THE FLORIDA VOLUNTEERS: TERRITORIAL MILITIA IN THE OPENING OF THE SECOND SEMINOLE WAR

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The Second Seminole War was America's longest Indian conflict. Spanning seven years, the war was the deadliest and costliest phase of a half-century-long struggle between the U.S. government and the Seminoles over Indian removal. The war consumed every regular army unit at one time or another (approximately 10,000 soldiers) and 30,000 militia. Yet, few histories of the Second Seminole War exist and there are none that explore the capabilities and effectiveness of the Florida Militia. Major works, such as John K. Mahon's *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842,* contemporary accounts, and journal articles, alike, focus on the campaign commanders and generally disregard the Florida Militia's contributions. The Florida Militia should be examined because it was the military force made up of the territory's citizens—the people most invested in success or failure. This thesis examines the Florida Militia's capabilities and effectiveness in the opening of the first year of the Second Seminole War. This period, from December 1835 through April 1836, was the first fighting season where the Florida Militia was used primarily as an expeditionary force. Contrary to the preceding histories, the Florida Militia offered capabilities comparable to the regulars, specifically in their veteran leadership, and unique capabilities, such as their mounted militia. Overall, and in spite of their flaws, the Florida Militia proved far more effective than previously thought, owing to their leadership, organization, and policy.

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE FLORIDA VOLUNTEERS: TERRITORIAL MILITIA IN THE OPENING OF THE SECOND SEMINOLE WAR, by MAJ Ryan P. Hovatter, 191 pages.

The Second Seminole War was America's longest Indian conflict. Spanning seven years, the war was the deadliest and costliest phase of a half-century-long struggle between the U.S. government and the Seminoles over Indian removal. The war consumed every regular army unit at one time or another (approximately 10,000 soldiers) and 30,000 militia. Yet, few histories of the Second Seminole War exist and there are none that explore the capabilities and effectiveness of the Florida Militia. Major works, such as John K. Mahon's *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842,* contemporary accounts, and journal articles, alike, focus on the campaign commanders and generally disregard the Florida Militia's contributions. The Florida Militia should be examined because it was the military force made up of the territory's citizens—the people most invested in success or failure. This thesis examines the Florida Militia's capabilities and effectiveness in the opening of the first year of the Second Seminole War. This period, from December 1835 through April 1836, was the first fighting season where the Florida Militia was used primarily as an expeditionary force. Contrary to the preceding histories, the Florida Militia offered capabilities comparable to the regulars, specifically in their veteran leadership, and unique capabilities, such as their mounted militia. Overall, and in spite of their flaws, the Florida Militia proved far more effective than previously thought, owing to their leadership, organization, and policy.

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Figure 1. Jefferson Volunteers at the Camp McLemore Blockhouse

Source: Jackson Walker, *Blockhouse Siege of the Withlacoochee,* painting courtesy of the artist and the Florida National Guard Heritage Art Series.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Second Seminole War was America's longest Indian conflict. Spanning seven years, the war was the deadliest and costliest phase of a half-century-long struggle between the U.S. government and the Seminoles over Indian removal. The war consumed every regular army unit at one time or another (approximately 10,000 soldiers) and 30,000 militia and captured the imagination of the American public. Called the Florida War in its time, it occupied the front pages of newspapers across the country. The press gave more attention to the Florida War in 1836 than the Texas rebellion, the Battle of the Alamo, and the presidential election—all occurring that same year.[1] Yet, few histories of the Second Seminole War exist and there are none that explore the capabilities and effectiveness of the Florida Militia.

Contemporaries and historians, alike, have marginalized the capabilities and effectiveness of the Florida Militia during the Second Seminole War. History of the war has been told through the lens of the regular army's contributions, in spite of the majority of forces being militia. This thesis specifically examines the opening of the Second Seminole War, covering the first fighting season from December 1835 through April 1836 when the Florida Militia was primarily an expeditionary force. The Florida Militia fought in all three offensive campaigns during this period. They were often deployed far from their homes and significantly outnumbered their regular counterparts. After 1836,

[1] John Missal and Mary Lou Missal, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 114.

the Jackson administration placed a higher importance in the Florida theater and regular army units took over offensive operations. Thereafter, the Florida Militia was used less in offensive operations and shifted to hometown and fort defense.

To understand the entirety of the Second Seminole War, one must delve into three books on the subject. It's best to start with John K. Mahon's *History of the Second Seminole War* published in 1967 and revised in 1985. Mahon tells the story of the war in context to national, military, and Florida history. His was the first objective history of the war. The second book, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War,* published by John T. Sprague in 1848 is part historical study and part contemporary account—since Sprague fought in later part of the war. As remarkable as Sprague's narrative is, it does not place the war into larger historical context, nor does it address the Florida Militia in a comprehensive way.

Mahon's book stood as the single definitive work of the Second Seminole War for some fifty years and still stands as one of few major sources. A third important source is a book published by C. S. Monaco in 2018: *The Second Seminole War and the Limits of American Aggression.* Monaco's approach was to look beyond the military aspects and focus on how the war affected the nation. While Monaco provides an excellent study, he too only superficially addresses the Florida Militia.

Each of these works are important for understanding the war, but only touch lightly on the Florida Militia. Where militia officers and units are mentioned, they are not put into context of where they came from and how they relate to development of the Florida Territory or the Florida Militia. None of the works on the Second Seminole War or on the organization of the Florida Militia frame the history of the war from the militia

perspective, nor do they interweave the important familial and geographic relationships that are so important to understanding the Florida Militia. George C. Bittle partially filled this gap when he wrote a dissertation on the development of the Florida Militia in 1985, titled "In the Defense of Florida: The Organized Florida Militia from 1821 to 1920." His unpublished manuscript provides excellent detail on the territorial policies governing the militia but only fleetingly describes some important relationships between the militia and political leaders, and Bittle only examines tactical skirmishes and operations in broad strokes. None of these works analyze the contributions of the Florida Militia across the three campaigns fought in the first fighting season of the war. And none describe how the Florida militia changed its organization and tactics to meet demands and threats during the war.

This thesis specifically examines the Florida Militia's capabilities and effectiveness by telling a comprehensive story of the Florida Militia during this period. To understand their capabilities, this thesis examines the people who constituted the militia—especially the leaders—and their motivations, how they were organized, and how the Territorial Legislature adapted policy to make the militia more effective. Military effectiveness will be examined using the definition from historians Allan Millett, Williamson Murray, and Kenneth Watman. They defined military effectiveness as the process by which an army converts "resources physically and politically available" into

fighting power.[2] Resources consists of available manpower, equipment, weapons, horses, money, and political willpower.

Millett, Murray, and Watman note that while there is a relationship between effectiveness and victory, victory cannot be the sole indicator of effectiveness.[3] Chance is still the unpredictable factor that can produce victory for an ineffective army and defeat for an effective one. It is good that victory alone is not the measure of effectiveness since U.S. military commanders—whether regular or militia—failed to achieve their war aims: to remove the Seminoles from the Florida peninsula. In fact, seven years after its beginning, a frustrated Tyler administration unilaterally declared the war over in 1842, even though several hundred Seminoles remained in Florida.

The Florida Militia was far more effective than credit has been given. This is especially true in the opening of the war since the army had so few regular forces in the territory. The Florida Militia often had more understanding of the terrain and of the people living there, and they had far more invested in success. Using the Florida Militia on such a large scale, at least in the beginning, helped cement the Florida public to the war, particularly in the Panhandle region less affected by the fighting. The war for the regulars was far less passionate since, for the most part, they were outsiders. The regular officers were mainly Northerners, and the majority of enlisted soldiers were foreign-born.

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[2] Allan R. Millett, Williamson Murray, and Kenneth H. Watman, "The Effectiveness of Military Organizations," in *Military Effectiveness,* vol. 1, ed. Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1-2.

[3] Ibid.

For them, it was only their duty to be in Florida. The war was far more passionate among the Florida Militia and the Seminoles who were fighting for their existence.

Since war is a human endeavor, this thesis must examine the backgrounds of leaders. Understanding the details of their person, their family history, and their place in society. This helps understand the whole character of the leader and gives insight into their motivations and stresses. This thesis also describes the Territory of Florida and some of its important towns and places in order to gain situational context. It is in this context that the political and militia leaders adapted the Florida Militia's organization and the manner it fought.

Why does this matter today? This study is applicable to the learning of counterinsurgency and militia and reserve matters. The three Seminole Wars span five decades, and the Second Seminole War alone was the longest and most expensive Indian war.[4] The Florida Militia and the militias of other states shared a high burden during the period of this study. During the Second Seminole War era there were arguments on how, and whether, the militia should be used in the war. These arguments continued well into the twentieth century and even today as the Department of Defense grapples with the use of the National Guard in federally funded emergencies and in overseas conflict.

