

# THE SEMINOLES ONE CENTURY AGO: Seminole Indians of Florida

by Clay MacCauley

An excerpt from: *"The Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1883 - '84"* by J.W. Powell, Director

Photos: Courtesy Smithsonian Institute

## SOCIETY

As I now direct attention to the Florida Seminole in their relations with one another, I shall first treat of that relationship which lies at the foundation of society, marriage or its equivalent, the result of which is a body of people more or less remotely connected with one another and designated by the term "kindred." This is shown either in the narrow limits of what may be named the family or in the larger bounds of what is called the clan or gens. I attempted to get full insight into the system of relationships in which Seminole kinship is embodied, and, while my efforts were not followed by an altogether satisfactory result, I saw enough to enable me to say that the Seminole relationships are essentially those of what we may call their "mother tribe," the Creek. The Florida Seminole are a people containing, to some extent, the posterity of tribes diverse from the Creek in language and in social and political organization; but so strong has the Creek influence been in their development that the Creek language, Creek customs, and Creek regulations have been the guiding forces in their history, forces by which, in fact, the characteristics of the other peoples have yielded, have been practically obliterated.

I have made a careful comparison of the terms of Seminole relationship I obtained with those of the Creek Indians, embodied in Dr. L. H. Morgan's *Consanguinity and Affinity of the American Indians*,

and I find that, as far as I was able to go, they are the same, allowing for the natural differences of pronunciation of the two peoples. The only seeming difference of relationships lies in the names applied to some of the lineal descendants, descriptive instead of classificatory names being used.

I have said, "as far as I was able to go." I found, for example, that beyond the second collateral line among consanguineous kindred my interpreter would answer my question only by some such answer as "I don't know" or "No Kin," and that, beyond the first collateral line of kindred by marriage, except for a very few relationships, I could obtain no answer.

## THE SEMINOLE FAMILY

The family consists of the husband, one or more wives, and their children, I do not know what limit tribal law places to the number of wives the Florida Indian may have, but certainly he may possess two. There are several Seminole families in which duogamy exists.

## COURTSHIP

I learned the following facts concerning the formation of a family: A young warrior, at the age of twenty or less, sees an Indian maiden of about sixteen years, and

by a natural impulse desires to make her his wife. What follows? He calls his immediate relatives to a council and tells them of his wish. If the damsel is not a member of the lover's own gens and if no other impediment stands in the way of the proposed alliance, they select, from their own number, some who, at an appropriate time, go to the maiden's kindred and tell them that they desire the maid to receive their kinsman as her husband. The girl's relatives then consider the question. If they decide in favor of the union, they interrogate the prospective bride as to her disposition towards the young man. If she also is willing, news of the double consent is conveyed through the relatives, on both sides, to the prospective husband. From that moment there is a gentle excitement in both households. The female relatives of the young man take to the house of the betrothed's mother a blanket or a large piece of cotton cloth and a bed canopy - in other words, the furnishings of a new bed. Thereupon there is returned thence to the young man a wedding costume, consisting of a newly made shirt.

## MARRIAGE

Arrangements for the marriage being thus completed, the marriage takes place by the very informal ceremony of the going of the bridegroom, at sunset of an appointed day, to the home of his mother-in-law, where he is received by his

bride. From that time he is her husband. The next day, husband and wife appear together in the camp, and are thenceforth recognized as a wedded pair. After the marriage, through what is the equivalent of the white man's honeymoon, and often for a much longer period, the new couple remain at the home of the mother-in-law. It is the man and not the woman among these Indians who leaves father and mother and cleaves unto the mate. After a time, especially as the family increases, the wedded pair build one or more houses for independent housekeeping, either at the camp of the wife's mother or elsewhere, excepting among the husband's relatives.

### DIVORCE

The home may continue until death breaks it up. Sometimes, however, it occurs that most hopeful matrimonial beginnings, among the Florida Seminole, as elsewhere, end in disappointment and ruin. How divorce is accomplished I could not learn. I pressed the question upon Ko-nip-ha-tco, but his answer was, "Me don't know; Indian no tell me much." All the light I obtained upon the subject comes from Billy's first reply, "He left her." In fact desertion seems to be the only ceremony accompanying a divorce. The husband, no longer satisfied with his wife, leaves her; she returns to her family, and the matter is ended.

