# FORT FOSTER AND THE SECOND SEMINOLE WAR

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A THESIS

Submitted to
Adams State College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

M. A. in United States History

November 2015

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would not have been able to complete this work without the assistance, guidance and encouragement of several people. I would like to thank Dr. Loosbrock for spending a few hours at a Starbucks in Tampa to help introduce me to the process of writing the thesis and some ideas to explore. I appreciate Dr. Crowther's guidance, suggestions and always quick response to everything I sent his way. Sean from Hillsborough River State Park was a tremendous help and I appreciate the hours he spent guiding me through Fort Foster and access to the documents on hand. A special thanks to my colleagues Bill Scales for familiarizing me with the functions of Microsoft Word and Rich Lally for his willingness to listen and give good advice. I appreciate the efforts of my parents in instilling the value of hard work and their appreciation of education. I would not have been able to complete this undertaking without the encouragement of my wife Allison. She has been a constant inspiration and provided the time and resources so I could have the opportunity to explore Fort Foster and pursue my education.

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Introduction

## Fort Foster and Why It Matters

During the Seminole Wars in Florida, the United States Army constructed over 200 fortifications in its efforts to push the Seminoles South and force them into compliance with the Unites States Government's plan to remove them to the west.[1] The major tactic of General Thomas Jesup, the supreme commander in Florida, was the construction of numerous fortifications that supplied the troops with the materials required to wage a successful campaign. The fortifications throughout Florida served many practical purposes such as supply depots, hospitals, and staging centers in warfare against the Seminoles. Without the military presence and capabilities of the forts in Florida the United States Government would have been engaged in a longer and less effective campaign against the Seminoles.

The Second Seminole War should be understood as an insurgency. The Seminoles actions of rebellion in response to the orders of the United States to leave Florida resulted in the beginning of a new strategy of warfare, which ended the ability of the military to confront a standing army. Fort Foster represents the role that forts played in both the strategy and tactics of a counterinsurgency. By understanding the role Fort Foster played in the Second Seminole War the actual political and military functions of forts are observed. Examining the military tactics and documented records reveal the public perceptions of wars in the nation's history.

Fort Foster was a Second Seminole War fort constructed at General Thomas Jesup's order to protect the Hillsborough River crossing (see Appendix B). The role Fort Foster and its predecessor Fort Alabama played in the Second Seminole War was typical of many forts of the period. The history of Fort Foster provides a perspective of the significance of forts and their functions in the Second Seminole War. Fort Foster and many other Seminole War forts helped protect transportation routes and established a military presence amongst the Seminoles.

Presaging the important roles played by the more storied forts of the American west after the Civil War, Fort Foster was an essential part of the limited success the American military had during the Second Seminole War. Frontier Forts are commemorated for their ability to provide safety, facilitate westward expansion and foster cultural blending.[2] Fort Foster and other Seminole War forts are not celebrated for the role they played in the Second Seminole War for numerous reasons: the war was unpopular because the United States never was able to claim victory, it is remembered as a stain on the country's past, and most would prefer to forget it.

The defensive fortification protected a geographically important location. The Hillsborough River crossing was one of four river crossings on the Fort King Road and each of the bridges came under attack from the Seminoles. Protecting the bridges at Fort Foster, and other fortifications along the Fort King road was key in allowing effective troop movement to the center of the state. The Fort King Road connected the army's major supply distribution site on Florida's west coast at Fort Brooke with the Indian Agency located near the earliest established reservation at Fort King. The Fort King Road was utilized to move food, weapons, tools, troops and building supplies to the interior of Florida.[3]

Fort Foster and many other forts in central Florida housed large amounts of rations and ammunition. This allowed forces to stay in the field for longer periods of time to engage the enemy. Two major offensive forces passed through Fort Foster. The first was led by General Edmund Gaines in February of 1836 and the later was led by General Jesup through the winter of 1836 through 1837.[4]

The ability to move tools and building supplies helped the army to continue its military buildup through Florida. The heavy majority of forts were concentrated in the interior from Gainesville south to Fort Myers.[5] Colonel William Foster and his unit began the construction of

Fort Foster on the bank of the Hillsborough River at the first river crossing on the Fort king Road. Prior to the completion of the project, the Colonel Foster's unit proceeded to the Withlacoochee and commenced construction on Fort Dade. Fort Foster was completed and began its role in the Second Seminole War shortly after Colonel Foster departed the post. Military buildup in central Florida continued with the construction six defensive posts essential to the counterinsurgency. Fort Dade, Fort Cooper, Fort Drane, Fort Clinch, Fort Izard, and Fort King were all constructed and resupplied through Fort Foster.[6]

Primarily a command and logistical post, Fort Foster nonetheless experienced ferocious Seminole attacks during the Second Seminole War. In this regard, Fort Foster and the myriad of army posts in Florida endured frequent assaults throughout the campaign to pacify the Seminoles. Camp Izard in Marion County was a hastily constructed fort that was attacked. Fort Clinch in Levy County was attacked and burnt by the Seminoles. Fort Cooper in Citrus County was under attack for thirteen days then later abandoned. Fort Foster was no exception as it faced numerous Seminole attacks and attempts to burn the bridge of the Fort King Road spanning the Hillsborough River.[7]

The examination of the role Fort Foster played in the Second Seminole War portrays the value and importance of military forts in counterinsurgency situations. A military presence destabilizes the insurgencies ability to operate. The fort acts as a visual representation of the counterinsurgencies ability to operate in the Seminoles territory. The fort is able to provide supplies and troops to continuously antagonize the enemy. The permit structure sends a message that the counterinsurgency force is committed to obtaining a long term solution and is capable of taking actions through force. The fort is symbolically announcing the presence of the counterinsurgency and offering hope to the population that has been under the control of the

insurgency's leadership. The fort is tremendously useful in psychological and physical warfare. The United States Army has utilized the knowledge of the Second Seminole War to write counterinsurgency tactics utilized in modern conflicts such as Afghanistan and Iraq. Examining the actions and results of the Second Seminole War has shaped the way the military has developed policy pertaining to counterinsurgency.[8]

While the Seminole Wars have receded from public memory and its military history has become mostly the province of academic and military historians, Fort Foster has an ongoing history. The study of Fort Foster and its role as a Seminole War Fort has been enhanced by the steps taken by the state of Florida. Only three structures from the Second Seminole War currently remain. They include a barracks from Fort Dallas, the reconstructed Fort Christmas and the reconstructed Fort Foster. Only Fort Foster remains at its original location and the surroundings closely resemble what a person would have seen at the time. The Historic site of Fort Foster also contained a large amount of archeological items recovered from the time period. Once the archeological remains of the fort were compared to maps created by men stationed at Fort Foster it became unmistakable that it was the exact location of the fort. During the 1970's the state of Florida undertook the reconstruction of Fort Foster. The state reconstructed the fort, the bridge and built a small museum to display some of the many objects found at the site.[9]

Fort Foster depicts the necessity of Second Seminole War forts. The role the forts served allowed the United States the ability of having any success in engaging and capturing the Seminole forces. The forts played a vital role in protecting the transport of troops, tools, rations and ammunition to the interior. Many forts protected geographically important locations and displayed American power by creating impressive defensive structures throughout Florida. The reconstruction of forts in Florida allows people to study and understand the importance of

frontier military forts, counterinsurgency movements, and cultural interactions of the American past.

The Second Seminole War was the longest Indian war totaling seven years. By the end of the conflict eighty percent of the American population opposed the war.[10] The brutal tactics sickened the American public and many started to feel the Seminoles deserved to remain in the land they fought so hard to maintain.

Many of the men who served in the Second Seminole War would later see action in the Mexican American War such as General Winfield Scott and General Zachary Taylor. Several men went on to fight in the Civil War, including the notable officers William Sherman, George Meade and Braxton Bragg.[11]

The war forced the army to develop a guerrilla style of warfare that was later utilized in international conflicts. The navy and army worked closely together, more so than any previous conflict, to fulfill missions and transport supplies.[12]

Prior to the Second Seminole War Florida was a land of unknown terrain, but through the military operations and letters the men sent home, Florida became a place more familiar to the American people. The population of Florida grew throughout the war and continued to grow once the war concluded. In 1830 the recorded population in Florida was 34,730.[13] By 1850 the population in Florida more than doubled reaching 87,445 citizens, and by the time the Seminole Wars no longer threatened citizens, the population grew to 391,422 in 1890.[14] The influx of population helped make Florida a state only three years after the end of the war.

The archeological site Fort Foster is located directly adjacent to state owned land and across from highway 301. The land Fort Foster occupied belonged to the Thomas family who was utilizing the majority of their property as a ranch. In the early 1970's the Thomas family

went through the process of having a portion of their property, and ultimately Fort Foster, added to the list of the National Register of Historic Places.[15] An archeological survey was conducted in 1971 and the report positively portrayed Fort Foster. The Thomas family was successful in its attempt to have the site added to the National Register of Historical Places and within a short period of time the family sold the land containing the historical post to the State of Florida. On December 28, 1973 Robert Thomas signed the property deed over to the State of Florida.[16] Once the State Park System acquired Fort Foster, the inspection and protection of the resource were the first priorities.

The first task of the park service was to survey and photograph the site. Daniel Penton was hired and sent to photograph the military structures and areas of geographical importance.[17] A historical inspection of the site revealed the location of the fort in regards to the river. The flora on the site was typical of the region:

> the vegetation on the site includes pine, cypress, live oak and other hardwoods and scrub palmetto. The area on the north bank of the Hillsborough River, facing the site of Fort Foster, exhibits typical hammock vegetation. The overstory of the pines and hardwoods on the site has effectively reduced the understory growth, producing an environmental setting very similar to the original situation.[18]

The landscape was later noted to enhance both the aesthetic and historical value of the site. The physical remains of the two bridges are still observable as is the Fort King Road.

As archeologists surveyed the fort, they noted that very little human-caused disturbance of the fort had occurred since its abandonment in the middle of the nineteenth century.[19] Upon the conclusion of the archeological survey, a representative of the United States Department of the Interior recorded that Fort Foster is probably one of the best extant examples of a Second Seminole War post.[20] The site was archeologically well documented and offered a rich variety of materials recovered in the fort, in the Hillsborough River, and in the surrounding area. "The

combination of research and archeological excavations should result in a vivid picture of life at a frontier fort during the Second Seminole War."[21]

A wealth of archeological remains have been discovered around the fort. Some of the items include: buttons, kaolin pipes, leather shoes, bone toothbrushes, eye glasses, harness hardware, spurs, pocket knives and tools.[22] The archeological artifacts, in addition to the remains of two bridges, leave little doubt that the location is in fact Fort Foster. When the data is compared to the Randolph map of 1843 it becomes clear that the fort is in the same location (see Appendix A).

The Fort Foster site was designated as an item of interest to be reconstructed in 1976 as part of the State of Florida's Bicentennial celebration.[23] The reconstruction of Fort Foster included two blockhouses, a magazine house, a storehouse and the erection of a twelve to fourteen foot high palisade wall that surrounded all the buildings.[24] Every effort to reconstruct the fort as accurately as possible was taken, but on few occasions alterations were needed. The men under Colonel Foster used southern longleaf yellow pine. No trees in the area met the specifications for reconstruction, so trees were purchased from the Tallahassee area.[25] The same techniques and technologies utilized in the original construction were used by the reconstruction crew to create the most authentic results possible. The fort was fully reconstructed and opened to the public on February 1, 1980.[26]

Fort Foster has remained open to the public since February 1, 1980. An estimated seventy-eight people visit Fort Foster each weekend.[27] The park office has been converted into a small, yet very informative museum. The museum helps educate the visitor on the history of the Seminole Wars and posts constructed within Florida. The museum has an interesting collection of archeological artifacts on display ranging from plates to bayonets. The artifacts on display

help the viewer get an idea of what life at the fort would have been like on a daily basis. Numerous pipes found suggest that the men enjoyed a smoke and were able to acquire tobacco.[28] It would appear that dishes were used by some of the men because three pieces of different style plates have been found.[29] Rifles and bayonets are presented in the next display case.[30] The small museum and the artifacts it displays gives the visitor a view of the daily lives of the men at Fort Foster and their military duties. The tour continues as the visitors walk past a collection of the original beams from the 1836 constructed bridge that spanned the Hillsborough River. The park staff then proceeds to Fort Foster, the visitors enter the stockade through the main gates then proceed to view the blockhouses, storehouse and the tour concludes at the bridge.

In addition to the tour, the Hillsborough River Park staff provides educational opportunities to Tampa Bay area schools the second week of February. During the second week of February, Fort Foster is staffed by time period craftsmen who provide students with live demonstrations of common tasks and jobs of the people who were stationed at Fort Foster. Demonstrations range from candle making to the firing of the six pound cannon.

Interpretation of the fort is presented through a neutral viewpoint, especially on the ethical dimensions of the Second Seminole War, which is enhanced by presenting facts and allowing the guest to arrive at their own conclusions.[31] The fort hosts two reenactments of historical skirmishes each year. The reenactments allow park guest to get a realistic sense of warfare during the Second Seminole War; both white reenactors and current members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida have participated in Seminole War reenactments at Fort Foster.

Hillsborough River State Park offers guests the ability to experience one of only three remaining structures from the Second Seminole War in Florida. Despite the importance of the fort during the Second Seminole War and the historical accuracy, the reconstructed Fort Foster

has remained a relatively unknown historical resource throughout Florida and the Tampa Bay area. After the 1850's the fort faded into obscurity until the 1970's. The designation as a historical landmark and the ultimate reconstruction in 1980 brought the fort to the attention of thorough *Tampa Tribune* readers. Only a slim collection of journal entries and a handful of newspaper articles highlight the existence of Fort Foster, the most recent entry coming as late at 1994.

Fort Foster is an excellent example for study of a typical Seminole War fort. Forts were first used as a military post in Europe in the eighteenth century as a way to impede the advance of an invading army.[32] The use of the military forts has been adapted by the Americans prior to the Revolutionary War. Indian War era forts in the United States have been held in high esteem and are celebrated throughout the western United States. Many frontier forts of the Indian War era have been reconstructed and commemorated for the success they gained in America's expansion. Seminole War forts are part of the same time period and played a vital role in opening settlement opportunities in Florida, but do not receive the same recognition. Seminole War forts differ to frontier forts of the American West: in their construction, the functions the forts served, and their place in American memory.[33]

In the Seminole Wars, the army constructed most of the defensive structures from tall and straight growing pine trees, which were abundant in the area.[34] Florida was an environment that offered the bounty of dense wooded hammocks, dry areas of densely wooded land, in most locations. The army took advantage of the lumber resources in the construction of planned forts, and quickly assembled defensive structures that offered protection on several occasions. Frontier forts of the American West were composed of a variety of materials. Frontier Fort Larned of Kansas was constructed using sandstone. Fort Union in Northern New Mexico was originally

constructed using logs, but due to the weather, the structure was torn down and replaced by adobe buildings in 1862.[35]

The materials of construction were not the only difference between the forts because the defensive abilities also differed. Seminole War forts were surrounded by a picket constructed of logs usually fifteen to twenty feet high. Two blockhouses were usually built to minimize the number of troops required to defend the fort. The blockhouses were constructed at opposite corners of the fort to allow adequate flanking fire.[36] Many of the frontier forts in the American West did not have a stockade, as attacks on the forts were unusual. Fort Smith constructed in 1817 in Arkansas marked the transition of walled forts to open forts.[37] In the rare occasion that the western frontier fort did come under attack, people could take up defensive positions within the structure.

Both types of forts were necessary to supply commodities to groups nearby, thus they usually contained storehouses. Seminole War forts used the storehouses to hold items vital to the war such as additional rations, weapons and tools. Frontier forts used the storehouses to supply rations to accommodate travelers and weapons to provide safety, but also possessed large amounts of goods to facilitate trade with Native American groups.[38]

Construction materials and defensive features of the forts were evidence of the different functions of Seminole War forts and frontier forts of the American West. The Seminole War forts were a tactic used to establish a formal military presence in an area the Seminoles operated. The forts were able to house and outfit troops, supply offensive missions to the interior, and serve as a military hospital when needed. Fort Brooke, a Seminole War fort located at Tampa Bay, sent troops to the interior of Florida continuously from the start of the Second Seminole

War until the conclusion of the Third Seminole War. Fort Foster equipped troops that were victorious in battle at Hatchee-Lustee, near present-day Disney World.

The Seminole War forts often came under attack. The military function of equipping and dispatching troops was quickly realized by the Seminoles, and the forts became targets. Fort Cooper, located in Citrus County, was under attack for thirteen consecutive days and was able to repel the Seminoles. Fort Clinch of Levy County was attacked and put under siege for a month, then abandoned and burnt by the Seminoles on April 11, 1826.[39]

Treaties were arranged and peace talks often occurred at Seminole War forts. Deceit and trickery became a weapon of choice when a compromise could not be reached. Military forts were used to capture Seminole Chiefs under white flags of truce. The forts were used as a temporary prison, holding Seminoles that would later be transferred to the west. Fort Lauderdale accepted the surrender of forty-four Seminoles and held them until transport was arranged. Fort Brooke was the major port on the western coast of Florida, where Seminoles were gathered and shipped west.

