been carefully trained to memorize, according to tribal tradition.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Andrew Hutton, *Phil Sheridan and His Army* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), p.22.

<sup>29</sup> Guinn, p. 96.

<sup>30</sup> Guinn, p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> See Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2016), p. 42, and Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), chapter 7, "Slaves and the Slave Trade," pp. 157-182.

<sup>32</sup> Jane Landers, "Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose: A Free Black Town in Spanish Colonial Florida," *The American Historical Review*, vol. 95, issue 1, February 1990, p.18.

<sup>33</sup> In addition to the Seminole, these were the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Creek.

<sup>34</sup> See Joe Knetsch, *Florida's Seminole Wars 1817-1858* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2013).

<sup>35</sup> See Daniel Rasmussen, *Uprising: The Untold Story of America's Largest Slave Revolt* (New York: Harper Collins, 2011). This violent episode was also known as the German Coast Uprising, after the German Coast on the east side of the Mississippi River, just north of New Orleans.

<sup>36</sup> John T. Sprague, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1848), p. 310.

<sup>37</sup> Kevin Mulroy, *Freedom on the Border: The Seminole Maroons in Florida, the Indian Territory, Coahuila, and Texas* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1993), p. 29. See also J.B. Bird's website "Rebellion: John Horse and the Black Seminoles, the First Black Rebels to American Slavery" < <http://www.johnhorse.com/toolkit/quotations.htm> > retrieved October 9, 2019, and J.B. Bird, "The Buried History of the Rebellion June 5, 2005 <[www.johnhorse.com/highlights/essays/buried.htm](http://www.johnhorse.com/highlights/essays/buried.htm)> Retrieved October 16, 2019.



<sup>38</sup> Mock, p.4.

<sup>39</sup> Porter, p.6.

<sup>40</sup> Reséndez, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Mulroy, p.8.

<sup>42</sup> Mulroy, pp. 17-18.

<sup>43</sup> Guinn, p. 50. Seminole historian Susan A. Miller, in *Coacoochee's Bones: A Seminole Saga* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), disputes this characterization, however: "Africans carried messages, collected intelligence, and translated, but with rare and noteworthy exceptions, they do not appear to have advised Seminole officials." p.66.

<sup>44</sup> Guinn, p.9.

<sup>45</sup> Thom Hatch, *Osceola and the Great Seminole War* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2012), pp. 8-9.

<sup>46</sup> Bruce Edward Twyman, *The Black Seminole Legacy and North American Politics, 1693-1845* (Washington DC: Howard University Press, 1999), p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Woodburne Potter, *The War in Florida: Being an Exposition of its Causes, and an Accurate History of the Campaigns of Generals Clinch, Gaines, and Scott* (Baltimore: Lewis and Coleman, 1836), p.111.

<sup>48</sup> William Loren Katz, *Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage*, Twenty-fifth Anniversary edition (Athenium, 2012), p.3.

<sup>49</sup> Guinn, p. 48.

<sup>50</sup> Guinn, p. 48.

<sup>51</sup> Anthony E. Dixon, *Florida's Negro War: Black Seminoles and the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842* (Tallahassee, AHRA, 2014), pp.84-98.

<sup>52</sup> See also Joshua R. Giddings, *The Exiles of Florida: The Crimes Committed by Our Government Against the Maroons, Who Fled from South Carolina and Other States, Seeking Protection Under Spanish Law* (Columbus: Follet, Foster and Company, 1858).

<sup>53</sup> *Enduring Beauty: Seminole Art & Culture From the Collection of I.S.K. Reeves and Sara*

W. Reeves, The Orlando Museum of Art, Catalog for the exhibition, March 22 - July 8, 2018

<[https://omart.org/images/uploads/pdfs/Enduring\\_Beauty\\_Edited\\_Catalogue\\_Complete\\_Final.pdf](https://omart.org/images/uploads/pdfs/Enduring_Beauty_Edited_Catalogue_Complete_Final.pdf)>

Retrieved July 8, 2019. This daguerrotype can also be seen on Doug Sivad's Instagram, @dougsvadsbsimt < <https://www.instagram.com/p/BTh-7UhgY4f/> > Retrieved October 11, 2019. The adapted drawing can be seen on J.B. Bird's < [www.johnhorse.com](http://www.johnhorse.com) >

<sup>54</sup> Dixon, pp. 110-126.

<sup>55</sup> Guinn, p. 53.

<sup>56</sup> Porter pp. 112-113; 116-118; 185-186.

<sup>57</sup> Porter, p. 37.

<sup>58</sup> Giddings, after p. 32, entitled "Gopher John, Seminole Interpreter." A gopher was a terrapin. A U.S. Army officer gave John Horse the nickname after he sold the officer the same terrapin several times.

<sup>59</sup> Guinn, pp.66-68; Knetsch pp. 71-72; Porter pp. 41-42.

<sup>60</sup> See Bliss.

<sup>61</sup> Littlefield, p. 59.

<sup>62</sup> Littlefield, pp.108-109.

<sup>63</sup> Littlefield, p. 112.

