



# The Foundation Report

Seminole Wars Foundation, Inc.

Winter 2013

## Reliving Dade's Battle

Once again, the sound of musketry and cannon fire was heard within and around the Dade Battlefield Historic State Park in Bushnell. The weekend of January 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> brought the usual carnival atmosphere to the park, with the food trailers, vendor tents, and various demonstrations. Yet all those who participate, be they on the battlefield or behind the scenes, know they are working to re-create a tragic and momentous event, and they do their best to relate that fact to the thousands of spectators who come to watch the reenactment.

On December 28, 1835, a column of 108 United States soldiers walked into a well-planned ambush by the Seminole Tribe. By the end of the day, only two of those men were left alive. It was the beginning of a long, costly war that would bring little satisfaction to any of the participants. True, the Seminoles were victorious on this particular day, but the resulting conflict would end with the vast majority of their people forcibly settled in a strange new land and hundreds of their tribal members slain by bullets or disease. And yes, the armed forces of the United States would be triumphant in the end, but at a staggering cost in lives lost or ruined, and millions of dollars wasted. As the reenactment ends, and after the last musket has fired and all the soldiers lie scattered across the ground, a hush falls over the crowd, and the audience realizes that while applause are in order, there is little to cheer about.





# Seminole Wars Foundation

## Logo Shirts



We are again pleased to offer shirts embroidered with the brilliant green and gold Foundation Logo. These high quality shirts are available in a variety of styles, colors, and sizes.

Orders will be shipped within 30 days of receipt.

Colors (Polo): White, Tan, Pink, Lt. Blue, Burgundy, Black

Sizes: Small, Medium, Large, X-Large, in Men's or Women's

Shipping charges are \$5 for the first shirt and \$4 for each additional shirt.

Qty	Style	Color	Size	M/F	Price Ea.	Total
	1 <sup>st</sup> Polo w/ Pocket				\$25.00	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Polo w/ Pocket				\$25.00	
	1 <sup>st</sup> Polo w/o Pocket				\$25.00	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Polo w/o Pocket				\$25.00	
	1 <sup>st</sup> Long Sleeve Denim	Blue			\$23.00	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Long Sleeve Denim	Blue			\$23.00	
	1 <sup>st</sup> Short Sleeve Denim	Blue			\$23.00	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Short Sleeve Denim	Blue			\$23.00	
					<b>Subtotal</b>	
					<b>Tax (7%)</b>	
					<b>Shipping</b>	
					<b>TOTAL</b>	

**Mail this form with check to:**  
 Seminole Wars Foundation, Inc.  
 35247 Reynolds St.  
 Dade City, FL 33523

Phone: 352-583-2711

**Thank You!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Editorial Information

The *Foundation Report* is published quarterly for members of the Seminole Wars Foundation, Inc. Anyone wishing to submit articles should contact Managing Editor John Missall at 11155 Rabun Gap Dr., Ft. Myers, FL 33917; 239-543-8831; or [info@seminolewars.us](mailto:info@seminolewars.us)  
 The Seminole Wars Foundation, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1992. Its mission is to work toward the preservation of sites important to Florida's three Seminole wars and to promote publishing and education about this time period. The main office of the Foundation is at 35247 Reynolds Ave., Dade City, FL 33523. Phone: 352-583-2711. Web: [www.seminolewars.us](http://www.seminolewars.us)

# Calendar of Events

**February 9 & 10, 2013:** Fort Foster Rendezvous, Hillsborough River State Park, Tampa, [www.floridastateparks.org/hillsboroughriver/](http://www.floridastateparks.org/hillsboroughriver/)

**March 2 & 3, 2013:** Big Cypress Shootout, Billie Swamp Safari, Big Cypress Indian Reservation, [www.bcshootout.com/](http://www.bcshootout.com/)

**March 16 & 17, 2013:** Fort Cooper Days, Fort Cooper State Park, Inverness, [www.floridastateparks.org/fortcooper/](http://www.floridastateparks.org/fortcooper/)

