#### SEMINOLE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES February 16, 2023

**Members Present:** Deborah Bauer, Donna Bundy, Carmen Bierman, Kim Carroll, Rosalie Cook, Lynn Dictor, Eunice Mann, Beverly Mason, Marjorie Smith, Kathryn Townsend, Paul Zuromski

Members Absent: Desta Horner, Robert Hughes, Imogene Yarborough

Staff Present: Cindy Kelley, Bennett Lloyd, Michael Wirsing

Guests: Don Epps

Call to Order – Donna Bundy called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**Invocation/ Pledge of Allegiance**—Don Epps gave the invocation, and everyone said the Pledge of Allegiance

Welcome/Introductions

Public Comment -- None

#### **Review of previous meeting minutes for January 19, 2023**

• Approved with changes and passed with no objections.

#### **Society Report**

- The Society met to discuss the overview of the St Lucia festival, the history and the changes made this year. Terry Patterson from Lake City attended.
- o Upcoming Events
  - EarthFest-April 29<sup>th</sup> at Casselberry Concord Park
  - Sanford Historic Garden Tour-May 6th
  - Family Festival-May 13<sup>th</sup> at Cranes Roost in Altamonte
  - The Senator exhibit will be at some of these events.
- Received a thank you letter from the Russell Home for the can goods donations.

#### **Museum Report**

- Bennett provided a recap of the previous months events as well as talked about upcoming events and programs. Report attached.
- The attached article was published about the Cattle Drive that Bennett Lloyd attended that mentioned Seminole County.

#### **Subcommittee reports**

- o Accessions Subcommittee-Robert Hughes, Eunice Mann, Beverly Mason, Paul Zuromski
  - The library at the museum is being accessed to identify accessioned items. The committee will need to meet at the museum to review material.

- o Historical Marker Subcommittee-Donna Bundy, Rosalie Cook, Beverly Mason,
  - Lynn Dictor and Marjorie Smith have asked to join the Historical Marker Committee.
  - Meeting set for Tuesday, February  $21^{st}$  at the museum.
  - Marker Dedication for Hedy Lamarr Marker is on March 12, 2023. 4pm, at Red Bug Lake Park
- o Programming Subcommittee-Donna Bundy, Rosalie Cook, Beverly Mason
  - Kim Carroll, Lynn Dictor, Marjorie Smith and Kathryn Townsend asked to join the committee.
  - Meeting set for Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup> in the Polycom room at 2:30pm
  - Bennett needs decision for exhibits for 2024 as soon as possible. Need to choose 2 of the 4 to run January to June and July to November.

#### **Fund Raising**

Kathryn Townsend made a motion to approve Commissioner Zembower submitting a request from the Seminole County Historical Commission to the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners to authorize the use of \$20,000.00 of the money being held in the Historical Commission Trust Fund be used to fulfill the Historical Commission's commitment as their participation to the Bill Nygren Buggy Fund. Bennett Lloyd amended the amount to \$25,000.00 because all funds are held in the same account as stated by Michael Wirsing. Kathryn Townsend accepted the amendment. Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Marjorie Smith. Motion approved.

#### **Old Business**

o NONE

#### **New Business**

o NONE

Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm by Donna Bundy.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES NEEDING ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THESE PROCEEDINGS SHOULD CONTACT THE HUMAN RESOURCES, ADA COORDINATOR 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING AT 407-665-7941.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING THIS NOTICE, PLEASE CONTACT THE COUNTY MANAGER'S OFFICE, AT 407-665-7224. PERSONS ARE ADVISED THAT, IF THEY DECIDE TO APPEAL DECISIONS MADE AT THESE MEETINGS / HEARINGS, THEY WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND FOR SUCH PURPOSE, THEY MAY NEED TO ENSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, WHICH INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED, PER SECTION 286.0105, FLORIDA STATUTES.



