

# **A Pyrrhic Victory: The Second Seminole War, 1835-1842**

Lukáš Bílík

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Fakulta humanitních studií  
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## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

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1835-1842**

Zásady pro vypracování:

**Shromážděte literaturu a možné zdroje k tématu.**

**Vysvětlete a popište vznik Seminolů na Floridě a události, které předcházeli druhé Seminolské válce.**

**Zaměřte se na počátek druhé Seminolské války a objasněte hlavní příčiny, které k ní vedli.**

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**Uvedte, proč podle vás obě strany dosáhli Pyrrhova vítězství.**

Rozsah bakalářské práce:

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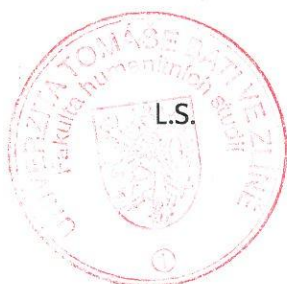
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## **ABSTRAKT**

Předmětem této bakalářské práce je prokázat fakt, že obě strany konfliktu, během druhé Seminolské války, dosáhli pouze Pyrrhova vítězství. Neboli vítězství za příliš velkou cenu. Práce se zabývá historií a událostmi, které k této válce vedly, a hlavně pak rozebírá sedm let dlouhý konflikt, který vyústil v uzavření míru mezi zúčastněnými stranami.

Klíčová slova: Pyrrhovo vítězství, Druhá Seminolská válka, Nejdelší Americko-Indiánský konflikt, Seminolové, Guerillová válka, Florida, americká tažení, Smlouva Moultrie Creek a Payne's Landing

## **ABSTRACT**

This bachelor thesis demonstrates that both sides of the conflict, known as the Second Seminole War, reached only a pyrrhic victory. A victory, but at a great price. It also examines the history and events that led to the Second Seminole War, and further examines a seven years long conflict, which ultimately ended by a truce.

Keywords: A Pyrrhic victory, The Second Seminole War, The longest American-Indian war, The Seminoles, Guerilla war, Florida, American Campaigns, The treaties of Moultrie Creek and Payne's Landing

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## INTRODUCTION

“One more such a victory and I am lost.”

King Pyrrhus of Epirus<sup>1</sup>

Good knowledge of a terrain and guerrilla warfare have proven successful in fighting against a much stronger enemy. The United States participated in numerous wars and battles, whether in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Vietnam, or in 1835, the Second Seminole War. Despite 150 years separating such conflicts, they share one characteristic. In each of them, the United States faced (on paper) a weaker enemy, which in a certain phase of the war turned to guerilla warfare. The first time the United States had to deal with this kind of war was during the Second Seminole War. The Florida Seminoles were able to successfully resist the Americans for several years. The U.S. generals adapted to this new war strategy only slowly, leading to what several scholars have classified a pyrrhic victory over the Seminoles.

This thesis mostly deals with the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842, the longest and costliest American-Indian war in U.S history. The first chapter describes the origin and history of the Seminoles in Florida, in order to clarify what preceded the Second Seminole War and its possible causes. However, the main goal of this work is to establish why the war was a pyrrhic victory for the both sides. The United States had clear and overwhelming superiority in numbers, more money, better equipment, and a belief in white racial superiority. The Seminoles were far outnumbered and poorly armed, but they possess a great knowledge of the environment and what is more important, they were determined to

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<sup>1</sup> Mark A. Wollaeger, Victor Luftig, and Robert E. Spoo, eds., *Joyce and the Subject of History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 50-51.

stay and fight for their homeland. Although most of them did not achieve their goal of staying in Florida, they put up so much resistance that the Americans were ultimately forced to sue for peace. Both sides achieved their objectives during the war: the Americans gained possession of most of Florida, including the fertile farming lands, while the Seminoles still in Florida were allowed to remain in the territory's southern reaches. But these objectives were achieved at a great price.

## 1 THE ORIGIN OF THE SEMINOLES IN FLORIDA PENINSULA

The Seminole Wars. Not many Native American tribes successfully resisted white Americans and their errand to spread civilization and obtain new land like the Seminole Indians of Florida. The Seminoles were not only able to fight back, but for some time, they were able to stop and even defeat Americans military forces. Collectively, the three Seminole Wars were the longest and most costly military conflict between white Americans and natives.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1 Florida, the Creeks and the Seminoles

Florida at the beginning of the eighteenth century was Spanish territory, and it was inhabited by about one hundred thousand native Indians of various tribes, e.g. the Apalachees, Calusas and Timucuan. They fought with each other, hunted game, herded cattle, farmed and traded with the Europeans. The Seminoles did not exist.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1.1.1 The Creek Confederacy

The Creek Confederacy of the American southeast was a community of about sixty Indian towns with a population of almost twenty thousands. Each tribe in the Confederacy had their own habits, language and culture...identity. English traders were able to identify two major language dialects among them. The Muskogee and the Mikusaki. The Muskogee was represented by Upper Creeks, who lived around the Alabama River in Tallapoosa and Coosa, and the Mikusaki was represented by Lower Creeks, who lived in the Chattahoochee River valley. Both parties, Upper and Lower Creeks started to migrate in to

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<sup>2</sup> James W. Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 3-4.

Florida in the late eighteenth century. This Creek migration had three main phases that took their place from 1740 to 1820.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.1.2 The Creek Migration to Florida

The first phase started in 1702. The Creeks made no effort to established permanent settlements in Florida. The main purposes of the migration were slave raids and to aid the British in a war against the Spanish. Despite the fact that Creeks came and left in this phase, they gained valuable information about the land and the sub-tropical environment of Florida. The second phase took place from 1740 to 1820, during which Creeks went deeper in to Florida territory and established at least six permanent settlements; these villages were usually situated in the northern regions of Florida where soil was fertile and game was plentiful. In 1763, Spain transferred ownership of Florida to Britain. In 1764, the remaining Spanish left with their allies to Cuba, leaving mostly natives and blacks in Florida. The British moved into Florida and re-started the fur trade with the natives. Even though the British paid less for furs than the Spanish, the natives had a good relationship with them. Unfortunately for the natives this relationship was not meant to endure. The British lost Florida and the rest of their North American colonies to the Americans in American Revolution (1775-1783). British were forced to leave their formal colonies in 1782. But before they left, they managed to surrender Florida back to Spanish in 1783. The third phase started after 1820 and it was the biggest migration of Creeks in to the Florida territory. Soon after the American Revolution white Americans put a constant pressure on Creek Confederacy in Alabama and Georgia and that consequently lead to decision that more Upper and Lower Creeks moved south to Florida. Indians wanted to find a distant place far

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<sup>4</sup> Brent Richards Weisman, *Unconquered People: Florida's Seminole and Miccosukee*

away from white Americans. Florida at this time offered them safe haven, with fertile soil and a lots of game to hunt.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.1.3 The Seminoles of Florida

The natives that migrated to Florida in the first and second phase were at the beginning of their long journey still considered as a part of Creek Confederacy. However, over time and with growing migration of Creeks, the natives who settled in Florida lost their connection and boundaries with Alabama and Georgia which led to the loss of their Creek identity. Since 1763, these native Indians were known among whites as a Seminoles, which meant wild people.<sup>6</sup>

### 1.1.4 The Black Seminoles of Florida

Slavery at the beginning of the eighteenth century was still a legal and prosperous business for many Americans. Black slaves were shipped to America in huge numbers where they often worked on southern cotton or tobacco plantations. Some of these slaves managed to escape and join to Seminoles.<sup>7</sup>

As early as 1689, slaves began escaping from plantations in British American colonies and making their way to Florida, where the Spanish king offered them freedom in exchange for defending the Spanish settlement at Saint Augustine. In 1763 were Spanish forced to sign the Treaty of Paris. This treaty ended the French and Indian War, in which Spanish allied with France, and lost against alliance of British and British Americans colonist. As a result the Spanish had to transfer ownership of Florida to the British. Another waves of

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*Indians* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 12-13; Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida* 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 5-6, 10-12.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 12-14.

