

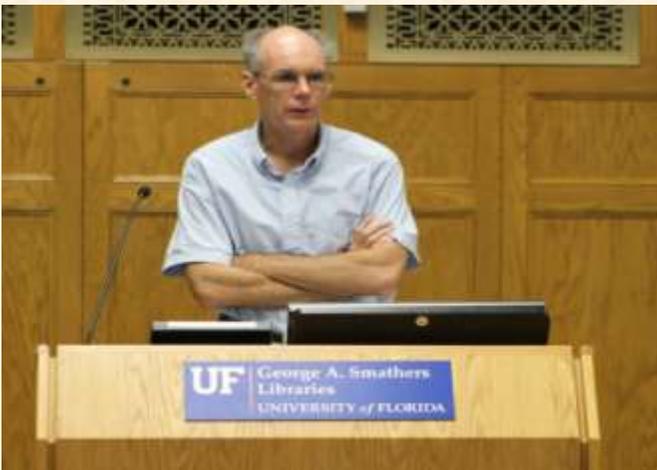


# The Foundation Report

Seminole Wars Foundation, Inc.

Fall 2013

## Summer Members' Meeting



Twenty-five members and guests of the Seminole Wars Foundation gathered on an overcast and drizzly Saturday at the George A. Smathers Library at the University of Florida in Gainesville on July 20, 2013 for our latest Member's Meeting. The event was graciously hosted by past board President and current Advisory Board member Dr. James G. Cusick, the Chair and Curator for the P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History Special & Area Studies Collections. After brief introductions, Jim led a tour of the special collections area, including several items from their collection related to the Seminole Wars. These included various maps, the Henry Prince diary, a copy of Gen. Thomas Jesup's order book from 1838, the Joseph Van Swearingen papers, an unpublished manuscript for a second edition of John Lee William's *Territory of Florida* that included a pair of original John Rogers Vinton sketches, along with other items. During lunch we watched a brief video documentary about Black Seminoles submitted by Clearwater student Stephanie Hamilton for our newly inaugurated "Student Research Award," and she was recognized (in absentia) as the first recipient of that award. After our time at the library, the membership was invited to continue their time in Gainesville with a visit to the Florida Museum of Natural History to see their exhibits on Florida's Indian peoples. The next member meeting is tentatively planned for spring 2014.

*Article & photos by Dr. Sam Smith*



# Student Research Award Winner

Stephanie Hamilton, now a freshman at East Lake High School in Clearwater, FL, has been named as the first recipient of our “Seminole Wars Foundation Student Research Award.” This award program is intended to encourage an interest in the Seminole Wars for students of all ages and provide support for primary research about that conflict.



Miss Hamilton was 13 years old and in the 8th grade when she prepared her documentary, "Black Seminoles: Lost In History" as part of “National History Day” for her advanced American history class at Safety Harbor Middle School. “The research phase was extremely time-consuming, and sometimes horribly frustrating, but after months, I would find one little piece of information and follow that trail (like a detective) through the internet, speaking to USF librarians, emailing and calling various staff at history departments at several colleges around the country, contacting professors at USF in St. Petersburg, emailing more than 50 people from authors, state park employees, history researchers, museum staff, teachers at schools, or teachers who are friends in our neighborhood, asking

everyone I know if they are related to the Seminoles, calling, emailing the Seminole Indian Councils throughout the state, reading Seminole Indian newspapers, reading articles, books, historical pamphlets, watching movies from the library on Native Americans, to finally, finally locating Doctor Uzi Baram, who's an anthropology professor at New College in Sarasota. My communications and interview with Dr. Baram inspired me to not give up the hope that I could locate actual Black Seminole descendants. And through another couple months of research, and digging, digging, digging, I finally found the Griffins. They agreed to meet me and my Mom, and let me interview them at their black Seminole ancestor's home in Brooksville. I spent my Christmas vacation from school working on writing the script, and then several months editing, while continuing to do research. My documentary won the school history fair, enabling me to compete at the Pinellas County History Fair. I was truly honored to win the documentary division at the Pinellas County History Fair in addition to the top 2 coveted awards for the overall county history fair. One of those awards was for the most passionate learner, the other was for the top entry pertaining to Florida History. I went on to compete at the state history fair, and won the top overall award for a project on Florida History.”

Stephanie’s dream “is to be accepted into the school of music at Florida State University as a voice major, with an additional major in engineering, and then attain my Masters Degree at Juliard School of Music in New York City.”

Congratulations to Stephanie Hamilton as our first award recipient.



## Foundation to Produce Seminole Wars Heritage Trail Guide

We are pleased to announce that the Foundation has received preliminary notification that we have won the grant to produce the guidebook for the proposed Seminole Wars Heritage Trail. Although the application requires the formality of acceptance by the Secretary of State and, more importantly, inclusion of funds in next year’s state budget, chances are extremely good that we will be awarded the project.

