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Seminole Dolls, Seminole Life: An Exploration of Tourism and Culture

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THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

SEMINOLE DOLLS, SEMINOLE LIFE: AN EXPLORATION OF TOURISM
AND CULTURE

By

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A Thesis submitted to the
Department of Anthropology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Degree Awarded:
Fall Semester, 2005

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without the guidance and help of several people I would not have been able to undertake and complete this project. I would like to thank the chair of my committee, Dr. Michael Uzendoski, whose motivation and advice steered me toward my goal. I would also like to thank Dr. J. Kathryn Josserand and Dr. Bruce Grindal for continued support and encouragement during this project and throughout my studies at FSU. I greatly appreciate the guidance of my committee which has been instrumental in making me a better researcher, writer, and student throughout this project and others.

I would like to say Shon-na-bish to all the Seminole doll-makers and craftswomen who took the time to sit and chat with me while they were working. Their warmth and kindness is deeply cherished. I would also like to recognize the continued hospitality of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. I never really felt like a stranger, and it was greatly appreciated.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their love and understanding throughout this process. My parents and sister have provided endless encouragement to pursue my interest in anthropology and Native American issues. Thank you, Ashley Kistler, for your answers to many questions about economic theory, and your proofreading skills. I would also like to thank my son; you have given me a definite incentive for completing this project. I can't wait to take you to with us to the festivals and powwows. Above all, I would like to thank my husband, Robre' Shash, whose love, support, transportation and conversation during the very long drives to Seminole Country, and assistance during this process is immeasurable. I wouldn't have been able to do this without you. Also thanks for moving the gigantic creepy spider out of the tent while we were camping in the Everglades.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the ways in which identity and culture can be expressed through tourist art, using a Seminole doll as an example of the connectivity of art. The Seminole doll, a quintessential Florida souvenir, is not just layered with trim and beads, but with meaning and significance for both the doll-maker, and the doll consumer. This meaning is not easily measured in terms of “value,” but it is transferred during the exchange of Seminole dolls for sale, for gifts, and for display. The binding of Seminole identity to Seminole dolls impresses upon the tourist consumer and Seminole producer a sense of reflecting, knowing and understanding about Seminole lifeways. Each participant in the exchange is left with a glimmer of what it means to be Seminole. The Seminole in Florida have punctuated their survival in Florida with a fierce resistance to outside control of their daily lives. They remain “unconquered” and this status is a deeply held Seminole core value. The Seminole doll, because of its form and place in the Seminole participation in tourism stands as a link between the “unconquered” Seminole of Florida and the tourists who crave the exotic. This thesis examines how the Seminole doll can reinforce values greater than just its surface level souvenir worth; it is a cultural icon that conveys messages of tribal autonomy to both tourist and tribal member, and as such is a symbolic representation of the tribe’s historical pathways.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Argument

The Seminole Tribe of Florida has a unique place in the history of the Southeastern United States. Throughout their residence in the Southeast, they maintained relations with the Spanish, British, United States and the State of Florida. Prior to 1492 and during the early development of the United States, the Seminole were formed through processes of ethnogenesis where in groups of related peoples merged. During periods of resistance in the 1800s they fought some of the costliest “Indian Wars” with the United States Government. Their initial isolation and ensuing survival in the remote and seemingly inhospitable regions of the Florida Everglades and their later re-emergence as a major economic and political element in Florida served to secure their position in American history as “unconquered.”

Unconquered does not mean unchanged, or unaffected. All groups change over time, and in the case of the Seminole, the colonial circumstances they faced greatly affected Seminole identity. The Seminole Tribe of Florida’s place in Florida history is marked by periods of resistance, seclusion, and participation with the communities and governments that surround them. Throughout their struggles in Florida they have, in many ways, preserved specific cultural features, thereby resisting losing their autonomy. In this way, the Seminole remain or seek to remain “unconquered.”

This thesis explores the concept of “unconquered” as it is reflected in Seminole participation in tourism. Victor Turner (1967) discusses how a dominant symbol can appear in many contexts, while maintaining relatively consistent meanings. Specifically he states that a dominant symbol has a “fan” or “spectrum” of referents, which “interconnect a wide variety of significata” (Turner 1967:50). From what I have learned, a Seminole dominant symbol is their association as “unconquered.” The use and associations with the term are punctuated throughout Seminole discourse. Even the tribal newspaper, The Seminole Tribune, is named the “Voice of the Unconquered.”

Through conversations with Seminole craftswomen, personal observations, and field experiences at the Seminole Reservations and in tourist venues, I have found that the Seminole doll, an archetypal Florida memento, reinforces values greater than just its surface level souvenir worth. My hypothesis is that the Seminole doll stands as a cultural icon that conveys messages of tribal autonomy to both tourists and tribal members, and as such is a symbolic representation of the tribe's historical pathways. This work will examine how the Seminole doll, because of its history, medium and exchange networks, signifies a core symbol of what it means to be a Seminole, both publicly and privately.

I have had a small Seminole doll since I was two years old. One Sunday my mom and dad took my sister and me to the Brighton Reservation to see my grandfather guest preach at the Brighton Baptist Church. Usually my grandfather preached at the Baptist church in Okeechobee, but sometimes he would visit other churches. On the way home, we stopped at a trading post and I convinced my parents to buy me the doll. My mom has kept it in a curio cabinet since that time. While growing up, I would look at the doll and remember my Papa talking with the "Indians" in their "pretty dresses." The church still stands on the Brighton Reservation; I was able to find it almost 25 years after my first visit there. Today this doll has taken on a new meaning for me. Now when I look at that Seminole doll, I am reminded of what I have learned and experienced through my trips to festivals, powwows, and to the Seminole reservations. Perhaps after reading this thesis, others will also view objects created for the tourist trade with a more critical eye.

To explore my hypothesis, this thesis is divided into six chapters, each of which addresses a portion of the central question. Chapter one introduces the problem examined by the thesis. It provides a brief survey of the references that will be used in subsequent chapters, and how each chapter addresses the central argument. This chapter also provides an account of the methods I have used during this project.

Chapter two provides a background for the Seminole's emergence in Florida as a process of ethnogenesis and resistance. Terence Turner (1991), Stuart Schwartz and Frank Saloman (1999), and Jonathan Hill (1996) have explored the concept of ethnogenesis and the ways in which colonial contact can affect indigenous

communities. Various scholars of history and anthropology have studied the history of the Florida Seminole. The works of Clay MacCauley (1887), Mark Boyd (1955) and Alexander Spoehr (1941) about the Seminole provide a historical framework for my research, but much has changed for the contemporary Seminole Tribe of Florida. Because of these changes, I have integrated the research from a variety of past and present day scholars and disciplines to develop a more comprehensive approach to looking at the Seminole Tribe of Florida's appearance in Florida tourism. Early studies about the historical events relating to the Seminole's contact with outsiders are difficult to discern because many earlier records are based on travel accounts or military depictions.

The Seminole in Florida remained relatively out of reach from in depth anthropological query until William Sturtevant (1951, 1970, 1971), Irvin Peithman (1957) and Harry Kersey (1973, 1974) initiated their inquiries in middle of the last century. These sources provide a base understanding of the Seminole's past lifeways in Florida, but do not always resonate with contemporary Seminole life. Pasty West (1998, 2001) brings Seminole anthropological scholarship up to date by exploring contemporary Seminole life-ways and translating meaning through present-day and historical accounts. Archaeologist Brent Weisman (1999) explores the material record of the Seminole's presence in Florida from a social perspective. These two studies, although instrumental to an understanding of Seminole lifeways and historical Seminole connections to Florida, do not address how the power of an object can represent the deepest values of modern Seminole identities in Florida today. Additionally, there is a new presence in the study of Seminole lifeways, by members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Works by Betty Mae Jumper (1988, 1994, 2001), Alice Micco Snow (2001) and Buffalo Tiger (2002) have been pivotal to a better understanding of the purposes for Seminole participation in doll-making and tourism.

Chapter three of this thesis addresses the factors contributing to the legacy of Seminole self-determination, and the events in American history that have had a profound effect on the desires for indigenous autonomy. There is an extensive literature on tribal autonomy and self-determinism that is linked to larger discourses of indigenous peoples' rights in the world. Specifically, Joseph De La Cruz (1989), Vine Deloria (1984)

and C.L. Henson (1996) explore the history of tribal autonomy as it relates to all indigenous peoples in the Americas. Ben Nighthorse-Campbell (1999), a former US Senator, has presented an account of the US Government's relations to tribal autonomy and the motivations behind the "Indian Policies." Harry Kersey (1996), Richard Sattler (1996) and Brent Weisman (1999) relate the ways in which the Seminole of Florida have developed and maintained their autonomy through political action and participation in tourism.

Chapter four explores how meanings and values connect to art and tourist art, as well as providing an account of the doll-making process and the materials of the dolls, both of which reinforce Seminole identity in an artistic medium. Michael Podro (1982) has discussed the role of art in society while Richard Anderson (1989) discusses the functions of art for non-western peoples. Ruth Phillips (1998) and Trudy Nicks (1999) explored the purpose and meanings of tourist art and the functions of tourism for non-western groups. These works provided insight into why a group would participate in ethnic and cultural tourism as well as offered an understanding of the souvenir trade and tourist desires. Bill Holms and Bill Reid (1975) discuss value, power and authenticity in non-western art, while Ruth Phillips and Chris Steiner (1999) explore the notions of the connectivity of tourist art. In addition Robert Armstrong (1981) examines how objects can have a "presence" that connects value and meaning. Since none of these works relate directly to the Seminole Tribe of Florida, I have explored and adapted their ideas to try to recognize the Seminole connections and meanings of tourism and art.

Chapter five examines the meanings and values of Seminole dolls as they navigate three networks of exchange. These three exchange networks are commodity exchanges, gift exchanges, and cultural display. While, the literature on gifts and commodities within anthropology is extensive, for the purpose of this project, I have limited my use of anthropological scholarship on gifts and commodities to Marcel Mauss (1967), C. A. Gregory (1982, 1997), and Gretchen Herrman (1997). All of these explore the intricacies in classifying a type of exchange as either gift or commodity, and they provide the support for my discussion of meaning within the exchange networks as it relates to the transactors and the alienability of the objects. In addition, Maurice

Godelier (1999) examines in detail the social implications of gifts that, because of their affirmation of identities, must be kept. This provides the theoretical framework behind the discussion of the meanings of cultural displays.

Chapter six of this thesis is a summation of the ideas presented in this project. It connects the previous chapters to the conclusions found during my research. This chapter also addresses two connected ideas that I would like to explore in future research.

Methodology

I have tried to fill in the gaps between the Seminole's historical associations with tourism and crafts production as it currently relates to their identity as "unconquered." As the ethnographic basis for my research, since the summer of 2000, I have made several journeys to Seminole country to explore the ways in which a small handmade doll reaffirms and reinforces Seminole concepts of self-determinism and their commitment to their culture. I have also attended major tourist events around Florida, such as the annual Seminole Tribal Fair, Powwow and Rodeo, the annual Florida Folk Festival, and other smaller events, like the American Indian Heritage Days Festival and various arts and crafts festivals. I made a number of visits of varying length to each of the Seminole reservations and two trips into the Everglades to camp and learn about Seminole lifeways, foodstuffs, and "traditional activities." While on reservation, I spent time in the museums, arts and crafts shops, and talking with residents and vendors, to learn about their history and their connections with Seminole dolls. Additionally, I have utilized the tribe's archival resources at the Hollywood and Big Cypress reservations.

Through observations and research, I have analyzed the exchange networks of these dolls and the history of the Seminole Tribe of Florida's participation in the tourism industry in Florida. I have also researched the greater issue of tourism and tourist art as a manifestation of how indigenous people in Florida and around the world control their own economic systems and representations of their self. The information I have used for this project has come from literature on colonial resistance, tourist art, tourism, doll making, representational art and historical and contemporary references to the

Seminole Tribe of Florida and from my personal observations and conversations with members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

As the focus of my research was about Seminole dolls, a seemingly “peripheral” topic to them, and because I recognized the historically based apprehension many tribal members felt toward “being studied,” I did not often inquire about sacred or ceremonial systems of concern to them. I found that since I was not always directly asking about their personal spiritual lives, the Seminole with whom I spoke were more at ease in discussing the forms, functions, and meanings of their dolls. I have tried to focus my research on the public displays of culture as I observed them and on tying these displays to the literature on representation and self-determinism to illustrate how the Seminole Tribe of Florida has etched their place in the history of the Southeastern United States and secured their position as a current political, economic, and social force in Florida.

CHAPTER 2

THE SEMINOLE STORY IN FLORIDA: ETHNOGENESIS, REMOVAL AND RESISTANCE.

To understand the meanings of Seminole dolls and how they relate to Seminole identity, it is necessary to understand the story of the Seminole and how they came to reside in and participate in Florida's tourist economy. The story of Seminole ethnogenesis provides a background for understanding the modern Seminole construction of identity. The political emergence of the Seminole Tribe of Florida can be described as one of ethnogenesis, in that it involved "cultural and political struggles to create enduring identities in general contexts of radical change and discontinuity" (Hill 1996:1). Hill (1996:1) describes ethnogenesis as "creative adaptation" to turbulent changes that result from the methods and systems of colonialism. Marshall Sahlins (1993:21) argues that "the world is becoming a Culture of cultures" and that people adjust to their historical circumstances in their own ways as they navigate the "world system." This is not something unnatural; as Sahlins stated, it is a "normal process" (1993:16). The historical changes the Seminole faced were certainly turbulent, yet their reactions to them were based on their previously established cultural patterns.

The process of Seminole ethnogenesis involves reactions to outside pressures, but they also began to manage their relations with surrounding groups proactively. Richard Sattler (1996) has explored the use of ethnogenesis as a framework for his discussion of the formation of Seminole identity. Sattler argues that the process of Seminole ethnogenesis was not a simple static linear model, but instead involved several branches tied to previously established Muskogean sociopolitical models (Sattler 1996:40). In this way, Seminole ethnogenesis is not a new reaction to outside influences, but instead an adaptation of past organizational processes. This chapter documents the process of Seminole ethnogenesis through periods of fragmentation, dislocation, and unification, and it examines the ways in which Seminole identity was affected through this process.

The indigenous people of the Southeastern United States have been interacting with Europeans and their descendants since the beginning of the sixteenth century. Through conversations with Seminole vendors and crafts persons, I have learned that contemporary Seminoles consider these previous groups to be Seminole ancestors. I was inspired to look into this while discussing current tribal enterprises with a Seminole elder. He related to me how he was angered by a Florida archeological pamphlet that called the Calusa of South Florida “extinct.” He angrily jabbed at the word “extinct” with his finger and said, “This is a lie, they are still alive, they are in our memories and in our stories.” In this way, the Seminole have encompassed the story of the Calusa and have integrated it into their own story. He also stated that since the Seminole keep other’s stories alive, they are bound together and must “protect the other tribe’s interests,” including burial grounds, sacred sites, and culture. To accomplish this, the Seminole Tribe of Florida has been increasingly active in legal issues of self-determination and land rights and has amplified their involvement in Florida politics through action and fundraising.

There are more than 2,600 Seminole now living in Florida¹, either as recognized members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida or as Independent Traditional Seminole, who are not recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The currently enrolled members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc., are spread out between the Brighton, Hollywood, Big Cypress, Immokalee, Fort Pierce and Tampa reservations. Some of these reservations include communities of Seminole who have lived in the area for a long time, while others are recent land acquisitions of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc. The recently acquired reservations include land, casinos and hotels, and have incorporated a number of Seminole families living in the area. When the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. purchases land, it becomes reservation land not subject to the laws of the State of Florida, but instead to federal laws regarding tribal land use. These laws are set by the US Congress and the US Department of State.

Not all Seminole in Florida live on reservations; some Seminole live off-reservation in surrounding cities, and there are also smaller independent communities of Seminole living in isolated areas south of Lake Okeechobee. These independent communities do not participate in the reservation system or tribal government and are

generally closed to outsiders. As a result, I was not able to visit any of these communities. The map below (Figure 1) shows the current locations of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Reservations in south and central Florida.

