

Joy Murphy:

Hello everyone. Welcome to The Stories We Tell, podcast of the Collier County Museums. My name is Joy Murphy and I am your host. And I am incredibly excited to be at the Blanchard House. We're on location with Martha Bireda and Jaha Cummings and today we're going to talk a little bit about Black Seminoles. You've had two exhibits here: The Seminole Wars: Slaves, Maroons and Black Seminoles and The Southern Underground Railroad and the Seminole Wars. So welcome to you both and then I'll give you a few minutes to tell us a little bit about those exhibits before we get into it.

Martha Bireda:

Well, the first exhibit I think was the Seminole Wars and we actually were doing some work with the reservation. We had a speaker that came up and talked to us and we got very interested in the Black Seminoles. We also had a gentleman who was the descendant of Black Seminoles, and John would come and he would do presentations for us as well. So we got very interested in it, so we did the first exhibit. In the meantime, there was a National Underground Railroad Conference in St. Augustine and because we'd done this work, we did a little bit more digging and so we were able to present at that national conference and out of that came our second exhibit here.

Jaha Cummings:

One thing in that regard is that when we talk about the Underground Railroad, people's perception is only going North, where it was three times larger going South. And going South, there was probably a lot more surety of you actually being free because once you cross St. Mary's, you had armed militias waiting to receive you.

Joy Murphy:

Well, we are definitely going to dig into that. It's an interesting topic. I feel like people know about Black Seminoles, but they don't know as much as we think. Or maybe only people in the South know about Black Seminoles and maybe... No? Maybe not. Maybe it's the historian in me.

Martha Bireda:

I did not know about Black Seminoles until I was an adult and working on the exhibit here. Something that was not taught us in school. And even the term maroon, you'll be surprised how many people have no clue as to what maroon is.

Joy Murphy:

Now, that's not a new term to me, but from what I've seen, just briefly looking on your website and looking at the description of the exhibit, what I know as maroons is not the same thing or the idea that I had for maroons is not the same thing. So I'm interested in that too.

Jaha Cummings:

We can go there a little bit. One thing, that word Seminole, even the word Seminole is still going to describe the Africans actually. Even now this is a federally recognized native group, but still the name to describe them is actually the one that described the Africans. But the word maroon applies to all of these people in the Americas who had escaped and so you have Brazilian maroons, you have American maroons, you have Cuban maroons, you have Puerto Rican maroons, you have Venezuelan maroons,

you have Colombia maroons. And so we often in our minds, we only restrict it to Jamaica, where every place you had a plantation to run away from, you had maroons.

Joy Murphy:

That makes sense.

Martha Bireda:

I'm curious, what was your feeling or thought or belief about maroons? What did you feel?

Joy Murphy:

I was always taught that when the government started categorizing people that they would call people maroons who didn't have a set... where they couldn't put them in a category.

Martha Bireda:

Interesting.

Joy Murphy:

So yeah, looking at these definitions, so that term Black Seminole and the term maroon are not the same people. We want to clear that out, right?

Jaha Cummings:

Well, a lot of the Black Seminoles, they actually were maroons. So you could say the Black Seminoles were maroons. If we go some history in terms of Florida, you know that Florida was colonized by the British?

Joy Murphy:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jaha Cummings:

And during the time of the American Revolution, if you were African, you had a choice, you can be American and roll dice in regarding your freedom. And if you're with the British, you were guaranteed your freedom and so you had a whole lot of black folks that fought on the British side. So you had about 50 British posts in Florida. When the British lost the second time in the War of 1812, those forts became African forts, they became maroon forts. And so that was part of when the Creeks had the Creek Wars and came into Florida, it was that unity between these Africans who were already here as escaped and having formal area. They actually were in position in which they both could be able to help each other and make this joint nation. But that's probably, just give the term etymology, that name Seminole we're saying it probably came from the Spanish Cimarron, which was the word used to describe the maroons in the Spanish speaking countries.

Joy Murphy:

Well, and let's back that up a little bit to give a little bit more history for people who don't know anything about the Seminoles and also about maroons that at one time Florida was of course a Spanish colony and that at one point the Spanish allowed runaway slaves to come into Florida, welcomed them into Florida. And somewhat in the same way with native Americans, as other places in what would

become America, were being colonized mostly by the British, but by the Dutch and other places like that and they were pushing people off their land, native Americans, they were coming into Florida for a variety of reasons. And one of them is because it was largely unsettled even though it was a Spanish territory. And then, as I tell anybody, as long as there has been slaves in America, there have been runaway slaves. And so a lot of them came into Florida because they were pretty much allowed to come in by the Spanish and then left alone.