Western Frontier forts, especially in Texas, were utilized to establish authority in the region. General Worth and General Brooke both served in the Second Seminole War. Once in Texas, they constructed Fort McIntosh and Fort Duncan as a method to establish military strength.[40] The fort construction continued, and by 1849 a string of twelve forts was established that created a southwestward line to the Mexican border.[41]

Beyond Texas, frontier forts were scattered throughout the west. Territorial acquisition succeeded by emigration and settlement brought whites increasingly into confrontation with Indians, and raised the need for military posts in settled areas.[42] Many of the western forts were established to help ensure safe passage to people traveling west, most often on the Oregon and

Santa Fe Trails. Like the Seminole War forts, frontier forts became locations to sign treaties with Native Americans, such as Fort Laramie with the treaty of 1866.[43] Frontier forts became a framework for army deployment, which created a way to supply and move troops to areas of uprisings.

The cry for additional fort construction was common amongst all Indian War era locations. The cost and inability to man the fortifications was a constant struggle. Lieutenant General William Sherman, commanding the division of the Missouri said: "Were I or the department commanders to send guards to every point where they are clamored for, we would need alone on the plains a hundred thousand men..."[44]

Fortifications during the Indian Wars played a pivotal role in the expansion and settlement of the country. Frontier forts have been positively remembered as places that offered protection to settlers and travelers. The frontier forts were places of trade and cultural blending that can be celebrated today in the current social climate. In comparison, the Seminole War forts are not as celebrated. Perhaps the negative association of the forts was due to the fact they were locations of skirmishes and places of entrapment and death. This deters the ability or desire to celebrate the past. The most obvious reason to neglect the Seminole War forts is the desire of the American public to erase the war from our past. The Seminole Wars were a stain on the country at the time they were fought and the tactics and moral reasoning allowed the wars to continue far beyond the desire of the American public. The inability to admit a moral lapse in reasoning and fear of destroying the country's pride led to the virtual eradication of the Seminoles in Florida. The Seminole War forts are objects that remind us that the decisions of our political leaders were not perfect and American history contains shameful acts. The forts of the Seminole Wars are

important reminders that we must learn from our past so we can prevent the victimization of other cultures in the future.

Seminole War forts offer great opportunities to learn from the past and the American military has taken full advantage of studying the counterinsurgency. Until 2006, the Second Seminole War was used as a guide in reviewing the operational environment, the nature of anticipated operations, and national and multinational strategic direction.[45] An insurgency is described as a method of using violence to achieve political goals.[46] A counterinsurgency involves all political, economic, military, paramilitary, psychological, and civic actions that can be taken by a government to defeat an insurgency.[47] Avoiding creation of new insurgents and forcing existing insurgents to end their participation is vital to defeating an insurgency. The Army has developed an action plan to rationally and successfully deal with counterinsurgencies. This is accomplished by studying the actions of officers and the geography of the Second Seminole War.

According to Colonel Matthew Moten it is imperative to have focused objectives in a counterinsurgency because "war carries you away from the original goal you were fighting for."[48] Army doctrine indicates that conditions for a self-stabilizing long term peace is the main goal of a counterinsurgency.[49] The goal should be to achieve a set of conditions that at some point will allow withdraw of the elements of United States power and leave things on a self-sustaining course. The goal of the Second Seminole War was to move every Indian from Florida territory to Arkansas, a task that proved to be impossible.

Studying the history of the Second Seminole War provided the army with an opportunity to study the leadership of tactical and operational command. Seven commanders served as head of the operations during the Second Seminole war and three of them asked to be relieved of their

duty. In October of 2013, the United States Army Combat Studies Institute published a study of leadership using Dade's Battle in December of 1835 as an example.[50] The leaders of the Second Seminole Wars used a paradigm heavily influenced by the Napoleonic Wars. That method of thinking exposed flaws in their concepts of operations and operational design.[51] The study exposed the inabilities to understand the environment, to anticipate and adopt to uncertainty, to recognize change, and to lead transitional operations. It became evident that the military lacked senior officers who were willing to think creatively and critically.

The Seminoles became a formative foe and relied on their strengths to prolong the war. The strengths displayed by the Seminoles included being indigenous to the territory, their knowledge of the geography, established intelligence networks, and motivation to stay in Florida. These strengths led to altered battle tactics that allowed the Seminoles to operate without encountering heavy losses, as well as their ability to endure hardships. In contrast, the white forces were unfamiliar with the geography of Florida and were hampered by the hot summer and the sickness it brought. The vulnerabilities of the Seminoles included limited personnel, resources, and technology that led to insufficient combat power.

The Army's studies on the Second Seminole War have led to some important guidelines for successful counterinsurgency operations. For example, Robert Thompson suggests that the government must secure the base area before conducting a military campaign.[52] Jesup used this strategy once he was appointed to command in Florida. Not only did he establish his command in a centralized and well-fortified location, but he built up the surrounding area with forts to supply the interior and central command. According to Charles Callwell, other tactics necessary for a successful counterinsurgency include a succession of blows to paralyze the enemy, matching the enemies' mobility and inventiveness, and seizing what the enemy prizes most.

Those tactics were imposed by Worth as he campaigned during the summer months to increase the frequency of battles. He also employed the use of boats to engage the enemy deep into the Everglades. He encouraged troops to seize women and children when the opportunity presented itself, thus hoping to destroy the will of the Seminole warriors in efforts to end the war.

The Second Seminole War played a valuable role in the establishment of army doctrine. This led to the United States counterinsurgency policy, which was developed by studying the decisions of leaders and the geography that affected the Second Seminole War. The army's plan to destroy the insurgent force and their complexes resulted in the ideology requiring the: expansion of the control area, isolation of guerrillas from support, demonstration of government support for people in the area, and the harassment of the insurgents to prevent buildup of personnel and resources.[53]

The army did not build Fort Foster to inform subsequent tactical doctrine any more than the "rediscovery" of the Fort in the 1930s reflected an attempt to explain the history of the Second Seminole War or elucidate the role of the United States Army forts in the 19th Century. Rather, Fort Foster and the War were products of historical contingency— history being lived forward. It is evident that the material existence of the Fort and its actual reconstruction has provided a basis for examining the past and illustrating the importance of operational details in the complex matrix of United States history as well as the history of First Nation's peoples.

Chapter One

## History of the Seminoles and the Start of Conflict

On June 13, 1842, David Levy, the delegate from the territory of Florida, addressed the House of Representatives of the United States. He said, "Sir the sympathies of the public have been enlisted by supposition that these Indians were about to be torn unwillingly from the hunting grounds of their ancestors, and the graves of past generations of their people. Nothing can be more mistaken. No part of the Indians found in Florida at its cession were aborigines of that peninsula; and most of them were very recent refugees and stragglers from other parts.... Thus it will be seen, sir, that whatever of sympathy has been excited in behalf of the Seminoles upon the score of their attachment to the land of their fathers is altogether misplaced."[1]

Levy's point mattered because the Seminoles were not, in fact, indigenous to Florida. The Seminoles' migration and their subsequent wars with the United States illustrated the fluidity and contingency of Native American, Colonial, and Early National United States histories from the Eighteenth to the Mid-Nineteenth century. Prior to the arrival of the Seminoles in Florida, the land was populated by indigenous groups such as the Apalachees, Calusas and Timucuans.[2] These tribes were virtually extinct by the time the Creek Confederacy interacted in the area known as Florida. As early as 1704, the Governor of South Carolina, James Moore, commanded 50 colonial soldiers and 1,000 Lower Creeks in an invasion of the Apalachee area.[3] The war party caused considerable damage to Spanish missions, capturing 300 Apalachee men and 1,000 women and children.[4] As word of the success of James Moore's raid spread, groups of whites, Yamassees, and Lower Creeks moved south to raid Florida's defenseless indigenous villages. By 1705, thirty-two towns had been destroyed by raiders from the north.[5] In a report of 1709, Nairne informed the Earl of Sunderland "that all in quest of booty are obliged to go down as far as the point of Florida as firm land will permit..."[6] In addition to this increased travel, infectious

diseases such as smallpox, measles, bubonic plague, influenza, and yellow fever that were introduced by the Europeans possibly reduced the population by half, if not more.[7] The vacancy of aboriginal Native American habitation in Florida created a unique environment that was capable of supporting settlements and opened human migration with little or no threat of conflict.

As the tribes of Florida were being decimated, the neighboring Creek Confederation was thriving. The Confederacy controlled sixty towns and a population of over twenty thousand people living throughout Georgia and Alabama.[8] The Confederacy was classified into two divisions by English traders: the Upper Creeks and the Lower Creeks. This latter group of Muskogean speakers would expand into Florida and fill the void. The repopulation of Florida was a byproduct of the struggle for Spanish territorial gain as well as an aspect of Creek expansionism.[9] After Queen Anne's War, the Spaniards felt the need for a buffer of natives to replace Florida's aboriginal tribes. The Spanish governor sent numerous expeditions to Creek country to encourage bands to relocate to Florida. All Creek bands that relocated to Florida soon went by the term "Seminoles." The term Seminole itself is a corruption of the Spanish term Cimarron meaning runaway or wild one.

The migration of the Seminoles into the Florida territory occurred in three stages. Between 1702 and 1740 the Seminoles conducted raids against the Spaniards.[10] Through their actions they acquired much knowledge of the Florida terrain but made no significant settlements in Florida during this time period. Between 1740 and 1812, six Seminole villages were established in Florida. Small parties explored the entire peninsula in search of deer, bear, and other game. These expeditions occasionally resulted in contact with Cuban fishermen.[11] The third stage came between 1812 and 1820, when pressures in Alabama and Georgia forced many Upper and Lower Creeks to move into Florida.[12]

Evidence for this migration comes from a welter of sources, including famed traveler, William Bartram. According to Bartram, Chief Cowkeeper's band of Creeks had settled along the Oconee River in Georgia. Due to the proximity of white settlements they migrated south into Spanish-held Florida. Upon observing the plains and the lake at Paynes Prairie Cowkeeper's band built their town. Eventually the smell of decaying fish and swarms of mosquitos caused Cowkeeper and his people to move to Cuscowilla, located near the present day town of Micanopy.[13] The tribe became well established there by 1750 and Cuscowilla became the nucleus of the main Seminole tribe of the Alachua band.[14] By 1755, Tonaby's Town had been established at present-day Tallahassee and Newtown was established at Lake Miccosukee. In 1767, a band of Upper Creeks from the town of Eufaula on the Chattahoochee River settled northeast of Tampa Bay and established a center known as Chocachatti, in what is now Hernando County.[15] Over time other Muskogee-speaking Indians formed towns in the general vicinity of Tampa Bay.[16]

Bartram suggested that Creek migration was due to the over-cultivation of corn and beans which caused soil exhaustion. This was a common issue which often forced tribes to relocate. The presence of hostile tribes such as the Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Choctaw caused competition for fertile land and it could have forced the Lower Creeks to migrate to Florida where they found an abundance of deer and bison. Large herds of wild cattle from abandoned Spanish ranches were also prevalent in the region.[17]

During the early years of the Seminoles' arrival, the tribe was considered a part of the Creek Confederacy and maintained political ties with their counterparts in Alabama and Georgia.[18] As time continued, communication became more erratic and political ties began to sever. Eventually, all political ties between the Seminoles and the Creeks fully eroded.

Following the Seminoles' arrival, the Treaty of Paris in 1763 was a major event that altered territorial possession in the region. The treaty transferred Florida from Spanish rule, under which the Seminoles lived almost an independent existence, to British rule. Under British rule, the Seminoles encountered the need for treaties to be signed, observance of set prices for furs, and regulation of trade. After the signing of the Treaty of Paris, treaty negotiations with the Seminoles quickly followed in 1765. At the conference at Picolata, a boundary was established which white people could not settle beyond, thus protecting the land of Seminoles. As a result of the Treaty of Picolata, the Lower Creeks gave up two million acres of land in northeast Florida.[19] The treaty was signed mostly by Lower Creeks living in Georgia whom the English believed controlled the land and people in Florida, thus creating disputes over who controlled the Florida territory.

In the midst of signing treaties, the Creeks found their new homeland in Florida to be a source of bounty, but in time, they realized it was a land full of people who meddled in their affairs. The first conflict between the Seminoles and the United States occurred in 1799 as a result of the signing of the Treaty of San Lorenzo. Seminoles and Lower Creeks encountered a surveying team that was establishing a border between Spanish Florida and the United States. The Seminoles and Lower Creeks stole many articles and horses from the surveyors' camp and the next night the Seminoles stole more horses from a corral and robbed a schooner's crew of all its possessions.[20] Similar minor conflicts continued throughout the 1790's on the Florida-Georgia line. Cattle grazing and white invasion on Seminole hunting grounds caused conflicts to develop. Seminoles responded by breaking into Robert Seagrove's store near Colerain, Georgia, and killing two whites.[21] In retaliation, Creeks from the United States side of the river went to Florida and stole all of the horses, cattle, and slaves they could manage.[22]

African Americans who sojourned among the Seminoles constituted a threat to the institution of slavery north of the Spanish border. Settlers in Georgia and Mississippi constantly accused the Indians of stealing Negroes, and the Indians complained of white slave raids.[23] These continued slave raids were viewed as a challenge that threatened the economic prosperity of the United States. To Georgians and Mississippians, as to the majority of frontiersmen, the only good Indian was a dead one.[24]

Conflict continued in 1803 when the United States captured and expelled former loyalist William Augustus Bowles from Florida. The United States wanted Bowles out of Florida for two reasons: he had opposed Creek land cessions and he planned to seize American Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins to try him under the laws of the state of Muskogee.[25] Bowles had won favor of the Seminoles by establishing a free port from which peaceful trade and raids were launched that benefited the tribe. Due to the destructive raids of Bowles, the Wakulla stores had accumulated debts. To repay those debts, Creek and Seminole leaders ceded 1 million acres of land between the Apalachicola and Wakulla rivers.[26]

By 1810 Edmund Doyle, the principle agent of John Forbes and Company, forced the Seminoles into the surrender of three tracks of land in order to repay $19,387 of debt accrued by the Seminoles.[27] This time, the company attempted to get as many chiefs to sign the agreement as possible, leaving less room for dispute.

Strife ensued in 1812 with the Patriot War, an effort of George Mathews to claim Spanish territory in East Florida for the United States. The mission was backed by President Madison and called for the utilization of troops from Georgia and the United States Navy. After a quick realization that Spanish Governor Juan de Estrada would not surrender the territory quietly,

Mathews turned to the blacks and the Seminoles of the territory for military assistance. Both the blacks and the Seminoles had no interest in helping the white invaders overthrow Spanish rule.

Seminole leader Bowlegs led the tribe into war against the white insurgency because he felt they threatened the deerskin trade, which had become the primary method to acquire finished products.[28] The Indians competed to expand their hunting territories far beyond traditional boundaries in their efforts to acquire more deerskins to facilitate trade. As the tribes expanded into Florida, the deerskin trade flourished and accounted for eighty-eight percent of the total produce exported from Florida before the Revolutionary War.[29] In the southeast, Native American groups such as the Creeks and Seminoles owned the land equally and were able to communally use the hunting territory.[30] The Seminoles sought to acquire goods including metal cooking pots, cloth, weapons and ammunition. Bowlegs realized that white settlement would reduce the hunting area and would lead to conflict. Seminole warriors were eager to repel the insurgency to protect their livelihood. The Spanish Governor had issued a reward of a thousand dollars for the scalp of McIntosh, the political leader of the force, and ten dollars for the scalps of each of his followers, which further encouraged Seminole involvement.[31] The Seminoles proved to be a formidable opponent, killing eight white settlers, carrying off eighty slaves, and driving numerous cattle from plantations.[32] The Seminoles continuously molested the Patriot Army and helped force the army's withdraw from Florida.

The last major migration of Indians into Florida occurred as a result of the Creek War in Alabama Territory in 1813. The Creek War began as a civil war between Upper and Lower Creeks and destroyed the Creek Confederacy. As a result of successful battles at Horseshoe Bend, Andrew Jackson, a Tennessee militia leader, won a commission to the regular army and started his ascent to the presidency. Jackson killed no less than eight hundred Creeks in the Red

Stick War and then proceeded to hold the Creeks to a treaty he imposed upon them, which forced them to surrender two-thirds of their land.[33] Numbers of Red Sticks chose to migrate south into Florida, allowing them to avoid the terms of Jackson's treaty. The Creek warriors were more willing to fight amongst themselves than to unite against the white advance.[34] The Creeks were poorly armed and at the mercy of inadequate leadership, resulting in the choice to flee rather than to stay and fight. With the latest migration of Red Sticks into Florida, the number of Indians living in Florida rose to five thousand.