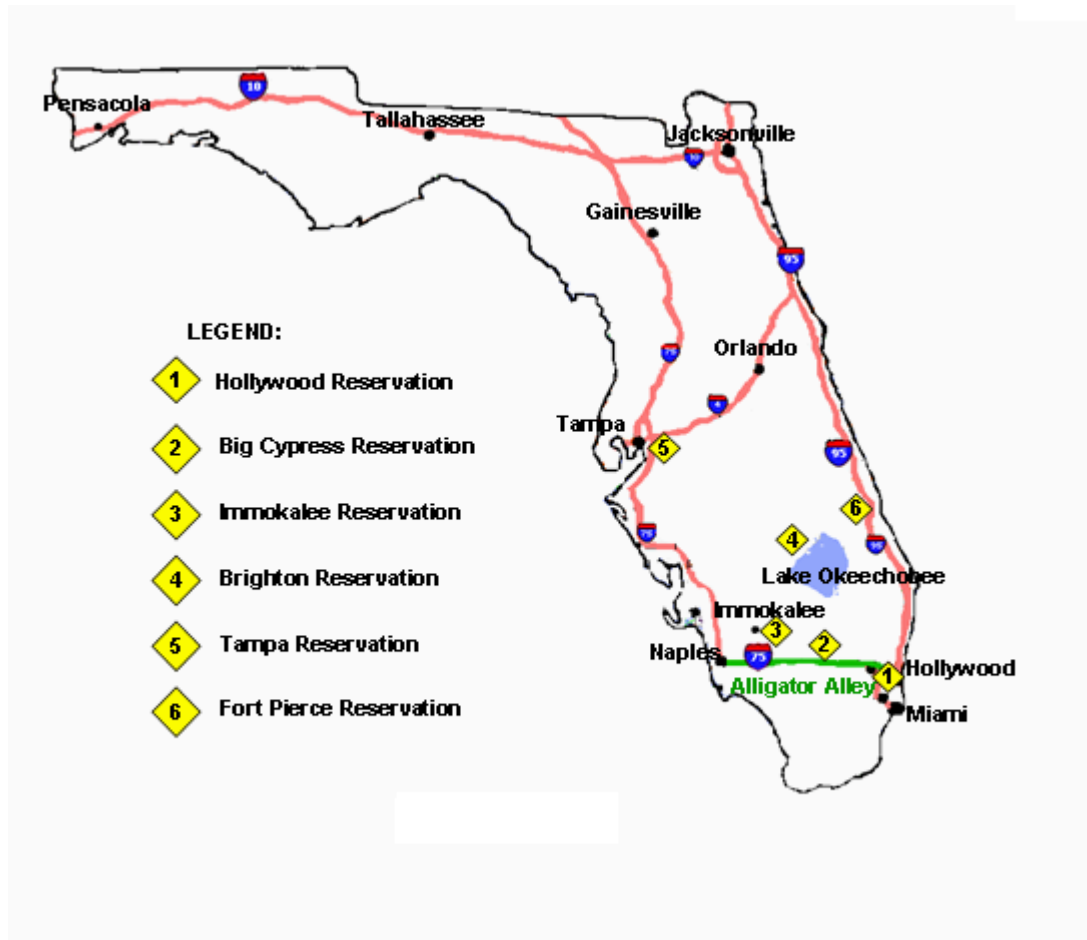


Figure 1. Reservations of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc.

The process of Seminole ethnogenesis was complicated by the fact that two distinct languages were spoken by the Seminole living in Florida. Most ethnic Seminoles and Miccosukees living in Florida speak Mikasuki² (as well as English). Seminole living on the Brighton Reservation speak Muskogi (Creek) and English (Seminole Tribe of Florida 1997, Weisman 1999:1). Although related, the Mikasuki and Muskogi languages are not mutually intelligible and most tribal gatherings are conducted in either Mikasuki or English. As a result of migration through Florida, many

place names and geographical features of Florida have Muskogi and Mikasuki origins. For example, Okeechobee means “big water,” and Miami means “that place” in Mikasuki.

In the past, the Seminole hunted and fished for animals such as deer, alligator, turtle and gar. They had small gardens and raised chickens, cows, or pigs for food. Contemporary Seminole groups have experienced shifts in food acquisition and production, turning to large-scale agriculture³ in order to tap into available resources in their changing environment. Although Seminole cuisine still includes dishes such as gator, swamp cabbage, gar, and *sofk*⁴, their diet also incorporates current American foodstuffs.

An Account of the Ethnogenesis of the Florida Seminole

The Seminole of Florida, although an essential element of Florida life, are not the original inhabitants of this region. Their place in Florida’s history is marked by periods of conflict and transition. Sturtevant’s (1971) account of Seminole ethnogenesis somewhat simplifies the complex process of becoming Seminole; it focuses heavily on the Oklahoma Seminole, because many key Seminole leaders were moved there. The emergence of the Seminole into Florida while difficult to trace, begins with early chiefdoms and towns. This history is complicated because the name “Seminole” was not used until well into the 1700s. Before then, the groups living in Florida were referred to by town names or by generic terms like “the enemy” (Weisman 1999:5). The formation of the contemporary Seminole Tribe of Florida involved a sequence of relocations of these early towns and chiefdoms that occurred in the context of Florida’s changing ownership by the Europeans (the British and the Spanish) and eventually the newly formed United States. Responses to these colonial contexts⁵ shaped modern Seminole social and political organization.

The socio-political organization of the proto-Seminole⁶ operated on two levels. An individual’s allegiance was to their town (or village), and to their clan⁷ or extended family unit. Political organization was centered around the town or village. Each village had a *micco*, or spiritual leader, who was responsible for the welfare of the community (Sattler 1996:19). This person could be either male or female. The micco listened to

public opinion and represented it to the village and to the larger town councils of their allies. As an “agent of the people,” this person’s position was not prescribed by clan affiliation or status; instead, it was awarded as a result of achieved trust (Wickman 1997:1). The position was also fluid, in that it could be awarded or rescinded when people deemed necessary. The fluidity of the micco leadership system allowed for continuation of essential elements of Seminole culture throughout their resistance.

One essential element of Seminole culture that continued and increased in importance throughout the periods of resistance was the clan system. Decreases in large scale residence patterns as a result of relocation and resistance led to an increase in the smaller, more centralized role of the family clan (Sattler 1996:20). The Seminole clan followed exogamous marriage rules and their social order was based on matrilineal kinship. Children are born into the clan of their mother and inherit property from their mother’s clan. The extended family camp of the mother’s clan was the basic social unit for the Seminole and proto-Seminole, as they also practiced matrilineal residence patterns. Mother’s Brother, rather than Father, served as the head of household, but today, because of assimilation, his role is reduced (Snow 2001:19).

There are eight current Seminole clans (Panther, Wind, Bear, Deer, Bigtown, Bird, Snake and Otter), and when the last female in a clan dies, the clan becomes extinct (Seminole Tribe of Florida 1997). Among the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Panther is the largest clan and the only clan that can care for the sacred medicine bundles. The power of the sacred medicine bundles is reaffirmed every year through ritual purification at the Green Corn Dance (Snow 2001:19). Customs of the clan are maintained by “medicine” men and women, and during the annual Green Corn Dance,⁸ which is part of the cycle of *buskita* (fasting), the powers of clan and village leaders are reaffirmed.

Although tribal leadership is open to members of any clan, I have noticed that many tribal leaders are from the Bird clan. An everyday example of the importance of the clan as a social motivating force can be seen in the Seminole Tribune. Most birth announcements include the names and clans of both of the grandmothers as well as the child’s clan association.

Although social organization was based on clan affiliation, a person’s allegiance was also tied to their town. There were a few proto-Seminole towns in Florida prior to

the eighteenth century. From 1573 to the Yamasee War of 1715, Lower Creek towns moved into Yamasee territory in northern Florida (Howard 1984:4). In the early part of the eighteenth century, a group of Hitchiti-speaking Okonee left Georgia and began to settle in northern Florida and the Alachua Prairie region near present-day Gainesville. The Okonees were not the earliest of the proto-Seminole groups, but they were the first to be labeled Seminole by the Europeans (Peithman 1957:14). Soon other groups moved into Florida and later also became known as Florida Seminole. The Creek towns of Apalachicola, Okonee, Hitchiti, Sawokli and Yuchi (the five proto-Seminole towns) agreed to move into the buffer zone between the Spanish and the English settlements. These towns included groups of Muskogee Creeks, Hitchiti Mikasuki, refugee Yamasee, Yuchi, and remnants of other northern tribes who fell under the Creek Confederacy. These distinct groups provided the basis for Seminole identity; as groups emigrated in response to colonial circumstances, they were either absorbed into the Seminole system or were detached and removed from Florida.

Some of the reasons why these towns moved into Florida include dissatisfaction with their role in the Muskogee and Creek Confederacy chiefdoms, a pattern of detachment and migration during disequilibrium, pressures from colonists, and the availability of unoccupied land to the south of them (Miller 1997:18). There were two linguistic families represented by these five towns, Hitchiti (including Hitchiti proper, Mikasuki, and Alachua) and Muskogi (Creek proper). As noted earlier, Mikasuki and Muskogi have since become the languages currently used by Seminole in Florida (Howard 1984:4).

The colonial contexts for indigenous groups in Florida included interactions with both British and Spanish settlers, so that local indigenous groups had to navigate their positions with these two nations who were each struggling to increase colonial holdings in the Americas. In 1763, the British acquired Florida and met with the tribes on the border. The tribes were given most of the interior lands of Florida. In the Treaty of 1768, the English reserved the lands “touched by tidal waters” for Britain and subsequently secured the aid of the Creek during the American Revolution (Florida Writers Project 1941:1). This alliance with the English further instigated hostilities between the Creek and people of the newly formed United States. In 1783, Spain

regained control of Florida with the Treaty of Paris, but allowed British traders to remain in the territory and supply the Indians. This continued until 1819, when Spain ceded Florida to the United States (Howard 1984:7).

The group known as the Seminole did not readily participate in relationships between the Creek and the Europeans or Americans. Long-standing discord between the Creek Confederacy and the Florida Seminole created a situation where the Florida Seminole did not wish to be bound by agreements made by the Creek Confederacy. By 1804, the Seminole were “acting almost entirely independent of the Creeks” (Howard 1984: 6). The people of the United States, however, still considered the Seminole to be Creek and maintained hostility toward them because of Creek cooperation with the British during the Revolutionary War.

Schwartz and Salomon (1999) have examined the concept of identity as it relates to the perceptions of the dominant society. Specifically, they state that “the term Indian quickly evolved from a cursory overgeneralization to an innovative juridical category with real social consequences” (Schwartz and Saloman 1999:446). The “real social consequences” of the settler’s overgeneralization of all indigenous groups in the area as Creek Indians led to continuing hostilities and eventually to the Seminole Wars.

The Seminole Wars as a Motivating Force for Seminole Resistance

The Seminole, the Creek, and the American settlers were constantly crossing paths. The Red Stick War of 1813-14 was the result of American settlers encroaching on Upper Creek territory in Alabama. The Upper Creek retaliated by raiding the American settlements. Andrew Jackson and a group of Lower Creeks eventually suppressed the anti-American uprising. As a result of Jackson’s destruction of these Upper Creek towns, many Upper Creek refugees from this war moved into Florida, “abandoned all ties with the Creek Confederacy, and immediately became Seminoles” (Howard 1984:8). One result of the Red Stick War of 1813-14 was a bitter animosity toward those Lower Creek who helped Andrew Jackson. The First Seminole War resulted from this animosity.

During the First Seminole War (1814-1818), Andrew Jackson invaded Florida several times to monitor the British, and in the process executed many Seminole whom

he thought to be aiding the British. Jackson practiced a “scorched earth” policy⁹ in Northern Florida and along the Suwannee River. As a result of this policy, Jackson acquired the nickname, “The Indian Killer,” popularized by the media of the time, and many Seminole were forced to move further south. England and Spain formally protested these raids into Spanish territory, but Florida eventually was ceded to the United States in 1819. In February of 1821, Andrew Jackson was appointed military governor of Florida (Peithman 1957:19). This was unfortunate for the Seminole, as Jackson’s dislike of these Indians was incorporated into state policy. Jackson advocated “Indian Removal” and sought ways to displace native populations.

The desire by the American settlers for Indian cattle, freed or runaway slaves who were living with the Seminole, and fertile land fueled the American campaign to relocate Florida Seminole to western reservations through the clandestine maneuverings of the treaties of Payne’s Landing and Fort Gibson. The Seminole did not wish to leave because the lands they were to be moved to were within the Creek Nation and were bordered by warring Kiowa, Comanche and Wichita tribes (Peithman 1957:23). The Seminole did not wish to be put into a situation where they might have incensed the Plains Tribes, and they resented the government’s attempt to relocate them to such a “hostile” location (Howard 1984:11). Despite their strong resistance, during the Seminole Indian Wars, many Seminole were captured and sent to Indian Territory¹⁰.

In the summer of 1835, Halley’s Comet appeared. Comets signal war or monumental disruption, “so the Seminole knew that their trouble was only beginning” (Miller 1997:97). During the Second Seminole War (1835 to 1842), the two distinct groups of Seminole (Muskogee and Miccosukee) waged a guerrilla-style war on the United States. The Seminole, living scattered in the swamps of Florida, initiated fierce battles and ambushes, while the United States resorted to meeting some Seminole leaders under a flag of truce and then capturing them. The Seminole leader Osceola was captured during one of these parleys.

By the end of the Second Seminole War, approximately 4,420 Seminole were removed to Indian Territory, while only about five hundred Seminole remained in the swamps of Florida (Howard 1984:13). This was the longest and costliest of all the Indian

Wars; “it lasted nearly eight years... cost the government over twenty million dollars, and the lives of over 1,500 regular soldiers... this does not take into account volunteer soldiers and civilians” (Peithman 1957:43). The cost was monumental, and the American citizens began to grow tired of the war; many began to question Jackson’s efforts. To subjugate the Florida Seminole “it cost the U.S. Government approximately one life and \$10,000 for every Seminole man, woman and child killed or moved to the new territory” (Peithman 1957:18). Uncaptured Seminole fled deep into the Everglades to evade the U.S. Army. They were eventually left alone because it became so difficult to find and capture them. There was a period of fourteen years (from 1842 to 1856) when there was an “uneasy peace” (Seminole Tribe of Florida 1997).

The Third Seminole War (1856) began as a result of a U.S. survey team discovering a Seminole camp in an isolated hammock¹¹ and destroying the camp’s garden. The leader of the camp demanded payment for his lost produce, but the surveyors refused. The next day, a group of Seminole led by Billy Bowlegs attacked and wounded the survey party. This touched off a series of skirmishes with whites and Seminole led by Billy Bowlegs. Despite the U.S. Government’s best efforts, only about 20 Seminole were killed but 240 were deported to Indian Territory. In spite of being relocated so near the Creek, these Seminoles “were never reconciled to being part of the Creek Nation” (Howard 1985:15). The Seminole who were moved into Indian Territory eventually organized the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma in order to maintain their sense of being Seminole and not become part of the greater Creek Nation.

This final relocation effort cost the U.S. a considerable amount, because in an effort to avoid the same situation as the Second Seminole War, they hired a “relocation expert” at a cost of about \$50,000. This was the last removal attempt and the approximately 200 remaining Seminole refugees were allowed to stay in their isolated Everglades communities, in Big Cypress Swamp, and in a few scattered communities northwest of Lake Okeechobee. (Florida Writers Project 1941: 9) Present-day Florida Seminole are descendants of these “unconquered” people and have participated in a variety of economic endeavors to maintain their autonomy.

Early Experiences with Tourism as a Means of Survival

Today, the Seminole consist of a variety of groups who share common cultural traits and who have sought refuge in the most inhospitable areas of Florida to avoid further conflict or contact with American settlers. Sahlins states that while facing periods of change in a colonial context, “the first thing of course is to survive” (1993:19). After the Third Seminole War, Seminole survival in the Everglades and near Big Cypress included hunting aquatic animals such as birds, gar, turtles and alligator, and raising cattle. By the end of the Civil War, hunting was very profitable for the Seminole, as they sold hides and feathers to locals who sent these products to manufacturing facilities further north. This continued until the beginning of the twentieth century when economic changes and development projects in south Florida resulted in changes for the Florida Seminole.

Early in the twentieth century, Mikasuki-speaking Seminole began their involvement with tourism as a result of contact with outsiders, and in response to economic and environmental pressures. Their economic situation was grim because of environmental changes and declining supplies of game. Their environment was changing before their eyes as the eastern Everglades were drained for agriculture and South Florida began to develop around them. Drainage cut off water routes that the Seminole used to travel to the trading posts to sell their pelts. Settlers moved into their land and the Seminole needed to find a new economy.

Many Seminole continued to hunt and farm for the majority of their income, but tourists now visiting South Florida became a new source of revenue. Rather than rely on outside economic aid, while men were occupied in hunting activities, women stayed in the camps and produced dresses, dolls, and other craft objects to sell to tourists. Although these early ventures into tourism provided income, indigenous crafts produced by the Seminole were only a small part of a diversified economic base that also included fishing, hunting, and selling bird feathers. During the economic boom of South Florida, tourists wished to see these “exotic” Indians, the “untamed” Florida, and to experience Seminole culture. When Miami became the major tourist Mecca in South Florida in the 1920s, the southernmost group of Seminole were the first to become immersed in the tourist economy (West 1998:3).

This participation set a precedent for future involvement in tourism and the contemporary Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc., maintains control of its relationship with Florida tourism. Seminole involvement with tourism is on their own terms. In the beginning, it usually involved production of crafts for sale at the emerging roadside stands. Not all Seminole are directly involved in tourism enterprises, but those who participate present aspects of their culture that are highly visible including their colorful traditional costumes. Since almost all Seminole wore patchwork clothing, tourists assumed that patchwork clothing united the different groups into one Seminole culture.

Displays of Seminole culture took the form of tourist camps when Seminole families began to move close to where they maintained their roadside stands. The earliest documented instance of the Seminole's long-standing relationship with tourism was in 1911. A man named Warren Frazee, or "Alligator Joe," had an alligator farm on Wagner Creek. At times the natural rapids of the Miami River created difficult traveling conditions so the Seminole used Wagner Creek to get to Miami to sell their pelts. A Seminole camp was started near Alligator Joe's Alligator Farm and a Christmas festivity was planned at the camp. Therefore the alligator farm and the Indian camp created a "joint attraction" (West 1998).