### FAMILY LIFE

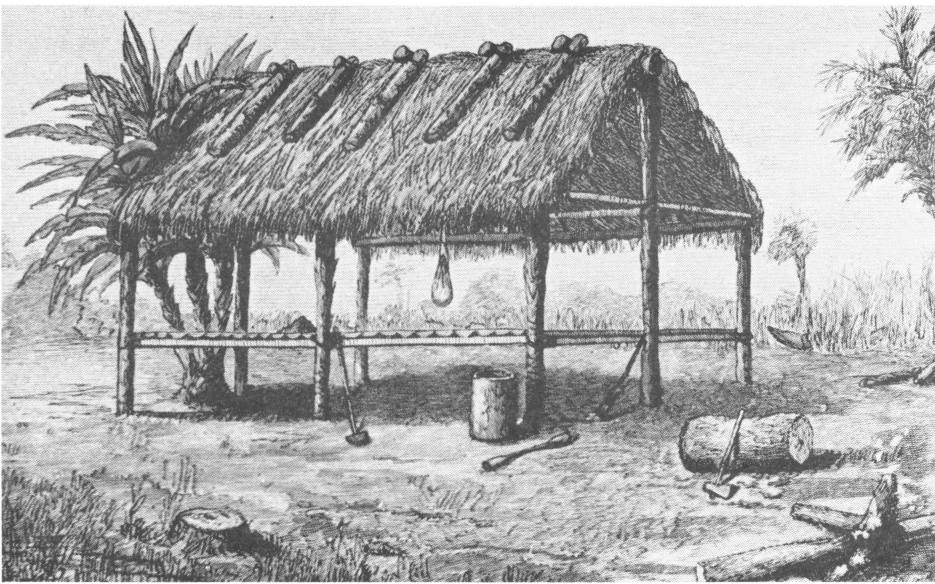
There is no embarrassment growing out of problems respecting the woman's future support, the division of property, or the adjustment of claims for the possession of the children. The independent self-support of every adult, healthy Indian, female as well as male, and the gentile relationship, which is more wide reaching and authoritative than that of marriage, have already disposed of these questions, which are usually so perplexing for the white man. So far as personal maintenance is concerned, a woman is, as a rule, just as well off without a husband as with one. What is hers, in the shape of property, remains her own whether she is married or not. In fact, marriage among Indians seems to be but the natural mating of the sexes, to cease at the option of either of the interested parties. Although I do not know that the wife may lawfully desert her husband, as well as the husband his wife, from some facts learned I think it probable that she may.



"Manner of Wearing Hair"

### CHILDBIRTH

According to information received a prospective mother, as the hour of her confinement approaches, selects a place for the birth of her child not far from the main house of the family, and there, with some friends, builds a small lodge, covering the top and sides of the structure generally with the large leaves of the cabbage palmetto. To this secluded place the woman, with some elderly female relatives, goes at the time the child is to be born, and there, in a sitting posture, her hands grasping a strong stick driven into the ground before her, she is delivered of her babe, which is received and cared for by her companions. Rarely is the Indian mother's labor difficult or followed by a prolonged sickness. Usually she returns to her home with the little one within four days after its birth.



"Seminole Dwelling"

## INFANCY

The baby, well into the world, learns very quickly that he is to make his own way through it as best he may. His mother is prompt to nourish him and solicitous in her care for him if he falls ill, but, as far as possible, she goes her own way and leaves the little fellow to go his. From the first she gives her child the perfectly free use of his body and, within a limited area, of the campground. She does not bundle him into a motionless thing or bind him helplessly on a board; on the contrary, she does not trouble her child even with clothing. The Florida Indian baby, when very young, spends his time, naked, in a hammock, or on a deer skin, or on the warm earth.

The Seminole mother, I was informed, is not in the habit of soothing her baby with song. Nevertheless, sometimes one may hear her or an old grandam crooning a monotonous refrain as she crouches on the ground beside the swinging hammock of a baby. I heard one of these refrains, and, as nearly I could catch it, it ran thus.

*No-wut-toa. No-wut-toa.*

The hammock was swung in time

with the song. The singing was slow in movement and nasal in quality. The last note was unmusical and uttered quite staccato.

There are times, to be sure, when the Seminole mother carries her baby. He is not always left to his pleasure on the ground or in a hammock. When there is no little sister or old grandmother to look after the helpless creature and the mother is forced to go to any distance from her house or lodge, she takes him with her. This she does, usually, by setting him astride one of her hips and holding him there. If she wishes to have both her arms free, however, she puts the baby into the center of a piece of cotton cloth, ties opposite corners of the cloth together, and slings her burden over her shoulders and upon her back, where, with his brown legs astride his mother's hips, the infant rides, generally with much satisfaction. I remember seeing, one day, one jolly little fellow, lolling and rollicking on his mother's back, kicking her and tugging away at the strings of beads which hung temptingly between her shoulders, while the mother, hand-free, bore on one shoulder a log, which, a moment afterwards, still keeping

her baby on her back as she did so, she chopped into small wood for the camp fire.

## CHILDHOOD

But just as soon as the Seminole baby has gained sufficient strength to toddle he learns that the more he can do for himself and the more he can contribute to the general domestic welfare the better he will get along in life. No small amount of the labor in a Seminole household is done by children, even as young as four years of age. They can stir the soup while it is boiling; they can aid in kneading the dough for bread; they can wash the "Koonti" root, and even pound it; they can watch and replenish the fire; they contribute in this and many other small ways to the necessary work of the home. I am not to be understood, of course, as saying that the little Seminole's life is one of severe labor. He has plenty of time for games and play of all kinds, and of these I shall hereafter speak. Yet, as soon as he is able to play, he finds that with his play he must mix work in considerable measure.