As word spread through the country of the Seminole attacks, the Tennessee militia, under the command of Colonel John Williams, was moved to action. By 1813 the Tennessee militia had engaged the Seminoles in the town of present-day Micanopy. The troops moved to kill as many Seminoles as possible, and in the process, destroyed their fields and homes. Over the course of three weeks, the soldiers had captured three hundred horses, four hundred head of cattle, nine Seminoles and blacks. They also destroyed three hundred eighty-six houses, consumed fifteen hundred bushels of corn, and killed twenty Seminoles.[35] This destruction forced Bowlegs to move his band to Old Town on the Suwannee River, resulting in conflict with the Lake Miccosukee people.

In 1814, a large force of Seminoles, trained by British officers and deployed to New Orleans, participated in the battle that ended in an overwhelming defeat of the British by Andrew Jackson. The next year, British troops were withdrawn as a result of the treaty of Ghent. The absence of British troops resulted in diminished trade opportunities and an absence of British gifts.

General Edmund Gaines sought to make a show of force along the boundary of Alabama and Georgia by marching one thousand troops to the newly acquired territory. The American

military's threat led to the Treaty of Fort Jackson.[36] A hostile force gathered at the confluence of the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers, but when the Creeks saw the large number of troops, they dispersed. A large Creek force gathered as Fort Gaines was constructed. The force arose when the government failed to furnish the food supplies promised in the Treaty of Fort Jackson. Fort Gaines was established to provide a defensive outpost to monitor the actions of the blacks, who took possession of the British fort at Prospect Bluff. By 1816 the effective stronghold became known as the Negro Fort by boarder folk.[37]

After Gaines spent time talking with the Indians in the area, he decided not to attack them because they were too weak to oppose his force. A short time later, two of General Clinch's men were killed, and thirty head of cattle were stolen.[38] The new American plan of action was to ship supplies up the Apalachicola River, and if the Negro Fort at Prospect Bluff impeded, then it would be destroyed. This would provide an excuse to wipeout the stronghold, which was a center of hostility to Americans, and above all a threat to the security of their slaves. In 1816, as the force approached the fort, it was attacked. A lucky return shot from one of the gun boats landed in the fort's powder magazine and killed most of the three hundred people in the fort.[39] These losses weakened the Seminoles.

After a year passed, more border incidences occurred. The Mikasukis chief, Neamathla from Fowltown, warned General Gaines that if the Americans tried to cross the Flint River, they would be destroyed.[40] At the same time they became neighbors with Alachuas and entered into a semi-alliance, thus creating a larger Seminole force.

General Gaines was outraged by Neamathla's proclamation. He then sent two hundred fifty men under Major David Twiggs to arrest Neamathla and bring in the important men of his

band.[41] As a result of the order, a gunfight ensued on November 21, 1817, inaugurating the First Seminole War.

Chapter Two

## The First Seminole War

In retaliation to the attack on the Negro Fort, Indians attacked a party of forty under command of Lieutenant R.W. Scott. His forces were traveling up the Apalachicola River to Fort Scott. The Indians killed all but six of the party; among the dead were seven soldiers' wives.[1] Jackson and Gaines petitioned for orders to enter Florida and clean up the boarder anarchy. On December 16, 1817, the War Department issued the orders to bring retribution to the Seminoles to General Gaines, even if it resulted in entering Spanish governed Florida.[2] On December 26, 1817, the Secretary of War directed Andrew Jackson to take command and bring the Seminoles under control.[3]

The commanders at Fort Scott accelerated the campaign prior to Jackson's arrival. The whites advanced to attack Fowltown on January 4, 1818, found it deserted, and burned it.[4] Jackson arrived at Fort Scott in March and soon descended the Apalachicola River with a force of thirty-five hundred men.[5] Jackson's force overcame Indian opposition easily and burnt two Mikasuki towns. One of the battles that the presented the most resistance to Jackson's forces was made by a band of three hundred Negroes. They stayed west of the Suwannee River to delay Jackson's advancement until women and children could escape from Bowlegs' town.[6] The Negros' efforts, despite being out numbered and out gunned, successfully allowed the desertion of the town by the time Jackson's forces arrived.

The campaigns of 1812 and 1813 weakened the tribes of east Florida and the campaigns of 1818 weakened the tribes of west Florida. This series of campaigns left the Seminoles in no condition to repel white settlers who entered when the United States procured Florida from Spain and started to occupy the territory.

By 1818 the people of the United States were told that they were being dragged into a war with the Seminoles that was entirely the fault of the Indians. President James Monroe told Congress that the hostility of the Seminoles, altogether unprovoked, stemmed from long-standing antagonism to the United States.[7] General Jackson stated the case in a letter to Spanish commander at St. Marks, dated April 6, 1818, demanding he surrender the fort. "To chastise a savage foe, who, combined with a lawless band of Negro brigands, have for some time past been carrying on a cruel and unprovoked war against the citizens of the United States, has compelled the President to direct me to march my army into Florida."[8] The American rationale put all parties but the United States and her border dwellers at fault for the conflict.

Jackson continued his conquest through Florida and within months of first entering, he had captured St. Marks and Pensacola.[9] Jackson's troop movements of 1818 resulted in migrations of Seminoles throughout the territory. Many of the Red Stick Creeks moved south to the Tampa Bay area. The Alachua Indians moved about 120 miles south to what is now Lake County.[10] The Mikasukis moved northwest to the area of modern-day Madison County.

Spain realized that possession of the Florida territories was slipping away as a result of Jackson's raids of 1817 and 1818. Spain and the United States arranged a treaty of cession of the Florida territory in 1819 and by February 22, 1821, ratifications were exchanged.[11] Article VI of the ratified treaty proclaimed: "The inhabitants of the territories which his Catholic Majesty cedes to the United States, as soon as may be consistent with the principles of the Federal Constitution, and admitted to the enjoyment of all privileges, rights, and immunities of the citizens of the United States."[12] Literally interpreted this would provide Indians and Negros United States citizenship; however this would not be the case.

President Monroe looked for a person to govern the newly acquired territory from Spain. At the same time the government was looking to reduce the military drastically and needed to remove one of the top two generals. Jackson more than any other person was responsible for helping acquire the territory and his governorship seemed ideal. Jackson was commissioned governor of Florida on March 10, 1821 but only served a short time in that capacity.[13] He would leave Florida early in October of the same year never to return.

At the time Jackson became governor in Florida the Seminoles were suffering. Captain John Bell said in 1822, "they are now weak and poor, yet their native spirit is not so much broken as to humble them to the dust."[14] Chief Sitarky said, "When I walk about these woods, now so desolate, and remember the numerous herds that once ranged through them, and the former prosperity of our nation, the tears come into my eyes."[15] As the Seminoles continued their existence in Florida, white men argued as to what to do with them. Some men suggested moving them out of the state entirely, whereas others suggested to move them to a concentrated area within the state.

On April 17, 1822, William Pope DuVal, a judge in East Florida, was appointed governor of the territory.[16] Three weeks later Major Gad Humphreys was appointed Indian Agent of Florida. Early in DuVal's appointment, he reported the Seminoles were hungry and restless and unwilling to improve upon their fields. Their failure to put crops in and the complication of high water in west Florida forced the tribe to live on meat and coontie root.[17] DuVal's solution came in two parts: the short term answer was to request more federal money for food, and his long term answer was to send the Seminoles to the north to live with the Creeks. As it became apparent that moving the Seminoles to the north was impossible, DuVal decided the best action would be to move the Seminoles west of the Mississippi River.[18]

While the Seminoles waited on an official government decision about what would become of their land and what rights if any would be protected, they were backed into a corner. The Seminoles were hungry and were being pushed off land by white encroachment. The increased friction of cultures resulted in several murders.[19] Finally by 1823, Secretary Calhoun conducted the Administration to action, suggesting the concentration of natives south of "Charlotte's River."[20] The Administration allowed for the ability to extend the reservation northward towards Tampa Bay if the aforementioned territory could not support sufficient agricultural opportunities.[21]

On April 7th, Secretary Calhoun sent commissions to James Gadsden and Bernardo Segui. Governor DuVal later joined the commission upon his return to Florida. A meeting with the Indians was set for September 5th, in which Gadsden took a hardline stance to make it known to the Seminoles they were the inferior party. Gadsden's stance echoed his belief that the Seminoles should be removed from Florida because their presence made it possible for slaves to escape to Indian villages for safety.

On September 5th, the Seminoles headed for Moultrie Creek were in need of a head chief. They selected Neamathla, the chief of the Mikasukis. The talks began on September 6th, and continued for nearly two weeks. Seventy chiefs and warriors took part in the Moultrie Creek treaty.[22] Gadsden's hard stance continued suggesting that the Seminoles' noncompliance would result in military action. Chief Neamatha voiced his displeasure of being forced to move south on September 10th.[23]

At the conclusion of the Treaty of Moultrie Creek, eight square miles of reservation land in the valley of the Apalachicola River were granted to Neamathla, Blunt, Tuskihadjo, Mulatto King, Emathlochee, and Econchatomico.[24] These chiefs were not forced to move south. Except

for the newly appointed reservation, the remaining Seminoles surrendered their claim to the "whole territory of Florida." In total the Seminole ceded 28,253,820 acres of land. In returned they were awarded a reservation north of Charlotte's River covering 4,032,940 acres.[25] The Seminoles also received protection such as six thousand dollars' worth of agricultural equipment, five thousand dollars annual annuity for twenty years, the promise to keep white men off the reservation, provisions of meat, corn and salt. To those who had to move, up to forty-five hundred dollars in improvements on the reservation was ensured, the promise to maintain an agent, a subagent and an interpreter on the reservation, one thousand dollars a year for twenty years to maintain a school on the reservation, and pay one thousand dollars a year to maintain a blacksmith and gunsmith on the reservation.

In order to receive all of the provisions of the treaty, the Seminoles had to honor three requests. The first was to prevent the concentration of runaway slaves in their midst.[26] The second was the governor set boundaries on the reservation preventing the Seminoles from coming within twenty miles of the coast.[27] This was done to cut off the Seminoles from trade with Cuba and destroyed their ability to acquire weapons and ammunition. The third stipulation was that the document made no mention of the duration to which the Seminoles were entitled to living on the reservation.[28]

Only two years later the Seminoles communicated to the Indian agent that the tribe was forced to sign the treaty of Moultrie Creek. The Seminoles were confounded to the interior of the territory and soon would be pressured to leave altogether. The Treaty of Moultrie Creek was the first in a series of disasters to befall the Seminoles.[29]

By July, 1824, fifteen hundred Seminoles had moved to the reservation and were fed daily at two points of issue, Tampa Bay and the St. Johns River.[30] The governor noted the appropriated $65,700 to feed the Seminoles was not enough.[31]

The need to show a military presence in the area was quickly realized and the War Department sent Lieutenant Colonel George M. Brooke in 1824, to construct a military post in the vicinity of Tampa Bay.[32] Governor DuVal was convinced more military action was necessary and ordered the Seminoles to attend a stern talk in St. Marks on July 26, 1825.[33] At the meeting DuVal forcefully removed Neamathla from power and selected Tuckose Emathla also known as John Hicks to replace him as chief of the Seminoles.

In October, more Seminoles were living off the reservation than on it.[34] Seminoles complained of the poor condition of the new land. Benjamin Chaires, the ration contractor, said the land the Seminoles had received was the worst in Florida.[35] By 1825, it became evident that the Treaty of Moultrie Creek had not resolved Indian and white relations. On December 26, 1825, the Seminoles were awarded six thousand acres of rich land in the Big Swamp.[36] This action was a direct result of governor DuVal's exploration of the Seminole reservation and his statement upon review, the land "is by far the poorest and most miserable region I ever beheld."

Despite the effort to give the Seminoles additional tracks of land, they still faced starvation. Indian Agent Gad Humphreys and Colonel Brooke both requested additional rations. On October 10, 1825, Colonel Brooke reported that the rations were exhausted and the Indians had starved to death.[37]

The Seminoles, desperate for food, started searching outside the reservation and began to prey on the cattle of white settlers.[38] Some Seminoles realized they could not live on the reservation, left, and went back across the Suwannee. Governor DuVal took action in December,

1825, ordering the Alachua militia not to attack Indians for killing cattle.[39] In response, DuVal offered the possibility of the government paying back the white settlers' losses of cattle.[40]

In July 1825, near St. Augustine a fight occurred in the Cabbage Swamp, resulting in straining relations to a near breaking point. Throughout the following year tensions increased as white slaveholders continued to pressure DuVal to demand that the Seminoles return all run away or previously captured slaves to their white owners. White demands began to call for Seminole removal from Florida by 1826. DuVal noted in a letter to Thomas L. McKenney, "The best hunting was in the Indian reservation, yet the red men neglected it, preferring instead to maraud upon the cattle and provisions of white people. The whites had been good to them, they had set out food at any house where natives asked for it. Apparently this practice spoiled the Indians."[41]

White settlers desired a new fort to be constructed to prevent additional Indian movements. The War Department allowed Governor DuVal to select the location of the new fort. The selected location was a quarter mile from the Indian Agency near Silver Springs, where Gad Humphreys conducted his business.[42] The fort was first designated Containment King, after William King who commanded the Fourth Infantry before Clinch.[43] In the interest of budget constraints, Containment King was closed and later reopened in 1832 with the designation Fort King.

On May 20, 1827, territorial delegate Joseph M. White met with a group of chiefs to discuss migration. The President told them, "now offers you a good country and a great deal of money and provisions, do not therefore listen to bad counsel but take them for this sickly country where you now are. If you do not in a dozen moons your bad men may do wrong again, and your Great Father will send soldiers and destroy their town."[44] After listening to the proposal, the

chiefs refused to consider moving at all. The Seminoles were not intimidated or reduced in numbers to the extent that migration would seem acceptable.

As Andrew Jackson ascended to the presidency, Governor DuVal quickly partitioned to remove Indian agent Humphreys due to his inability to convince the Seminoles to deliver an acceptable amount of Negros to their former owners.[45] Jackson made the removal in 1830 and the Seminoles lost a friend when Humphreys was removed from duty. Discontent continued to grow amongst the Seminoles as the realization that the whites desired to possess all Negros in Florida.

In President Jackson's first annual message, he recommended that land west of the Mississippi be set apart and that the Indians in the East be encouraged, but not forced to trade eastern land for western land.[46] Indians failing to trade land would come under the jurisdiction of the states. This act was passed narrowly in the House by a margin of 101 to 97.[47] As it passed through the Senate with less opposition it become known as the "Indian Removal Act." The act now allowed Americans to do what was necessary to remove the Indians and move them to the new land in the west.

On January 30, 1832, instructions were issued from the United States War Department to appoint a special agent to negotiate with the Seminoles.[48] James Gadsden was chosen to lead the negotiations, with the goal of forcing the Seminoles to move west and share land with the Creeks. Payne's Landing was the location selected for the treaty talks. According to Gadsden's reports he told the Seminoles two things. First, he told the Seminoles the government could no longer afford to feed them year after year. The second was that their situation would be more wretched when they came under the laws of the territory if they refused to move.[49] The Seminoles agreed to send seven chiefs to inspect the land, and if they found the situation

suitable, they would agree to move. A treaty was signed on May 9, 1832, by seven chiefs and eight subchiefs.[50]

Micanopy challenged the Treaty of Payne's Landing a short time later claiming he had not marked the document despite his name appearing on the document. Charley Emathla claimed that all the signers were coerced.[51] Regardless of the allegations, the Treaty of Payne's Landing stipulated that the Seminoles were willing for seven of their chiefs to travel west to inspect the Creek lands. The treaty was filled with controversy, the term "they" was debated in its meaning. Did the term "they" refer to a few tribes of the Seminoles or did "they' refer to the whole nation? Controversy continued as the rumor spread that the Negro interpreter was paid to conceal the truth. Many thought coercion must have been utilized to get the Seminoles to agree to reunite with the Creeks.

The terms of the Treaty of Payne's Landing stated that the Seminoles would remove themselves from Florida within three years after the ratification of the treaty and surrender all of their claims to their land in Florida. The whites living in Florida praised the treaty claiming it would free them of "savages."[52] Many people, especially those in the army who were present at the signing of the treaty, admitted it was a fraud. By 1832, the Seminoles were less of a threat than when they signed the treaty of Moulrie Creek in 1823, and thus were exploited. The treaty called for the Seminoles to become part of the Creek nation and occupy a separate portion of the Creek reservation.

