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Butte Tribe pursues acknowledgment from Bureau of Indian Affairs

By Belinda Brooks
Chief Rodger Collum received correspondence from the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Office of Federal Acknowledgment on April 26, advising him that Butte Tribe's recently submitted narrative for federal acknowledgment would be published on the Federal Register and posted on the BIA website as Petition 402. (<https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/ofa/402-btbbb>)

The 70,000+ pages of the Butte Tribe petition for federal recognition were submitted to the BIA in March 2023.

The narrative is the document that states how Butte Tribe meets the requirements to be a federally recognized tribe. BIA's Office of Federal Acknowledgment will allow individuals and groups to send comments by September 27. After comments have been submitted, Butte Tribe will be allowed to respond.

The acknowledgment process is tedious and time-consuming. Should Butte Tribe be accepted as a federally acknowledged tribe, it will be the first tribe federally acknowl-

edged in North Louisiana.

Since the 1990s, Butte Tribe Vice-Chief Belinda Brooks' mission has been to find the secret roots of her Native American ancestors in Natchitoches Parish. Brooks' mother, Hazel Trichell-Brooks, inspired her genealogical research.

Her mother would always tell her how secretive the elders were about their bloodlines. They would not allow their children to speak any language but English; when the elders spoke of their past, they spoke in French.

The location of the Butte tribal land research area is Northeast of the city of Natchitoches, straight across the Red River from Grande Ecore. For years Brooks searched the Campti/Black Lake area without success.

Ancestors could be documented, but she found no evidence of tribal activity or oral history.

She heard of the Frederick Mound across from Black Lake near Prairie Lake. Her cousin, Rodger Collum, lived there. That's where the

mystery started to unfold.

Rodger Collum, the grandson of Clarence Desadier, had access to not only the Frederick Mound but to all the Native American archeological sites and mounds of Bayou Bourbeaux.

The oral history of the tribe had been passed down to him by tribal elders beginning at age five. His grandfather told him that he would know when the time was right to reveal the secrets of the family tribe.

For nearly 200 years, the mystery had been, where did the indigenous people of Natchitoches go? In April 2019, the Butte Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux came out of hiding as Chief Rodger Collum gifted his people with the story of their ancestors. For the next year and a half, Collum and Brooks spent weekends writing oral tribal history.

Everything started to align for the perfect federal petition team. In addition to Collum and Brooks, Estella Almond (tribal registrar) and Belinda "Bella" Haag (Tribe Secretary of State in charge of the petition regulations) committed to the arduous petition process. Massive documentation was provided to the BIA to prove the tribe's bloodline. The tribe claims a mixed Native American origin of Chitimacha, Spanish Texas Mission Indians, and Caddo.

To give readers a brief history, assumptions of the whereabouts of the Bayou Bourbeaux natives were many. Some said that they died off. Others said they relocated.

Louisiana historians and archaeologists acknowledged that Native Americans occupied the Bayou Bourbeaux area.

In November 1707, the French Missionary de Saint Cosme traveled to Mobile, the Louisiana Territory's capital. He was feared and hated by local Indians due to his violent mistreatment of indigenous enslaved people.

On the trail, he was hacked to death by a band of Chitimacha Indians. In response to the missionary's murder, French-Canadian explorer and soldier Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis attacked a small Chitimacha village near Mobile as the natives slept, killing the men and taking the women and children prisoners.

One of the captured children was Marie Theresa De La Grande Terre. Jacques Guedon dit Nantois, a French soldier, bought her as a slave. Years later, they moved to the fort at Natchitoches and married at Fort Adaes in 1721.

At this time, the priest gave her the Christian name of Marie Anne Theresa. Her last name, "De la Grande Terre," was French, meaning of the big land. Marie

Theresa De La Grande Terre was the primary Native American ancestor of the majority of Butte Tribe family members.

The Spanish enslaved many Teja/Texas Native Americans in the 18th-19th century. These captives were forced into the Spanish culture.

The Spanish government and missionaries planned to have the Native American people move into their missions and assume the Spanish culture and religion. After converting to Catholicism, the Indians would be considered "Espanol," not "Indios." History has much to say about our Mission Indian ancestors.

It is essential to know that our ancestors escaped the Spanish Missions, fearing future attacks by the Apache, Comanche, Osage, and Wichita Indians, who were raiding missions in search of horses, weapons, and better hunting grounds. Our ancestors ended up in Nacogdoches, and some went south to Opelousas. All, eventually, found their way home to Bayou Bourbeaux in Natchitoches Parish.

