To: Department of the Interior
Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Indian Affairs
Attn: Office of Federal Acknowledgement
1951 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015

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DOI/AS-IA/OFA Washington, DC

From: S. Pony Hill, Chairman

Apalachicola River Indian Community Tribal Organization

2805 Evelyn Ave 7A Panama City, FL 32405

Re: Comment Period -Petitioner 032 - Muscogee Nation of Florida

To Whom It May Concern,

This is a response to various claims and assertions contained within the federal recognition petition, and attached supplemental documentation, of the Muscogee Nation of Florida as it pertains to Indian communities, individuals, and families who have historically resided within Calhoun, Jackson, and Liberty counties of Florida. No present, or former, member, individual, or family of the historic, or current, identified Indian communities of Calhoun (Scott's Ferry), Jackson (Scott Town), or Liberty (Woods) counties have, or had, any genealogical, political, or social connection to the historic Apalachicola reservation Indians, nor has there been any historic, genealogical, political, or social connections between the aforementioned Indian communities and any individual, family, or community located at Bruce, Florida.

Shortly before the onset of the Civil War, numerous Indian blooded families (Scott, Stevens, Oxendine, Ayers, Brown, Jones, etc) migrated to north Florida from the area of Sumter, South Carolina. Before even settling within Sumter in the revolutionary War era, these same families had historical roots among the Lumbee Indians of Robeson County, North Carolina, and the Catawba Indians of South Carolina. While in Sumter these Indian blooded families intermarried with a few families of Middle Eastern descent (Benenhaley, etc) and this resulted in these families being relegated to the legal, and social, suffrages of "free persons of color" and "mulatto" designations, both within Sumter and later in north Florida as well. After arrival in north Florida, a few of these "Carolina Indian" families did intermarry with a handful of the remnant Creek Indian mixed blood descendants, but this interaction never rose to any level for justifying identification of our community as "Creek Indian" in any legal, political, social, or cultural sense.

We respect the right and ability of the Wards and other families of Bruce, Florida to claim, assert, and celebrate their Native American descent, and this comment letter is not to be perceived as any negative observation of the Bruce community (as represented by the Muscogee Nation of Florida) only a matter of 'setting the record straight' as to previous insertions of our community's history and documentation by the Muscogee Nation of Florida.

Regarding the memorandum from the Kitto Law Firm dated July 30, 2004 (received by ASIA-OFA Feb 02, 2012). This memorandum is submitted in support of the Muscogee Nation of Florida's "2006 Membership Narrative", yet it is apparent that the majority of the information the Kitto Law Firm used to construct the memorandum is historic documentation of the Scott's Ferry and Scott Town Indian communities of Calhoun County and Jackson County respectively. It's unclear whether the Muscogee Nation of Florida used the historic documentation these two interrelated Indian communities as simply a comparative model, or to imply some historic or genealogical connection (which has not, and does not, exist).

In the Muscogee Nation of Florida's 2002 TA Response Narrative reference is made to the "Treaty Town of Blountstown" and the "Big House grounds of Blountstown". Historical or genealogical connection between any individual, family, or community currently (or in the recent past) within Calhoun County, Florida and the

historic reservations or "town" of John Blunt or any other "Apalachicola" Indians, is entirely unfounded, disproved by existent documentation, and is purely an untruth. Descent of present day Calhoun County residents from John Blunt, Tuski Harjo, Coa-Thlocco 'Cockrane', or any other Indian leaders of the historic Apalachicola reservations is, and always has been, an easily dismissible and unproven fabrication of Charles Daniels (a.k.a. "Sakim") and Andrew Ramsey, two individuals of no known Indian ancestry nor any historic connection to the identified Indian communities of Calhoun, Jackson, and Liberty counties.