### **Cindy Kelley**

Administrative Assistant Leisure Services/Business Office

O: (407) 665-2001 | F: (407) 655-2179 100 E 1<sup>st</sup> Street 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Sanford, FL 32771 <u>ckelley@seminolecountyfl.gov</u> www.seminolecountyfl.gov

## THE RANCH

# **GREAT FLORIDA CATTLE DRIVE 2022**

### 75-MILE TRAIL RIDE 'AIN'T FOR SISSIES!'

#### Written by: Kathy Ann Gregg

he year was 1995, the first time the Great Florida Cattle Drive took place. Participants became enamored of re-enacting Florida's cattle history so much so that it was done again in 2006 and 2016.

So, when an event to honor the Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon bringing the first cattle to Florida was to occur in 2021, it was only fitting yet another Great Florida Cattle Drive should take place.

Covid messed with the schedule, however, so it was postponed and held over six days this past December.

But what a journey it was!

### **CAME FROM EVERYWHERE**

The Florida Cow Culture Preservation Committee, headed by executive director and cowboy historian Doyle Conner Jr., began the push in 2019 by commissioning the painting of seven fiberglass replica bulls, each five feet tall and weighing 150 pounds. They represented what is known as Juan Ponce de Le-

on's 1521 Herd of 7. The seven artists used her or his imagination painting pastoral, cattle, wildlife and even rodeo scenes to convey cattle ranching and its way of life in the Sunshine State. (Florida Country Magazine attended the reveal party in Kissimmee, with a story in the February/March 2020 issue.)

The stories are as varied as the 350-some horsemen/ women braving the week-long ride, and those in the 14 adjoining wagons. They came from Florida, from New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania in the northeast, and Oregon in the opposite corner of the continental United States, and many points in between.

While a few are regular snowbirds, the majority made the trip solely for this event.

While no one listed a foreign address on their forms, flags were flown from Brazil and Mexico, the latter being carried on the trail by a sombrero-wearing gaucho, and one from Guatemala. The flag of the Seminole tribe wafted from the back of Billie Joe Johns' Conestoga-style wagon the entire ride.

> Riders push 500 Corriente cattle—longhorn influenced with horns to match from Deseret Ranch in east Florida to Bluehead Ranch in Lake Placid.





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Left photo: 33-year-old Bennett Lloyd, Coordinator of the Museum of Seminole County History, who walked the entire 75.3 miles of the cattle drive. Middle photo: A pair of riders carrying their country flags. Right photo: Andy Bowers of the Seminole Tribe, sporting the yellow bandanna worn by the group of veterans.

#### **'TOUGH AS NAILS'**

The equestrians were broken into geographic groups, with each having its own circle boss and a bandanna color with matching flag.

David Hunt from Polk County, as director of the Outdoor Freedom Program, ran the veterans' group, and they all sported gold bandannas. The Seminole tribe sponsored 20 military veterans, paying the entry fee and providing horses. So, a special banner was presented by this group to the tribe, containing the cattle drive emblem, surrounded by the insignias of each branch of the military. And to Tara Johns, this was her favorite part of the ride.

Accompanying the Johns family in their wagon for the first three days was veteran Mike Hill of St. Augustine, Florida. He then departed for Arlington Cemetery in Virginia, to lay a wreath on the grave of his son on the first anniversary of the boy's death.

The last mile of the route saw the Johns' host 88-yearold Ron Wetherington of Dozier, Florida, who was driving their wagon. Unexpected surgery before the event prevented him from making the entire ride, one of his bucket-list items! Wetherington is the grandfather of Moriah McCullers Johns, and he drove the team wearing his Seminole patchwork jacket.

The third day a rearing horse struck a woman rider. She went to a local emergency center for medical scans. The result was a mild concussion and she rejoined the ride after a day's rest. Her young daughter stayed with the group, quickly becoming the ward of fellow riders!

The oldest listed participant was Al Johnson of Orlando, Florida. He had been a cow hunter (the group tending the cattle) on three previous drives but this year he rode a wagon. Jose Carranza, 87, rode the entire route, as he did on the 2016 drive. The youngest registered rider was Jayme Wells of Fellsmere, Florida, at the tender age of six, described by event organizers as "tough as nails, and an absolute hero to many on the ride."