The Trail Guide will be a full-color booklet listing approximately fifty publicly accessible Seminole War sites throughout Florida. The guide will also offer maps, a brief history of the wars, and sidebars about significant individuals. To view similar guidebooks, visit [www.flheritage.com/preservation/trails/index.cfm](http://www.flheritage.com/preservation/trails/index.cfm).

We would, as much as possible, like to have our membership involved in this project. When we receive instructions from the state and begin our planning, we’ll notify the membership on how they can help. A Seminole Wars Heritage Trail has long been a dream of this organization and the guidebook will be a legacy we can all be proud of.

# St. Augustine Event

The sixth annual commemoration of the end of the Second Seminole War was held in St. Augustine on August 24, 2013. The event is sponsored by the West Point Society of North Florida, with support from the Seminole Wars Foundation and the St. Augustine 450<sup>th</sup> Military Commemoration Committee. Reenactors set up tents on the parade ground across from the historic St. Francis Barracks, and many visitors came by to be educated about the war and to see the demonstrations. At 11:00 AM a short march was made to the adjacent National Cemetery, where a wreath-laying ceremony was held at the pyramids marking the grave of soldiers from the war.

The event then moved into the Officer's Club at the Barracks (Florida National Guard Headquarters) where the audience was welcomed by various members of the sponsoring groups, followed by a presentation by Foundation Advisory Board member Lt. Col. (Ret) Greg Moore, who introduced his new book "Sacred Ground: The Military Cemetery at St. Augustine." A new addition to this year's activities was a "book fair" put on by the Foundation, where participants and guests could purchase books relating to the Seminole Wars.

Plans are to expand the program next year to include a march with reenactors and a horse-drawn wagon through the town from the city gates at the north to the cemetery in the south, following the same route as the funeral procession of 1842.



## Book Review

### Sacred Ground: The Military Cemetery at St. Augustine, by Lt. Col. (Ret.) Gregory Moore

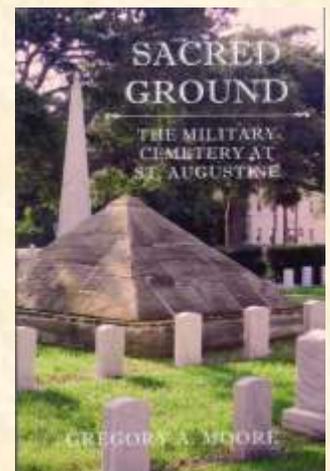
Much of our history has been lost simply because historians felt an event or place was insignificant or unworthy of study. When compared to the great National Cemeteries of Arlington or Gettysburg, the little cemetery at St. Augustine does indeed appear insignificant. Yet every grave tells a story, whether there are thousands of headstones, or only a few. Greg

Moore, Command Historian for the Florida National Guard, works only a few steps from the cemetery and understands the importance of the little plot of "Sacred Ground."

Most of us who are familiar with the Seminole Wars are aware of the three pyramids and obelisk that commemorate the lives lost in the Second Seminole War, but few of us have bothered to look beyond that monument to the other individuals buried there. Thankfully, Greg has taken the time to do just that.

Greg begins the book with a history of the cemetery itself, including the story of the adjacent St. Francis Barracks, which began as a Franciscan Mission in 1573. When the British took over Florida in 1763, the mission became a military installation, and continued as such through the second Spanish period and into the American acquisition of Florida in 1821. Greg relates the tale of how the Barracks' garden became a simple post cemetery and eventually an official National Cemetery, and of the people who made it happen.

The author then examines the lives of twenty of the people interred in the cemetery. Greg freely admits it's an arbitrary number. There are, to be sure, other tales to be told, but a line has to be drawn somewhere, and twenty makes for a good number; not too few, which might make the reader feel cheated, nor too many, which would make the book tedious. Greg also gives us a mix through time. The list starts with casualties from the Seminole War period, then introduces us to people who served in all the wars since then. Some are recognizable names, such as the wife of Col. William Jenkins Worth, the war's final commander, while others are soldiers who were slain before they had a chance to make a name for themselves. All branches of the service are incorporated, including the nursing corps. Greg Moore has given us a look at a small corner of America that is representative of the nation as a whole.



# Seminole Heritage Trail at Fort Cooper



The first kiosk of the Seminole Heritage Trail at Fort Cooper State Park in Inverness is finished and open for viewing. The full trail will include four kiosks throughout the park and is scheduled for completion sometime in 2014. This kiosk first tells about the aboriginal Floridians who met the Spaniards then focuses on the genesis of the Seminole Tribe and their migration to the area around the Withlacoochee River. Other kiosks will examine Seminole culture, the war in the Withlacoochee area, and the significance of Fort Cooper.

The Seminole Heritage Trail has received financial support from the Foundation and a number of our members have worked closely with the Friends of Fort Cooper to bring this dream to a reality.

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## Editorial Information

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