

A N N U A L R E P O R T

Narrative Section

1932

Seminole Agency
Dania, Fla.

Prepared by

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ANNUAL REPORT
1932
Seminole Agency

***** NARRATIVE SECTION *****

SECTION No. 1

Introduction

The Florida Seminole census of April 1, 1932 shows:

Total population - - - - -	562
Men - - - - -	278
Women - - - - -	284
Increase over previous census - -	3

These Indians are divided into the Wind, the Otter, the Snake, the Bird, the Wolf, the Deer, and the Tiger gen. The latter group is subdivided into the "Big Cat" or Tiger, and the "Little Cat" or Wild Cat clan. The Deer household consists of Charlie Buster and George Osceola. Since the family name is perpetuated through the mother, rather than the father, this family will be extinguished with the death of these two men.

Through their tribal ceremonials the Seminoles are divided into 1. the Miami, 2. the Cypress, 3. the Okeechobee or Cow Creek Indians. Each division has its own medicine man, and holds its own Green Corn Dance and tribal court, at which the affairs of Justice are disbursed to its members.

This population is divided, again, into two language groups. The Indians living near Brighton, Ft. Drum, and Okeechobee speak the Muskogee, and those in the Miami and Big Cypress sections the Micasukee dialect. In general those of one group cannot understand those of the other.

During the Seminole War these tribesmen fled from the white people, and found hiding places within that vast inaccessible region, known as the Everglades. They still make their homes at widely scattered points about over this semi-tropical jungle.

Irrespective of the difficulties involved the Indian Service set up its program among the Seminoles as early as 1892. At present the State and Federal Governments hold in reserve for these people a total of 125,880 acres of land, which is divided into sixteen tracts, and is scattered over the greater part of South Florida. Much of it can be used only after a vast drainage system has been set up, and highways have been completed in this section of the State.

The Federal Government has made some progress in improving this land. The larger part of the twenty thousand acre tract in Hendry County has been fenced, and a three roomed house, an office and a barn has been erected on it. An employee is maintained here for the protection of the game on the reservation, and to aid Indians who live here.

Considerable improvements have been added to a 360 acre tract in Broward County. The Administration building is located here. It contains Government offices, Official Guest room, teacher's quarters, and Superintendent's quarters. On this reservation also are eleven Indian cottages, school building, infirmary, garage, tool and storage house, pumping plant, laundry, and latrines. With the exception of the Administration building and garages, all have been painted during the past year. The Indian cottages have been enlarged until each is almost $2\frac{1}{2}$ its previous size. The group together with the school and infirmary have been rearranged for greater service and beauty. A porch has been added to the school.

In 1932 two hundred eighty acres of this tract were placed under a hog wire fence, and funds have already been obtained with which a small herd of cattle will be secured for the Indian families living here.

Through the past year the Indian Service has maintained a Special Commissioner, a Teacher, and a Deputy Special Officer who have been in charge of its program among these Indians.

LAW AND ORDER

During the greater part of their half century in the Everglades the Seminoles have maintained a most vigorous type of Government. If a brave committed theft, or other wise broke the code of his people he was tried before the tribunal and shot. Women who broke faith were shot, and children born out of wedlock were killed. In more recent years there is a breaking down of the authority invested in Government. One Indian complains that the Green Corn Dance has degenerated into a drinking party, and that although Indian men come to them with a determined purpose to punish all injustice, the tribal leaders soon become so intoxicated that they are not able to attend to the affairs of their own tribal court.

Among the white people pioneer conditions still obtain in much of South Florida. In the cities law and order has been established and a highly advanced type of community life attained. Some of the villages in the Everglades country, however, boast of the fact that they have never allowed a peace officer to live within their limits. In recent months from some of this back country came stories of men riddled with buck-shot in a cattle feud. As late as 1930 a gang of desperadoes who used the Everglades as a rendezvous, were killed in a battle with deputies from Palm Beach County. Desperate men are now living in those frontier regions where the Indian makes his home.

The problem of establishing law and order ^{under} such conditions was farther complicated by the fact that the Seminoles had never had any status, other than theory, in the Federal Courts. Many thought that it would be impossible to ever induce the Indian to have anything to do with the white man's court.

The year 1932 brought its advantages along with its problems. As in all pioneer settlements, the country and its people are passing rapidly through a period of transition. The boom days brought new citizens, and vast improvements and wealth to South Florida. The breaking down of the authority formerly invested in the Indian court, the wider contact of the Seminoles with the white people, the growth of the country and its institutions have created a most urgent need that the security which is provided by state and federal courts shall be extended to the Florida Red Man.