The descendent of the organized militias, the National Guard, has been at the forefront of overseas combat operations throughout the past two decades and virtually the sole force provider for defense support to civil authorities in the homeland. As the Global War on Terror winds down in the number of deployed units and soldiers, the National

[4] Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars*, xv.

Guard continues to deploy with frequency in support of counterinsurgency and contingency operations around the world. At the time of this thesis' completion, there were 77,000 Guardsmen—seventeen percent of the entire National Guard—mobilized with 40,000 supporting homeland defense missions across the nation and 16,000 deployed overseas in contingency operations.[5] This number includes 4,000 Guardsmen activated to support the peace in civil disturbance operations. The year 2020, however, saw the most Guardsmen activated at a single time since World War II, with a peak of 43,351 Guardsmen conducting civil disturbance operations on June 7, and 30,000 Guardsmen deployed for coronavirus relief throughout the summer.[6]

Lastly, the reader should consider if it is possible to understand the history of a war by solely focusing on the actions of the regular army and its commanders. The answer clearly is it is not. To understand the full history of the Afghanistan War, for example, there must equally be accounts of the U.S. Army National Guard and Army Reserves, the joint and coalition forces, the enemy, and importantly the country's local defense and police forces. In this regard, this thesis contributes to the greater history of the Second Seminole War, the 19th Century American militia system, and the National Guard.

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[5] National Guard Bureau, Joint Operations Center, "OPSUM (Operational Summary)," April 29, 2021.

[6] National Guard Bureau, "2020 Year of the National Guard," unpublished paper; Steve Beynon, "31 States, Territories Want National Guard to Stay Deployed on Coronavirus Missions into the Fall, Possibly Christmas," *Stars and Stripes,* July 15, 2020.

CHAPTER 2

SETTING THE STAGE

Tallahassee is a Creek word meaning "old town." It had once been a vast city supporting thousands of Apalachee who prospered in the hills that offered rich soil for planting and numerous lakes for water and fishing. The Apalachee called the sprawling village Anhaica. The rolling red hills region surrounding Tallahassee had rich soil and abundant fresh water with lakes, streams, and a cascading waterfall. In the winter of 1539, the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto came upon the freshly abandoned town and found 250 large well-built houses. De Soto and his 600 Spanish conquistadores likely experienced the first Christmas Mass in the New World in Anhaica, although it would be another century before the Spanish attempted to evangelize the Apalachee and other natives of Florida.[7]

Relations between the Spanish and Apalachee improved, and the Spanish eventually established two main missions in the region to increase trading, keep peace, and convert the locals to Catholicism. The Spanish established the mission-fort San Marcos de Apalachee (St. Marks) where the St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers converged and emptied into the Apalachee Bay. It provided a base to move to Anhaica twenty miles to the north. In Anhaica itself, the Spanish built Mission San Luis de Apalachee.

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[7] The Apalachee temporarily vacated Anhaica to avoid DeSoto's army. David Lavender, *De Soto, Coronado, Cabrillo: Explorers of the Northern Mystery* (National Park Service Handbook, 1992), 43; Mary Louise Ellis and William W. Rogers, *Tallahassee Leon County, a History and Bibliography* (Tallahassee: Florida Department of State, 1986), 1; John H. Hann, *Apalachee, the Land between the Rivers* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2017), 1-3.

Eventually the Apalachee missions and old village collapsed as American raiders and their Creek allies from Georgia made increasing attacks into Spanish-held territory. The Apalachee evacuated their native home too, moving further from the American border.

Spanish ambitions in their backwater Florida colonies had long been dead by the late 18th Century. The ancient native civilizations of Florida were long-gone, decimated by European disease, war, and displacement. All of the Spanish missions were abandoned and only two principal settlements remained at St. Augustine and Pensacola, along with a small fort at St. Marks. What happened to the Apalachee at Anhaica is just one example of the disintegration of the Native American tribes in Florida. The remnants of various native peoples eventually formed a new tribe called the Seminoles. They were a conglomeration of many different tribes from northern Florida and southern Georgia and Alabama. Mainly descendants of Muskogee and Mikasuki speaking Creeks, they also included the last remnants of the Apalachee, Yamassee, Yuchee, and Timucua. At some point before the American Revolution, American colonists applied the name Seminole to all of Florida's natives. The name Seminole may have stemmed from a poor imitation by the Muskogee-speaking Creeks of the Spanish word *cimarrón,* meaning runaway, although as Historian James Covington wrote, the natives did not like being thought of as runaways and that Seminole may be better translated as pioneer or adventurer.[8]

[8] Mikasuki had various English spellings, however, Mikasuki refers to the tribe of Lower Creeks that spoke Mikasuki. This should not be confused with the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, a federally recognized tribe that broke off from the Seminole Tribe of Florida in 1962. James W. Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1993), 12-13.

The Seminoles, although wanting to retain their own way of life, adapted much of their lifestyle from centuries of contact with Europeans. They lived in small villages of log cabins where they cultivated vegetables and herded cattle. They were loosely organized across many villages, each having its own chief. They spoke Muskogee or Mikasuki, but many also spoke English and Spanish. They were accepting of outsiders, allowing displaced Red Stick Creeks from Alabama, and even whites, and blacks to join them. Many runaway slaves and free African Americans found refuge among the Seminoles and there were some entirely Black Seminole communities. Of course, the Spanish also encouraged blacks to come to Florida, offering freedom, in hopes they would serve as a buffer against the British and later Americans who continued excursions into Spanish Florida until the Spanish ceded Florida to the United States. It should be noted that the Seminoles also owned slaves and the blacks who joined the Seminoles were in their own segregated bands. The Seminoles frequently traded cattle with the Spanish, British, and Americans for slaves to use as cowhands. The Seminole chief Micanopy, for example, owned more than 100 slaves to manage his herds.[9]

One of the most influential Seminoles was Osceola who was mainly of Anglo-Saxon ancestry. Born under the name Billy Powell, he was given a new name once he matured past his adolescence, as was the Seminole custom. The name Osceola, or Asi-yaholo, roughly meant "one who takes the black drink and yells" and was given in honor of the annual Green Corn ceremony's traditions of drinking a strong caffeinated black tea. Osceola's father was white and his mother, Polly, was mixed-race. Polly raised her

[9] C. S. Monaco, *The Second Seminole War and the Limits of American Aggression* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), 30-35.

son in a Creek community in Alabama until they were displaced during the Creek War—when American troops soundly defeated the Red Stick Creeks at Horseshoe Bend in 1814. Polly and her son joined other Red Stick Creeks who fled to Florida and found refuge among the Seminoles. The Spanish government largely left the Seminoles alone; they remained proximate to their enclaves of St. Augustine, Pensacola, and St. Marks. The expansive longleaf pine forests of northern Florida with their abundant wildlife and creeks provided a welcoming respite for the Red Sticks who soon assimilated into the amalgam called the Seminoles.

Figure 2. Osceola

Source: George Catlin, *Os-ce-o-lá, The Black Drink, a Warrior of Great Distinction,* 1838, oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum, gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr.

The Creek War was bloody with massacres of civilians on both sides. Hostility continued into Florida as American settlers and Seminoles fought on the borderlands until Major General Andrew Jackson swept into the Spanish territory in December 1817. Jackson accused the Spanish government of allowing Seminoles to attack American settlements in Georgia and of harboring two British agents who incited the Seminoles into invading American territory. Jackson left his headquarters in Nashville with a force of regulars and Tennessee Volunteers and invaded Spanish Florida. He quickly seized Spanish-held St. Marks and Pensacola, razed Seminole villages near Lake Miccosukee and the Suwannee River, and captured and executed the two suspected British instigators. Ultimately, Jackson's war—now known as the First Seminole War—led to Spain relinquishing Florida to the United States in the Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819. The United States formally took possession of Florida in 1821 and opened the door for American settlers to move in.