The seven chiefs signed the delegation at Fort Gibson. They claimed that they were satisfied with the land in the west and would commence relocation to their new home as soon as the government made arrangements for their emigration that was satisfactory to the Seminole nation.[53]

Holata Emathla, Coa Hadjo, and Jumper later claimed they never signed the Fort Gibson Treaty.[54] These claims did not prevent the Senate from pushing through the ratification of the Treaty of Payne's Landing and the Treaty of Fort Gibson on April 8, 1834.[55] Once the treaties were ratified, pressure to remove the Seminoles intensified throughout the fall of 1834.

The treaties called for a complete removal three years after ratification, putting the deadline at April 12, 1837. The Seminoles read their circumstances differently, contending that they had a twenty year time period from the signing of the Moultrie Creek Treaty, giving them several years to remain in Florida.[56] Whites considered the Seminole perspective preposterous. In any case, the inability to communicate honestly and effectively led to the signing of three treaties that ultimately escalated tensions and led the United States and the Seminoles to war.

Chapter Three
**First Shots**

Contested interpretations of treaties melded with the evolving realities of Seminole life. As the winter of 1833 approached, the Seminoles grew restless. They were in need of blankets and had not been inoculated for smallpox as directed by the government because the one hundred dollars allocated to do so was insufficient.

As the Seminoles struggled through the winter, changes of territorial leadership in Florida occurred. Wiley Thompson replaced Phagan as the Indian agent for the Seminoles. Thompson served with Andrew Jackson in the Creek War and was the Major General of the Georgia militia, and then served time as a representative of Georgia in the House of Representatives.[1] Thompson reported to Fort King for official duty in Florida on December 1, 1833.[2] In 1831, Jackson took action during the Petticoat Affair by forcing the resignation of the entire cabinet due to scandalous rumors being spread about the Eaton family. The opportunity benefited Jackson as he was portrayed as a man of honor for respectfully defending the Eaton family. Jackson was presented with the opportunity to appoint men loyal to him as cabinet members which replaced many who were loyal to Calhoun. The recently removed John Eaton was appointed to replace William DuVal as the Governor of Florida on April 24, 1834.[3]

As Washington pushed for Indian removal, the Indian department was created as a subdivision within the War Office. The Indian department provided the Indian agents with the ability to determine the dates for removal. Indian agent Thompson selected the spring of 1835 for final removal. He met with the chiefs on October 21, 1834, to distribute the last annuity payable in Florida and to alert the Seminoles of the mandatory removal in the spring.[4]

After meeting with Thompson that day the Seminoles gathered that night in their own council. Better known today as Osceola, Powell encouraged the Seminoles not to migrate.

Osceola had no hereditary claim to leadership, but ascended to the top of the Seminoles political advisors. Osceola who was thirty-five at the time made it clear he had no intention of moving and this alerted and captured the attention of the whites.[5]

The Seminoles debated their next plan of action. Osceola and others protested the migration and others such as Holata Emathla insisted that the bands must migrate. Jumper was selected to present the Indian objections to the whites the following day.[6] Seminole chiefs claimed the Treaty of Moultrie Creek ran for twenty years, and nine years still remained before removal could begin. Thompson declared that the possibility of removal was not being discussed, but how it would be carried out. Again the Payne's Landing and Fort Gibson treaties came under attack from the chiefs who claimed they were intimidated in to signing them. Osceola had the last word in the argument claiming, "There remains nothing worth words! If the hail rattles, let the flowers be crushed, the stately oak of the forest will lift its head to the sky and the storm, towering and unscathed."[7] Thompson then refused to distribute the customary presents, and the chasm between the two parties continued to widen.[8] When President Jackson became aware of the October meetings, he ordered, "Let a sufficient military force be forthwith ordered to protect our citizens and remove and protect the Indians agreeable to the Stipulations of the Treaty."[9]

As the spring of 1835 approached and migration was scheduled to begin, an extreme cold front dropped temperatures in Florida to single digits. The cold front further reduced the Seminole food supply and they grew more hostile.[10] As tensions mounted the agents on the ground decided to move the forced migration back another year, April 20, 1836 was the date selected to force the Seminoles to leave Florida. As talks of war spread through Florida,

Thompson, Clinch, and Lieutenant Joseph Harris decided to push the removal back to January of 1836 to allow time to build a significant military force in Florida.

In early June, Thompson had Osceola captured in an attempt to keep him from starting trouble. Osceola made an agreement to sign a document to certify the validity of the Treaty of Payne's Landing in order to be released. Osceola even offered to bring in a band of followers for migration. Seventy nine followers turned themselves in and Osceola was released.[11] Thompson believed that Osceola had a change of heart, but in reality, Osceola was manipulating Thompson to secure his release.

In the middle of June in Alachua County, seven white men came across five Indians hunting outside of the reservation. The white men beat the Indians with lashes just as two other Indians appeared. The two Indians opened fire and wounded three of the white men. In return, one of the Indians was killed and another injured.[12] Once Thompson received word of the violence, he demanded the chiefs turn in the Seminole culprits. The Seminoles were turned over for white justice, once delivered to the court, the judge soon sent the men back to their chiefs for punishment. Conflict continued in August when Private Kinsley Dalton was murdered while carrying mail from Fort Brooke to Fort King by Seminole warriors, in an attempt to avenge the death of the Seminole in the June attack.

In October, Charley Emathla made up his mind to take his band to new territory in the West. In November, Emathla's band was surrounded by a larger band under the command of Osceola. Osceola shot Emathla and left his body on the trail as a visual reminder of what would happen to traitors.[13] Panic spread through Florida, whites were eager for the arrival of troops, and the Seminoles willing to move to the west were in need of protection. Five hundred Seminoles in favor of migrating to the west gathered at Fort Brooke and were under white protection. Shortly

after the Seminoles took shelter at Fort Brooke, communication between Fort Brook and Fort King was broken.[14]

The governor ordered five hundred horsemen to be enlisted for a tour of four weeks under the command of Major General Richard Call.[15] The presence of the militia force near the Indians brought on action which could be termed the first battle of the Second Seminole War.[16] On December 18, 1835, near the Alachua Savannah, the Battle of Black Point occurred. The mounted militia traveled through the countryside attempting to prevent attacks on white settlers. Colonel John Warren detached from the main column, and was headed to Wetumpka when a large Seminole force led by Osceola ambushed them and captured the supplies. At the same moment, Doctor McLemore approached with thirty horsemen and ordered a charge.[17] Only twelve of his men responded, which resulted in the death of six and eight others sustained injuries.[18]

The Seminoles inflicted heavy damages to sugar plantations and within a week the entire industry was destroyed. As the Seminole force continued to create havoc, the *Florida Herald* issued no newspapers from October 22, 1835 to January 6, 1836. When it resumed publication, the editor explained he had been away on military duty.[19]

President Jackson was surprised once he learned of the turn of events proclaiming, "Why is it that he is permitting such outrageous depredations by the Indians without inflicting just punishment for outrages so unpunished. Let order be forthwith given to him to act with promptness and call upon the Governor of Georgia for a force."[20] As troop buildup continued in Florida, the Seminoles continued their plans of attack.

On December 28, 1835, only one company was stationed at Fort King. Osceola had a war party outside Fort King waiting to dispose of Indian Agent Thompson. Between three and four

o'clock in the afternoon, the Indian agent and his dinner companion, Lieutenant Constantine Smith, took a walk outside of the palisade. Shots poured in on them from all directions, riddling Thompson with fourteen balls and killing him instantly.[21] His scalp was taken and cut into tiny pieces so each participant could take a war trophy.[22] At the same moment another war party surprised sutler Erastus Rogers and his two clerks. The death of Rogers was symbolic because he was one of the witnesses of the signing at Payne's Landing.

On the same day, fifty miles south, a relief column marching toward Fort King under the command of Major Francis Dade was ambushed. The detachment included eight officers, a surgeon, and a hundred enlisted men of whom only three survived the attack.[23] Dade led his column out of Fort Brooke on December 23, 1835, traveling north on the Fort King road. His force was slowed at the Hillsborough River crossing, delaying the march by two days. The Seminoles considered striking the forces as they were left exposed traversing the first of four river crossings, but were waiting for Osceola to join them. On the morning of December 28, 1835, conditions were too favorable for the Seminoles to wait any longer to attack.[24] Dade's column advanced with little preparation of a battle, their ammunition tucked under their coats and their sky blue uniforms provided easy targets. The men came under fire and quickly Dade and half the command fell to the ground. One hundred and eighty Seminoles continued the assault and by four o'clock not a man was left standing.[25] The Seminoles did not scalp or loot the bodies, but once they took food and ammunition, a swarm of Negros came and killed the wounded and looted the dead.[26] Days later Ransome Clarke, one of the three survivors, reached Fort Brooke and gave the only white account of the massacre.

Chapter Four

## The Fort King Road and Fort Alabama

During the first Seminole War, the need to increase supervision of the Seminoles on their new reservation resulted in the construction of a fort named after Colonel William King, who had commanded the Fourth Infantry before Clinch.[1] The fort was constructed on March 25, 1827 near Humphreys' agency. The fort was composed of a twenty foot stockade, three foot platforms constructed around the interior wall, and blockhouses constructed in the corners. In the center of the fort was a two story building with a cupola on the top. A man was stationed to keep watch at all times and ring a cow bell if someone approached the fort. [2] Not even a year after construction was completed, Major General Scott attempted to close Fort King due to the high cost of supplying the fort overland from Fort Brooke. The War Department, in reaction to complaints of white settlers, refused to allow Scott to close the fort at least until 1829.[3] The post was reopened in 1832 as conflict arose within Florida.

Prior to the construction of Fort King, the army required a supply road to connect Fort Brooke in Tampa to the Indian agency in present-day Ocala. On September 29, 1825, Assistant Quartermaster Captain Isaac Clark reported to Brigadier General Thomas Jesup, Quartermaster General in Washington, that he had completed a survey of the area north from Containment Brooke to the recently established Indian Agency, a distance of one hundred miles.[4] The trail Clark charted was cleared the previous January and February by Humphreys with a party of discharged soldiers, a couple of Indian Negroes, and the loan of one ox team.[5] The men based their route for the most part on a game trail and Indian path.[6]

In October, Clark and two companies of the fourth Infantry stationed at Fort Brooke under the command of Captain Francis Dade and Lieutenant George McCall began road construction.[7] The men avoided areas prone to flooding and built up the road in low areas. The

men cleared twenty two miles of trail in route to the Big Hillsborough River.[8] They spent several weeks cutting timber to construct a bridge high above the water. As the crew continued construction, they cleared the trail twenty feet wide the entire distance and constructed a total of four bridges. They arrived at the Indian agency in mid-January 1826.[9]

The next month, Governor DuVal traveled the road south from the agency to Fort Brooke, inspecting the land along the route. He concluded that "No settlement can ever be made in this region, and there is no land in it worth cultivation."[10] The heat was "intolerable," and there was no water "fit to drink."[11]

The road would become the key supply line for tools, provisions, weapons, and men to the interior of the state during the Second Seminole War. As white settlers desired to push the Seminoles south, it became necessary to construct forts in the interior of the state. The Fort King Road allowed for swift deployment of items essential to the war effort. In a letter written by Lieutenant William Warren during the Second Seminole War he proclaimed, "90 wagons of provisions, two artillery companies with three artillery pieces, one infantry regiment and a detachment of dragoons left Fort Brooke for Fort Dade on November 1st of 1836." Five days later he wrote, "On the 6th of this month, a train of 40 wagons arrived here with provisions and forage for this post (Fort Foster) from Tampa. A part of the escort consisted of about 200 Delaware and Shawnee Indians."[12] Warren's accounts are only a small example of the items and military units who traversed the road.

The Fort King Road became well utilized during the periods of conflict with the Seminoles. As conflict raged, the more necessary it was to keep the route to the interior open and operational. The Seminoles realized the importance of the Fort King Road and continuously harassed the people on the trail and destroyed the bridges. By the start of the Second Seminole

War, it was necessary to construct defensive fortifications to protect the four bridge crossings on the Fort King Road.

In October 1835, Brevet Brigadier General Duncan Clinch, the commander in Florida, requested that 150 mounted Florida volunteers be mustered into federal service.[13] Clinch felt the men could be utilized in defensive operations and the regulars would be used for offensive operations. In December of 1835, the Acting Governor G. K. Walker responded to Clinch's request and ordered Richard Keith Call, a brigadier general of the militia, to organize a force of 500 men to join Clinch.[14]

With Clinch's force fully assembled, he pursued the Seminoles into the Cove of the Withlacoochee. On December 31, 1835, Clinch's force was divided while crossing the river, they were fired on and forced to retreat to Fort Drane.[15] The Battle of the Withlacoochee was the first major engagement of the war and signaled to the government the Seminoles would not honor the removal treaty.[16]

The government decided that a large force would be necessary to bring the Seminoles under control. Brevet Major General Winfield Scott was dispatched to pacify the Indians and remove them from the territory.[17] Scott became responsible for coordinating all the details of the campaign. In addition to the regular army, militia units from neighboring states filled the ranks. "The militia and regular units received the same monthly pay, rations, clothing, forage, be furnished with the same camp equipage, knapsacks, as are … provided by law for the officers, musicians, artificers and privates of the infantry of the army of the United States."[18]

On March 1, 1836, the Alabama Militia, numbering 800 men and under command of Colonel Lindsay, were mustered into Federal service.[19] At the same time, Brevet Major General Edmund Gaines was preparing a force for use in Florida.[20] On January 18, 1836, Gaines ordered

Lieutenant Colonel David Twiggs to proceed to New Orleans and raise a force of Louisiana volunteers.[21] By February 3, 1836, the necessary forces had been raised, armed, and were already in route to Florida.

On February 13, 1836, Gaines and his force of one thousand men marched to Fort King to relieve Clinch's force thought to be besieged.[22] Upon their arrival, Gaines was informed Clinch and his men were at Fort Drane and in no need of assistance. Gaines was furious when he found that the rations ordered for his command had not arrived at Fort King and they were not expected to arrive.[23] On Gaines return march to Fort Brooke, his unit was attacked. They immediately took shelter behind a quickly constructed log fortification. The fortification was 250 yards square and would later be known as Camp Izard. While besieged at Camp Izard, food ran low forcing the men to kill their horses, and even the dogs that had accompanied the army were butchered.[24] Army Major Prince described the scene, "They are this moment (11 o'clock) killing two fat dogs & cooking out a horse for beef. Two horses have been killed and served out in rations. A quarter of dog meat sold for $5."[25] The men were rescued from Camp Izard when Clinch marched to the camp and lifted the siege.

Conflict and destruction continued up and down the Fort King Road. According to Lieutenant Prince's field notes of February 23, 1836, "the Indians had burned all the houses on the road."[26] Prince recorded fire fights on February 27th, 28th, and 29th, 1836, one of his more notable quotes occurred on the last engagement in February. Prince was discussing with Lieutenant Linnard on the possibility of the Seminoles still being in the area when, "Whang! Whang! Pop! fit! whirr! bang! spatter spatter spatter! It is no use to discuss it any longer says I for there they are. I ran to my line company amidst a storm of bullets."[27] Prince indicated the Seminoles attack force numbered at least one thousand and the fight lasted three hours.[28]

General Scott announced his strategy for defeating the Seminoles; he would divide his command into three columns that would compress the enemy into a mass that could be easily defeated. The center wing composed of Alabama volunteers would be commanded by Colonel Lindsay. Lindsay and his men arrived at Fort Brooke on March 13, 1836.[29] Lindsay while awaiting orders from General Scott was:

> Determined to make a forward movement and construct a stockade on the Hillsboro River where it is crossed by the main road from Fort Brooke to Fort King with a view of bringing our subsistence nearer to the scene of military operations and on the 15th (March) the line of march was accordingly taken up. The destruction of the bridge by (the) Indians delayed and embarrassed our march so much that we did not arrive at the Hillsboro until the 17th from which time until the 20th we were engaged in the construction of a stockade named by me Fort Alabama. Major Read of the Florida Battalion was left in command of this post whilst the remainder of the force returned to Fort Brooke on the 20th.[30]

Myer Cohen, a South Carolina volunteer described the construction of Fort Alabama in a sense of illusion.

