



Butte Tribe History

Although Louisiana History speaks of the indigenous people of Natchitoches Parish, the details of precisely where they came from, who they were, and where they went remained a mystery for over 200 years. Who would have thought that one family on Bayou Bourbeaux held the secrets to all those questions? Additionally, only a handful of family members knew the secret.

In true Native American form, Chief Rodger Collum's elders chose him at the early age of five to carry on their indigenous ancestors' legacy and protect the tribal land of the family that lived on it. His elders told him he would know when the time was right to share his story.

The decision to share the Butte Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux's oral history was made on April 6, 2019. Over a hundred family members met at the banks of the Cane River on Main Street, Natchitoches, LA. The "Hidden Tribe of Natchitoches" revealed itself to an unknown public. Since the days of the first chief of the Butte Tribe, White Smoke, six chiefs have lived their entire lives and raised their families on Bayou Bourbeaux on Highway 1226 in the Pace and Trichell communities.

For Native Americans, tribal land is more than the dirt beneath their feet. The land itself is a sacred living being. Indigenous landmarks are scattered throughout Butte tribal lands. These Native American holy places shrouded themselves against public eyes for centuries. Several Native American mounds sprinkle the landscape throughout White Smoke's tribal lands. Butte Hill is the burial mound of White Smoke and his wife, Two Moons. His family buried him there standing up, holding his sacred pipe and coup stick.

Artifacts collected at Collum's Temple Mound prove the existence of the indigenous communities of that area. Indian trails led to and from the temple mound in every direction. Visitors to the villages were required to first stop at the temple mound to pray and leave gifts to the Great Spirit. Following the ritual, the villages welcomed their guests with open arms.

Native artifacts such as clay pottery bowls, spearheads, Kaolin trade pipes, tools, tomahawks, arrowheads, effigies, and much more bring excitement and dreams of the ancestral life that came before us.

When traveling the Indian trails, the natives would make a special stop at Jewel Springs. This mystic spring was a holy place for indigenous people who needed healing for various illnesses.

Another colorful surprise on Butte tribal land is the prairie "buffalo lick." The sand lick was built hundreds of years ago by area natives who hauled sand for six miles to the bayou's prairie land. First, buffalo would roll in the sand to rid themselves of biting insects. Then, hunters waited in the nearby forest to make their buffalo kills.

Other historical sites of the Butte Tribe include the Desadier Native American School, Pace School & Community Center, and the Christian Harmony Baptist Church, all located in the Pace Community in Natchitoches Parish. All buildings were constructed by natives on land donated by the chiefs' Desadier families.

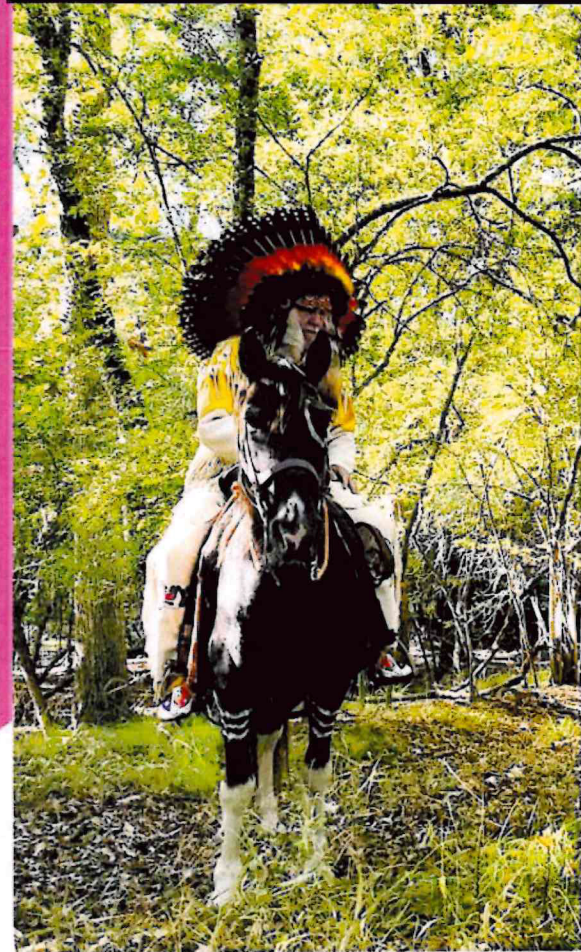
Unannounced, U.S. Military forces rode into the bayou's native village and left with eight children. The children were to be taken to Native American boarding schools to be assimilated into the European culture. However, the children were never returned. This event was the catalyst for the natives of the area to go undercover. The Desadier School for Native American children was built after the Civil War to prevent the abduction of native children by the American government. From that time until April 2019, the tribe became families and hid their tribal bloodlines from the public.



GUARDING TRIBAL LAND

THE ORAL HISTORY OF THE BUTTE TRIBE OF BAYOU BOURBEAUX

A FILM BY NYTN



Vision for Future Generations:

- Teach planting and harvesting by the moon cycle.
- Reveal ancient knowledge of natural remedies and medicinal properties.
- Instill knowledge that has been passed down by the elders.
- Respect and care for our elders and by doing and learning to respect ourselves as an essential part of the universe.

To ensure that honorable leaders, teachers and protectors arise from the mist of our tribe to lead and guide in ways of our elders, by being the action, legacy and voice of our past, present and future.

Our vision is to preserve our heritage, educate future generations, and honor our ancestors by continuing the Butte Tribe culture and traditions for many generations to come.



MISSION STATEMENT

We, the tribal members gather with the leader and council of the Butte Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux to embody the universal mission of all indigenous people and honor our forefathers.

We are called to protect our indigenous way of life that is vital to our existence. We will respect, protect and nurture our environment, land and waterways. As a tribe we will continue to be a positive factor and influence in our community while staying true to our heritage.

We are challenged to pass to our youth the same survival skills, knowledge and history as it was passed to us by our elders for generations.

About Butte Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux...

Butte Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux is a small rural Native American tribe in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana. Chief Rodger Lee Collum obtained the title of Chief from the tribal elders at the death of his grandfather, Chief Clarence Desadier.

The tribe has submitted a petition for federal recognition to the United State Bureau of Indian Affairs. Should the tribe be granted recognition, it will be the first federal tribe in North Louisiana.

Should you like to contribute to Butte Tribe and be a part of preserving the Native American history of Natchitoches Parish, gifts & donations can be received by PayPal or Venmo at buttetribe@gmail.com.

Our Outreach

Butte Tribe works in conjunction with the Louisiana Governor's Council, Division of Physical Fitness & Sports – Bureau of Minority Health Access and Promotions to develop minority health initiatives including cultural competency standards and multilingual communications under the guidance of Director Rudy Macklin.