Even these displays of camps, and *chickees*¹² in the Everglades were on their own terms, as the participating Seminole continued to maintain some private cultural practices. Private cultural practices included administering medicine, the Green Corn Dance, and childbirth and these events were not open to tourist involvement. West argues that the emergence of the Seminole of Florida "into the tourist market stirred this unique economy in which their culture itself became saleable" (West 1998:3). However, only certain features of Seminole culture were open to outsiders. Even for those Seminole living in the tourist camps, specific Seminole lifeways were kept very much separate from Seminole economic endeavors. William Sturtevant reviewed the Seminole participation in the tourist market and noted that:

For many decades Seminole families have successfully exploited the tourist market in large part on their own initiative, with the production of craft goods and the operation of souvenir stores and 'exhibition villages' and by a type of theatrical performance called alligator wrestling (Sturtevant 1971:121).

I have found that this pattern continues to this day, in that The Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. initiates well-defined endeavors aimed at tourists while maintaining specific “Seminole only” events.

These Seminole Camps became very popular after a 1915 ad campaign that advertised Miami as a “Mecca for tourists and investors, and as a land of opportunity” (West 1998:12). In order to travel to Miami easily, the US Government and the State of Florida started to build the Tamiami Trail in 1916. The opening of the Tamiami Trail in April of 1928, was “the last 275 mile stretch of US Highway 41” connecting Tampa and Miami. It subsequently increased the number of tourists coming into contact with the Seminole (Klinkenberg 2003). It took approximately eight million dollars and twelve years to create a road through the sandy pines and swamps and the completion of the Tamiami trail was celebrated as a “major engineering feat” because of the inhospitable environment (Klinkenberg 2003).

One method used to drain the Everglades for the Tamiami Trail included the Army Corps of Engineers planting paper trees that sapped water from the swamp. These trees can still be seen throughout the Everglades and they have created a significant environmental impact. During an airboat ride through the Everglades, I learned from our Seminole guide that when they are disturbed, paper trees send out spores to create more paper trees. They are also highly effective at draining water from the ground and now are usually left alone. Prior to the Tamiami Trail, those wishing to travel from Miami to Tampa had to take a ferry through a series of canals. The connection of these two cities directly influenced the Seminole’s interaction with tourists and as a result the number of “Indian Villages”¹³ increased.

“Indian Villages,” a Bridge Between Two Cultures

The formal beginning of Seminole living in structured tourist “Indian Villages” occurred in 1917 after a very hard freeze. The freeze affected Seminole gardens, games supplies and food sources. As a result, more and more Seminole started to move into the villages as a ready source of income. For example, by 1918 a family of the Wind clan was living in a garden attraction called Coopinger’s Tropical Gardens (West 1998:14). In these “Indian Villages,” Seminole families erected camps and lived

their daily lives under the scrutiny of the tourist gaze. They rarely interacted directly with the tourists outside of bartering, and they were considered to be on display. Men in these villages began to wrestle alligators to supplement their incomes, a custom which continues to today, as a result of tourism. Indeed, the former chairman of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc., James Billie, was an accomplished alligator wrestler, and one can still see him wrestle alligators on Big Cypress Reservation.

The success of Coopinger's Tropical Garden, led Seminole named Willie Willie to lease a piece of land from a local farmer named John Roop and to start the "Musa Isle Trading Post and Seminole Indian Village" in 1919. This trading post was also used by trappers, and it allowed tourists to see trappers coming in on their canoes with pelts (West 1998:15). Rivalries between the Coopinger's Tropical Garden Camp and the Musa Isle Camp led to friction between their Seminole employees, and the leaders of the two camps would sometimes fight each other.

Women in these camps still participated in traditional daily activities, like cooking and child care, but since they no longer tended village gardens, they spent their remaining time creating crafts to sell from their chickees. The decline in gardening was also a result of the Seminole beginning to purchase foodstuffs from camp stores. Each woman was responsible for her own enterprises and kept the profits from her handiwork or distributed them as she wanted. Women created patchwork tablewares, skirts, and dolls that were sold directly to the tourists in the "Indian Villages", and these women set their own prices and kept their profits.

By the middle of the last century, many Seminole families were directly involved with tourism, either as guides for swamp tours and hunting or as participants in the "Indian Villages." In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the tourist craft market continued to be of key economic importance as craft sales bolstered family incomes. Income from tourists was seasonal, and in the off-season the Seminole had to find other ways to supplement their incomes, such as working on nearby farms, or hunting. The situation in these "Indian Villages" was often disagreeable as incidents of drinking and fighting increased. By the late 1950s, many Seminole became disenchanted with the tourism industry in South Florida and systematically began to increase and participate in other tribal ventures such as cattle farming and large scale agriculture and aquaculture.

Today, the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. selectively manages its involvement with tourism and strives to present to tourists a unified Seminole culture. Presentations of Seminole culture occur in many folk festivals, the annual Tribal Fair, Powwow and Rodeo, the tribe's museums and various souvenir shops, and the tribe's multifaceted web site. Seminole dolls can be purchased at all of these events. They may range in price and size, but through my research, I have found that they seem to be uniformly presented to the public as a link to the Seminole's "unconquered" history. The modern day descendants of Osceola, Billy Bowlegs, and the others who ceaselessly fought in a resistance to colonial forces continue fight through their presentation of Seminole culture to outsiders. Seminole dolls link both the tourist who buy them and the craftsman who makes them to the history and identity of the proud and independent Seminole Tribe of Florida.

CHAPTER 3

SELFDETERMINATION, A CONTINUING SEMINOLE LEGACY

The concept of “unconquered” is vital to what it means to be a Florida Seminole and it is reflected in the actions of the previous and present Seminole, in the decisions of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc., in the visual representations made by Seminole artists, in everyday conversations, and in the newspaper of the Seminole Tribe. Colonial pressures can shape a group’s political and cultural identity (Sahlins 1993; Schwartz and Saloman 1999; Hill 1996). The Seminole “cultural consciousness” of being “unconquered” was formed during periods of dominance by colonial forces. As a group struggles to “control their relationships with the dominant society” and possibly “recreate themselves in the image others have made them,” they produce or reinvent ways to distinguish themselves from the dominant group (Sahlins 1993:4-5). This additional layer of understanding ties identity to the processes and ways of colonial control over indigenous groups. Seminole responses to colonial influences mirror this struggle in that they have created ways to interact with the dominant group as well as reinterpreted and reflected on their status as a historically autonomous sociopolitical unit.

The previous chapter explored the process of Seminole ethnogenesis as this cultural group confronted the colonial systems that surrounded them. Hill argues that as a result of the colonial system, groups react in ways to either increase or decrease their access to the dominant power’s resources or in ways that help them “cope with the dominant society” (1996:2). Seminole ways of “dealing with” the dominant society included resistance to forced removal, retreating into the everglades, reorganizing their political structures, and reconceptualizing their position in Florida in order to maintain control over their lives. This way of conceptualizing themselves as “unconquered,” although originating in the experiences of early contact with outsiders, was not formally recognized by the United States as an acceptable policy until the 1970s. Until that time, the relationship between the US government and all indigenous communities was one of inconsistent and elastic policies that served to fuel the indigenous desire for self-determination. Reactions to these policies provided the fodder needed for the Seminole

to emerge as a sociopolitical force. This chapter explores the ways in which the Seminole navigated the policies and actions of the dominant colonial system to remain an autonomous political power—to remain unconquered.

A Brief History of US Indian Policies and its Effects on Indigenous Identity

Since the shaky beginnings of the United States 228 years ago, there have been inconsistencies between the policies enacted by Congress and by past US Presidents. Flexible policies led to differing and often conflicting federal attitudes toward indigenous populations. At first, the tribes of the United States were treated as “sovereign nations and the United States entered into some 380 treaties with them as equals” (Nighthorse-Campbell 1999:8). As the nation grew and its needs changed, the ways in which indigenous people in the US were treated also changed. The patterns of colonialism enacted by the US government were not stable forces, but instead changed as political needs and public opinion shifted. As a result, indigenous groups in America had to adjust the ways in which they interacted with the dominant society (Hill 1996).

The Northwest Ordinance set down initial policies regarding indigenous groups. Congress adopted the Northwest Ordinance under the policies of the Articles of Confederation on July 13, 1787, and it was important to increasing the influence of the United States (Harret, et al. 1993). These policies outlined the way in which the areas northwest of the Ohio River would be settled, shaped the personal freedoms of those settlers, and banned slavery in this territory. They also stipulated how indigenous people were to be treated. Article III of the Northwest Ordinance states (United States Printing Office 1927):

The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards Indians; their land and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress; but laws founded in justice and humanity, from time to time shall be made for preventing wrongs being done to them and for preserving peace and friendship.

This meant that although the US could intervene when it deemed absolutely necessary, in general, the individual tribes were to be left to govern themselves. Other early policies, like “Indian Trader Statutes” and the “Indian Non-Intercourse Act of 1790,”

federally regulated and limited the ways in which non-Indians could interact, trade, and buy land from individual tribes (Nighthorse Campbell 1999:8). All of these early policies and laws served to increase individual tribal authority over their own people, property and lands.

In theory and on paper, these policies would seem to have ensured the continued autonomy of indigenous communities. In practice, however, the policies were not followed. The pressure for expansion, as a result of population increases, led to a desire for lands once deemed the property of individual tribes. This desire resulted in drastic changes to the indigenous groups in the United States. Cultural groups cannot be thought of as stagnant or unchanging,¹⁴ all groups are “dynamic” and experience periods of change (Hill 1996:9). However, cultural change within the context of colonial expansion can have devastating consequences on the effected groups. This expansion led many states and politicians to remove various tribes from their lands. Removal policies had devastating effects on the Seminole and all Southeastern indigenous groups.

The removal process was launched when Andrew Jackson withdrew federal troops that had protected tribal lands since the end of the War of 1812 (Harret et al. 1993:327). On May 26, 1830, Jackson and the Twenty-first Congress of the United States defied the principles of non-interference with Indian tribes as set by previous policies and the Northwest Ordinance and instituted the Indian Removal Act. The Indian Removal Act sought to relocate all southern Indians to isolated areas west of the Mississippi River, but the Supreme Court, then headed by Chief Justice John Marshall, upheld the rights of the southern Indians and stated that they had a right to their lands. Jackson defied the Supreme Court and subsequently sent the US Army into Indian-held areas. After several battles, the Army forcibly removed thousands of southern Indians; the most widely known example of this is called the Trail of Tears, a migration journey during which countless Cherokee died from hunger, disease, and exposure.

Small bands of Seminole were able to avoid Jackson and the US Army and to keep their autonomy by fighting a guerilla-style war in the Everglades. Sattler argues that Jackson’s policies not only affected Seminole populations by removing nearly 90% of Seminole to Indian Territory by 1842, but his policies also affected Seminole socio-

political institutions, resulting in an increased importance of the chiefdom system and of the clan and family kin group as social organizing forces (Sattler 1996:37). Decreased populations and increasing contact with each other transformed the Seminole who remained in Florida and withdrew into the Everglades. They faced a difficult time “maintaining traditional subsistence and settlement patterns,” so they relied on other organizing social patterns to avoid outsiders (Sattler1996:37).

In order to avoid Andrew Jackson and the US Army, the Seminole in the Everglades often hid themselves, their chickees, and their children. One Seminole craftswoman also told me how her grandmother used to hide her mother and brothers in the swamp under cabbage palms when government agents would visit her grandfather, because she was afraid they would “take her children.” During the removal captured Seminole were sent by ship to Oklahoma via the Gulf of Mexico. According to the same Seminole craftswoman, the US Army thought that if their captives could see the way to Oklahoma by land, then they would be able to find their way back to the Everglades. She also related how some Seminole used “sleep medicine” to put their captors to sleep and then swam the shallow waters of the Bay of Tampa to return to their families.

The Seminole Wars and removal policies were costly and difficult, and eventually the US Army gave up their efforts to remove the remaining Seminole from Florida by force and the US began efforts to negotiate with them.

US Government Policies toward American Indian Sovereignty

U.S. attitudes and policies toward the Seminole and all indigenous communities have fluctuated during different eras in American politics. After the Third Seminole War ended, the U.S. Government made several attempts to approach the Seminole who remained in Florida. The U.S. wanted to complete a census of the “Indians” and to coerce them into using government services, programs and reservations. The U.S. wanted to include the Seminole and other American Indians in the New Deal and give them loans for cattle, feed, seeds and equipment, hoping that the loan industry would provide a source of income for the government, since repayment rates often exceeded the profits made by these endeavors.

At the same time, some policies advocated separation and removal, while others recognized “sovereign rights” of the different tribes (Brookeman 1990:3). Policies that advocated removal also advocated the assimilation of American Indians into mainstream American culture. In 1887, the General Allotment Act (or Dawes Act) was passed by Congress; its aim was to abolish tribal governments and to assimilate indigenous peoples into American society. To accomplish assimilation, the General Allotment Act allowed for the homesteading and the allotment of reserved lands to settlers (Nighthorse Campbell 1999:8).

It was thought that American Indians should, like recent immigrant groups from Europe, strive to be as “Americanized” as they could and subsequently deny aspects of their heritage, including language, dress, and religion. The US government initiated several popular efforts to “civilize” indigenous groups (Wickman 1997:3). Hill (1996) argues that the desire to “civilize” indigenous groups stemmed from ethnocentric ideas involving an unbalanced relationship of equality. “Euramerican states perceived indigenous peoples as potential equals if they could be educated and brought into direct relations with Americans of European descent” (Hill 1996:11). This meant that if the Seminole were to become “Americanized,” they needed to be “properly educated.”

In order to be effective, “civilization” policies advocated taking children from their communities and sending them to boarding schools where they were taught to adopt American culture. These children were often punished for using their languages, forced to conform to an American style of dress, and through various other means they were forcibly assimilated into a mainstream American way of life. Brookeman (1990:4) notes that in 1908 Richard Pratt the founder of the Carlyle Indian School in Pennsylvania stated:

The multiplicity of tribes represented enabled a mixing of the tribes in dormitory rooms. The rooms held three to four each and it was arranged that no two of the same tribe were placed in the same room. This not only helped in the acquirement of English, but broke up tribal and race clannishness, a most important victory in getting the Indian toward real citizenship.

Many children faced difficult times when they completed boarding school and tried to return to the communities that they had been taught to forget. Although these schools continued up until the late 1950s, their positions toward American Indian culture shifted

slightly as they became less inclined to erase tribal identities and more focused on educating children. Sahlins (1993:17) states that the colonial states combine “discipline, repression, and persuasion” and as a result, continued cultural practices are “radically altered for the worse”. This is true for Seminole (and other indigenous peoples) who faced the period of Indian Boarding Schools. They were taught how not to be Seminole. This profoundly affected their identity as Seminole, and the older generation’s reconnection with their Seminole identity.

The US government took a paternal position and initially controlled education through “Americanization.” Government councils also legislated many other aspects of daily life for federally recognized Indian tribes. These councils later evolved into the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).¹⁵ Initially, the BIA was supposed to control distribution of funds used for the “civilization of the Indians,” but in just two years, it was given the authority to handle “all matters relating to Indian affairs” (Henson 1996:2). This led to a long period of difficulty for these groups that fell under BIA power. The newly adopted Indian Removal Act (1830) and the subsequent removal of tribes to reservation lands created an era of disease and food shortages for American Indians and the BIA was called upon to supply food and aid to the suffering. This created new problems for the BIA and the Indians, because agents hired to distribute food and aid to reservations were often corrupt (Henson 1996:2).

Difficulty for American Indians came not just from the pressures of hunger and disease, but also from seemingly unstable US policies regarding them. Throughout the period between 1930s and the 1990s, there were several government positions regarding the status of American Indians and their positions as sovereign nations.¹⁶ During the 1930s, Roosevelt’s New Deal sought to “nourish selected aspects of Indian ways” but by the 1950s, political sentiment decried that “special case” status for them was un-American” (Brookeman 1990:4). As a result of this sentiment, policies were initiated that sought to terminate the special relationship that American Indians held with the government in an effort to “Americanize” them.

One significant policy, the collective land and tribal asset ownership status that had been reinforced by the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, was attacked. Some indigenous and non indigenous groups felt that the capitalist market system was

impeded by collective ownership. One group the American Indian Federation, agreed with termination of “special status” for Indian tribes. In response the National Congress of the American Indians was formed in 1944. This lobby group “demanded that the philosophy of self-determinism be maintained” and to this day, it continues to lobby for American Indian issues (Brookeman 1990:5).

Several U.S. Presidents, managed to shield groups somewhat from termination policies. In 1970, President Richard Nixon stated that “termination is morally and legally unacceptable” and that “federal policy should affirm the integrity and rights to continued existence of all Indian tribes and Alaskan Native Governments, recognizing that cultural pluralism is a source of national strength” (Brookeman 1990:4). By 1975, President Ford and the US Congress had passed the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEA), P.L. 93-638. (Indian Health Services 2001) This act was instrumental in tribal self-determinism in that it transferred many aspects of decision making from the BIA back to tribal councils.

