

"Ending" Our 100-Year Indian "War"?



Osceola, Chief of the Seminoles

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

THE other day a press dispatch from West Palm Beach, Fla., told the following story:

Squatting on their haunches in a circle on the shores of Lake Worth, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes and seven Seminole Indians today revived negotiations to end the 100-year "war" between the tribesmen and the United States.

Through an interpreter, the representatives of a majority of the 500 Seminoles surviving in Florida asked a domain of 200,000 acres in the Everglades and \$15 a month each from the government as indemnity for seizure of the rest of the state by "our white friends."

In return they offered to recognize the United States and obey its laws, except the game laws.

"The Seminoles," replied Secretary Ickes, "are a proud and independent people. I do not know whether it will be possible to give them all they ask, but in co-operation with the state of Florida, the administration in Washington will do all in its power to give them the land and the game they require to live the lives of their forefathers."

It was a colorful scene with ranks of National Guardsmen and huddles of Seminole squaws and children in bright festive garb forming a background along the sparkling lake waters. Loud speakers carried the negotiations to several thousand spectators, mostly winter visitors from the North, in boxes and bleachers.

"There is no game left for me. I ask for provision for my people," said Sam Tommie, the chosen spokesman.

"Formerly I had many grounds to hunt on. Now I ask the white people to deed me land," said Charlie Cypress.

After the council the tribes in their many-colored and many-colored dress danced the green corn dance while the fashionable audience applauded.

Not only did many newspapers print the story, or one similar to it, but some of them editorialized at length on it. Others, however, ignored the story or the opportunity for editorial comment. Perhaps they considered it just another "press agent yarn." Or they may have remembered that eight years ago this same "war" was going to be "officially ended." At least, that was what press dispatches from Miami said at the time. Those dispatches told how Chief Tony Tommy, "ordained leader of all the Seminoles in Florida," was going to Washington "to make formal peace with the United States government and ask for citizenship for his people."

All of which made good copy for the newspapers and good publicity for Miami and that part of Florida. But a short time later this press dispatch from Fort Myers, Fla., appeared in the papers:

Nuck-Suc-Ha-Chee, chief of the Florida Seminoles, vigorously denies that the glade tribesmen seek American citizenship or reconciliation with the government of the United States.

The position of "our little nation" is made plain in a letter from Stanley Hanson, secretary of the Seminole Indian association of Florida, to Judge George W. Storter of Collier county, a life long friend of the Indians, in which the Indian chief repudiates statements made by Tony Tommy of Miami, "self styled leader" for the Seminoles.

"All news dispatches carried out of Miami recently," the letter continues, "have been unauthorized by Seminole leaders and therefore without foundation. When the Seminoles take action it will be through a duly constituted council which governs the little nation."

So that was that, and nothing more was heard of the proposal to "end officially" a non-existent "war" until recently when Secretary Ickes, on vacation in Florida, was reported to be making "peace medicine" with the Seminoles. The fact that he and "seven Seminole Indians," among them "Sam Tommie, the chosen spokesman," and "revived negotiations" may have reminded newspaper editors of the negotiations started by Chief Tony Tommy eight years ago.

Perhaps they remembered also that as far back as 1917 arrangements were completed for acquiring land for those Seminoles who had been wandering around in the Everglades as a kind of "lost tribe"; that in 1924 they came under the provisions of a congressional act which made them citizens of the United States and that in 1926 a reservation, divided between Lee and



Secretary Ickes and the Seminoles



The Dade Monument at West Point



Chief Tony Tommy



A Group of Seminoles

Broward counties, was established for them with an outpost agency half-way between Miami and Fort Myers and that, under the direction of Maj. Lucien A. Spencer, special commissioner, these Seminoles really began to travel the white man's road. So the picture of a group of savages smoking the peace pipe to end a 100-year-old war, as painted by the recent press dispatches, didn't seem so authentic.

But whether this was a press agent stunt by some enterprising white men or a bid for notoriety by some publicity-minded red men, it has served to bring back into the news the name of a famous Indian leader and to recall to Americans the tragic story of his people, although they cannot be very proud of some parts of that story. Even if the war with the Seminoles wasn't really a "100-year war," it was the longest and costliest ever waged by this nation on a tribe of red men.

In reality there were two Seminole wars. The first one was a comparatively short affair. It took place in 1817-18 and lasted less than a year. An aftermath of the Creek Indian war, it was a minor incident in the larger field of diplomacy and international relations.

After the defeat of the Creek Indians in 1817, many of those tribesmen sought refuge among the Seminoles in Florida, then held by the Spanish. To the Seminoles also had fled many runaway negro slaves. So there was constant friction between the Indians and slave-catchers, officers of the law and settlers on the southern border of what was then the United States.

After a number of Indians and whites had been killed in the spasmodic warfare which followed, General Gaines was sent with a force of regulars to demand the surrender of some of the Seminoles accused of killing white settlers. The Indians refused, claiming that the whites were responsible for the first aggressions, which was probably the truth.

So Gaines attacked a party of Seminoles at Fowtown just north of the Florida border, and stirred up a veritable hornet's nest, which resulted in an attack by the Indians on his garrison at Fort Scott. The War department then ordered Gaines to continue his offensive against the Indians, pursuing them into Spanish territory if necessary but not to molest any Spanish garrison. The department next ordered Gen. Andrew Jackson, the hero of New Orleans and the Creek war, into the field and gave him extremely vague instructions as to the course he was to pursue.