## ARCHITECTURE

### Seminole Dwellings — I-ful-lo-ha-tco's House

Now that we have seen the Seminole family formed, let us look at its home. The Florida Indians are not nomads. They have fixed habitations: settlements in well defined districts, permanent camps, houses or wigwams which remain from year to year the abiding places of their families, and gardens and fields which for indefinite periods are used by the same owners. There are times during the year when parties gather for temporary camps for a few weeks. Now perhaps they gather upon some rich Koonti ground, that they may dig an extra quantity of this root and make flour from it; now, that they may have a sirup making festival, they go to some fertile sugar cane hammock; or again, that they may have a hunt, they camp where a certain kind of game has been discovered in abundance. And they all, as a rule, go to a central point once a year and share there their great feast, the Green Corn Dance. Besides as I was told, these Indians are



frequent visitors to one another, acting in turn as guests and hosts for a few days at a time. But it is the fact, nevertheless, that for much the greater part of the year the Seminole families are at their homes, occupying houses, surrounded by many comforts and living a life of routine industry.

As one Seminole home is, with but few unimportant differences, like nearly all the others, we can get a good idea of what it is by describing here the first one I visited, that of I-ful-lo-ha-tco, or "Charlie Osceola," in the "Bad Country," on the edge of the Big Cypress Swamp.

When my guide pointed out to me the locality where "Charlie" lives, I could see nothing but a wide saw grass marsh surrounding a small island. The island seemed covered with a dense growth of palmetto and other trees and tangled shrubbery, with a few banana plants rising among them. No sign of human habitation was visible. This invisibility of a Seminole's house from the vicinity may be taken as a marked characteristic of his home. If possible, he hides his house, placing it on an island and in a jungle. As we neared the hammock we found that approach to it was difficult. On horseback there was no trouble in getting through the water and the annoying saw grass, but I found it difficult to reach the island with my vehicle, which was loaded with our provisions and myself. On the shore of "Charlie's" island is a piece of rich land of probably two acres in extent. At length I landed, and soon, to my surprise, entered a small, neat clearing, around which were built three houses, excellent of their kind, and one insignificant structure. Beyond these, well fenced with palmetto logs, lay a small garden. No one of the entire household — father, mother and child — was at home. Where they had gone we did not learn until later. We found them next day at a sirup making at "Old Tommy's" field, six miles away. Having, in the absence of the owner, a free range of the camp, I busied myself in noting what had been left in it and what were its peculiarities.

Among the first things I picked up was a "cow's horn."

This, my guide informed me, was used in calling from camp to camp. Mounting a pile of logs, "Billy" tried with it to summon "Charlie," thinking he might be somewhere near. Meanwhile I continued my search. I noticed some terrapin shells lying on a platform in one of the houses, the breast shell pierced with two holes. "Wear them at Green Corn Dance," said "Billy." I caught sight of some dressed buckskins lying on a rafter of a house and an old fashioned rifle, with powder horn and shot flask. I also

saw a hoe; a deep iron pot; a mortar, made from a live oak(?) log, probably fifteen inches in diameter and twenty-four in height, and beside it a pestle, made from mastic wood, perhaps four feet and a half in length.

A bag of corn hung from a rafter, and near it a sack of clothing, which I did not examine. A skirt, gayly ornamented, hung there also. There were several basketware sieves, evidently hand made, and various bottles lying around the place. I did not search among the things laid away on the rafters under the roof. A sow, with several pigs, lay contentedly under the platform of one of the houses. And near by, in the saw-grass, was moored a cypress "dug-out," about fifteen feet long, pointed at bow and stern.

Dwellings throughout the Seminole district are practically uniform in construction. With but slight variations, the accompanying sketch of I-ful-lo-ha-tco's main dwelling shows what style of architecture prevails in the Florida Everglades.

This house is approximately 16 by 9 feet in ground measurement, made almost altogether, if not wholly, of materials taken from the palmetto tree. It is actually but a platform elevated about three feet from the ground and covered with a palmetto thatched roof, the roof being not more than 12 feet above the ground at the ridge pole, or 7 at the eaves. Eight upright palmetto logs, unsplit and undressed, support the roof. Many rafters sustain the palmetto thatching. The platform is composed of split palmetto logs lying transversely, flat sides up, upon beams which extend the length of the building and are lashed to the uprights by palmetto ropes, thongs, or trader's ropes. This platform is peculiar, in that it fills the interior of the building like a floor and serves to furnish the family with a dry sitting or lying down place when, as often happens, the whole region is under water. The thatching of the roof is quite a work of art: inside, the regularity and compactness of the laying of the leaves display much skill and taste on the part of the builder; outside - with the outer layers there seems to have been less care



"Seminole Costume"



taken than with those within - the mass of leaves of which the roof is composed is held in place and made firm by heavy logs, which, bound together in pairs, are laid upon it astride the ridge. The covering is, I was informed, water tight and durable and will resist even a violent wind. Only hurricanes can tear it off, and these are so infrequent in Southern Florida that no attempt is made to provide against them.

