

PART FOUR

FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE



FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE



Please be sure to read Part One before going through this section. It contains information necessary to use this and other Inquiry Boxes and to visit the Museum.



To see individual items in the Florida's Seminole People Inquiry Box, visit the Museum's website at www.flmnh.ufl.edu.

FLORIDA SEMINOLE PEOPLE



FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE



Frequently Asked Questions about Florida's Seminole People

Who are they and where did they come from?

The Seminoles are Native American people who still live in Florida today.

The Seminoles are a mixture of native people and refugees who came to Florida from the lower southeastern part of America. By the early 1700s, the early native populations in Florida were greatly reduced in number because of disease, warfare, and slavery. Florida was largely uninhabited. Native people in the lower southeast were also under great pressure from the Europeans. With encouragement from the local Spanish government, southeastern native people began migrating to Florida. Other refugees, including African Americans, also migrated to Florida.

These early immigrants were called "cimarrones," which meant wild or untamed in Spanish. The name then became "Simanoli," which connoted emigrant or frontiersman among the Indian people. It was eventually accepted as "Seminole" and referred to all Indian people in Florida. The name has also been translated as runaway, renegade, pioneer, adventurer, separatist, and freeman.

The name Seminole first appeared in documents in the 1760s. This reflected the continuing migration of the native Creek people into Florida from the early 1700s.

Between 1817 and 1858 there were three wars between the Seminole people and the U.S. government. The Seminole never conceded defeat in any of the wars. However, more than 3,000 Seminole people were captured and deported to Oklahoma. A few hundred evaded capture and survived in the remote areas of southern Florida's Everglades. These are the ancestors of today's Florida Seminole and Miccosukee people.

Today the name refers to one group of Native Americans in Oklahoma and three groups in Florida. Only one group in Florida is officially "The Seminole Tribe of Florida." Another group in Florida is officially the "Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida." It is a culturally similar group that chose not to apply for federal status with the Seminole Tribe of Florida in 1957. However, it later received federal recognition as the Miccosukee Tribe. The last group is a small independent group that has not sought federal recognition. They are culturally related to the Seminoles and Miccosukees.

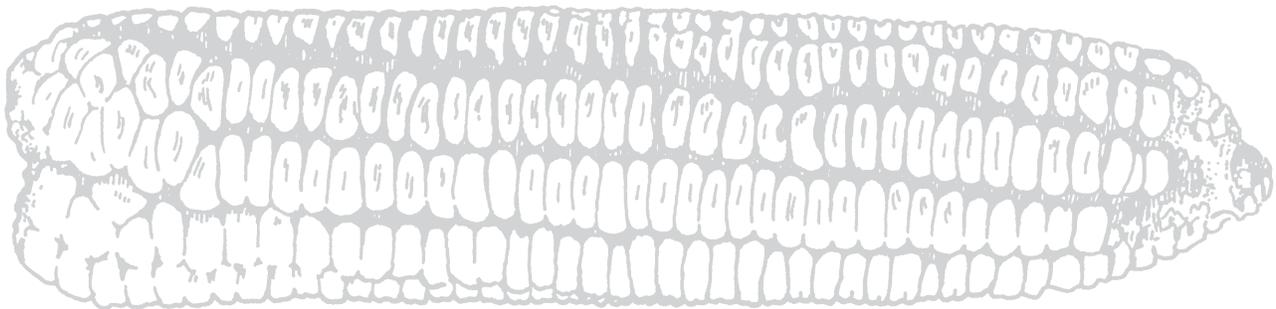
Where do the Seminoles live today?

Most members of Florida's Seminole tribe live on six reservations. There are approximately 2,500 members. The reservations are located around South Florida: Hollywood (where the tribal headquarters is), Big Cypress, Brighton, Immokalee, Tampa, and Ft. Pierce (the newest reservation). Seminoles also live elsewhere in Florida and across the nation. Large numbers live in Oklahoma. They are the descendants of those forced west by the U.S. government.

What kind of houses do they live in?

Today most Seminoles live in houses like other Americans.

A few Seminoles still live in the traditional chickee. A chickee is an open-sided house made of cypress poles with a palm-thatch roof. It is the house that early Seminoles lived in for many years in isolated hammocks.



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What did they eat?

Early Seminole people depended on hunting and fishing like other Florida Indian people.

They grew gardens of corn, beans, squash, Indian potato, and a type of pea. They also gathered wild plants like coontie, the root of which was used to make flour.

The Seminole also raised livestock like cattle and hogs.

Today they eat the same kinds of food that everyone else does. But they also enjoy some traditional foods.

What kind of clothing did they wear?

Early Seminoles wore the traditional clothing of southeastern native people. As they moved south, their clothing was adapted to the warmer, more humid climate. They also adopted some elements of European clothing.

In the 1880s, sewing machines became available to the Seminoles. The women started to sew with the machines instead of sewing by hand. By the 1920s, the old appliques became patchwork that was sewn into the cloth rather than on top of it.

How did they travel?

Seminoles used dugout canoes as their primary means of transportation because of the extensive waterways that existed in the Everglades. As always, people walked, and horses were useful when available.