Jaha Cummings:

That was the game. And if you want to take it further, you'd escape to The Bahamas apical and then go further, you can go to Cuba. So you had a whole free blacks cast in Cuba that was based on people who had escaped via Florida.

Joy Murphy:

And we'll talk about that a little bit more later when we get deeper into the Seminole Wars. Okay. And then, now I will say, full disclosure, I used to work for the Seminole tribe and one of the things that they taught me there was that now they don't really like to use the term Black Seminole. And it's kind of this concept of othering others that by calling them Black Seminoles, it's like saying you're not Seminole enough or you're not black enough kind of thing. For them it's just you're Seminole. So it's not saying that, we want to take away either culture, it's just that you're Seminole.

Martha Bireda:

Can I ask you a question?

Joy Murphy:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Martha Bireda:

Why are there no photographs of Abraham or John Cavallo at the museum there?

Joy Murphy:

I can't for sure know the answer to that because I was the educator. So though I had access to the archives, I didn't dig around in them a lot. But there are massive amounts of photos in the archive there that are unidentified and they haven't been actually scanned into the system. So that doesn't mean that there aren't photos, it just could mean that they just haven't been cataloged or maybe they haven't identified the people that are in them. But also without speaking too much on Seminole tradition, there are some Seminoles who believe that their photos should not be taken of them. So it's very possible that there aren't photos because they would not allow them to take photos.

Jaha Cummings:

Part of why this point is that another way we can describe the Seminole Wars was the Gullah Wars of independence. It was so intertwined with Africans escaping slavery to the point where the Andrew Jackson's invasion of Florida was to retake people back into slavery. So this history of the Seminole Wars is clearly married to the history of slavery, that's why I think it's important to emphasize that aspect that.

Joy Murphy:

Yes, I really do want to dig into that. We kind of did a little groundwork about how Seminoles got here and how blacks got here and a little bit about how they became intertwined, but I do want to dig into that a little bit more so then we can talk about those relationships and how they led to Seminole Wars. So let's talk about that, because it's easy to have this idea that blacks came here and they had their own separate communities and Seminoles had their own separate communities, but that's not really, it's true in some ways, but it's not true, right? They started working together.

Jaha Cummings:

There's one thing... Oh this is cool. On that note is that you had your laws where slave catchers were actually able to come into Florida and by virtue of US law, even though it was the US, they were actually able to take people under Fugitive Slave Act. So a relationship was made with the chiefs that if someone came to land let's say that there were Seminole, which would have been like to say former Creek descendants, that chief, the Micco actually could technically own you so then the standpoint of the law, this other person can't claim ownership. So there actually was also a tribute system with some of the Africans who had come to live in similar communities is that that was how that they were able to get around the fugitive slave law by having that relationship as well.

Joy Murphy:

And then with that, we want to talk about how some of these relationships developed to deeper, right? People begin to marry each other and have children. And some of that is what led to part of the Seminole Wars.

Martha Bireda:

Well, okay, 1835 has been called the largest slave revolt in American history, okay? And so when Jaha talked about why the Seminole Wars, I think he explained that what was really happening, let's go back a little bit to when the British left and they left the Negro Fort up near your area, okay. And so Andrew Jackson was very upset. In fact, from everything I've read, just miles and miles of free blacks were just out so having their gardens and doing all kinds of things. And so the planters who saw that, that was just, "How can you have this?" And so that whole set up to attack the fort, what happened when they did attack the fort, it was the Negro Fort, I guess by chance, they had all of the ammunition and whatnot on there and it blew up. And so a lot of those people who were there did escape. Now there were native Americans and then there were the Africans.

Martha Bireda:

And so they escaped and they came down to Alachua. Some came down to Angola. But it was always this thing about getting the enslaved people back and that's why it has been Seminole Wars were actually called the Negro Wars. Yes, 1830, one of the reasons they wanted to move the Seminoles from Florida was to break this up. They felt like if they can move them out and where they were moving them, some of the Creeks where they were moving them, still practiced enslavement. And so there were groups here, Osceola, is it his mother or his wife? His mother was African who said, "Oh no, we will not do this." So actually when you think about the Seminole Wars, except for the Third Seminole War, it was all about slavery.