<sup>7</sup> Tracé Etienne-Gray, "Black Seminole Indians," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed December 01, 2013 (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/bmb18>).

escaped blacks reached Florida during the American Revolution (1775-1783), when the British offered liberty to American slaves in exchange for fighting against Americans.” In 1783, the British lost Florida as a result of American Revolution and were forced to leave. Nevertheless before they retreated they managed to surrender Florida back to Spanish authorities”.<sup>8</sup>In the meantime the blacks established in Florida their own settlements with their own leaders and maintained friendly relations with the Seminoles and the Spanish. The Seminoles in Florida realized that these black runaways were useful to them. The blacks were intelligent, some of them were knowledgeable of tropical agriculture, and shared this knowledge with the Seminoles, and in addition many of them already knew English and Spanish and were able to learn the Seminole languages as well.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the fact that some blacks considered them self as free, many of them were slaves to individual Seminoles. However, the concept of Seminole slavery was very different from the Anglo-American concept. The blacks were allowed to live in their towns (usually situated next to the Seminole ones and protected by Seminoles for small tributes), they could possess wealth in form of cattle and crops, and they could even own weapons for their own protection. The Seminoles and the blacks joined together and created this unlikely alliance to face their common enemy, the United States. Scholars recognizing blacks as an important part of the Seminole community and as allies, called them Black Seminoles.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 19.

<sup>9</sup> Etienne-Gray, "Black Seminole Indians"; Joseph A. Opala, "Black Seminoles-Gullahs Who Escaped from Slavery," *The Gullah*, accessed January 8, 2014, <http://www.yale.edu/glc/gullah/07.htm>; "Treaty of Paris, 1763," U.S. Department of State Office of the Historian, accessed January 12, 2014, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1750-1775/treaty-of-paris>.

<sup>10</sup> J.B. Bird, "The Black Seminoles," accessed January 8, 2014, <http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~birdja/#Top>; Opala, "Black Seminoles-Gullahs Who Escaped from Slavery"

## 1.2 The Harbingers of War and the First Seminole War

### 1.2.1 Prelude to War

Soon after the American Revolution, the Americans began to strengthen their position in Georgia and Alabama. In 1813, the Red Sticks, a tribe of Upper Creeks, attacked Fort Mims situated in the lower Alabama River, and killed more than five hundred American settlers. “This attack started the Creek War of 1813-1814.”<sup>11</sup> The United States responded immediately with a large army comprised of whites and friendly Lower Creek warriors, who decisively defeated the Red Stick at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in central Alabama on March 27, 1814. The war was over by August and Gen. Andrew Jackson forced some of the remaining Creek leaders to sign the Treaty of Fort Jackson, which gave the United States nearly half of the Creek’s land in Alabama and Georgia. After their defeat, some Red Sticks escaped to Spanish Florida. Unfortunately for the Spanish, Red Stick runaways and Seminoles, the Americans did not stop in Alabama and Georgia, but began approaching on Spanish Florida.<sup>12</sup>

Blacks and Indians established a fort in West Florida that, although defensive in nature, directly threatened American chattel slavery. Americans wanted this “Negro Fort” destroyed and asked Spanish officials in West Florida to do so. When these officials demurred, the Americans began planning to do it themselves.<sup>13</sup> About three hundred blacks, twenty Choctaws and some Seminoles inhabited the fort. To antagonize the forts inhabitants and incite a conflict, the United States sent a ship convoy, sailing on Appalachicola River On July 10, 1816, the U.S. ships were fired upon, allowing an American reprisal. When the Americans returned fire, one of their shots hit the fort’s

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<sup>11</sup> Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 33.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 43-45.; Ron Field, *The Seminole Wars, 1818-58* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2009), 5-7.



gunpowder magazine, resulting in the complete destruction of the fort. Only a few inhabitants of the fort survived this explosion. The threat neutralized and strong message sent both to runaway blacks and to Spanish authorities, the American ships then departed Spanish Florida. But they would soon return.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.2.2 The First Seminole War, 1817-1818

“When settlers began to move into the Fort Jackson cession, the whites and Native Americans stole each other’s livestock, burned each other’s houses, and murdered each other, with blame equally divided between the two races”<sup>15</sup>. Americans requested surrender of these murderers, but Seminoles refused to do so. On November 21, 1817, Major David E. Twiggs, a commander of seventh infantry of Fort Scott was given an order from Gen. Jackson to attack nearby Seminole village of Fowltown with two hundred and fifty soldiers at his command. During this attack, the Americans killed five Seminoles, four men and one women, and remaining Seminoles escaped to the swamps. This attack was the beginning of the First Seminole War. On November 30, 1817, the Seminoles and their allies managed to strike back. A strong force of them attacked an open American river boat, sailing on Apalachicola from Fort Scott, and killed most of passengers, soldiers and crew. Gen. Andrew Jackson was given full command over the conflict in early 1818. His forces comprised of five hundred regular soldiers, one thousand militiamen from Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee, and with almost two thousands friendly Creek Indians. On March 9, 1818, Jackson’s forces moved from Fort Scott, situated on borders between Georgia and Florida. Jackson ordered relentless campaign against inhabitants of Florida, during which

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 37-38.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 37-38; Adam Wasserman, “The 'Negro Fort' massacre,” Libcom, accessed January 12, 2014, <http://libcom.org/history/negro-fort-massacre>

<sup>15</sup> Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 41.

American forces pushed them deeper into Florida territory. The American forces burned and destroyed every Seminole village in their path and confiscated all cattle and crops. On 24 of May, 1818, the Americans reached and captured formal Spanish fort Saint Marks. Spanish garrison of the fort did not put a lot of resistance against Americans, and they rather withdrew their forces and retreated.<sup>16</sup>

With the fort in their possession, the Americans decided to move against the main Seminole force, which was mostly gathered around stronghold at Suwanee River. The stronghold itself was situated in the very edge of the swamp, which provided very good strategic position against any invaders. Despite this fact, Americans were able to seize stronghold without any bigger resistance, while the Seminoles and their allies were forced to retreat to nearby swamp. Not long after this demonstration of power, Spain finally decided to cede Florida to the US. The Transcontinental treaty between Spain and US was signed on February 22, 1819. According to this treaty Americans acquired ownership of Florida and nullified Spanish debt of five million dollars to them, and in addition US accepted Texas as a Spanish territory.<sup>17</sup>

### **1.2.3 The End of the First Seminole War**

The First Seminole War was, no doubt, won by the United States. With the Spanish retreating from Florida and the Seminoles looking for protection deeper in the peninsula, the Americans had good and strong position in Northwest Florida. As more settlers moved down to Florida to set up a new life in a new land, the American authorities had to deal with the fact that a lot of Seminoles were still living in peninsula. The Seminole population in Florida before the First Seminole War was by about six thousand, by the 1821, their

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<sup>16</sup> Field, *The Seminole Wars, 1818-58*, 6; Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 40-43.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 43.

population decreased to four thousand and seven hundred. By about twelve hundreds of them disappeared, some of them were killed during war, some of them escaped to other territories, and some of them were relocated by the United States. The remaining Seminoles in Florida mostly moved their settlements further from whites. According to modern historians, many of them moved to central Florida to the banks of Manatee River, on the other hand most of the Red Stick settled down in Tampa Bay region, while some of the Muskogee-speaking bands moved to regions north and east from Tampa Bay<sup>18</sup>

### **1.3 The Treaties of Moultrie Creek and Payne's Landing**

The treaties of Moultrie Creek and Payne's Landing were two important milestones in the history of relations between the U.S. and the remaining Seminoles in Florida. Based on the ground of those treaties, the Indians agreed to relocate their settlements in Florida. Which later ultimately led to clashes between both sides.<sup>19</sup>

#### **1.3.1 The Treaty of the Moultrie Creek**

The U.S. ratified the Transcontinental treaty in 1821 and acquired Florida from Spain. With this, the American government acquired not only land, but also about five thousand Seminoles inhabiting it. Although the Seminoles lived in Florida, they did not take any part in the negotiation between the U.S. and Spain. In addition, their conditions on the peninsula after the First Seminole War were deteriorating. They lost many of their formal settlements, their herds were confiscated, and crops mostly destroyed. Left with few options, they migrated to more distant and isolated parts of the peninsula.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 37, 48, 50.