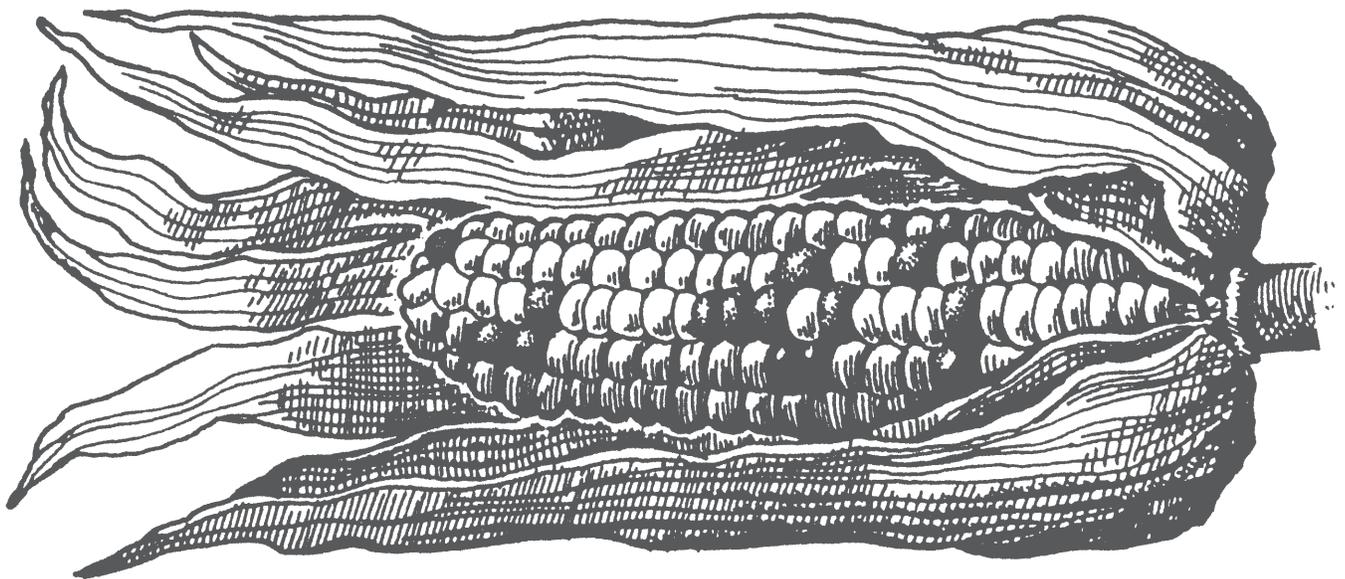
Today Seminoles use mostly cars and trucks.

How do we know about these people and their environment?

Our knowledge of early Seminoles comes primarily from the records of the Spanish, British, and Americans.

Accounts also come from visitors like William Bartram and from archaeological evidence found at sites like Payne's Town, Cuscowilla, Ft. King, Ft. Brooke, Powell's Town, Oven Hill, and Talahaschte.

Today, Seminoles share their culture through many different avenues. They have a website at www.seminoletribe.com, publish a newspaper called the *Seminole Tribune*, and also have two museums located at the headquarters in Hollywood and on the Big Cypress reservation.





FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE

INQUIRY BOX CHECKLIST

8 1/2 x 11 Laminated Cards

- Picture contents cards
- Map of southeastern United States
- Woman sewing
- Cattle herd
- Ball stick game
- Woman with mortar and pestle
- Coontie plant

Artifacts

- Sweetgrass basket
- Seminole doll
- Branding iron
- Sofkee spoon
- Wooden canoe
- Ball stick
- Mortar
- Pestle
- Seed jar
- Ear of corn
- Smilax root
- Flag
- Children's vest and/or skirt and patchwork sample
- Newspaper

Books and Video

- Legends of the Seminoles* (Jumper)
- Seminoles: Days of Long Ago* (Mulder)
- Native Americans in Florida* (Wickman)
- Seminole Colors* (Seminole Indian Artists)
- Seminole* (30 minutes)

Word Cards

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> chickee | <input type="checkbox"/> reservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cimarrones | <input type="checkbox"/> Seminole |
| <input type="checkbox"/> La Florida | <input type="checkbox"/> Simanoli |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Miccosukee | <input type="checkbox"/> sofkee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> replica | |

Game

- 30+ bean bags
- 30+ laminated word cards
- Laminated directions card



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INQUIRY BOX CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Laminated Southeastern United States Map

Trace the history of the Seminole people to Florida, note reservation locations, and/or pinpoint familiar landmarks.

Ear of Corn; Jar of Beans and Squash and Pumpkin Seeds

These represent basic Seminole crops. Corn is the most important. Crops were grown again after the Seminoles' lives became more settled. During the war years and the first years in the Everglades, farming was not practical. These were lean years, and the Seminoles relied more on wild food. See also sofkee spoon, mortar and pestle, and picture of woman with mortar and pestle.

Coontie Plant

Coontie (from the Mikasuki word *konti*) is a tropical cycad of the scientific genus *Zamia*. Both Seminoles and earlier Florida people ate the root after processing. Coontie had to be washed, boiled, and fermented before it was safe to eat. It was prepared by grinding it into flour for use as a staple carbohydrate. If you want to view a whole plant, see the FLMNH's ancient plant garden outside the front entrance.

Sofkee Spoon

Our sofkee spoon is a miniature replica of a wooden ladle that always accompanied an ever-ready pot of thin corn soup (sofkee). The spoon's shape is somewhat unique. There is a slight bend halfway up the handle. In full size, it would be about 18" long. Ours was made by a Seminole woodcarver. One recipe for sofkee says to add 1 cup of grits to 6 cups of water and cook until milky in color.

Mortar and Pestle

This miniature replica represents a large mortar and pestle like the one shown in the picture of the woman with the mortar and pestle near the chickee. The original tools were made from oak. Large ones were

used for grinding large quantities of corn. Smaller ones were used for small quantities and other food items.

The pestle is held with the heavy end up for increased leverage. Folklore says that only a family with multiple daughters could have a large mortar and pestle.

Laminated Picture of Woman with Mortar and Pestle

Note the relative size of the picture's contents and that the heavy end of the pestle is up. Also note the woman's dress, necklace, hairstyle, and chickee.

Branding Iron

Seminole cowboys would have used this piece of equipment in their cattle ranching. The original cattle were inherited from abandoned Spanish ranches on the La Chua prairie. The Seminole people probably stopped raising cattle during the Seminole wars. In the 1920s the federal government shipped drought-starved western cattle to Florida. This gave the Seminole another opportunity to start cattle enterprises.

Laminated Picture of Cowboys Working Cattle at Pens

This picture depicts a modern Seminole cattle operation.

Chickee (chikíe, pronounced chi-gét in Mikasuki)

Chickees come in two styles. One has a raised wooden floor and was used for sleeping, storage of goods, and sometimes eating. The floor raises the inhabitants and goods above the soggy ground. It allows air to circulate above and below the floor and keeps some animals out. The lower roof sides provide protection against the weather, but still allow good air circulation. The other style of chickee has no floor. The roof is only a covering from weather to protect fires, cooks, and kitchen goods. Both styles were made from cypress logs and palmetto fronds. In the laminated pictures, note the chickee in back of the woman with the mortar and pestle and the chickee over the woman who is making patchwork using an old sewing machine.