The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s increased awareness of the unequal and unclear status of American Indians in the US political and legal system. In addition, this time period was marked by increased activism for indigenous sovereignty and rights. American Indians in the US began to reclaim their identity as “Indian” and to demand better treatment. Schwartz and Saloman (1999:446) argue that although native populations had their own sense of “self” prior to 1492, the adjustments made during the periods of colonial control could lead to adopting the term “Indian” as a socially motivating power.

American Indian activism continued to increase in the late 1960s through the 1980s, and these activities had profound results for tribal sovereignty. These decades were punctuated by activist incidents by groups such as the American Indian Movement¹⁷ (AIM). Worldwide media coverage of events like AIM’s seizure of Alcatraz prison from 1969 to 1971 and the seventy-one day standoff at Wounded Knee in 1973 revealed to the world the social and economic hardships faced by America’s indigenous peoples. As a result, the US government began to look for ways to get out of their ambiguous relationships and responsibilities with American Indians (Brookeman 1990:7). Additionally, Brookeman feels that the U.S. Government thought of this

relationship as “an uneasy mixture of a benign trustee and a frustrated parent who wants to be rid of responsibility by allowing their ‘adopted children’ to become independent through their own commercial skill” (Brookeman 1990:7).

To facilitate a way out of its historical relationship with American Indian groups, the US government changed the way in which the BIA interacts with these groups. Historically, the BIA controlled many aspects of tribal life, including settling legal disputes, operating tribal ventures, controlling access and utilization of land, and distributing social services like health care and educational opportunities. Now the BIA acts as an “advisory agency” as tribes move toward greater self-determination (Henson 1996:2). The current stated goals of the BIA are to (US Department of State 2004:1):

- (1) Encourage Indians and train Indians and Alaskan Native people to manage their own affairs under a trust relationship with the federal government;
- (2) To facilitate, with maximum involvement of Indian and Alaskan Native people, full development of their human and natural resource potentials;
- (3) To mobilize all public and private aids to the advancement of Indian and Alaskan Native people for use by them;
- (4) To use the skill and capabilities of Indian and Alaskan Native people in the direction and management of programs for their benefit.

Events in US Government Relations with the Seminole that Influenced Seminole Self-Determination.

The United States faced many challenges throughout their efforts to change Seminole lifeways. The Seminole were well established in the Everglades, but eventually development projects sought to drain the Everglades and as a result local politicians and developers began to encroach on Seminole lands. These development projects had lasting environmental and economic effects for the Seminole. After the opening of the Tamiami Trail in 1928, the Seminole were struggling because pollution and development led to a series of poor crops and shrinking game populations, while droughts, freezes and a hurricane devastated the unpolluted areas near Lake Okeechobee (Seminole Tribe of Florida 1997). Despite these conditions, the Seminole maintained their private communities and autonomy up until the last century.

As a result of their earlier encounters with the U.S. Government and local politicians, independence and sovereignty were important issues for the Seminole. They began work as a group to effect change. "In the late 1920s the [Seminole] council began formally to dispute the government's right to act on their behalf" (West 1998:3). US Government response to Seminole and other tribal nations' economic hardships included the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act that encouraged tribes to form their own "formal" governments.

Additionally, in 1938, the government set aside approximately 80,000 acres of land in the Big Cypress, Hollywood and Brighton areas of Florida as Indian reservations. This land was an invitation to the Seminole to move in and "change from subsistence farming and hunting/trapping to an agriculture based economy" (Seminole Tribe of Florida 1997). A few Seminole moved into these lands, but many retained a severe distrust of the U.S. Government and a desire for individual autonomy. At the time, they felt that moving onto reservations would deny them access to their previous lifeways and would result in losing both personal and tribal autonomy (Tiger and Kersey 2002).

Many Seminole did not wish to participate in relations with the U.S. Government, the State of Florida or with other Seminole communities. Hill (1996) explains the reactions to colonial domination as two-fold. Indigenous groups can "develop around the issue of how to cope with the dominant society" or resist the "other factions ways of relating to that dominant order" (Hill 1992:2). The Seminole both resisted the dominant social order, the US, and other groups' ways of dealing with the US by reaffirming their desires to be left alone, and for some by separating themselves from both the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes.

In a meeting with Florida Governor Sholtz on February 22, 1936, a Seminole spokesperson, Cory Osceola, spoke for the Seminole who had lost good hunting grounds to the Everglades National Park and to newly forming reservations north of the Tamiami Trail. He said (West 1998:81):

They want to be left alone. They are afraid they will again be moved from the villages, which they occupy deep in the Everglades. They fear the white men will keep on moving them until they are in the water.

The independent identity of the Florida Seminole was important during this time because the “majority of the non-reservation Indians were adamantly anti-government” (West 1998:2). Today, pockets of Seminole who are not recognized by the BIA or enrolled in either the Miccosukee Tribe or Seminole Tribe of Florida remain in lands south of Lake Okeechobee. These Seminole, the “Traditional Independent Seminoles,” continue to protest government interference into their lives while living in much the same way that they have for the last two hundred years, and maintaining an open land claim for most of the state of Florida.

Even though many Seminole were anti-government, others recognized the need to sort out answers to the daily problems the Seminole faced. On the night of May 25, 1938, a group of Seminole leaders met with the United States Government. Although the government had been meeting with individual Seminole because of the difficulty locating them, this was the first meeting between a large group of Seminole and the U.S. Government since the Third Seminole War almost ninety years prior (Peithman 1957:51).

A spokesman for the Cow Creek branch of Seminole, located near Lake Okeechobee, told the government of his group’s needs for good land, clean water, and most importantly, the right to be left alone. This was the first formal attempt to reach a compromise between the U.S. Government and the Seminole people, and despite the government’s political spin of this meeting as a “peace offering” from the Seminole Tribe to the U.S., the Seminole did not consider this to be an offering of peace or an end to the hostility felt toward the United States.

The Incorporation of the Seminole Tribe of Florida as a Sovereign Political Entity

A generation of Seminole leaders began to meet regularly beneath a large oak tree on the Hollywood Reservation as a response to frequent government attempts to intervene in their lives with services or programs. This oak tree, called “The Council Oak,” still stands and was recently protected. In 1957, these Seminole created a constitution that established a two-tiered system of government. This two-tiered system is reminiscent of the earlier Southeastern indigenous patterns of political origination. In the past, internal and external governing systems regulated daily life, while war-chiefs

and peace-chiefs were responsible for social order. The constitution marked the beginning of the Incorporated Seminole Tribe of Florida and it instituted the Tribal Council and Board of Directors. In addition, leaders are elected with representation from each reservation (Hollywood, Big Cypress, Immokalee, Tampa, Fort Pierce and Brighton).

At a surface level, the creation of a constitution and new political structures that are not based on historical Seminole models may seem like a concession of Seminole identity in response to pressures from outsiders. Marshal Sahlins (1993) discusses the compromises that indigenous communities make in order to ensure their continued survival. He states that “defenders of the indigenous order are prepared to make useful compromises with the dominant culture, even to deploy its techniques and ideals in the course of distinguishing their own” (Sahlins 1993:19). The legal incorporation of the Seminole Tribe was one of these “useful compromises” that used the structures of the dominant society to ensure political gains. Even though it was based on outside models of government, the incorporation, ratification of the constitution, and creation of a formalized tribal council and board of directors ensured *self-governance* for the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

Today, the Tribal Council is the principal governing body and it includes a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Council Representatives. However, each reservation has the autonomy to make local decisions that best suit individual community needs. Presently, the Tribal Council oversees the direction of the Seminole Police Department, the human resources programs, the gaming enterprises of the tribe, the Billie Swamp Safari, citrus and cattle interests, the Tribe’s museums and most of the tribe’s cigarette-related ventures. These activities are monitored by the Tribal Council, located at the headquarters of the Seminole Tribe of Florida on the Hollywood Reservation off of Stirling Road (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Headquarters of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida also has its own Legal Services Department, as a result of all the legal battles the tribe has faced with the State of Florida and the U.S. Government. This department manages a public defenders office and oversees the Water Resource Management and Utilities Departments. The legal department also intervenes in legal cases involving other Indian groups (both past and present) in Florida because they consider themselves related to those who have come before. Since its formation, the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. has been looking toward economic increase and its future as a viable and autonomous nation.

The framers of the constitution foresaw an economic prosperity far beyond the small-time tourism ventures - alligator wrestling shows, airboat rides, road side arts and crafts booths, village tours that had become the stable of individual and tribal economy (Seminole Tribe of Florida 1997).

Economic Self-Sufficiency: A Requirement for Continuing Seminole Political and Cultural Autonomy

A group's economic self-sufficiency is not the sole marker of that society's cultural construction; instead it is one construction mechanism. Members of a group may produce, not just for economic development, but also for other cultural motivations. Howard D. Smith (2000) relates that many studies of tribal economy have not fully

understood how the benefits of tribal development have been integrated with cultural development for many present day tribes. Specifically he establishes that tribal economic development “increases the potential for strengthening and developing tribal culture” (Smith 2000:2) Thus economic self –sufficiency can directly influence tribal culture. In the case of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, economic self-sufficiency ensured cultural and political autonomy in that as long as they could continue without increasing government interference, they could maintain their right to self-determination.

The intensely guarded right of self-determination and cultural survival are features of most tribal nations as they negotiate relations with the dominant societies that surround them. “The fact that Native Americans have clung to a distinctive philosophy and cultural identity despite the continuous attacks...suggests that this distinctive identity is not some set of colorful aboriginal survivals but an organic world view, necessary for survival” (Brookeman 1990:2). The Seminole Tribe of Florida prides and markets itself on its history of self-determinism. It is an essential cultural value and according to one craftswoman at the 31st Annual Tribal Fair and Rodeo in Hollywood Florida, “independence is what it means to be Seminole.”

Many Seminole believe that if they had to rely solely on the US Government for basic economic needs, then they would be beholden to them and subject to their policies (Tiger and Kersey 2002). Being tied to US policies would infringe on their abilities to practice their culture as they had done in the past. For example, in the late 1950s, BIA representatives to the Seminole wanted them to move into cinder-block houses instead of living in thatched chickees. The chickees were built to withstand South Florida’s enveloping heat by maximizing breezes, whereas the cinderblock houses, which at the time lacked air-conditioning, were stifling. As a result, no one wanted to live in them (Snow 2001). Seminole defensive attitudes toward assimilation included not just retreating in to the Everglades or fighting the US Army, but also involved the development and maintenance of lifeways they deemed important including political structures and practices from their heritage such as hunting and crafts production to maintain economic self-sufficiency.

Seminole keep their culture and a dedication to autonomy alive through participation in activities that remind them of their heritage. For example, during heritage days and festivals at the Afatchkee Day School on Big Cypress Reservation, children learn about the ways in which the Seminole survived in the Everglades. There are contests with bows and arrows to remind children how the Seminole hunted for their food, traditional cooking that demonstrates how foods like swamp cabbage and gar were essential for survival, and exhibitions of traditional skills and craftsmanship to show how everyday essential items were produced and used. Through these types of activities, Seminole status in the US is reflected on and reinforced to future generations. Although making Seminole dolls for sale to tourists initially increased a family's access to capital in a time of reduced economic and environmental prospects, it now making dolls also reminds them of their past struggles to remain "unconquered."

Over the years the federal governments' relationship with indigenous nations has been inconsistent while tribes have fought to maintain sovereignty. Tribal self-determination is not only important for cultural reasons, but also for economic reasons. About three percent of national fuel reserves and fifty five percent of world-wide uranium deposits are under Native American control (Brookeman 1990:3). This means that in recent past some groups have found themselves in substantially lucrative financial positions. In order to keep and redistribute the revenue generated from these resources to their members, tribes must maintain their sovereign status. Now "it is an era of self-determination in which the federal government has committed itself to protecting and enhancing inherent tribal resources, rights, and the ability of tribes to manage their own governments" (Henson 1996:4).

The Florida Seminole have etched a place for themselves in Florida. They have fought for and continue to fight for their rights as a sovereign nation within the United States to control the path of their future. This fight for Seminole self-determination continues at various levels, through the Seminole Tribe of Florida's use of legal processes and diversifying tribal assets on to everyday reminders of their past.

CHAPTER 4

LEGITIMACY AND MEANING IN THE SEMINOLE DOLL-MAKING PROCESS

Anthropologists and art historians have long been interested in the “stuff” of others, packing their offices or houses with items accumulated during their research and travels. But how do they classify these mementos? There is a long-standing binary distinction between art and artifact. “The objects of others have been appropriated primarily into two of these categories: the artifact or ethnographic specimen and the work of art” (Phillips and Steiner 1999:3). This distinction itself is problematic, and even more so for tourist art. Is the souvenir art or object? This question is as difficult to answer as is the definition of culture. Like the anthropological definition of culture, the definition of art has changed in response to greater cultural awareness. As such, an indigenous concept of art and value must not be based on western artistic conventions, but instead it must account for the connections between the object’s power and meaning. I have observed that for Seminole doll-makers, the cultural “value” of the doll shifts between both art and object based on context. This chapter explores the ways in which the meanings of Seminole dolls as both art and object can be transferred during exchange.

Connecting Art and Value in Indigenous Systems

In order to approach non-western concept of the values of art, I must first explore the foundations of Western art. A brief discussion of Western classifications of art is necessary before it can be contrasted with indigenous systems of art. A major shift in the Western classification of art can be traced back to Germanic scholars who, according to Michael Podro, focused their work in “the Kantian opposition between human freedom and the constraints imposed by the material world” (1982:xxi). According to Kant, humans are restrained by a dependency on Nature, but are free in the exercise of Reason. Podro states, “the role of art was seen as overcoming our ordinary relations to the world” (1982:xxi). As a result of

Kantian thinking, art has been conceptualized in Western society as either high art, the most free, “art for art’s sake,” or low art, more functional pieces.

These opposing classifications, although mainstream in art history, are arbitrary and may not be shared by indigenous artists. Previously, in order for an object to be valued as “art,” it had to meet the Western criteria for fine art or applied art (Phillips and Steiner 1999). The notion of “primitive art” was established to try to incorporate a greater variety of objects, but in practice it still utilized the biased notion of fine art. As a result, “the indigenous systems of value and meaning attached to objects” have largely been ignored (Phillips and Steiner 1999:7). In general, indigenous systems of art are conceptual frameworks that, like western systems, take into account form, function, craftsmanship, and aesthetics, though they can also include other variable cultural markers.

No view of art is easily transferable into a “value.” The value of art is fundamentally tied to its power and cultural integrity (Armstrong 1981). For many indigenous artists, art is a form of power. Power is embedded in the act of making, and the object itself retains this power. Armstrong (1981:5) states that the term “art” is problematic for describing certain objects because it does not “account for the human aspect of meaning.” The artist determines what to create, and then represents those ideas that to her typify what it means to make art as a member of her group and the object created becomes a physical demonstration of that experience. Making art and the art object then can become mediums for historical representation and cultural self-determinism, but there is more to the meaning of art than just recreation and representation. There is also a human element in the reactions toward the objects.

Some objects, because of people’s behavior toward them, make them more than just objects (Armstrong 1981:3). These objects although material in nature, also contain a more insubstantial force. Armstrong calls this force a “sacred presence” and notes that the object stands at a crossroad between both material object which is not “in-presence” and powerful object which is “in-presence” (1981:10). “Objects of presence” or “special kinds of things” have variable power

related to their use and position in internal systems (Armstrong 1981). An object “in-presence” then is charged with cultural power and its value is modified.

When tourists, however, ascribe economic value¹⁸ to an object, the object’s meaning is also modified. It can take on an additional layer of meaning for the indigenous artist. This process often leads to booming souvenir trades as visitors wish to acquire a token representation of their vacations. Typically the tourist does not have an infinite or extended amount of time, or does not understand the cultural frameworks needed to discover the indigenous meanings associated with the artistic creations of the people they are visiting. Therefore, taking into account “the laws of modern economy,” demand for these tourist objects is “stimulated, orientated, and at times, totally created” to fill the tourist desires (Rossell 1988:2).

Rossell states that those who operate the tours, or who sell to tourists, “create an atmosphere where novelty attracts (exoticism)” (1988:3). The atmosphere of being outside of their everyday experiences is what the tourist craves. As a result craftspeople carefully constructed images and experiences so that the tourist leaves with a sense of “knowing” about an area or people, although in reality they have seen what they were meant to see. The tourist gains status¹⁹ by their experience, even if the experience has been carefully constructed.

In the Everglades of South Florida, tourists can spend the night in a thatched roofed *chickee* and then in the morning take a Swamp Tour by swamp buggy or airboat to experience the “wildness” of the River of Grass. During these tours, Seminole guides call animals such as wild pigs, alligators and various birds to the edges of the vehicle by either food or sound, so that tourists are face to face with “the real Florida.” The tourist can step off the vehicle, walk into the Swamp Water Café, and order a “real Seminole lunch” of gator tail and fry bread. Then as they leave, the tourist can step into the gift shop and buy a memento, such as a small doll dressed as a “real Seminole Indian” to take with them to show their friends. The tourist leaves the Everglades with the feeling of “knowing” what it means to be Seminole, yet they were provided a show of habitat, mythology, and adaptation that is created to reinforce the “unconquered” or “wild” image of the Florida Seminole.