> Never did Rome or Greece in days of yore—nor France, nor England, in modern times – pour forth a nobler soldiery, than the Volunteers in the Army of Florida, during the campaign of 1836, from Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and South Carolina, As the sandal tree sheds perfume on the axe that fells it, so would the vilest Seminole become ennobled by the slaying of the least one of these gallant sons of the South.[31]

Within two days of construction a simple stockade fortification was constructed. Alexander Meek, a member of the Alabama volunteers, aided in the construction of the fort. His journal entry of March 18, 1836 states:

> We commenced building today at this post (on the Hillsborough River) a picket fort, as a Depot for provisions and ammunition, and as one of the chain of fortifications which it is said it is intended to establish between Fort Brooke and Ft. King, and thus to form a safe line of communication from one side of the cape to the other.[32]

Captain James Barr offers an obscure description of the fort by saying, "… [they] had built a Fort, called Fort Alabama, somewhat similar to Fort Brooke."[33] Lieutenant Colonel

William Foster of the fourth infantry described Fort Alabama with detail in a letter to Roger Jones, the Adjutant General of the army. Foster describes that pickets, "which were of unequal length from 12 to 20 feet in height," define the fort's defensive perimeter.[34] Foster also describes that a magazine was built with "large logs hewn square."[35]

Through an archeological study conducted in 1977, information surfaces that revealed the location and the design of Fort Alabama. The fort was located parallel to the Hillsborough River and constructed in the design of a rectangle with the longer sides running along the river.

The crossing of the Hillsborough River was recognized early in the war as a strategic location. Major Dade and his ill-fated troops observed the still smoldering ruins of the bridge on their march to Fort King in December. The destruction of the bridge delayed the troops two days. Fording the river was a difficult task that exposed the troops to enemy fire. A fort in this location would be capable of protecting the crossing and facilitate supplies to the interior.

Upon completion of Fort Alabama, Lindsay and the Alabama volunteers were ordered to the interior of the territory to attack the Seminoles at the Cove of the Withlacoochee. On March 22, 1836, Lindsay departed Fort Alabama and left a small garrison at the fort to be commanded by Captain Henry Marks and his company of Louisiana volunteers. Marks was also responsible for 30 sick and wounded men who remained at the fort.[36]

Prior to the end of March, Mark's small force at Fort Foster was attacked by a force of Seminoles between 300 and 400 in strength. Lindsay later reported the incident to General Scott:

> The attack commenced about 8 AM and continued without intermission two hours and twenty minutes. The loss on the side of the defenders was one man killed and two wounded. Whilst that of the enemy was supposed to be 15 killed. Notwithstanding their defeat in the main attack they continued to lay around the work in considerable force both day and night until my return (March 31) when they moved off on the same road (on) which I marched(.) (A)nd the sign made on that road furnishes me with the means of estimating their numbers. During the

> whole time the siege Capt. Marks, his officers and men conducted themselves with coolness and courage.[37]

Myer Cohen, a volunteer from South Carolina, claimed the Indians attacked the garrison on March 27, 1836. Cohen considered the attack significant enough to record in his notes.

> This Garrison was attacked simultaneously, on every side, by about two hundred Indians. They caught one man outside of the pickets, and killed and scalped him. A steady fire was kept up for two hours, during which they discharged as many (as a) thousand balls at the fort. Being unable, however, to make any impression upon the garrison, by which they were warmly and cordially received, a number of them ascended the trees which overlooked the pickets, and thence wounded several men. One of them being observed by a rifleman, was fired at and hit: the wound given being so severe, that the blood was seen to trickle down the tree. Notwithstanding the extent of this injury, the savage succeeded in descending, and made off with himself and rifle…
>
> It is supposed that from fifteen to twenty savages were killed. A chief of some note, as indicated by three different colored plumes, which he wore in his head-dress, was among the slain.[38]

Violence continued on March 31, 1836 when Major Cooper and the Louisiana Regiment scoured the hammock near the fort in response of discovering a trail. As the men entered the forest to peruse the trail, a heavy fire was opened on them by the Indians. The Louisiana Volunteers returned fire and small volleys of grape shot entered the hammock. Cohen recorded, "The savages retreated through the woods, closely pursued by our men."[39] The action continued for an hour as the Seminoles fought bravely and continued to advance from the hammock to obtain better positions for firing.[40] The engagement concluded when the Seminoles retreated three miles to the river. The conflict resulted in the deaths of two whites and thirteen others were wounded, the loss of Indians was unknown.[41]

Cohen later on April 5, 1836, recorded the difficulty in crossing the Hillsborough River, "The horses ford it with great difficulty, after traveling through a long rich hammock, preceded by an extensive gall. This river is beautifully bordered by varied foliage; and on the side nearest Tampa, the Alabama and Florida troops, under Colonel Lindsay, erected fort Alabama."[42] The

lack of a bridge resulted in the delay of troops and supplies to the interior of the state. If the unit crossing the river was in transport of a six pound field cannon, the crossing would have been very time consuming. The six-pounder would have been dissembled and packed on to three mules, distributing the weight equally. Once the mules approached the water all of the equipment would have needed to be unloaded, carried across the water by the men, then repack the equipment on to the mules. This whole ordeal would have taken several hours, but it would have prevented the weapon from being destroyed and prevented the mules from drowning.

On April 11, 1836, Cohen describes the value of Fort Alabama as a supply depot and how scarce resources were, "To-day I have to forage from my horse some corn sent via Tampa, parching which, it constitutes my whole dinner. Poor pony! He was without grain many days consecutively,"[43] The supply transportation and provisions were scanty and prevented the army from venturing into the wilderness to pursue the Indians for extended periods of time.[44]

A day later, Cohen describes the evidence of conflict in the area, "We pass the skeleton of a horse, who, with his rider, had been shot by the Indians, a little while before."[45] Cohen was riding from Fort Foster and towards Fort Brooke, in Tampa, when he encountered the scene.

In the middle of April, Colonel Lindsay crossed the Hillsborough River in route to Fort Brooke, his men were attacked, resulting in the death of James Branham, an Alabama Volunteer. The presence of the Seminoles was experienced near Fort Alabama on April 15, 1836. Cohen encamped nearby at Camp Sidney and wrote:

> After I had closed my journal and my eyes, we had an alarm. A cry like that of owls was heard from three different trees, succeeded by the report of three rifles. …we plainly perceived the Indians, arms trailed, dashing across the camp, their dusky forms relieved by the bright blaze of the guard-fires. In the earlier periods of the campaign. We often heard cries which we took to be those of wolves, and various birds. We became, subsequently, convinced that they were but signals from one Indian party to another.

Violence in the area continued that same night when one of the men garrisoned at Fort Alabama was killed. The next day Private William Radford was fishing at a stream and was shot in the arm.[46] Captain Parker's company quickly charged the hammock, but to no prevail. After the men endured a wet and toilsome march, they were unsuccessful in finding any traces of the Seminoles. Dr. Trotti and Captains Hibler and Fripp were sent to Fort Foster only a few days prior to April 17, 1836. The men told Cohen they had been very busy and anxious because the Indians were constantly hovering around and picking off all the stragglers from the camp.[47] Prince wrote on April 27, 1836 that, "Yesterday morning the first man that went out of the door of the Fort was shot with 3 bullets, 20 steps from the egress!"[48]

As summer approached, the conditions at Fort Alabama deteriorated. The heat of April was so oppressive that the troops could not execute ordinary marches.[49] The troops still wore their winter clothing as a result of the absence of sutlers goods at Tampa. Many of the sink-holes and ponds that previously supplied water to the men and horses were now dried up and in others the water was tepid and filled with vegetable matter.[50]

Crossing the Hillsborough River continued to be a problem that aggravated the army and slowed travel to the interior. As late as April 21, 1836, Cohen was angered by his attempt to ford the Hillsborough, "my saddle bags were soaked, and my botanic collection ruined, I fear, forever."[51] Major Watson braved the deep water of the Hillsborough in an effort to save the lives of two friendly Creeks, disregarding the fact he himself did not know how to swim.[52]

Later that spring, the Seminoles attacked Fort Alabama and once again Colonel Lindsay was not garrisoned at the fort. The Seminoles were not successful in their attack, but they did kill one soldier and wounded two others.[53]

Once Lindsay returned to Tampa in April, the Alabama volunteers continued to search the area for the Seminoles and engage them when possible. As April came to a close, it became evident that Scott's campaign was a complete failure. Lindsay received orders to terminate his activities in Tampa and make the necessary preparations for withdrawing the volunteers from Florida.[54] An aspect of this duty included the "abruption of the post of Fort Alabama."[55] In addition to the lives violence claimed, the harsh conditions of the Florida environment claimed the lives of more soldiers than those killed in battle.[56] At the onset of the mosquito infested summer, the post was ordered to be destroyed.

Lindsay ordered Colonel William Chisolm, the commander of the Alabama volunteers, "to remove all troops at Fort Alabama, break up the post, and bring away all the United States property, weather of provisions or ammunition."[57] The force sent from Fort Brooke to Fort Foster to carry out the mission totaled six hundred men and was composed of Chisolm's force, a battalion of the Fourth Infantry Regiment under Lieutenant Colonel Foster, and twenty soldiers from the Second Artillery Regiment, under the command of Lieutenant Morgan.[58]

Upon arrival at Fort Foster, Chisolm:

> Directed the wagons to be loaded and the two companies which occupied the fort (Alabama volunteers) to be readiness to march. The wagons, nine in number, were loaded with the ammunition, subsistence, &c., and the pack-horses packed…[59]

As the men were preparing to leave, an Alabama volunteer spoke of booby trapping the stockade magazine. After the senior commanders discussed the proposition, they decided to take action to implement the plan. Lieutenant Colonel William Foster reported it to the Adjutant General:

> We placed in the magazine a Barrel of Rifle powder, with the muzzle of a loaded musket entered into it. Two strings (for fear one should fail) were fastened to the

> triggers and to the door of the magazine, which opened outwards, whenever the wooden peg by which it was fastened should be pulled out.
>
> The Magazine was made with large logs hewn square. We had marched by my watch 21 minutes when the explosion took place, the effects of which were not known until my return here on the 1st Instant (December 1836). The Logs were thrown in every direction, some over the pickets … a distance of sixty to eighty yards. The bodies of two Indians were found. …(They had been) partially intered (sic) by their comrades to conceal their bodies (.) They were buried by the troops after our arrival. The skull of a third was found yesterday one hundred and fifty yards from the fort.[60]

Lieutenant Prince described the event, "At ten to our great merriment, we heard the thunder & felt the trembling of the blow up."[61] It was later noted that Alabama Volunteer, John Shackelford was the man responsible for setting the trap.[62]

Fort Alabama was utilized for only a few short months prior to its abandonment. The remains of Fort Alabama went unutilized for a short period of time, but by the end of 1836, troops had returned and began the reconstruction of Fort Alabama. Chisolm's force returned to Fort Brooke and ultimately left Florida and returned to their homes.

Chapter Five

# Fort Foster

Fort utilization and abandonment was a common occurrence throughout Florida during the Second Seminole War. Early in the war, many forts were left abandoned during the summer months out of fear of the conditions being too taxing on the American Army. Under the command of Jesup, the army headquarters of the south was located at Fort Dade and the post was abandoned and later burnt by the Seminoles.

The abandonment of Fort Alabama ultimately led to the construction of Fort Foster (see Appendix C). The history of Fort Foster displays evidence of the importance of forts during the Second Seminole War. Fort Foster was utilized as a storehouse that had the ability to hold weapons, food, and tools for troops. The access to materials at Fort Foster prevented a march to resupply at Fort Brooke which was an additional 24 miles, a march that usually took an entire day. The ability to protect the bridge allowed troops to move through the interior of the state faster and unmolested while crossing the Hillsborough River. Two major offensive campaigns were expedited by safe passage over the bridge. The goal of the commanding officers was to attack the main force of the Seminoles and coerce them into compliance. As the Seminoles retreated into the hostel environment, forts became increasingly necessary. The need to establish a presence in the area prevented Seminoles from taking refuge, planting crops or plundering white settlements.

As more forts were constructed in Florida, the army was attempting to use the fortifications to push the major population into a centralized area. If the Seminole warriors could be gathered into a centralized location, the army could attack and render a decisive blow to the Seminole warriors. The Army anticipated that a decisive victory would cause the Seminoles to

submit to immigration to the west. If the Seminoles would not surrender, then the entire force could be eradicated in a quick and decisive battle.

The construction of Fort Foster aided to the army's plan to push the Seminoles to the southern central region of the state. Fort Foster and the other forts in central Florida aided in the execution of this plan by providing troops to continue their advance and provided the supplies necessary to continue construction of additional forts. This allowed the ability to pursue the enemy in battle if encountered. Fort Foster served as a line of containment established to keep the Seminoles to the South of the fort and the whites to the North of the fort.

The forts constructed in the Second Seminole War met their objectives and in many cases succeeded. Many forts repelled enemy attacks, some for hours, others for days without surrendering the post. Several forts accepted the surrender of Seminoles and held them until transport to the west was possible.

In July 1836, Major General Alexander Macomb, the Commanding General of the Army, relieved General Scott from his command in Florida. The government then turned to Quartermaster General of the Army, Brevet Major General Thomas Jesup.[1] On November 4, 1836, Jesup received the message to assume command of all operations in Florida. Jesup immediately proceeded to Florida and began a "vigorous attack" against the Seminoles.[2]

Jesup's orders clearly directed him to penetrate the country of Florida and pacify it. He was ordered to occupy the "whole country between the Withlacoochee and Tampa Bay."[3] Jesup immediately surveyed the terrain and began selecting locations to build fortifications. The government believed that a large number of Seminoles were living along the banks of the Withlacoochee River or within the Cove of the Withlacoochee. The specific request of the commander were to:

> Establish posts at or near the mouth of the Withlacoochee, at Fort King, and at Volusia; and you will take proper measures for securing through them, the safety of the frontier. You will, also, through the same posts, and by such means of transportation as may be most certain and economical make permanent arrangement for procuring sufficient and regular supplies.[4]

To achieve these objectives Jesup undertook the construction of a number of supply depots in the area to be utilized throughout the campaign. After only two days of receiving his orders to occupy the Withlacoochee watershed, he requested, "20 carpenters, a master carpenter,... and 50 laborers," from the quartermaster general.[5] Lieutenant Colonel William Foster quite possibly was in communication with Jesup prior to November 9, 1836, when Foster sent his requisition to Major Issac Clark, the quartermaster at New Orleans. Foster asked for "50 ford felling axes and as many helves, two cross-cut and two pit saws complete with one set of carpenter's or joiner's tools, oil stone, sawflies, &c."[6]

As the supplies were being acquired and shipped to Florida, Jesup and his subordinates searched the interior for the best possible locations for supply depots and fortifications that would be necessary for the war effort. The juncture of the Fort King Road and the Hillsborough River was identified as a critical location to defend. If a military presence was not established the Indians could have, and mostly likely would have, destroyed the bridge that spanned the river. The inability to utilize a bridge at this location would have caused an increase in work, exposed troops to enemy fire, and slowed troop and supply movements to the interior of the state. The necessity of a fort to defend the bridge was clearly evident, since the bridge had already been burned, delaying Dade's march the previous December. The ability to construct a defensive fortification that could also supply materials and troops to the interior would be vital. The location would be optimal in its ability to supply men to the north operating in the dense

hammocks and supply men to the east operating in the Big Cypress Swamp. Prior to the end of November, Jesup determined that a post would be established at the location.

Order Number 18 was issued on November 28, 1836, under the signature of General Jesup and directed that:

> Lieutenant Colonel Foster with the Infantry, the 3rd Artillery including Captain Lyon's Company, and the Washington City Volunteers, will reestablish Fort Alabama—A strong picket work with blockhouse at the opposite angles will be constructed without delay.[7]

On November 26, Foster wrote to Jesup telling the general that he had arrived at Tampa with ninety-two men and was "ready for the field," lacking only "transportation and great coats. . . ."[8] The command was quickly organized by Foster. Brevet Major W.W. McClintock was to command the First battalion, consisting of three companies of the Third Artillery Regiment and Lieutenant Irwin's Company of Washington City Volunteers.[9] The Second battalion was ultimately commanded by Major George Birch, incorporating three companies of the Fourth Infantry Regiment, Captain Lyon's Company of the Third Artillery, and a small unknown number of mounted Georgia volunteers.[10] Three hundred twenty men marched out of Fort Brooke on November 30, 1836, and cautiously proceeded north on Fort King Road.[11] Foster and his men arrived at their destination the next day, approximately twenty-four miles north of Tampa.

