



The Foundation Report

Seminole Wars Foundation, Inc.

Summer 2012

Remembering the Battle of Micanopy



Tom Brady (l.) and Jackson Walker (r.) unveil painting

On 9 June 1836, six months after the Dade Battle and the commencement of the Second Seminole War, the Micanopy area had its own encounter with the Seminole Indians. This year, on 9 June 2012, the Town of Micanopy commemorated the 176th anniversary of that particular event.

Approximately 75 U.S. Army Artillery soldiers and Dragoons attacked a force of 200 Seminoles who showed themselves three quarters of a mile southeast of Fort Micanopy. Post Commander Maj. Julius Heileman, ordered an envelopment by Dragoons under 1st Lt. Thompson Wheelock on the left and Capt. Richard Lee's Artillerymen on the right, followed by 1st Lt. Andrew Humphries and his detachment. After an hour and a half of heavy action, the Seminoles were forced back two miles into the Tusawilla Hammock. Capt. Lee and two enlisted men were badly wounded, one of whom later died, while the other had his arm amputated—but surprisingly re-enlisted and retired just prior to the Civil War. Maj. Heileman died of disease a few weeks after the battle, and Capt. Lee, a younger cousin of Gen. Robert E. Lee, resigned his commission and became a Col. in the Confederate Army. Lt. Humphries had a distinguished career and retired after the Civil War as Maj. Gen. and in command of the Engineer Corps.

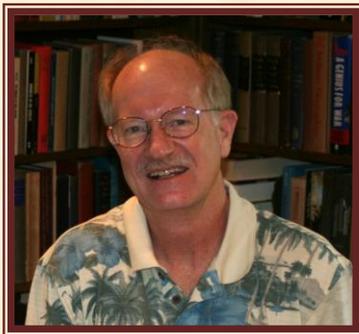
The all-day commemorative affair took place at the Thrasher Warehouse Community Center Complex in Micanopy under rain-threatening skies. Featured were vendors, period craftsmen, the UF Army ROTC Gator Guard Drill Team, the Historical Society, the Micanopy Regulars re-enactors, with the crucial support of fellow SWF members Jerry Morris with his traveling Army Rations program, and Steve Rinck in his uniform whites, meeting and greeting the guests in his best Irish brogue. Gary Ellis regaled all with his details of his archaeological discoveries of Fort Defiance and Fort Micanopy, followed by the dedication of Micanopy's Native American Heritage Park, and the unveiling of Jackson Walker's latest Seminole War oil painting masterpiece—the dramatic depiction of “the Battle of Micanopy.” To close out the program, John and Mary Lou Missall, after a busy afternoon selling publications, did a dramatized reading of the official battle report. Just under 200 guests attended the event in the hot and humid atmosphere of the open-sided rehabilitated warehouse. Thankfully, the rain held off until the event closed down, and a good day was had by all.

Article by Tom Brady



Board Member Tom Brady explains details of Jackson Walker's painting of the Battle of Micanopy

New President Takes Office



The annual elections were held at the July 21 Board of Directors meeting. Judge Richard Tombrink of Brooksville was elected to replace outgoing president Jackson Walker. All other officers retained their positions. Frank Laumer remains as Vice President, Dr. Sam Smith as Secretary, and Debbie Harper as Treasurer.

In other changes, Col. Joe Naftzinger (ret.) has been added to the Board, while Dr. Joe Knetsch and Jackson Walker have been moved to the Advisory Board.

The Board wishes to thank Jackson Walker for his excellent service both as President and as editor of the newsletter.

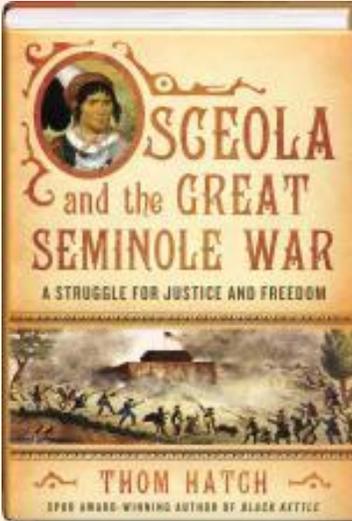
President's Message

I would like to take this opportunity to thank your Board of Directors for having the confidence in me to elect me as the president of this organization for the next year. I will strive to carry on the efforts and activities of the Seminole Wars Foundation at their direction. Due to my "day job" I plan to utilize a very delegated format of leadership, leaning heavily on the other officers, directors, and chairs. (Cont...)

(...cont.) Please remember that this organization is your, the members, organization, so please feel free to get involved and encourage new members to join. We have a very open approach to new efforts and ideas, so please don't hesitate to contact any officer or director with your thoughts, ideas, concerns, or even constructive criticism. Together we hope to carry forward the lofty and established goals and aspirations of the Foundation. Please join together with all of us and get involved. We look forward to seeing all of you at our next general membership meeting!

Richard Tombrink

Book Review



Osceola and the Great Seminole War: A Struggle for Justice and Freedom. By Thom Hatch. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2012. Acknowledgements, Introduction, Appendices, Notes, Bibliography, Index. 322 pgs. \$27.99 hardcover.)