Dugout Canoe

The canoe was “as important to [Seminole] life as the horse would later become to the Plains Indians,” according to Patricia R. Wickman in *Seminole Colors*, particularly after the Seminole moved into the Everglades. A full-sized canoe would have been made from a cypress log. Cypress was plentiful in swamps. Because the tree grew in water, it did not rot easily and could be “sunk” when necessary. The boat was built in two sizes: one size for carrying a single person and another size for carrying an entire household and its contents. The canoe was propelled with a pole. The larger canoe may have been fitted with a sail in addition to the pole. The main purpose of the canoe was transportation since the Seminoles were not a major fishing culture. Some of the Inquiry Box miniature canoes were made by one of the Seminole’s last traditional canoe-makers, Henry John Billie.

Ball Stick

The traditional ball game was played in some version by many southeastern tribes. Hitting a tall, slim pole with a hard tennis ball-sized sphere that is thrown with a small tennis racket-like stick scores points. The game is played on many occasions, including the Seminole’s Green Corn Dance. Rules vary with location and occasion.

Laminated Picture of Ball Game

Note the dress of men and women. The women have no sticks and have bare feet. Can you tell from this picture whether those are traditional factors in the game?

Legends of the Seminoles, by Betty Mae Jumper

There are two Seminole languages, and both are based in the oral tradition. Jumper is a former tribal chairwoman who has gathered and had illustrated some of the stories that she remembers. She says that stories were usually told by grandmothers at night around a fire to teach children. “The Corn Lady” is long, but it has been successfully used with fourth grade classes. Shorter stories, suitable for reading aloud, are noted inside the front cover of the book.

Child’s Patchwork Vest and/or Skirt

Connie Gowens and Linda Jim Seminole Indian Bird Clan made many of the Seminole clothing items. Red, white, black, and yellow are considered powerful colors. Shirts, jackets, and skirts are common Seminole-made garments. Patchworks are distinctive bands of designs that are made of colorful strips of cloth. Large strips are cut into smaller strips and sewn together into a pattern. Patchwork became possible when hand-driven sewing machines became available in the late 1800s. Better machines were introduced in the 1920s. Earlier Seminole garments were just bands of colorful cloth without a pattern or design.

Laminated Picture of Woman with Sewing Machine

In addition to the old sewing machine, note the woman’s dress with cape, her necklaces, and the poles of the chickee above her. The cape was probably an adaptation of an earlier ruffled garment: a long-sleeved blouse. A lightweight cape over a sleeveless blouse would have been cooler in the warm climate of South Florida. However, it still offered protection against the sun and insects.

Palmetto Doll

The body of the doll is made from palmetto fibers. She is dressed in the traditional Seminole style: her dress has bands of cloth and not patchwork; she wears necklaces; her hair is arranged in the old style. A young girl was given her first necklace by the age of 12 and received another one each year. As a mature woman, she began removing one a year. The doll’s hairdo is not a hat. It is hair arranged over a frame to appear like a wide-brim hat. This creative hair design resembles a hat, but is distinctly Seminole.

Sweetgrass Basket

Other materials have been used by the Seminoles to make baskets, but the decorated sweetgrass basket is now the most common. These baskets are usually made for the tourist trade. It is becoming harder to find sweetgrass in South Florida. It is harvested only during certain times of the year and in limited locations.



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Seminole Flag

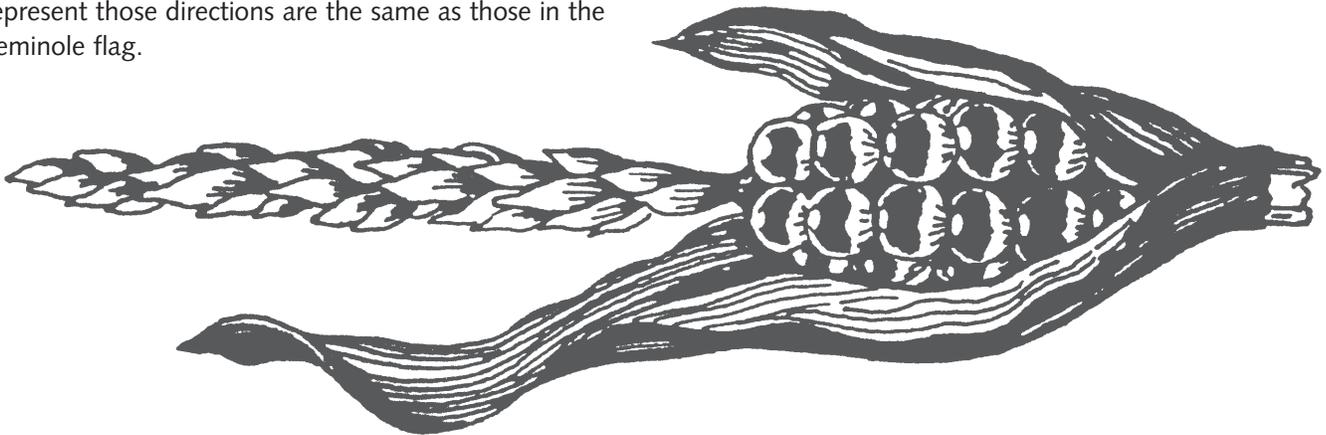
The Seminole Tribe of Florida currently uses this flag even though the Tribe has not officially adopted it. The four traditional colors represent the four points of the compass. East is yellow. North is red. West is black. South is white. The central seal represents the tribal council that leads the Tribe and includes a fire and a chickee.

The Seminole Tribune

"The Voice of the Unconquered" reports current and historical news of interest to members and friends of the Seminole culture. "The Unconquered" refers to the fact that none of the three wars fought between the U.S. and the Seminole resulted in a formal surrender.

Miccosukee Flag

It is shown on the reverse of the Seminole Flag. The Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida adopted this flag in 1962. According to Miccosukee belief, life spins in a circle starting in the east and moving to the north, to the west, and to the south. The colors that represent those directions are the same as those in the Seminole flag.

