



Tiger Bone Yuchi (Euchee) Indian Scout 1805-1887

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(Our sources of information are listed at end of article.)

Tiger Bone's information is sketchy but we've been able to gather a few facts about his life.

Tiger Bone was born about 1805 in Indian Territory (1). His wife's name was Yahponna born in 1799 in Indian Territory. Tiger Bone and Yahponna had one child, Jack Tiger, also known as Tiger Jack born in 1847.

Tiger Bone and his brother Long Tiger, are cited among the Creek frontiersmen who should be recognized as pioneers and knights who led their present civilization into parts further west than civilized outposts at that time. (2) As a member of the Creek nation, Tiger Bone was involved in various tribal conflicts in the mid 1800's. On Tiger Creek (now in Oklahoma) during the fall of 1859, Tiger Bone, Long Tiger and a crippled brother of theirs-three alone, fought a war of Comanche, who were in alliance with a war party of Pawnee Picts. These three Tiger brothers whipped the Comanche and Pawnee Picts, killing seven of them. Tiger Bone's horse was shot from under him during the skirmish. Tiger Bone was also a commanding officer of the Creek Mounted Rifles (3) that simultaneously defeated six wild western tribes in the 1850's.

For a period of time, Tiger Bone, was hired as a tax collector among the cattle drovers traveling through Oklahoma (4). His legendary reputation, however, comes from his scouting abilities. Not only was Tiger Bone a skilled Yuchi scout, he apparently came from a long line of scouts from each generation before him dating back to Jack Bone, (a grandfather) who was a Creek scout (3) for the Patriot army that fought the Cherokees in the Revolution. Tiger Bone passed his scouting skills on to his son, Jack Tiger, also known as Tiger Jack.

There are a couple of accounts (of the same story) describing Tiger Bone's scouting abilities-in particular, Tiger Bone's ability to track a cold trail. (5) The U.S. Marshal's office sought his tracking ability after a failed six-month search for the bandits and loot connected to a robbery of the U.S. payroll wagon near Old Chissum Crossing. Familiar with Turkey Track Trail's reputation of outlaw

hideouts, Bone made a big impression when he quickly led authorities to a cave south of Mannford where the bandits and loot were found.

Another account of the above story is as follows: (6) Back in 1880, Lucy Bruner, then the wife of Timmie Fife, lived on Rock Creek six miles northwest of Sapulpa. They lived on what they called the Chisholm (also spelled Chissum) Trail crossing of the creek. This was the pony-express route taken by post riders on their way from the Sac and Fox Agency northeast. Mrs. (Bruner) Fife always served them meals and she also gave meals to paymasters or other government officials on their way to the Sac and Fox Agency.

One day a light hack drove up with three men in it. They stopped to eat, paid for their meal and drove on north. The last person to see these men was an Indian working in a field. He noticed a white man on horseback following them; this white man later was joined by three other men on horseback. A few days later a man came along the route making inquiry about the paymaster and his companions who had been in the hack. He went on his way.

Old Tiger Bone lived about three miles west of Bruner's. Tiger Bone was noted as an old frontiersman and expert Indian trailer. A day or two after the inspector came through, what was Mrs. Bruner's surprise to see Old Tiger Bone come driving up in the hack the paymaster had had. She asked him about it. He said he found it in the woods ten miles west of his home. He said he also had found some harness and taken that, too, since no one was using it. Mrs. Bruner told him to return the hack and harness at once to the spot where he had found it.

Another group of inspectors came. They got Tiger Bone to lead the way and there they found the dead bodies of the men and their horses, undoubtedly robbed by outlaws. Then came two hundred soldiers; as Joe Bruner, who was ten at the time, told the story, these were the first soldiers he ever had seen and were quite curiosities to him. The soldiers called on Old Tiger Bone as trail leader and recruited Timmie Fife and Jim Sapulpa to assist and took the trail.

Seven months had elapsed since the murder. That is the part of the story that the Creeks like the best to tell. They like to tell that Tiger Bone took a trail seven months old and was able to run the outlaws down. As they said, "he took the trail like a hound." He found the hideout of the desperados west of Mannford among the caverns on the Cimarron River. They claim the four outlaws were seized and taken to Fort Smith, convicted and hanged. It is said to be a matter of court records.

Tiger Bone died on February 9, 1887 (7) and is buried in a tiny cemetery named for him, Tiger Bone Cemetery, on the banks of Rock Creek.

Sources of Information

- 1 Information taken from a Family Tree listing by Joan Case on RootsWeb
<http://worldconnect.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=joancase&id=I2105>
- 2 American Native Press Archives and Sequoyah Research Center (Account by James Roane Gregory)
“Some Early History of the Creek Nation”
http://anpa.ualr.edu/digital_library/James%20Roane%20Gregory%20-%20Part%20I.htm
- 3 Taken from a Social Networking Site from an individual with the user name of *Etowah*
http://www.matchdoctor.com/blog_91409/Hay_Chihuahua_Where_did_you_get_those_Gringo_soldier_boots.html
- 4 Citing a document on record at the Oklahoma Historical Society. We have temporarily misplaced but have requested another copy.
- 5 Quoting a Tulsa World Article from approximately 1994 as told by Mike Porter-Keystone Crossroads Historical Society.
- 6 An Interview with Timmie Fife posted on OKGenWeb
<http://okgenweb.org/pioneer/ohs/fife-timmie.htm>
- 7 Cemetery is listed as Bruner Cemetery. Date must have been read off of Tiger Bone’s headstone (now missing). <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~okcreek/cemeteries/bruner.html>