Within the Butte family, there are several names that would call attention to the Texas Mission Indian bloodline: Desadier, Perez, Cordova, Pardee, and Sanchez, to name a few. Documented ancestors are White Smoke and

Two Moons, Joseph Pereda Desadier and Marie Luisa Perez, Maria Vicenta Perez, Bernard Sanchez, Charles Carlo Cordova, Marie Porcilla Desadier, and others not mentioned here.

Caddo ancestors are Marie Jeannie of the Caddo and Anne of the Caddo.

Although the probability of receiving federal recognition is high, there are several phases the petition will have to complete to satisfy the BIA.

There are those tribes, both federally and locally, who will fight the federal acknowledgment of Butte Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux.

For federal tribes, it's a matter of prestige and money. They do not like the loss of the limelight. For the one local tribe, it's a matter of dislike and conceivably envy. Be assured, Butte Tribe is ready for the question-and-answer forums.

As the BIA acknowledges, it is not unusual for Native American tribes to squabble among themselves like all other cultures. What interests the BIA is a tribe that provides the requested narratives, documents, sources, and proof of lineage. Butte Tribe has done that with bells on!

Follow Butte Tribe online at buttribe.org and on Facebook. Butte Tribe invites everyone to enjoy its documentary on YouTube, "Guarding Tribal Land."



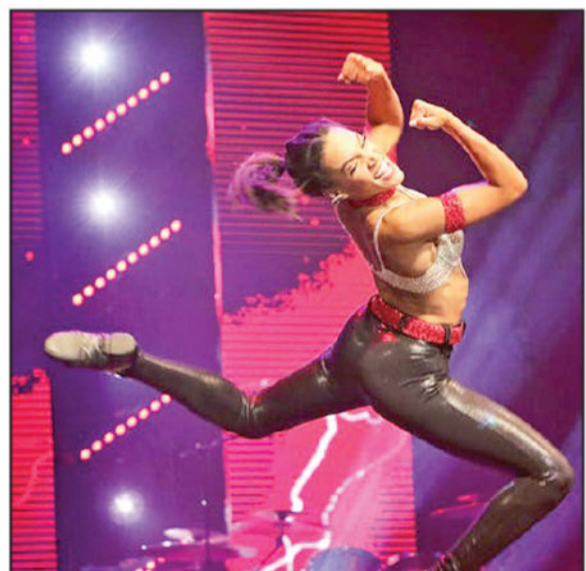
VADING IS A



Makenzie Scroggs' social impact initiative was Being True to Being You.



Makenzie won a preliminary competition of evening wear.



Makenzie Scroggs danced for her talent in the Miss Louisiana pageant.

Miss Natchitoches-City of Lights wins Miss Louisiana

Northwestern State dance major Makenzie Scroggs won the title of Miss Louisiana June 10 in Monroe. She will represent the state in the Miss America Pageant later this year.

Scroggs, who is from Marksville, was Miss Natchitoches City of Lights. She was first runner up in the contest last year competing as Miss Northwestern - Lady of the Bracelet.

Scroggs won the crown and title and a \$10,000 scholarship. In the preliminaries, Scroggs won the \$1,000 Glenda Moss Memorial Passion for Dance Scholarship and \$500 for evening wear. Scroggs is pursuing a degree in dance and was recently named captain of the NSU dance team,

Demon Dazzlers.

Scroggs' social impact initiative is Being True to Being You, an organization she started at 15 with the goal of raising confidence in young women and girls. She's been able to talk to hundreds about the importance of confidence through her self-development workshops. Through the program, she said she hopes to instill confidence in people of all ages.

As Miss Louisiana, Scroggs will take a year off from her studies. She will enter the Miss American Pageant in December and make numerous public appearances throughout the state.

Scroggs is the second NSU student to become Miss Louisiana in the past six years. Alumna Holli' Conway earned the title in 2018. Scroggs is the first former or current Miss Northwestern - Lady of the Bracelet to become Miss Louisiana.

Scroggs' mother Rebecca Dauzat Scroggs was Northwestern - Lady of the Bracelet in 1998 and competed in the Miss Louisiana Pageant.

Northwestern State alumna Jourdan Waddell was third runner up.

The university was also represented by Bailey Willis, the current Miss Northwestern - Lady of the Bracelet.