Jaha Cummings:

Because so many people would escape here. Again, it was three times larger than the Northern Oregon Railroad, and that it was actually that the press was actually disallowed by virtue of being charged a felony to even discuss this because you basically had wars that were the US Army versus Africans. And having reports of that, they were very afraid that it would be heard by other plantations in the South, that it would inspire people to revolt, and so it had to be. So ultimately, this is why this is not been discussed. That's why you end up having the piece where it doesn't really make any sense. And also probably why this is downplayed a little bit because this is a very unique relationship.

Joy Murphy:

Well, one of the things that I tried to talk to, when we had visitors at the museum, is that, the Seminoles started coming into Florida in the 1700s. The first time the war didn't start till 1815, give or take, depending on who you're asking. And like I said, there were always runaway slaves. And so as these Seminoles and these formerly enslaved people started to mix and mingle and get married and rise up in the tribal ranks and have children, we're talking about generations who had never been slaves. And when Andrew Jackson and these slave catchers would come into Florida to reclaim this property, they weren't going around going, "Oh wait, you were not born into slavery. You were not formerly someone's property. You're black-

Jaha Cummings:

You're going back.

Joy Murphy:

... you're going back." So you're kidnapping people's children who were never slaves not to mention their wives and their husbands and things like that. And so that was really upsetting to some of the Seminoles. Of course, I mean, that would be upsetting to anyone, you're losing your children. And that, along with them trying to force Seminoles to move out to what was called Indian territory, that played a role in these Seminole Wars getting started. As you said with Osceola's mother, which I did not know was black. They were saying we're not going or we're not going to continue to let people come in and take our children and take our families and tear them apart. So I think that's important to know because it doesn't get told a lot in American history. When you read about the Seminole Wars, you don't hear that part as much. You just hear mostly about moving native Americans to Indian territory.

Martha Bireda:

We really can think of it as the Gullah War of independence, the Negro Wars.

Jaha Cummings:

Also, probably even talking about how Florida itself ended up being colonized and settled, you can almost look at the path in which these wars where people were in North, Northwest Florida, and then after those treaties were written, they're broken, they end up having to move to the Alachua area. And then after those wars in Loxahatchee, after that situation, having to move down to Big Cypress area and so with that came the other people who came in the trade and all that. So it is interesting how these war shaped even Florida's development as a whole.

Joy Murphy:

So I do want to talk more about the maroons because again, it was kind of a new concept for me looking into it. So, exactly who were they? And then what were they doing? Before they started mixing with Seminoles, how were they living here?

Martha Bireda:

Okay. First of all, by the time of Civil War, there were at least 50 maroon communities. They were all the way, Virginia, North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi. So anywhere there were enslaved people, there were maroon communities. These people developed their own separate communities based upon African traditions. The Dismal Swamp is one of those very famous ones, right in the Virginia, North Carolina area. So we talk about the maroons that came South, here, but there were maroon communities everywhere there were enslaved people.

Jaha Cummings:

Did you see the Free State of Jones, that movie?

Joy Murphy:

No.

Jaha Cummings:

That's actually, if you want to have, I guess, a picture of what that would look like. You'd have this area that had these plantations, you had basically these people escaped and they've created their own community. In this story it actually was these escaped Africans and the poor whites who were also harmed by slavery as well because there was no work because everything is for free and so they had actually made a community to basically free of this plantation system. It was a very interesting movie.

Joy Murphy:

Maybe a question about how did they stay away from slave catchers?

Jaha Cummings:

Swamps and guns and all those tricks, traps. Pretty much wide places like the Dismal Swamp. You put very inhospitable areas. This is why Seminoles were down in Big Cypress like you're not coming down there, I mean, if you plan to come back out.

Martha Bireda:

You could come back down there, but right-

Jaha Cummings:

Yeah, you could come down there, but you're not making it out.

Joy Murphy:

Yeah, that's interesting because I talk about that with the Seminoles is that one of the reasons it was so hard to get rid of or move all the Seminoles is that they know this territory. This is where they live and this is South Florida and it is hot and there are mosquitoes and these soldiers didn't know how to survive here. They didn't know what foods they could eat, what plants they could find, but these Seminoles did

and they knew where they could hide and they set series of traps and things like that to slow down the enemy and for them to be able to get away and-

Jaha Cummings:

That was the goal. Not to kill, but to maim. So you have some of the sick who certain people have to carry and you're moaning and oh, just rough traps.

Martha Bireda:

They chose places that you would not want to come into, but they made lives there. They built some sort of shelter. There was fishing. There was hunting. They made lives and they had independent lives and that was what was important to them. We even had, right down here in Pine Island, there was a maroon village.

Joy Murphy:

Really?

