



# The Foundation Report

Seminole Wars Foundation, Inc.

Fall 2009

## Continuing Work at Fort Dade

Excavations are proceeding at a careful but steady pace at the site of Fort Dade, most of which is under the ownership of the Foundation. Portions of the fort extend onto the neighboring property of Jake Hunter, and Mr. Hunter has been most cooperative in letting the archaeologists from Gulf Archaeology Research Institute (GARI) do their work on his land. Board member Gary Ellis, the head of GARI, points out that it is slow, painstaking work. The remaining evidence of the fort is often so small and ephemeral that if one digs too fast, they'll miss it. Working from a National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program grant, the GARI team members have made numerous sample cores, shovel tests, and test pits, and have unearthed hundreds of small period artifacts, including nails, lead shot, fragments of smoking pipes, bits of glass, and pottery shards.



Traces of charcoal and nails in the dirt at an excavation pit at Fort Dade.

*Photo courtesy GARI*

The outlines of the fort are becoming evident as is the footprint of what is believed to be one of the blockhouses. The fort appears to be about 150' square, and the blockhouse about 25' square. The blockhouse is indicated by the presence of charcoal and nails from the burned timbers and what is known as "fort earth." This is a layer of clay that the soldiers who built the fort brought up from the river bed and pounded smooth to make a floor in the blockhouse. In most places it is only a few inches thick and can only be spotted by an experienced eye. The remains of the timbers are easier to spot, being obviously darker than the surrounding sand, but could still be easily missed if the excavations are not done carefully.

One of the things Gary and his team would like to find are signs of nearby friendly Creek Indian encampments and the areas where American troops set up their camps. Unfortunately, much of the area south of the fort has been greatly disturbed, but Gary still holds out hope that some data can be extracted from the soil. If nothing else, careful examination of the soil has revealed signs of the path of the old Fort King Road, and shows that it passed through the fort on its way to the bridge that crossed the Withlacoochee River.

Excavations are normally done on Thursdays, and if you would like to accompany the GARI team, please contact Gary at [gari.arch@gmail.com](mailto:gari.arch@gmail.com), or call him at 352-564-0888 (lab) or 352-464-4274 (cell).

## Renewal Notice

If you have received a renewal notice with this issue of the newsletter, it indicates that we have not received your renewal as of Oct. 2. Renewals were sent out with the July newsletter. If you believe you have already paid, please contact membership coordinator John Missall at 239-543-8831 or [membership@seminolewars.us](mailto:membership@seminolewars.us). Thank you for staying with us!

## New Board Members

As reported in the previous newsletter, elections were held at the July Board of Directors meeting and the following individuals have been added to the Board:



Tom Brady was born in the Bronx, NY, and moved with his family to Miami in 1948. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Design and Commercial Art in 1954 from the University of Florida, then spent two years in the Army, where he met his wife while stationed in France. Upon returning to civilian life he worked in the field of Industrial Design in Miami and traveled extensively. He moved to Micanopy in 1982 and became interested in local history, especially in the Seminole War era forts and the soldiers who occupied them. Since retiring in 2003, Tom has formed the Micanopy Regulars, a group of reenactors that gives talks at Elder hostels, schools, and the ROTC.



Roger Landers is a native of Tennessee who came to Florida in 1963. He is a retired educator who taught and served as an administrator in the Hernando County public school system, where he was an instructor in American History. Roger is an historian for the Hernando Heritage Museum and serves as Moderator for the Old Hernando Historic Roundtable.



Eunice Penix is a native of Dade City, Florida, where she received her high school education from Moore-Mickens High School. She continued her education at Bethune-Cookman College (now Bethune-Cookman University), earning a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education. She received her Masters Degree from Tampa University and taught in the school system for 39 years, and since retiring continues to serve as a substitute teacher.

She has served in the community on a number of boards, namely The Chamber of Commerce, Youth Alternative, Housing Authority, and as City Commissioner of Dade City for approximately 15 years. She is a Rotarian, a member of Alpha Pi Chi Sorority, and a devoted member of St. John Missionary Baptist Church.

## Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Accreditation

The Seminole Tribe of Florida is pleased to announce that the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum has earned national accreditation from the American Association of Museums (AAM).

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki (meaning "a place to learn") is the first tribally governed museum in the United States to receive official certification from the AAM. The four-year accreditation process evaluates a museum's ability to meet a national industry standard of excellence in all aspects of its responsibilities including governance, staffing, sustainability and stewardship of the collection entrusted to its care. Accreditation by AAM verifies that Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki has achieved a level of professional superiority on all these points.