The Seminole's house is open on all sides and without rooms. It is, in fact, only a covered platform. The single equivalent for a room in it is the space about the joists which are extended across the building at the lower edges of the roof. In this are placed surplus food and general household effects out of use from time to time. Household utensils are usually suspended from the up-rights of the building and from pronged sticks driven into the ground near by at convenient places.

From this description the Seminole's house may seem a poor kind of structure to use as a dwelling; yet if we take into account the climate of Southern Florida nothing more would seem to be necessary. A shelter from the hot sun and the frequent rains and a dry floor above the damp or water covered ground are sufficient for the Florida Indian's needs.

I-ful-lo-ha-tco's three houses are placed at three corners of an oblong clearing, which is perhaps 40 by 30 feet. At the fourth corner is the entrance into the garden, which is in shape of an ellipse, the longer diameter being about 25 feet. The three houses are alike, with the exception that in one of them the elevated platform is only half the size of those of the others. This difference seems to have been made on account of the camp fire. The fire usually burns in the space around which the buildings stand. During the wet season, however, it is moved into the sheltered floor in the building having the half platform. At Tus-ko-na's camp, where several families are gathered, I noticed one building without the interior platform. This was probably the wet weather kitchen.

To all appearance there is no pri-

vacy in these open houses. The only means by which it seems to be secured is by suspending, over where one sleeps, a canopy of thin cotton cloth or calico, made square or oblong in shape, and nearly three feet in height. This serves a double use, as a private room and as a protection against gnats and mosquitoes.

But while I-ful-lo-ha-tco's house is a fair example of the kind of dwelling in use throughout the tribe, I may not pass unnoticed some innovations which have lately been made upon the general style. There are, I understand, five enclosed houses, which were built and are owned by Florida Indians. Four of these are covered with split cypress planks or slabs; one is constructed of logs.

Progressive "Key West Billy" has gone further than any other one, excepting perhaps Me-le, in the white man's ways of house building. He has erected for his family, which consists of one wife and three children, a cypress board house, and furnished it with doors and windows, partitions, floors, and ceiling. In the house are one upper and one or two lower rooms. Outside, he has a stairway to the upper floor, and from the upper floor a balcony. He possesses also an elevated bed, a trunk for his clothing and a straw hat.

Besides the permanent home for the Seminole family, there is also the lodge which it occupies when for any cause it temporarily leaves the house. The lodges, or the temporary structures which the Seminole make when "camping out," are, of course, much simpler and less comfortable than their houses. I had the privilege of visiting two "camping" parties - one of forty-eight Indians, at Tak-o-si-mac-la's cane field, on the edge of the Big Cypress Swamp; the other of twenty-two persons, at a Koonti ground, on Horse Creek, not far from the site of what was, long ago, Fort Davenport.

I found great difficulty in reaching the "camp" at the sugar cane field. I was obliged to leave my conveyance some distance from the island on which the cane field was located. When we arrived at the

shore of the sawgrass marsh no outward sign indicated the presence of fifty Indians so close at hand; but suddenly three turbaned Seminoles emerged from the marsh, as we stood there. Learning from our guide our business, they cordially offered to conduct us through the water and saw-grass to the camp. The wading was annoying and, to me, difficult; but at length we secured dry footing in the jungle on the island, and after a tortuous way through the tangled vegetation, which walled in the camp from the prairie, we entered the large clearing and the collection of lodges where the Indians were. These lodges, placed very close together and seemingly without order, were almost all made of white cotton cloths, which were each stretched over ridge poles and tied to four corner posts. The lodges were in shape like the fly of a wall tent, simply a sheet stretched for a cover.

At a Koonti ground on Horse Creek I met the Cat Fish Lake Indians. They had been forced to leave their homes to secure an extra supply of Koonti flour, because, as I understood the woman who told me, some animals had eaten all their sweet potatoes. The lodges of this party differed from those of the southern Indians in being covered above and around with palmetto leaves and in being shaped some like wall tents and others like single-roofed sheds.

Adjoining each of these lodges was a platform, breast high. These were made of small poles or sticks covered with the leaves of the palmetto. Upon and under these, food, clothing, and household utensils, generally, were kept; and between the rafters of the lodges and the roofs, also, many articles, especially those for personal use and adornment, were stored.

## HOME LIFE

Having now seen the formation of the Seminole family and taken a glance at the dwellings, permanent and temporary, which it occupies, we are prepared to look at its household life. I was surprised by the industry and comparative prosperity and, further, by the cheerfulness

and mutual confidence, intimacy, and affection of these Indians in their family intercourse.

