



WAR COMES TO THE COVE

THE SECOND SEMINOLE WAR BEGINS

A Year of Victory for the Seminole

In the early 1830s pressure to remove Florida's Indians grew intense. Seminole leaders signed treaties in 1832 and 1833 that called for the tribe to relocate within three years. Whether they were coerced, were stalling for time, or misunderstood the terms is not known, but by the end of 1835, the Seminole declared they had no intention of leaving.

Increasing tensions led to bloodshed. White settlers assaulted unsuspecting Indians and Seminole warriors attacked unwary travelers and isolated homesteads. No one in Florida, Indian or white, felt safe. The Second Seminole War began in December 1835 with the annihilation of a force under Major Francis Dade near present-day Bushnell. For the first year of the war the Seminole and their black allies skillfully defended their homes.



The Tide Turns

The successes enjoyed by the Seminole were short lived. In December 1836, General Thomas Jesup was given command of the war and began to put unrelenting pressure on the Seminole. Captured Indians were sent west, escaped slaves were returned to bondage and the remaining Seminole were driven into southern Florida. Jesup also began the controversial practice of taking Seminole leaders prisoner while they negotiated under a flag of truce.



Old Military Road

You are now standing on the Old Military Road. During the Second Seminole War it was used to transport cannon, ammunition, food and medicine to the troops fighting in the Cove. Thousands of war-weary soldiers and Seminole warriors trod this path, which can still be seen today. The road remained in use by local inhabitants well into the 20th century.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR

Driven Into a New Homeland

By mid-1838, most Seminole had been pushed from central Florida and had taken refuge in areas south of Lake Okeechobee. The conflict continued for another four years with the army gradually wearing down the Indians. The U.S. government declared the war over in August 1842. Despite this, the defiant Seminole and their descendants lived in fear of removal for the next hundred years until they were federally recognized in the 1950s.

SEMINOLE LEADERSHIP

Chief Micanopy led the Seminole warriors throughout the early years of the Second Seminole War. He was captured and imprisoned by Jesup in 1838 and ultimately sent to the Indian Territory in the west.

Osceola was a defiant warrior and widely recognized by both sides as a skilled political leader. He fiercely opposed forced emigration, was outspoken in his support for the war, and helped plan military strategy. He was taken prisoner while negotiating under a flag of truce and died at Fort Moultrie in Charleston, SC, in 1838.

Chief Abiaka (Sam Jones) was a powerful medicine man and spiritual leader. He was determined to escape removal and taught his people to avoid the whites when possible but to fight fiercely when necessary. Abiaka led embattled warriors and their families to safety and was the only major Seminole leader to evade relocation to the west.



THE FIRST YEAR OF THE WAR

DECEMBER 28TH 1835
Dade's Battle
 Only two of 108 soldiers serving under Major Francis Dade survive a Seminole ambush. The Second Seminole War begins.

DECEMBER 31ST 1835
Clinch's Battle
 A force of 750 men under General Duncan Clinch is forced to retreat after crossing the Withlacoochee to attack Seminole villages in the Cove.

FEBRUARY 27TH 1836
Gaines' Battle
 The Seminole prevent General Edmund Gaines and 1000 men from crossing the Withlacoochee. They hold the soldiers under siege at Camp Izard for a week.

MARCH-APRIL 1836
Scott's Campaign
 General Winfield Scott is sent to Florida with 5000 men. His elaborate plan of a three-pronged attack on the Cove fails.

APRIL 1836
Siege of Fort Cooper
 Major Mark Anthony Cooper and his 380 men are held under siege at Fort Cooper for 16 days until a relief column arrives.

NOVEMBER 21ST 1836
Battle at Wahoo Swamp
 The Seminole hold off a force of 2,500 men led by Florida Governor Richard K. Call in the difficult terrain of Wahoo Swamp.

BATTLES IN THE COVE
 Map showing locations: Ft. King (Orlando), Clinch's Battle, Gaines' Battle, Fort Cooper, Battle at Wahoo Swamp, Dade's Battle, Ft. Brooke (Tampa).

Other items on timeline: BLACK LEATHER ARMY HATS ARE CALLED "FORAGE CAPS", U.S. ARMY AMMUNITION KIT & CANTEN, U.S. MUSKETS ARE FITTED WITH BAYONETS, POWDER HORNS HOLD BLACK POWDER FOR SEMINOLE RIFLES.