As the command was allotted specific assignments for completion, construction of the fort quickly commenced. Captain Lyon and his men, for instance, were directed to erect "Blockhouse No. 1."[12] Captain Allen was assigned the job of building "Blockhouse No. 2," and cutting most of the logs that were used in construction.[13] Lieutenant Henry Prince, Fourth Infantry, was appointed project engineer, and also "put up the pickets of the Fort, a most

laborious job," according to Colonel Foster.[14] The job of building "the commissary store, magazine, . . . and the bridge,' was assigned to Lieutenant Wall of the artillery.[15] After the men were assigned their tasks, they quickly took to the forest and shattered the silence by felling trees and conversing on how best to complete the job. Indian scouts constantly passed through the camp, no doubt bemused by the cacophony that assailed their ears.[16]

After a day of strenuous labor the men took refuge from the weather in their tents. Campfires were lit and the smell of brewing coffee, combined with the aroma of frying bacon, filled the entire area.[17] Often long before tattoo, military music played to signal the end of the day, the men were sleeping soundly.[18] As compensation for hard work and subjection to danger, a private only earned six dollars a month.[19] A senior officer received sixty dollars a month, a servant, and a liberal travel allowance.[20]

Lieutenant Prince continued the supervision of the picket work. His objective included the duty to searching the camp area for thick and straight trees. Once a tree was selected it would be chopped down, the upper branches and trunk removed, and the log dragged back to camp. If they were fortunate, a log cart pulled by mules would move the tree back to camp.[21] The log would then be split near its middle, placed in a waiting post hole, and firmly anchored there. The next step taken by the Alabama Volunteers was to nail braces, constructed from scrap lumber, to flat points on the inside of the stockade. The top of the log was then hewed into a point, holes were then cut through each piece, about seven feet from the base of the picket. On the interior of the fort, pickets were fastened to a shelf, a three foot raised platform extended around the entire perimeter, which helped the men defend the fort from an elevated position.

As the days wore on, Lieutenant Prince oversaw the lengthening of the palisade; upon completion it enclosed nearly five hundred square feet.[22] The blockhouses at opposing ends of

the fort were constructed and soon reached above the pickets. The construction was relatively simple, as it involved chiseling a shallow cut in the log at both ends.[23] The logs were then stacked on each other in a crisscross pattern, resulting in a loose but structurally sound joint. Once the block houses reached the desired height, the log square was capped by the roof. The blockhouses were completed by caulking the walls and adding flooring and doors. Once completed, the two story 45x45 foot structures provided comfortable quarters and fulfilled their primary roles as sentry posts. It is possible that the upper level of the blockhouses were used as a storage space for the large amount of supplies that General Jesup later sent to the fort.

As Lindsay was completing his objectives, artillery Lieutenant Wall was fast at work completing his assignment. Wall was constructing the commissary storehouse; the largest and quite possibly the most important interior structure he was responsible for. The store house was rectangular and fifteen feet wide on the back and front, which contained the door, and forty-five foot long sides.[24] The store house was built in such a similar style to the two blockhouses that observers of the time period referenced it as a third blockhouse.[25] The magazine was the other interior structure; it was eight feet wide, fifteen feet long, and ten feet high. The magazine was located near the picketing at the center of the northeast wall, and occupied the same location as the magazine of Fort Alabama.[26] On December 6, 1836, Foster and his men were removing rubbish around the camp when they discovered another skull of an Indian, increasing the number to five killed as a result of the explosion during the evacuation of Fort Alabama in April.[27] The structure was sunk four feet into the ground, a precaution that would limit the chances of the magazine being hit by enemy fire. By December 22, 1836, as the fort was nearing completion, Colonel Foster and a portion of his forces were ordered to the Withlacoochee to start construction of another supply depot. By the end of the Seminole Wars, the United States

military constructed two hundred such forts.[28] One hundred men of the Third Artillery, led by Major McClintock were left at Fort Foster to complete the construction and guard the fort and partially completed bridge.[29]

The bridge that spanned the Hillsborough River on the Fort King Road was first constructed in March 1828. The first bridge was constructed by the troops stationed at Tampa Bay under the command of Colonel George Brooke. The bridge Brooke and his men constructed was an impressive structure, composed of three trestles. The highest of the three was "at least twelve feet above the water" and all three trestles were firmly anchored in the river bottom.[30] Rough planking, most likely constructed from cypress, stretched across the trestles, and on completion, the bridge furnished a useful route over the Hillsborough River.[31] In December 1835, Major Francis Dade found the smoldering ruins of the bridge, which delayed the march of his ill-fated mission by two days. Colonel Lindsay, the commander of the center wing, marched north, in compliance with General Scott's orders. When Lindsay and his men approached the Hillsborough River, they were hampered by the absence of the bridge. Lindsay complained that the "destruction of the bridges (along the Fort King Road) … delayed and embarrassed our march."[32] Until Colonel Foster rebuilt the bridge in the winter of 1836, the only way across the Hillsborough River was by wading through it.

When observing Colonel Foster's rendering of the two bridges, it appears the new bridge was constructed about seven hundred feet down the river from the original structure.[33] In Colonel Foster's sketches two crosstrees can be faintly seen and it appears that it was a sturdy structure capable of handling heavily loaded wagons. Even today, when standing on the reconstructed bridge and looking seven hundred feet up river, an embankment on each side of the river is clearly observable. Foster wrote to the Adjutant General of the army, informing him that the

Hillsborough and Withlacoochee bridges were "two of the finest bridges in Florida, and in fact, the finest ever built by the Army...."[34] Foster continued in the same letter to note "the bridges at each River form a part of the Forts, and are connected with, and defended by, the Fortifications...."[35] In closing, Foster proclaimed, "twenty-five men will defend either of them against all the Indians in Florida."[36]

Commanding general Jesup arrived on the Hillsborough River, a few days prior to Christmas. Jesup observed that the construction of the fort was "nearly completed."[37] Jesup was well satisfied with what he observed, and christened the newly erected post "Fort Foster."[38] Foster wrote in his journal "Thus in 18 days we have taken from the stump & erected 2 Block Houses, a large store house, & a fort that one Hundred men would easily defeat 2000 Indians at any time."[39] Colonel Foster agreed with the general on the quality of the fort, and once informed by Major McClintock that all of the work, including the bridge had been completed, Foster characterized the fort as "one of the strongest and best field fortifications ever erected (against Indians) on this continent."[40] Fort Foster was a model frontier fort, a result of impressive quality work.[41]

As early as December 20, 1836, troops were being sent to Fort Foster to resupply the Advanced Guard of the Tennessee Volunteers, consisting of thirty to forty horsemen.[42] To fulfill Special Order Number Two, twenty-five wagons were loaded with provisions and sent to Fort Armstrong on December 21, 1836. On December 23, 1836, the same day Jesup inspected the fort, he ordered that "fifty thousand rations of subsistence and ten thousand bushels of corn" be delivered to the post as soon as possible.[43] Jesup's next order directed a "six pounder and a howitzer with at least a hundred pounds of ammunition for each piece" be permanently maintained at the post.[44] Most important, fifty thousand "ball and buckshot cartridges," with

forty thousand "rounds of rifle powder and bullets" were to be placed "in deposit" at Foster.[45] The general then requested that "an ample supply of tools of every description as well as iron, steel, nails, cordage, etc. required for service in the field" be placed at Foster and the other "principal post in Florida."[46] Thirty-seven wagons reached Fort Foster on December 26, 1836, containing twelve thousand pounds of bread, bacon and tools previously requested.[47]

On December 13, 1836, Commodore Alexander Dallas, the commander of the West Indies Squadron, arrived in Tampa and announced he was "ready in any way to cooperate with" Jesup.[48] At the time Jesup was making preparations to put men in the field. The acquisition of nearly four hundred sailors and marines would have been a pleasant surprise. Before the end of the month numerous correspondence between the two men were exchanged. Finally on December 24, 1836, Jesup requested "fifty men to garrison Fort Foster."[49] Only four days later Jesup reconsidered and requested a "force of sixty men" suggesting the previous request would not be sufficient to garrison the post.[50]

Taking advantage of Commodore Dallas's men Jesup notified Major McClintock on January 2, 1837 that his force would be transferred and they would join the units that would be taking the field. Later that day McClintock was informed that:

> Lieutenant Leib of the Navy with a detachment of forty seamen moves this morning for Fort Foster. This force together with two noncommissioned officers and twelve privates, which you were instructed by Order No. 31 to leave at that post, is to continue until an additional force of marines can be added, its present garrison.[51]

If Lieutenant Leib had any illusions of garrison duty being uneventful that was quickly rectified. Leib's force had to repel several attempts by the Seminoles to storm the fort and burn the bridge. On January 20, 1837, Leib wrote an anxious note to Jesup informing him that a "party of Indians" had fired on a company of Alabama volunteers who were temporarily camped near

the fort. Returning fire the Indians scattered, "since which time we have neither seen, nor heard more of them."[52] On January 23, 1837, Leib wrote Jesup the enemy "fired into the fort, the moment they fired, they yelled and departed."[53] The next day Leib recounted the events, "they were heard to yell in the hammock… but I thought it more prudent to keep within the Fort, as my force is small."[54]

After the fire fight on January 23, 1837, an unknown number of Indians remained near the fort and provided "some occasional annoyance," Leib reported.[55] On February 3, 1837, the Seminoles became more aggressive and attacked Fort Foster while attempting to burn the Hillsborough Bridge. "The discharge of one of our field pieces, and a volley of musketry, put them to flight not however without returning the charge."[56] Upon receiving this missive, the commander at Fort Brooke, Marine Colonel William Miller, dispatched Jim Boy, a friendly Indian, and one hundred marines to aid Lieutenant Lieb if necessary.[57] Leib reported no further incidences suggesting that the sizable force convinced the Seminoles to abandon their siege.

As Fort Foster came under fire and conflicts with the Seminoles raged on through the winter, the supply trains continued to travel along the Fort King Road. Fort Foster received constant resupply of rations, arms, ammunition and the Major General even supplied several kegs of whiskey.

Jesup continued to stress the importance of adequate supplies being available to the forces that would be sent to the interior. Jesup sent word to Lieutenant John Casey, the subsistence officer at Fort Brooke, urging him to send the rations "to the interior depots as rapidly as the means of transportation … will permit."[58] The convoys that would bring the resources to the interior consisted of ten or twenty light wagons that were water tight and each was drawn by two horses. Lieutenant Colonel Miller was assigned the duty of guarding "the

convoys dispatched from time to time from the main depot at Tampa Bay to the several depots on the Fort King Road."[59]

From February 3, 1837 to February 18, 1837, a peace had been arranged with the Seminoles. During the time period, it was noted that the force garrisoned at Fort Foster was severely reduced. Lieutenant Leib reported on February 28, 1837 that the following men, including civilians, were attached to his command at the fort.

> One blacksmith, one carpenter, two Georgia volunteers, one who had his leg amputated; the other his attendant, one canter hired man, twelve marines, including one sergeant and one corporal, two men from company D, 3rd Artillery, one man from Company D, 4th Artillery, two sergeants from Company C, Marine Corps, and one private.

As February came to a close, the men at Fort Foster received word that the war could be ending. According to waggoneers and returning troops, they claimed the general had arranged to meet the Seminoles at Fort Dade on February 18, 1837. It was believed that Jesup would meet the Seminole chiefs and discuss conditions that would end the war and establish an effective removal treaty. As the men at Fort Foster continued their duties they became less optimistic as official word ending the Second Seminole War was never received. The men at Fort Foster did receive word that the Seminoles signed a "capitulation" on March 6, 1837, binding "themselves to move South of the Hillsborough by the 12th of April, and to be in readiness to emigrate to the west by the 10th."[60]

Jesup began removing the army from the field, making it possible to replace the navy personnel and marines at Fort Foster with regular army units. Jesup ordered troop movement to commence before the end of March and by March 22, 1837, he informed the Hillsborough commander that the "sailors and marines of your command, and belonging to the ship (Concord), should be relieved from service with the Army...."[61] Jesup continued dispatching orders on the

same day when he advised Brevet Major R.A. Zantzinger, of the Second Artillery, that he was being assigned to the Hillsborough post. Zantzinger was directed to take a detachment of the artillery and take command of Fort Foster the next day. On March 24, 1837, Zantzinger arrived at Fort Foster and eight days later he reported the strength of his command to his superiors.[62]

The unit defending Fort Foster was almost entirely composed of artillery personnel. Men from seven companies were directed to duty at the fort, including Companies E, F, I of the First Artillery Regiment and Companies A, B, G, H, of the Second Artillery Regiment.[63] One captain, one first lieutenant, two non-commissioned officers, and one private from the Marine Corps were also assigned to garrison Fort Foster. Upon review of the major's orders three-hundred and five men should have been present at Fort Foster. However, it was reported that only one hundred eighty men were present at Fort Foster prior to the end of March. The records indicate that the men missing were either on detached service, furlough, or absent without leave.[64] On March 25, 1837, the men of Fort Foster received word that twenty-five Indians had been assigned to supply the command with game. The men must have been relieved by the thought of receiving fresh meat, seeing as previously several of the men stationed at Fort Foster complained of the poor quality of bread and rancid bacon rations.

Jesup signaled the importance of Fort Foster as a strategic location by expanding the number of forces garrisoned there in early March. According to the terms of capitulation signed on March 6, 1837, the Seminoles agreed to move south of the Hillsborough River by early April. The troops at Fort Foster were located parallel to the designated line that the Seminoles would have to retreat south of in order to be in compliance. It is logical to think many of the troops at Fort Foster would have been assigned to patrol the surrounding area to round up any reluctant bands of Seminoles they encountered. The troops also had the difficult duty of enforcing Order

Number 79, forbidding Floridians or other whites from entering the territory south of the demarcation line between Fort Foster and the Atlantic Ocean. In addition to these tasks, the men were still required to guard the fort and make sure the bridge stayed intact allowing troops and supplies to flow along the Fort King Road.[65]

Major Zantzinger dealt with one of the more concerning issues for the troops stationed at Fort Foster. Despite the fact the fort enclosed over five hundred square feet, it was not possible to have all of the troops encamped inside the fort. Zantzinger wrote, "most of the companies were encamped outside, rendering it necessary that comfortable and durable palmetto sheds should be erected over the tents of officers and men, as well as over those occupied as hospitals, and in which property was stored."[66] Foster noted that, in the construction of the fort in 1836, a camp was constructed.

> Situated south and east of the fort, covering an area of over 300 yards. The camp consisted of a line of wagons on a southwest-northeast axis between the fort and barrack positions. Approximately 100 yards southeast of the wagon line was the barrack area. This was composed of two lines of tents parallel with the axis of the wagon line. The outside tent line was more closely spaced than the interior line. Campfires were placed both between the two lines of tents and outside the exterior tent line. A log bastion was constructed at each end of the barrack position.[67]

The entire area appears to have been enclosed by some type of picket line which intersected the fort at the east and west bastion. Surrounding the entire encampment was a series of large fires which probably were used to prevent night infiltration of the defense system.[68] In his personal journal on January 5, 1837, Foster referenced fires built at "150 to 200 yards around the encampment by each company and lighted up after dark to allow the sentinels to discover any object coming between them and the fires."[69]

Under Zantzinger's command at Fort Foster in the spring of 1837, he was responsible for one hundred eighty-one troops. In order to expedite construction Zantzinger eliminated all unnecessary drills and inspections, and retained a perfunctory daily roll call.[70]

Despite attempts to construct shelter in and around Fort Foster, the troops began to be affected by unhealthy conditions, much the same since their entry into Florida, but particularly severe at the Hillsborough site. The assistant surgeon at Fort Foster, Doctor Baldwin, complained about the rising incidences of illness and disease at the fort. Baldwin wrote a substantial medical report for the month of April in which he gives reasons for the deterioration of heath amongst the troops:

> By comparing this, with my last report, it will be seen, that the number taken sick has been very much increased. This is not surprising when we consider the number of causes conspiring to render this post unhealthy. In addition to (being in) the vicinity of the river, we are surrounded by marshes, which when exposed to the sun, must be a fruitful source of miasmatic inhalations. The clearing of the hammock without any other cause, will of itself be sufficient to produce disease; for example it has afforded a quantity of vegetable matter for decomposition, at the same time it has exposed a large boggy surface to the action of the sun. Whenever it rains, the pickets are overflowed and the tents of the soldiers are flooded with water; and when this is succeeded by a hot sun new causes of Dysentery or Diarrhea invariably occur. Some of which are very violent. But independent of the usual diseases of the climate there is a tendency to the prevalence of scurvy. Although I have only reported two cases, yet they are of a very malignant character.... From a review of the above remarks I would suggest the property of abandoning this post as Early as possible.[71]

In addition to Baldwin's observations he omitted that poor food, inadequate sanitation facilities, and germ infested drinking water were quickly deteriorating the ability to garrison the fort without sustaining heavy losses of life.

As early as July 12, 1834, the desperate conditions in the fort and the surrounding area began to appear in the documentary record. John Maher wrote his wife, "It is dry and warm here only for the Sea and a few creeks we would suffer from the heat." Maher also mentioned that

within the three hospitals in the area two hundred men in all were sick.[72] According to Lieutenant Prince four hundred men were sick at Tampa Bay on April 14, 1836.[73] Even at Fort Brooke one hundred eighty-four men of five hundred thirty-six were reported sick as of February 1839.[74] On February 4, 1838, Assistant Surgeon E.H. Abadie wrote, "I would therefore recommend the measure of sending both sick and well out of the territory being confident that it would save not only the expenditure of lives but also money."[75]

After Baldwin's first request went unanswered, he quickly sent correspondence to Doctor J.A. Kearney the medical director of the Army of the South. On May 9, 1837, Baldwin sent his letter stating, "the number of sick has been progressively increasing," he also noted, "and from the violent character of some recent cases we have reason to fear the approach of a serious epidemic."[76] In conclusion of the letter, Baldwin demanded that Kearney order the evacuation of the fort or he would be the one responsible for the loss of life surely to proceed. Zantzinger agreed with Baldwin on the conditions at Fort Foster and he too wrote a letter asking Kearney to abandon the fort. If abandonment was not entirely possible he asked the force to be reduced to a number that could be accommodated in the blockhouses, in order to escape the elements of the surrounding environment.

