

The Yamasee Indians

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Manataka® American Indian Council

The Yamassee Indians

The Yamassee Indian name is not a name commonly heard by those in today's modern Native American Indigenous forums, but with a little research you will find their story is one that formed some of the most important parts of U.S. History and newly made Indian Nations!

The Yamassee Indians have been described as "the most fierce warriors of all the native tribes encountered". Mostly known for the Yamassee War of 1715 where roughly, 7% of South Carolina's white citizenry was killed, making the war bloodier than King Philip's War, which is often cited as North America's bloodiest war involving Native Americans. This war and the aftermath of it, is said to be cited as the contributed factor to the emergence of new Indian confederated nations, such as the Muscogee Creek, Seminoles, and Catawba to name a few.

What is more interesting to a average history buff is in the Congressional serial set By United States. Government Printing Office, 57th Congress 1st Session. House of Representatives, Document No. 179 Report of the Industrial Commission on Agriculture and Agricultural labor, Washington Government printing Office year 1901 page. 824 when describing the Yamassee Indians is quoted as stating for fact of record :

"...the Yamassee Indians were negroes, what were known afterwards as the fiercest of the Indians tribes of the South..." The well-known Yamassee Indians were Africans.

Now, of course this may come to a surprise to those whom were told all black Indians were either slaves





or freedmen, but when coming from a Congressional record, along with other supported documentation, simply makes it understandable why their existence was reported to be extinct by scholars.

Choobee Mico (Big Chief) Se'khu Hidden Eagle Gentle

complexion, found widely scattered among the inhabitants of North and South America”. More specifically, the Carolinas, some of which is now known as Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, and parts of Louisiana.

The Yamassee or Jamassi (also referred to as the Amogarickakan and the Amacarissee and/or the Amercario) were listed among the nineteen tribes “as being of dark

The Yamassee Muskogee Tribe, which is now led by Choobee Mico (Big Chief) Se'khu Hidden Eagle Gentle, says, his people of the Yamassee Indians, have revealed themselves to prove they were never extinct, nor annihilated as historical documents claim.

Closer to truth is that the Matriarchs of the Yamassee hid them under other tribal names, to preserve their culture and heritage! A majority of the history of the Yamassee Tribe, was passed down to Chief Sekhu and his mother, from their grandmother and great great aunts. Other Yamassee tribal members can also share in the history of their tribe, which was passed down the ancestral family lines. Chief Sekhu said, "Although we have learned to forgive, we shall never forget...".

The Yamassee Chief says that because indigenous black Indians have been continuously overlooked by United States officials, now given the proven facts of our existence and emergence, seek to be recognized by main stream Indigenous forums. Moreover, that such organizations like the B.B.I.A.



(Black Bureau of Indian Affairs) and long-time advocate on behalf of tribes of color, Dr. Angela Molette (Tuscaloosa Ohoya) Black Warrior Woman leader of the 5 Civilized Tribes Legal and Educational Fund based in Oklahoma need to be supported by all organizations who want to make the claim of their “indigenous black Indian status”.

We must stop looking for acceptance in other places, and just accept ourselves with such organizations as the B.B.I.A.!

The Manataka American Indian Council supports the struggle of the great Yamasee people to be recognized by indigenous forums and all people everywhere for their contributions to American history and culture so that they may achieve true black Indian status.

To the Editor:

The article on the Yamasee left out quite a bit of actual history and cultural facts to create an impression of a history that never was. It reminded me of a white, Southern Pentacostal preacher at an ex-girlfriend's church, who would quote parts of sentences in the Bible, pause, then state things that were never said in the Bible. Unless one was listening carefully, you would leave the service thinking *that God said it was okay to kill "colored folks" (African Americans and Native Americans) libruks and soshulists because they are all heathans.*

Here are the facts:

1. **Yama** was the name of a powerful Native American province along the Mobile and Alabama River with many Mesoamerican characteristics. *Yama* is also the Totonac word for a clearing in the forest where crops are grown. It is still used today in Mexico.
2. **Yamasi** is a Itsate-Creek word meaning "offspring of Yama" or "speakers of the Yama language." It was a political alliance in SE Georgia and southern South Carolina, formed to resist Native American slave raiders coming out of SW Virginia and NE Tennessee.
3. The **Yamasi** (or Yamasee) absolutely were NOT Muskogee Creeks as stated on a photograph in the article. There were many branches of the Creek Indians speaking several languages and many dialects. The Muskogeeks were just one of those branches. The Yamasees were arch-enemies of the Muskogee's in the late 1600s, who briefly allied with the Muskogeeks in 1715 in an attempt to drive out the colonists of South Carolina. In order to return to the good graces of the British, the Muskogeeks attacked the members of the Yamasee Alliance after the Yamasee War and drove the few survivors into Spanish Florida. By 1750, the ethnic name, Yamasee, had disappeared from history.
4. The **Mobile River's** name is the French pronunciation of the Tamaule (a Totonac-Maya dialect) word, **Mapile**, which means "Trader People." The Tamaule were forced out of

Tamaulipas State Mexico around 1250 AD by Chichimec barbarians. Apparently, many resettled in the Southeast along the Alabama River in Alabama and the Altamaha River in southeastern Georgia.