<sup>19</sup> Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 46-47.

<sup>20</sup> John Missall and Mary Lou Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 52-55.

### *1.3.1.1 The Solution for Florida*

In early 1821, the U.S. government agreed on two possible solutions for the Seminole problem in Florida. The Seminoles were either to be relocated outside Florida or concentrated in one place on the peninsula, on a reservation. Many white Americans agreed with the first solution and supported sending remaining Seminoles north to rejoin the Creeks in Alabama and Georgia. Nevertheless this option was soon rejected by the Seminoles. The Seminoles had once been Creeks, but by the 1820s the relationship between these two groups was hostile. The Florida territorial governor was William P. DuVal. DuVal was well aware of the Seminole situation in Florida and the valuable lands they inhabited. As a result, Duval devised a plan to move all the remaining Seminoles west of the Mississippi River. But the U.S. government preferred to keep them on the Florida peninsula<sup>21</sup>

### *1.3.1.2 A new Reservation in Peninsula*

After the further discussions the U.S. authorities decided to place all the remaining Seminoles onto a new reservation in the middle of the peninsula. As a place for negotiation, between the U.S. authorities and the Seminoles, was chosen the landing at Moultrie Creek and the time chosen for negotiation was September 1823. Most of the Seminoles (four hundred and twenty five Seminoles attended negotiation) arrived for negotiations at the beginning of the September and they chose Neamathla (chief of the Mikasukis tribe) as their leader. The negotiations lasted almost for two weeks and by the end of it, the both sides agreed on creating a reservation in the central part of the peninsula. According to the treaty, the reservation itself covered more than four million acres of ground and all the remaining Florida's ground belonged to the U.S. (which was more than

twenty-eight millions acres). In addition the Seminoles agreed to prevent any further harboring of escaped slaves among them. And they also agreed that borders of reservation will be at least twenty miles away from coast (to prevent them to trade with Cuba). On the other hand, the U.S. committed themselves to protect Seminoles, prevent whites to enter the reservation, supply Seminoles with agricultural tools and livestock, and to pay for any other necessity, e.g. for transportation to the new ground, to maintain school and blacksmith in reservation... The treaty itself was ratified by the U.S. senate on December 23, 1823.<sup>22</sup>

### **1.3.2 The Treaty of Payne's Landing**

Not even a year passed since the ratification of the Treaty of the Moultrie Creek before the Americans realized that the Seminoles were not moving on to the assigned reservation as fast as they had hoped. Many Seminoles occupied fertile ground on which they had built houses and were not surprisingly hesitant to leave their lands and homes for the less fertile lands of the reservation they had been offered by Americans.<sup>23</sup>

#### **1.3.2.1 Resettlement of the Seminoles**

American authorities observed this slow progress with growing concern. Finally, DuVal ordered that all remaining Seminoles are obligated to move to the reservation by October 1, 1824. DuVal was well aware that the migrating Seminoles were dependent on government help and food. And for this reason, he ordered most of the rations sent south to area around Tampa Bay, in order to lure Seminoles into the reservation. But another problem appeared when the Seminoles reached Tampa. Many of them decided to camp

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 60-61, 63-67; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 34-37.

<sup>22</sup> Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 43-47; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 61, 64.

<sup>23</sup> Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 69-71.

there instead of building permanent homes elsewhere on the ground of reservation. Despite these problems, most Seminoles were within the borders of reservation by the 1826. Their condition there were rather miserable. Many of them had arrived on the reservation after it was too late to plant crops, and those who did manage to cultivate saw their crops destroyed by a long time of drought. First problems arose throughout the reservation. Some Seminoles, especially the Mikasukis began causing troubles, while some whites preyed on the Seminoles while they were weak. Whites stole cattle, slaves and other property from the Seminoles, but were rarely caught or punished <sup>24</sup>

### ***1.3.2.2 Indian Removal Pack***

Tennessee planter and formal Florida governor Andrew Jackson won the 1828 presidential election. Jackson long supported Indian removal. Under his leadership, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act in 1830, according to which all Indian tribes living east of the Mississippi River, including the Florida Seminoles, would have to move west. Subsequent negotiations between Seminoles and American leaders lead to the March 1832 signing of the Treaty of Payne's Landing, which required the forfeiture of all Florida lands and complete removal. Besides certain illegalities and irregularities associated with the signing of the treaty, Americans were intent on ensuring that all treaty stipulations would be met. On the other hand, the Seminoles were not willing to follow this contradictory treaty.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 71-76.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 79-81, 84-87.

## 2 THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND SEMINOLE WAR

The treaty of the Payne's landing was approved by President Jackson on April 12, 1834 and Seminoles were expected to leave Florida till 1835. Jackson appointed Indian agent Thompson as a person responsible for further negotiations and removal of the remaining Seminoles. In March 1835, Thompson once again called Indian representatives for a meeting and presented them a message from American President. The message was strict, either the Seminoles leaves Florida peacefully or U.S. would use military force against them. Despite this fact, most of the Seminoles refused to leave and insisted on staying. As a result of their action, Thompson forbid to sell any weapons or ammunition to Seminoles.<sup>26</sup>

### 2.1 Split among the Seminoles

Not all of the Seminoles were determined to stay and fight. One of them was Charley Emathla, a well-known chief among Indians. He decided to leave peninsula in peace and follow the U.S. treaty. Unfortunately for him, other Indians considered his decision as a betrayal. This split among Seminoles lead to the first conflict that can be related to the beginning of the Second Seminole War. Emathla was executed by another Seminole chief the Osceola, while he was heading with few other chiefs and their followers to a ship which was anchored near Fort Brooke.<sup>27</sup>

General Clinch, a commander of U.S. troops in Florida, had to deal with the fact that most of the Seminoles started to be restless and denied to leave. Considering this fact, Clinch decided to contact U.S. authorities with message that another war with Seminoles is

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<sup>26</sup> Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 73; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 90-92.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 73; Ibid 91-92.

inevitable and called for reinforcements. Clinch was well aware of his situation, he had only five hundred men to his disposal and moreover his men were split between two forts, the Fort Brooke and Fort Drane. American reinforcements were on their way but they were still more than one hundred miles away from Fort Brooke. Until this moment the Seminoles did not attack any American forces stationed in forts.<sup>28</sup>

## 2.2 The Dade's Massacre

On December 21, 1835, the first American troops arrived to Florida. It was a part of American Fourth infantry, under the command of Major Francis Dade. Dade and his one hundred and seven soldiers were supposed to be stationed in Fort Brooke to support the American cause in Florida. However they never arrived to Fort Brooke. On December 28, Dade's troops were ambushed and almost completely wiped-out by a large force of Seminole warriors hiding near the road in tall grass. The attack was devastating, one hundred and eighty Seminoles use their superior position and moment of surprise and annihilated American forces. Only three American soldiers survive, that what became later known as Dade's Massacre, and carried the witness of the battle to their friend in Fort Brooke. The major leader and the mastermind behind this attack Osceola, did not take any part in this action personally. He and his warriors went to murder Indian Agent Thomson, in which they succeeded in very same day as ambush on Dade's men took place. The Second Seminole War started and Seminoles were able to strike first in two different places against American forces.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 94-96; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 95.

<sup>29</sup> Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 95-96.



### **2.3 The Possible Causes of the Second Seminole War**

When the U.S. won the First Seminole War, not many Americans expected that second and after that third war would follow. However, the events that took place between years 1820-1834 lead uncompromisingly to another military conflict between Natives and the United States. Both participating sides, the U.S. and the Seminoles, carried their share of blame.