And in between was 33-year-old Bennett Lloyd of Sanford, Florida. This intrepid adventurer completed the 75.3-mile route (per GPS) on foot! As coordinator of the Museum of Seminole County History, he wanted to experience Florida's diverse history. He was dressed entirely in clothing from the 1530s, most of which he himself had made. But he "had to order the shoes online," he said. On the first day's . outing, Lloyd lost the group and had to backtrack, pulling a hamstring muscle, spending the first night icing his leg.

Unlike the cattle drives of old, meals were catered — hot breakfast at 7 a.m. and supper served at 7 p.m., with seconds and even third helpings allowed. A sandwich and chips for lunch on the trail.

#### **TRAIL MIXING**

Every night was entertaining. Judge Nelson Bailey talked about Florida's cattle history, for example, and 93-year-old Iris Wall of Indiantown explained about being a Florida cracker, there was visiting an early Native American camp (pre-Seminoles), Bennett Lloyd discussing the arrival of early Spanish explorers, re-enactors talking about the Florida Cow Calvary during the War of Northern Aggression/Civil War and their flag which bears the motto "the rights of the south at all hazards," and the singer Chuck Hardwick, the cowboy poet Doyle Rigdon.

The highlight was the Friday night entertainment — Seminole culture night. Seamstress Stephanie Johns displayed her patchwork designs and traditional garments. Her brother, Jobe Johns, demonstrated the gathering and cooking of the Florida delicacy, swamp cabbage. Jobe and his wife Moriah had intended to complete the week-long ride, but due to unexpected circumstances had to bow out after the third day. Their father, Billie Joe, was emotional about his children and daughter-inlaw all being there.

The storyteller/medicine man Herbert Jim of the Tampa Seminole reservation enthralled everyone with his stories. Skeeter Bowers explained the corn dance, then had many on their feet joining in the friendship dance. Singer/songwriter Rita Youngman performed some of her songs. Charlotte Gopher, her two children and Jayleigh and Hushee Osceola cooked fry bread and made sofkee, a staple drink made from rice, grits or dried corn heated in lots of water.

The drive commenced on the Deseret Ranch in east Florida, where its cattle began the drive. From there riders pushed northwest across the Kempfer Ranch and the Deseret Escape Ranch. That Thursday 500 Corriente cattle — longhorn influenced with horns to match — were delivered from the Bluehead Ranch in Lake Placid for the end of the drive.

The group left Diego Medina's ranch on the morning of December 10 with this wild and frisky group of bovines, driving them into the Kenansville Silver Spurs arena grounds for the trail's end celebration. There was music and food, vendors selling jams and jellies, decorated cow skulls, cowhide products and much more. Stephanie Johns displayed her Seminole clothing and painter Eldon Lux had his artwork on display. Lux had done a special painting to honor the Great Florida Cattle Drive 2022 — a painting of Florida cow hunters on the ground, Seminole cow hunters in the clouds.

Many thanks to the members and volunteers with the Florida Cow Culture Preservation Committee for providing a glimpse into Florida's cattle history.

And always remember, the Great Florida Cattle Drive — 1995, 2006, 2016 and now 2022 — "ain't for sissies." **FCM** 

# ROUNDUP

Great Florida Cattle Drive 2022/ Florida Cow Culture Preservation Committee, greatfloridacattledrive.com

Museum of Seminole County History, seminolecountyfl.gov

Florida Cow Calvary, tampahistorical.org

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# THE GREAT FLORIDA CATTLE DRIVE 2022 \*IT AIN'T FOR SISSIES"?

Written by: Kathy Ann Gregg Photos by Kathy Ann Gregg and persons on the Cattle Drive

The Great Florida Cattle Drive 2022 took place from December 4-10 of last year, culminating with the Trail's End Celebration at the Kenansville Silver Spurs Arena on that Saturday. This was the fourth such event, the first being held back in 1995, then again in 2006 and 2016.