5. In March of 1540, Hernando de Soto's Expedition passed through the **Province of Tamau** (Tama in Spanish.) It was located around the confluence of the Oconee, Ocmulgee and Altamaha Rivers in south-central Georgia. The Tamau-tli spoke a dialect of Itsate-Creek with many Totonac and Maya words in it. They were NOT Africans, but ethnically related to the people downstream who joined the Yamasee Alliance. However, the member towns of the Province of Tamau eventually moved to the Chattahoochee River and joined the Creek Confederacy.

6. One ethnic group in SE Georgia that was a member of the original Yamasee Alliance, changed sides at the end of the Yamasee War and joined the Creek Confederacy. They were the **Palache**, called "Biloxi" by the French. Most people don't know that most of the Biloxi lived in Georgia. They were not ethnic Creeks, but spoke a Siouan language mixed with Mexican words. The Palache lived in the Georgia Mountains until Native American slave raiders coming out of NE Tennessee forced them southward.

7. The Creek Indians of Georgia and Florida consistently gave sanctuary to escaped African slaves. The Creeks had no concept of race based on skin color or "blood quantum" until the Bureau of Indian Affairs forced it down their throats. The brave souls who broke the chains of slavery had to walk barefoot across 50-200 miles of wilderness to reach freedom. The result was one of the most amazing stories of North American history. Some of the escaped African slaves married Creeks. However, most formed their own towns that were allied with the Creeks. They adopted completely the culture, clothing, language and architecture of the Creeks. Within a few years they had built neatly planned towns. Both the Creeks and their African neighbors in Florida prospered because they concentrated on growing produce and livestock rather than trying to get rich quick by cultivating cotton.

The planters HATED the Black Creeks (or Black Seminoles) because they were living proof that all the tenets of racism and slavery were lies. The main motivation of the Seminole Wars was to get rid of the escaped slaves, who had adopted Creek culture. The federal government mostly succeeded in this effort, but then turned around and recruited Black Seminoles now living out west to be scouts and cavalymen. That core group of Black Seminoles became the famed Buffalo Soldiers.

To the Black Yamasees, I say this. I am Scottish-Itsate Creek. You are African-Seminole Creek. We will never be full-blooded American Indians, even if there is such a thing. However, we are both proud of our Creek ancestry. Even those Black "Yamasees" who don't have a bit of American Indian DNA can be VERY PROUD of their heritage. There is no need to make up history or pretend "royal" bloodlines, when there are none. What your ancestors accomplished in the 1700s and 1800s is an example to be emulated for all future generations. If I was trapped in a ditch and surrounded by enemies, there is nobody I would rather have at my side more than Black Seminole soldiers.

How the Master of Life taught the NAZI preacher a lesson

During prayer time at that Pentecostal church in Calhoun, GA the Master of Life told me that he/she didn't like white NAZI's pretending to be ministers of the gospel. Back many moons ago, when I was in NROTC, the Navy wouldn't let me in submarines or shipboard Combat Information Centers because I naturally had too much electricity in my body. That inspired me!

While the Pentecostal congregation was being worked up into a state of hypnosis by a "special song," I rubbed my Sunday-go-to-church-meeting shoes against the carpet. At the end of the service everybody was supposed to go up front and be touched on the shoulders by the preacher. Those touched, then fall back, pretending to be knocked unconscious by the preacher with "superior" spiritual powers. They are covered with a golden cloth sheet, then arise from dead at the end of the service. This is called "Being Struck in the Spirit."

Well, when the NAZI preacher touched me, he got a jolt of electricity like he had been struck by lightning. He fell back and hit his head on the steps of the altar. He was temporarily knocked out.

The preacher followed us to a steak house in Calhoun that had an all you can eat Sunday buffet. He strategically planted his family on a table about 30 feet from ours, so he thought he could watch us without me seeing him. He was red faced and sweating. He alternately piddled at his plate then stared at me. He was bewildered. All these years he had been leading a charade called, "Being Struck in the Spirit" and by golly, there really is such a thing. How come a "person of color" had the real spirit, and he didn't?

The preacher never did eat much on his plate, and eventually staggered out the restaurant . . . with his head lowered in shame. I wonder if he is still preaching that colored folks are

heathens?

Richard Thornton

Architect of the Trail of Tears Memorial in Tulsa, OK

National Architecture & Native American History columnist for the Examiner

Creek Indian and proud of It!