In the mid 1980's, Daniels and Ramsey created "Pine Arbor Tribal Town" (a.k.a "Topachula" which translates in Muscogee Creek as "old bed", an obvious indicator of the lack of Creek language fluency). Ramsey appointed himself "Ceremonial Chief" and Daniels self-appointed as "Medicine Maker". Daniels and Ramsey established this "Creek Square Grounds" on a parcel of land leased from the Calhoun County Commissioners where Andrew Ramsey had signed the lease "Andrew Boggs Ramsey Chief, Harjo-Boggas Clan, Apalachicola Band of Creek Indians." In an attempt to establish a perception of legitimacy, or "history", for this newly formed "Tribal Town", Daniels and Ramsey concocted an elaborate "oral history" connecting their "Tribal Town" to every known leader of the historic Apalachicola reservations. These ludicrous and unfounded claims are easily disproven by even the most basic of genealogical examinations. The name of "Pine Arbor Tribal Town" was subsequently changed to "White Earth Tribal Town" in the 1990's after Charles "Sakim" Daniels was expelled from the group.

Andrew Marshall Ramsey (a.k.a. "Andrew Boggs Ramsey"), an individual who has long claimed Indian blood (though without documentation of said ancestry) adeptly wielded his educational and economic prowess (as a member of one of Calhoun County's wealthiest families and one of the few college educated people of Blountstown) to thrust himself to the forefront of "Indian affairs" in northwest Florida and appoint himself as "Chief of Blountstown Indians." While his family has no direct ancestry from, and only a periphery connection to, the identified Indian communities of Calhoun, Jackson, and Liberty counties, the uneducated, economically impoverished local Indians were silently complicit in his 'leadership'. In just a short time, Ramsey had managed to attain the title of "Chief - Harjo-Boggas Clan" playing leadership roles within the Apalachicola Band of Indians, the Lower Muscogee Tribe, and the Florida Tribe of Creek Indians.

While the majority of Indians within the Scott's Ferry, Scott Town, and Woods communities had little memory or knowledge of any specific historic tribal origin other than "we come from Carolina Indians" or "we came down from Sumter, South Carolina", local Indians gradually capitulated to a "Creek Indian" identity based on Ramsey's status as a prominent local educator and his insistence that he had "documentation of Creek Indian" and that local Indians stood to gain financially from this identification. Unfortunately, state legislators and other area Indian tribal groups also blindly accepted Ramsey's fabricated ancestral narrative of Creek Indian descent, his equally dubious claims of "Boggs Pond Indian Town", "Big House ceremonies", "Polly Parrot, daughter of Tuski Harjo Cochrane", and other fantastical tales.

It is our unequivocal position that there never existed any Indian community known as "Boggs Pond" nor was there ever any Indian ceremonial site known as "Big House" in Blountstown. No documentation exists to support these claims and they are simply an obvious fabrication of Andrew Ramsey to elevate himself within our Indian community as well as among other tribal groups.

It is with satisfaction that we observed the Muscogee Nation of Florida's 2004 TA Response Narrative completely omits any earlier mention of Calhoun County Indians, the involvement or leadership of Andrew Ramsey, and curtailed the usage of historic documentation of the identified Indian communities of Calhoun (Scott's Ferry), Jackson (Scott Town), and Liberty (Woods) counties.

It is our sincere hope that your agency will accept this letter, as well as view the accompanied historical and genealogical material, and develop a clear and concise picture regarding the completely separate nature of the current, and historic, political, social, and legal identities of the Muscogee Nation of Florida and the identified Indian communities of Scott's ferry, Scott Town, and Woods, Florida.

Once more, please do not infer any language contained within this letter as besmirching, or casting any negative light on, the federal recognition petition of the Muscogee Nation of Florida as it specifically pertains to the individuals and families of Bruce, Florida. We do not consider it proper, or within our prevue, to comment or cast judgement on their claims of Native American descent or identification as a separate Indian community.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this correspondence,

S. Pony Hill, Chairman

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# Records and Origins of the Indians of the Apalachicola Reservations

Compiled by S. Pony Hill

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"Apalachicola or Tulwa Thlocco (Big Town), a lower White Town of Hitchitee origin." - "The Road to Disappearance" by Angie Debo

