

Oklahoma Creek Nation Tribe Member Visits Alabama

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Charles Coleman, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town in Oklahoma, a federally recognized tribe with ancestral ties to Alabama, was invited to a Cultural Diversity event in mid-July at the Alabama Army National Guard. When planning his visit, Coleman expressed an interest in seeing the historic towns of the Creek Nation. Consequently, the Army Guard Cultural Resources Manager, Dr. Heather Puckett (no relation to our Dr. Puckett), contacted me about the location of specific sites on farmlands and asked for help obtaining locating and permission to visit the Historic Creek sites. Since a few of the places he wanted to visit were in Elmore County, I requested the help of Pam Mason, former DC in Elmore County.

On July 15th, Pam, Heather and I escorted Mr. Coleman to the archaeological site of Sam Monac's Tavern (a/k/a Sam Moniac) on the Old Federal

Road near Pintlala. Monac's tavern was built on the Federal Road about 1809. Soon after the 'Red Stick' attack on Tukabatchee in July 1813, the tavern was burned; however Monac rebuilt it after the Creek War ended. Today the site is in a pasture. (Samuel Monac, a mixed Creek, was married to Elizabeth Weatherford – the sister of William Weatherford.)

We then traveled to the recently discovered site of Holy Ground, which had been the staging ground for the attack on Fort Mims. Historic records indicate that Holy Ground consisted of perhaps 200 houses and was home or refuge for a large concentration of Red Stick warriors. On December 23, 1813, Holy Ground was attacked by General Claiborne's Third U.S. Infantry, local militia and an estimated 150 Choctaw warriors. Holy Ground is popularly recognized as the place where Weatherford and horse leaped from a bluff into the Alabama River to escape being taken prisoner. (Note: During his lifetime William "Billy" Weatherford was not known as Red Eagle; this nickname was ascribed to him after his death.) Holy Ground was recently purchased by the Archaeological Conservancy to protect it from nearby residential development

On July 17th, the State Archaeologist, Stacye Hathorn, joined us for a tour of the western half of Atasi, a prominent Creek Indian town that was established by the early 1700s on the Tallapoosa. Atasi, which consisted of an estimated 200 houses, was attacked and burned on November 29th. At this site – which is almost entirely in cropland, Mr. Coleman was so enamored with the tall corn and large cotton fields that that he insisted we take photographs to



Oklahoma Creek Nation Tribal Member visited Alabama and was captivated with the tall corn and large cotton fields in Alabama.

show his friends in Oklahoma. From Atasi we drove to an area known as Polecat Springs near Tuskegee. Unfortunately, private and commercial developments have disturbed, if not destroyed, much of the archaeological remains, however, Mr. Coleman stated he still felt good seeing the area itself since it was the homeland of his tribal town.

The third site we visited that day is a portion of what is believed to be Hoithlewaulee (a/k/a Cluwalee talwa). Red Stick warriors from this town attacked General Floyd's encampment on Calebee Creek. Many of the town's original inhabitants as well as those who had only recently arrived (fleeing or regrouping after battles) left soon after the defeat at Horseshoe Bend, however the remnant of the town was destroyed on April 14, 1814 by General Jackson and his troops. Today, this site is in hayland, longleaf pines, and a mixed hardwood and pine forest.

We all took lots of photos for Mr. Coleman, who has already showed them to members of his tribe – and now many of them hope to visit their homeland soon. Fortunately, the landowners that own property with Historic Creek towns were more than willing to accommodate us. Many thanks go to Pam Mason for arranging a visit to one farm that also included a grilled lunch by the owner.



Mr. Coleman was very interested in the large cotton fields we visited.



Mr. Coleman in a pine forest.