Whereas, the Spanish had kept to enclaves in St. Augustine and Pensacola, the white American settlers intended to establish plantations and ranches in the interior. The American territorial government organized counties and jurisdictions to govern the populace. In 1822, the Territorial Legislature created two judicial districts divided along the Suwannee River and called them East and West Florida. Two years later, in 1824, the Legislature created a third superior court district to serve Tallahassee and the surrounding plantations called Middle Florida. Middle Florida was created by dividing the West Florida district and encompassed the area between the Apalachicola and Suwannee Rivers, now known as the big bend region. The first two counties were established in 1821 along the same borders as the East and West Florida districts. In the first thirteen

years the territorial government created another seventeen counties. The counties were shaped and reshaped so frequently, that even in official correspondence the territorial administration used the terms East, Middle, and West Florida to refer to areas since the geographic boundaries of the districts stayed consistent (see figure 12).[10]

In East Florida near St. Augustine, settlers from Georgia pushed south and west to establish sugarcane and rice plantations in the lowland swamps. In the red hills of Middle Florida surrounding Tallahassee, settlers from Virginia and the Carolinas established cotton plantations. The rich soil in Middle Florida offered higher yields than the old plantations up north. The wealthier prospectors established large plantations, each bringing with them scores of slave labor. The free Seminole territory with its Black Seminole bands may have been tempting for many slaves to consider running away and posed another major friction point between their white masters and the Seminoles.[11] Not all settlers, however, established slave economy plantations. Cattlemen sought the fertile

[10] See "Acts of the Legislative Council" in Florida Legislature, *General Acts, Resolutions and Memorials Adopted by the Legislature of Florida* (Tallahassee: W. & C. J. Bartlett, 1822, 1, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/chi.60363302; Charles D. Farris, "The Courts of Territorial Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (1941): 347, 354, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30138387; Works Progress Administration, Florida, "Creation of Counties in Florida, 1820-1936," 1936, Florida Memory: State Library and Archives of Florida, https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/322986. Generally, see Clarence E. Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States,* vol. 23 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934), for use of East, Middle, and West Florida in correspondence.

[11] George C. Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida: The Organized Florida Militia from 1821 to 1920" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1984), 47.

plains of the interior Alachua country that was once so prosperous to the Seminoles who had been the main provider of beef to the Spanish.[12]

The American government sought to separate the Seminoles from the newly settled communities. In September 1823, Governor William P. DuVal, Colonel James Gadsden, and Bernardo Sequi representing the U.S. government, met with Seminole chiefs a few miles south of St. Augustine to establish a treaty to resettle the Seminoles.[13] Colonel Gadsden was adamant that the Seminoles cede their northern lands and move south on to a reservation. Reluctantly, and perhaps fooled by the lengthy treaty written in English, Chief Neamathla and thirty-one other chiefs placed an X under their names on the parchment. The Treaty of Moultrie Creek established a four-million-acre reservation for the Seminoles in the center of the Florida peninsula, guaranteed protection from the U.S. government, and assured a $5,000 annuity for twenty years. The reservation was cut off from the shores by a fifteen-mile buffer, preventing contact with ships from the Caribbean, and where the government thought that American pioneers would not want to

[12] The name Alachua derives from the Spanish "La Chua" which translates to the sinkhole. The county of Alachua was created in 1824, but by 1835 the county had been carved into a total of five counties. In the Florida Territorial period, the terms Alachua country or the Alachua frontier refer broadly to the land in Alachua County, surrounding counties, and slightly into the Seminole reservation. The borders of the Alachua frontier are not well defined. Therefore, the terms Alachua country or frontier will be used throughout this thesis to describe the region more broadly.

[13] Bernardo Segui was a Minorcan merchant from St. Augustine. For more on Segui and the people of St. Augustine see Daniel Velasquez, "Persons, Houses, and Material Possessions: Second Spanish Period St. Augustine Society" (Thesis, University of Central Florida, 2015). The president appointed Gadsden and Segui as commissioners to represent the U.S. Government in treaty negotiations. See Clarence E. Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States,* vol. 22 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934-), 659-661.

settle anyway. Some of the friendly Seminole bands were allowed to remain in the Apalachicola River region, but the majority were bound to the reservation.[14]

The Seminoles thought a concession would give them peace after fighting with settlers and other Indians for decades. The treaty pushed the Seminoles farther south into sandy and swampy regions and away from the interior plains called the Alachua country. The Seminoles soon found themselves consistently short of food and unable to provide for themselves on their new reservation. As white settlers moved into Alachua to raise cattle, the Seminoles saw their starving situation in stark contrast to the whites who prospered in the Seminoles' former grazing lands. More important, however, was the sacred connection the Seminoles felt toward their lost land. It would soon become clear how important the Alachua country was to the Seminoles as it became the battleground of 1835 and 1836.[15]

The American epicenter of the Territory of Florida was Tallahassee. Until the founding of the centrally located capital, the Florida territory had been governed separately from Pensacola and St. Augustine. The new capital was in the heart of the fertile red hills region of Middle Florida. The Americans chose this location in 1824 because it was a mid-point between the disconnected Spanish settlements of St.

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[14] John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1825-1842,* rev. ed. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1985), 47; Monaco, *The Second Seminole War and the Limits of American Aggression*, 10-17; United States, *Treaty Between the United States and the Florida Tribes of Indians Signed at Camp on the Moultrie Creek, Florida Territory,* Indigenous Digital Archive, National Archives, Washington, DC, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/102251857.

[15] Monaco, *The Second Seminole War and the Limits of American Aggression,* 10-17.

Augustine and Pensacola. Tallahassee could be reached by riding overland, or by boat to the port of St. Marks where it was only a twenty-mile horse or carriage ride north to the capital. Tallahassee also served as the government seat of Leon County. On the morning of April 9, 1824, the first American settlers arrived in Tallahassee.[16] Governor DuVal moved his government office from Pensacola on June 21, 1824. Writing to President John Quincy Adams, "I shall sail this day for St. Marks and shall remain at the new seat of Government (sic) near Tallahassee, where I request all communications, from your Department to me be directed."[17] In the Fall of 1824, the Territorial Legislative Council held their third session in a log cabin in the new capital. The town quickly grew as settlers made their way from Virginia, Tennessee, and the Carolinas.

Within a couple of years, Tallahassee's dirt roads were lined with wooden shops and homes. A new capitol building was partially constructed. There were two churches, an academy, and two private schools, along with three public houses, several boarding houses, nine stores, two groceries, and a grog shop.[18] John Bellamy, a resident of Tallahassee, won a government contract to build a military road from St. Augustine to Tallahassee. The road was completed by 1826 and connected St. Augustine, Tallahassee,

[16] T. Frederick Davis, "Pioneer Florida," *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1946): 292-294, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30138607; Bertram H. Groene, *Ante-Bellum Tallahassee* (Tallahassee: Florida Heritage Foundation, 1971), 3.

[17] Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 22:979.

[18] Ibid.

and Pensacola.[19] There was a network of roads that led outward from the capital like spider legs into the hills to the many rural cotton plantations—the rustic homes situated on lakes surrounded by picturesque live oaks dripping with Spanish moss. Settlers in the rural reaches outside of Tallahassee lived in proximity to the Seminoles. The Mikasuki Seminoles lived to the east of town and the Apalachicola Seminoles lived further west.

Figure 3. Tallahassee Street Scene

Source: A. Bertrand, residential street scene in Tallahassee, Florida, 1842, lithograph, hand-colored, 7 x 9 in., Florida Memory: State Archives of Florida.

[19] Mark F. Boyd, "The First American Road in Florida: Pensacola-St. Augustine Highway, 1824. Part II," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1935): 139-191, https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol14/iss3/1.

It was in this situation where the first American militia in Florida took root—out of necessity to defend Tallahassee, St. Augustine, and the Alachua frontier. The Territorial Legislature created two brigades of enrolled militia in the first Florida Militia law, passed on September 13, 1822. The two brigades were the 1st Brigade with headquarters in Pensacola and the 2d Brigade in St. Augustine. The dividing line between the two brigade areas of responsibility was the Suwannee River.[20] Each brigade commander had responsibility for all the enrolled militia in their half of the territory. Because of this they were referred to, synonymously, as the West and East Florida Militias. The 1st Brigade headquarters moved from Pensacola to Tallahassee when the seat of government moved there in 1824. Thereafter, 1st Brigade encompassed the militia of Middle and West Florida. The Territorial Legislature also authorized the establishment of enrolled militia regiments in the 1822 legislation.[21]

Governor DuVal, in September 1822, recommended Richard Keith Call and Joseph M. Hernández as brigade commanders to President John Quincy Adams—who had commissioning authority over general officers. The two men were popular figures in their respective communities of West and East Florida. Adams appointed Call commander of the 1st Brigade in West Florida and Hernández commander of the 2d Brigade in East Florida.[22] The two generals held commands of these brigades for the

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[20] Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 22:659.

[21] Florida Legislature, *General Acts, Resolutions and Memorials Adopted by the Legislature of Florida,* 1822, 120.

[22] Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 22:529.

better part of two decades and were both still in command at the start of the Second Seminole War in late 1835.