"So badly had the wholesale emigration of the Creeks and Seminoles been managed that a band of Apalachicola Indians were brought west and located upon the Creek domain. The Creek Chiefs reported their presence on their land and begged the government to furnish them with food, as they were "In a deplorable situation; a good many of them are naked and have no means by which they can obtain subsistence." (Letter from Opothleyahola to Armstrong, March 13, 1840)."- "The 5 Civilized Tribes" by Grant Foreman

"They speak the ancient Hitchiti language...The remnant Apalachicola (400 persons) were listed under their tribal name when they came to Indian Territory...They settled in the region south of present day Okmulgee...their 'town' ('Tulwa-Thlocco' or 'Big Town') was one of the forty-four tribal 'towns' comprising the Creek Nation (in Oklahoma)."- "A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma" by Muriel H. Wright

# --Individual Reservations Granted on the Western Shores of the Apalachicola River by Treaty of 1823—

- (1) **TOTOIVITHLA** chief Econchatimicco (Red Land Chief)...total of 172 persons...a village of Hitchiti speaking Apalachicolas...removed to Oklahoma in early 1839.
- (2) **CHOCONICLA** Chief John Yellowhair or Nocose Yahola (Bear Singer)...total of 79 persons...a village of Hitchiti speaking Apalachicola Indians...removed to Oklahoma in late 1838. Note: John Yellowhair was replaced as head chief by John Walker (a.k.a. Emachilochustern) sometime between 1833 and 1837. Choconicla became known as "Walker's Town".
- (3) **ATTAPULGAS** Chief Tustanugge Hajo or Tuski Harjo (Crazy Warrior)...total of 97 persons...a town of Muscogee speaking Creeks from Alabama...removed to Texas in 1833. Note: Tuski Harjo had died shortly before the treaty of 1832. All of his tribal town members had merged onto the reserve of Chief Blunt. With no Indians living on Tuski Harjo's reserve, the Government immediately negotiated for the sale of the reservation. The land was approved for sale to Jackson County resident S. Brown by Territorial Governor John H. Eaton who also appointed Peter W. Gautier jr. and Richard H. Long as "guardians of the estate of Tuski Harjo" to see that the chief's widow and orphans were "treated fairly" while dispersing the old chief's assets.
- (4) IOLA- Chief Colonel John Blunt or Hothleboyar...total of 172 persons (including the former residents of Chief Tuski Harjo's town)...a town of Muscogee speaking Creeks from Alabama...removed to Texas in 1833. Note: John Blunt immediately voiced his concern regarding his reserve being placed "so near his former enemies" (i.e. the Hitchiti speaking Apalachicolas). Within a decade Blunt had negotiated for the sale of his reserve and "impatiently awaited departure".
- (5) **SPANE WATKA** Chief "Old Cockrane" or Coa Thlocco (Horse)...total of 63 persons...a town of Muscogee speaking Creeks from Alabama...removed to Texas in 1833. Note: By November of 1832 Coa Thlocco and his family had already "gone to the Creek Nation, gone to a town called Tewathlee" and was no longer residing on the reservation. By April of 1834 Coa Thlocco had travelled to New Orleans where he brought suit against "John Blunt and Osiah Hajo or Davey" for not giving him his share of the proceeds from the sale of his Florida reserve land. By July of 1844 Coa Thlocco was living in Oklahoma as he is reported as once again leading a group of Indians: "Blunter's Band, Chief Coathlocco, 114 members".

Note: Tuski Harjo and Coa Thlocco (or Cockrane) were two separate individuals. Tuski Hajo had died before the treaty of 1832 while Coa Thlocco was still very much alive and signed the treaty. Cockrane (he was never recorded as "Cochrane") was living in the Creek Nation (Alabama) by 1833 and was living in Indian Territory (Oklahoma) by 1844 where he was leader of the 114 members of Blunt's band of Pakana Muscogees who were not in Texas.

1833: a total of 61 men, 30 of age women, 46 children, 24 slaves, 6 free Negros, and 5 elderly women.