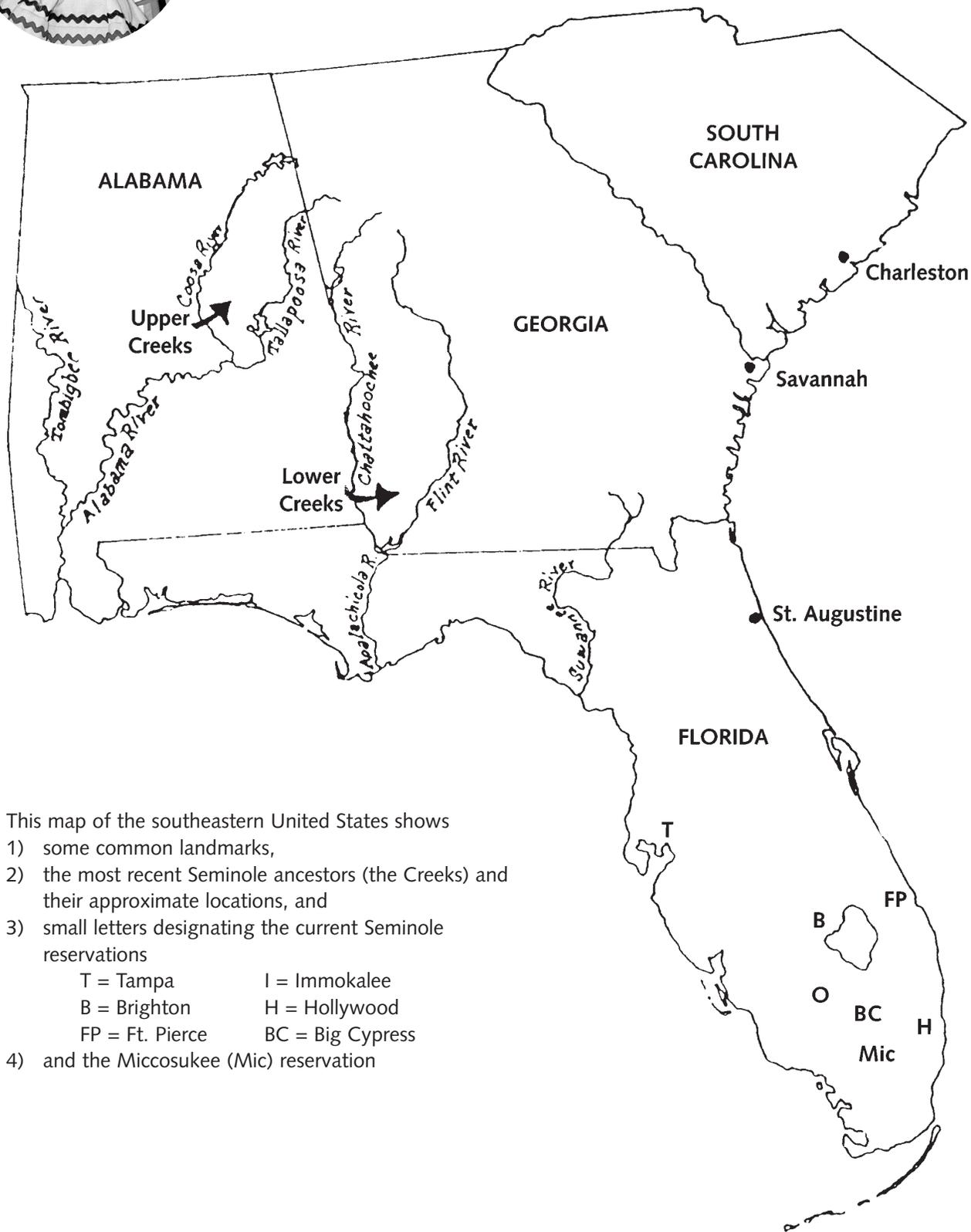


KEY WORDS

appliqués
chickee
Creek
emigrant/immigrant
hammock
Miccosukee
migration
refugee
reservation
sofkee



FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE



- This map of the southeastern United States shows
- 1) some common landmarks,
 - 2) the most recent Seminole ancestors (the Creeks) and their approximate locations, and
 - 3) small letters designating the current Seminole reservations

T = Tampa	I = Immokalee
B = Brighton	H = Hollywood
FP = Ft. Pierce	BC = Big Cypress
 - 4) and the Miccosukee (Mic) reservation

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Photos of traditional Seminole clothing



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INQUIRY BOX CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Teachers may have students engage in the following activities.

1. Visit the Seminole Tribe's website: www.seminoletribe.com. Report to your class what you found there.
2. Visit the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on the Big Cypress reservation in person or online. What does the museum's name mean?
3. Write a paragraph about one way that life changed for the Seminoles after they moved from Georgia and Alabama to southern Florida.
4. Using a map of Florida, find three of the six Seminole reservations. What towns are they near? Explain the route you would take to get to the closest one.
5. Write a story that explains why you think the sofkee spoon has a bend in it, or why the raccoon looks like he is wearing a mask.
6. Seminoles enjoy the traditional ball game common to southeastern native people. There were differences in the game between each tribe. Sometimes two towns would challenge each other. Play was so vigorous that players would be hurt, or even killed. Today's version of the ball game involves only one pole and play is not so fierce. Both men and women can play. With the right equipment, you can play also.

Equipment

A pole that is 25-30 feet high
Masking tape
A tennis ball
Paper and pencil to keep score

Version One

- Mark the pole about 10 feet from the top with masking tape.
- Players need to stand back 5 feet from the pole.
- Each player has 5 turns to throw the ball at the pole.
- If the ball hits the very top of the pole, the player gets 4 points.
- If the ball hits above the tape, the player gets 2 points.
- If the ball hits below the tape, the player gets 0 points.
- A referee may be needed to judge exact ball locations.

Version Two

- Divide the players into 2 teams. Proceed as above.
- The team with the most points wins.

Version Three

- Players can score only by hitting the top of the pole.
- Players are divided into two teams.
- The ball is a hard tennis ball.
- The players need a throwing stick. It should have a rounded, woven basket at one end for throwing the ball.
- Players use one or two sticks and throw the ball at the top of the pole from anywhere on the field.
- The first team to reach a pre-set number of points wins.



FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE



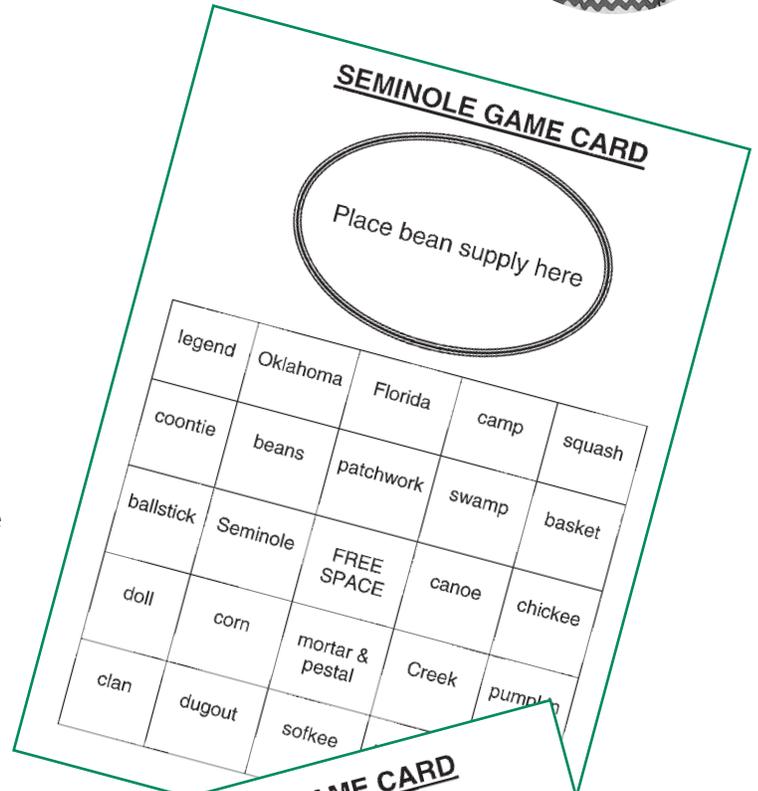
Inquiry Box Seminole Game – words and instructions

1. The object of the game is to cover (with a bean) five words in a row down, across, or diagonally. If time allows, you might ask for ALL words to be covered. Students should say "Seminole" when they have reached the announced goal.
2. The leader may simply call out these words, or, where possible, show the objects in the Inquiry Box. If you are showing the objects only, note that a) either "canoe" or "dugout" (or both) would satisfy for that object, and b) squash, pumpkin, and beans are all noted in the seed jar.

beans	coontie	Oklahoma
patchwork	Spanish	mortar & pestle
canoe	dugout	squash
Seminole	corn	basket
sofkee	pumpkin	camp
clan	swamp	Florida
Creek	branding iron	doll
chickee	ball stick	legend

This game could be used as an ongoing activity as you talk about objects, or as a review activity, or with a class that needs a group interactive.

There are 30+ game cards and 30+ bean bags (25 beans each) per Inquiry Box. Please try to return all beans and bags to the Inquiry Box after use.





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SEMINOLE GAME CARD

Place bean supply here

Creek	Oklahoma	Seminole	legend	ballstick
squash	mortar & pestal	sofkee	swamp	doll
Florida	pumpkin	FREE SPACE	spanish	chickee
canoe	dugout	patchwork	basket	beans
corn	coontie	camp	branding iron	clan

Samples of the laminated playing cards which may be found in the Inquiry Box.

SEMINOLE GAME CARD

Place bean supply here

swamp	ballstick	patchwork	legend	beans
clan	mortar & pestal	sofkee	Creek	corn
camp	pumpkin	FREE SPACE	spanish	chickee
canoe	Florida	Oklahoma	Seminole	coontie
squash	dugout	basket	branding iron	doll

SEMINOLE GAME CARD

Place bean supply here

patchwork	Oklahoma	Florida	beans	clan
chickee	branding iron	spanish	swamp	camp
ballstick	Seminole	FREE SPACE	coontie	basket
sofkee	mortar & pestal	corn	doll	pumpkin
squash	dugout	Creek	legend	canoe

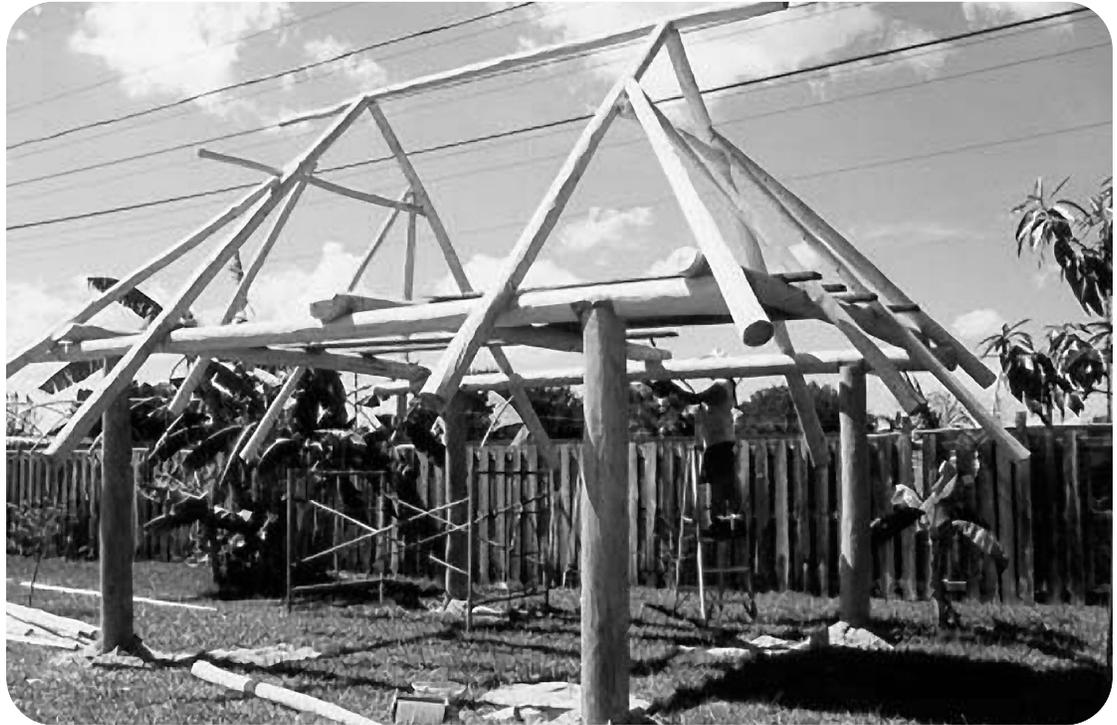
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Photos of modern chickee construction