These Indians have been fortunate in that their Deputy Special Officer is honest, fearless, and diligent in his work. He and the Special Commissioner have had excellent aid from the Federal Department of Justice. To date a total of 85 arrests have been made of men who abuse the welfare of the Indians. These cases have been developed under the most trying conditions. Often it has been impossible to secure the type of evidence which is ordinarily expected by courts. As a witness the Indian was a new and unknown factor. For the Federal Attorneys to expect ten or more Indians

to meet the Grand Jury at the opposite end of the state at an assigned hour, or to be able to question witnesses having such a poor knowledge of English that necessary evidence might be obtained, was a hazard which men of the legal profession do not wish to encounter. There was the further problem of whether or not the evidence to two Indians might justly be accepted as against the testimony of a single white man.

Many of these matters have been answered, at least in part, through the 75 or more cases which have been presented to the Grand Jury through the last year. Because of the work of the Special Commissioner and Deputy Special Officer the courts have had, with two exceptions, every witness they have requested, and these witnesses have appeared in Tampa, Jacksonville, or Miami as the case required and on the hour appointed. In general the Attorneys have been satisfied with the truthfulness of the Indian witness. They and the Federal Judges have been determined in their efforts to extend security and justice to the Seminoles. The Prohibition units over the state have granted the best of cooperation in the fight against bootleggers who infested the Indian country, and consumed from 50% to 75% of all the Indians earned. Through the work of the year fully 80% of the rotten liquor which was formerly consumed by the Seminoles has been stopped. The tribal leaders appreciate the advantages of temperance. One old Indian father put the matter thus: "They no get it any where now but Miami - I think so they no get it - alright". Some addicts in recent months have received and used as much as forty or fifty dollars without spending any part of it for whiskey.

The year has seen the bankruptcy of one of the men who has been most outstanding in exploiting the Indians. His dominance over a small group of these people has been strained.

In the fight for the welfare of the Indians the help of the "Florida Friends of the Seminoles", together with the aid of the "Florida Federation of Woman's Clubs" and other civic organizations have been invaluable.

Since the Federal courts do not have jurisdiction over many offences committed against the Indian, greater cooperation is needed from some of the county officials.

Conditions have been greatly improved in the amusement camps which feature the Indian to the curious public. Temperance and sanitation are now requirements of these institutions.

CASE RECORD TO DATE

Arrests	82	Convictions	45
Cases presented to Grand Jury . . .	79	Awaiting trial	10
Dismissals	1	Grand Jury found no true bill	14
Forfeited bond . . .	1	Cases not presented to Grand Jury	3
Automobile seized . .	2	Cases settled out of Court	2
Stills seized	2		

The above are some of the results of the Deputy Special Officer's attempt to police 15 cities and villages, 5000 square miles of swamp and jungle and hundreds of miles of highway.

SECTION NO. II

The Seminoles of Florida have been endowed with unusually strong, healthful bodies. Life in the Glades has accustomed them to hardships. They have lived without a knowledge of sanitation or an understanding of the causes of disease. The weak and physically unfit have been destroyed quickly. Only the strong survived. Their power to recover from injuries and bodily poison is remarkable. The bite of a moccasin may be successfully disposed of by the chemistry of an Indian's body. Foods which would kill members of the white race, or the poison from serious infections are eliminated without fatality. White physicians often remark that the chance of recovery with a Seminole is much greater than with other patients.

In recent years, because of wider contact with white people, these Indians are confronted with a disease condition against which they have not great resistance. Two of the larger of these health hazards are alcoholism and venereal disease.

All the combined destructive agencies of life do not produce a greater death rate among white people than alcoholism alone produces among the Seminoles. The following is a common experience among them: During the Christmas holidays a group of Indians, who had been celebrating the season with rotten liquor, left Miami for their home in the Everglades. Because of drunkenness, or the stupor following intoxication the driver wrecked the car, killed himself, and drowned a child. Several in the auto were injured. A girl had a part of the windshield driven in her chest. The accident cost:

A widowed mother	her only son
A father and mother	their child
The Indian girl	2 weeks in the hospital
The Government	\$295

Expectant mothers and Indian children five and six years of age become intoxicated. Considerable progress has been made in checking this destructive habit, but men and women are worth too much to be squandered so needlessly.

During the past year ten men and five women have had treatment for gonorrhoea. Two cases of syphilis received medical aid. About half of these Indians were given care at the Seminole Agency, where treatment was given each four hours until the infection was destroyed. The Indian administers the treatment prescribed by the physician very poorly. Seminole women are very modest. Some cases, undoubtedly, have not been reported. But a determined effort has been made to locate, and obtain treatment for every possible victim.