While the generals were appointed by the president, the territorial governor appointed field grade officers, with consent of the Territorial Legislature, for positions in the adjutant general's office, brigades, and in each of the regiments divided among the counties.[23] The regimental commanders provided recommendations to the governor to appoint company grade officers. Although in an 1825 revision to the territorial militia law, the governor's patronage power lessoned as the Legislature authorized militia privates to elect their own company officers annually at a special muster on the first of each June.[24] In a later militia law, enacted in 1829, the Legislature expanded the election of officers to all regimental, battalion, and company officers who then served a two-year term.[25]

Shortly after Adams appointed Call and Hernández brigade commanders, they ordered their regimental officers to take the oath of office, form their commands, and provide militia returns with the names of eligible white men to Colonel Joseph M. White—the first Adjutant General of the Territory. The attempt to form the militia during 1822 and 1823 was half-hearted, however, and no militia returns were made. In fact, none

[23] Florida Legislature, *General Acts, Resolutions and Memorials Adopted by the Legislature of Florida*. 1822, 120.

[24] Ibid., 106; Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 30.

[25] Florida Legislature, *General Acts, Resolutions and Memorials Adopted by the Legislature of Florida,* 1822, 149; Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 38.

were made before 1831. Historian George Bittle believed many of the militia officers were more interested in having a military title than performing their duties.[26]

It should be noted here that the Florida Militia had three categories: enrolled militia, volunteer militia, and war volunteers. The terms militia and volunteers are often used synonymously, even in the era, but there are subtle, yet important, distinctions. All three categories fell under the responsibility of the Florida Militia. All had elected officers at the company level. Only the enrolled and volunteer militia were explicitly addressed in Territorial law. The war volunteer concept would be used through the Second Seminole War, partly because the enrolled militia system was not functional or popular with the territory's citizens.

The enrolled militia was based on the old minuteman concept, that a civilian could be called to the town square at a moment's notice—with his own gun and ammunition. In Florida, the enrolled militia was mostly a shell organization. Officers were often identified in their position, but the units did not drill, and in theory, if they were to be called upon, eligible males would be drafted and placed into companies and regiments based on the county in which they lived. There are some exceptions as will be seen in two of Hernández's regiments during the Second Seminole War, but by and large, the territory's enrolled militia regiments were not formed.

The volunteer militia was composed of highly independent long-term volunteer companies. The territory's first militia law allowed citizens to form independent volunteer militia companies to be accepted for service. These companies were constituted

[26] Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 20-21; Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 22:665, 721-722.

by the Legislature and had requirements for drilling, weapons, and uniforms. Volunteer militia companies' members were exempt from service in the enrolled militia. Individuals in the companies were exempt from the enrolled militia draft and voted on the unit's by-laws.[27] The volunteer militia companies, often referred to as independent volunteers, differed from the war volunteer units in that they continued to exist beyond the crisis du jour and many of the volunteer militia companies constituted during the Second Seminole War would continue to exist for decades. These organizations often named themselves *guards*, referring to the inherent nature of their purpose—to guard their hometown. This was mostly preference, but aside from a few rarities, nearly every company organized by the Legislature had *guards* in the name; as in the St. Augustine Guards, Tallahassee Guards, Spring Cove Guards, and Jacksonville Guards. Although independent, these companies were assigned to an enrolled militia regiment for oversight.

The war volunteer units differed from volunteer militia companies in the duration and type of service. War volunteers were task-organized for a specific expedition, campaign, or time period and then dissolved afterward. They were activated in federal service and paid by the federal government. The war volunteer units were usually formed as battalions or regiments, whereas the volunteer militia units in Florida only existed at company level. War volunteer battalions and regiments could consist of both volunteer militia companies which enlisted altogether as a unit and individual volunteers forming entirely new task-organized volunteer companies for the single expedition. Often, a war volunteer unit would be raised by calling forth the enrolled militia to a town's square and

[27] Florida Legislature, *General Acts, Resolutions and Memorials Adopted by the Legislature of Florida*, 1822, 116-117; Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 14-17.

encouraging citizens to volunteer. War volunteer companies often named themselves *volunteers,* such as the Leon Volunteers.

If a war volunteer unit could not fill their requirement, men could be drafted from the enrolled militia, although there were usually enough volunteers for it to be unnecessary. There was also a marked pride in serving in either a standing volunteer militia company or an expeditionary war volunteer force.

The first known American volunteer militia company in Florida was raised in St. Augustine on August 1, 1826. The men called themselves the Florida Rangers and elected Joseph Woodruff as their captain. The Florida Rangers were a mix of Spanish and Anglo-American descendants and had among its volunteer ranks some of the prominent men of East Florida who would not only lead in government and business, but the East Florida Militia as well. Some of the more influential men in the company were First Lieutenant José Simeon Sanchez who anglicized his name as Joseph, and Sergeant Benjamin A. Putnam who is the namesake for Putnam County. By 1835, Sanchez and Putnam were the colonel and major of the 2d Florida Regiment, respectively. José Hernández, Jr. was the ensign of the company and the son of militia Brigadier General Hernández.[28]

[28] "Florida Militia Muster Rolls, 1826-1900: Joseph Woodruff's Company (Florida Rangers) Muster Roll, St. Johns County, 1827," Florida Memory: State Library and Archives of Florida, http://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/345104. The Florida Rangers had one captain, a first, second, and third lieutenant, one ensign, three sergeants, two musicians, and 55 privates. The elder and junior Hernández's are listed as signers of an 1827 petition to Congress requesting citizenship. Clarence E. Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States,* vol. 25 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934-), 761.

Of note was the diverse make-up of officers in the East Florida Militia. Brigadier General Joseph M. Hernández was the son of Minorcan immigrants who settled in Andrew Turnbull's colony of New Smyrna when the British controlled Florida. The Minorcans, as the New Smyrna colonists would be collectively referred to since the majority came from the small Spanish Mediterranean island, also included a substantial number of Greeks, Turks, Italians, and French. After years of tough living and a failed indigo enterprise, the New Smyrna colony collapsed. Hernández's parents joined some 400 other former colonists of New Smyrna in St. Augustine seventy miles to the north. His parents settled in St. Augustine where he was born in 1788—only five years after Florida returned to Spanish control. His father, although not wealthy, sought to give his first-born son an education. The young Hernández went to a Catholic school in St.

Figure 4. Brigadier General José Mariano Hernández

Source: P. S. Duval, Joseph N Hernandez, First Delegate to Congress from the Territory, and Brigadier General of the Militia of Florida, 1838, print, Library of Congress.

Augustine and later studied in Savannah and then in Cuba where he earned a law degree. During the 1812 incursion by Georgia militia into north Florida, known as the Patriot Revolution, Hernández joined the local militia to defend the Spanish government and his city. The American invaders seized Fernandina Island and the old free-black fort, called Fort Mose, just a few miles north of the Castillo de San Marcos, a Spanish coquina-masonry fort, guarding St. Augustine. With no formal support from the U.S. Congress,

the Americans retreated to Georgia. For his service, Hernández received substantial land grants south of the city.[29]

Like many of the Minorcans of St. Augustine, he stayed through Florida's transition to American rule and anglicized his name from José Mariano to Joseph Marion. Although Hernández had fought against the American invasion of 1812, he viewed the American administration favorably. He served as an important bridge between Spanish colonial and American territorial administrations; he was bilingual, a wealthy landowner, and had served in the Spanish colonial militia. He befriended the first Territorial Governor DuVal who appointed him as one of two brigadier generals in the enrolled militia. Hernández also served as the first Hispanic member of Congress and was later elected as mayor of St. Augustine.[30]

The years of 1826 and 1827 were marked by a sense of urgency as there were several instances of Indian attacks on Florida settlers near Tallahassee and the Alachua frontier. Governor DuVal ordered elements of the militia to protect settlers in the Alachua frontier and to arrest suspected murderers on several occasions. In December 1826, after nearly the entire Carr family was murdered at their home on the Aucilla River just east of Tallahassee, the governor ordered Brigadier General Call to find the perpetrators. Call

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[29] U.S. House of Representatives, "Hernandez, Joseph Marion," Biography, https://history.house.gov/People/Detail/14946. The Castillo de San Marcos is the oldest masonry fort in North America. It translates to St. Marks' Castle. The Spanish built the star fort with coquina, which is a natural sedimentary rock made of compressed crushed shells. For more on the Patriot Revolution, see Rembert W. Patrick, *Florida Fiasco: Rampant Rebels on the Georgia-Florida Border, 1810-1815* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1954).