The Seminole family is industrious. All of its members work who are able to do so, men as well as women. The former are not only hunters, fishermen, and herders, but agriculturalists also. The women not only care for their children and look after the preparation of food and the general welfare of the home, but are, besides, laborers in the fields. In the Seminole family, both husband and wife are land proprietors and cultivators. Moreover, as we have seen, all children able to labor contribute their little to the household prosperity. From these various domestic characteristics, an industrious family life almost necessarily follows. The disesteem in which Tus-ko-na, a notorious loafer at the Big Cypress Swamp, is held by the other Indians shows that laziness is not countenanced among the Seminole.

But let me not be misunderstood here. By a Seminole's industry I do not mean the persistent and rapid labor of the white man of a northern community. The Indian is not capable of this, nor is he compelled to imitate it. I mean only that, in describing him, it is but just for me to say that he is a worker and not a loafer.

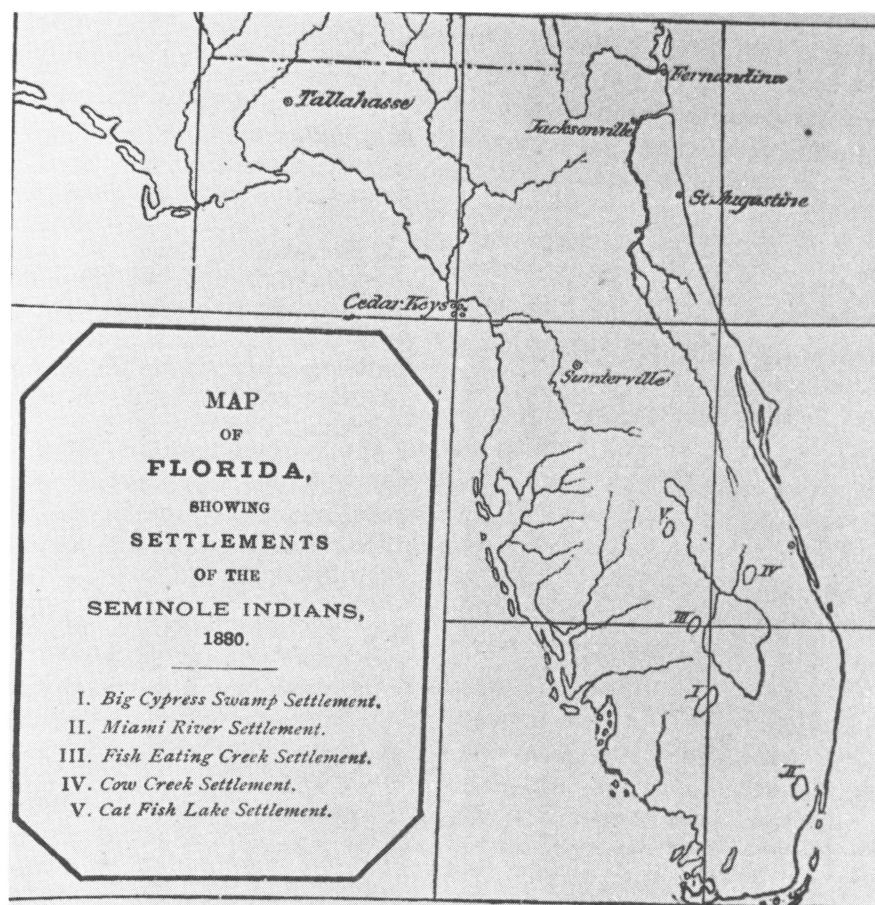
As a result of the domestic industry it would be expected that we should find comparative prosperity prevailing among all Seminole families; and this is the fact. Much of the Indian's labor is wasted through his ignorance of the ways by which it might be economized. He has no labor saving or labor multiplying machines. There is but little differentiation of function in either family or tribe. Each worker does all kinds of work. Men give themselves to the hunt, women to the house, and both to the field. But men may be found sometimes at the cooking pot or toasting stick

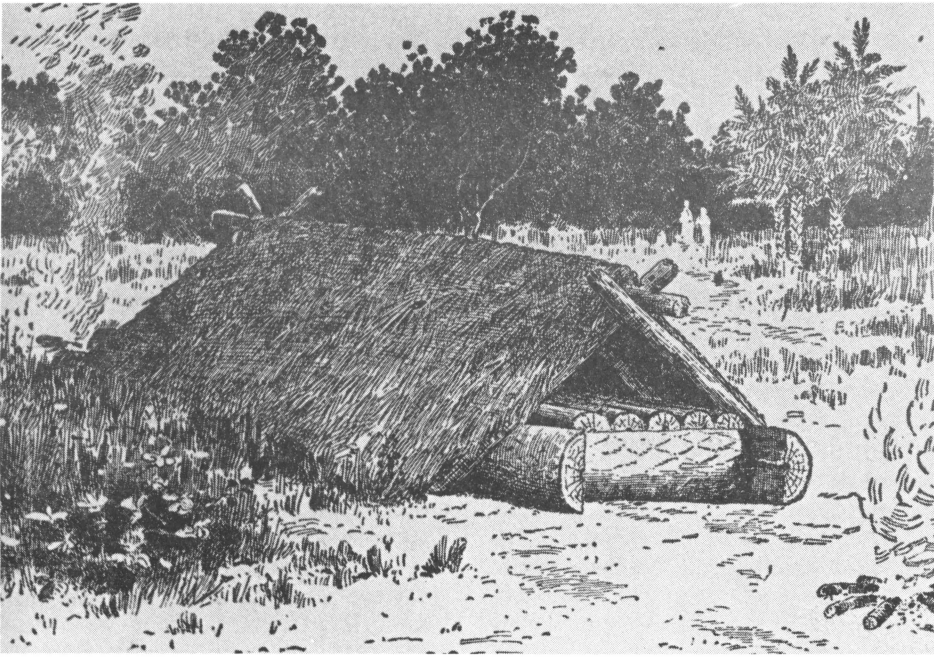
and women may be seen taking care of cattle and horses. Men bring home deer and turkeys, &c.; women spend days in fishing. Both men and women are tailors, shoemakers, flour makers, cane crushers and sirup boilers, wood hewers and bearers, and water carriers. There are but few domestic functions which may be said to belong exclusively, on the one hand, to men, or, on the other, to women.