The Question of the Legitimacy and Value of Tourist Art

The tourists' desired object, a Seminole doll, is also carefully constructed based on a set of Seminole cultural norms, but is it art? Notions of illegitimacy as art shroud objects produced for souvenir or tourist trades. Using Western beliefs about art, the object's authenticity as art is questioned based on production and distribution intensity. Phillips and Steiner speculate that the notion of inauthenticity that surrounds souvenirs is because these objects are located at the "intersection of discourses of art, artifact and commodity" (1999:4).

A discussion by Holm and Reid regarding masks from the Northwest Coast of the United States provides an example of the course of an indigenous object from art to commodity. "Most pieces collected in the late eighteenth century were of high quality" and were relatively rare, therefore they were art (Holm and Reid 1975:13). In the 1820s, a developing market for masks coincided with the declining fur trade. The masks that were made between 1820 and 1870 are considered to be commercial art and a commodity, because they are uniform in style. These masks are described as "lifeless, well-executed, but technique cannot conceal the meaningless quality everywhere characteristic of art without belief" (Holm and Reid 1975:14). This notion implies that rarity equals legitimacy as art, while objects that are produced on a greater scale are too commercial to be art; they are instead a commodity or object.

The process of popularity and legitimacy for Seminole dolls is similar to the masks of the Northwest Coast. At first, they were rare. As a result these early dolls are displayed in museums as "art" and ethnographic artifacts. Then following the boom in South Florida around the 1940s, they were produced in greater numbers for tourists and subsequently have had their legitimacy as "art" questioned by non-indigenous art critics and consumers. This connects the value of the doll not only to the arbitrary concept of high art or low art, but also to a new, equally arbitrary, standard of scarcity. Crediting the legitimacy of Seminole dolls as art because of rarity does not account for the value of the dolls ascribed by Seminole doll-makers.

I assert that Seminole dolls are an example of an item now produced in three different contexts and that for the Seminole doll-maker and the tourist consumer, the

meaning of the doll changes with the context in which it is presented. Those contexts, as well as meaningful symbolic features of the doll, transform the meaning of the doll as it navigates exchange networks. I have noticed that Seminole dolls can simultaneously be meaningful as art, ethnographic artifact and commodified object; they are not limited to just one category. As art and ethnographic artifact, they are made for contests and as gifts used for relationship building and prestige. They are created and given with meaning attached to their style of dress, their form, or in the events they represent. Because they remind and reinforce Seminole identity through symbolic patchwork and dress²⁰, and are treated as “special,” these objects are charged with their own cultural power that makes them “in-presence” (Armstrong 1981). The treatment of these kinds of dolls includes special handling and display, and a reverence paid to them during the process of creation and distribution.

As commodified objects, Seminole dolls are produced *en mass* as mementos of a tourist experience. Their meanings, therefore, are directly tied to their economic value and their use as status symbols for tourists. Tourist’s meanings of the dolls, although essential because they have fueled Seminole economic independence, do not charge the dolls with the same cultural power. The dolls, even though they are important in this context, are not “in-presence” because they are bought and sold (Armstrong 1981). The meaning of the doll²¹ is altered based on its position within the tourist experience.

The Tourist Experience as Meaningful Exchange

Smith (1989) discusses some of the reasons why people chose to visit tourist attractions. These reasons can be thought of in terms of types of tourism: ethnic, cultural, historical, environmental, and recreational (Smith 1989:4). Based on Smith’s model, I identify contemporary Seminole tourist attractions as a part of ethnic tourism, because the tourist can see “quaint customs of indigenous people” (Smith 1989:4) Ethnic tourism, as defined by Smith, involves a notion of going off the beaten path to a removed place that attracts “only a limited number of visitors motivated by curiosity and elite peer approval” (Smith 1989:4). This kind of tourism,

by nature, has a minimal host-guest impact because of the decreased number of participants on both sides of the tourist line. Cultural tourism is tied to ethnic tourism, but Smith makes some distinctions between the two. The most notable difference is that the impact of host-guest relations is greater in cultural tourism because of the accessibility from a large number of tourists who come to photograph the local way of life. Cultural tourism encompasses a “view of a vanishing lifestyle”, or a peek at a way of life recently removed from human memory (Smith 1989:4). Tourism in any form can act as an agent of social change for the indigenous community and for visitors who seek leisure and the “exotic other” (Grayburn 1976).

From my observations, the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. participates in both ethnic and cultural tourism. Swamp tours offer those daring visitors to the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation a trip to a remote lifestyle. This experience is an example of ethnic tourism as tourists make a minimal impact on the Big Cypress Reservation. Visitors to Big Cypress are motivated by a desire for the “exotic” real Florida experience.

Examples of Seminole cultural tourism are large-scale events like the Annual Tribal Fair Powwow and Rodeo, participation in the Florida Folk Festival and other heritage festivals that draw many people and provide tourists a glimpse of Seminole culture. In 2004, approximately 25,000 people attended the Seminole Tribal Fair Powwow and Rodeo at the Seminole Tribal Fairgrounds near the corner of State Road 7 and Stirling Road. This annual event provides a destination in which tourists can view “Seminole culture”. “Even though not all tribal members are directly involved ...tourism--the sharing and displaying of certain highly visible aspects of their tourist experience-- serves to reinforce a tribe’s group identity” (West 1998:111).

Seminole participation in tourism provides a meaningful way for tourists and Seminole to interact. Seminole tourism is a medium for relations that are “safe” in that they are shielded by focused situations. Seminole people initiate their own involvement with tourism; they are not descended upon in their homes by hordes of outsiders snapping photos. Instead they represent their identity through the mediation of public venues and tourist attractions. In this way the Seminole can

negotiate their involvement with the dominant society, while maintaining their independent identity and presenting their culture in their own terms.

Doll Symbolism and Seminole Notions of Representation and Identity

While walking around the Big Cypress, Immokalee, Brighton and Hollywood Reservations, I observed one highly visible aspect of Seminole culture as primarily the presentation of “traditional Seminole patchwork” on men’s jackets and vests, and women’s skirts. The Seminole demonstrate and reinforce their identity through the production and distribution of Seminole dolls accentuating “traditional” Seminole patchwork. Although Seminole dolls are now widely sold in a variety of contexts, initially they created a cultural conflict. When a Seminole craftsman was commissioned by George Storter to make a family of wooden dolls for the Doll Land Convention in New York (around 1900), he was afraid his family would become sick because he had made representational images. Storter, however, successfully convinced the man to make the family of dolls and a small dugout canoe in which the dolls were displayed (Brainard 1999). Downs reinforces this idea of representational images as taboo, by stating “Seminole and Miccosukees are hesitant to recreate the exact image of something, fearing it will bring harm to them” (Downs 1995). Seminole dolls are not literal images of Seminole women, but instead are altered impressions of those features important to the Seminole.

I have noticed throughout my fieldwork that Seminole dolls made for sale are usually made by women past menopause, perhaps because of the power of representational images. During my conversations with doll-makers, I learned that while the Seminole do not believe that the dolls they make for sale possess spiritual power, they are still important because they represent Seminole women at a turning point in their tribal history. In the past, Seminole “medicine makers” used dolls, either carved from wood or sculpted from clay for a variety of reasons, including exacting revenge and sorcery. (West 1998:51) The spiritual power of dolls can still be seen in a continuing tradition involving retribution for murder as told by Willie Lena, in Howard (1984). Lena recounts that four male relatives of a murdered man would prepare a nine and a half inch doll of clay, place it in a fire of blackjack oak, and

position themselves at each of the cardinal directions. After a period of prayer and smoking *hici pvkpvki*, native tobacco, the clay effigy would become very hot, and glow red. If it fell in the fire, it meant that the murderer would die within four days. If it did not fall, then the murderer had “powerful counter magic” and would get sick, but not die. (Howard 1984:95)

An Account of the Doll-Making Process

Seminole dolls whether made for medicine, contests or sales are elaborately crafted. Initially, two different styles of wooden dolls appeared on the tourist market; one was made entirely of wood, carved and painted by the Seminole men. The other was carved by men and dressed in cotton clothes by women, as were the ones for the New York Doll Land Convention. These dolls were the predecessors of the dolls currently available at arts and crafts venues. The bodies and faces of early dolls were carved out of cypress or another soft wood. The hair and eyes of the dolls were highlighted by black dye, while the dolls were dressed in multi-colored patchwork clothes. Examples of these early dolls can be found in the Ah-Tha-Thi-Ki Museum of the Seminole Tribe on the Big Cypress Reservation, and in the National Museum of the American Indian, in Washington D.C. These early dolls were not made in vast quantities. Their rarity as well as their early emergence into the tourist market makes them highly sought after both as art and as ethnographic artifact.

Around 1918, Seminole began to offer the popular palmetto fiber husk dolls at local tourist attractions. The first dolls for tourists were sold out of the maker’s chickees, because at this time there were no organized outlets for Seminole crafts other than the Seminole attractions or “Indian Villages”. By 1934 the first craft booth, commissioned by the matriarch Annie Tommie, was built on the Dania (now Hollywood) Reservation right off of Highway 441. (West 1998:52) Several craft programs since the 1930s have marketed and promoted the palmetto fiber dolls as Florida tourist trade products in order to aid in the economic development of Seminole communities (Downs 1995). Deaconess Harriet Bedell of the Glade Cross Mission saw the potential market for Seminole dolls, and in 1937 arranged for them to be sold by the thousands for approximately ten cents a doll in stores and by mail

order (Lenze 1986:82). These mass-produced palmetto fiber dolls are the type that continues to be produced today for sale in gift shops, at powwows, and over the Internet.

Seminole doll-makers prefer palmetto fiber because the husks have a reddish tone, “more appropriate for dolls representing Indian people” (Downs 1995). While visiting the Ee-toh-lit-kee (Seminole Family Camp) at the Florida Folk Festival, a Seminole doll-maker walked me through the process of creating a Seminole doll. She said that although elder Seminole women usually make the dolls, sometimes men will collect the palmetto fiber for the dolls. First they must locate an appropriate palmetto, remove the leaves, isolate and fell the trunk and then separate the smoother fiber from the coarser fiber. One palmetto can make approximately five dolls. The fiber is dried for a few days and then the doll-makers cut pieces of palmetto for the heads and bodies of the dolls. A template for the body is also cut from a piece of thin cardboard and the palmetto is stretched and sewn onto this cardboard base. The heads and bodies are assembled in large groups and filled with scrap palmetto fiber. They follow this process because “cotton pulls at the thread” when facial features are sewn onto the dolls.

Female dolls have a spherical head and conical body with a cardboard base. Once the bodies of these dolls are stuffed and a seam is sewn down the side of the cone, and the facial features are sewn onto the dolls. These features have been broken down into two primary elements, the eyes and mouth. Simply shaped eyes are sewn with black thread, and the stylized mouth is embroidered with red. Dolls are made in quantity, and once all the doll forms are assembled, they are dressed. Dorothy Downs (1995) verifies this process of doll creation in her book *Art of the Florida Seminole and Miccosukee Indians*. Figure 3 shows the process of doll production from raw palmetto fiber to finished Seminole doll.



Figure 3. The Doll Making Process

The skirts of the dolls are also assembled in groups. First, bands of brightly colored fabric are embellished with several bands of small rickrack, a store bought zigzagged trim. The size of the band and number of trim elements is in relation to the size of the doll. Then, these bands of fabric are seamed and slightly gathered at the top to be sewn onto smaller dolls as skirts. Larger more expensive dolls may also have a band of patchwork incorporated into the skirt of the costume.

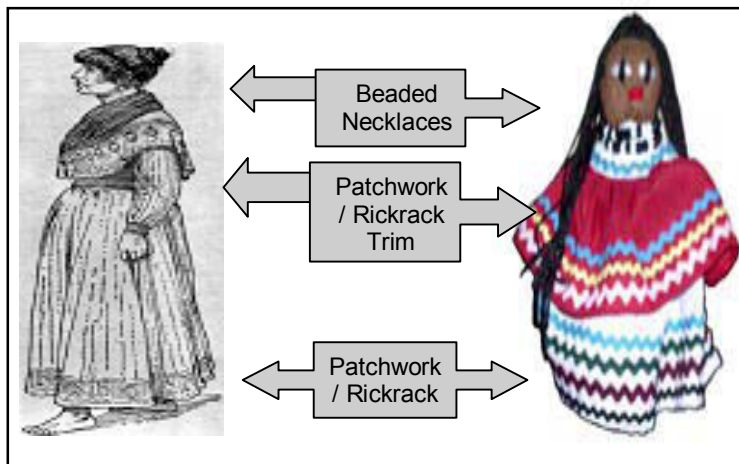
I have found that the male dolls are only made in larger sizes usually around 18 inches tall, while the female dolls are made in a variety of sizes ranging from an inch and a half to almost 14 inches tall. Male dolls are usually dressed as Seminole men of the 1800s, including a turban and “big shirt.” The very small dolls were usually labeled “papooses” by the vendors who sold them, and they were swaddled in brightly colored fabric.

Once the Seminole doll is assembled, skirted, and its features defined by embroidery, the doll-maker attaches yarn or silky thread to suggest traditional women’s hairstyles. These styles include a bun (popular among Seminole women prior to the 1900s), a crescent shaped forehead crown (popular from about 1900 to the 1940s) and a ponytail (popular after 1950). The hairstyle of the doll does not determine how old the doll is, but rather the doll-maker chooses which style she

wishes to incorporate. Dolls made prior to the 1900s usually had painted hair (Downs 1995).

After the doll's hair is attached, the doll-maker sews on the dolls cape. The cape is made in the same fashion as the skirt, but falls to the horizontal midline of the doll, around the waistline. Once the doll is completely dressed, it is ornamented with beaded necklaces. More expensive and larger dolls have additional necklaces and either plastic or glass-bead drop earrings. In the past, a Seminole woman considered herself to be completely dressed, when she wore as many strands of beaded necklaces as she could afford, often ranging from her shoulders to just below her ears. As she aged, she might have given away some of her necklaces to her female relatives and friends, "as vanity gave way to comfort" (Seminole Tribe of Florida 1997).

The Seminole doll, once dressed and adorned, is complete for sale. I have observed that greater care and stylistic adaptations regarding costume and hairstyle are used in the creation of contest or gift dolls, while the ones produced for sale are made in large quantities with attention to not wasting materials. Each doll, either for sale or other purposes, is a highlight of Seminole culture and is easily recognized and sought after by tourists. "More than just a cloth-wrapped palmetto fiber husk stuffed with cotton, the Seminole Doll accurately portrays the clothing and hairstyle worn by traditional Seminole men and women" (Seminole Tribe of Florida 1997). Figure 4 compares the costumes of a Seminole woman from the 1800s and a contemporary Seminole doll.



The image on the left is courtesy of the Florida Photographic Collection.

Figure 4. Comparison of 1800s Seminole Woman's Costume and Seminole Doll

Patchwork as a Marker of Seminole Identity

The style of Seminole clothing, jackets, women's skirts, scarves and children's garments are easily recognizable because of the brightly colored patchwork designs incorporated into them. The designs are symbolic and are made into clothing, kitchen linens, and dolls. Smaller, less expensive dolls do not have patchwork motifs on their skirts while the larger more costly dolls or dolls made for gifts and contests have motifs on their clothing. Seminole patchwork can be intricate or simple, and the meanings of some motifs vary by kin group. Therefore, it may be possible to determine a person's matrilineal kin group based on the motifs in their clothing. Symbolic motifs also include geometric adaptations of natural phenomenon. Deaconess Harriett Bedell, promoted "traditional" designs on items she sold from the Glade Cross Mission including the "Fire," "Lightning," "Man on Horseback," "Waves," "Trees," "Mountains," and "Arrowheads" (West 1998:65). "Rattlesnake" is also popular because former Chairman James Billie, a noted snake handler and alligator wrestler wore a vest with this design during performances. The designs of the patchwork can have spiritual significance, can be purely artistic,

or can relate to important Seminole myths and stories. Figure 5 shows four typical Seminole patchwork designs.



Figure 5. Examples of Seminole Patchwork Designs

Seminole patchwork designs are created by sewing three or more thin strips of fabric into long bands. The bands are then vertically cut into small strips, usually less than an inch wide. These little strips are placed on a diagonal, butted up against one another and then attached to one another. Varieties in the ways the fabric strips are positioned create the different motifs in Seminole patchwork. In general, cotton fabric is used for everyday garments and for dolls for sale. The cotton is a plaid, a calico, or sometimes a small geometric print. While at the Annual Seminole Powwow, I even noticed a boy of about seven years wearing a “traditional style” Seminole patchwork big shirt from Dragon Ball Z²² novelty fabric. Fancier fabrics such as silks, velvets, and corduroys have been and are used in garments and dolls for gifts, for contest, and for other special occasions. For example, at the 31st Annual Seminole Tribal Fair, I observed a contest winning woman’s skirt completely made of bright blue velvet.