Martha Bireda:

Yes.

Joy Murphy:

I did not know that.

Martha Bireda:

And you knew about Angola near Sarasota?

Joy Murphy:

I've heard of it, I don't know much about it though.

Martha Bireda:

When Andrew Jackson, again, trying to get real people and he attacked those in Alachua County, then they moved down to Angola and so you see they were kept coming South. But we had maroons right here in Pine Island.

Joy Murphy:

And then how did they start building these relationships between them and the Seminoles?

Martha Bireda:

Well, I think, when you first come into Florida, Seminoles were fighting for their land, the right to be able to live. You had Africans who were fighting for the right to just be free. You had these two groups of people who have a common goal. And so that mutuality of goal was one of the things that bound them.

Jaha Cummings:

And learning Florida. The Seminoles now are masters of Florida, but it was just as new to them, it was to the Africans who escaped here, so they had to learn how to pretty much tame the wild together.

Joy Murphy:

Okay. Now, what I read on your website with the Underground Railroad that I found super interesting because as you've already mentioned, when you think about the Underground Railroad, you think about going North and of course I knew there were stops in the South. I mean, I've been to Savannah where they have the big Baptist church there and things like that, but you don't think about, one, Seminoles playing a role in the Underground Railroad. But also you don't think about it as much especially in Florida, these spots in the South, I didn't know that it ran South.

Jaha Cummings:

I'd say a good trip we'd take is to take the US one down, say if you start from Wilmington, North Carolina, come all the way down to Cumberland Island, all on those sea islands, all that marsh land, this is where people had been enslaved in their plantations. And so pretty much was that if you got to where Cumberland Island was, if you can get past that mess around St. Mary's and just simply crossover all along that coast from Fernandina down St. Augustine were white or black forts. And so that was the deal was that if you could visualize it, you just had to get passed through that marsh land, across that river and you actually had now settlements, there were armed settlements and that was how that worked about.

Joy Murphy:

And so we're talking about people in Georgia and stuff like that who were escaping into Florida rather than going up North. I think that's so interesting. I had never really thought about it like that.

Martha Bireda:

1673, I believe it was, its Spanish territory, and the governor said that if you can get here and become Catholic and become part of the militia, then you can be free. And so what happened, they established Fort Mose, which is right in St. Augustine, and so the Africans actually were part of the defense mechanism.

Jaha Cummings:

This is a good point. Remember the Spanish aristocracy were actually Habsburgs. And the Habsburgs, that whole place, where the Balkans, that whole area, we have the Croatian having those hardcore people, their job was, they gave them land, you were free to be there as long as you protect the Europe against the Turks. And so this idea of taking people and placing them in areas to be buffers was something that Habsburgs had been doing and so you pretty much had a Habsburg crown that now had Florida that practiced the same thing is that we will give you this, you can come here as long as you pretty much agree to protect it from enemies of Spain.

Joy Murphy:

Interesting.

Martha Bireda:

And it's interesting about the house here. Blanchard was from St. Augustine and probably some of his relatives probably were some of those who had escaped and come down.

Joy Murphy:



So how did the Seminoles, how did native Americans, how did they help with the Underground Railroad?

Jaha Cummings:

Well, like you said, they are community. This family, you're one community. And at the very beginning when you had people that were escaping and could actually benefit from that Micco tribute system where a chief could play owner to allow you to [inaudible 00:24:16], because again, the fugitive slave law, the US government was trying to say it applied in Florida. But if this chief could say, "No. Actually, they're my property," then that law didn't stand. So that was, I would say one way at the very beginning that was very strong was that from a legal standpoint, the relationship allowed them to not be legally taken back. And then of course, becoming actual national family and community over time.

Martha Bireda:

Okay. And in St. Augustine, the groups all lived there. It wasn't like these people were all separated. These people all lived together because they had a common purpose. So they were just there, they lived together, they married, whatever.

Jaha Cummings:

And they were armed.

Martha Bireda:

Yeah, I believe even Blanchard's first wife, I believe was a European. I mean, all these people were just, probably the Spanish woman, they were all just living in St. Augustine.

Jaha Cummings:

Yeah. Even the French had St. Augustine for a little while. So there's an interesting Florida story in St. Augustine area.

Joy Murphy:

Yeah, North Florida in general, it's kind of interesting because it changed hands so many times. Well, those are all my questions.

Jaha Cummings:

Polly, can you share about the conference, St. Augustine, about the group that came from Mexico?

