

# ADA TIGER, THE LONE CATTLEWOMAN



Twice a year in the 1920's, one lone Seminole woman would walk into the market at Indiantown, Florida, leading a herd of cattle. Accompanying her were two "cow-chaser" dogs, guiding the herd. In town she would sell some of the cattle, have the rest treated for ticks and fleas, and buy some essential goods. Then she would walk her herd the ten mile trip home to her camp out by Lake Okeechobee.

Ada Tiger (Snake Clan) maintained her cattle on her own, her only aid coming from the two dogs she had raised and trained. She had no fences or pens to keep them in. Instead she kept them well fed with corn grown by the family, and worked the area around the camp to ensure it was a place the cattle would want to stay in.

Ada had become a cattlemoan in unfortunate circumstances. Her cattle had been inherited from her three brothers, each of whom had succumbed to tuberculosis or pneumonia within five years between 1914 and 1919. She took on the job of managing the family's stock, and by the mid-twenties her herd was the largest owned by any Seminole.

In 1928, conditions forced Ada Tiger, now mother to a five year old girl, to leave Lake Okeechobee for the Dania (now Hollywood) Reservation. The cattle were sold to pay for the move. In Hollywood she took up making crafts and souvenirs for the tourist trade, and raised her two children: Betty Mae Tiger Jumper and Howard Tiger, both of whom would grow up to become leaders and elected chairs of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

If you're interested in more Seminole History, The STOF Tribal Historic Preservation Office are creating a new site with more stories, historic resources, and more to come soon!