The piecing is complex and the colors of the motifs are usually bright primary colors. Throughout history, colors have held symbolic meaning for different people, and the Seminole are no exception. Color symbolism in Seminole patchwork and garments continues to be an identifying marker. Red, yellow, black and white, reflect the medicine colors of the four sacred directions recognized by the Seminole. These colors are used in spirit motifs for “medicine makers” clothing, and for the clothing of important people for the Seminole. Historically, Seminole medicine makers were

paid for their services with bolts of cloth in one or more of these colors. He would then give the fabric to his female relatives, who in turn would use it to make his sacred garments, and the cloth pieces needed to make medicine, since Seminole women were the only ones who could sew cloth. (Snow 2001)

Since the “Indian Village” days, women would make clothing and dolls for sale, although now only a few items include spirit motifs. At first, the dolls sold for ten cents to three dollars, though now they range from five to a hundred dollars or more. (Jumper 1988) Whether expensive or not, all Seminole dolls are dressed in brightly colored solid and patterned material and trims. Female dolls are dressed in a typical woman’s costume of the 1800s; while male dolls are dressed in “big shirts” instead of the now widely recognized and used “Seminole Jacket.” The men’s “big shirt” (a long patchwork belted shirt) was originally worn by Seminole men, but around 1930 they discarded this style in order to better participate in outside employment. Women began making shorter shirts that transformed into the now famous patchwork Seminole jacket. Although styles of clothing changed for the Seminole, like it has for all people, patchwork continues to be a source of cultural pride.

“Patchwork clothing remains the tribe’s sole blazon of cultural identity” (West 2001:31). The motifs created by piecing the cloth together are symbolic as well as markers of a particular person’s artistic adaptation. The patchwork pieces were originally sewn by hand, but the introduction of the hand-cranked sewing machine greatly influenced the production of patchwork items. The hand-cranked sewing machine did not require power to operate, and Seminole women became adept at sewing patchwork in their chickees. When I asked a Seminole doll-maker why the pieces of patchwork were so small, she replied that it was because often, the larger pieces of fabric used in the bands of Seminole clothing would be torn or worn out. Seminole women had to “make due with what they got” and make “new clothes out of old.” “Patchwork is becoming less important as a means of income for the younger generation, but patchwork as a source of cultural pride and artistic achievement will continue for many years to come” (Seminole Tribe of Florida 1997).

Representations and Meanings of the Materials of the Doll-Making Process

The rough texture and reddish tone of the palmetto fiber used for the doll's skin, the use of primary colors for the costumes, the unobstructed conical shape of the dolls, and the reduction of the face to basic features all serve to reinforce the exotic "primitive" nature of Seminole dolls. They are made to look "primitive" to increase their desire to tourists, and subsequently increase salability.

Art in non-Western societies can have many functions. First, it can provide an economic gain, increase social relations, and enforce social control through representations of power or the supernatural. Also, it can serve as a tool of socialization and cultural pride for a group (Anderson 1989). Most importantly all art is social; "the essentially social character of primitive art is reflected in [the] forms themselves." (Firth 1951:173) Seminole dolls are social in the purposes for which they are intended, in their representation of the human form, and "traditional" Seminole costume. These dolls are a physical representation of Seminole identity. They can mark cultural features or be manipulated to signify cultural mores. Phillips (1998) discusses the process of doll creation as essential to the representation of the self for the doll-maker:

The fashioning of a doll in the image of oneself, whether destined for display in the treasury of a cathedral or a Regency drawing room, required Aboriginal artists to see themselves as the objects of the European gaze and to privilege, within their self representations, those features that most interested the European other (Phillips1998:87).

The Seminole highlight the doll's clothing, marking their costume as the interesting feature for the tourist gaze. The doll-maker sees herself as an object of the tourist gaze, yet defies this image by representing what she feels is essential elements of Seminole identity. She makes the dolls for others, yet highlights those features that are important to her.

Objects like Seminole dolls remind the Seminole of their "traditional" dress and symbolize their cultural survival through participation in cultural and ethno-tourism. The link between objects and tradition is closely related to the ideas of self-representation, and cultural identity. Objects can serve as the "visual referents and reminders of the traditional beliefs and values embedded" in oral traditions (Nicks1999:310). Marshal Sahlins (1993:5) states that groups "recreate themselves

in the image others have made them.” The Seminole craft-persons or artists recognizes in themselves and represents or recreates the identity that the tourist consumer visualizes and craves while still maintaining their Seminole identity. The Seminole “self” is represented and recreated for the tourist “other” who may not recognize the meaning behind the doll’s form and features. This process cycles each time a doll is made and bought. In this way “the production of souvenirs then was instrumental in the construction of a new consciousness of self and other” (Philips 1998:87).

Responses to the Seminole participation and their economic success in the tourist economy have been varied. The U.S. Government felt Seminoles who lived in the “Indian Villages were “too commercial” and were adopting too many vices (West 2001:31). Government representatives who had a paternal attitude²³ wanted to decrease the number of Seminole living in these camps. Brent Weisman explored this attitude and noted that “the government was eager to extend its New Deal to the Seminoles, [which would be] difficult to do if they did not need it” (1999:125). Fueled by these desires, government agents began to speak out in Washington and in Florida against the tourist camps. Financial independence for the Seminole, as a result of their participation in tourism and other economic ventures, facilitated their continued political independence. The association of the Seminole with being “unconquered” served to fuel the tourist market, thus completing a cycle of tourism and economic independence.

Incentives for the Creation of Seminole Dolls as Commodities, Cultural Displays, and Gifts

Seminole dolls provide economic incentive for the Seminole producer through the tourist market. As commodities the Seminole dolls for the tourist market, fill a need and thereby exhibit use-value. Marx (1867) argues that an object is a commodity if it satisfies some human need, while Adam Smith (1776) asserts the importance of commodity exchange, labeling it the defining feature of a people (Gregory 1982:11). Gregory argues that a commodity “establishes a relationship between objects” and as a result, objects become the focus of relationships among people (1982:19).

The creator (producer) of an object desires to make something that has a functional utility within that society, as well as to make something that fosters relations, or that although decorative, provides a cultural platform for expressing core values. Seminole dolls, for their creators, do not fill just one of these needs, but instead the dolls can satisfy all three. For example, dolls can be made in relatively mass quantities for sale at tourist functions, they can be made to give as gifts to those with special relationships, or they can be made to display at arts and crafts contests and museums. The tourist consumers of Seminole dolls can use them functionally as status symbols displayed in their curiosity collections relating their exotic adventures. Tourists can also use the dolls as gifts for friends or relatives. In either way, the dolls increase the status of the consumer in that they provide proof of their “exotic” travels.

Doll-makers can receive either monetary or social rewards for their production. Monetary incentives include a source of income. Once made, displayed and sold the dolls provide their creator with a functional utility in the form of income she will use or distribute as she desires. As noted in Chapter 2 during early experiences with tourism, the monetary incentives for crafts production provided Seminole women with a means to support her family during periods of desolate economic conditions. Today Seminole dolls still provide that monetary incentive, but the economic condition of the Seminole is not as bleak as it once was.

Social incentives for doll-making are increased prestige for winning a contest, and the relationships that accompany gift giving. Dolls made for contests provide a cultural platform on which the doll-maker’s sentiments and values can be displayed in an artistic way and once judged, the doll-maker receives prestige. While attending one craft contest, I asked a Seminole doll-maker about a doll whose skirt included very intricate (and in my opinion difficult) patchwork bands. She replied to me that “That’s Annie’s²⁴ doll, she makes good dolls.” At this contest, the women were focused on the judging and the prestige that accompanies winning these types of contests. Prestige also comes to the doll-maker when her doll is chosen for display in tribal museums or enterprises.

Dolls made for gifts grant the doll-maker the opportunity to increase or create relationships outside of or within the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Mauss (1967:10) states

that “to give something is to give a part of oneself” and to receive a gift is to “receive a part of someone’s spiritual essence.” If something of the owner is passed to the receiver during gift exchange, then the receiver is obligated to accept that part of the owner that is transferred. In this way gifts tie the giver and receive in “bonds of perpetual interdependence,” meaning that both the giver and receiver own a piece of the “meanings” behind the gift. In Seminole gift exchange, that “something” is the core value of what it means to be Florida Seminole. Chapter 5 of this thesis examines the contexts and meanings of Seminole dolls in gift exchange in greater detail. What is essential here is the idea that Seminole dolls are made for a purpose and that they are not created or distributed in a vacuum. The following graph (Figure 6) illustrates the cycle of incentives for Seminole doll-making.

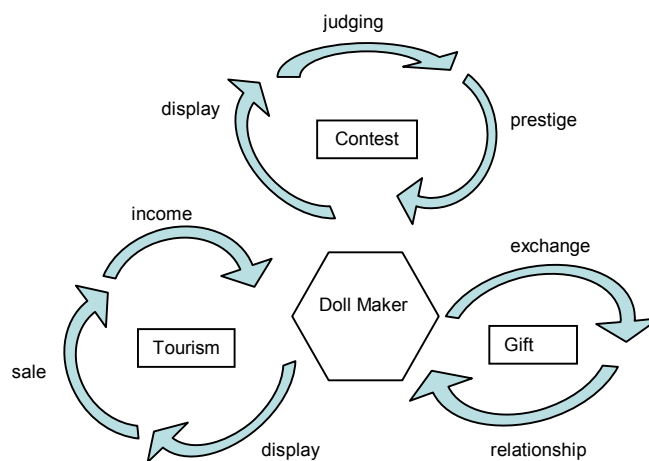


Figure 6. Cycle of Incentives for Doll Production

The Souvenir’s Continuing Effect on Cultural Representation

The consequences of Seminole participation in the tourist economy through the sale of dolls are difficult to determine. “Stereotypes, both positive and negative, reinforced by tourist-oriented presentations, work against present day Indian struggles for social, economic, and political autonomy” (Nicks 1999:313). The doll’s dress reinforces a stereotype of the Seminole that the tourists take with them and

display for others. The difficulty in this relationship is that tourists remember the present day Seminole because of the dolls, but the dolls are dressed to represent the “wild” Seminole of the past.

Today the Seminole Tribe of Florida actively participates in Western society through large-scale gaming, tourism, journalism, and use of a highly developed website. All of these public ventures encourage tourism to Seminole controlled or owned businesses, yet they enforce the idea that the Seminole are “exotic,” and “traditional.” Nicks argues “as long as people in mainstream society think of Indian cultures as something that only existed in the past and of Indian people as having no role in mainstream history and society, they will not be inclined to take seriously the aspirations of First Nations” (1999:314). The paradox is that exoticism is a primary component of cultural tourism, and cultural tourism provides a large economic incentive, but tourists want to see what they believe to be “authentic” displays of culture and not what may be truly representative of the people they are visiting.

Certain representative features of the Seminole “traditional” lifestyle have been maintained, for example, patchwork skirts and spirit motifs in personal garments. However other features have been modified because of participation in the tourist economy. For example, the men's long shirt was shortened to a patchwork jacket, and dolls are made not just for making medicine, but also for sale to tourists. The Seminole still have chickees and large ceremonial events, although some of these events are now open to tourists.

One might think that Seminole have lost a part of what it means to be Seminole as a result of participating in tourism. However, Jonaitis explains with regard to Haida art there is a difference between the loss of cultural markers and the loss of ethnic identity. “Artists do not lose their ethnic identity when they interacted with non-Natives in the marketplace, both as consumers of material and as manufacturers of commodities; as the constraints of cultures changed, their creative responses changed as well” (Jonaitis 1995:332). Vivian Delgado, a Seminole craftswoman, furthered this idea at the “Recapturing Our Identity Through Arts and Crafts Event” in August 2003. Delgado related that in the past, the Seminole used

crafts as a means of cultural survival, and that younger Seminole should “Remember your culture, remember what it means to be Seminole” (Seminole Tribune 2003).

For the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc., tourism and other enterprises make up a multi-million dollar industry. The Seminole dolls made for the tourist market with “traditional” costumes including patchwork, beaded necklaces and hairstyles, are a visual reminder of the Seminole Tribe of Florida’s history of resistance and their relationship with tourism. Seminole dolls reinforce cultural pride, Seminole exoticism, and social relationships even though they were initially created for the tourist market. Although the Seminole doll reinforces an image of exotic to the tourist other, they are made by Seminole women who have adapted features of the dominant society for their own means (Sahlins 1993). This cultural adaptation is “authentic” in that it is a way of conceptualizing Seminole identity through their struggles to remain “unconquered.” Seminole dolls, by way of their form, medium, and meanings, link culture, art, and commodity in a cycle of self-representation and understanding.

CHAPTER 5

SEMINOLE DOLLS IN COMMODITY, GIFT AND DISPLAY NETWORKS

Every item, regardless of intended function, has a life cycle. It is created, regarded, and used until it is spent. Kopytoff (1986) argues that objects have “life histories,” and each time an object is exchanged, a new “provenance” is added to its life history. In this way, goods have history. According to Herrman (1997), this history is attached to the original owner which implies a sense of “possession” that transfers to the recipient after the object is exchanged. The question of how to attach value to an object remains.

Value is ascribed to an object as it progresses through the life cycle of creation and use, yet the value of an object can be fluid and changing. At any time in this process, Seminole dolls have both a material value, and a social value. By material value I mean the base market price of the doll and by social value I mean the degree to which the doll fosters connections between people. As noted earlier with regard to masks from the Northwest Coast, the Western concept of material value is closely tied to the laws of supply and demand in that scarcity equals increased value, yet in many exchange networks the value of an object is not set or prescribed. Herrman (1997) argues that value fluctuates based on context and position in an object’s life cycle. This chapter examines exchange contexts and how Seminole dolls, depending on exchange circumstances, can have varying degrees of meanings and value.

Economy and exchange are tied together in a web of meanings and values, so before discussing exchange meanings and values, I should first briefly examine the concept of economy as it relates to culture. Economy, in basic terms, can be thought of as the choices people make to satisfy their wants through the provision of goods and services (Nash 1989:120). This is a fundamental principle on which economic studies are founded. Economic theory also focuses on the idea that people often try to maximize the ratio of their benefits to costs. A cost-benefit analysis works effectively in a capitalist economic system, but does not always apply to other economic systems (Mauss 1967, Herrman 1997, Gregory 1982, 1997). I have tried to explore the networks

of exchange of Seminole dolls from the Seminole perspective as they connect Seminole economy to culture.

The economy of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, a sovereign nation, is linked to agriculture, aquaculture,²⁵ gaming, industry, and tourism, but the individual (or family's) economy is tied to their sale of goods or services or their personal employment either by the tribe or elsewhere. The Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc. is not only involved in large-scale economic endeavors, but also in smaller scale endeavors. Although individual tribal members do receive dividends from the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc., they also participate in their own economic ventures involving production, distribution, and consumption. Additionally, economic participation for some members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida involves interactions with outsiders or tourists.

Participation in any economic exchange involves several levels: production, distribution, promotion, and consumption. Production as it relates to Seminole dolls is the actual process of making the doll through gathering materials and constructing a finished doll. This process includes the consumption of one type of goods, the raw materials, to produce another, the doll. Display and movement of dolls from one venue to another is the distribution of dolls, while promotion includes the sale and marketing of the dolls. Consumption of Seminole dolls involves receiving or purchasing them.

Goods, once produced, may be consumed through both internal and external exchange networks. Internal networks are those arenas in which goods do not leave the social constructs of the group. Internal networks of exchange for Seminole dolls include individuals who receive dolls as gifts, The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, The Billie Swamp Safari and the Big Cypress Campgrounds located on the Big Cypress Reservation; The Seminole Gaming Palace at the Tampa Reservation; Seminole arts and crafts shops and The Seminole Bingo Casino on the Brighton Reservation; The Panther Hammock Seminole Arts and Crafts Shop, The Seminole Native Arts and Crafts Shop, and The Seminole Gaming Palace and Casino on the Immokalee Reservation; and The Seminole Tribal Headquarters, The Coconut Creek Casino, The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino and the Seminole Indian Okalee Village in Hollywood; as well as the newly completed Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Tampa. These places purchase and display Seminole dolls as cultural artifacts. The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum,

The Okalee Museum, as well as some of the many casinos, arts and crafts shops, and cafes also sell dolls to the public, thus bridging the gap between internal and external networks.

External networks for the dolls can be conceptualized through two separate situations, either through face-to-face interaction between producer and consumer, or through a mediated interaction between producer, distributor, and consumer. The face-to-face interactions between producers of the dolls (most often elder Seminole women) and consumers (most often tourists) usually occur at public festivals like Powwows, Field Days, or Heritage Days. Mediated interactions between producers and consumers, by way of a distributor, occur at museum gift shops, arts and crafts shops, cafes, and on the internet through the Seminole Marketplace found at <https://www.rpwm.com/cgi-bin/webplus.exe?script=/webpshop45/store.wml>.

Bohannan (1955) examines the connections between objects and their “spheres of exchange,” relating an object’s value to a ranking system for the Tiv of Nigeria. Among the Tiv, objects like women, prestige goods (cattle and brass rods), and subsistence items exhibit different “values” during the exchange process. Seminole networks of doll exchange differ in that the object’s “value” has a foundation in its mode of production and in the contexts in which it is exchanged. During public Seminole events, I noticed that Seminole dolls made for internal networks have more intricate symbolic patchwork, well-defined embroidered facial features, and are usually larger, while dolls made for external networks are smaller, with less patchwork. Tourist dolls may also have painted facial features as opposed to embroidered features and instead of patchwork they may have alternating rows of rickrack trim applied to doll’s skirt and cape.

