



The Foundation Report

Seminole Wars Foundation, Inc.

Spring 2015

Remembering Pelaklikaha



On the morning of April 18, an important step was taken in the long-overdue recognition of the significance of the site of Abraham's Old Town, or Pelaklikaha, a Black Seminole Maroon village that prospered between 1813 and 1836. On that day a collection of approximately 75 interested persons gathered along Sumter County Road 567, directly adjacent to the townsite on an elevated hammock of large oaks and pasture close to sinkholes and ponds, to hear several speakers describe Pelaklikaha's unique history and culture. John Griffin, a direct Black Seminole descendant, very movingly spoke of his personal quest to understand a people sharing a

heritage that is both African and American Indian. Dr. Brent Weisman, an anthropologist at the University of South Florida, reviewed the more recent efforts by a variety of interested parties that continue to provide evidence of how the town's residents developed societies that were both multicultural and enduring.

The immediate goal of those present at the event was to have the requisite steps taken that will result in the erection of a highway marker that will better familiarize the public with the importance of Abraham's Town. The like-minded groups supporting this effort are Sumter County Historical Society, Scenic Sumter Heritage Byways, Dade Battlefield Society, Seminole Wars Foundation, and Historic Hernando Preservation Society. Members of each of these groups, as well as other committed parties, are confident that the marker will become a reality by 2016.

Article by Steve Rinck



New Painting Unveiled

Also on April 18, at the Loxahatchee Battlefield Park in Jupiter, artist Jackson Walker unveiled his latest work on the Seminole Wars, "The Loxahatchee Incident," depicting a confrontation between Maj. Gen. Thomas S. Jesup and Tennessee Volunteer Maj. William Lauderdale during the Battle of Loxahatchee on January 24, 1838.

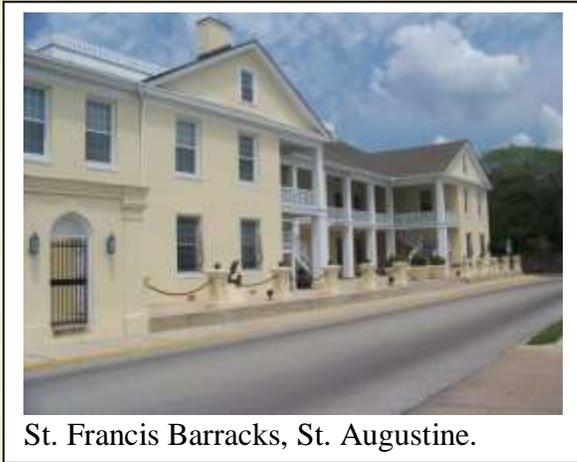
A crowd of about seventy-five people were in attendance, along with two television station news crews. The painting was commissioned by author Jim Snyder and will figure prominently in a new book about the history of the Loxahatchee River.

Seminole Wars Heritage Trail Guide

It's nearing completion! A final draft of the Florida Seminole Wars Heritage Trail Guide has been sent to the state Division of Historical Resources for review. Over that past few months the publication has grown from forty pages to fifty-six, contains listings for 143 individual sites, ninety-seven photographs and paintings, thirty-seven informational sidebars, about ten pages of historical background text, and four maps.

If all goes well, the Trail Guide will be available from the Division of Historical Resources in August of this year. The official "launch" of the publication will be at our Member's Meeting at St. Augustine on August 15th. With an initial print run of 15,000 copies to be distributed free and available for download, this will surely raise awareness of the Seminole Wars and our Foundation.

Summer Member's Meeting



St. Francis Barracks, St. Augustine.

As we told you in the previous edition of the *Foundation Report*, we've changed this year's Spring Meeting to a Summer Meeting in order to participate in a very special event. In conjunction with West Point Society of North Florida, the Dade Battlefield Society, and the 450th Military Commemoration Committee, the Foundation is hosting the 8th Annual Reenactment of the 1842 Parade and Interment Ceremony at the National Military Cemetery adjacent to St. Francis Barracks in St. Augustine. The event has been growing every year, and this year, as part of St. Augustine's 450th anniversary, we will have over fifty reenactors plus at least on mule-drawn wagon in the parade.

The parade and ceremony will be held on the morning of Saturday, August 15th, but the event has also expanded to include a Friday afternoon program featuring period displays and presentations by living historians at the Ximenez-Fatio House Museum, which will be free and open to the public.

In addition, the ceremony on Saturday will be followed by an expanded luncheon for participants and other guests, to be held at nearby Trinity Hall. We will be using the luncheon as the official debut of the Seminole Wars Heritage Trail Guide, with a program highlighting the production of the publication and the most interesting sites we found while putting it together. Because the Trail Guide will be of benefit to all who wish to promote knowledge of the Seminole Wars, organizations with an interest in the wars will be invited to attend, in hopes of promoting networking and greater cooperation among those of us devoted to this important aspect of Florida history.

Because this is also our Foundation Member's Meeting, the cost of the luncheon will be covered for our members. Details are still in the planning stages, and official notices will be sent out in July. Please plan on attending and making this solemn event one that we'll all remember.

