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Cherokee's Keetoowah Band visits Butte Tribe

Belinda Brooks
Members of the Keetoowah band of the Cherokee Nation visited the tribal land of Butte Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux. For the past five months, the team has traveled over 47,000 miles throughout the United States, bringing the Word of hope and peace to a hurting nation.

Jimmy Muskrat, Cherokee Nation Evangelist, was visiting a neighboring Winnfield church when he asked about the indigenous tribes within the local Louisiana area. He was told about the Natchitoches Parish tribe that recently came out of hiding after 200 years of protecting its history. Muskrat phoned Chief Rodger Collum and asked for an interview.

Chief Collum wel-

comed Muskrat to his home on Butte Tribal land. While there, Muskrat learned of the struggles of the descendants of White Smoke in Natchitoches Parish.

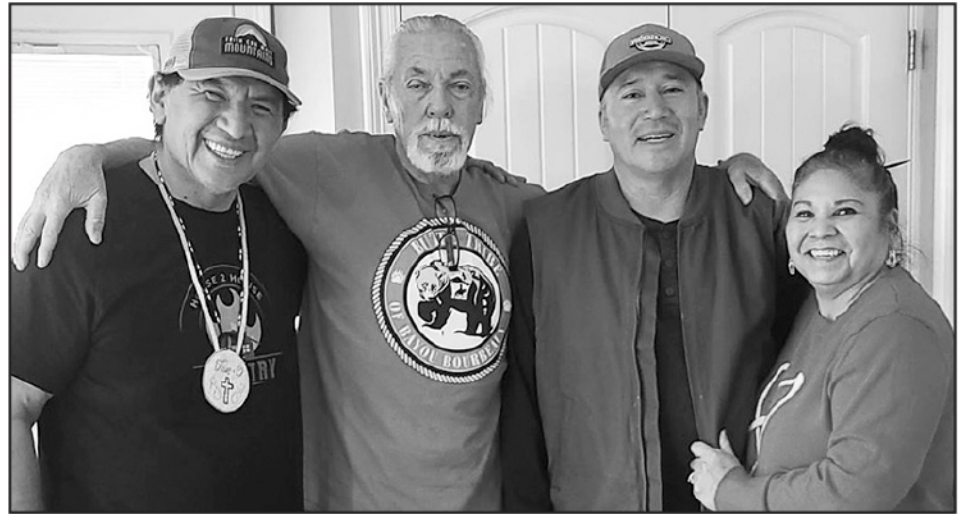
Collum spoke of the lineage of his tribe. The tribe's main bloodlines include Louisiana Chitimacha and Colonial Spanish Texas Mission Indians. Although sketchy about location, Caddo's bloodlines are also mixed within the tribe.

According to John R. Swanton (Source Material on the History and Ethnology of the Caddo Indians, 1942,) three Native American Confederacies spoke the primary language of Caddo: Kadohadacho Confederacy (Caddo tribes), Hasani Confederacy (Texas

tribes), and Natchitoches Confederacy (Natchitoches tribes.) To be called "Caddo" in the Louisiana (Natchitoches) or East Texas area is historically misrepresented by today's historians and misunderstood by common people. In these areas, Caddo refers to the "linguistics" of the historical indigenous people.

Therefore, in some cases where the ancestor is not linked to a specific tribe but has been identified as a Caddo "savage" in a baptismal or marriage record, it is unclear whether the ancestor in question was born of Caddo bloodline or if that ancestor was born into the tribe's mixed bloodline and spoke Caddo.

So how did Butte Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux get its name? Before the



Chief Rodger Collum of Butte Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux welcomed a tribal party of the Western Band of the Cherokee Federal Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux welcomed a tribal party of the Western Band of the Cherokee federal tribe to Butte lands. The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee evangelistic party requested an interview with Chief Collum to learn more of the tribal history of indigenous people of Natchitoches Parish. From left are: Evangelist Jimmy Muskrat, Chief Rodger Collum, Levi Catron and Starla Sanders. Not pictured are Jimmy Kather and Kamia Sanders.

tribe came out of hiding in April 2019, it was not named. The tribe hid its identity as Native Americans for over 200 years. Collum explained that due to the mixture of indigenous bloodlines, the tribe took the name of the sacred burial mound that its first chief, White Smoke, and his wife, Two Moons, are buried on, Butte Hill.