#### **2.3.1 The Expansion of the American Frontier**

Perhaps one of the most important cause that lead to another open military conflict would be consider a constant American expansion to a new lands. As a result of American expansion to Florida, the Seminoles had to deal with fact that they were forced to leave, but not only their tribal hunting grounds but also they had to move their homes and start over again in different place. And it was not only about moving their property, it was also about planting new crops and cultivating of new ground. It is clear, from historical point of view that major part of the Seminole population was incensed by this American approach. Which only strengthen an anti-white sentiment among them.<sup>30</sup>

#### **2.3.2 The Incomprehension of the Cultural Differences between the Seminoles and the Creeks**

Another very important factor was a cultural clash between Seminoles and Creeks which was either misunderstood or rather overlooked on purpose by U.S. authorities. Americans planned to move Seminoles together with Creeks to a reservation west of Mississippi river. The purpose of this action was to move all remaining Indian tribes away from Florida and concentrate them in one place. The problems arose when U.S. negotiators

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<sup>30</sup> Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 34-37; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 60-61.

shared part of this idea with Seminole leaders. Most of them were strictly against this proposition. The relations between Seminoles and Creeks were rather hostile than friendly. Which came up from fact that Creeks helped Americans in their fight against Seminoles during the First Seminole War.<sup>31</sup>

### 2.3.3 The Failure to Comply with the Terms of the Treaties

The U.S. government and the Seminoles signed several treaties. The most important treaties were the treaty of Moultrie Creek and the treaty of the Payne's landing. According to Moultrie Creek treaty the Seminoles had a claim to stay in Florida for another twenty years. Despite this fact, U.S. authorities accepted the Indian Removal pact and Seminoles were meant to leave by the end of 1835. The Seminole leaders demanded their right to stay in Florida according to Moultrie Creek, but Americans no longer accepted that. The Seminoles were supposed to leave Florida peacefully or they would be forced to leave by a military force.<sup>32</sup>

All causes mentioned above only added more stress to the already tensed situation in peninsula. Long term oppression and dissatisfaction of the Seminoles with behavior of the white man resulted in to the longest American Indian conflict in history of the United States, The Second Seminole War, which lasted for seven years, cost millions of dollars and thousands of lives.

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<sup>31</sup> Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 52-55; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 34-37.

<sup>32</sup> Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 79-81.

### **3 THE FIRST PHASE OF THE SECOND SEMINOLE WAR, 1835-1838**

The first phase of the Second Seminole War began with Dade's Massacre in 1835 and lasted until the end of year of 1838. The war was fought between two very divergent nations. On one side was the United States, with the population of about fifteen million. Its army numbered in the thousands, and included volunteers and "friendly" Indians. On the other side stood the Seminoles. The natives and their allies, totaled barely five thousand, with approximately eight hundred warriors. The United States was positioned for a quick and decisive victory. Even so, the Seminoles determined to stay and make use of their advantages, which included their knowledge of Florida's subtropical climate and terrain as well as their use of guerilla warfare.<sup>33</sup>

#### **3.1 American Warfare and Indian Guerilla War**

U.S. authorities intended to wage war against Seminoles in the same way as in the First Seminole War. Essentially, this meant to gather a large army, enter the enemy territory, built forts and roads, burn villages, destroy crops and confiscate enemy property and cattle, and finally meet the enemy in open battle and defeat them in a few decisive victories. After, the enemy was expected to negotiate peace. The American generals would soon find out that these tactics would be absolutely ineffective in Florida's environment and against the Indian style of war. The Seminoles did not intend to meet them in open battle but rather used guerilla tactics.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 83.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 83; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 111-112.

Guerilla war tactics rely on smaller groups of soldiers/warriors that use a hit and run strategy against their enemy. The warriors attack, inflict losses upon the enemy and retreat before the enemy can effectively strike back with enough forces. These tactics, together with adequate knowledge of the environment and the element of surprise, proved to be a great asset for the Seminoles in the first few years of war and allowed them to survive with minimal losses three American military campaigns in 1836.<sup>35</sup>

## 3.2 Sub-tropical Environment of Florida

Despite that Florida being inhabited by U.S. settlers since the Transcontinental Treaty in 1821, most of the peninsula was still unmapped and unknown for most Americans. Plantations and household were mostly situated in northern part of Florida. Forts and garrisons were built during the War in strategic positions across the peninsula. Some of them were permanently used, some of them had to be abandoned and remaining soldiers were moved to other forts.<sup>36</sup>

### 3.2.1 Difficult Living Conditions in Peninsula

The Florida peninsula was situated in sub-tropical belt and mostly covered by huge swamps, forests, streams and hammocks. And as Americans soon learned, there were only two seasons in Florida. The winter season and the summer season. “Winters were usually mild, dry and cool”<sup>37</sup>. It was this season when armies could wage war against their

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<sup>35</sup>Matouš Lážňovský, “Guerilla War,” *Lidovky*, accessed March 29, 2014, [http://www.lidovky.cz/guerillove-valky-maji-udajne-predpoveditelny-prubeh-p0e-/veda.aspx?c=A091217\\_125310\\_In\\_veda\\_mal](http://www.lidovky.cz/guerillove-valky-maji-udajne-predpoveditelny-prubeh-p0e-/veda.aspx?c=A091217_125310_In_veda_mal).

<sup>36</sup> “Plantation Culture- Land and Labor in Florida History,” Florida Memory, accessed March 30, 2014, [http://www.floridamemory.com/photographiccollection/photo\\_exhibits/plantations/plantations3.php](http://www.floridamemory.com/photographiccollection/photo_exhibits/plantations/plantations3.php); Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 82.

<sup>37</sup> Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 115.

enemies, transport supplies and get reinforcements. This season was generally called as the “healthy season”.<sup>38</sup> However, summer in Florida was very different. Soldiers were generally unaccustomed to the intense heat and daily rains, which made any transport almost impossible. But the worst thing which U.S. soldiers had to deal with was varied insects, e.g. mosquitoes, which transmitted various deadly diseases. There were usually no conflicts during the summer. The Seminoles did not have to bother with enemy or engage them during this season. Diseases in this war killed more U.S. soldiers than Seminoles themselves. On the other hand, the Seminoles were used to this environment and immune to the most of diseases. For them was this time a season of peace, when they would regenerate suffered loses, build their villages, plant and harvest new crops.<sup>39</sup>

### **3.3 Florida’s Campaigns**

Americans launched against the Seminoles several campaigns during the first phase of war. The first three of them were not considered as successfully, they did not meet with high expectations of U.S. authorities. The fourth one, led by Sidney Jesup, managed to do what its predecessors did not, but the methods used by its commander casted a bad light upon whole campaign.

#### **3.3.1 Gaines Campaign**

Brig. Gen Edmund P. Gaines was one of the first who was ordered to deal with the Seminole threat in Florida. Gaines proved himself in battles with Indians during the First Seminole War and was given command in north-west territory of the Florida peninsula. Gaines and his eleven hundred men arrived in Tampa Bay, Florida in February 1836.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

Gaines set off quickly for the Cove of Withlacoochee, where the bulk of the Seminoles, where though to be located. The main problem in the beginning of his campaign was that he did not care much about logistics which proved to be fatal mistake in most American campaigns against Seminoles.<sup>40</sup>

Gaines was in a difficult situation. Low on supplies and within any sufficient knowledge of the terrain, the U.S. soldiers arrived at the ford of Withlacoochee on 28 February, but were not able to cross the river. And they were soon ambushed by a sizable force of Seminole warriors and forced to build a hasty defenses called camp Izard. Trapped and without supplies, soldiers were forced to kill and eat their horses and mules. General Gaines requested for immediate reinforcements from fort Drane, which took eight days to arrive. In the meantime, Gaines lost 5 soldiers and another 46 were injured. When the Seminoles spotted enemy reinforcements they withdrew back to the swamps and abandoned the Cove. Gaines then returned to Tampa in defeat. His campaign was not considered as a successful one.<sup>41</sup>