Fort Cooper Seminole Trail Dedication

The dedication for the Seminole Heritage Trail at Fort Cooper State Park will be held Wednesday, May 27th at 2:00pm. Public and local dignitaries will be invited as well as District staff. Participants will gather at the Recreation Hall where there will be cake, coffee, and drinks. Those who have not seen the kiosks will be taken on a tour at about 3:00 – 3:30pm. The park's address is 3100 S. Old Floral City Rd. Inverness, FL 34450. For more information, call the park at (352) 726-0315.

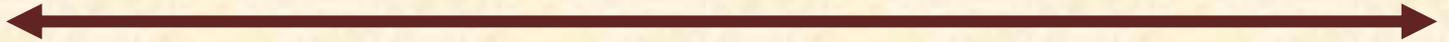
The Trail, funded in part by the Foundation, consists of four kiosks spread throughout the park, and tells of the area's importance to the Native peoples and its significance in the Second Seminole War.

Micanopy Memorial Day Commemoration

A commemoration honoring the dead of the Second Seminole War will be held on Monday, May 25, at 10:00 AM in the courtyard of the Thrasher Warehouse Museum, 607 NE Cholakka Blvd., Micanopy.

The event will focus on both the U.S. Army soldiers and Seminole warriors who died there. Distinguished speakers will include historian Dr. Joe Knetsch and Seminole Tribal Chairman James Billie. Color Guards from the UF Army ROTC and Seminole Tribe will take part. A special prayer for the fifty-nine soldiers who perished at Micanopy will be offered by Episcopal minister Les Singleton, and Bobby Henry, Seminole spiritual advisor, will bless the fallen warriors in the ancient Miccosukee language. After a wreath laying ceremony, a musket volley by reenactors outfitted in period dress will bring the ceremony to an end.

Light refreshments will be served and Seminole crafts will be on sale. This free, two-hour event is being organized by the Micanopy Trust for Historic Forts and Battlefields and is sponsored by the town of Micanopy and the Seminole Tribe of Florida.



Second Seminole War Fort Possibly Found at O'Leno State Park

After a 17 year search, park volunteers and staff at **O'Leno State Park** think they have found enough evidence to establish **Cantonment Winfield Scott** as being located within the park boundaries. Though long rumored to be the site of a Seminole War era post, staff had been skeptical since the late 1990's until a series of clues began to emerge from their research in the late 2000's. Two maps were recently identified that indicated an unnamed fort or military camp stood in the vicinity of the Santa Fe River's natural bridge, and in 1897 the Bureau of Land Management sold a parcel of land adjacent to a Mr. Townsend, who was known to have owned land outside the gate of Cantonment Winfield Scott. Facts about this relationship were corroborated through Sprague's *Florida War* and post returns for the camp, graciously provided by Chris Kimball in 2014. These post returns begin in August 1841 with a company of Capt. Beall's 2nd US Dragoons and end with their replacement in October 1841 with Capt. Seawell's 7th Infantry company until April 1842.

The cantonment appears to have had its origins in the need for a fortification at the Santa Fe River's Natural Bridge to protect the area's existing inhabitants from marauding Seminole war bands in 1840-1, to allow safe passage of new settlers into the area for further development, and to protect the intersection of the Alligator Road from Newnansville to Alligator, and the Bellamy Road from St. Augustine to Pensacola. The fortification was located on a bluff overlooking the river and near both roads and additional trails used to cross the river during flood stage. Both of these roads and period trails are still in use by the park staff as park trails and service roads. The volunteers and park staff would like to be able to confirm the location of the fortification with the assistance of an archaeological study in the future and are trying to secure funding for such a project. It is our belief that this fortification became the basis for the later mid-19th century settlement of Keno, and later after the Civil War, the short lived town of Leno. This is of course the origin of O'Leno State Park's name, "Old Leno" being shortened to "O'Leno" by the 20th century after the town's demise.

Article by V. Morgan Tyrone, Park Manager, O'Leno State Park

Guy LaBree 1941-2015



We are saddened to announce the passing of Florida artist Guy LaBree, well known for his depictions of Seminole life, Seminole history, and Florida nature. A third-generation Floridian, LaBree grew up in Dania, where many of his classmates were Seminole children, some of the first to attend public school. Among his closest friends were Jimmy and Alan Jumper, who lived in traditional chickees on what is now the Hollywood Reservation.

A lithographer by trade, LaBree painted as a hobby until his old friend Alan Jumper suggested he try painting traditional Seminole scenes. A young alligator wrestler, James Billie (now Tribal Chariman), took a liking to Guy's work and became one of his most supportive patrons.

LaBree's attention to detail and vivid colors helped make his work unique and brought him the Florida Fold Heritage Award in 2014. For those who are unfamiliar with his work or would simply like to once again look upon some of his creations, the book "Guy Labree: Barefoot artist of the Florida Seminoles" by Carol Mahler is available from the University Press of Florida.

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Editorial Information

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