

TRIBAL REGISTER: THE COUNCIL OAK

On the Hollywood Reservation, just alongside US Route 441, stands an elder Live Oak tree, its twin trunks bearing the scars of over two centuries of life, including a long gash left behind by a lightning strike. It is not known exactly how old the Council Oak is. It is known that it stood here in the early 1800s, when the location was home to Tribal members who called it "Big City Island" and when it offered shelter from the front lines of the Seminole War. It was here in 1907 when the land was set aside for the Seminole people, and in 1926 when the Dania Reservation, now the Hollywood Reservation, was established.

It was under the branches of the Council Oak that the first Seminole Constitutional Council met, giving the tree its name as they discussed plans to organize the community and fight against the new United States policy of "Indian Termination", a policy that would have seen the Tribe disbanded and their land sold. Since that time it has become custom to inaugurate all newly elected Seminole leaders at the site. The Council Oak is now listed on both the Tribal and National Registers of Historic Places, a natural symbol of the long endurance of the Seminole People.



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