This was an event to celebrate the quincentennial anniversary of the Spanish explorer Ponce de Leon bringing the first cattle to Florida. (Technically, that was 2021, but the COVID-19 pandemic messed with the schedule



of events leading up to the ride, so it was postponed a year).

The Florida Cow Culture Preservation Committee, headed up by Executive Director and wellknown cowboy historian Doyle Conner, Jr., began the celebration in 2019 by commissioning the painting of seven fiberglass replicas of a bull, each 5 feet tall and weighing 150 pounds. They represented what is known as "Juan Ponce de Leon's 1521 Herd of 7". The seven artists used her or his imagination painting various pastoral, cattle, wildlife and even rodeo scenes to convey cattle ranching and its way of life in the Sunshine State. And these bulls were on display at the arena for the very last time as a group.

The stories from the most recent event are as varied as the 350-some horsemen and women that braved the weeklong ride, and those persons (Continued on page 77)

#### The Great Florida Cattle...

(Continued from page 76)

who rode in the 14 wagons that participated. They came from Florida as well as 17 other states – from New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania in the northeast, and Oregon in the opposite corner of the continental United States, and many points in between. While a few are regular "snowbirds", the majority made the trip solely for this event.

While no one listed a foreign address on their forms, flags were flown from Brazil and Mexico, the latter being carried on the trail by a sombrero-wearing gaucho, and one from Guatemala made the trip. The flag of the Seminole Tribe wafted from the back of the Billie Joe Johns family conestoga-style wagon the entire ride.

The equestrians were broken up into groups, basically on where they were from, with each having its own Circle Boss, and its own unique bandanna color with matching flag. Polk County cattleman David Hunt is director of the Outdoor Freedom Program, and he headed up the veterans group – they all sported their gold bandannas.

The Seminole Tribe sponsored 20 military veterans, paying their entry fee, and providing them with horses. So a special banner was presented by this group to the Tribe, containing the Cat-



tle Drive emblem, surrounded by the insignias of each of the branches of the military. And to Tara Johns, this was her favorite part of the ride.

Just prior to the start of the drive, one of the horses spooked when a wagon drove by – even though it was hobbled – causing the cow hunters and riders to go lickety-split after it. That rider lost one of her saddlebags, and that day's lunch!

The third day on the trail witnessed a rearing horse striking a female rider on the back of her head. She was escorted from the trail to a local ER for proper medical scans – the result, a mild concussion, and she rejoined the ride after a day's rest. Her young daughter stayed with the group while the mother was



gone, quickly becoming the ward of fellow riders!

The oldest participant was Al Johnson of Orlando, Florida – he had been one of the cow hunters (the group that tended the cattle) on the three previous drives, but this year he rode in a wagon. 87-year-old Jose Carranza rode his horse the entire route – as he did on the 2016 drive.

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#### The Great Florida Cattle...

(Continued from page 77)

third helpings allowed. A sandwich and chips were provided for lunches on the trail.

Every night saw "entertainment" - Judge Nelson Bailey talking about Florida's cattle history and 93-year-old cattle woman Iris Wall of Indiantown explaining about being a Florida Cracker, a visit to an early Native American camp (dating even before the Seminoles), Bennett Lloyd discussing the arrival of the early Spanish explorers to Florida, re-enactors talking about Florida's Cow Calvary during "the War of Northern Aggression" and their flag which bears the motto "THE RIGHTS OF THE SOUTH AT ALL HAZARDS", singer Chuck Hardwick and cowboy poet Doyle Rigdon.

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The storyteller/medicine man Herbert Jim, of the Tampa Seminole Reservation, enthralled



everyone with his stories. Skeeter Bowers explained the Corn Dance, then had many on their feet joining in the Friendship Dance. Singer/songwriter Rita Youngman performed some of her own songs, along with "Seminole Wind" (made popular by country singer John Anderson). Charlotte Gopher and her two children, and Jayleigh and Hushee Osceola cooked fry bread and made Sofkee (a staple drink, made from rice, grits or dried corn heated in a big pot with lots of water, over an open fire, which served as a "filler" when food was scarce).