**Econchattimicco:** Head Chief of Totointha...age 60 in 1833...owned all 24 slaves within the town (20 of these were *"stolen by white men in 1837"*)...arrived in Oklahoma in January 10, 1839 and petitioned under the provisions of the Indian Removal Act to be reimbursed for 73 acres of improved land, 2 mills, 14 thousand 280 fence rails 1 cabin, 1 storehouse, 1 corn crib, 1 summer house, 3 log cabins, and 1 shed.

Hepia Tustenugge: Second Chief...age 40 years in 1833.

Coosa Hatchee: Head warrior...age 40 years in 1833.

**Billy Lumpkins or Fulma Hajo:** son of Econchattimicco...age 35 years in 1833...arrived in Oklahoma with 2 family members in 1839.

Joe Miller or Lathlafixico: interpreter of the village...age 23 years in 1833...no record of emigration.

Joe Riley: a half-blood...grandson of Econchattimicco...age 15 years in 1833...became 1/3 owner of his grandfather's reserve...property contained "a warehouse, storehouse and wood yard for steamboats and is the best public landing in Jackson County for steamboats"...arrived in Oklahoma with 6 family members in 1839.

"...the Indian village of Hitchetan, the chief of which, Ecouchatemico is also called the king of the red lands. He is an old man, bent with age, who has had his nose and ears cut off for the crime of adultery. This people who are generally called by the name Apalachicolas or Chattahouchis, are a branch of the Creeks or Muscogis, former allies of the Spaniards. They fought bravely against General Jackson, but since then have remained friendly to the whites and served as allies in the war against the Seminoles; their houses are covered either in bark or with palm leaves; their canoes are of the smallest size and made of tree trunks hollowed out. On going up this river in 1838 I was deeply impressed by the strange sight this village offered." — "Essay on Middle Florida" 1838

### --CHOCONICLA (Burnt House) later known as "Walker's Town"—

1833: a total of 46 men, 23 of age women, 26 children, 1 slave, 4 free Negros, and 5 elderly women. It was reported that 14 individuals had died in the year since 1832.

John Yellowhair or Nocose Yahola: replaced Mulatto King as head chief...age 20 years in 1833...no record of his existence after 1833.

Isaac Yellowhair: was being held at dog Island by emigration officials in 1837 where they reported "...left his brother's tribe before their emigration and joined Econchattimocco's town."...arrived in Oklahoma in late 1838.

John Harjo: Second chief...he was prepared to emigrate in 1833 but his wife wished to remain.

Vaccapachassie or Cow Driver or Mulatto King: former head Chief...his daughter was the wife of Chief John Blunt...not reported as alive in 1833.

**Walker Packhassee**: age 70 years in 1833...only individual in town who owned a slave...also included in this town was "Aischasehy, Walker's son, age 10".

John Walker or Emachilochustern: had replaced John Yellowhair as head Chief by 1837...was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in "Richards' Company of Friendly Indians, Mounted Florida Militia" which was mustered at "Walker's Town – Jackson County"...arrived in Oklahoma with 126 of the Choconicla Indians on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1838.

"Below the junction point, and still on the western bank, is another village of the Indians called Choakanickla, governed by a young chief who is called by the Americans John Walker, but whose Indian name is Emachilochustern."- "Essay on Middle Florida" 1838

### -- IOLA or "Blunt's Town"-

1833: a total of 67 men, 34 of age women, 58 children, 9 slaves, 4 free Negros, no elderly women. It was reported that 8 individuals had died in the year since 1832.

**Colonel John Blunt or Hothleboyer**: head Chief of Iola...age 60 years in 1833...his wife was the daughter of "Old Vaca" or "King the Mulatto"...owner of 8 slaves...his maternal uncle was Chief Red Shoes of the Alabamas...emigrated to Texas in 1833 where he was replaced as head Chief by Davy Elliot...John Blunt's wife, "Susey" a widow in 1855, applied for bounty land in Oklahoma where she was listed in "Chocomicklar Town".

