

The Shadow Warriors Living History Series

Shadow Warriors is a Living History program highlighting the contributions of black Americans who rode the Old West and who served in the United States Colored Cavalry during the American Civil War and the post-Civil War 9th & 10th Cavalry regiments (Buffalo Soldiers).

They are presented as a part of the Descendants Jubilee Project's living history program. It's presented in tribute to the courageous black men and women who helped discover, tame and develop the American West.

The Project also encourages maintenance of historic burial grounds where black veterans and other founders and leaders of the African American community are interred. Throughout our history in America, black people have been segregated from whites, even in death. So it is up to us to find, identify, acknowledge and maintain our sacred burial sites for posterity.

Many African American burial sites from the 18th and 19th centuries are just being rediscovered, especially in the eastern portion of the United States. It is incumbent upon us to do everything possible to preserve and protect these sites, the burial places of our forefathers. We must protect and honor the role our ancestors had in developing, building and protecting these United States by ensure respect and protection of our ancestors' sacred burial places.

Shadow Warriors focuses attention on American Civil War history and the post- Civil War, frontier west. The Descendants Jubilee Project pays homage the black soldiers, homesteaders, scouts, cowboys, merchants and lawmen who help to tame and develop the frontier west.

The United States Colored Troops of the American civil War are found on the USCT page of this website. The 9th and 10th Cavalry are found on the Buffalo Soldiers page.

The Shadow Warriors Living History Program

The spirit of the Old West is alive in the person of re-enactors and living historians who portray western historical characters. Each is an amateur historian who presents living history. The characters are right out of the Golden Age of the Frontier West (1866-1891). They include stories of Scouts and Lawmen, Buffalo Soldiers and Outlaws, War Chiefs and Cowboys. They all fit into well presented stories called the Shadows Warriors. In the Shadow Warriors program, reenactors and living historians present period authentic, historically accurate impressions depicting warriors of color in authenticated tales of valor, long ignored by mainstream historians.

The characters are presented on horseback whenever possible, in order to lend period authenticity to the stories. The lead presenter is most often found in a school library or church hall. Clothed in period attire of either; an 1872 Buffalo Soldier, the buckskins of a Cavalry Scout or with the functional accoutrements of an Old West Drover.

As a living historian, Joe Certaine offers a realistic view of what the West was like during the period after the American Civil War, often called the Golden Age of the West. He focuses on recorded but ignored historical characters of American history.

Certaine served as the on screen historian and narrator for the "The Invisible Men of Honor - The Legend of the Buffalo Soldiers" a television documentary that portrays the history of the legendary Buffalo Soldiers. He has written two short stories "As the Crow Flies" a record of a visit to his friends on the

Crow reservation and "The History of the Buffalo Soldiers" a history of the early years of the 9th and 10th Cavalry. Both are published as booklets by Blue Horse Productions of Tucson, Arizona.

While researching his family history, Certaine discovered William Loren Katz's "The Black West". It is a collection of little known stories of settlers and gamblers; preachers and merchants, lawmen and bronco-busters, soldiers and outlaws, all of whom were Black. It inspired him to experience the history first-hand. Afterward, Joe spent all of his free time on horseback riding the West with Bob Burton, the founder of VisionQuest. During that time, he met a Sundance Chief of the Crow nation, Dan Old Elk.

Dan Old Elk is a respected leader of the Crow Nation. He is the grandson of Curley, one of the Crow scouts and only survivor of the Battle of the Greasy Grass (the Little Bighorn). Dan is the other pillar of Joe Certaine's western experience. Through those two men, Joe Certaine gained a hands-on appreciation for all of the historic places of the real frontier west.

During the last decade of the twentieth century, Joe Certaine, rode with the Warrior Societies of the mighty Plains Nations, the Lakota, Cheyenne and the Crow. He retraced the old Comanche War Trails in Texas and Oklahoma. He guided his horse up the rugged mountain trail deep in the Dragoon Mountains of Southern Arizona, into the stronghold of the great Apache leader Cochise. He rode across the Little Bighorn River in the company of the Bishkawaliki of the Cheyenne, Sioux and Crow nations onto the Little Bighorn Battlefield in Montana during the historic dedication ceremony of the warriors monument. He was later presented with a model of a part of the historic monument.

Joe conducted his field research in places named Brackettville and Uvalde, Tombstone and Cheyenne, Forts; Clark, Robinson, Leavenworth and Sill, all the while learning the stories and legends of the west. He has ridden with the descendants of the great warrior chiefs of the mighty nations of the Great Plains. Joe also met many of the last active duty members of the 9th & 10th Cavalry who were among the last horse soldiers to relinquish their spurs. They shared the stories of the black cavalymen who rode the West and built the legend of the Buffalo Soldiers

His western characters like Bose Ikard, ride the Chisholm, the Western and the Goodnight-Loving Trails on cattle drives. They work on building the Union Pacific Railroad and they search for Billy the Kid in Lincoln County, New Mexico. Black Scouts guide settlers going west in wagon trains from Missouri. Black settlers build towns named Nicodemus and Boley, Wewoka and Marshalltown. They run a ferry across the Red River. They stop Victorio and his Apaches from raiding in Texas and they capture outlaws in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). In the process, they help to build America. The Shadow Warriors program of the Descendants Jubilee Project brings you untold and true stories of adventure and accomplishment.

Let one of the exciting western characters of the Shadow Warriors program bring history to life, at your next assembly. Register on the contact us page and we'll help you plan your next history presentation.



Joe Certaine

Joe Certaine on the banks of Little Bighorn, where Crazy Horse rode across to meet Custer.

The Shadow Warriors series will change the way you think of American history. It will awaken your spirit and test your knowledge of who you are. You're sure to want more and that's the point. The more you hear of the Shadow Warriors the more you understand the contribution made by black Americans to tame the Western Frontier and build the country. Contact us to learn more.