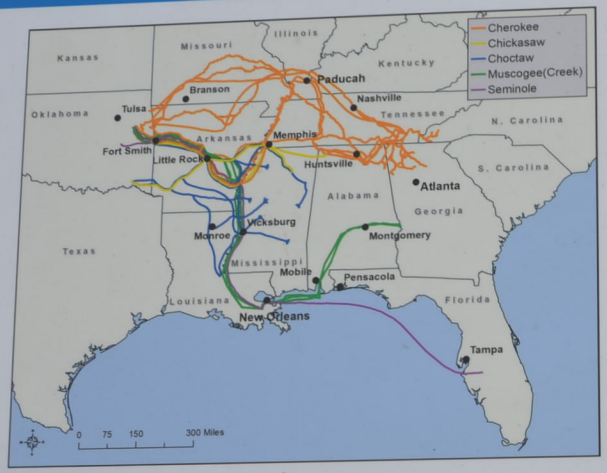
WELCOME TO THE MEMORIAL GREEN SPACE



This location marks the original post cemetery at Jackson Barracks. It is set aside to honor the men and women who were buried here between 1835 and 1864. They include soldiers, families of soldiers, slaves, civilians who worked at the Barracks, and Native Americans. During the period of Indian Removal, in the mid-19th century, thousands of Seminoles and Muscogee (Creek) Indians were brought through New Orleans, forced from their homelands in Florida and Alabama to resettle in the Oklahoma Territory.

Between 1837 and 1859, tribal groups were confined at Jackson Barracks as they awaited transport up the Mississippi River by steamboat. The stress of this journey and disease took a toll on tribal members. Those who died at the Barracks were buried here, in the post cemetery, along with others who had lived or were stationed at Jackson Barracks.

It is unknown how many people are buried here and who they were. The cemetery was in use from the opening of the Barracks in 1835 until the Civil War. Chalmette National Cemetery was established by the Army in 1864 for all military burials. After 1866 many of the military burials at Jackson Barracks were reburied at Chalmette. The post cemetery was gradually abandoned and forgotten.

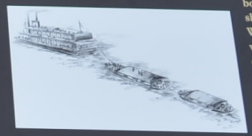
On January 17, 2005, a construction crew renovating a building on this site came across human remains. Archaeologists determined that this was the original post cemetery, which still holds the remains of many individuals. One of the two remains accidently uncovered in 2005 was a Seminole woman, who was identified through her tribal accoutrements - many layers of bead necklaces, silver discs, and a silver cuff. The other was a coffin burial of a 40-45 year old male. After the archaeological investigations, the Louisiana Military Department decided to leave the ground undisturbed and establish a green space dedicated to the memory of those who have been at rest here for more than 150 years.

ROLE OF NEW ORLEANS & JACKSON BARRACKS IN INDIAN REMOVAL

In 1830 President Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act forcing more than 60,000 Native Americans to leave their homelands east of the Mississippi River. The torturous overland journey from the Carolinas is known as the Trail of Tears. Less well known, but no less tragic, was the Gulf of Mexico-Mississippi River route. The Muscogee (Creek) call it "Nene Estēmēkv" or "The Road of Misery."

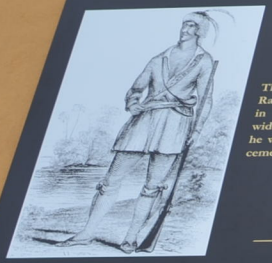
Whether pressured to sign away their lands in unethical treaties or failed in their attempts to remain in their homeland, an estimated 7,500 Seminoles from Florida and 10,600 Muscogee (Creeks) from Alabama were put aboard ships between 1837 and 1859 and sent across the Gulf of Mexico to New Orleans on this "Southern Route." They were then transferred to steamboats that took them up the Mississippi River to Arkansas, then overland to Indian Territory, present day Oklahoma. The tribal groups could spend hours or months in New Orleans at Jackson Barracks or nearby Fort Pike, depending on weather, availability of boats, and military decisions. Military records indicate that few provisions were made for the travelers who seem to have set up their own camp sites. Living conditions in New Orleans could be extreme given the dismal provisions, heat, dampness, insects, and the threat of disease. Deaths among the tribal groups occurred at the Barracks, though the exact number is not known.

In New Orleans, tribal members were under military guard but allowed some freedom of movement. Newspaper reports of the era describe chiefs and their families attending theatre performances and visiting the French Market in the city.



The steamboat trip up the Mississippi River had its own hardships and dangers. The boats were often overcrowded, sometimes short of supplies, and prone to accidents. When river levels were low, the passengers were forced to disembark and walk, often for days. One of the biggest single disasters of the Indian Removal era was in October 1837 when the steamboats Monmouth and Trenton violently collided at night on the Mississippi River above Baton Rouge with a horrific loss of life. Of the estimated 700 Muscogee (Creeks) onboard the Monmouth, more than 300 died from drowning or injuries.

