

The Foundation Report

SUMMER - 2002



SEMINOLE WARS

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Foundation members tour Camp IZARD battlefield

Led by archaeologist Gary Ellis, the Seminole Wars Historic Foundation sponsored a return to the site of Camp IZARD on Saturday, October 27, 2001. Beautiful weather and an equally beautiful boat ride down the Withlacoochee, afforded members and guests of the Foundation a perfect day to walk the terrain of this significant Second Seminole War battlefield and learn firsthand the details of the pivotal engagement that took place there.

Sometimes termed "Gaines' Folly," the ten-day battle was triggered on February 28, 1836 when First Lieutenant James F. IZARD, a young West Point graduate and member of the 1st Dragoons, was struck in the head by a Seminole bullet while trying to ford the Withlacoochee River at the head of an army led by General Edmund P. Gaines. The defensive position was later named after the fallen officer.

The impulsive Gaines had

charged into hostile Indian country with approximately 1,200 regular, volunteer and militia troops in the hopes of drawing a measure of revenge for the loss of Major Dade's command two months earlier. Instead, Gaines found himself confronted by 1,500 Seminole warriors led by Osceola, Jumper and Alligator.

Despite having the upper hand, it has been suggested by some historians that the Seminoles never pressed the issue to the point of annihilating the command because their real intent still remained to convince the United States government simply to allow them to remain in Florida. In fact, the Seminoles actually suspended fighting and began negotiating with Gaines.

Unfortunately, fate would intervene in this earliest attempt to reach some form of treaty. General Duncan Clinch, who had previously been ordered by General Winfield

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ORIGINAL MONUMENT AT DADE BATTLEFIELD



Group with Gary Ellis at Camp IZARD.

IZARD

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Scott to remain at Fort Drane, unexpectedly arrived on the scene and drove the Seminoles off. One of the only real opportunities to end the war thus slipped away, and the fighting continued for another six years.

The Seminole Wars Historic Foundation has focused much of its preservation efforts on the Camp IZARD site, thanks in large part to the financial assistance of the William H. Donner Foundation.

In November 2001, Dr. Brent Weisman led a group of students from the University of South Florida who

began satellite mapping of the site's features. This information is being used to create a map atlas of the area and improve the application that is being prepared for National Register of Historic Places designation.

Gary Ellis has also continued the work he began in 1996 uncovering the remnants of the battlefield. At this writing he is proceeding with the second phase of the project sponsored by the Foundation. The goal is to accurately locate the breastwork of logs that were used by the United States soldiers for cover during the fighting.



Board members and guests listen attentively to the story of Camp IZARD.

Efforts to preserve site of Wahoo Swamp battle continue

An article in the Sumter County Times last November sounded the alarm once again that another of the last tangible remnants of the Second Seminole War was in danger of being lost forever.

On November 13, 2001, Sumter County commissioners unanimously approved a special land-use permit that would have allowed a Florida company to build a stress management retreat on an 830-acre tract in the Wahoo Swamp.

Normally, a five-million dollar development in this rural community west of Bushnell would be welcomed.

What the developer and government officials apparently hoped would be overlooked was the fact that the tract included Battle Slough, site of a significant engagement between Seminole Indians and forces of the United States government.

For more than a mile along the slough, 2,500 U. S. Army regulars, Tennessee and Creek Indian volunteers, and Florida militia faced off against an estimated 620 Seminole warriors on November 21, 1836. The battle lasted approximately five hours, and left eight soldiers dead. It was never determined how many Seminole fighters lost their lives.

Not only was this one of the major engagements of the war, but also the site where David Moniac, a member of the regiment of Mounted Creek Volunteers and first

native-American graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, was killed in action.

Today, a number of local residents, including Carl Martin and Nancy Miller, president of the Sumter County Historical Society, are prepared to wage a modern battle to protect this historic site.

The Seminole Wars Historic Foundation has joined in the local effort and is actively involved in exploring the various options for preserving Battle Slough, the Seminole village, and a possible Indian burial site.

Dr. Brent Weisman, president of the Foundation, has spearheaded our efforts since initial word was received concerning the potential loss of this property.

When a local resident stepped in to purchase the tract, Brent immediately met with him and explored the possibility of setting aside the most historically important parts of the 830 acres.

With the Foundation's full support and assistance, the Sumter County Historical Society is now working on a "Florida Forever" grant that could lead to outright purchase of the property or acquisition of "conservation easements."

The fight is far from over, but the Foundation is fully committed to preserving one of the most significant battlefields of the Second Seminole War. Our support will make the difference in this effort.