As Jesup looked for way to reduce the amount of men in the interior that were subjected to unhealthy conditions, he was worried about the possibility of the Indians refusing to honor the March agreement. Jesup maintained correspondence with the staff at Fort Brooke asking constant questions. "How many Indians were arriving at Fort Brooke?" "Would other warriors follow their example and leave the peninsula peacefully?" Replies from Fort Brooke were often negative and must have caused Jesup to doubt the sincerity of the Seminoles to adhere to the terms of the agreement. The negative response also forced Jesup to maintain large numbers of

troops in strategic locations to squash any uprisings. Despite the negative response to Jesup's questions, he still remained optimistic that the "Indians will all come in and immigrate in the course of the summer."[77] Jesup was so confident that the Seminoles would honor the agreement that on May 9, 1837, he wrote a letter to Navy Captain Thomas Crabb, commander at Fort Brooke, "I am confident that the war is over, and that the Indians, though they may not be readily assembled for immigration, will not renew hostilities."[78] Less than a month later Jesup announced to General Roger Jones what he had been fearing, "I have the honor to report that this campaign, so far as relates to Indian emigration, has entirely failed."[79]

Baldwin continued to forward letters to all chains of command throughout Florida as he awaited orders that would allow the troops to be removed from hazardous conditions. Baldwin received the following message on May 10, 1837 from Major Zantzinger:

> The increasing sickness amongst the troops of your command as reported as yourself and the medical officer, Dr. Baldwin, has included the Commanding General to decide on their removal to some more healthy position, except a garrison of about sixty men and the necessary officers for Fort Foster.

Jesup ordered Major Zantzinger and Doctor Baldwin to find a site for temporary encampment that would provide the men of Fort Foster with more favorable conditions.

In anticipation of Jesup's order, Baldwin had spent time scouting the surrounding area for acceptable locations for encampment. Jesup's correspondence was received May 12, 1837, and only two days later the two officers sent word to Jesup notifying him of their decision and of the favorable conditions of the selected site.

> The Point which we selected as being most eligible is close upon the main road about $7^{1/2}$ miles from the fort, and by a trail supposed to be only six miles it is elevated and slopes gradually to the Lake Thlonotosassa which is surrounded by a high beach composed of pure white sand: The bottom is of the same nature, and the water is clear, deep and constantly agitated by a refreshing breeze.[80]

On May 15, 1837, Jesup replied that he had no objection to the site and encouraged the troops to move there as soon as possible. Jesup did require that fifty men remain to garrison Fort Foster, a defensive unit capable of defending itself and the bridge from Seminole attack. On May 17, 1837, Zantzinger and one hundred sixty-seven soldiers marched out of Fort Foster and down the Fort King Road to their new encampment.[81] Lieutenant E.A. Capron of the First Artillery Regiment assumed command at Fort Foster. Capron commanded seventy-one troops who remained to defend the fort.

By June 5, 1837, Capron and the men under his command received the news of Jesup's summer plans. Jesup has sent official word to General Jones that the campaign had failed and detailed his plans for the summer months. Jesup noted:

> The season is too far advanced for the renewal of offensive operations: All therefore that can be done is to place the troops in such positions as shall at the same time cover the frontier and give reasonable assurance of health. The garrisons of Fort Mellon and Call on the St. Johns, and Foster on the Hillsborough, must be withdrawn in consequence of the unhealthiness of the sites....
>
> The difficulties presented by the nature of the country are great, but those presented by the climate are grater—many of the post necessary to succeed during the season of operations must be abandoned early in the summer or preserve the lives of their garrisons, and the consequence is that at the commencement of every campaign nearly all the interior depots have to be reestablished.[82]

Jesup originally thought some men should remain at Fort Foster throughout the summer. Eventually he decided to abandon the post and the camp at Thlonotosassa on June 12, 1837. By the end of the week the men of both posts proceeded to Fort Brooke and most took leave or transfer.[83]

As the summer approached Jesup wrote his superiors asking to be removed from the Florida assignment. Jesup had assumed command in Florida in 1836 under unfavorable circumstances that hampered the effectiveness of the army. Among the difficulties he

encountered were: the inability to supply interior units, personnel shortages, and constant inability to trust the agreements made with the Seminoles. On June 22, 1837, Jesup received the option to remove himself from the Florida campaign. However, by this time he was under criticism from citizens and government officials.[84] Jesup decided it would be better to leave Florida after a successful campaign so he refused the government's offer and the requests of General Gaines and Scott to assume command.[85]

Military operations stalled in the summer and Jesup took advantage of the months void of major conflicts to prepare for a successful fall campaign. Jesup wrote a letter to Captain George Crosman, senior assistant quartermaster for the Army of the South on June 11, 1837, requesting the materials that would soon be needed. He called for:

> Light covered pontoon-wagons, for four mules—straight bodies; to be made water tight, like those used by Col. Dodge's Dragoons in Arkansas and Missouri in 1833 and '36. Light travelling forage and tool wagons, for two horses each.... Trapaulins of all sizes, from 10 to 30 feet square; for covering supplies at depots, &c. 100 dray ropes—30 feet long—of one inch rope untarried, 1,000 sheep skins—in the wool; to be used instead of saddle blankets. Large quantities of Indian or Spanish rawhide packing rope, halters, and larritts. Parched cornmeal, or corn flour—firm and course—carefully put up in stout lines sacks, of convenient sizes for transportation and use—say from half a peck to two pecks each. Indian pouivican or fresh portable soup, if it can be made in sufficient quantities—if not—fresh beef. A corps of teamesters ... veterinarians.... Forage—hay and oats...[86]

Other officers throughout the command in Florida requested additional materials to help their individual units succeed. Captain D'Lagnee, a ranking ordnance officer, made it known that the mountain howitzer was the "only gun upon which you can really rely in the approaching campaign. 24 pound howitzers and even the 6 pound field guns are quite useless in the interior of Florida."[87] Colonel George Bomford responded on September 12, 1837, that he needed a

"traveling forge, and 11 12 pdr. mountain howitzer carriages."[88] Bomford scoured Florida for muskets and rifles and the ammunition required to fulfill the amounts constantly being requested.

As fall approached Jesup deployed his new plan; he separated the four thousand army troops into seven columns that would each operate autonomously. Each of the seven units was directed to search a designated area in efforts to penetrate the interior and force the Seminoles to fight or surrender. In order for Jesup's plan to work the units would have to remain in the field throughout the campaign. In order to provide the army with the needed supplies and rations, supply depots and forts protecting transportation routes would be heavily relied on.

Jesup began specifying the posts that would be essential to his plan, and Fort Foster was one of the strategic locations listed. Jesup sent official word to Colonel Thompson on October 23, 1837 to "occupy Fort Foster immediately with fifty men, and place ten thousand rations of subsistence and two thousand rations of forage in it. Let the force be of the Second Artillery. Let ten men be mounted."[89] On October 29, 1837, Brevet Major Francis Belton of the Second Artillery Regiment received Order Number Nineteen directing him to:

> Proceed with his company on the 1st Proximo to Fort Foster on the Hillsborough River and garrison the post in obedience to the instruction of the Commanding General of the 23rd October. Ten mounted Dragoons of Lt. Bryant's Company will accompany Major Belton and remain subject to his orders and an officer of Dragoons will be in command of the detachment. The assistant quartermaster general and assistant commissary of subsistence will deliver to the officer who may be designated by Major Belton 10,000 rations of subsistence, and 2,000 rations of forage for Fort Foster. Also 600 pounds of corn and 600 pounds of oats, and 1500 rations of subsistence; two 6 pounders with 150 rounds of fixed ammunition, grape and canister.[90]

Belton and his men were ordered to support the troops under the command of Colonel Zachary Taylor, who controlled Fort Foster, Fort Brooke, Fort Gardiner, and Fort Bassinger.[91]

Second Lieutenant William Warren Chapman, a West Point graduate, arrived at Fort Brooke on October 27, 1837 and was assigned to Company B of the Second Artillery. As Chapman prepared to leave Fort Brooke to garrison Fort Foster he wrote a letter to his wife describing recent military success. "Powell and seven other chiefs of the Micasukes, 73 warriors, 50 negroes, and 30 women were surrounded while in council, by a body of 300 Dragoons and taken prisoners."[92] Chapman continued to describe the importance of the recent actions to his wife "The Master Spirits of the war are taken" due to these recent events the war will continue with great vigor.[93] Forts Dade and Foster were to be re-garrisoned immediately and Chapman departed to fulfill the order shortly after writing his wife.

Chapman arrived at Fort Foster under the direction of Major Belton's B Company of the Second Artillery. Shortly after his arrival he was appointed the Assistant Commissary of Substance and Quarter Master of Fort Foster. Chapman described the fort in a letter to his wife as being built of stockade with two blockhouses that offer a cross fire on the bridge. Chapman also noted the necessity of the post, it served as a defensive outpost to guard the bridge, a depot for provisions, and a hospital of the sick and wounded.[94]

On October 25, 1837, Jesup appointed sutlers to serve at several of the forts in Florida, in efforts to ease the harsh conditions the men were sure to face through the campaign. Joseph Burr was notified that he was "authorized to sutle for the posts of Fort Foster and Fort Dade which will be reoccupied at an early period, and you are permitted to open a store at Tampa Bay...."[95] Burr took full advantage of this arrangement an often his wagon would arrive at Fort Foster. Burr provided much needed articles and dry goods, but most of the men were interested in the prospect of acquiring whiskey. Selling whiskey to troops was illegal but the prospect of earning large profits led many to engage in the transaction.

While posted at Fort Foster, Chapman engaged in repairing the fort and several construction projects. He built houses for the comfort of the officers, erected a store house, four larges houses to store rations, built two sheds, one hospital and three houses.[96] In addition to construction projects, the men who garrisoned the fort were sent out every day on scouting missions. Chapman recorded one account of a scout who heard the cock of a rifle and saw bushes stir. "The rider fired his pistol, plunged his spurs into his horse and rushed from the scene of danger."[97] Chapman does indicate all of their days were not full of action as on some occasions "we amuse ourselves by shooting an alligator."[98] In December 1837, Chapman wrote his wife claiming that he had not seen an Indian in "this vicinity these two months."[99]

The men at Fort Foster learned that Colonel Taylor had engaged several hundred Seminoles near Lake Okeechobee as the year of 1837 came to a close. Taylor's forces encountered the loss of twenty-six men and one hundred twelve were injured.[100] Despite the casualties, Taylor's actions forced the Seminoles to fall back. Jesup joined Taylor's forces on January 18, 1838, near the recent battle ground of Lake Okeechobee. The majority of the army in Florida operated southeast of Fort Foster by 1838. On January 24, 1838, a confrontation occurred on the Lockahatchee River, and the inability of the army to subdue the enemy led Jesup to arrange another truce.[101]

The official meeting between Jesup and the principle chiefs of the Seminole tribe commenced on February 8, 1838. Jesup requested that the federal government allow the remaining members of the Seminole tribe to live in south Florida. The Seminoles camped near Jesup's forces while they awaited a response from the administration in Washington. Almost a month pasted before word reached Jesup of the Administrations unequivocal rejection to the peace terms. Jesup sprung to action by sending Colonel David Twiggs of the Second Dragoons

to the Seminole camp, and without firing a shot, Twiggs and his men captured over five hundred Indians.[102] After the actions of Twiggs the Seminoles renewed the war and the bands of Seminole warriors fled south.

Fort Foster continued to supply the interior with troops and rations as the hostilities were renewed. As the winter faded and the summer season approached, the men received word that General Jesup had been relieved of his duty in Florida. In Jesup's final recommendations to the new Commander Zachary Taylor, he spoke on behalf of the hazardous conditions:

> Before the approach of the sickly season the garrisons of Fort Dade and Fort Foster be withdrawn. Neither of these posts…can be occupied after the 1st of June without great danger to the health of the troops.[103]

Taylor honored the advice of Jesup, and by the end of May 1838 Fort Foster was abandoned. Fort Foster remained without a garrison for the remainder of the war. The fort was briefly reoccupied in September 1849, during the Third Seminole War but the force was garrisoned there less than a month.[104] Fort Foster faded from the record books until the 1970's when an effort began to revitalize the structure and protect the historic resource.

Chapter Six

## Fort Foster and the Seminoles: the Aftermath

Fort Foster closed prior to the end of the Second Seminole War. Even after Fort Foster became an inactive post, fighting between the army and the Seminoles continued throughout Florida for four additional years. Under Jesup's command, the army employed questionable tactics such as the capturing of Seminole chiefs under white flags of truce. Osceola was one of the chiefs captured by Jesup in September of 1837. Osceola was removed from the territory in an effort to dissolve his influence as the respected leader of the Seminoles operating within Florida. On January 30, 1838, Osceola died in captivity, and the news of his death must have disheartened the Seminoles engaged in resistance throughout Florida.[1] Jesup then requested to be relieved from his duty in Florida, after his suggestion to end the war was rejected by the Martin van Buren administration.

In May 1838, Zachary Taylor took command of the operations in Florida. Taylor found it necessary to construct numerous small posts across Florida, at intervals of twenty miles. The string of posts was intended to keep the Seminoles in the southern portion of Florida. As Taylor constructed the needed outposts he had to deal with eroding American support for the war. Americans were getting frustrated by the length of the war and the expenditures of the government. In addition, public support fell sharply as Americans became aware of the gruesome details of the war. Many Seminoles were abandoning or killing their crying children in an effort to remain undetected from approaching military units.[2] As the Seminoles retreated deeper into the swaps of Florida the use of blood hounds was employed by the American Military. Upon finding the Seminoles, the dogs would maul the Indian to death. Many times the dogs would do this even before the military unit was in the area and offer the Seminole the ability to surrender.[3]

On May 19, 1839, Martin Van Buren sent the Commanding General of the Army, Alexander Macomb, to negotiate a treaty with the Seminoles. An agreement was reached that gave the Seminoles a reservation in the Southeast portion of the Florida, in return for the promise of ending hostilities. That same month Taylor requested a transfer out of Florida. He had served in Florida longer than any previous commander. Taylor's request was granted and he was soon replaced by General Walker Keith Armistead. On July 23, 1839, hostilities continued when one hundred fifty Seminoles attacked a trading post on the Caloosahatchee River.[4] The post was garrisoned by twenty-three troops, commanded by Colonel William Harney. The conflicted resulted in several deaths on each side and renewed the war.

As Armistead arrived in Florida he went on an immediate offensive, campaigning even in the summer months. Armistead's forces burned fields and drove off horses, cattle, and pigs which left the Seminoles in a deplorable situation. This resulted in starvation, disease, and often death amongst the Seminole population. In addition to Armistead's actions, the navy sent Lieutenant John McLaughin to prepare a join army navy amphibious force to operate in south Florida. McLaughin's force established a base at Tea Table Key in the upper keys and operated from there in December 1840 through January 1841.[5] The force utilized canoes to penetrate deep into the everglades to engage the Seminoles. In retaliation the Indians attacked Indian Key burning several buildings and killed one family. Colonel Harney and his men, a force of ninety, found Chakaika's camp deep in the everglades and killed the chief responsible for the attacks on Indian Key and hung some of the members of the tribe.

The government grew tired of warfare as the years went on. They sent Armistead $55,000 to use to bribe chiefs to surrender and immigrate to the west.[6] By the spring of 1841, Armistead had sent four hundred fifty Seminoles to new lands in the west and another two hundred thirty-

six were at Fort Brooke awaiting transportation.[7] Armistead estimated that only three hundred warriors remained in all of Florida.

In May of 1841, Armistead was replaced by Colonel William Worth. Worth concentrated on the downsizing of military operations in Florida. Worth quickly released one thousand civilian employees and consolidated commands.[8] He continued warfare by ordering search and destroy missions. The missions relied heavily on bloodhounds tracking the Seminoles through the swamps and attacking the Indians as the military forces surrounded the tribe.

The last action of the Second Seminole War occurred when General William Bailey and planter Jack Bellamy led a fifty-two man force on a three day pursuit of a small band of Chief Tiger Tail's warriors. They had recently been attacking settlers. Bailey and his force found and fired the last shots of the war as they killed the twenty-four braves hiding in a hammock.

