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## Who was White Smoke?

**Belinda Brooks**

Franco Jose Pereda Montano, aka Chief White Smoke, was the first chief of the Butte Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux. He was baptized at the Basilica of Saint Joseph and Our Lady of the Heart Catholic Cathedral in Mexico City on March 10, 1778. His wife, Ana Maria Leal, aka Two Moons, was born farther north on the Pacific coastline in Sinaloa, Mexico on Feb. 13, 1782. Oral history doesn't tell how the couple arrived at the Texas Missions in San Antonio, but the archival records of the San Fernando Mission show their first son, Joseph Pereda Desadier, was born Feb. 10, 1798. Their child became the sec-

ond chief of the Butte Tribe, Chief Powder Face.

The Spanish Texas missions were intended to indoctrinate the indigenous people of that area with the Catholic religion and Spanish culture. The Spanish and church authorities lorded over the natives of the land. Too often, the indigenous patrons of the missions were abused and enslaved. These practices were the root cause of the indigenous people's desire to escape the harsh treatment of the missions created for their protection.

Life at the missions was everything that White Smoke loathed: suppression of his people's native customs, forced enculturation, and strict/rigid teach-

ings of Christianity. He waited until the birth of his child to escape. His plans were in order as his band of braves waited for his command.

Some ranchos built compounds to house Mission men and their families. In White Smoke's case, that worked to his advantage. When the time arrived, they escaped the rancho with a wagon and a small herd of horses. Leading up to the escape, White Smoke traded furs and horses with the French for guns and ammo. He timed their exodus so that it would give his band a head start. Their destination was the Louisiana bayou across the Red River where Buffalo roamed. Many of White

Smoke's family waited in the woodlands for his arrival.

White Smoke was a spiritual man. He believed that the Great Spirit was leading him to a place of green grass and buffalo. The band worked its way toward their destination, stealing and raiding when the opportunity arose. Weeks later, they crossed the Louisiana territorial line with horses, furs, and a stash of other contraband. White Smoke and his followers found the land of the Great Spirit. On this land, Bayou Bourbeaux, his people would live the life intended for them.

The adventures of White Smoke are told to honor him as the first chief of the Butte Tribe of Bayou



The Butte Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux will unveil a Louisiana Historical Marker Saturday, March 19 at 11 a.m. at 1458 Hwy 1226h. Grilled pork plates from Butte land will be sold as a fundraiser.

Bourbeaux. To read History page at more, go to the Chiefs' [ButteTribe.org](http://ButteTribe.org).