[30] U.S. House of Representatives, "Hernández" biography.

quickly raised a force from Leon and Gadsden Counties. The small but mounted militia force, aided by dogs, sought to find the responsible Seminoles. DuVal also ordered Brigadier General Hernández to send sixty mounted men from Duval and Nassau Counties to protect the settlers in the Alachua frontier. At the same time, DuVal requested assistance from Captain Francis Langhorn Dade, commanding a detachment of the 4th U.S. Infantry. DuVal wanted Dade to disarm the Mikasuki Seminoles between the Aucilla and Suwannee Rivers and force them to migrate to the reservation south of the Alachua frontier.[31] While the militia forces were largely unsuccessful, Dade was noted for his vigilance and efficiency in capturing Seminoles, destroying their settlements, and sending them to the reservation.[32]

The Territorial Legislature responded to the Indian scare of 1826-1827 by amending the militia law again in 1827. The position of the adjutant general was increased from colonel to brigadier general to bring authority in collecting militia returns. The Legislature also gave regimental commanders the authority to recognize independent volunteer companies without needing the governor's approval.[33] In February 1827,

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[31] *Niles' Weekly Register* (Baltimore), 31:312, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006903835; Canter Brown, "The Florida Crisis of 1826-1827 and the Second Seminole War," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (1995): 435-436, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30150482. The Territorial Governor could not order Federal troops but had a relationship with U.S. Army commanders in Florida where he could request their use and they usually cooperated.

[32] Brown, "The Florida Crisis of 1826-1827 and the Second Seminole War," 435-440. Indians killed Mr. Carr, four infant children, and a black male slave.

[33] Florida Legislature, *Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, Passed at their 6th Session,* 1827 (Tallahassee: Joseph D. Davenport, 1828), 143, 150-151, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.35112204573432.

DuVal appointed the full complement of generals, colonels, lieutenant colonels, and majors of the Florida Militia.[34] DuVal appointed Isham G. Searcy as Adjutant General of the Florida Militia with the rank of brigadier general.[35]

Figure 5. Colonel James Gadsden

Source: Charles Frazier, James Gadsden, ca. 1830, watercolor on ivory, 6 x 3 1/4, Gibbes Museum of Art, gift of Ms. Ellinor Gadsden.

[34] Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 23:778, 781; "Florida Militia Muster Rolls, 1826-1900: Florida Militia Staff Roster, 1827," Florida Memory: State Library and Archives of Florida, http://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/345089.

[35] Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 23:781.

One of DuVal's most trusted officers was Colonel James Gadsden, the commander of the 7th Regiment of Leon County.[36] Gadsden was the grandson of a Continental Army general who designed the famous revolutionary flag with a coiled snake and the proclamation "Don't Tread on Me." James Gadsden graduated from Yale and joined the army during the War of 1812 where he served with General Jackson. Gadsden served for a short time between 1821 and 1822 as Adjutant General of the U.S. Army and then retired to settle in Florida where he established a plantation. Like Richard K. Call and Isham Searcy, Gadsden had first come to Florida with Jackson during the invasion into Spanish Florida. They remained loyal to the general. When President James Monroe appointed Jackson as the military governor of Florida, Jackson rewarded them with high posts in the new territory. These three and other loyal Jackson men settled in the new capital city and together were known in their time as the "Nucleus."[37]

Gadsden's imprint on Florida is indelible. He spent decades of his life shaping the territory. Not only is the county bordering the capital named for him, but he had invaded Pensacola and St. Marks with Jackson, destroyed the "Negro Fort" at Prospect Bluff which was the largest armed black colony in the South, founded Fort Brooke from which spurred the growth of a town called Tampa, and as Indian commissioner he pursued the flawed treaties with the Seminoles that would lead to the longest Indian war. Of course, his most famous endeavor, known as the Gadsden Purchase, was the American acquisition of northern parts of Mexico in 1854 which now make up the southern portions

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[36] Davis, "Pioneer Florida," 290-292.

[37] Herbert J. Doherty, Jr., *Richard Keith Call, Southern Unionist* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1961), 42.

of Arizona and New Mexico. Gadsden turned command of the 7th Regiment to Colonel Achille Murat in 1827 but remained an influential officer in the Florida Militia.

With Gadsden and Murat were Lieutenant Colonel Richard C. Allen, Major Richard C. Parish and Lieutenant George Taliaferro Ward as the adjutant.[38] Murat was by far the most eccentric of them and as influential with the governor as Gadsden. Murat was a French prince and son of Joachim Murat who was a cavalry commander in Napoleon's Grande Armée and appointed King of Naples by his brother-in-law Napoleon Bonaparte. With Napoleon's downfall and his father's death by firing squad, the young Prince Murat left Paris at the age of 21 and emigrated to New Jersey. Convinced by his friend Richard K. Call, he resettled in Florida. Murat first went to St. Augustine, but he was lured to Middle Florida where his first Florida friend, Call lived. Murat was also influenced by his friend James Gadsden and the two decided to partner on a land tract. Gadsden had experience as a surveyor and the two of them chose a site fifteen miles west of Tallahassee which they named Wascissa after an old Timucuan name. Murat brought with him 100 head of cattle, slaves, and a pet owl. His slaves built a cabin which he named Lipona—an anagram of Napoli, the Italian spelling of Naples. Through Gadsden, Murat befriended DuVal and the three frequently sat in Murat's home, eating salt pork and discussing Indian and frontier problems. Murat soon met and married Catherine Daingerfield Willis Gray, a great grandniece of George Washington.[39] Both Murat's St. Augustine and Tallahassee homes exist as museums today.

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[38] "Florida Militia Muster Rolls, 1826-1900: Florida Militia Staff Roster, 1827."

[39] Alfred J. Hanna, *A Prince in Their Midst* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), 102-119.

The illustration of Murat's life shows how interconnected, and often outlandish, the Florida Militia officers were. These officers remained in significant positions through the Second Seminole War.

While the regimental and brigade staffs had been formed, there were few organized companies. Governor DuVal wrote to James Barbour, the Secretary of War, in August 1826 requesting 65 stands of rifles for "one fine company" already formed to defend Tallahassee against the Seminoles.[40] The Tallahassee Independent Volunteers—likely the "fine company" DuVal referred to in his letter—first appeared on the territory's muster rolls in 1827, captained by Edward P. Downing with lieutenants E. R. Freeman and J. R. Davenport, and Ensign Amos Alexander. The volunteer company was attached to Murat's 7th Regiment as an independent volunteer company that were not obligated to answer to the regimental commander. Aside from the Tallahassee Independent Volunteers and the Florida Rangers, the only other registered volunteer company in 1827 was the Gadsden County Independent Volunteer Company, commanded by Captain William B. McCall and attached to Gadsden County's 5th Regiment.[41]

Militia law required each man to own a gun, whether it be a rifle, musket, or shotgun.[42] Yet the governor's request for the additional weapons demonstrated that a well-drilled company had to have matching arms and ammunition. Captain William L.

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[40] Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 23:269. A stand of rifles (or arms) is a complete set which includes the gun itself, sling, cartridge box, belt, and bayonet.

[41] "Florida Militia Muster Rolls, 1826-1900: Florida Militia Staff Roster, 1827."

[42] Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 32, 35.

Haskins, commander of a volunteer infantry company called the Florida Guards from Magnolia—a small community in Leon County just south of Tallahassee—echoed this need. Haskins wrote to DuVal in August 1829 that "in order to insure permanency in the Establishment of that Company, it is desirable that it be provided by the Government with a Suitable Stand of Arms," and that it was an "absolute necessity" to have like arms and accoutrements. "Without a uniformity in the arms, the Manuel & accompanying exercise cannot be as perfectly acquired as with it." Haskins' company numbered 45 officers and men.[43] Having like weapons in a unit is a fundamental aspect of arming soldiers. Militia companies may get by with using their own unique weapons and ammunition in a short emergency, but in a prolonged campaign it is crucial to have the same type of ammunition so that they can be resupplied.

The territory relied on the charisma of its officers to recruit volunteers from the citizenry. If that could not fill the necessary force, the brigadier generals had the authority to draft from the enrolled militia. The enrolled militia consisted of appointed officers and rolls of eligible white male citizens who could be called to either volunteer or draft in case of emergency. An eligible male was someone between the age of eighteen and forty-five years who had resided in Florida for at least thirty days in time of peace or ten days in time of war. There were peace-time exemptions for certain professions such as judges, U.S. marshals, district attorneys, clerks of the court, post-masters and mail carriers, and

[43] Other officers of the Florida Guards were First Lieutenant Edward Klein, Second Lieutenant L. W. Burnet, and Sergeants S. Culver and Ambrose Crane. Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 24:258-259.

clergy. Aside from the clergy, however, this is where most of the militia officers came from.[44]

The militia officers were the upper class of territorial society as evidenced by Gadsden, Murat, Call, and Hernández. The Tallahassee officers were mostly American born, although there were exceptions such as Murat. The officers from Florida's most populous town, St. Augustine, were formerly Spanish citizens, although they were mostly born in the Americas. The militia officers came from military families with a heritage of militia service going back to the Revolutionary War. They were highly educated, and a number of them were lawyers or doctors. The majority of them held multiple positions and responsibilities in government and business. There were many examples of officers who were simultaneously a lawyer, government official, militia officer, and owner of multiple plantations.