Worth recommended in the early part of 1842 that the remaining Seminoles be left in peace. He received authorization to allow the Seminoles to occupy land in southwestern Florida and declare the end of the war. The official announcement of the end of the Second Seminole War came August 14, 1842. That same month congress passed the Armed Occupation Act, allowing settlers to acquire land if they improved it and were prepared to defend themselves from Indians. By the end of 1842, any Indians not on the reservation were rounded up and sent west. In April of 1843, the army's presence in Florida was reduced to one regiment. Worth reported in November of 1843, that only ninety-five Seminole men and two hundred women and children remained in Florida.

The cost of the Second Seminole War was estimated to be between $30,000 and $40,000 dollars making it one of America's most expensive wars.[9] More than forty thousand regular United States Military, Militiamen and Volunteers served in the war. Of the men who served one

thousand four hundred sixty-six men lost their lives in Florida, mostly from disease.[10] Three Hundred twenty-eight United States military men and fifty-five volunteers were killed in action.[11] There is no official record of Seminole deaths but many died as a result of battle, starvation or disease in Florida. Others died on the journey west or once they arrived in Indian Territory. Three thousand eight hundred twenty-four Seminoles were shipped west and by 1844 only three thousand one hundred thirty-six Seminoles were living in Western Indian Territory.[12] By the end of the Third Seminole War, in the 1850's, only one hundred Seminoles remained in Florida.

The remaining Seminoles in Florida adopted to their conditions and found ways to continue living. The Seminole tribe is now composed of two thousand tribal members who hold ninety thousand acres of land in Florida.[13] A large portion of the income the tribe acquires is through the gaming industry, including the operation of several casinos throughout the state. Another lucrative economic investment the Seminole tribe has made is operating a discounted tobacco store since 1977.[14] They also have a substantial citrus industry in south Florida, operate airboat tours of the Everglades, and operate the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki museum.

The Seminoles who were sent west now occupy six hundred thirty-three square miles in Oklahoma.[15] The Seminole tribe of Oklahoma is composed of seventeen thousand members and five thousand three hundred fifteen of them reside on the reservation in Seminole County Oklahoma. Much like the Seminole tribe in Florida they rely heavily on the gaming industry to supplement their income. The tribe operates three casinos and a convenient store, however many of the members work in the industrial field.

In subsequent years, Florida's white population boomed. It became a winter destination and the scene of land speculation. Floridians endured the Great Depression, and Franklin

Roosevelt's New Deal, a pragmatic attempt to jump-start the United States economy, it ironically breathed new life into the long forgotten Fort Foster. From 1933 and lasting to 1942 the Civilian Conservation Corps undertook a wide variety of tasks to improve communities throughout the country and get Americans back to work. In 1936 the Civilian Conservation Corps planned the construction of eight state parks in Florida.[16] One of the first eight parks constructed was Hillsborough River State Park located directly across from Fort Foster. The park was constructed on a geographical feature along the Hillsborough River that created a series of rapids.[17] Hillsborough River State Park was opened to visitors a short time later and provided recreational opportunities to guest such as hiking, fishing, and canoeing.

Conclusion

## Seminole War Forts and American Memory

Fort Foster's role in the Second Seminole war provided evidence reguarding the importance of Indian War era posts in America. The necessity of forts to combat insurgency forces was observable throughout Florida. This lead to the development of military doctrine on counterinsurgency. The history of Fort Foster showed the struggles of the United States Army in its attempt to wage an unjust and unpopular war.

The Seminole War posts established a military presence amongst the insurgency and allowed the army to penetrate deeper into enemy territory. The surplus of ammunition and rations made available at forts helped the army continue to attack the Seminoles. Under Worth's command the seek and destroy missions he ordered sent troops deep into Seminole territory and helped break the will of many of the Seminoles. Those actions convinced many of the Seminoles to relocate to the west. The effectiveness of Seminole War forts to supply the army with needed tools, rations, and weapons proved pivotal in the war effort. Many offensive campaigns, captures of Seminole chiefs and signed treaties were made possible through the utilization of forts.

The United States military has taken advantage of the records and evidence of the Second Seminole War to craft a methodology to effectively end insurgencies. Numerous theories, pamphlets, and books have leaned on the actions of Seminole War commanders and the conditions the army faced in Florida to better prepare for future engagements.

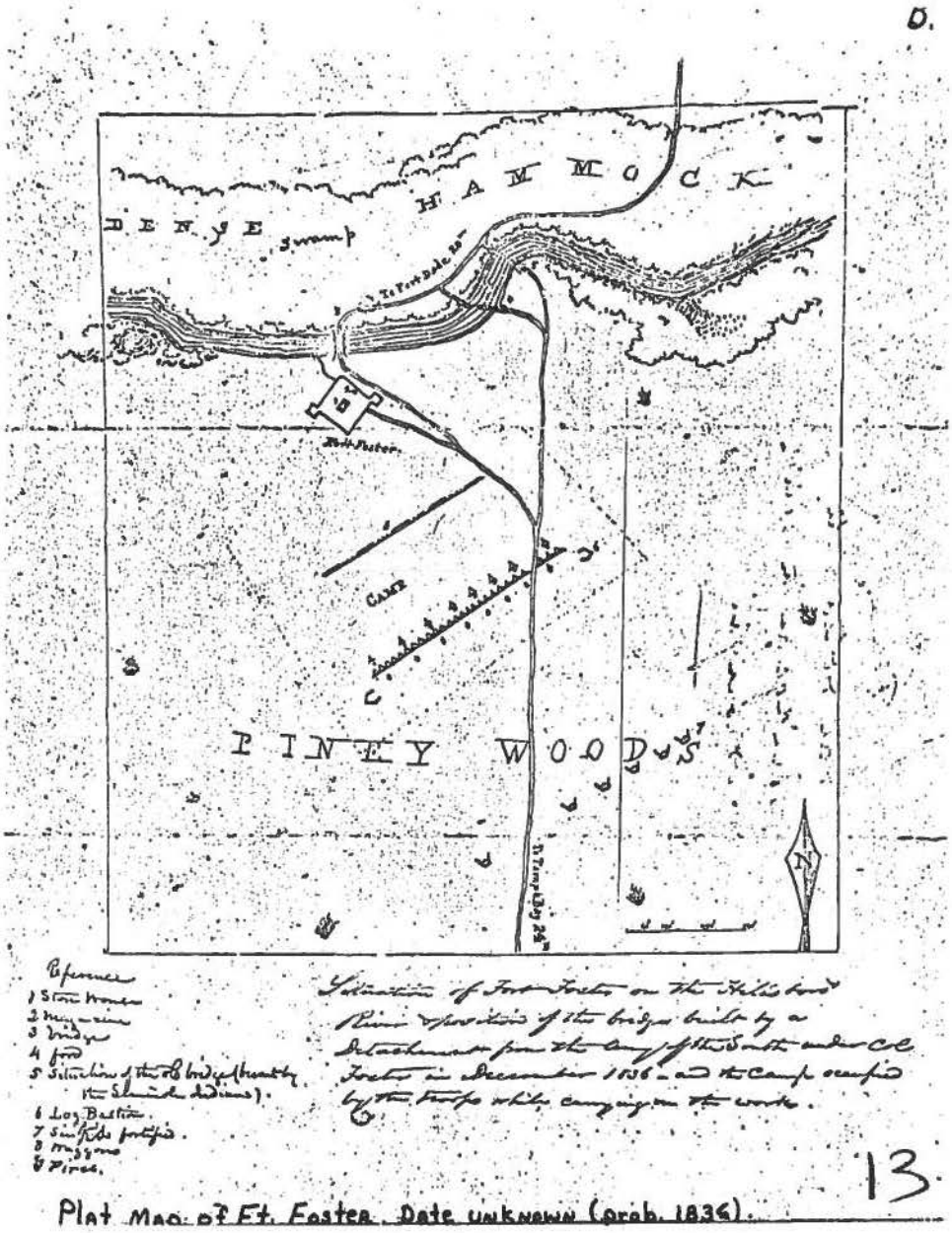
Fort Foster and other Seminole War forts offer a great contrast to Indian War era forts constructed in the western part of the United States. The forts help create a discussion about military history and which of its components are celebrated and why. The time period of Seminole War forts and Indian War Forts overlap making the comparison more intriguing. The construction methods and the materials used varied, but the shape, size or even location is not

what draws the difference in the way the forts are chosen to be remembered. Many western Indian War era forts are recognized as places of protection and commerce. This association with western forts as places of exchange and cultural blending affect the way people choose to remember the forts and often choose to celebrate the mission and hold the remaining structures in high regard. Seminole War forts have assumed a tainted history. The forts are seen as tools to remove a militarily inferior opponent off of their land. That quest often viewed as immoral is complicated by the inability to even declare an American victory. The Seminole War hangs over the United States as a forgettable unethical quest that many would prefer not to remember or celebrate.

The Seminoles have taken pride in being the only tribe never to sign a treaty with the United States. The war their ancestors fought has enabled them to remain in Florida and afforded them to a certain extent, the choice to assimilate in American culture. Many tribal members continue to honor the remembrance of the warriors who fought in the Seminole Wars by participating in reenactments. Reenactors hope to present an accurate presentation of former conflicts to help educate the public and ensure the Seminole Wars not be forgotten. The reconstructed Fort Foster provides a physical location for the continuation of learning from the past to ensure a better future.

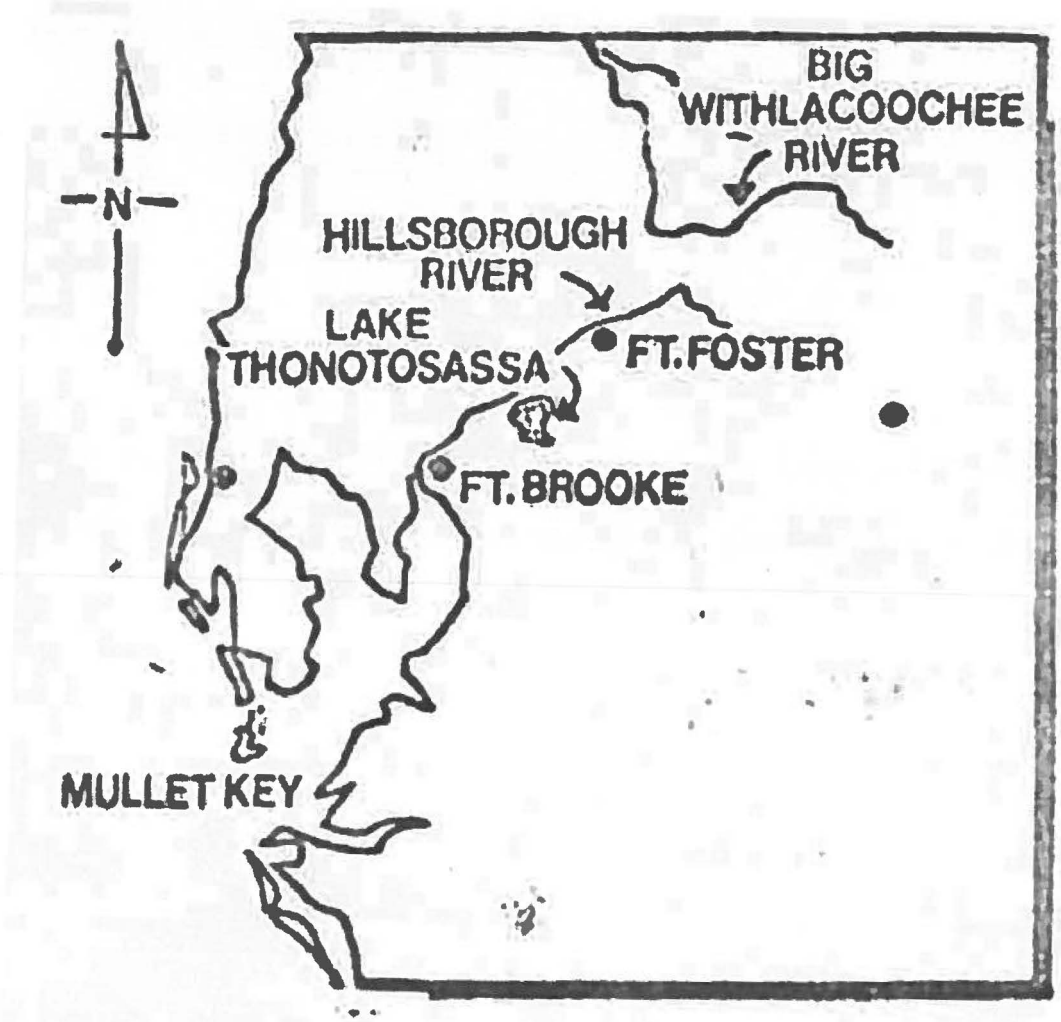
APPENDIX A

Plat map of Fort Foster date unknown Colonel Foster's Journal Florida Archives Tallahassee, Florida



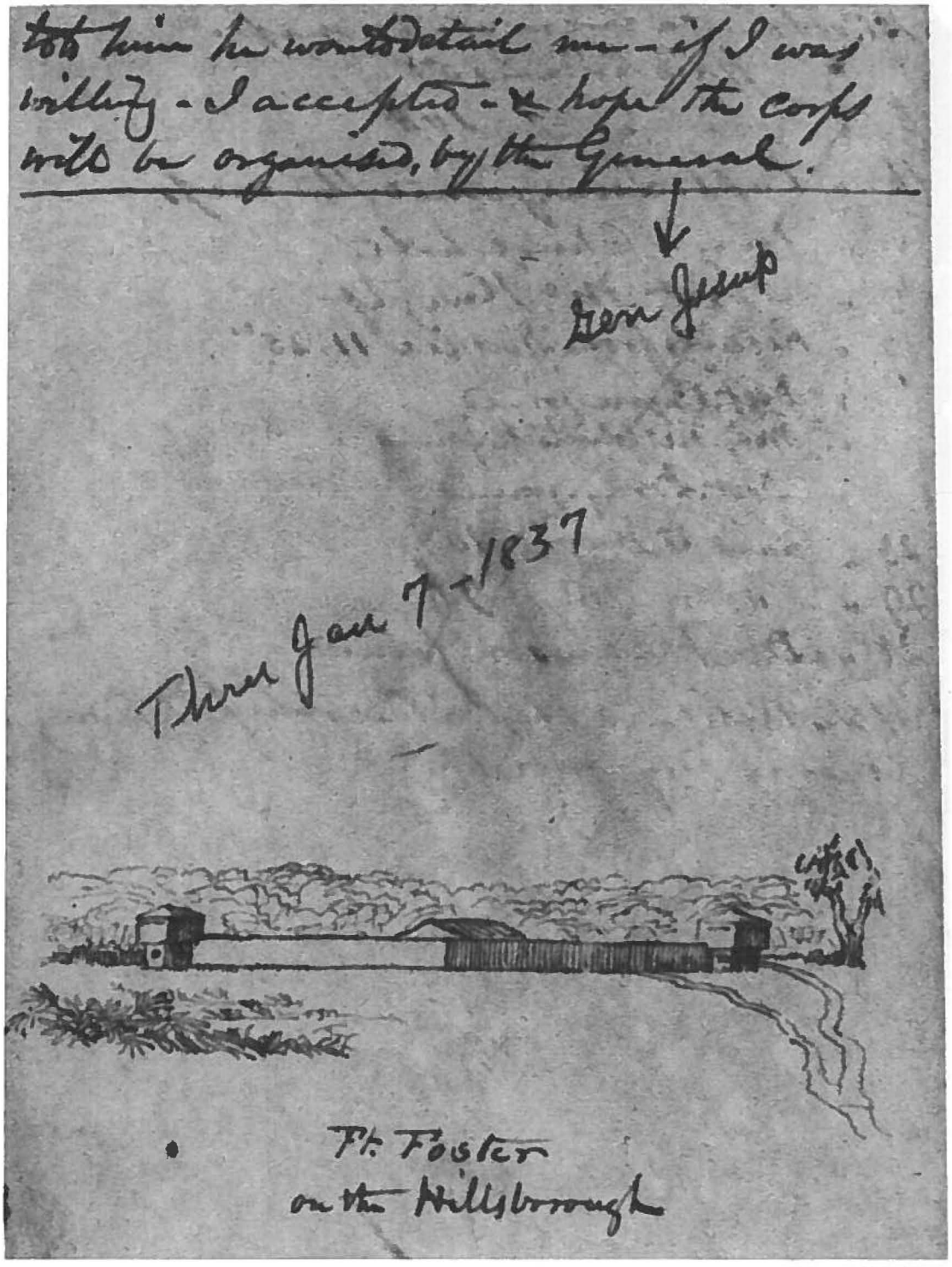
APPENDIX B

Mark Todd, Fort Fosters Role Was Brief, *Tampa Tribune*, July 9, 1972.



APPENDIX C

Fort Foster Sketcha General Jesups Papers National Archives Washington D.C.



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