**March 23 & 24, 2013 (tentative):** Fort Chokonikla Encampment, Payne's Creek Historic State Park, Bowling Green, [www.floridastateparks.org/paynescreek/](http://www.floridastateparks.org/paynescreek/)

## The Seminoles Make a Stand

Although the Second Seminole War lasted until 1842, the heavy fighting was over by early 1838. In December of 1837, the American commander, Maj. Gen. Thomas Jesup, was intent on bringing the war to a close. With 9,000 men at his disposal, he formed his army into seven columns that would scour the peninsula from north to south, forcing the Seminoles to either surrender, flee to the inhospitable Everglades, or stand and fight. In truth, the Seminoles did all three. Some bands were captured, while others gave up as the army approached. Those who would not give up fled south, with Jesup's soldiers in hot pursuit. To buy more time for the women, children, and elders to make their way to safety, the Seminole leaders and their warriors decided to make a stand at the battles of Okeechobee and Loxahatchee.

### Recreating the Battle of Okeechobee

On February 2 & 3, 2013, the annual reenactment was held at the Okeechobee Battlefield Historic State Park in Okeechobee. On Christmas Day of 1837, Col. Zachary Taylor and about 850 men were confronted by a Seminole force of less than half their strength. The Indians and their black allies had chosen their position carefully, taking refuge in a thickly wooded hammock on the north shore of the great lake. To reach the hammock, the soldiers would have to cross a large sawgrass swamp, which would slow their march and make them perfect targets. Taylor accepted the challenge, and sent about half his force through the sawgrass to attack the Seminole position. The first unit to fall within range of the Seminole riflemen was the Missouri Volunteers. Their leader, Col. Richard Gentry, was slain almost immediately, and many others were wounded. The 6<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry followed, and fared even worse, with four officers killed, and all but one wounded. Finally, the 4<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry charged the hammock and the Seminoles began an orderly retreat to the canoes they had placed on the beach. When the battle was over, Taylor counted his dead and wounded. Twenty-seven of his men had been killed, and 111 were wounded. By comparison, Seminole casualties were light. For all practical purposes, the battle was a draw.

### Battles of Loxahatchee Remembered

On January 19, 2013 a commemoration of the two battles along the Loxahatchee River was held at the Loxahatchee River Battlefield Park in Jupiter. The first battle took place on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1838, when a combined army/navy force of around eighty men led by Lt. Levin Powell of the navy came upon a large force of Seminoles who had regrouped after the Battle of Okeechobee three weeks earlier. Unlike the fight at Okeechobee, this time there was a clear victory by the Seminoles, as the surprised soldiers and sailors were forced to retreat to their boats after suffering casualties of four dead and twenty-two wounded.

A little over a week later, things were different. This time, the Seminoles made their stand against a force of about 1,500 U.S. soldiers, including volunteers from Tennessee and Alabama, led personally by General Jesup. As they had at Okeechobee, the Seminoles chose their battleground carefully. The soldiers were forced to pass

through a cypress swamp, then a thickly-wooded hammock, before coming to the Loxahatchee River. The Seminoles began their defense from the hammock, and then slowly fell back, eventually crossing the river, where they poured an intense fire upon the Tennessee Volunteers. This effectively stopped the army's advance. A group from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dragoons crossed the river, but found few Indians to fight. Once again, as at Okeechobee, the Seminoles had stopped the army and were now free to make their way south, to the relative safety of the Everglades. Jesup's dreams of ending the war quickly were shattered, and the fighting continued, though at a lesser scale, for another four years.



*Scenes from this year's Battle of Okeechobee*

## Board Welcomes New Member



The Foundation is pleased to announce the election of Col. Joe Naftzinger (ret.) as a member of the Board of Directors. Joe was born in Philadelphia and graduated from the United States Military Academy with the class of 1960. He retired as a Colonel after 28 years of service, including two tours in Vietnam. After earning his PhD in International Relations from the University of Maryland in 1994, Joe moved to St. Augustine and taught for Troy State University as an associate and later adjunct professor until 2011. He became interested in the Seminole Wars while arranging memorial events for the West Point Society of North Florida, and looks forward to helping expand the public's awareness of the period, particularly as St. Augustine approaches its 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

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