The officers in Tallahassee were close-knit, mostly belonging to the Nucleus faction of Jacksonians. Although friends and acquaintances, they competed against each other for elected and appointed territorial positions. Competitions led to insults and insults led to duels. These fights may have been especially bitter because of how close they were. They were a breed of adventurers who settled in the wild and dangerous territory. Many were War of 1812 veterans. They partnered in land speculation and in the formation of Florida's early banks. They met in each other's log homes drinking apple brandy by the fire or joined together at the inn owned by Florida's onetime Adjutant

[44] John P. DuVal, *Compilation of the Public Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, Passed Prior to 1840* (Tallahassee: Samuel S. Sibley Printer, 1839), 393-394, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008595799.

General—and future governor—Thomas Brown. There in the inn located on the main dirt road in Tallahassee the militia officers—generals, "colonels by the score," majors, and captains too—mingled. Among them were the territory's eminent businessmen, judges, legislators, and governors. They talked about territorial problems, banking, and land speculation, but their conversation always leaned toward what they called the Indian problem and what the militia could do about it.[45]

The Territorial Legislature passed a new militia law in February 1833 which repealed all previous militia laws. It expanded the enrolled militia into ten regiments, each divided into two battalions with five companies per battalion. Regiments were either entirely from one or from several adjacent counties. A colonel commanded each regiment and had one lieutenant colonel and one major who each commanded a battalion.[46] The two brigades and ten regiments had small staffs to assist the commanders. A brigadier general commanded each brigade and the staff consisted of colonels in the positions of assistant adjutant general, brigade inspector, brigade quartermaster, and two majors as aides-de-camp. In addition to the regiment and battalion commanders, the regimental staff had an adjutant and a quartermaster with the rank of captain, and paymaster in the rank of first lieutenant. The regiments also had a surgeon, surgeon's mate, sergeant

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[45] Gathering of DuVal, Gadsden and Murat in Murat's log home described in Hanna, *A Prince in Their Midst*, 112. Brown's Inn scene with the "colonels by the score" described in Ellen C. Long, *Florida Breezes, or Florida New and Old* (1883; repr., Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1962), 74-78, https://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00101388. Thomas Brown mentioned as Adjutant General of Florida in *The Floridian,* February 6, 1836, 3; Horatio Waldo, "Richard Keith Call; Thomas Brown," *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (1928): 156-158, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30149674.

[46] Generally, the lieutenant colonel commanded the 1st Battalion of the regiment and the major commanded the 2d Battalion.

major, quartermaster sergeant, drum major, and a fife major. The companies were commanded by a captain who had a first, second, and third lieutenant, four sergeants, four corporals, a drummer, and a fifer. Each private was required to own their own musket, rifle, or shotgun.[47] More importantly, the 1833 militia law removed the provision allowing citizens to form independent volunteer companies. Evidence suggest that this did not stop communities from forming their own militia companies anyway.[48]

The enrolled militia system was unreliable since men understandably disliked being drafted and forced into service. Most of the drafted men had no military training and no desire for military duty. The long-term volunteer militia companies and the volunteer units that formed during a crisis were more reliable. The individuals who volunteered had more in common with each other. Many were militia and army veterans. They were generally more conservative and embraced the values of duty, honor, and patriotism.[49] They were democratic in nature, electing their officers and choosing to serve. They also wielded political power which gave them more of a choice in whether and how to respond to the governor's calls to mobilize than did the drafted men. The volunteer companies formed close bonds of camaraderie and family ties. Many continued

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[47] DuVal, *Compilation of the Public Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, Passed Prior to 1840,* 393-394.

[48] It is likely that citizens were unaware of changes to the militia laws or did not care to follow them. This is seen by citizens avoiding enrolled militia musters, officers not enforcing the militia laws (especially punishments for failing to report to musters), and the continued existence of several independent companies—including the Spring Cove Guards in Alachua County.

[49] Michael D. Doubler, Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 130-1, *I am the Guard, A History of the Army National Guard, 1636-2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 88.

to exist even in peacetime and were recognized by the governor and legislature. The Florida Militia would rely on a mix of enrolled and volunteer systems to meet future crises.

Many of the militia officers, including Call, Murat, and especially Gadsden, were ardent proponents of Seminole removal. To a degree, the Seminoles tolerated American encroachment, but a series of government actions in the early 1830s pushed the Seminoles closer to war with their white neighbors. With a constant call to permanently remove the Seminoles to the Indian reservations set aside in the Arkansas Territory (now Oklahoma), and with the election of Andrew Jackson—one of the most virulent anti-Native American politicians—to president in 1828, the government renewed efforts to remove the Seminoles west of the Mississippi River. Talks with Seminole chiefs resulted in the one-sided Treaty of Payne's Landing which stated that all Seminoles would relocate to Indian Territory within three years. The U.S. government enacted the treaty unilaterally since the tribal leaders later claimed they could not accept the terms on behalf of the entire Seminole community. Other prominent leaders, such as Micanopy, openly refused the treaty. In spite of their protest, the government prepared for their removal—by force if necessary. The government re-established Fort King in central Florida and appointed Wiley Thompson, a former militia officer and Congressman from Georgia, as Superintendent of Indian Emigration. The U.S. government set January 1, 1836 as the deadline for Seminoles to evacuate Florida.[50]

[50] Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 51; Brown, "The Florida Crisis of 1826-1827 and the Second Seminole War," 419-442; Mark F. Boyd, and Joseph W. Harris. "The Seminole War: Its Background and Onset," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (1951): 53, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30138833.

As relations between Agent Thompson and the Seminole chiefs eroded, small clashes between settlers and Seminoles sparked outrage among the two communities. The Seminoles started to galvanize around the cause of resistance with Osceola emerging as one of their chief leaders. Osceola frequently visited Fort King where Indian Agent Wiley Thompson lived. On one occasion, in late May 1835, Osceola is purported to have used language that insulted Thompson. Thompson ordered Osceola's arrest, and after a scuffle, he was placed in chains. Although released several days later, this incident caused a hatred of Thompson and his representation of the American effort to remove the Seminoles. Few Seminoles visited the agency after that.[51] They became more determined to remain in Florida and fight the American agents, if necessary.

Another escalation occurred in the Alachua country in June 1835. A group of five Seminoles ventured outside of the reservation boundaries to hunt. Then they killed a cow owned by a white settler. Another group of three Seminoles met with them afterwards and all camped near a sinkhole. A posse of Alachua settlers, who were members of the independent Spring Cove Guards militia company, heard that a cow had been killed and set off to hunt down the Seminoles.[52] The posse, led by Major Llewellyn Williams and Second Lieutenant George Rawles, caught up to the Seminoles sometime between June

[51] Boyd and Harris, "The Seminole War: It's Background and Onset," 50-51.

[52] DuVal, *Compilation of the Public Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, Passed Prior to 1840*, 416-418. The Spring Cove Guards were an independent volunteer militia company organized by the Territorial Legislature on January 29, 1835. Officers of the company at organization were Captain Steven (sic) V. Walker, First Lieutenant Edward Bird, Second Lieutenant W. Carter Allen, and Third Lieutenant Thomas D. Colding.

18 and 20 at a place called Hickory Sink near Kanapaha Pond.[53] There, they found six of the Seminoles resting by the sinkhole and seized their guns, searched their packs, and started whipping them. The Seminoles ran, but the posse caught up to one and continued to whip him. Then two of the Seminoles who had been off hunting, Lecotichee and Fise (also known as Fix-onchee), returned and saw their compatriot being flogged. They fired at the white men, wounding Rawles and two others. The whites returned fire, killing Fise and wounding Lecotichee.[54]

The two parties dispersed and went back to their homes where they essentially told the same stories. Agent Thompson demanded the Seminole chiefs surrender the belligerents—ignoring the militia's role in the escalation. The Seminoles were released a

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[53] *American State Papers: Documents Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States,* vol. 6, *Military Affairs, 1836-1838* (Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1861), 76-77. In "The Seminole War: Its Background and Onset," Boyd and Harris wrote that Major Llewellyn Williams commanded the detachment. There is no record of a Williams in the Florida Militia, but militia rosters are far from complete and since this posse was not federalized there is no federal muster roll for this action. There is record of a private Lewelling (sic) Williams, who may have been his son, serving in Captain James F. P. Johnston's company in February 1858. In those rosters, Williams is described as a 24-year-old, fair skinned, dark haired and dark eyed, six-foot-tall attorney from Alachua. This same man, who went by Lew, later captained Company B "Alachua Guards", 2d Florida Infantry in the Civil War. For references to the younger Lewelling Williams see Florida Department of Military Affairs, Special Archives Publication no. 67-76, *Florida Militia Muster Rolls: Seminole Indian Wars,* vol. 5, https://archive.org, 78-79, 82-85; Fred L. Robinson, *Soldiers of Florida in the Seminole Indian, Civil, and Spanish-American Wars* (Live Oak: Democrat Book and Job Print, 1903), 81; "Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Florida," Record Group 360, National Archives, Washington, DC, http://www.Fold3.com.