With his usual high-handed methods "Old Hickory" invaded Florida, captured the Spanish post of St. Marks, summarily executed two Englishmen named Arbuthnot and Armbrister, whom he accused of stirring up the Seminoles against the Americans. He fought a few minor skirmishes with the Seminoles, who promptly scattered like quail, making pursuit impossible, and then pushed on to capture the Spanish town of Pensacola. Of course, Spain protested at this unwarranted invasion of her territory and the United States placated her by censoring Jackson in a manner that was something of a polite slap on the wrist.

The upshot of the whole affair was that Spain, seeing the handwriting on the wall, agreed to sell Florida to the United States. And that, more than any great desire to punish the Seminoles for their depredations, was what the American government wanted. But in thus making the Seminoles pawns in a game of diplomacy the United States was storing up trouble for itself.

It broke out soon after Florida became our territory. Friction between the settlers and the Seminoles continued, mainly because the settlers wanted the lands held by the Indians. By the

treaty of Fort Moultrie in 1823 the Seminoles ceded most of their lands except one small reservation. But the land-hungry whites began crowding in upon them there and demanding that they be removed across the Mississippi as had other southeastern tribes.

So another treaty was made at Payne's Landing in 1832 by which the Seminoles, at least a part of them, agreed to migrate within three years. The majority of the Indians, however, repudiated the treaty. Matters came to a crisis in November, 1835, when Amathia, a chief who had signed the treaty and received his share of the money for doing so, was shot by a party under the leadership of Micanopy, the head-chief, and Osceola, a half-breed war-leader.

Gen. A. R. Thompson, agent for the Seminoles, exerted all pressure possible to get the Seminoles to agree to the removal and during a council became so angry with Osceola that he ordered the Seminole leader arrested and held in irons. Enraged at this treatment Osceola, while agreeing to sign the treaty, plotted revenge on the agent.

Removing his people to places of safety, Osceola and his warriors began attacks on the white settlements. Troops were concentrated in Florida to protect the settlers and force the removal of the Seminoles. On December 24, 1835, an expedition of 108 officers and men, commanded by Maj. Francis L. Dade, set out from Fort Brooks to meet a force from Fort King for a punitive expedition against the Seminoles.

Four days later Dade's force reached the banks of the Withlacoochee river. What took place there—and tragic though it was, it is one of tales of high heroism in the annals of the American army—is recorded on the side of a monument which stands on the grounds of the United States Military academy at West Point, N. Y. It reads: "To commemorate the battle of the 28th of December, 1835, between a detachment of 108 United States troops and the Seminoles of Florida in which all of the detachment save three fell without an attempt to retreat."

On the same day Osceola made a daring raid against Fort King, killed and scalped General Thompson and four others who were dining at a house outside the fort and made his escape. As the result of this and the Dade tragedy a great outcry went up all over the country for the extermination of the Seminoles. But officer after officer sent against the Indians failed to crush them and at last General Jessup, spurred on by this cry, forever sullied his name as a soldier by seizing Osceola while holding a conference with him under a flag of truce and sending him away to prison.

Osceola died in Fort Moultrie, Fla., on January 30, 1838. But even the loss of their leader did not break the spirit of the Seminoles. The war dragged on for four years more before the Indians finally acknowledged defeat in August, 1842. It had lasted for nearly eight years at a cost of the lives of 1,500 soldiers and nearly as many civilians, not to mention a money cost of \$20,000,000!

The Seminoles who were removed to Oklahoma became known as the Seminole Nation, one of the "Five Civilized Tribes." Even with the removal of nearly 4,000 Seminoles in 17 different parties between 1836 and 1842, some 300 remained in the fastnesses of the Everglades at the close of the war. There was still some trouble with them later and in 1858 Chief Billy Bowlegs and 160 of his followers were sent west. But there still remained approximately 100 Seminoles who refused to leave their ancestral home and from these are descended the 400-odd Seminoles who live in Florida today.

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MILE A MINUTE CROCHET COLLAR

By GRANDMOTHER CLARK



Crocheted collars are becoming more popular each day. They are very attractive and add so much to personal appearance. The collar shown here received its name from the combination of crocheted stitches that work up very fast. The term "mile a minute" has been applied to crocheted work of this type for many years. The work on this collar is very simple and it costs very little to be the proud maker of this pretty dress accessory. Package No. 718 contains sufficient

white "Mountain Craft" crochet cotton to complete this collar, also instructions how to make it.

Send us 25c and you receive this package by mail postpaid. Instructions only will be sent for 10c. Address—HOME CRAFT COMPANY, Department B, Nineteenth and St. Louis Avenue, St. Louis, Mo. Enclose a stamped addressed envelope for reply when writing for any information.

Roman Substitute for the Modern Newspaper

Ancient Rome had a "Stock Exchange," and almost every citizen in the Eternal City, in the Second century B. C., owned shares in some joint stock company.

These Roman corporations were formed to collect taxes, loan money, construct public works, and exploit the mines seized by the conquering armies of the Caesars in Gaul, Spain, Africa and Asia.

It is hard to see how the Romans got on without stock quotations in the newspapers, but Caesars' publication of the Acta Diurna, or proceedings of the senate and assembly, would take the place of our newspapers, and the crowds which gathered at the points where these documents were posted simply parallel the throngs that collect in front of a bulletin in the window of a newspaper office today.

Couriers were constantly arriving from the agents of corporations in

the provinces with the latest news of industrial and financial enterprises.

There is no evidence of an organized Roman stock exchange, but there was a row of banking offices along one side of the Forum which probably did a brisk business in stock loans.

Rome had its speculators as we have today, and in 191 B. C. a character in a play referred to a "corner in grain." There was also an "oil scandal" in Rome when speculators tried to gain control of the olive oil market.—Pearson's Weekly.



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