<sup>64</sup> Chris Hale, "The U.S. Army Finds a Way: The Great Wagon Train of 1849," *Journal of Big Bend Studies*, vol. 30, 2018, p.41.

<sup>65</sup> Hale, p.40.

<sup>66</sup> Emmanuel Domenech, *Missionary Adventures in Texas and Mexico: A Personal Narrative of Six Years' Sojourn in those Regions* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858), p. 29; p.72.

<sup>67</sup> Andrew J. Torget, *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands, 1800-1850* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), p. 55.

<sup>68</sup> John Salmon Ford, edited by Stephen B. Oates, *Rip Ford's Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963), p.313. See also Porter p. 140.

<sup>69</sup> Ironwood/PBS, 1991.

<sup>70</sup> See William Beezley and Michael C. Meyer, *The Oxford History of Mexico* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2010). See also my prologue to Luis Reed Torres' *El Libertador sin patria* (Publicaciones Doble EE, 2017), available online at < <http://www.cmmayo.com/ARTICLES/Prologue-to-El-Libertador-sin-patria.html> >

<sup>71</sup> Guinn, p.64.

<sup>72</sup> Guinn, p.133; Porter, after p.134, twenty-fourth paragraph.

<sup>73</sup> Guinn, p.134.

<sup>74</sup> Guinn, p.135.

<sup>75</sup> Guinn, p.139.

<sup>76</sup> Guinn, p.142.

<sup>77</sup> Mock, p. 55.

<sup>78</sup> Littlefield, p. 153.

<sup>79</sup> Porter, pp. 133-134.

<sup>80</sup> Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. xv. See also Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University, 2008).

<sup>81</sup> Hämäläinen, pp. 234-235.

<sup>82</sup> Guinn, pp.190-191; Mock, p.73.

<sup>83</sup> Guinn, p. 174.

<sup>84</sup> "'Kibbetts' is how Miss Charles said his name should be spelled." Guinn, p. 225.

<sup>85</sup> Porter pp. 169-171.

<sup>86</sup> Porter, p. 176.

<sup>87</sup> Porter, p. 176.

<sup>88</sup> Porter, pp. 177-178.

<sup>89</sup> Guinn, p. 238.

<sup>90</sup> The church, Mount Gilead Baptist, was subsequently moved to the town of Brackettville. Mulroy, p. 101.

<sup>91</sup> Orders Disbanding the Seminole Negro Indian Scouts and Removal of Some Families from the Fort Clark Military Reservation, Headquarters, 14th U.S., Cavalry Regiment, Fort Clark, Texas, July 10, 1914. < <http://lestweforget.hamptonu.edu> > Retrieved November 5, 2019.

<sup>92</sup> Mulroy, pp.132-169.

<sup>93</sup> < [www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/treaties](http://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/treaties) > Retrieved November 24, 2019.

<sup>94</sup> Eric Emmerson Strong, "The Lost Treaty of the Black Seminoles," in Bruce A. Glasrud and Paul H. Carlson with Tai D. Kriedler, *Slavery to Integration: Black Americans in West Texas* (Abilene: State House Press, 2007).

<sup>95</sup> Porter, p. 214. From an interview conducted in 1992, presumably by the editors.

<sup>96</sup> Guinn, pp. 331-332.

<sup>97</sup> Mock, p. 146.

<sup>98</sup> B. Ann Rodgers and Linda Schott, "My Mother was a Mover: African American Women in Brackettville, Texas, 1914-1964" in Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage, eds, *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), p. 589.

<sup>99</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, Ben E. Pingent, "Fort Clark," < <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbf10> > Retrieved November 05, 2019.

<sup>100</sup> Mock, p. 9.

<sup>101</sup> Seminole Negro Scouts Detachment, Muster Roll 1870-1914 < <https://www.seminolecemeteryassociation.com/seminole-negro-indian-scouts.html> > Retrieved November 5, 2019.

102 Brown, p. 193: "In 1883 Juan Caballo went to Mexico City to appeal his case for land for his people to President Manuel González. He mysteriously disappeared during this trip and was never found. Months later one of John's sons, Joe Coon, also a Seminole Scout, searched for some trace of him, but he was never found."

103 Charles Emily Wilson, "The History of the Seminole Scout Cemetery" < <http://www.lestweforget.hamptonu.edu> > Retrieved November 5, 2019.

104 Rodgers and Schott, p. 583.

105 Guinn, p. 358.

106 Guinn, pp. 351-352.

107 Guinn, p.242.

108 <[www.seminolecemeteryassociation.com](http://www.seminolecemeteryassociation.com)> Retrieved October 9, 2019.

109 Guinn, p. 366.

110 Kenneth W. Porter died in 1981, leaving the manuscript of some 700 pages that he had been working on since 1947. It was edited for publication by the University Press of Florida by Alcione M. Amos and Thomas P. Senter in 1996.

111 Email to author, October 29, 2015.

112 Her statement as printed in the program is online at < [https://folklife-media.si.edu/docs/festival/program-book-articles/FESTBK1992\\_38.pdf](https://folklife-media.si.edu/docs/festival/program-book-articles/FESTBK1992_38.pdf) > Retrieved October 20, 2019.