NATIVE AMERICAN BURIALS AT JACKSON BARRACKS

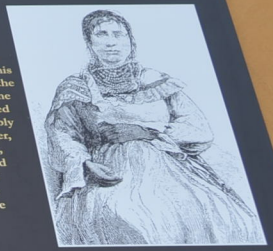


The death of another notable chief, Rakko Tvstvnvke, known as Tiger Tail in English, in March 1843, was also widely reported. All indications are that he was buried in the Jackson Barracks cemetery.

Many tribal people died on the Indian Removal route that went through New Orleans. Most of their names are lost to history. However, there are three Native Americans buried at Jackson Barracks whose lives are known.

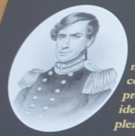
Horre Emarv, known as Jumper in English, was an important Seminole war chief who contracted tuberculosis soon after being detained at Jackson Barracks. He died on April 18, 1838, after spending the last two months of his life on a sick bed. His obituary details his military funeral with "The military and a number of citizens" in attendance. Jumper's death was reported extensively in American newspapers, according him great renown. Typical of the era, this same short paragraph appeared in dozens of newspapers: Another Captive Chief Gone. – Jumper, the distinguished Seminole chief, died at the Barracks in New Orleans on the morning of the 18th April, and was buried in the afternoon.
– In his coffin were placed his tobacco, his pipe, his rifle, and other equipments, according to his people's custom.

Most of the tribal people passing through New Orleans were not chiefs and their deaths received no public notice. A Seminole woman's remains were accidently uncovered in January 2005 during a construction project. This discovery led to the identification of the post burial ground. She died sometime between 1837 and 1859 and was buried wearing a ferrous adornment, possibly an epaulet, covering her left shoulder, layers of necklaces, made of shells, silver, and more than 1,275 blue and clear glass beads. These materials identified her as a member of the Seminole tribe. Her remains were reinterred nearby.



MILITARY BURIALS AT JACKSON BARRACKS

Army records list 285 soldiers who died at Jackson Barracks between 1835 and 1865. Unfortunately, these records do not locate the post cemetery or document burials other than a few soldiers. Other sources indicate that military family members, enslaved people, and civilian workers living at the post were buried in the cemetery. Causes of death were not systematically listed, but common maladies of the 19th century were yellow fever, tuberculosis, and cholera. The first soldiers' deaths recorded at the post were Privates Peter Flanley and D.W. Wilson, of Captain Jesse B. Wright's Company, Louisiana Volunteer Militia, who both died on October 31, 1837.



One of the most widely reported burials at the post, then called the New Orleans Barracks, was in 1845. Colonel Josiah H. Vose (1784-1845), who was revered by his men and his fellow officers, died of a heart attack while reviewing his regiment. Among the officers mourning Vose was a young U.S. Grant, later commanding general during the Civil War and U.S. president. In his memoir Grant praised Vose as an ideal officer and recalled the Barracks as the "most pleasant place I have ever been stationed."

Soldiers' Cemetery, 1861-1869, Alexandria, Virginia

During the Civil War New Orleans fell quickly to the Union in 1862 and Jackson Barracks was a hub of federal activity. After 1864, existing military burials at Jackson Barracks were moved to the new Chalmette National Cemetery.

A New York volunteer known as Lyons Wakeman died from dysentery at the post in 1864. It only came to light in the 1990s that Wakeman was a woman when letters to her family were discovered and published. She was Sarah Rosetta Wakeman born in 1843. Her Chalmette tombstone remains unchanged, reading: "Lyons Wakeman, N.Y."

SEMINOLE TRIBE

The Seminole Tribe emerged in 18th century Florida from several Native American groups that coalesced on the peninsula. Creeks from Georgia and Alabama began moving into Florida in the early 1700s, in resistance to European expansion into their homelands. The interior of Florida was sparsely populated, a result of the diseases introduced by the Spanish explorers of the 16th century.

The surviving bands of Florida Indians, such as the Calusa and Tequesta, gradually joined with the newcomers, blending their customs and cultures. The tribe was further enlarged by runaway slaves from the English colonies near Florida's northern border, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. Under Spanish rule, slaves who made their way into Florida were recognized as free people. The Spanish term Cimrrones, meaning "wild ones" or "runaways," was corrupted into "Seminole" and came to embrace all the Indians in Florida.

The tribe's acceptance of runaways and the Spanish government's acquiescence incensed slaveowners to the north. Border tensions between the English and French colonies and Florida increased throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries, becoming even more hostile under the United States. Armed warfare frequently erupted, culminating in General Andrew Jackson's 1818 march into Florida. The next year Spain ceded the colony to the United States.

Efforts by the new U.S. government to restrict Seminoles to reservations were met with stiff resistance. This determination escalated with the Indian Removal Act of 1830 that ordered all tribal people to move west of the Mississippi River. A few Seminoles agreed and in 1832 they were put on ships and sent across the Gulf of Mexico on their journey to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). The majority of Seminoles fiercely resisted removal and war broke out, lasting until 1858. An estimated 4,200 Florida Indians were sent west but a small band of Seminoles eluded capture and remained in their homeland. This small group grew into the Seminole Tribe of Florida. The tribal group that moved west became the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. Today both of these federally recognized tribes nurture and safeguard Seminole culture and history.