

Bel Abbey

April 10, 1916 – January 21, 1992

Blowgun Maker, Wood Carver, and Koasati Storyteller

Koasati – a tribe of Native Americans who have maintained their language and live predominantly in Elton, Louisiana. Also known as Coushatta. (This tribe migrated to Louisiana in 1763).



Fun Facts

Inducted into the Hall of Master Folk Artists, 1982.

Concluded his stories by saying, "tafhiyám" to ward off evil.

Learned to write English while in the army during WW II.

Bel Abbey was a **Koasati** Indian, raised in a settlement in Allen Parish (five miles north of Elton, Louisiana). He valued his traditional upbringing and learned much from the elders of his community. As he matured, he became a teacher and preserver of his culture, sharing his knowledge within and outside of his tribe. In 1991 he mentored his nephew, **Timothy Langley**, in the art of Koasati Storytelling. Abbey was fond of animal tales, because he felt a strong connection to nature. Fishing, hunting, and woodworking were also interests of his. Making folk toys, such as blowguns and whistles, for the children in his community enabled him to communicate with younger generations. Along with his many talents, Abbey was a lover of language. He mastered English on his own, but also spoke: Koasati, Cajun French, Choctaw, Alibamu, and Mobilian.

"That's what the important thing [is], the stories."
-- Bel Abbey