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FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE



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FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE

ACTIVITY ONE - WORD PUZZLE



B E A N S Q U I R R E L S E I
 B D E E R Y P K Z P U C A X Q
 E Y E N O H A O F E O N E U K
 R W N U T S M I L A X U P M Q
 R Y H S A U Q S A C N S V P I
 I K M J G C C W C H N R F Q O
 E P B E I O O X O E F M K A M
 S U N F L O W E R S Q X R S L
 L M H L L N S S N E K F R M J
 E P O T A T O E S G O H E E W
 M K G V F I X L Q N V H O J G
 H I E J H E B T Y A J F Y G J
 Z N Z C V C C R U R I N R E G
 K U N U E I S U L O G Q C K C
 Z V Y H D R V T E O O U B C O

- | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| acorns | nuts | sunflowers |
| alligators | oranges | turtles |
| beans | peaches | |
| berries | peas | |
| coontie | potatoes | |
| corn | pumpkin | |
| cows | rice | |
| deer | smilax | |
| hogs | squash | |
| honey | squirrels | |





FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE

ACTIVITY TWO - WORD PUZZLE

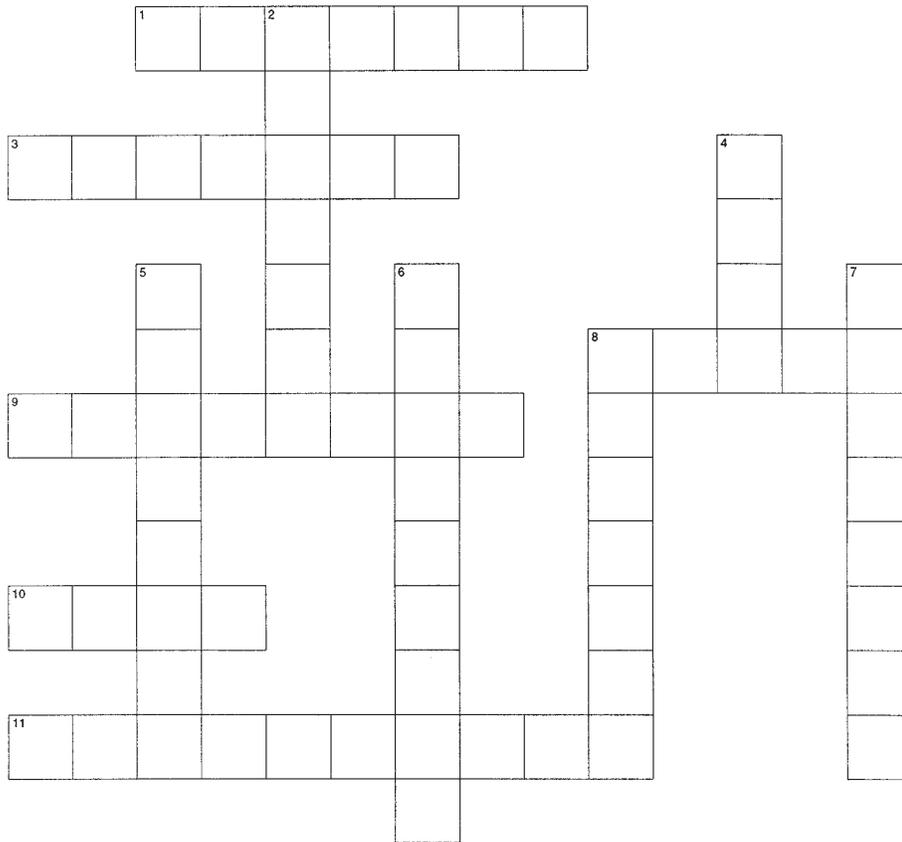
C H I C K E E F L A G T P B C
 B A L L S T I C K S H E A A O
 E F L O E D A H S E R N T R O
 A I D O N D S A E A O S C T N
 N A N E I A R K M R N O H R T
 S A G R U G U O I I M F W A I
 C E O Q T S H G K E P K O M E
 L L S E O A N P L M E E R U S
 F E E C L I M O A E O E K U M
 O W C K D U N W R L F R E N T
 S I O N P I S C A T M L T U C
 M U A N M B A S K E T E O A O
 R R A E S P A N I S H G T A R
 B L S T R I B E E L U H I T N
 C A M P S T O P R D O L L Y O

- | | | | |
|---------------|---------|------------|------------|
| ballstick | clan | legend | Seminole |
| Bartram | coontie | Miccosukee | sofkee |
| basket | corn | mortar | Spanish |
| beans | Creek | Oklahoma | squash |
| branding iron | doll | palmetto | swamp |
| camp | dugout | patchwork | sweetgrass |
| canoe | flag | pestle | tribe |
| chickee | Florida | pumpkin | |



FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE

ACTIVITY THREE - CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ball game
canoe
chickee
clan
corn
cypress
Florida
Osceola
palmetto
patchwork
Seminole
sweetgrass

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Across

- 1. an outspoken Seminole war leader
- 3. the state where displaced southeastern Indians found a new home
- 8. the long, narrow boat used by the Seminole; sometimes called a dugout

- 9. the kind of tree used in making Seminole dolls and chickees
- 10. a group of related Seminoles
- 11. a kind of native grass used for making baskets today