Martha Bireda:

Oh yes. Let me start with the story of a very dear friend of mine. I went to school at Western Michigan and we were close friends and she was down visiting. And I was working on this exhibit and on my dining room table was a book about Black Seminoles. She was going through it and she saw this picture, and in this picture was her great-great-grandmother. And from that I was invited to go to Texas, Fort Bracket, I believe, in Texas. And every year in Texas in September, all of the descendants of these Black Seminoles come back. Now, you're there and you have Black Seminoles who are speaking Gullah and Spanish.

Martha Bireda:

But all these people were there because what happened, they went, Oklahoma, that didn't work. They went to Texas. And even in Texas they were starting to have problems. So John Horse took them across to Mexico. And there it's the whole group of African descent people. Think about it, start out in South Carolina-

Jaha Cummings:

Who speak Maskókí as their first language.

Martha Bireda:

... Yeah, come to Florida, then go out West and end up in Mexico. So at that conference, there were people, there were descendants who were from The Bahamas, they were from Mexico. And so all of these places where these people who originally started in South Carolina, those areas who made this trip, they were all here, and it was a wonderful reunion of all of these people. But it's just amazing. And you're walking around and these people who are speaking this Spanish, but there's also a little bit of the Gullah, they've not totally forgotten their Gullah.

Martha Bireda:

And so they have some of the same cultural practices. They've of course blended the practices, the Seminole practices and the maroon practices. But very interesting, in fact, when I was in Texas at Fort Bracket, one of the things that we did was to go to the cemetery and everybody was given tobacco and we sprinkled tobacco on the graves. And of course, we know where that came from, that came from probably Seminoles, but I also just found out that the reasons why they brought so many Africans to Virginia was because we had been planting tobacco in Africa already, and so-

Joy Murphy:

That's one of the reasons for the whole Gullah Geechee thing is that they were rice people and they put them there to grow rice. But interesting, when I worked for the Seminole tribe, they do a thing called AIAC every year, which is a big kind of cultural celebration. And one year there was a group of Seminoles who after the end of the Seminole Wars or actually before they ended Seminole Wars, when Florida changed hands again, they went with the Spanish and some of them ended up in The Bahamas.

Joy Murphy:

And so there's a whole group there who are Seminole descendants and some people from the museum went and met them and they brought them over for AIAC. But it was really interesting to see those same kind of cultural traditions. So they're Black Seminoles, but they're making the sweet grass baskets, just like Seminoles here, very similar style, and I'm thinking about how these traditions mixed and now you think about like Seminoles will say, "This is traditionally our culture," and do you meet some descendants of slaves or some Gullah people or something like that and they'll say, "This is traditionally our culture." And it's true for both, but maybe what really happened is a very long time ago those cultures mixed and learned from each other.

Martha Bireda:

They had to.

Joy Murphy:

Yeah.

Martha Bireda:

Fort Pierce. Are you familiar with the Black Seminole tribe in Fort Pierce?

Joy Murphy:

I am, yes. So the Fort Pierce Reservation is a part of the Seminoles tribe Florida's reservation, so I've worked on Fort Pierce a couple of times, but I do know some tribal members from Fort Pierce in that res.

Martha Bireda:

That's a place where I really would like to get to meet some of the people in Fort Pierce, the Black Seminoles there.

Jaha Cummings:

And down in Brighton also, down by, we call it Moore Haven, has a lot as well.

Joy Murphy:

Yeah, traditionally, they say Fort Pierce is where the Black Seminoles live. I mean, I guess, I've been to every reservation there are Black Seminoles on every reservation, but traditionally, yes, but traditionally they say they live in Fort Pierce, but Fort Pierce is more like a gated community, so it's very hard to get onto that reservation.

Martha Bireda:

Okay.

Joy Murphy:

But they're everywhere, they can-

Jaha Cummings:

Oh, I have a fun fact. It's very interesting. We often say that the first time the US military was integrated was with Truman, truth was there was one other time before, it was the battle Loxahatchee, the Jupiter, where they had actually had, what was his name, with the J?

Martha Bireda:

Jesup.

Jaha Cummings:

Yeah, Jesup. General Jesup basically was a practical man and he realized he had to have people who knew how to fight this type of guerrilla warfare to the same degree. So he actually broke from the Army's normal tradition of having segregated forces and actually had integrated force, so he actually had African sent people also fighting with the US military to fight against the Seminoles in the battle of Loxahatchee and that was the reason why it was a decisive battle is that you pretty much had two of the same type of maroon types that were fighting against each other. So it wasn't just Seminoles versus

Americans. And so that's one reason why that battle went the way it went is you had a commonality of abilities.