"Sir: The Seminole war having terminated, I deem it politic and advisable to send to Washington John Blunt and his Indian comrades, who have acted as pilots to me during the late campaign. John Blunt is a Tuckabatchee Indian, has long been friendly to the United States, and in consequence of his opposition to the Red Stick party during the Creek war has drawn down upon himself their vengeance during the late contest. His settlement being in an exposed situation on the Apalachicola River, he was early attacked by the Seminoles, his property destroyed, and his family rifled from him; alone he escaped and fled to Fort Scott, where, joining the American standard, he has proved himself a most zealous friend and faithful pilot this period. In justice to him I am bound to state, that to his correct knowledge of the country and zealous attachment to the cause in which we were engaged, am I measurably indebted for the success of the present campaign."- June 2, 1818 Division of the South, Fort Montgomery,

American State Papers: Letter, from Major General Andrew Jackson Letter to John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War. American State Papers; pp.707-708.

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Tuski Harjo: Second Chief...had died prior to 1832 at the age of 40....his wife and 2 children "wished to emigrate"...His widow, "Eliza" a widow in 1855, applied for bounty land in Oklahoma where she was listed in "Chocomicklar Town".

Pocca Hajo: Warrior....age 20 years in 1833...married to Davy Elliot's sister.

Old Adam: a free Negro...age 120 years in 1833...reported that "Blunt don't want to take him away, and is not willing to go."

**Sampson:** a free Negro...age 30 in 1833...executed by the Indians for rape and murder.

John Mealy: former head Chief of the "Ocheesee Ehohaslees"...age 30 years in 1833...owner of 1 slave...enrolled at lola but remained at Walker's Town when Blunt emigrated to Texas...John and 4 family members arrived in Oklahoma in 1838 where he petitioned under the provisions of the Indian Removal Act to be reimbursed for 4 acres of improved land left behind in Florida.

**Jack Mealy or Tommy Hajo**: age 25 years in 1833...enrolled at Iola but remained at Walker's Town when Blunt immigrated to Texas...arrived in Oklahoma in 1838.

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The report of Daniel Boyd, Superintendent of immigration for the Apalachicolas on October 20th, 1838 stated that "Blunt's Indians were not considered to be part of the Apalachicolas" prior to Blunt's emigration in 1833.

### --SPANE WATKA or "Spanish Cow" --

1833: a total of 24 men, 17 of age women, 22 children, no slaves or free Negros, and no elderly women. It was reported that 8 individuals had died in the year since 1832.

Old Cockrane or Coa Thlocco (Horse): Head Chief prior to November 1832...removed north to the Creek Nation in late 1832...traveled to New Orleans in 1834 to file suit against Blunt and Davy, and was living in Oklahoma in 1844 were he was recorded as head of "Blunter's Band, Chief Coathlocco, 114 members".

Davy Elliot or Osiah Hajo (Crazy Crow): age 46 years in 1833...replaced Coa Thlocco as head Chief in late 1832...also replaced John Blunt as head Chief upon the Band's arrival in Texas.

Olatha Hajo: Second Chief...he, Concheteticcico and Conchatte were listed as the "immediate descendants and relations of Old Cochrane, dissatisfied with the treaty made by Davy and Company". These were three nephews of Coa Thlocco who had remained in Florida when Old Cockrane went north to the Creek Nation. Old Cockrane eventually sued Davy and John Blunt in Court over the sale of the reserve land.

## --Records of Blunt and Davy's Band after Emigration to Texas-

The Indians of the Iola and Spane Watka towns immigrated to Texas to "a site on Penwau Slough (note: Penwau means "turkey" in the Muscogee language) two miles east of its junction with the Trinity River in the area of present day Polk County." All of the Texas records reflect that this group of Indian under the direction of John Blunt and Davy Elliot were known as "Pakana Muscogees" and were considered separate, and distinct, from the Hitchiti speaking "Apalachicolas".

**1859:** The Pakana Muscogees were reported as living on property owned by Frenchman John Burgess, who had married a maiden of the tribe. It was stated that only 50 of the tribe remained, the larger portion of them having already immigrated north to Oklahoma.