Intestinal disorders rank third among the ills of the Seminoles. There were 30 cases of hookworm treated during the year. Unsanitary foods produce dysentery. The lack of a balanced diet causes many serious cases of constipation. Since children have no milk, they suffer from malnutrition. Out of thirteen deaths during the past year six were infants under three years of age.

A school cow has been purchased at the Seminole Agency, and all Indian children living here have been provided with an abundant supply of milk. Goats have been introduced in the tribe with the hope that they may furnish this much needed food to the Seminole children.

Rheumatism is another ill common to these Indians. During the year 9 women and 13 men have received treatment for this disease. Exposure to the flood water of the Glades is the cause.

The Seminole Indians are undoubtedly the most "doctored" people in Florida. The Indian Service provides a physician at Okeechobee, one at Miami, one at Everglades, and one at Hollywood. Any Seminole may have the services of any one of these physicians without cost to himself. During the year a population of 562 made approximately 1200 calls on these physicians for medical treatment.

For this service the Seminole Agency has paid \$3209.73. Nine Seminoles have been given care in local hospitals at an expense of \$552.00

When necessary the Special Commissioner has given ill Indians transportation to the physician. Such calls have required driving half the night, or covering five hundred miles on a single trip, but such service has been cheerfully furnished. A diligent effort has been made to take the health program to the humble homes of the Indians.

The great deficiency in the program is the lack of health education. It is well enough to free 30 Indian children of hookworm, but if the parents do not know enough of the disease to prevent re-infection the treatment will not greatly aid the children. To heal the sick is necessary but it is far more intelligent to prevent illness. The fact that, in spite of so much medical service, the Seminoles have a death rate double that of the white race, is ample evidence of the GREAT NEED of health education. By all means the Seminole Indians should be provided with a HEALTH NURSE.

SECTION NO. III * * * * * SCHOOLS

The school census of the Seminoles for 1932 shows 91 boys and 94 girls of school age. The greater number of these children live under the most primitive rural conditions. Their homes are isolated and often inaccessible. Their fathers hunt and trap for subsistence, which requires the family to move from one plentiful game supply to the next. The permanent camp is deserted for months and the members of the household occupy temporary camps. To provide an educational program which will fit into such modes of life is most difficult.

The Indian Service has a Day School at the Seminole Agency which is open to any and all of these children. It will provide board and clothing, medical care, and academic and vocational training to them. About 15 out of 185 children have sought this opportunity. Through the past year the term has been extended from six to nine months, and the teacher's position has been raised from a temporary to a civil service status. A much higher standard has been obtained in the work of the School.

In general the Indian is an individualist. He hunts and tills his small farm alone. He has never needed the conventions which are necessary to co-operative endeavor. It is difficult for him to understand why, when he is not studying, he should remain quiet, or why he should not leave the room by way of the window rather than the door, or why he has not the freedom to go at any moment he may wish. Much progress has been gained through the year in training the Indian students at the Seminole Agency in those conventions which make school possible. The teacher has required a REGULAR schedule, and has established an atmosphere essential to study. Some of the older students have learned to write an excellent hand, and are able to read satisfactorily.

In addition to the usual academic work of a primary school they have gained sufficient knowledge of platform work to be able to entertain club and church groups. Through the year they have appeared before forty or fifty gatherings. They have sung over the radio and for the vitaphone, and have been in demand in the best circles of cultured people. They have been required to assist in the preparation of their noon lunches, and from this have gained some knowledge of foods and cooking. A necessary sanitary standard has been required of them. They have had to bathe twice each week, brush their teeth each day, and keep their face, hands, and hair clean. Cuts and wounds have been disinfected and given sanitary dressing. Each has been provided with from one quart to one half gallon of clean, fresh milk each day.

Each of the older school children have been given a goat, and an effort has been made to teach the group both care and kindness toward animals. Through the activities of the Agency the adult Indians have been taught some truck farming, building of fence, clearing of land, carpentry, the further use of machinery, and canning.

The program is deficient in that it is reaching only about 8% of the children of scholastic age, and is still too limited in its field of knowledge. In so far as possible the school should be taken to Indian camps, and a much wider knowledge of the care of the home, cooking, and vocational training should be taught. It can best be taken to the camps by setting up Indian rural schools. Wherever the children of three or four Indian camps can be grouped into a small school a teacher should be provided. If a teacher may be found who is willing to go to them the Seminoles will accept more and more readily the education they so badly need. A CRAFTS teacher can bring much wider vocational training, and is assuredly needed. The future of the Seminoles, whatever it may be, is lodged in the plastic nature of these Indian children. The entire program of the Government awaits an adequate educational program.