### 3.3.2 Scott's Campaign

The next general chosen to end the Seminole threat after Gaines's failure, was Winfield Scott. General had his experiences with the Indians from earlier conflict in 1812 and was a protagonist of European style of war. He decided to resolve Seminole problem with one big operation, with almost five thousand men taking part. An army of this size led to high expectations among American public and government. Scott divided his forces in to three columns, which were supposed to converge on the Cove of Withlacoochee. None of

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<sup>40</sup> Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 144-146; Field, *The Seminole Wars, 1818-58*, 10-11.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 147-148; Ibid, 10-11; Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 85-86.

the three columns could find the enemy, and all three were forced by a shortage of supplies to withdraw from the field. The American Congress was not satisfied with Scott's campaign in any aspect. This wasteful and expensive campaign frustrated them and only bolstered Seminole moral. The failure of the campaign was once again blamed to the poor logistics and the lack of leadership.<sup>42</sup>

### 3.3.3 Call's Campaign

On the other hand the Seminoles, supported by American failures, launched several small hit and run attacks on American post across Florida. Such attacks, combined with frequent sickness during the summer season, caused U.S. troops to abandon some of their post. In order to support American position in the war, Gov. Richard Keith Call proposed a summer campaign, and U.S. authorities granted him permission to launch one. Call started to gather his forces and supplies by the end of the winter. But adverse weather conditions and logistical problems delayed the operation until late September. Call was ready to move on September 29, 1836. He and his men marched to the Cove of Withlacoochee, which had been flooded by recent summer rains, prohibiting a crossing. It was not until December that the soldiers could ford the river, and by the time they did so, the Seminoles abandoned the area of the Withlacoochee. Call's forces tracked them for a while and managed to find an abandon settlement, but once again a lack of supplies forces them to abandon their effort

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<sup>42</sup> Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 84-86; Field, *The Seminole Wars, 1818-58*, 11-12; Missall Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 117-120.

Once again, despite determined American efforts, the Seminoles escaped largely unscathed. The end of the war was not in sight.<sup>43</sup>

### 3.4 The Jesup's Campaign and the End of the First Phase of the War

President Jackson gave Gen. Thomas S. Jesup command over the Seminole War in late 1836. The first two years of the war had not go well for Americans, and Jesup was charged with reversing this situation. Jesup had almost nine thousand troops under his command, nearly half of them volunteers, most of which were from South. The economy of these states was mostly based on plantation slavery, so Jesup fomented the fear of black rebellion, calling the war a "Negro War"<sup>44</sup>. The volunteers signed one-year contract (the standard contract was usually for three months) because Jesup feared that defeating the Seminoles would take at least that long.<sup>45</sup>

#### 3.4.1 The Negotiations

The beginning of the 1837 quite successful for Jesup's campaign. The U.S. troops managed to capture or kill several Seminole bands and their leaders, and on 27 of January, the U.S. troops discovered a hidden Seminole camp, where after a short battle were managed to capture about fifty Seminoles, mostly women and children, and seize a significant amount of supplies and cattle. Most of the warriors escaped to the nearby swamp. The Seminoles had no hope for any help or reinforcements and their numbers in

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<sup>43</sup> Field, *The Seminole Wars, 1818-58*, 12-13; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 182-183; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 114-117.

<sup>44</sup> Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 196.

<sup>45</sup> "Brigadier General," US Army Quartermaster Foundation, accessed April 9, 2014, [http://www.qmfound.com/BG\\_Thomas\\_Jesup.htm](http://www.qmfound.com/BG_Thomas_Jesup.htm).; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 195-196; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 124-125.



Florida continued to dwindle. Based on this ground, some of their leaders were tired by the war and accepted to cease hostilities and attend the negotiations on January 28, 1837. The negotiations were held in the fort Brooke with some high ranked Seminole leaders e.g. Jumper and later Micanopy. Nearly seven hundred Seminoles and their allies were willing to stop fighting and leave Florida in peace. Most of them found temporally shelter in detention camps situated near fort Brooke, those camps were open, without fences and the inhabitants were not considered as prisoners. Which was used by Osceola on June 2, 1837, when he sneaked into camps with two hundred of warriors and lead out all inhabitants. This Seminole escape stopped all negotiations. Jesup considered this action as a treachery and his approach to the Seminoles had changed. By the end of his campaign, Jesup managed to remove more Seminoles than any other general before him. But the tactics he used would eventually made victims from the Seminoles.<sup>46</sup>

### 3.4.2 The Turnover at War

The rest of the 1837 was probably the worst time for the Seminoles during the second war. Americans seized the opportunity to remove their Black allies from a battlefield and offered them a safe trip to the west, where they could join Seminoles in a reservation. It was perhaps a fatigue of war and a constant fear of slavery that lead many of the Blacks to abandon their formal allies and accepted the American offer. As a result, only few Blacks stayed in fight until 1838. Americans also persuaded some of them to lead the U.S. forces to the hidden Seminole villages in the swamps. Based on this actions, the Americans found and captured a significant number of Seminoles, and for more, a well-respected Seminole senior leader during the Second War, King Philip ended in U.S. captivity as well. Jesup

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<sup>46</sup> “Jesup Diary,” Florida Memory, accessed April 9, 2014,

subsequently used Philip as a hostage and was able to capture not only his son Coacoochee, but also many of his followers.<sup>47</sup>

### 3.4.3 Osceola and the End of 1837

The Seminole chief Osceola was probably one of the main characters during the Second Seminole War and U.S. authorities probably saw him as a leader of the opposition in Florida. When the word of the Philip's capture reached him, he decided to meet and negotiate with the white officers. Jesup probably saw his chance to end the war and agreed with the terms of meeting. During this meeting on October 27, 1837, the white flag was on. The white flag which was supposed to guarantee a safety for the both sides was dishonored by the Jesup. He ordered to capture Osceola and subsequently was able to capture about fifty of his followers. Osceola died three months later in the U.S. fort as a prisoner. This act and a manner which Jesup used to win over Osceola was among U.S. population outside Florida accepted rather as nefarious one. And the story of Osceola was by many Americans considered as a story of patriotism. Indignation caused by this act was probably one of the main reasons why Jesup later in 1838 abandoned his post and withdrew from Florida.<sup>48</sup>

### 3.4.4 Major Battle of the Second Seminole War

The biggest, and by many Americans also most famous battle of the Second Seminole War was fought on Christmas Day, 1837, in a swamps surrounding Lake Okeechobee. The

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<http://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/252864?id=34>; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 198-200; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 126-128.

<sup>47</sup> Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 93-94; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 211-212; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 133-134.

<sup>48</sup> Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 214; William R. Adams, *St. Augustine and St. Johns County: A Historical Guide* (Sarasota, Fla.: Pineapple Press, 2009), 104; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 134.

battle itself was accepted by public as a great American victory and beginning of the rise of Commander Zachary Taylor. And even despite the fact, that U.S. forces suffered terrible losses, considering other battles. In this battle, Zachary Taylor with his unit that numbered almost one thousand troops attacked Seminoles, whose numbered about three hundreds warriors. By the end of the battle, Americans lost 26 men and other 112 were injured (some of them more likely fatally wounded). On the other hand Seminoles lost only 11 warriors and another 14 were injured. The Seminoles clearly had no hope to win this battle, they were more likely determined to causes more loses that they would receive. Once the Americans reached their positions, the Seminoles once again withdrew to the nearby swamps and disappear. Americans would not follow them because of their losses and a lot of injured soldiers. The biggest battle of the Second Seminole War ended, the Seminoles managed to escape again.<sup>49</sup>

### **3.4.5 The End of Jesup's Command in Florida**

By that time, Jesup managed to do more than any other general in Florida before him. Most of the Seminole nation was gone, deported to the Arkansas, and the position of remaining Seminole forces were significantly weakened. Jesup understood that there was no point in pursuing remaining small bands of the Seminoles across South Florida. This would take too long and only extended costly and already unpopular war. It is possible that he was also already tired of command, or even disgusted by war, but on February 11, 1838, Jesup decided to change his tactics. He proposed to leave remaining Seminoles in peace, seize all hostilities against them and built a permanent reservation in a distant part of Southern Florida. On the other hand, the Seminoles would stop all hostilities against