Butte Hill is located near Bayou Bourbeaux.

After years of avoiding United States forces, one day, they rode unexpectedly into Butte Tribe's village and rode off with eight native children. The US government took the "savage" children to assimilate them into civilized European ways.

When questioned about his visit, Muskrat stated, "Chief Collum has a heart for his people. He's real!" Muskrat was honored to visit Butte's tribal lands. He was thrilled to find a true tribe within the area with an oral history that guarded their ancestral land and mounds.

At 14, Jimmy Muskrat was one of the first Cherokee bike youth riders to travel the Trail of Tears in 1984. The ride at that time looked drastically different than it does today. The cyclists supported themselves. They toted their gear, handled mechanical

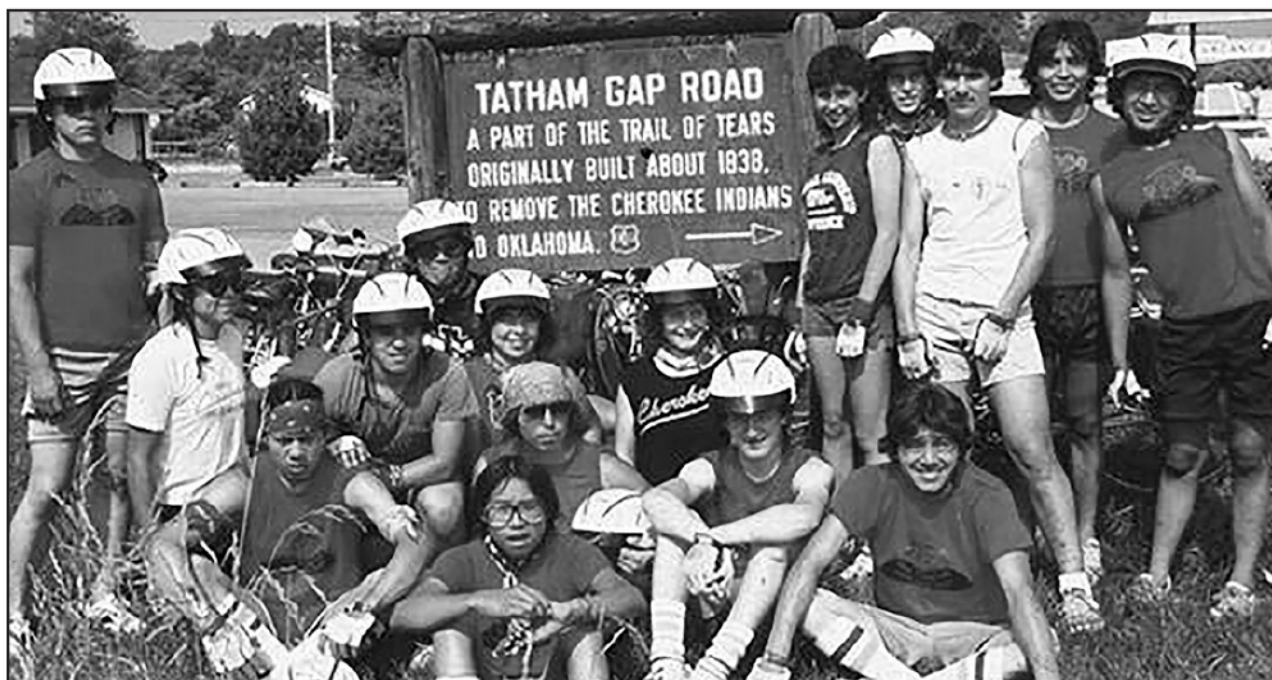
needs, and cooked their meals. The ride began in the mountains of Cherokee, NC, and ended approximately 850 miles later at the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma.

Chief Collum extended his invitation to the Western Band of the Cherokee Nation to visit Butte land anytime.

Butte Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux is a Louisiana non-profit organization. To learn more about the history of the tribe, go to buttribe.org.



Jimmy Muskrat cycling on the maiden voyage of the Trail of Tears in 1984. The Trip was approximately 850 miles.



In 1984 Jimmy Muskrat had the privilege of cycling on the trailblazing trip from the eastern to the western band of the Cherokee Nations. The group traveled the Trail of Tears route beginning at Cherokee, N.C. to Oklahoma.