Out of the diversified domestic industry, as I have said, comes comparative prosperity. The home is all that the Seminole family needs or desires for its comfort. There is enough clothing, or the means to get it, for every one. Ordinarily more than a sufficient quantity of clothes is possessed by each member of a family. No one lacks money or the material with which to obtain that which money purchases. Nor need any ever hunger, since the fields and nature offer them food in abundance. The families of the northern camps are not as well provided for by bountiful nature as those south of the Caloosahatchie River. Yet, though at my visit to the Cat Fish Lake Indians in mid-winter the sweet potatoes were all gone, a good hunting ground and fertile fields of Koonti were at hand for Tcup-ko's people to visit and use to their profit.

## FOOD

Read the bill of fare from which the Florida Indians may select, and compare with that the scanty supplies within reach of the North Carolina Cherokee or the lake Superior Chippewa. Here is a list of their meats: Of flesh, at any time venison, often opossum, sometimes rabbit and squirrel, occasionally bear, and a land terrapin, called the "gopher," and pork whenever they wish it. Of wild fowl, duck, quail, and turkey in abundance. Of home reared fowl, chickens, more than they are willing to use. Of fish, they can catch myriads of the many kinds which teem in the inland waters of Florida, especially of the large bass, called "trout" by the whites of the State, while





"Seminole Grave"

on the seashore they can get many forms of edible marine life, especially turtles and oysters. Equally well off are these Indians in respect to grains, vegetables, roots, and fruits. They grow maize in considerable quantity, and from it make hominy flour, and all the rice they need they gather from the swamps. Their vegetables are chiefly sweet potatoes, large and much praised melons and pumpkins, and, if I may classify it with vegetables, the tender new growth of the tree called the cabbage palmetto. Among roots, there is the great dependence of these Indians, the abounding Koonti; also the wild potato, a small tuber found in black swamp land, and peanuts in great quantities. Of fruits the Seminole family may supply itself with bananas, oranges (sour and sweet), limes, lemons, guavas, pineapples, grapes (black and red), cocoa nuts, cocoa plums, sea grapes, and wild plums. And with even this enumeration the bill of fare is not exhausted. The Seminole living in a perennial summer, is never at a loss when he seeks something, and something good, to eat. I have omitted from the above list honey and the sugar cane juice and sirup, nor have I referred to the purchases the Indians now and then make from the white man, of salt pork, wheat flour, coffee and salt, and of the various

canned delicacies, whose attractive labels catch their eyes.

These Indians are not, of course, particularly provident. I was told, however, that they are beginning to be ambitious to increase their little herds of horses and cattle and their numbers of chickens and swine.

#### CAMP FIRE

Entering the more interior, the intimate home life of the Seminole, one observes that the center about which he gathers is the camp fire. This is never large except on a cool night, but it is of unceasing interest to the household. It is the place where the food is prepared and where, by day, it is always preparing. It is the place where the social intercourse of the family, and of the family with their friends, is enjoyed. There the story is told; by its side toilets are made and household duties are performed, not necessarily on account of the warmth the fire gives, for it is often so small that its heat is almost imperceptible, but because of its central position in the household economy. This fire is somewhat singularly constructed; the logs used for it are of considerable length, and are laid, with some regularity, around a center, like the

radii of a circle. These logs are pushed directly inward as the inner ends are consumed. The outer ends of the logs make excellent seats, sometimes they serve as pillows, especially for old men and women wishing to take afternoon naps.

Beds and bedding are of far less account to the Seminole family than the camp fire. The bed is often only the place where one chooses to lie. It is generally, however, chosen under the sheltering roof on the elevated platform, or, when made in the lodge, on palmetto leaves. It is pillowless and has covering or not, as the sleeper may wish. If a cover is used, it is, as a rule, only a thin blanket or a sheet of cotton cloth, besides, during most of the year, the canopy or mosquito bar.