Material Value of Seminole Dolls in Exchange Networks

The “exchange value” of the Seminole doll, although possibly related to its function, can also involve symbolic meaning. Despite intended function for an object, it must be passed from producer to consumer through exchange. The value of an object during this exchange is its exchange value, and exchange value is culturally and contextually determined. For Seminole dolls, exchange value is affected by many

variables that lead to the consumer's questions, such as, "what is it worth to me" or "what am I willing to pay for it?" Herrman (1997:916) notes that price disparity for items in garage sales are based on a "just price" which is "adjusted by the circumstances of the specific exchange."

Seminole dolls have variable prices based on the circumstances of the exchange. I noticed during my fieldwork, in arts and crafts shops and in public venues, that the price of an item was clearly marked in the crafts shops, but in open markets like Field Days and Powwows, I had to ask the price. In addition, at tourist events, Seminole merchants were more willing to talk with me if I was willing to make a purchase, and after asking the price, I was looked over by the seller, and then told an amount. Even if I didn't purchase anything, doll-makers were usually willing to discuss their dolls once I introduced myself as a student who was exploring the meanings of Seminole dolls. The monetary value of the item could change depending on variables such as the seller's opinion of an item's worth, the buyer's background, what else they was purchasing, and how late it was in the day.

During these tourist events, each Seminole vendor sets his or her own price for an object based on labor, materials, and the current market value for similar objects. In general, the Seminole dolls in these networks are priced for sale based on size, quality and quantity of patchwork, and the prices of merchants in the nearby area. For example, I noted that at the 31st Annual Seminole Tribal Fair and Powwow, dolls of a similar size sold by Seminole merchants located at the back of the fairgrounds were five dollars each.²⁶ Seminole merchants at the front of the fairground near the entrance sold the same size and quality dolls for seven to ten dollars each. This price disparity most likely results from the differences in vendor location and the tourists' demands for mementos as they are entering and leaving the fairgrounds.

The price of an item in these events is not just based on factors related to the seller. It can also depend on factors relating to the buyer. I have found that some items will not be sold to non-Indians. While walking around the extensive vendor area of the Seminole Tribal Fairgrounds during the 31st Annual Tribal Fair, I first became aware that there were two "types" of souvenir objects: those sold to tourists and those sold

to indigenous visitors. I explored this notion further at the Seminole Heritage Festival and Field Day Event in 2003.

At this event, I asked one elderly Seminole woman about her beadwork. I was allowed to look at photos of some sacred beadwork designs, but she clearly explained to me that although I could look at pictures of them, she “only sells these to Indians.” She also did not want me to see the actual objects because of the “power of the design.” Later that day, while speaking with another Seminole vendor, I asked the price of a particular piece of reproduction Southwest pottery, her husband regarded me and said “Fifty dollars.” As I was reaching for my wallet, my husband, who is half-Chiricahua Apache, walked up beside me and asked about the price. The Seminole husband who assumed we were not together said to him, “Thirty eight dollars.” I was neither surprised nor offended by the seller’s price difference, because these are just small examples of the fluidity of price in an exchange network when material value is based on many cultural variables and circumstances.

The Social Meanings of Seminole Dolls in Exchange Networks

The social meanings of a Seminole doll are altered by its production. Those dolls that are made for gifts or contests and which include symbolic patchwork have a different social significance than dolls made for sale to tourists. As discussed earlier, Western concepts of “value” argue that rare items possess a greater material value. In other words, the less there is of something, the more it should cost. This basic law of economics does not translate into the meanings behind exchange contexts for the Seminole.

Seminole meanings of exchange and value incorporate the concepts of cultural integrity and continuity. For example, during a conversation I had with a doll-maker at the Florida American Indian Heritage Festival in February of 2001, I learned that she endows symbols of her culture with “value,” and those items that remind her of what it means to be Seminole have greater meaning. I have learned through my research that for the Seminole, exchange with outsiders is a benefit if it fosters greater economic autonomy and cultural empowerment both on tribal and individual levels. The Seminole

doll reflects this benefit because it serves as a reminder of Seminole resistance. In this position, the meanings and value of the doll create its power.

For the Seminole, an object's power is not solely tied to its material value, but instead it is linked to the degree to which it displays or encourages Seminole lifeways. Objects in this context are not just commodities, but instead are symbolic representations of Seminole culture. Gregory (1997:12) notes that values²⁷ are "those invisible chains that link relations between things, to relations between people" and those "invisible chains" are part of the human consciousness. When objects and meaning are tied together by those "invisible chains," the object's social value is affected; therefore the value of an object can be contextual (Gregory 1997:13). Seminole dolls produced either for contests or gifts²⁸ not only represent culture through a depiction of a Seminole woman in a historical costume, but also they represent ideals of tribal solidarity, individual achievement through the reproduction of culture and connection with historical culture, and the Seminole Tribe of Florida's continued status as "unconquered." The doll stands as a visual metaphor of a point in history to which the Seminole relate their current social and political condition. In this way the Seminole doll's social value is contextually based and the "invisible chains" linking dolls to relations between people are the deep-felt Seminole "values" of self-determination and autonomy.

Seminole dolls made for tourist exchange also symbolically represent Seminole culture through costume and hairstyle. As commodities, however, they are not charged with the same cultural meaning as contest or gift dolls. Instead, they are imbued with a different meaning. They have the power to foster social interaction between the producer and consumers, and the power to remind the consumer of the Seminole people for as long as they own the doll. Unlike other art, because they are a visual depiction of a Seminole woman, they always remind the viewer of the Seminole people. One may forget the circumstances surrounding the purchase of a painting after ten years or so, but will probably be reminded of a visit to Seminole country when looking at the small, multicolored, palmetto fiber woman. This constant message serves as a sign of Seminole identity for as long as the doll is displayed; it reinforces Seminole identity.

Three Networks of Exchange for Seminole Dolls

During my field research, I observed that there are three networks of exchange that affect the life cycles of Seminole dolls. The three networks are economic or commodified exchange, gift exchange, and cultural exhibition. By commodified exchange I am referring to the transfer of a doll for money. Gift-giving links the creator of the doll to the recipient when the doll is used as a gift; social relations are fostered and built in this situation. Cultural exhibition involves the display of Seminole dolls either through contest or cultural exhibits, and includes the awareness that the viewer of the doll carries after the experience. Although these three categories were initially based on my observations, I have discussed them with Seminole doll-maker who also recognizes the distinctions between the networks of exchange of Seminole dolls and the meanings they convey. In each of these realms of exchange, the dolls pass through a cycle of creation and use that leads back to the producer. Figure 6 in Chapter 4 illustrates the life cycle of the doll as it navigates three exchange networks. Gregory (1997:13) discusses how gifts and commodities can coexist, and how a material object can at the same time, but in differing contexts be both a commodity and a gift. The Seminole doll is fundamentally the same object, whether a commodity or a gift (allowing for variations in methods of production), but the context of the exchange alters both its meaning and its value as gift or commodity.

Commodified Exchange of Seminole Dolls

Commodity exchange is a central theme explored by Marx (1867). In (1867), Marx asserts that commodities exchange is the “exchange of alienable things between transactors who are in a state of independence” (Gregory 1982:12). Gregory (1982:47) builds on this, noting that since commodities are linked to alienability and independence of the object and the participants, they must be exchanged for something of a “measurable value.” He states that a commodity exchange is the exchange of “unlike for unlike” (goods, services, or capital) where the measurable value is the commonly accepted “worth” of both “unlike” things (Gregory 1982:47). In this way the “things” become the focus of the commodity exchange and not the transactors. Herrman (1997) asserts that in certain commodity exchanges, like garage sales,

although unlike items are exchanged, the item is not as essential as the relationship between the transactors. Herrman states that, in a garage sale context, sellers take social relations into account; therefore the objects sold are “hybrid varieties of inalienable commodities” (1997:910). The transactors are not in a state of independence because the seller bridges that independence by considering “social relations.” As a result, the object’s status as commodities is modified.

Seminole dolls produced for external networks are both commodities in the conventional sense (Marx 1867, Gregory 1982, 1997) and modified commodities (Herrman 1997) based on the conditions of their exchange. They are commodities in the conventional sense during mediated exchanges.²⁹ They are alienable, in that their social meaning is separated from the producer and consumer, and both the producer and consumer are independent of each other. The Seminole dolls in face-to-face exchange³⁰ are modified commodities, in that a social meaning is transferred from the producer to the consumer that involves the social relations between the two. The consumer of the doll in a mediated exchange may not account for or remember the doll-maker; indeed the two may never meet. The consumer of the doll in a face-to-face exchange has the opportunity to interact with the doll-maker and can subsequently account for and remember the contexts of the sale. In either position, the dolls remain a *type* of commodity that is exchanged for an “unlike” object – money because unlike gift, display or contest dolls, tourist dolls are produced for the singular purpose of sale.

After speaking with several Seminole women who create dolls, I learned that the life cycle of Seminole dolls for the commodity exchanges begins with gathering the raw materials for the dolls and creating the basic components of the doll in large quantities. For example, all the heads are made at one time, or the decorations on the materials used for the skirts are all sewn in large batches. It is a system of mass production, and dolls are created together, not as individual pieces. Once fully assembled, the dolls may be tagged with a price and packed for sale. When the Seminole seller reaches their venue, either an arts and crafts store or an arts and crafts chickee at a public festival, the dolls are often displayed with other Seminole objects created for sale.

To participate in economic activities and sell arts and crafts as “Native American-Made,” the seller must meet the legal standards set by the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of

1990, which is enforced by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). This act states that “an Indian is defined as a member of any federally or State recognized Indian tribe or an individual certified as an Indian artisan by an Indian tribe,” and the act covers “all Indian and Indian-style traditional and contemporary arts and crafts produced after 1935. The Act broadly applies to the marketing of arts and crafts by any person in the United States” (US Department of State 1990). Those who defy this act and sell objects as “Native American-Made” without proper certification face prosecution, fines, and possible prison sentences. Individuals, entire tribes, and the federal government hotly debate the issue of tribal membership because to receive benefits, immunities or privileges, one must belong.

For some, tribal membership is not only a question of federal recognition, but also includes “knowledge of the tribe’s cultural history, language, spirituality, traditions, and social system” (Smith 2000:7). This “cultural knowledge” as related to tribal membership is where the issue stands divided because each federally recognized tribe sets its own minimum for quantum³¹ of Indian blood in their BIA ratified constitution. Currently, the BIA recognizes only 562 tribal governments in the United States and the qualification system for selling “Native American Made” products does not account for those citizens of tribes not recognized by the federal government. Smith recognized the problem is one of consistency. “A person with $\frac{1}{4}$ quantum of blood in one tribe may be able to sell while someone with a $\frac{3}{8}$ in another (whose tribe requires $\frac{1}{2}$) may not be able to sell” (Smith 2000:6). Because of variability in membership requirements, the process of enforcing the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 is complex. As a result, in some situations, it is difficult to determine who is selling arts and crafts illegally.

Vendors must register before participating in public festivals sponsored by the Seminole Tribe of Florida. The application process ensures that the seller is a recognized member of the tribe they represent, thereby providing legitimacy of being “Native American Made” to the sale of their items. Often sellers at these events display a BIA certificate in their booths or tag the items with the seller’s name, tribal affiliation, and BIA enrollment number. Once the items are displayed, they become components of commodified exchange that for a brief time bridges two people, the producer and

consumer. When the two are from different cultures, this piece of tourist art can serve to link two members of differing cultures in economic exchange.

Nestled among alligator teeth and beaded necklaces, the Seminole doll sits as a physical embodiment of cultural values and economic self sufficiency. Once selected, the doll is purchased and the producer receives a monetary sum for her labor and materials. The producer receives money from the sale of the dolls for her participation in the exchange. After the sale, the doll's relationship with the producer is severed and the Seminole doll continues her journey with the consumer. At this time, the doll stands as a reminder of an interaction with a different culture. The tourist then can display the doll as an "exotic treasure" or gift the doll and reinforce or create new social relationships.

Both the producer and the consumer may be enriched by the exchange of this commodity, but benefits of the economic exchange of Seminole dolls at this level are not just monetary. One participant receives a means to support her family, while the other receives a visual reminder of her travels. Both benefit from interaction with each other, because the exchange supports tribal and individual autonomy and self-sufficiency as well as increased cultural awareness (even if on a small scale) of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. In this way, Seminole dolls, as well as tourist art in general, tie two cultures, not just to the moment of the sale, but also to their independent futures.

Seminole Dolls in Gift Exchange

The participants of a gift exchange of Seminole dolls are also bound together. The concept of "the gift" as linked to relations between transactors, redistribution, and debt/obligation has long been a significant theme in anthropology. The relationships and alliances created between people through the exchange of gift objects was a pivotal focus for Marcell Mauss. Mauss (1925) proposed that in gift exchange, objects are imbued with an inalienable part of the owner that is transferable to the recipient at the moment of the gift exchange. In this way, gifts can create social debts and there is a dependency relationship between the receiver and the giver. Gregory (1982:47) argues that the gift exchange is the exchange of "like-for like" and that the exchange of "like" objects puts the transactors in "an unequal relationship of domination" related to the

need or desire to reciprocate. “Gifts” can only somewhat be repaid when the original receiver (B) gives a “like” something to the original giver (A). The “reciprocated” gift is not a full repayment, because that inalienable part of the A that is transferred can only continue when B transfers an inalienable part of themselves back to the A through another gift exchange. In this context, a gift exchange can be a two-fold process; it involves an original gift exchange and a subsequent/reciprocated gift exchange to balance the social debt (Gregory 1982:48).

Gift exchanges do not have to be reciprocated in a balanced way. Marshal Sahlins (1972) discusses the types of reciprocity as generalized, balanced, and negative. Generalized reciprocity usually occurs between close kin, and there may be no real expectation of return. Balanced reciprocity involves the exchange of like for like, and an expectation of return in the near future. Negative reciprocity is not reciprocating, or trying to get something for nothing. The gift networks for the Seminole dolls as they relate to reciprocity involve giving them as “presents” to family and friends as well as giving them to non-tribal members as an “unsolicited recognition” or for significant deeds. There is a kind of generalized reciprocity in both contexts, as the giver is not really expecting a return gift. “What a gift transactor desires is the personal relationships that the exchange of gifts creates and not the things themselves (Gregory 1982:19)

Gift exchanges build or maintain relationships through transfer of social value. As commodities, Seminole dolls have a monetary value related to their cost of production and distribution, their size, and the degree to which the doll-maker incorporates symbolic patchwork. Gifts do not have the same monetary values as commodities; instead gifts create social debts and relations between people. As gifts, Seminole dolls have a social value related to the prestige of the producer and the debt of the receiver. The social value can be increased by the circumstances of the gift giving, as well as the amount of effort put into creating the doll.

I have seen dolls created for gifts in various places throughout Seminole country and have noticed that careful attention is paid to the intricacies of production. The gift dolls I have observed are truly works of art. They are dressed in elaborate costumes with a significant amount of Seminole patchwork on both the cape and skirt. The

patchwork incorporates powerful spiritual and symbolic designs. The materials used to make the costumes and beaded necklaces of the dolls are not just calico and plastic, but satin and glass. The Seminole dolls of this type are also usually taller than the ones made for tourist sales. Some are even made with carved wooden bodies as opposed to palmetto-fiber, coned bodies.

These dolls are made for special occasions or important people. Although I have not yet had the opportunity to participate in a Seminole doll gift exchange, letters from Minnie Moore Wilson (an advocate for the Seminole in the 1860s) to her family and Harriett Bedell (a liaison between Seminole craftswomen and outside markets in the 1930s) to her mission supporters state that the reasons for giving were usually as a symbol of appreciation or as a way to increase or create a new relationship (Downs 1995). This type of exchange creates significant meaning for both the giver and the receiver and both can be enriched from the experience. In addition cultural significance can be transferred during the exchange even when the receiver is not Seminole.

Cultural Display of Seminole Dolls

Cultural exchange occurs when Seminole dolls are created as entries in arts and crafts contests or for exhibition in tribal venues. Although the Seminole doll-maker often gives the doll to the tribal venue in which it will be displayed, there is another inalienable cultural meaning attached to the doll. Maurice Godelier (1999:33) notes that there are some things that must be kept because they “affirm deep seated identities.” These things are withheld from exchange and must be conserved, preserved and increased (Godelier 1999:35). In this exchange network, the doll and the social meanings behind the doll cannot be reciprocated; instead it must be kept.

The object takes on a significant role in this network. Seminole dolls, are kept and displayed because they “affirm deep seated identities” of remaining an “unconquered”. The cultural display of Seminole dolls can transfer a greater understanding of Seminole identity to the viewer, providing a value that is not directly tied to the producer, but the producer does receive something for her work. The display of the doll is “balanced” in that the doll-maker may receive either emotional rewards or social recognition. She may receive positive feelings and prestige for creating

something chosen to represent her people, and she may also receive prestige from awards received during arts and crafts contests.

Seminole dolls for cultural display, like those for gift exchange, are created with careful attention paid to detail, craftsmanship, and artistic interpretation. They are often very intricate, and themes of self-determination and cultural heritage are often artistically presented in the styles and poses of the dolls. Seminole dolls made for exhibition in arts and crafts contests, like those held at Powwows and Field Days, are meant for viewing, and usually are not for sale, though they can be gifted to family, friends, or to the tribe, for exhibition in tribal museums and other venues owned and operated by the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Inc.