The Drive commenced at the Kirchman Foundation's Lake X property near St. Cloud, then on to Deseret Ranch, where their cattle was used for the first part of the drive. From there it crossed the Kempfer Ranch, and the Deseret Escape Ranch

Thursday night a herd of 500 Corriente cattle – with longhorn influence and horns to match – were delivered from the Bluehead Ranch in Lake Placid for the end of the drive. Larry Howard, council representative of the Seminole Tribe, was instru-

(Continued on page 79)



#### **The Great Florida Cattle...** (Continued from page 78)

mental in leasing the Corriente cattle as well as arranging for the 20 veterans – some from the Sem Tribe – to participate in the Drive.

The group left Diego Medina's ranch on the morning of Saturday, December 10, with this wild and frisky group of bovines, driving them the seven miles into the Kenansville Silver Spurs arena





grounds for the Trail's End Celebration. Music and food were available, as well as vendors selling jams and jellies, decorated cow skulls, cowhide products and much more.

Stephanie Johns had a booth showing off her Seminole clothing and patchwork products, and painter Eldon Lux had his artwork on display. Lux had done a special painting to honor the Great Florida Cattle Drive 2022 – a painting of Florida cow hunters on the ground, and, in the clouds, cattle being offloaded from the Spanish ship and herded by Seminole cow hunters.

Many thanks to the members – all volunteers – of the Florida Cow Culture Preservation Committee for providing a glimpse into Florida's cattle history. And always remember, the Great Florida Cattle Drives – 1995, 2006, 2016 and now 2022 – "IT AIN'T FOR SISSIES".



# TALES FROM THE TRAIL THE GREAT FLORIDA CATTLE DRIVE 2022

Written by: Kathy Ann Gregg Photos by: Kathy Ann Gregg and persons on the Cattle Drive

Many members of the Florida Cattlemen's Association, and the Florida CattleWomen, took part in the Great Florida Cattle Drive 2022 held last month in west central Florida. And for many, it was a family affair.

CattleWomen president Holly Newsome rode in the Yarborough wagon for the last two days. All three of her children completed the full week-long event, with Clay and Cogan acting as cow hunters for the full 75+ miles. Daughter Cashlynn alternated between horseback and riding in the wagon.

The Yarborough clan was wellrepresented! The matriarch of this family, 87-year-old Imogene Yarborough of Geneva, was instrumental in all four of the cattle drives. For this one, she came down for the weekend events, and during the week she took care of the family's cattle business. This family tree has branches extending in all directions for the cattle drives:

J.W. Yarborough was one of the cow hunters for the 1995, 2016 and 2022 drives. His wife Frances rode in one of the wagons in 1995, while pregnant with son C.W., and then became a wagon driver in 2022.



And their children are: J.K. Yarborough rode in the 1995 drive, and was a cow hunter in 2016 and 2022. His wife of 13 months Lindsey rode in the wagon (technically they're still on their honeymoon!) C.W. Yarborough – a frequent competitor in the Cattlemen's Association ranch rodeos – a wagon rider in 2006, and graduated to be a cow hunter for both 2016 and 2022.

C.W. and his wife Eden have been married for only seven months, so she got an education of what it's really like to be a Yarborough!

Then Frances included her sister, Amy Mew Minger (who graciously contributed some of her photos to these stories!), and her daughter, Shannon Minger to ride in heir wagon.

Lynn Yarborough, who is J.W.'s sister, and her husband Rick Hanshew were wagoneers for both 1995 and 2022. And Lynn bravely took on the job of registration chairperson for 2016 and 2022, as well as both of them working in the Command Center for 2016 and 2022.