**November 12, 1866:** The Texas Legislature passed an Act granting the "Pakana Muscogees of Polk County" 320 acres of land. The land was never purchased and the Pakanas remained on the Burgess property.

### February 6, 1870:

To: Brevet Colonel H. Clay Wood, Assistant Adjutant General U.S.A. "Colonel.

The Muscogees, or as they are commonly known, the Blunt Indians, are an off-shoot from the Creek tribe of Florida Indians, and migrated to Texas about 35 years ago.

There are only 28, men, women and children, in all, and have, in great measure, adopted the language, dress and habits of the whites. Their present chief Bill Blunt [Blount], is the son of John Blunt, a former chief, now deceased, who was a favorite guide of General Jackson's, during the Seminole War, and Bill Blunt has in his possession a medal given his father by President Jackson, with the inscription "Presented to John Blunt, my faithful guide during the Seminole War", on it. Bill Blunt is an educated Indian, and transacts all his own business with the whites, in a very intelligent manner; he speaks the English language fluently. This tribe, or rather the greater portion of them, 20 in number, are now living on a piece of land containing between 5 and 6 hundred acres, belonging to an old Indian woman of the Alabama tribe, the widow of a Frenchman, deceased; the remainder, eight in number, are living on some vacant land, owned by non-residents, near Drew's Landing, on the Trinity river. They have in their possession a Grant of 320 acres of land, from the state of Texas, to be located on any public land in Polk County, but as there is no such land fit for cultivation, they have never located and the grant is worthless to them. Bill Blunt, the chief, say that if the State of Texas would cancel this grant, and furnish them with a few agricultural implements, they would be able to take care of themselves.

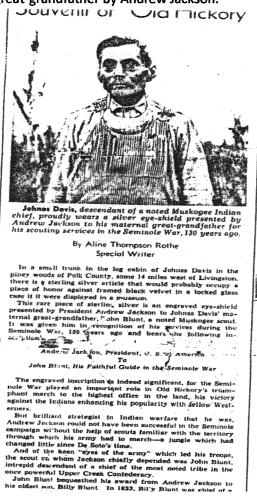
This tribe also refused to engage in the Rebellion. They are very poor."

-sig'd W. C. Philips, Sec'y of State, Headquarters Post of Livingston, Livingston, Polk co., Texas, February 6, 1870.

1882: Report stated that 42 Pakana Muscogees were living on the Burgess property in Polk County.

1899: John Blount, "acknowledged present chief of the Pakana Muscogee" and grandson of the original Chief John Blunt, removed into the Creek Nation in Oklahoma. Less than 10 Pakanas remained on the Burgess property.

1952: Houston Chronicle article reports that Johnas Davis (the son of Tillie Blunt and grandson of Chief William "Billy" Blunt) was still living on the site of the Burgess property in Polk County. He still possessed the silver eye-shield which had been presented to his maternal great-great-grandfather by Andrew Jackson.



### --Records of the Apalachicola Indians after Emigration to Oklahoma-

March 6, 1839: Ft Gibson, Indian Territory..."Claims on the United States by the Apalachicola Indians who have emigrated west"...Claims under the provisions of the Indian Removal Act for property and personal improvements left behind in Florida: 228 ½ acres of land, 2 mills, 15 sheds, 9 corn cribs, 14thousand280 fence rails, 44 Indian style cabins, 4 white style houses, 150 fruit trees, 4 fences.

**1847:** Letter from John H. Broadnax stated that "Neah Thlocco is the present King of Tulwa Thlocco in the Arkansas District" of Indian Territory.

**July 10, 1861:** "Treaty of the Apalachicola Indians, Indian Territory, with the Confederate States of America"..." That the Apalachicola band of Indians, being by origin of the Creek Nation, long resided on the Apalachicola River, in what is now the State of Florida...thus done, signed, and sealed, at the North Fork Village, on the North Fork of the Canadian River, 10 July 1861".

1882: Rolls of the Creek Nation, Indian Territory showed "Tulwathlocco Town" with Micco Henry Thompson.

1891: Census of the Creek Nation, Indian Territory showed "Tulwa Thlocco...population 171".