#### MANNER OF EATING

Next in importance to the camp fire in the life of the Seminole household naturally comes the eating of what is prepared there. There is nothing very formal in that. The Indians do not set a table or lay dishes and arrange chairs. A good sized kettle, containing stewed meat and vegetables, is the center around which the family gathers for its meal. This, placed in some convenient spot on the ground near the fire, is surrounded by more or fewer of the members of the household in a sitting posture. If all that they have to eat at that time is contained in the kettle, each extracts, with his fingers or his knife, a piece of meat or a bone with meat on it, and, holding it in one hand, eats, while with the other hand each, in turn, supplies himself, by means of a great wooden spoon, from the porridge in the pot.

The Seminole, however, though observing meal times with some regularity, eats just as his appetite invites. If it happens that he has a side of venison roasting before the fire, he will cut from it at any time during the day and, with the piece of meat in one hand and a bit of Koonti or of different bread in the other, satisfy his appetite. Not seldom, too, he rises during the night and breaks his sleep by eat-



ing a piece of roasting meat. The kettle and big spoon stand always ready for those who at any moment may hunger. There is little to be said about eating in a Seminole household, therefore, except that when its members eat together they make a kettle the center of their group and that much of their eating is done without reference to one another.

## AMUSEMENTS

But one sees the family at home, not only working and sleeping and eating, but also engaged in amusing itself. Especially among the children, various sports are indulged in. I took some trouble to learn what amusements the little Seminole had invented or received. I obtained a list of them which might as well be that of the white man's as of the Indian's child. The Seminole has a doll, i.e., a bundle of rags, a stick with a bit of cloth wrapped about it, or something that serves just as well as this. The children build little houses for their dolls and name them "camps." Boys take their bows and arrows and go into the bushes and kill small birds, and on returning say they have been "turkey-hunting." Children sit around a small piece of land, and sticking blades of grass into the ground, name it a "corn field." They have the game of "hide and seek." They use the dancing rope, manufacture a "see-saw," play "Leap frog," and build a "merry-go-round." Carrying a small stick, they say they carry a rifle. I noticed some children at play one day sitting near a dried deer skin, which lay before them stiff and resonant. They had taken from the earth small tubers about an inch in diameter found on the roots of a kind of grass and called "deer-food." Through them they had thrust sharp sticks of the thickness of a match and twice as long, making what we would call "teetotums." These, by a quick twirl between the palms of the hands, were set to spinning on the deer skin. The four children were keeping a dozen or more of these things going. The sport they called

"a dance."

I need only add that the relations among the various members of the Indian family in Florida are, as a rule, so well adjusted and observed that home life goes on without discord. The father is beyond question master in his home. To the mother belongs a peculiar domestic importance from her connection with her gens, but both she and her children seek first to know and to do the will of the actual lord of the household. The father is the master without being a tyrant; the mother is a subject without being a slave; the children have not yet learned self-assertion in opposition to their parents: consequently, there is no constraint in family intercourse. The Seminole household is cheerful, its members are mutually confiding, and, in the Indian's way, intimate and affectionate.

## CLANS OF THE SEMINOLE THE SEMINOLE GENS

Of this larger body of kindred, existing, as I could see, in very distinct form among the Seminole, I gained but little definite knowledge. What few facts I secured are here placed on record.

After I was enabled to make my inquiry understood, I sought to learn from my respondent the name of the gens to which each Indian whose name I had received belonged. As the result, I found that the two hundred and eight Seminole now in Florida are divided into the following gentes and in the following numbers:

1. Wind gens . . . . .	21
2. Tiger gens . . . . .	58
3. Otter gens . . . . .	39
4. Bird gens . . . . .	41
5. Deer gens . . . . .	18
6. Snake gens . . . . .	15
7. Bear gens . . . . .	4
8. Wolf gens . . . . .	1
9. Alligator gens . . . . .	1
Unknown gentes . . . . .	10
Total . . . . .	208

I endeavored, also, to learn the name the Indians use for gens or clan, and was told that it is "Po-ha-po-hum-ko-sin;" the best translation I can give of the name is "Those

of one camp or house."

Examining my table to find whether or not the work as translated describes the fact, I notice that, with but one exception, which may not, after all, prove to be an exception, each of the twenty-two camps into which the thirty-seven Seminole families are divided is a camp in which all the persons but the husbands are members of one gens. The camp at Miami is an apparent exception. There Little Tiger, a rather important personage, lives with a number of unmarried relatives. A Wolf has married one of Little Tiger's sisters and lives in the camp, as properly he should. Lately Tiger himself has married an Otter, but, instead of leaving his relatives and going to the camp of his wife's kindred, his wife has taken up her home with his people.

At the Big Cypress Swamp I tried to discover the comparative rank or dignity of the various clans. In reply, I was told by one of the Wind clan that they are graded in the following order. At the northernmost camp, however, another order appears to have been established.