The goal of the Seminole Wars Foundation is to promote interest in the Seminole Wars. *Osceola and the Great Seminole War*, written by Thom Hatch, published by St. Martin's and recommended by the History Book Club should further that cause. This book tells the story of the young (1804-1838) warrior who, without any official claim to leadership, inspired and led the violent Seminole resistance to the government's decree of Seminole removal to the west.

Hatch details Osceola's life and death in great detail. The details are the problem. The work is labeled "History" and described by the publisher as "meticulously researched". Perhaps so, but the evidence is not in the text. The errors of fact are many and, while not seriously affecting the outcome of Osceola's story, they do cast doubt on other stated "facts" as well as conclusions drawn from them.

For instance: While the Bibliography lists *Reminiscences of the Second Seminole War* by **Private** John Bemrose, he is referred to as a "contemporary army **officer**". Another source quoted is *Notices of Florida and the Campaigns* by Myer M. Cohen. Cohen's initials are given as "L.L." and he is described as an "historian". Cohen was in fact a lawyer who volunteered for service in Florida in February 1836 and upon his return to South Carolina less than three months later wrote of his adventures. His small book is considered a valuable reference but he made no pretense of being an historian. After the killing of Charley Emathla by Osceola, Hatch writes that "five hundred [Seminole] people fled to Ft. Brooke to seek protection . . .". He goes on to say, "The post commander, Captain Francis S. Belton . . . managed to . . . feed them until they could be transported to Tampa Bay for removal." Presumably Hatch was unaware that Ft. Brooke was on shore of Tampa Bay.

With reference to Dade's battle, the factual errors are many. To list a few:

Hatch refers to Dade's command marching "without flank guards or scouts". Two survivors of the battle, Pvt. Ransom Clark and the black interpreter, Louis Pacheco, both stated repeatedly that flank guards were out through the first five days of the march, being withdrawn only on the morning of the sixth day, the day of the attack.

The author states that Dade reached the Big Hillsborough River on Christmas morning. The record is clear that he reached the river on the afternoon of the 24th.

Hatch writes that "Osceola gave Alligator orders . . ." It seems unlikely that Osceola (or any other Indian), gave "orders" about this or other matters. Hatch goes on to say "[Osceola]. . . planned the ambush of Major Dade's party at a location ideal for a surprise attack. . ." Yet Alligator, who took part in the attack, later told Captain John T. Sprague that "It was our intention to attack them on the third night but the absence of Osceola and Micanopy prevented it. On the arrival of [Micanopy] it was agreed not to wait for Osceola. . ." In other words, the attack would come wherever the best opportunity presented itself, not at a location predetermined by Osceola. As to the source of the plan itself, it is likely that it was agreed upon by several leaders including Osceola, Micanopy, Alligator, Jumper and possibly Sam Jones. As with many other points given as fact, Hatch gives no source for his belief that the attack was planned solely by Osceola.

And once again Hatch endorses the calumny still charged against Pacheco, stating that the slave had been hired "to guide Dade's column." According to Capt. Belton at Ft. Brooke, writing soon after the command had marched, "I have just employed and sent an Interpreter [Pacheco] to the Detachment." Soon after the disaster Pacheco became "guide", providing the basis for the accusation that he had lead Dade to destruction.

There are more. If so many errors of fact can be identified, the reader might want to be careful of unverified conclusions drawn from misinformation. *Osceola* is a good story, but bad history.

Frank Laumer

Calendar of Events

October 20 & 21, 2012: Alligator Warrior Festival, O'Leno State Park, High Springs, www.alligatorfest.org

December 8, 2012: Candlelight Christmas at Ft. Foster, Hillsborough River State Park, Tampa, www.floridastateparks.org/hillsboroughriver/

January 5 & 6, 2013: Dade's Battle Reenactment, Dade Battlefield Historic State Park, Bushnell, www.dadebattlefield.com/

NEW EVENT! January 19, 2013: Battle of Loxahatchee, Loxahatchee Battlefield Park, Palm Beach County, www.loxahatcheebattlefield.com/

February 2 & 3, 2013: Battle of Okeechobee Reenactment, Okeechobee Battlefield Historic State Park, Okeechobee, www.okeechobeebattlefield.com/

February 9 & 10, 2013: Fort Foster Rendezvous, Hillsborough River State Park, Tampa, www.floridastateparks.org/hillsboroughriver/

February 23 & 24, 2013: Big Cypress Shootout, Billie Swamp Safari, Big Cypress Indian Reservation, www.bcshootout.com/

March 16 & 17, 2013: Fort Cooper Days, Fort Cooper State Park, Inverness, www.floridastateparks.org/fortcooper/

March 23 & 24, 2013: Fort Chokonikla Encampment, Payne's Creek Historic State Park, Bowling Green, www.floridastateparks.org/paynescreek/

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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., N. Ft. Myers, FL 33917; 239-543-8831; or 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: 352-583-2711. Web: www.seminolewars.us

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