SECTION NO. IV ***** INDUSTRIES

In the early part of the 19th century, when the Seminoles lived in the northern part of Florida, these Indians were compelled to supplement their game supply of food by growing cattle. Their herds were numbered by hundreds and even thousands. When the tribe was driven to the Everglades abundant game for food, and pelts for purchasing other supplies were found. The growing of stock had created friction with white people. The Seminole abandoned the trade, and devoted himself to hunting and farming.

Recent years are again altering his economic life. The boom days in Florida brought to the Seminole's hunting ground new highways, canals, and other modern improvements. It brought a population many times that of former days, a population which must be supported and which is doubly eager for such sport as hunting and fishing. The game supply has been greatly diminished, and the white man is now challenging the Indian's right to hunt. Game reserves have been established through out the Everglades, and game wardens have been stationed in this region to enforce game laws. During the last year several Indian homes have been searched for game, and Seminoles have been thrown in jail for killing the turkey or deer out of season. Billie Buster, an Indian 80 years of age, who is too proud to accept charity, has his raccoon skins seized because he had no funds with which to pay a trapper's license. The protest against Indians violating game laws is growing in volume with each season. A white hunter charges that the state protects the game in a reserve only to allow the "damn" Indians to kill it, forgetting of course that the Indian has almost no other means of obtaining food and clothing.

The Seminoles living north of Lake Okeechobee have made considerable progress in turning from the trade of hunting to that of stock growing. But since their humble thatched villages are built on lands owned and stocked by white cattlemen they were compelled to produce stock that would not diminish the food supply of cattle. Since hogs feed on the berry of the cabbage palm and on roots of the swamp growing plants they meet the needs of these Indians. The Okeechobee Seminoles own about one thousand head of hogs. By farming small hammocks they supply their table with pork, corn, potatoes, pumpkins, and the bud of the cabbage palm and turtles, or fish. They find some employment from the white people of the community. They are exceedingly poor, and by all means ought to have a legal right to occupy their own homes. That protection is due them, but they may be ejected by law from any one of their camps, under their present status. They have a reservation of 2100 acres near Indian Town but it is high pine land, and will not support their hogs. It produces neither cabbage palm berries, nor the roots of swamp growing plants.

This same economic pressure is also being felt by the Indians living in the lower section of the Everglades. They are finding it more and more difficult to obtain food and the necessities of life. Many are turning to amusement camps for subsistence. Like other showmen they find that there is profit in "humbugging" the public with exaggerations, distortions, and misrepresentations. Life under such conditions does not promise much for the future of the tribe.

Some have established small trading posts along the Tamiami Trail. The many tourists who pass afford some trade, but these primitive merchants have very, very few items to offer the public. There is a decided economic opportunity in this field. Indians from other parts of United States rush each winter into South Florida, put up their trading posts, and monopolize the market. Hard pressed as the Seminoles are, they should be granted this possibility. A crafts teacher would aid greatly in this phase of the economic re-establishment of the Florida Indians.

For a short period of the year a few of these red men earn excellent wages as guides. The employees at the Seminole Agency have assisted wherever possible in bringing hunters and the Indian guides together. The Indian has no need to be further taught this trade. He excels in it.

Another line of endeavor open to the Seminoles is their farming. This ought to become a more valuable aid to their economic life. Although they will not likely grow products for the market they should produce much for their own consumption. Present land holdings ought to be readjusted to make this possible. They should have legal ownership of the type of land they can and do farm.

The Seminole is fitted also for day labor. Through the past year the Seminole Agency has made a special effort to serve him in this connection. The members of the tribe were given employment to the amount of \$1800 as against \$550 during the previous year. This labor was used in improving Indian lands and Indian homes. Through the greater part of the year every Indian who asked for employment was given work. Some of the Indians have been employed by farmers to harvest beans, tomatoes, or other crops. Others have worked on the highways, or as cattlemen.

Again this program is inadequate because it reaches only a limited group of Indians. The economic transition in the Seminole world is inevitable. The Indian is compelled to fit himself into some new industrial life. The Government should guide him in this change, and save at least a part of the tribe for whom some occupations. Such an endeavor is a SERVICE in building constructive citizenship.

WELFARE PROGRAM

During times of depression the Seminoles have been fortunate in the relief to which they have had access. Although these Indians have no annuities or trust funds, any aged or indigent member of their tribe receives food and care from the Government. About ten per cent of the population is provided with groceries each month. Many additional Indians have had grants of Red Cross flour, and the Agency has on hand a very large quantity of clothing, which are distributed to them as the need arises.

In directing the foregoing program the Special Commissioner has driven 36,000 miles or an average of 100 miles each day. The demands have been as broad as life itself, but he has found the work exceedingly interesting.

J. L. Glenn

Special Commissioner

(The above report has been revised in this copy)