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<sup>49</sup> Spencer Tucker, "Conflict with Native Americans," in *Almanac of American Military History*:

Americans and moved peacefully in to this region. Not surprisingly many Seminoles, surely tired by outgoing war, decided to agree with these terms and almost five hundreds of them built their camp next to the U.S. military camp.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless the final decision was not up to Jesup, and the respond of U.S. government was not the one that would Jesup welcome. According to US. Authorities, not a single Seminole would be allowed to stay in Florida, all of them would be captured and deported to Arkansas. Otherwise the remaining Seminole forces would be destroyed. A political decision, and perhaps the worst political decision during the Second Seminole War. Although that Americans had their reasons to decline Jesup's proposal. The government could not afford to accept this offer. Accepting this offer would meant that U.S. lost and it would no doubt send a dangerous precedent to other Indians. Irrespective to the fact how much this war already cost, the war lasted for another four years. By the end of it, Americans were never able to remove all the Seminoles from Florida.<sup>51</sup>

Forced with the government decision, Jesup ordered to capture all Seminoles in nearby camp. U.S. troops were successful and almost five hundreds of Seminoles were immediately shipped to the west. Shortly after this event, Jesup was allowed to relief from his command in Florida and Bridged Zachary Taylor replaced him. The Seminole numbers in Florida dwindled to approximately five hundred souls, mostly divided into small bands scattered across swamps and hammocks in South Florida.<sup>52</sup>

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*Moving West* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 2:637; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 227-228;

<sup>50</sup> Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 145-146.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 147, 149;

<sup>52</sup> Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 237; Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 95.

### 3.4.6 The Result of the End of the First Phase of the War

By the end of the 1838, the Seminole population in Florida dwindled to nearly one thousand. Almost three thousand Seminoles were gone. Approximately two thousand and nine hundreds of them were deported to the west and about one hundred of them were killed. The Seminoles in three years of war lost more than seventy-five percent of their numbers. The remaining population spread in to small groups and withdrew deeper to the swamps. The warriors were forced to change their strategy. They were no longer able to strike against stronger U.S. forces. And as the result of this, Seminoles rather chose to attack distant and isolated homesteads, lonely travelers and smaller groups of soldiers.<sup>53</sup>

The Americans may be the winning side but they also had their losses. The plantations in north Florida were mostly destroyed and crops burned, which was a strike back for the U.S. economy in Florida. The Second Seminole War was also costliest Indian War in a history, in this point a month of war cost U.S government almost ninety thousand dollars. The war itself became also very unpopular among U.S. soldiers and the citizens as well. More soldiers died from diseases and injuries than in battle against Seminoles, the Florida's environment proved to be very dangerous and very unfriendly place for them.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 154; Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 96-97.

<sup>54</sup> Field, *The Seminole Wars, 1818-58*, 18; Adam Wasserman, *A People's History of Florida 1513-1876: How Africans, Seminoles, Women, and Lower Class Whites Shaped the Sunshine State*, 4 ed. (United States of America: City unknown, 2009), 243-244; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 115

## 4 THE SECOND PHASE OF THE SECOND SEMINOLE WAR, 1838-1842

Despite the fact, that the major battles and events took place mainly in the first phase of the war, the second phase lasted for four more years and proved to be very expensive for both sides. Not many Seminoles remained in Florida now, but even more were shipped away during the war's second phase. However, some of them were still willing to fight to remain. The U.S. federal government simply could not afford to lose the war, as doing so would set a dangerous precedent. It therefore felt compelled to continue to finance, at a cost of tens of millions of dollars, the complete Seminole removal effort.<sup>55</sup>

### 4.1 Gen. Zachary Taylor

Gen. Zachary Taylor took over the reins of the Seminole War in May, 1838. From the beginning of his command, he had to deal with deep budget cuts associated with the economic depression of 1837. Taylor had approximately 2,300 men at his command, and one of his first decisions was to push the Seminoles further south, out of the Middle Florida plantation belt. To do so, he divided northerner Florida territory into a series of twenty-mile squares. He proposed to divide North part of Florida in to smaller areas. Each square would have a small but permanent garrison. He also proposed a network of roads and bridges, which would connect these squares, in order to accelerate the movement of troops and supplies. Taylor's approach was, unlike those of his predecessors, rather defensive and was meant to push and hold the Seminoles in southern Florida. The U.S. government quickly approved this simple but quite expensive plan. Taylor remained in command for almost two years, and during his stay he managed to build fifty new outposts and more than 848

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<sup>55</sup> Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 152-153.

miles of road. What he did not manage to, despite his best efforts, was to end the war or even capture significant numbers of Seminoles.<sup>56</sup>

#### 4.1.1 Bloodhounds

The war did not go well for Americans, and that is why Taylor tried to find a new methods, which could help them to end the war. One of these method was the use of Bloodhounds. Dogs trained to track slaves on the run. Bloodhounds proved their value to British soldiers in Jamaica. British were helpless to locate escaped slaves without dogs, soon after they used dogs for tracking, they were managed to capture a significant number of the runaways. In this case, Americans hoped that dogs would be able to track the Seminoles in to their hidden outpost and villages scattered across swamps. However, what they did not consider was a terrain in Florida. Florida was mostly covered by swamps and hammocks and dogs were not able to follow tracks trough water. Dogs were also trained to track slaves (and their scent), not the Seminoles. Finally the use of Bloodhounds to track and capture the Seminoles became a political problem, a controversy, in the U.S. Many of its critics were members of abolitionist movement and consider this kind of capturing as inhumane. Taylor bought thirty-three Bloodhounds from Cuba, but despite all efforts, this method was not successful in the field, neither among American public.<sup>57</sup>

## 4.2 Alexander Macomb

The longer the War lasted, the more unpopular it became among the American public. Maj. Gen. Alexander Macomb Jr. was the commanding general of the entire U.S. army-

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<sup>56</sup> Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 159-160; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 253,255; K Jack Bauer, *Zachary Taylor: Soldier, Planter, Statesman of the Old Southwest*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 88-91.

<sup>57</sup> Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 171-173.

and also had practical experiences in negotiating with Indians. He was sent to Florida by the Secretary of War in 1839. Macomb was charged with do everything necessary to end the conflict and protecting American citizens in Florida, while not interfering with Taylor's work on the peninsula. Unlike other generals, Macomb believed that war could be quickly ended through diplomacy. He nearly succeeded.<sup>58</sup>

Macomb wanted to start negotiating with the Seminoles as quickly as possible. However, the Seminole leaders had rather negative experiences from negotiations with American officers, mainly due to Jesup's actions. Even so, Macomb was able to persuade a few of the remaining important leaders to meet with him. However, most of the belligerent Seminole leaders did not take part in these negotiations, which subsequently led to Macomb's failure. On May 18, 1839, the general reported that he was able to reach an agreement with the Seminole leaders. The end of the war was at hand and all hostilities would stop. The remaining Seminoles would be allowed to stay in Florida, and the U.S. government would create a new reservation for them in the southern reaches of the Florida peninsula. In exchange, the Seminoles would "bury the tomahawk and the scalping knife"<sup>59</sup> and move within the borders of the new reservation. Both sides would thereby achieve their objectives: The Seminoles would be finally allowed to officially stay in Florida, and Americans would finally end the protracted and costly war, and also gain valuable land.<sup>60</sup>

Unfortunately for Americans and moderate Seminoles, the War did not end. A formidable force of about one hundred and fifty Seminole warriors attacked and almost

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 161-162; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 255.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 164.