[54] *American State Papers,* 6:77-79, 558; Boyd, "The Seminole War: It's Background and Onset," 55; Samuel E. Cobb, "The Spring Grove Guards," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (1944): 208-216, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30138508.

few days later since Thompson did not want to incur the expense of feeding them and upon promise from the Seminole chiefs that they would be punished.[55]

The posse posed a threat to peace. Although not on duty with the Spring Cove Guards, they were all members of the militia and led by one of its officers. Furthermore, the captain later applied for pay for their service during this period. The Federal Government denied his claim and they were not paid. The fight threatened to draw a larger conflict between the militia and Seminoles. Captain Steven V. Walker, commander of the Guards, mustered his entire company of 100 men in the days afterward. Walker wrote to Agent Thompson that, in addition to his company, another hundred men from the upper Alachua country volunteered to join their boundary patrols and capture or "deal" with those that refuse capture "as they deserve."[56] One can infer that Walker was intent on murdering any Seminoles found.

Thompson replied that he regretted the skirmish and outcome but had demanded the surrender of the alleged perpetrators. Thompson expressed his pleasure that Walker had taken action to patrol the boundary line and suggested he take a jail with him since the thought of captivity was terrifying to the Seminoles. He also cautioned Walker to avoid escalation with the "troublesome" Mikasuki Seminoles. Thompson wrote:

> You are aware of the delicate character of our relations with this people, and that all causeless irritation should be avoided. The outrage complained of is well calculated to excite indignation and alarm: but I do not consider it as evidence of a settled purpose of any considerable portion of these people to commence hostilities; and I trust that the results of the ensuing three or four days will evince the correctness of my opinion. I have to request therefore that, during your

[55] *American State Papers,* 6:77-79, 558; Boyd, "The Seminole War: It's Background and Onset," 55; Cobb, "The Spring Grove Guards," 208-216.

[56] *American State Papers,* 6:78.

> excursions, you will not cross the Indian boundary, nor permit any acts to be done which would tend to irritate the Indians, that can be reasonably avoided.[57]

The incident also showed how different the perspectives could be among the Alachua settlers and the motivations for joining the Spring Cove Guards. One resident who lived seven miles from Hogtown (now Gainesville) later said that he did not know why the Spring Cove Guards sent out scouts since he frequently encountered Seminoles before the Hickory Sink skirmish and "they were always very friendly."[58] Samuel R. Piles joined the Spring Cove Guards because his father, brother, and uncle were members. He recalled that the Seminoles were frequently in his neighborhood but "they did not do anything unless it was to steal occasionally."[59] Private Henry Hope agreed that although the Seminoles often killed their cattle, they "never offered any hostility to the settlers."[60] Private James Hague recalled that at the time of the Hickory Sink fight there were friendly Seminoles at his own house in Hogtown. Still others joined because they were looking for a fight. Private Bennett M. Dell told Agent Thompson he was "satisfied the Indians were determined on making mischief."[61]

Agent Thompson wrongly surmised the Seminoles' intention to comply with the rules of the white settlers and their government. Sometime during the fall of 1835, most

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[57] *American State Papers,* 6:78-79.

[58] Cobb, "The Spring Grove Guards," 214. Hogtown was variously written as Hog Town and Hogstown.

[59] Cobb, "The Spring Grove Guards," 215.

[60] Ibid., 213.

[61] Ibid., 214, 216.

Seminole chiefs decided they would not comply with the U.S. government's removal demand. They were determined to resist and would kill any Seminole who submitted to white authority. The Seminoles galvanized around the charismatic leader Osceola who was particularly determined to get revenge for the humiliating apprehension by Agent Thompson.[62] And in early August, Seminoles exacted revenge for the militia's killing of Fise, by murdering Private Kinsley H. Dalton of the 3rd Artillery while he was riding alone carrying mail from Fort Brooke to Fort King.[63]

When Osceola heard that another chief, Charley Emathla, had sold his cattle to Agent Thompson in preparation to lead his tribe to Fort Brooke where the government would provide transportation to Indian Territory, he gathered some 400 Seminole warriors and confronted Charley at his village. There, on November 28, 1835, Osceola gave his longtime friend an ultimatum—refuse to emigrate or be killed. When Charley would not change his mind, stating that he had given his word to leave Florida, Osceola killed him. When Wiley Thompson heard of Charley Emathla's murder he realized that force was the only way to remove the Seminoles.[64]

During the last few months of 1835, it was reported that the Seminoles, instead of preparing for removal to Indian Territory, were moving their women further away from

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[62] *American State Papers,* 6:80.

[63] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 99.

[64] Emathla means "chief" and in English script it is written after the Seminole's given name as if it is a surname.

settlers into the swamp-filled interior which indicated an impending war.[65] Far from the white man's roads, the terrain ebbed and flowed between vast sandy acres of scrub brush where the pines and skinny hardwoods failed to create shade and a man could not escape the sun's rays, and swampland where nearly impenetrable palmettos grew four feet tall and were drawn together by creeping tangled vines. This swamp land was interspersed with hammocks—slightly higher ground where the canopies of live oaks weaved with palms to block the sun from the forest floor. The hammocks were ideal for the Seminoles to build discreet villages, hide their cattle, and conceal vegetable gardens. Traversing the region from village to village took one through trails in the brush and swamps. Florida Militia Colonel John H. McIntosh, Jr. wrote upon learning of Charley Emathla's murder, "we learn that the Mickasuky (sic) Indians have killed [Charley Emathla] and shown other signs of hostility, which in my humble opinion, brings matters to a crisis. We have a defenseless frontier, which must be entirely sacrificed, unless aided from some source or other."[66]

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[65] George C. Bittle, "First Campaign of the Second Seminole War," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 46, no. 1 (1967): 40, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30140215; Boyd and Harris, "The Seminole War: It's Background and Onset," 3.

[66] *Jacksonville Courier,* December 24, 1835 reprinted as "Jacksonville and the Seminole War," *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (1925): 11, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30149611. McIntosh wrote this letter on or about December 3, 1835. The Mikasuki tribe was a subset of the Seminoles that lived near the Withlacoochee River; Osceola was from this tribe. McIntosh spelled Charley's name as Charles O'Mathla.

The prairie plantations were evacuated as frantic settlers rushed to fortifications in Fort Crum at Micanopy, Hogtown, Newnansville, and elsewhere.[67] Women and old men assisted in fortifying the frontier towns and the militia in East Florida were called forth by Hernández. The men in Alachua County, however, did not await orders. Militia captains mustered their companies and sent out patrols to search among the abandoned plantations for Seminole war parties estimated to be in groups of ten to thirty Indians. One of the militia captains, Gabriel L. Priest, evacuated his plantation near Wachoota and moved his family twelve miles northwest to the fortification at Hogtown.[68] On December 7, Priest led a patrol of fourteen to fifteen men toward Wacahoota where they found the plantation building smoldering. As the posse approached a small scrub hammock, the men had a disagreement about whether it was safe to proceed on the trail through the hammock. Captain Priest's son, Emory, and a man identified as Mr. Folk decided to lead down the trail while two others followed a short distance behind. The rest traversed around the hammock. As Emory Priest and Mr. Folk entered about halfway into the hammock, Seminoles ambushed them. Seminole bullets hit their marks. A bullet pierced through Mr. Folk's shoulder and exited his throat. The shots killed Emory Priest's horse and Emory broke his arm in the fall. Emory's gun was trapped under the horse and both he and Mr. Folk ran until in different directions. Mr. Folk ran back to his compatriots

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[67] C. S. Monaco, "Alachua Settlers and the Second Seminole War," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 91, no. 1 (2012): 24, www.jstor.org/stable/23264821.