Donner Foundation grant funds Fort Dade research

This past March, fifteen students from the University of South Florida joined Dr. Brent Weisman at the Fort Dade site to begin the official archaeological search for remains of the military post.

The group, pictured below, found evidence of Second Seminole War period occupation, and confirmed the existence of the fort on property owned by the Foundation. Plans are now in place to move ahead full speed on developing an archaeological research design and educational

curriculum.

None of this work would have been possible without the generous financial assistance provided by the William H. Donner Foundation.

For several years now, the Donner Foundation has been the primary sponsor of our most important projects, to include battlefield archaeology and public education at the Camp Izard preserve, archaeological investigation of Fort Dade, and publication of several volumes in our historical series.



JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING

Major Dade Lodge
Dade Battlefield Historic State Park
Bushnell, Florida

Saturday - September 28, 2002
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Call 352-583-2974 to RSVP

Foundation publication program

With publication of *Amidst a Storm of Bullets* in 1998, the Seminole Wars Historic Foundation began sponsorship of a series of books aimed at providing pertinent material on the experience of Indian removal in Florida to historians, students and others interested in this complex period of history.

The second volume in the series is a reproduction of the original edition of *The Origin, Progress and Conclusion of the Florida War*, which remains a cornerstone of Second Seminole War history.

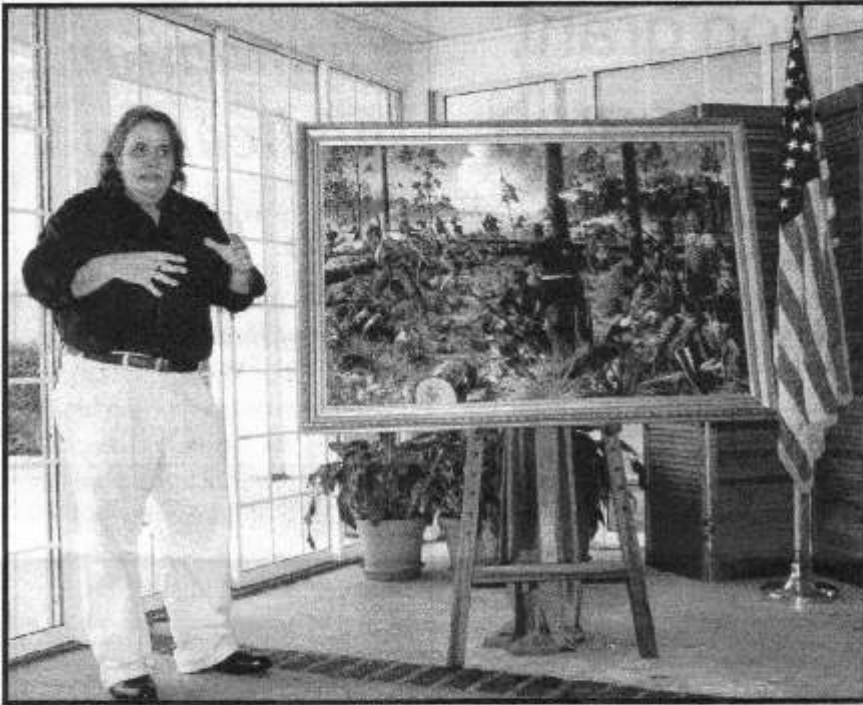
The book was first published in 1848, six years after the Second Seminole War came to an official end. Its author, Brevet Captain John T. Sprague, had the advantage of extended service in the theater of war, including eleven months as a Marine in 1836-37, and the last year and several months of the war as aide-de-camp to William J. Worth, commanding general in Florida.

From the variety of his experiences, and unique access to valuable documents belonging to his former commanding officer and later father-in-law, General Worth, Sprague produced a book that remained the primary source of information about the war until the publication of John K. Mahon's *History of the Second Seminole War 1835-1842* almost 120 years later.



New Walker painting

Jackson Walker, Foundation member and noted historical artist from Orlando, will unveil an original painting of the Camp Izard battle at the annual members meeting on September 28, 2002. Don't miss this exciting and unique event! Jackson is shown at left sharing his second Dade battle painting, *Do Your Best*, at a gathering of the West Point Society of North Florida. Highlighted in this dramatic rendering of the engagement is Captain George W. Gardiner, first commandant of cadets at the United States Military Academy, who rallied the soldiers of the detachment following the initial volleys that felled Major Dade and Captain Frazer.



Camp Izard Visit - October 27, 2001