Down

- 2. a traditional Florida Seminole house
- 4. a Seminole food staple

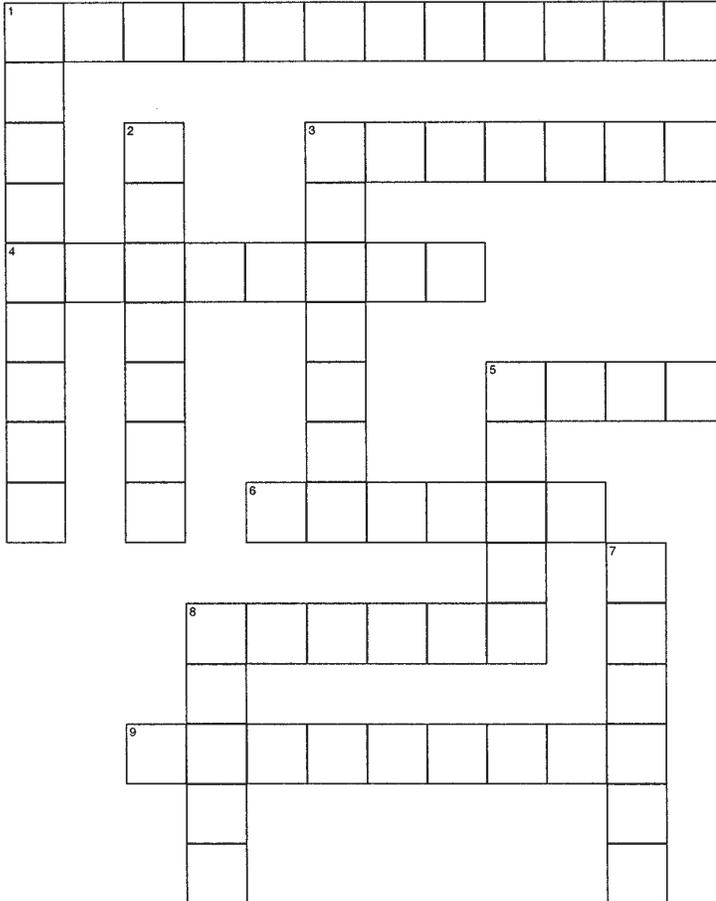
- 5. a traditional Seminole competition
- 6. a distinctive clothing style created by the Seminole in the 1920s
- 7. one of two Native American tribes based in Florida today
- 8. the kind of tree used in making Seminole canoes and chickees





FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE

ACTIVITY FOUR – CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ballstick
- basket
- branding iron
- canoe
- chickee
- coontie
- corn
- legend
- patchwork
- pumpkin
- Seminole
- sofkee
- swamp

Across

Down

1. Heated in a fire, this metal tool is used to identify cattle ownership.
3. A hut which is usually open on all sides but roofed with palm fronds.
4. Many believe this name for these Native Americans means runaway or wanderer.
5. This popular vegetable is sometimes called an ear.
6. A story that is passed down through generations.
8. A traditional food made of ground corn and water.
9. These pieces of colored cloth are sewn together into a design.

1. A traditional Seminole game which uses a round object and this tool to propel the round object.
2. This large orange fruit contains seeds and pulp in the center and is sometimes carved into jack-o-lanterns.
3. A native plant resembling a fern but having a root that can be processed into a starch.
5. A long narrow boat usually propelled by oars or a pole.
7. A container made by weaving grasses, palm fibers or vines.
8. Another word for the humid, soggy land that was home to early Native Americans in southern Florida.



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ACTIVITY FIVE – BREAK THE CODE



Break the code and discover the hidden message about the Seminole people

The code is hidden in the arithmetic answers below. Decipher the code for each word and replace the number with the word.

49	31	17	6	4	63	61
68	58	48	27	24		

The clues to break the code:

$8 \times 3 + 7 =$	and	$8 \times 8 - 1 =$	rattles
$3 \times 5 + 9 =$	dances	$7 \times 7 =$	Seminole
$8 \times 6 =$	during	$98 - 30 =$	their
$74 - 16 =$	legs	$3 \times 9 =$	traditional
$7 \times 3 - 4 =$	Miccosukee	$36 \div 9 =$	wear
$43 + 18 =$	on	$66 \div 11 =$	women





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ACTIVITY SIX – THE MAIZE MAZE

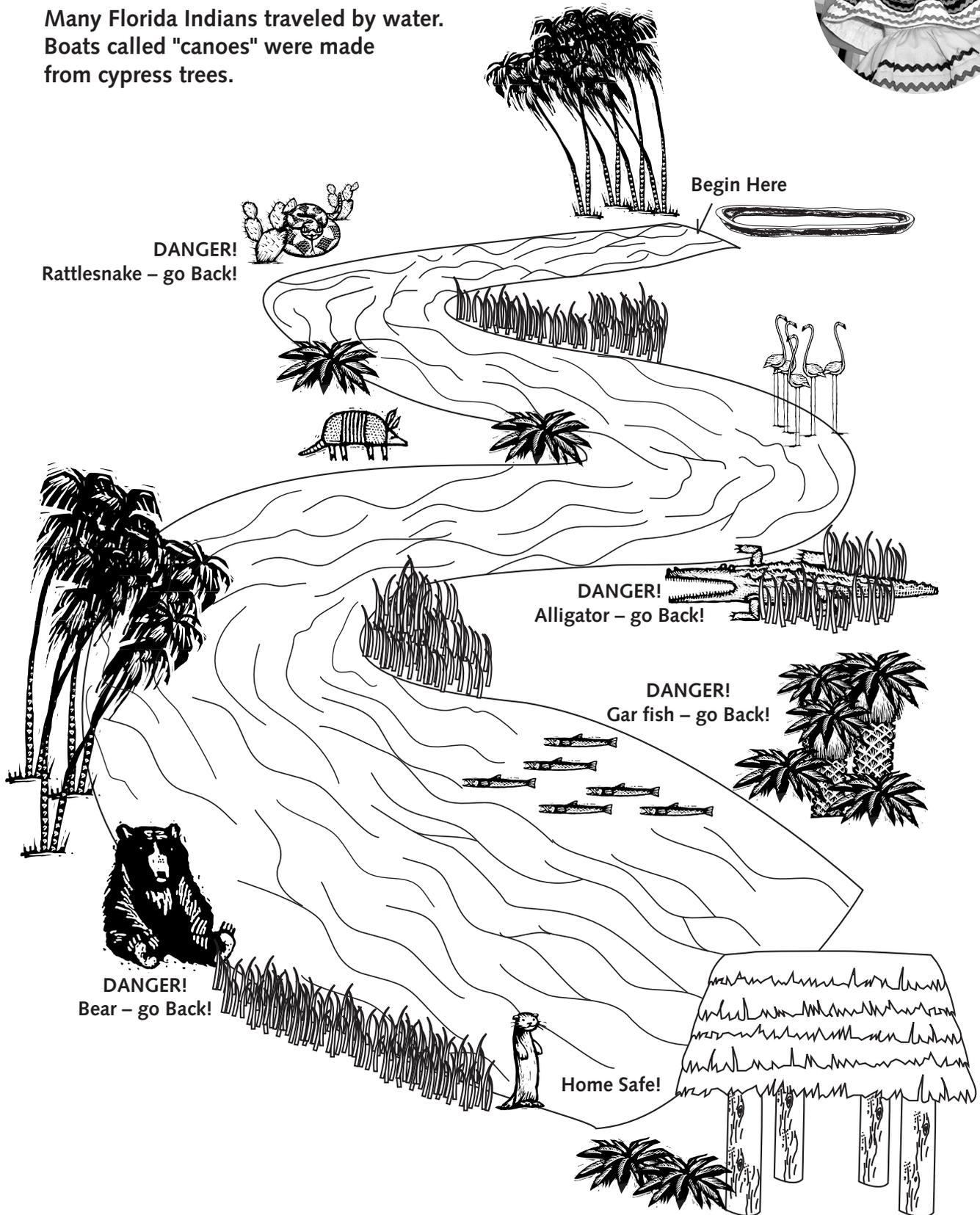
Maize, or corn, was an important food grown by the Seminole in Florida. It was first grown by other natives in the Americas. Can your pencil (or pen or colored pencil or crayon) "eat" its way from one end of the ear to the other?



FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE



Many Florida Indians traveled by water. Boats called "canoes" were made from cypress trees.



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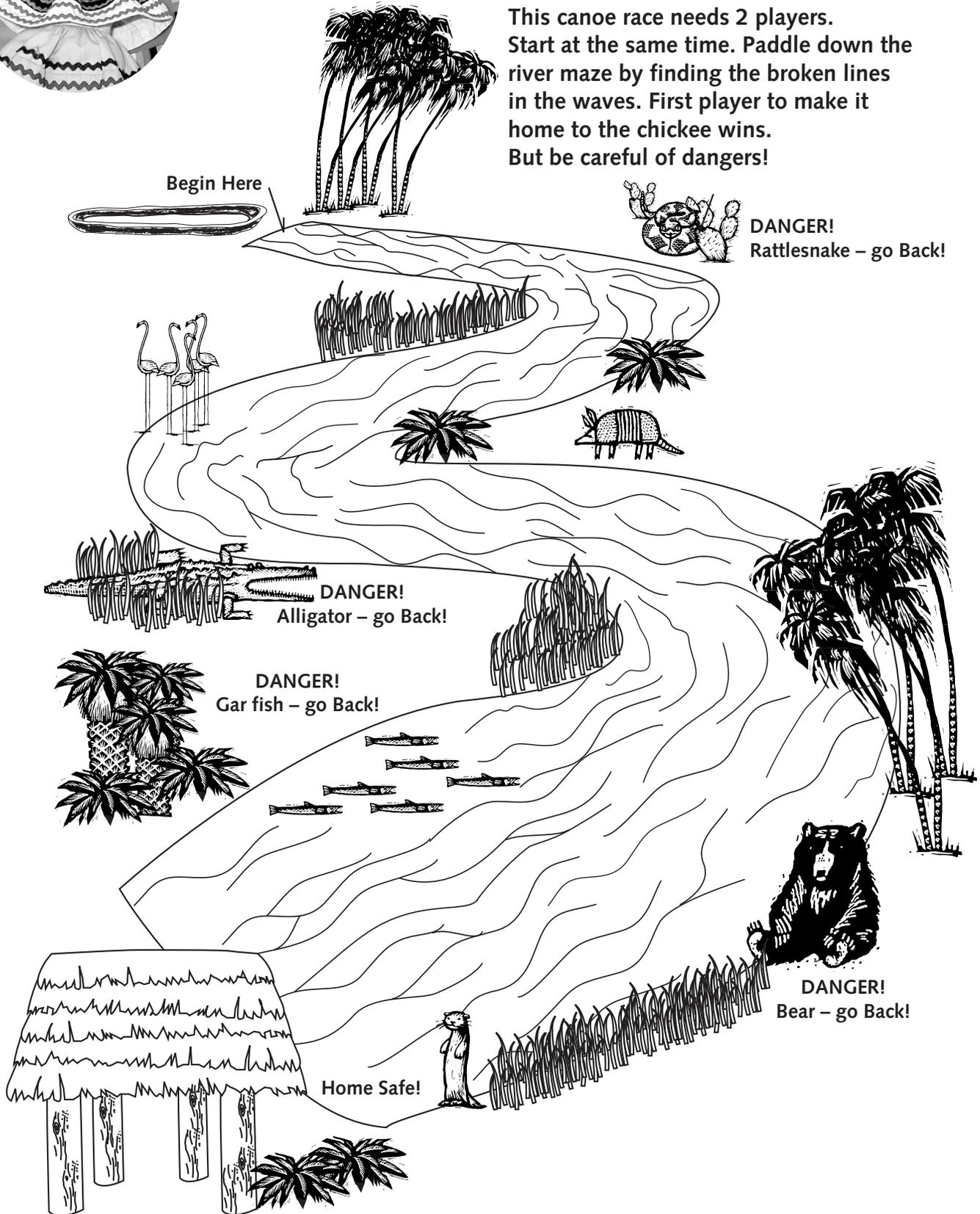
ACTIVITY SEVEN - TWO PLAYER CANOE RACE





FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE

This canoe race needs 2 players.
Start at the same time. Paddle down the
river maze by finding the broken lines
in the waves. First player to make it
home to the chickee wins.
But be careful of dangers!



FLORIDA'S SEMINOLE PEOPLE



Photo of Seminole patchwork