Joy Murphy:

Right. That's interesting.

Jaha Cummings:

And then from that point, the United States military was not integrated again until after World War II.

Martha Bireda:

Well, could I tell her about dog gone?

Jaha Cummings:

Tell her dog gone, yes.

Joy Murphy:

Please do.

Martha Bireda:

You're familiar with the term, "Oh dog gone?"

Joy Murphy:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Martha Bireda:

Well, that came out of the Seminole Wars. The battle pattern was always the U shape and I guess the army never caught on to that. But anyway, they a canoe right on the water. And of course, the Seminoles were surrounded in the U shape, but they had certainly the dogs that they were going to send in, the Spanish dogs, to get the Seminoles. And so they saw this canoe and they used that trick more than once, so the canoe was there so that's where they are, they're over there, so they sent the dogs and as the Seminoles watched, as the dog would go in, the alligator would do that and they would say, "Dog gone." And so they would pull out of the Seminole Wars. So now you know that little interesting fact.

Joy Murphy:

Yes. That's funny.

Martha Bireda:

Every time somebody says, "Dog gone," I want you to think of an alligator.

Joy Murphy:

I probably will now. It'll be stuck in my head and I'll start laughing.

Jaha Cummings:

Because the battle patterns, you remember, at the beginning, people still fought in the line type of warfare, but army to army. And so Seminoles were actually able to make this shape where it appeared as if no one was there, but you'd already be surrounded and they would walk into this again and again. So until such time, and now that's something that-

Martha Bireda:

They were also trees.

Jaha Cummings:

Yes trees, you couldn't see. Yeah, because people, they would become trees. They become trees.

Martha Bireda:

They became trees.

Joy Murphy:

Really?

Jaha Cummings:

So your whole forest you thought was just forest was people.

Martha Bireda:

They were great. And part of that I had to do with the African tradition of the guerrilla fighting. I think the Africans introduced guerrilla warfare.

Jaha Cummings:

Yeah. That's rough things.

Joy Murphy:

Yeah. That's interesting. When they talk about how they never surrendered and they were just never able to defeat all Seminoles. When I worked for the Seminoles they told the story, oh I can't think of her name right now, but she had been captured and was being taken to Oklahoma territory. From here they would march them up to Tampa and then put them on boats and they got her to Tampa and she convinced her captors that she needed to go get some herbs for her medicine and she needed help to gather them. And they told them, "Sure, you can go out and get some help," and she walked all the way back with those people. They just kept going and they walked all the way back to here to the reservation.

Joy Murphy:

It's just interesting how they were able... Here are these people who didn't really have sophisticated weaponry, who were not trained in battle and yet over and over again they were able to defeat the military.

Martha Bireda:

But they were trained in battle.

Joy Murphy:

Well, in a different type of battle, yes, but not in what I guess I would say when you think about warfare, you generally think the people with the most sophisticated weaponry and whatever are the ones who are going to win and that's just not the case.

Jaha Cummings:

George Washington and his group, they were guerrilla war and that's how they win. Because all you have to do, they would go up for, the guerrilla warfare is if you can just cause the decrease in morale on a daily basis. If someone gets hurt, someone gets hurt, that's enough to the other forces would just fall down, they'll just come apart, and so tried and true.

Joy Murphy:

So any final thoughts on Seminoles, Black Seminoles, maroons, Underground Railroad?

Martha Bireda:

Again, I'm happy that you're doing this, but these are stories and history that has been omitted and we are the Blanchard House Museum of African American History and Culture of Charlotte County, and those stories, we're very interested in having young people really understand American history and accurate American history. And this is a part of the American history that has not been shared with Florida students.

Jaha Cummings:

And one thing I'll leave, we actually just this few days ago, we were down on at the Miccosukee Reservation about 35 miles from Miami and every year, the week after Christmas, they have their arts festival. And it's really cool because a lot of nations from all over and to include coming even from South America, they'll come. But also those groups, you have all the different Seminole groups also, you also have Creeks, and you have other people, and so it was a very good time of seeing just the coming together. And it's wonderful and good food, good culture, good people, and it's every year.

Joy Murphy:

It's very similar to AIAC that's the Seminoles have, and that's in November.

Jaha Cummings:

All right.

Joy Murphy:

Very similar and tribal days too that they have in February, I think. All right, well thank you so much. Thank you both. And hopefully, we'll get to do this again at some point.

Martha Bireda:

Okay.

Jaha Cummings:

Thank you.