"In the past, tribal museums had often been overlooked by the larger museum community. When the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and the Tribal Council first decided to pursue AAM accreditation, we agreed that we wanted to go through this rigorous process to break down that barrier - to prove to both the world and the members of our Tribe that our museum could stand alongside the most respected institutions in the country," said Tina Osceola, Executive Director of the museum.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum has the additional honor of being certified at the same time as the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). NMAI opened its doors in 2004 and is the largest national museum dedicated to the celebration of the diversity of today's native peoples and the preservation of their cultural legacies. (From the Seminole Tribe Press Release. The full Press Release can be read at <http://www.ahthiki.com/news.html>)

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

**Oct. 24 & 25, 2009:** Ft. Chokonikla Encampment, Payne's Creek State Park, Bowling Green. The event will have period encampments, historic demonstrations, food and vendors. Bowling Green is located south of Bartow on US17. Phone 863-375-4717 for more information.

**Nov. 6-8, 2009:** American Indian Arts Celebration, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, Big Cypress Indian Reservation. Phone 877-902-1113 for more information.

**Nov. 7 & 8, 2009:** Old Florida Festival, Naples. Vendors and demonstrators from all periods of Florida history, with an emphasis on the Seminole Wars. Phone 239-252-8242 for more information.

**Nov. 21 & 22, 2009:** Ft. Christmas Encampment. Period camps and demonstrations at a fully reconstructed Seminole War fort. The town of Christmas is located on SR50 between Orlando and the Kennedy Space Center. Phone 407-568-4149 for more information.

**Dec. 12 & 13, 2009:** Fort Foster Living History Event. A new event at a familiar venue. Besides a battle reenactment on Saturday and Sunday, there will also be a candlelight tour of the fort on Saturday night, with reenactors bringing holiday cheer to the Florida wilderness. Located north of Tampa on US301 at the Hillsboro River State Park. Call 813-987-6771 for more information.

**Jan. 2 & 3, 2010:** Annual Dade Battle Reenactment at the Dade Battlefield Historic State Park, Bushnell. The park is located approximately one-half hour north of Tampa off I-75. Phone 352-793-4781 for more information.

**Feb. 6 & 7, 2010:** Annual Reenactment of the Battle of Okeechobee, the largest battle of the Second Seminole War. The battle takes place at the future site of the Okeechobee Battlefield Historic State Park in Okeechobee. Go to [www.okeechobeebattlefield.com](http://www.okeechobeebattlefield.com) for more information.

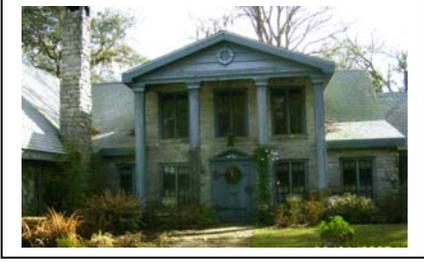
**Feb. 13 & 14, 2010:** Ft. Foster Rendezvous. Period vendors and a fully reconstructed fort make the setting more real. The fort is located north of Tampa on US301 at the Hillsboro River State Park. Call 813-987-6771 for more information.

**Feb. 27 & 28, 2010:** Big Cypress Shootout at the Big Cypress Indian Reservation. Located at Billy Swamp Safari, north of I-75, midway between Naples and Ft. Lauderdale. This is also a good chance to visit the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, located nearby. Call 800-949-6101 for more information.

**Mar. 20 & 21, 2010:** Ft. Cooper Days, Ft. Cooper State Park, Inverness. Watch a thrilling battle reenactment in one of Florida's loveliest parks. Phone 352-726-0315 for more information.

**April 3 & 4, 2010:** Ft. Christmas Encampment. Period camps and demonstrations at a fully reconstructed Seminole War fort. The town of Christmas is located on SR50 between Orlando and the Kennedy Space Center. Call 407-568-4149 for more information.

## Visit Your Foundation Library



During the past year, former Foundation president Dr. Jim Cusick has spent quite a few hours organizing the Foundation Library located at Headquarters in the Laumer estate outside Dade City. Jim is Curator of Special Collections at the Smathers Library of the University of Florida at Gainesville, so in effect he was taking a “busman’s holiday” to work on the Foundation collection. There are hundreds of books on American history in our collection in addition to works on the Seminole Wars. A large part of the books on our shelves came from the library of the late Dr. John K Mahon, one of our founders, a long-time history professor

at UF, and the author of “The History of the Second Seminole War.” He was also author of one of the most highly regarded histories of the War of 1812, and his interests (and thus his library) covered all aspects of American history. Come browse the shelves. Whether doing in-depth research or casual reading, you’re sure to find something of interest. Call Foundation Headquarters at 352-583-2711 for information.

**Correction:** In last quarter’s issue, we made mention of the work of FGCU students at excavations of Fort Shackelford on the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation. Also very instrumental in the execution and funding of the project were members of the Seminole Tribal Historic Preservation Office, most notably Paul Backhouse, Juan Cancel, Hope Hawkins, David Echeverry, and Bill Steele.

### Board of Directors

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### Editorial Box

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 [newsletter@seminolewars.us](mailto:newsletter@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: 352-583-2974. FAX: 352-583-3486. Web: [www.seminolewars.us](http://www.seminolewars.us)



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