### Big Cypress Camp.

1. The Wind.
2. The Tiger.
3. The Otter.
4. The Bird.
5. The Deer.
6. The Snake.
7. The Bear.
8. The Wolf.

### Northernmost camp.

1. The Tiger
2. The Wind.
3. The Otter.
4. The Bird.
5. The Bear.
6. The Deer.
7. The Buffalo.
8. The Snake.
9. The Alligator.
10. The Horned Owl.

This second order was given to me by one of the Bird gens and by one who calls himself distinctively a "Tallahassee" Indian. The Buffalo and the Horned Owl clans seem now to be extinct in Florida, and I am not altogether sure that the Alligator clan also has not disappeared.

The gens is "a group of relatives tracing a common lineage to some remote ancestor. This lineage is traced by some tribes through the mother and by others through the father." "The gens is the grand unit of social organization, and for many purposes is the basis of governmental organization." To the gens belong also certain rights and duties.

Of the characteristics of the gentes of the Florida Seminole, I know only that a man may not marry a woman of his own clan, that the children belong exclusively to the mother, and that by birth they are members of her own gens. So far as duogamy prevails now among the Florida Indians, I observed that both the wives, in every case, were members of one gens. I understand also that there are certain games in which men selected from gentes as such are the contesting participants.

### FELLOWHOOD

In this connection I may say that if I was understood in my inquiries the Seminole have also the

institution of "Fellowhood" among them. Major Powell thus describes this institution: "Two young men agree to be life friends, 'more than brothers,' confiding without reserve each in the other and protecting each the other from all harm."

## THE SEMINOLE TRIBE

### Tribal Organization

The Florida Seminole, considered as a tribe, have a very imperfect organization. The complete tribal society of the past was much broken up through wars with the United States. These wars having ended in the transfer of nearly the whole of the population to the Indian Territory, the few Indians remaining in Florida were consequently left in a comparatively disorganized condition. There is, however, among these Indians a simple form of government, to which the inhabitants of at least the three southern settlements submit. The people of Cat Fish Lake and Cow Creek settlements live in a large measure independent of or without civil connection with the others. Tcup-ko calls his people "Tallahassee Indians." He says that they are not "the same" as the Fish Eating Creek, Big Cypress and Miami people. I learned, moreover, that the ceremony of the Green Corn Dance may take place at the last three named settlements and not at those of the north. The "Tallahassee Indians" go to Fish Eating Creek if they desire to take part in the festival.

### SEAT OF GOVERNMENT

So far as there is a common seat of government, it is located at Fish Eating Creek, where reside the head chief and big medicine man of the Seminole, Tus-ta-nug-ge, and his brother, Hos-pa-ta-ki, also a medicine man. These two are called the Tus-ta-nug-ul-ki, or "great heroes" of the tribe. At this settlement, annually, a council, composed of minor chiefs from the various settlements, meets and passes upon the affairs of the tribe.

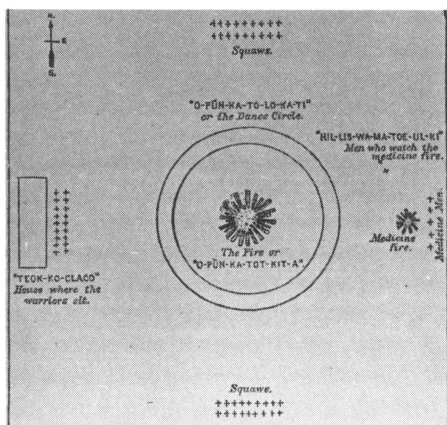
## TRIBAL OFFICERS

What the official organization of the tribe is I do not know. My respondent could not tell me. I learned, in addition to what I have just written, only that there are several Indians with official titles, living at each of the settlements, except at the one on Cat Fish Lake. These were classified as follows:

	Chief and Medicine Man	War chiefs	Little chiefs	Medicine men
Settlements				
Big Cypress Swamp		2	2	1
Miami River	1			1
Fish Eating Creek	1			1
Cow Creek				2
Total	1	3	2	5

## NAME OF TRIBE

I made several efforts to discover the tribal name by which these Indians now designate themselves. The name Seminole they reject. In their own language it means "a wanderer," and, when used as a term of reproach, "a coward." Ko-nip-ha-tco said, "Me no Sem-ai-no-le; Seminole cow, Seminole deer, Seminole rabbit, me no Seminole. Indians gone Arkansas Seminole." He meant that timidity and flight from danger are "Seminole" qualities, and that the Indians who had gone west at the bidding of the Government were the true renegades. This same Indian informed me that the people south of the Caloosahatchie River, at Miami and the Big Cypress Swamp call themselves "Kan-uk-sa Is-ti-tca-ti," i.e., "Kan-uk-sa red men." Kan-yuk-sa is their word for what we know as Florida. It is composed of I-kan-a "ground," and I-yuk-sa, "point" or "tip," i.e., point of ground, or peninsula. At the northern camps the name appropriate to the people there, they say, is "Tallahassee Indians."



"Green Corn Dance"