The Lightsey Cattle Company of Lake Wales also had three generations involved – Hattie (Continued on page 81)



#### Tales From The Trail...

(Continued from page 80)

Lightsey stepped in as a cow hunter representing Polk County when Fred Waters had to bow out. She was joined for the Friday night entertainment and the Saturday ride by her brother Ryder and their Dad, Clint, and grandfather Cary Lightsey.

Billie Joe and Tara Johns have been on the executive committee for all four cattle drives. And they participated in the 1995 and 2006 ones, missing the 2016 one due to health issues. So this time they drove their conestoga-style wagon for the entire route. They were joined by their son and daughter-in-law Jobe and Moriah McCullers Johns, for the first three days. While this younger couple had intended to complete the entire route, unforeseen circumstances arose that caused them to bow out after the first three days.

Accompanying the Johns family in their wagon for the first three days was veteran Mike Hill of St. Augustine. He then departed the event so he could travel to Arlington Cemetery in Virginia, to lay a wreath on the grave of his son on the first anniversary of the boy's death.

The last mile of the route saw them host 88-year-old Ron Wetherington of Dozier, Florida driving



their wagon – unexpected major surgery right before the event prevented him from making the entire ride. Wetherington is Moriah's grandfather, and he drove the team wearing his Seminole patchwork jacket. And he had tears in his eyes as he realized he was completing one of his "bucket list" items!

And for the Friday night entertainment, all of the McCullers family were there – more than 20 of them – all attired in Seminole traditional clothing, then some of them completed the Saturday ride into the Trail's End.

Tara describes sleeping in their



wagon every night, and having to "take baths" in creeks and ponds along the route, and sometimes even in the cow troughs! But husband Billie Joe was extremely proud that both of his children and daughter-inlaw participated in this event. And he says that his favorite part was "still being physically able to go". And come the day after, he was still ready for another ride!

Another three-generation family was that of veterinarian Dr. LuJean Waters-Stein - her mother and step-father, Lew Ann and Jimmy Strickland (in a waaon), and her husband lke Stein, and their 12-year-old son Zibe (on horseback), all made the trek. Originally, her father Fred Waters was to be one of the cow hunters, but due to Mother Nature walloping Florida with two hurricanes – Ian and Nicole - within a six-week period, he drew out to attend to his cattle business (and calf shipping).

She was one of the drive's four veterinarians – the 2016 drive saw her as the sole vet. "The cold and the rain and the endless sleepless nights tending to sore and exhausted horses quickly taught me I was not tough enough to endure this again." (The 2016 drive endured three straight days and nights of downpours, leaving every-(Continued on page 82)

#### Tales From The Trail... (Continued from page 81)



thing perpetually drenched.) Yet, when it came time for the 2022 event, she was right there, and this time she invited fellow vet (and someone that she had mentored), Dr. Maleah McMillen of Brooksville.

Dr. Waters-Stein describes the Great Florida Cattle Drive as "one of the highlights of my career, as well as being one of the toughest weeks I have endured". She is a seventh-generation cattleman, so this event is deep in her roots. "Re-enacting what our ancestors went through, how they were able to move their homesteads into central Florida – after spending just a week with only a fraction of their struggles – is truly moving."

Both horses and riders were tired, dehydrated and sore, especially during the first two days



rides, causing the veterinarians to work through both nights. At times they found themselves being transported back to camp to tend to those too exhausted to make it to the next camp area. (The total ride was 75.3 miles according to GPS, with the first four days being approximately 18, 14, 14 and another 14 miles.)

They were charged with making the decision when a horse and rider had to be pulled from the day's ride, for their

own safety. "There is so much emotion which accompanies this decision, and it is not taken lightly." But oftentimes, a day off gave those the strength to return to the drive, and see it to the Trail's End.

Dr. Waters-Stein comments that "It was impossible not to get tears in your eyes as you spotted your loved ones in the crowd. Although one of the hardest challenges in my career, I wouldn't have traded it for the world!"

That probably sums up the feeling of most of the participants.