<sup>60</sup> J. Leitch Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 275-277; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole*



completely wiped out an American trading post on the Caloosahatchee River. Only a few inhabitants managed to escape to river, which ultimately save their lives. This unexpected and devastating attack was condemned by the American federal government. Negotiations with the Seminoles were stopped and the war continued. Macomb was largely responsible for this latest failure to end the war, as he reached agreement with some but not all of the Seminole leaders in Florida. Once again, Americans had paid the price for lumping the Seminoles together as one united tribe instead of many semi-autonomous groups.<sup>61</sup>

### 4.3 Brig. Gen. Walker Armistead

A new general arrived in Florida in summer 1840, and he brought with him came a new strategy to end the war. Armistead believed that, he could not allow the Seminoles to recuperate during the summer season. He quickly gathered a formidable force of troops at Fort King, divided it and launched the first successful summer campaign. American soldiers managed to locate and destroy hidden Seminole villages, burn their fields and confiscate their supplies. These tactics proved important in ending the war. Meantime, the Seminole warriors continued in their guerrilla war, eluding the main U.S. forces and raiding isolated homesteads across the territory.<sup>62</sup>

#### 4.3.1 Bribery

However, the aggressive campaign itself probably could not end war. Armistead came up with another idea that proved to be a great asset in ending the war. His new idea was simply a bribery. The procedure itself was simple, the main leader of the tribe would get most (approximately about five to ten thousand dollars), lesser leaders would get about two

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*War, 1835-1842*, 255-256; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 164-165.

<sup>61</sup> Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 165-166.

<sup>62</sup> Ron Field, *The Seminole Wars, 1818-58* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2009), 17-18

hundred dollars, and the warriors of the tribe would get each thirty dollars and a rifle. The U.S. Congress supported Armistead's idea with almost fifty five thousand dollars. This method soon brought first results, when general managed to bribe almost sixty Seminole warriors. Warriors surrender peacefully along with their families. This method was expensive, but proved to be successful. By the end of February, 1841, Armistead was managed to rally more than two hundred and fifty Seminoles, prepared to move to West.<sup>63</sup>

### **Col. William Jenkins Worth**

The last American commander in Florida during the Second Seminole War was Col. William Jenkins Worth, who assumed command from Brig. Gen. Armistead. Worth intended to continue in both Armistead tactics, the summer campaign, that would not allow the Seminoles to regenerate from winter battles, and the bribery, when he tried to bribe Seminole leaders to leave. It should be noted that Seminoles leaders very often took an advantage from this negotiations. Some of them repeatedly visited American camps, where they demand more and more supplies, in order to use them to support gathering of their people. They would usually get these supplies and then disappear. This behavior ultimately lead Worth to act similarly as Jesup, when he seized these leaders during their visit and subsequently used them to capture more people from their tribes. As the Seminole numbers in Florida dwindled, the Second Seminole War was coming to an end. The situation in Washington changed and the new President of United States John Tyler gave permission to Col. Worth to declare end of the War according to his best judgment. By the 1842, Worth managed to capture most of the important Seminole leaders and estimated the remaining Seminole population of Florida to several hundred, most of them hiding deep in swamps

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 183-184, 186; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 282.

and hammocks. Worth sent message to the remaining Seminoles that their bands would not be persecuted if they move to the territory south from Peace River. By the end of the summer season in 1842, most of the remaining Seminoles found their way to the designated territory. Worth also tried to bribe them once again to leave Florida and join to their brothers in Arkansas. Those who would leave, would acquire money, food rations for a year and a rifle. But only few accepted this offer. Those who would decide to stay in Florida would not receive any help from the United States. Finally, Worth satisfied with progress in Florida decided to declare the end of the war on August 14, 1842. The longest American Indian War in the history finally came to the end.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 18-20; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, 186; James Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 106-108; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842*, 299,302,307-308.

## CONCLUSION

The Second Seminole War was no doubt the longest American-Indian war in the history of the United States. During this war, the United States had to adapt to a new style of war, a guerilla war to those later experienced in Vietnam, Iraq or Afghanistan. Both sides, the Americans and the Seminoles, fought in the war to achieve concrete objectives, the Seminoles wanted to remain in Florida, and the United States wanted to relocate them to the west. Both of them partially achieved victory. The purpose of this thesis was to point out that the victory was simply too expensive for each side. It was a pyrrhic victory for both sides.

Despite all their efforts and the huge amount of resources invested in to campaigns in Florida, the United States was not able to end the Second Seminole war quickly. The main problem was that they tried approach to this conflict in the same way as they approached the preceding conflicts with Indians. Applying the European style of war against the Seminoles proved to be a fatal mistake at the beginning of the war. This approach proved ineffective against guerilla warfare, and the fact that United State generals were not able to adapt to a different Seminole war strategy only contributed to their inability to end the conflict. The main American objective in the war was to gain Florida's fertile grounds and relocate all the Seminoles to the west (Arkansas). This idea was mostly supported by manifest of destiny, the idea, first articulated in the 1830s, that the white Americans had the God-given right and responsibility to spread their civilization across North America. Even though the American Federal government was willing to invest a huge amount of money and human resources to achieve its goal, the United States did not achieve its victory. Americans managed to gain most of the Florida peninsula, but they were not able to remove the Seminoles completely from Florida. This failure was usually attributed to the

lack of effective command, functional logistics, and an ignorance of Florida's environment. Americans were therefore able to achieve only a pyrrhic victory.

The Seminoles were mainly fighting for their rights to stay in their homeland. At some point, they were able to successfully resist American removal attempts. But where Americans could afford to lose their soldiers, the Seminoles could not afford to lose a single warrior. They were strictly limited in their numbers and had no hope for reinforcements. This aspect subsequently led to their pyrrhic victory. As the costly, protracted, and unpopular war continued, the United States was forced to recognize that complete Seminole removal was impossible. After seven years of conflict, both sides signed a truce. At this point, the Seminoles achieved their main objective. But the price for this victory was simply too large. Only about four hundred of them remained in Florida after the war.