Museums as Means for Interpretation and Interaction

At the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on Big Cypress, Seminole dolls are displayed and also sold in the gift shop. The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum is geared towards two audiences, both the Seminole and non-Seminole, and includes exhibits and a documentary film shot from a Seminole perspective. The museum is meant to provide the contemporary Seminole with a focused, self-reflective view of their ancestors and culture. For the non-Seminole, it provides a structured glimpse at what it means to be Seminole.

Ethnohistorical museums provide an effective means of fostering interactions between two groups (through exhibiting and viewing a culture), but they also pose some interesting problems regarding the exhibition of culture that must be addressed. For example, questions regarding the motivations of the museum's exhibit, the "story" that is displayed and remembered by the viewer, and the handling of sensitive materials must be answered before this type of endeavor begins. Neal discussed the functions of museums as not just "traditional holders of collections" or "as building where objects of aesthetic, historical, or scientific importance are stored," but as a "means of communication between specialists and ordinary citizens" (1976:vii-1). Museums then, are not just places that entertain; they present ideas, facts, or concepts (Neal 1976:2). In other words, they educate through communication of a specific purpose.

In Miccosukee, the term Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki is the verb “to learn.” Charles Flowers of The Seminole Tribune interviewed Billie L. Cypress, the Executive Director of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum at Big Cypress Seminole Reservation, regarding the purpose of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. Cypress described the purpose as one of learning about and preserving historical lifeways as a bridge to the future:

Nobody remembers the stories anymore. Nobody remembers how they were dressed 150 years ago. So it's a place to go back to learn. But it's not just the past. We also like to discuss the future, too. In other words, we're not going to just stay in the past (Flowers 1997:1).

Ethnohistorical museums like the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum provide opportunities for both passive and active structured interaction between two cultures. This benefits both cultures through increased awareness of the exhibit's message.

My first trip to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, in June of 2001, was hectic. The day I chose to visit was also the day when about 400 girl scouts were there on a field trip. As I looked through a sea of green and white jumpers and berets, I was able to observe their reactions to the displays and to the historical film shown at the entrance to the museum. The girls seemed to enjoy the section of the film involving the Seminole Indian Wars, as it is filmed from a Seminole perspective, so the US Army shoots at the audience. They were also fascinated with the colorful Seminole costumes on display.

On a subsequent visit when it was not as crowded, I noted that the mannequins used to exhibit the costumes were not standard or stock figures, but looked like people I had seen at festivals, on reservations, and in the Seminole Tribune. Later, I found out that the museum purposely modeled the faces and bodies of the mannequins after members of The Seminole Tribe of Florida so as to represent their culture more effectively (Flowers 1997:2). I left my first encounter at this museum and the ones following it with a feeling that I, like the 400 girl scouts, had seen something totally unique. I saw Seminole history and culture presented not from the outsider's ethnographic description as I had come across it in my reading, but from their own perspective. The Seminole Tribe of Florida in this museum recreated their history from their view and reinforce that history to Seminole and non-Seminole visitors.

The process of cultural display of Seminole dolls involves viewing the dolls, constructing and internalizing the message, and then remembering that message. At

the 31st Annual Seminole Tribal Fair, there were many dolls exhibited that possessed intricate Seminole patchwork and cultural themes. Doll themes for that year depicted Seminole women, Seminole men on horses, Seminole families in canoes, and also visual representations of significant historical events. All the dolls were finely dressed and intricately crafted. One doll, however, captured the attention of the crowd and the judges. This doll depicted a pivotal moment in Seminole history, a moment viewed by many Seminole as a symbol of their determination to remain “unconquered.” The doll was of Osceola stabbing a treaty that would have surrendered Seminole land claims to the U.S. Government. The doll was dressed in a historically accurate Seminole man’s costume of the 1830s and was made in the “traditional style” with a carved wooden body and head and patchwork on its big shirt. The doll was part of a scene that included a miniature version of the tree stump table and the treaty with Osceola’s hand still clenching his knife.

Through his defiance of the U.S. Government and resistance to relocation to Indian Territory, Osceola is a significant cultural icon for the Seminole Tribe of Florida. I learned stories of Osceola as a girl growing up in Okeechobee, Florida, but the legend of Osceola stabbing the treaty, although debated as to historical accuracy, is essential to the Seminole Tribe of Florida’s dedication to self-determination.

The story centers on an occasion when some of the Seminole chiefs signed a treaty that called for all Seminole in Florida to move to Indian Territory. Osceola and other young Seminoles opposed this. In 1835, the Indian Agent Wiley Thompson called a council at Fort Gibson to discuss Seminole relocation. Some of the chiefs agreed to move, but Osceola refused, plunged his dagger through the new treaty and said, "This is the only treaty I will make with the whites!" as he left (Boyd 1955). Figure 7 depicts the doll image of Osceola stabbing the treaty.



Figure 7. Osceola Stabbing Treaty, Winning Doll from 31st Annual Tribal Fair and Rodeo

Osceola was captured but escaped several times during his life and he led many battles against the U.S. Government. Several of his captures occurred when he went to talk “under a flag of truce.” These captures, along with other instances of betrayal and trickery, fostered a continued mistrust of the U.S. Government by the Seminole in Florida, a mistrust that has played a pivotal role in their resolve for self-determination. In 1838, while imprisoned, Osceola is reported to have said: "They could not capture me except under a white flag. They cannot hold me except with a chain" (Boyd 1955).

Like all Seminole dolls, the doll of Osceola stabbing the treaty serves as an example of the process of cultural display, that when viewed, can remind the Seminole of their deep-felt sentiments of indigenous self-determinism. This moment of righteous free will in Seminole history has been treasured and remembered. It is seen as a pivotal moment in their self-image as an “unconquered” people. This doll stands as a visual referent to the historical choices that have led them to their current position as major economic participants in Florida’s tourism economy. For tourists and non-Seminole viewers alike, this Osceola doll reinforces the idea of “exotic other” through its dress, its posture, and the message of “unconquered.” Other tourists, who were looking at this doll, were prompted to find out more about this pivotal scene in Seminole history.

I overheard one passerby said, “let’s see what this is about.” Growing up in Florida, I knew what the doll represented, but the first prize ribbon in front of it introduced me to the depth of the sentiment of the Seminole regarding their cultural heritage. All the dolls in the contest that day were exquisitely crafted, but the doll of Osceola stabbing the treaty, because of its message, was the crowd and judge’s favorite.

Through their exchanges with outsiders and Seminole dolls made for sale, for gifts or for display, the Seminole are truly speaking for themselves. Seminole representations of themselves reinforce, to the outsider and to tribal member, Seminole culture, values, and heritage. Economy is the choice people make to satisfy their wants, and members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida chose to represent themselves in ways that simultaneously reinforce their cultural history while directly affecting their current status as major participants in Florida’s tourism economy.

Seminole dolls have variable value and meaning depending on where they are in their cycle of creation, the level to which the creator produces, distributes, and promotes the item, and the degree to which the item is consumed by internal and external networks. This value is further altered by the perceptions of the meanings behind the dolls, perceptions of both the producer and the consumer, as the dolls are exchanged as commodities, gifts, and cultural displays. In these three networks, Seminole dolls not only represent Seminole culture through their depiction of Seminole women, but also represent ideas of tribal solidarity and their status as “unconquered.”

Commodities, gifts, and cultural displays as expressed by Seminole creation of dolls link the history and future of the Seminole Tribe of Florida to those of the people around them. The cultural meaning that surrounds the dolls either in a tourist market or in a museum environment involves viewing, constructing, and remembering a message. That message is carefully crafted so that both the tourist and the doll-maker benefit from increased exchange. In this way, exchange and tourism support individual and tribal autonomy as well as increases cultural awareness of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONTINUING IDEAS

Summary

Despite shaky federal and state policies, The Seminole Tribe of Florida has been determined to maintain their autonomy. Participation in the growing Florida tourism industry provided one means for the Seminole to develop and maintain their autonomy as a cultural and political unit within the confines of a dominant political structure. They have used this industry to further their own paths. Even if participation in tourism has altered “Seminole culture” in some ways, all groups change in response to economic, environmental or social pressures. Not to allow for change is to deny the potential of a group to construct and live their lives as they see fit.

Although certain cultural features of the Seminole Tribe of Florida have been created or altered to fill a tourist demand (such as alligator wrestling), others remain detached from tourist exchanges and continue to be private (such as the Green Corn Dance). The Seminole doll is an example of a cultural feature that has been created specifically for the tourist market. In addition, the costumes of the dolls represent traditional cultural markers of the Seminole that, although altered, are still recognizable as distinctly Seminole.

Seminole dolls are a physical representation of the tribe’s culture and history; they mark important traits of tribal identity through their medium, costumes, and patchwork. The hairstyle and costume of the dolls accurately represents a Seminole woman of the late 1800s, an era when The Florida Seminole were “wild” and “untamed.” This “untamed” stereotype is an effective public relations tool for the current Seminole Tribe of Florida, as they participate in cultural and ethnic tourism.

The contemporary craftswoman recreates the identity that the tourist envisions through her production of the Seminole doll as set by a historical pattern for doll style. This physical representation of the “unconquered” Seminole serves to solidify Seminole identity to both the consumer and producer of these dolls. The tourist consumer recognizes the exotic qualities of the doll as part of the “primitive” or traditional pathway

of the Seminole. Conversely, the Seminole producer associates the doll with their “unconquered” history as the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

Through my research, I have found that as a result of the set of historical events they have endured, the Seminole Tribe of Florida and its members are deeply committed to self-determination. This commitment is evident throughout their political actions, and daily lives. Their current participation in Florida tourism also follows a self-determinist pathway, in that they have initiated their involvement with tourism on their own conditions and have maintained a separation between public “saleable” culture and private culture.

The way a group represents itself to others in a tourist setting is noteworthy in that the group can separate and highlight those features that demonstrate their cultural uniqueness while also displaying their core values. Reinforcing core values to others gives Seminole doll-makers the opportunity to reconnect with their own cultural identities continuously. Because tourists crave the archetypical souvenir, indigenous artists are reminded of their identity as they create the objects that the tourists desire. Although often the tourist is interested in a short term “exotic” experience and subsequent proof of their experience in a souvenir, the visitor to the Seminole Tribe of Florida is also educated about Seminole values, culture and goals for the future. Both leave the experience with a greater awareness of the indigenous lifeways, even if that awareness is just superficial.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida has adapted some of their cultural features, but has also tailored themselves to changing economies by becoming a major participant in cultural and ethnic tourism in Florida. This should not be conceptualized as something new for the Seminole or as the culmination of their enculturation to American ways. Instead, it is a continuation of a relationship with tourism and production established by the Seminole for the Seminole in the beginning of the Twentieth century. Marriot’s statement in the 1930s that “Seminole arts and crafts are Seminole life” is just as true today as it was then (Marriot 1943:50).

Continuing Ideas

There are two ideas that, I was able to only briefly explore, and I would like expand upon them in my future research. Both of these ideas are centered in the ability of art objects to foster connections and relations. The first is the concept of the doll representing a bridge of communication and translation between two cultures. I have learned that Seminole doll-makers set apart those core features that to them typify what a tourist wants as well as highlighting their connections with their past. In this way, the doll's form illustrates a hybrid of what it means to be Seminole both to the doll-maker and to the "Other." Mauss (1967) and Sahlins (1972) discuss how gift exchange links participants. Mauss states that the gift is "peace," while Sahlins states that the gift is "reason," but in both instances, the exchange of the gift fosters "the optimal solution for the need of cooperation and greater good" (Mauss 1967:12). Because of the history of defiant resistance to colonial control by American Indians and some continued feelings of resentment toward American Indians,³² I would like to explore further the idea of exchange as a way of fostering non-threatening relations between indigenous crafts-persons and "Other" consumers.

In future research, I also plan to continue examining the power of arts and crafts to connect people who share a common history. The Seminole continue their crafts tradition through their production of dolls for gifts and contests, and through events geared to teaching arts and crafts to younger generations. The "Recapturing Our Identity through Arts and Crafts" day in August of 2003 was such an event. During this event, Seminole elders gathered to teach younger Seminoles about the importance of arts and crafts to Seminole life. Vivian Delgado, a participant, related her connection with arts and crafts, stating: "Even when we had to make crafts to survive, it never really felt like work. I remember making simple things that I knew the tourists would buy quickly" (Seminole Tribune 2003). Others at the event recognized how the Seminole sold arts and crafts for survival, and how that has become instrumental in their identity as Seminole. Although this project has addressed the connections between the Seminole's relationship with tourism as it is reflected in the meanings of the Seminole doll, I would like to continue exploring other forms of Seminole arts and crafts to see if the same connections between object and identity exist.

NOTES

¹ There are Seminole living on and around reservations in Oklahoma. For the purpose of this thesis, I have focused on Florida Seminole as the two groups are related, but maintain separate tribal governments and customs.

² I use Mikasuki to refer to the language and Miccosukee to refer to the cultural group.

³ The Seminole Tribe of Florida is one of the largest producers of lemons in the US.

⁴ Sofk (also sofkee) is a drink made of either grits or corn that is often made in the morning and left available throughout the day.

⁵ Schwartz and Saloman (1999), Hill (1996), and Sahlins (1993) all examine indigenous reactions to colonial domination, but Sattler's (1996) work specifically relates this process to the Seminole.

⁶ The proto-Seminole include the local indigenous populations who were integrated into Seminole communities (Sattler 1996, Wickman 1997).

⁷ Although the term clan can be problematic, it is used here to refer to an extended family unit. Members of the tribe still demonstrate allegiance to their clan affiliations and membership in the clan is essential to social relations.

⁸ The Green Corn Dance is a significant spiritual and social event for the Seminole Tribe of Florida usually held during the spring or early summer. Because of interference from outsiders it has become a closed ceremonial event. Activities during the Green Corn Dance include manhood ceremonies, purification ceremonies, and settling disputes among tribal members.

⁹ This policy meant that Jackson would burn to the ground entire towns that he thought were aiding the British.

¹⁰ These Seminole Make up the Seminole Tribe of Oklahoma

¹¹ A hammock is a piece of high ground in the everglades that separates areas of swamp and canals.

¹² A chickee is a thatched roof Seminole structure.

¹³ The Seminole "Indian Villages" were essentially camps of Seminole living at an attraction site displaying their daily lives to tourists. Their daily activities were not how the Seminole lived prior to these camps as they adapted their activities to match the needs of their new camps.

¹⁴ Hill describes the idea of thinking of indigenous groups as isolated and unchanging as a "Eurocentric historical perspective" that could be used to justify dominance (Hill 1996:8).

¹⁵ "[On] March 11, 1824, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun created what he called the Bureau of Indian Affairs without authorization from the Congress" (Henson 1996:1).

¹⁶ The term sovereign nation refers to the federally recognized status of an indigenous community which defines them by law to be "domestic dependent nations." This status is conferred on a tribe once it has gained BIA approval. The use of the term "nation" to describe an indigenous group increased after the civil rights movement.

¹⁷ AIM began in the summer of 1968. It acts through legal, social and political movements and has since increased political awareness of the status and rights of American Indians.

¹⁸ The "What am I willing to pay for this?" value is often based on the tourist's desire for an exotic memento, as well as their connection to the high art/low art model.

¹⁹ The tourist leaves the "exotic" experience with stories, photos, and objects to show their friends and families.

²⁰ A discussion of the meanings of the doll's form and features follows in this chapter.

²¹ Chapter 5 further explores the meanings of Seminole dolls as they continue through the networks of exchange as gifts, commodities, and cultural displays.

²² Dragon Ball Z is a Japanese cartoon.

²³ During this time US policies treated many indigenous communities throughout the US with a paternal attitude that sought to increase the need for use of Government services. Chapter 3 of this thesis explored this issue further.

²⁴ Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the doll-maker.

²⁵ Aquaculture involves cultivating aquatic plants and foods.

²⁶ The most popular doll sold at this event was the three to five inch size.

²⁷ Here Gregory uses value in the "personal or emotional" sense and not in the material sense (Gregory 1997:5).

²⁸ The processes and meanings of Seminole gift networks and cultural displays are discussed later in this chapter.

²⁹ As noted earlier, mediated exchanges are those that occur when a "middle man" (either an arts and crafts shop, or the internet) sells the dolls for the doll-maker.

³⁰ Face-to-face exchange is the direct sale of the doll by the seller, to the tourist during public events.

³¹ Blood quantum refers to the minimum degree to which a person can be classified as a member of an American Indian Tribe. For example, a person with a full-blooded Seminole father and non-Indian mother would have a blood quantum of ½, and would be able to register as a tribal member.

³² This is the notion that American Indians are getting a “free ride” from the government and was reflected in the assimilation policies of the 1950s.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Layla R. Archer was born near Okeechobee, Florida, but moved to Central Florida as an adolescent. She spent the early part of her childhood engrossed in Florida's living history at parks, reservations, and in museums. After graduating high school in 1995, she completed a Bachelor's of Arts Degree in Anthropology at Florida State University in 1999. After completing a Master's Degree in Anthropology with a focus in cultural anthropology at Florida State University, she plans to enter a museum certificate program and continue her interest in cultural displays and educational outreach. She has spent countless hours in museums and has traveled extensively to visit museums around the globe to pursue this passion.