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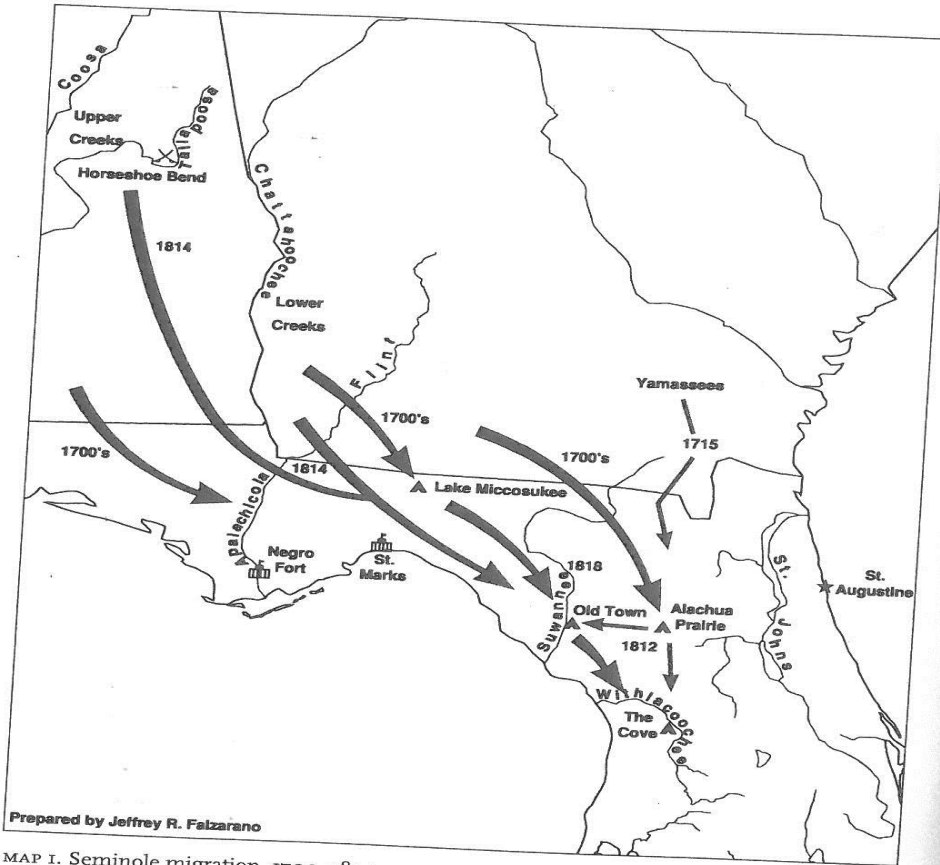
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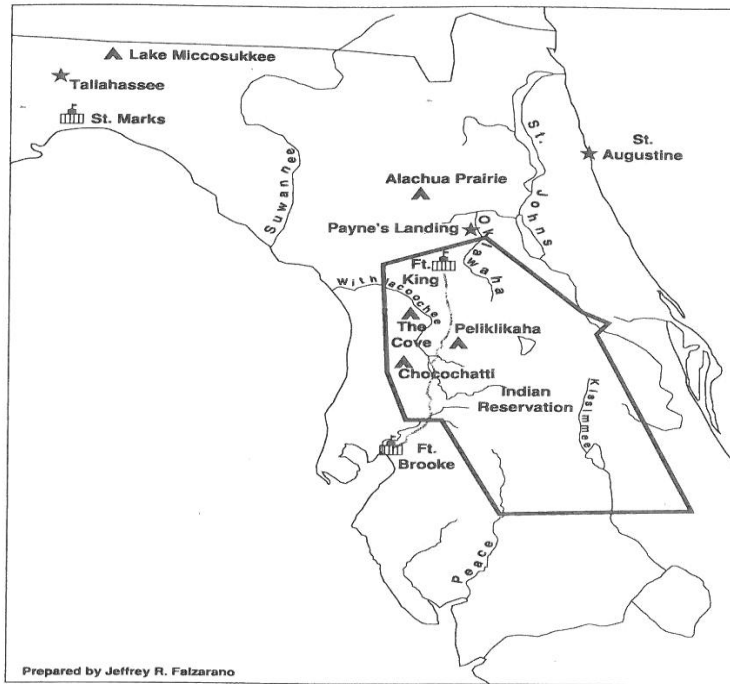
## APPENDICES

- I. The Seminole Migration, 1700-1820
- II. The Seminole Reservation, 1823
- III. Florida Campaign, 1836
- IV. Florida Campaign, 1837
- V. Florida Campaign, 1838-1842

# APPENDIX I: THE SEMINOLE MIGRATION, 1700-1820

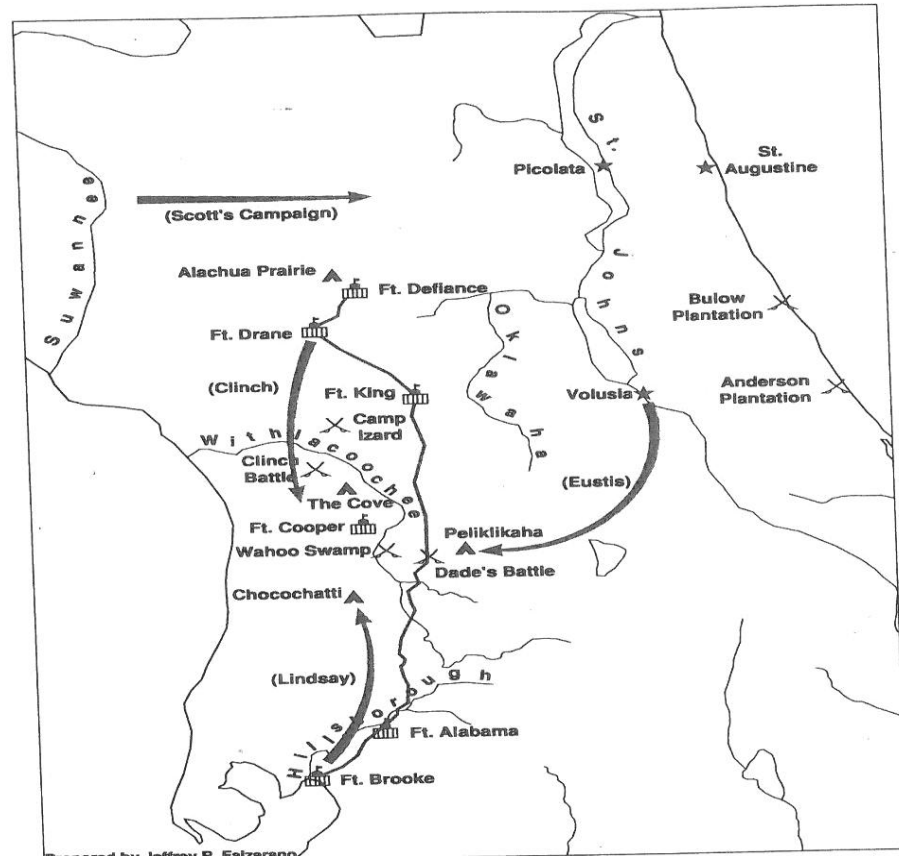


## APPENDIX II: THE SEMINOLE RESERVATION, 1823



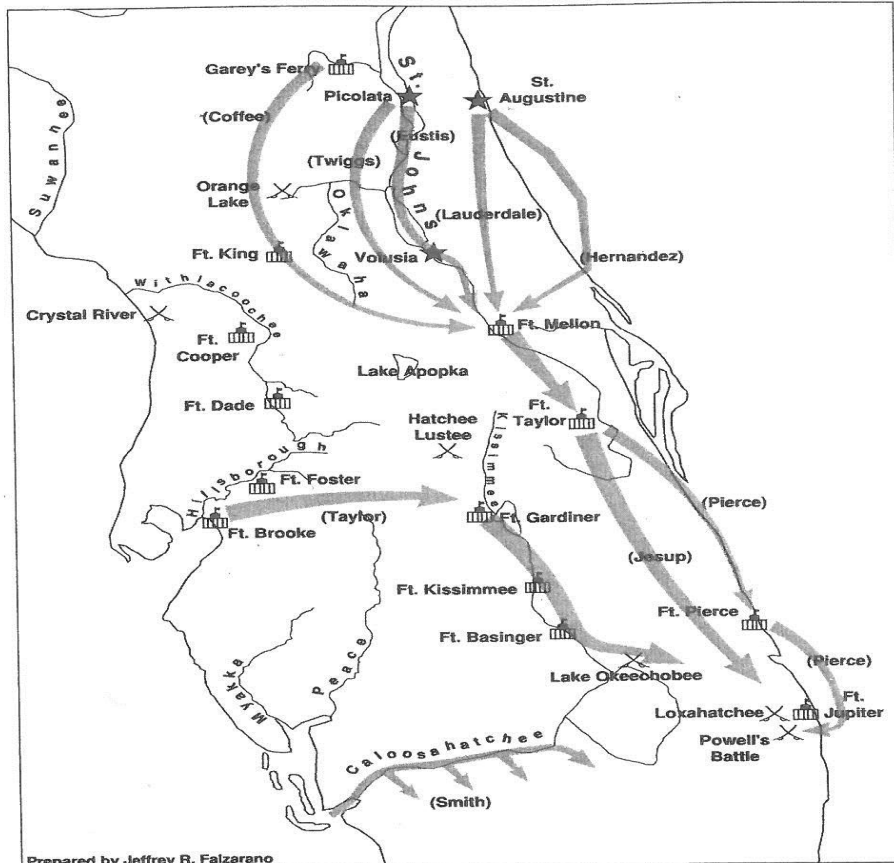
MAP 3. Seminole treaty lands, 1823.

### APPENDIX III: FLORIDA CAMPAIGN, 1836



MAP 4. Florida War, 1836.

## APPENDIX IV: FLORIDA CAMPAIGN, 1837



MAP 5. Florida War, 1837.

APPENDIX V: FLORIDA CAMPAIGN, 1838-1842



MAP 6. Florida War, 1838-1842.