[68] John L. Williams, *The Territory of Florida or Sketches of the Topography, Civil and Natural History, or the Country, the Climate, and the Indian Tribes from the First Discovery to the Present Time* (New York: A. T. Goodrich, 1837), 220. Wacahoota is an amalgamation of the Spanish word *vaca* and a Seminole word for pen, so the name means *cow pen.*

who picked up the mortally wounded comrade and escaped the hammock. Emory Priest, ran into the swamp and submerged himself in the water until it was safe to escape back to Hogtown.[69]

In this situation, and on learning of Charley Emathla's murder, George K. Walker, the Territorial Secretary and Acting Governor in John Eaton's absence, ordered Call to mobilize 300 mounted troops on December 6. Walker wrote to Secretary of War Lewis Cass of his mobilization of militia and shared his concerns that the regular infantry troops were too few, too immobile, and too "incompetent to protect so extensive a line of country."[70] To Call, he further detailed that he wanted 100 mounted troops to immediately deploy to protect the exposed frontier. Walker specified that the militia should avoid entering the Indian reservation unless the Seminoles continued their attacks or Major General Duncan L. Clinch, commanding the regular troops near the Alachua country, requested them in a joint campaign. Walker also ordered Hernández in St. Augustine to immediately raise a unit of cavalry to protect settlers and to detail a battalion of 200 mounted men to attach to Call's command and rendezvous at Newnansville.[71]

The Florida Militia, mobilizing in November and December 1835, had no idea that they were about to begin the longest and costliest Indian war in United States history.

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[69] *Jacksonville Courier,* December 17, 1835, 2; Report from Warren in "Indian Hostilities" *Richmond Enquirer,* January 5, 1836, 2, 4. Mr. Folk is presumed to have been mortally wounded.

[70] Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 25:290-293.

[71] Ibid.

The Seminole War would begin only weeks after Walker ordered the mustering of these large segments of the Florida Militia. Their mobilization was timely. Clinch's small, dismounted force of regulars would soon find themselves incapable of offensive operations without a large contingent of militia. The Florida Militia provided several crucial capabilities, including the immediate availability of manpower and a mounted force to conduct rapid movements across the vast area of operations. The militia's mounted capability cannot be understated as will be evidenced by Seminole ambushes on dismounted regulars and militia in which battalions were either completely destroyed or nearly so. Thus, the two parties of mounted militia, totaling 500, made their way toward the Alachua frontier to engage in the first offensive of the Second Seminole War.

CHAPTER 3

THE FIRST OFFENSIVE

Brigadier General Richard K. Call led the mounted force of Middle Florida volunteers on its way to rendezvous with Warren's East Florida force. His objective was punitive in nature, designed to force the Seminoles in the Alachua frontier to lay down their arms and return to their reservation, in preparation for the federal government to later remove them from the Florida territory. Any combatants would be killed or captured. Call was the obvious choice to lead this expedition.

To fully understand the leadership of the Florida Militia, one must delve into the personal history of Call, one of its most influential officers. Call was a domineering figure in territorial Florida. He was involved in most of the major episodes of the new American territory, having been with General Jackson in both of his incursions into Spanish Florida, in 1814 and 1818. Call returned to Florida for the third and final time in 1821 as Jackson's aide-de-camp when Jackson was appointed military governor during Florida's transition to an American territory.[72] By 1835, Call's relationship with Jackson spanned over twenty years.

Call's first encounter with the general came during Jackson's call for Tennessee Volunteers during his 1813 campaign against Red Stick Creeks in the Mississippi Territory (now Alabama). The irascible young lieutenant caught the attention of Jackson when his volunteer regiment nearly mutinied. Call requested that Jackson accept his resignation as third lieutenant so he could leave the disgraced unit and offered himself as

[72] Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 22:39.

a private soldier in the general's personal guard. Jackson turned down his resignation, saying he needed officers like Call in the regiments. But Call's loyalty to Jackson earned him a special place in the general's regard and Jackson soon awarded him a regular commission as a first lieutenant in the 44th U.S. Infantry.

Figure 6. Brigadier General Richard K. Call

Source: Richard K. Call, 1836, black and white photoprint of painting, 10 x 8 in., Florida Memory: State Archives of Florida.

Call served with Jackson in three successive battles in less than a year between 1814 and early 1815. He was with Jackson when the general defeated the Red Sticks at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in March 1814, then fought in the November 1814 Battle of Pensacola where Call personally led a battery of captured Spanish four-pounders in an

exchange of fire with British ships in the harbor at the Battle of Pensacola.[73] Finally, Call participated in the Battle of New Orleans where Jackson defeated a superior British invasion force.

Call's gallantry in the fight at Pensacola and at the Battle of New Orleans earned him a promotion to brevet captain. In 1818, Jackson again invaded Florida and after seizing Pensacola without a fight, bombarded Fort Barrancas until the governor surrendered. Jackson, ever more in admiration of the young Call, took him on as one of his aides—the other being James Gadsden. When Jackson went to Pensacola in the spring of 1821 to accept total surrender of Spanish Florida and establish an American territory as its first governor, Jackson took Call with him as his aide-de-camp. Jackson appointed Call to serve as acting Secretary of West Florida on April 14, 1821 and Tennessee Senator John H. Eaton recommended Call's permanent appointment to President James Monroe. Although Monroe chose another individual, Call remained the acting Secretary of West Florida through August 10, 1821. Call settled in Pensacola after Jackson's administration, and although hardly educated in law, opened a practice there. He resigned his regular commission in January 1822 and one year later the president appointed him as brigadier general of the West Florida militia.[74]

In addition to the military relationship between Call and Jackson, the two developed a deep personal relationship. Jackson continued to serve as a mentor and

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[73] Doherty, *Richard Keith Call*, 1-17, 24-27; Lyle N. McAlister, "Pensacola during the Second Spanish Period," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (1959): 315-317, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30166290.

[74] Doherty, *Richard Keith Call,* 1-17, 24-27; Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 22:39, 44, 105, 139.

confidant. Call spent more than a year, between 1819 and 1820, at the Hermitage when Jackson established his headquarters there, and later married Mary Kirkman, at the Jackson estate. Call was elected as Florida's lone territorial delegate in the 18th Congress, beating Hernández who had been the first in the seat. Jackson was elected to the Senate in the same year and invited Call to join him and Eaton on their travel to Washington.[75] Eaton's career would long be entwined with Jackson and Call. Later, President Jackson would appoint his friend Eaton to be his Secretary of War in 1829 and then Territorial Governor of Florida in 1834.

Call moved to the new Florida capital city of Tallahassee in about May 1825 where his position of Receiver of Public Monies in the land office required him to be. There he continued to be surrounded by Jackson men, such as John H. Eaton, James Gadsden, George W. Ward, and Isham G. Searcy. He also remained in command of the 1st Brigade of Florida Militia and permanently moved the headquarters there.[76] Spending so much time under the tutelage of Jackson did not help in curtailing the ill-tempered Call. His enemies would accuse him of being selfish and arrogant, and even his friends knew him to be pretentious to strangers. He had redeeming qualities too. He was mostly known to his friends as affable and kind. He was bright, intelligent, and enthusiastic. Together with his tall erect frame and powerful and melodic voice, Call captured the attention of those around him.[77] Call's eloquence and charisma proved necessary as he

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[75] Doherty, *Richard Keith Call,* 28-30.

[76] Ibid., 14, 41-42.

[77] Ibid., 24-25; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War,* 170-171; Waldo, "Richard Keith Call; Thomas Brown," 156-157.

mobilized his volunteer force in preparation for his expedition against belligerent Seminoles.

Elucidating Call's background helps establish the credentials of the Florida Militia leaders. While some historians may have written off Call and other Florida Militia officers as untrained and inexperienced military leaders, a closer evaluation shows a far greater depth of knowledge and experience among the key militia leaders in both Indian and conventional warfare. With that established, this thesis returns back to the commencement of the first offensive in the Second Seminole War.

As Call and Hernández organized their militia forces in early December 1835, Acting Governor George K. Walker received a letter from Brigadier General Duncan L. Clinch at Fort King.[78] Clinch, the commander of all regular army troops in East Florida requested militia assistance to bolster his small force of regulars and attack the Seminoles.[79] The army had relatively few forces spread across the Florida peninsula. Companies and detachments occupied forts from Tampa Bay to St. Augustine. Most of Clinch's troops were artillerymen, traditionally referred to as "red-legs," but they acted as infantry. Clinch wanted to invade the Seminole reservation with a combined force of regulars and militia to force the Seminoles to surrender and accept migration to Indian Territory west of the Mississippi River.

Walker amended his order to Call on December 12 after receiving Clinch's request for support. He ordered Call to take command of all Florida forces, including

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[78] George K. Walker was the territorial secretary—the number two position in the territorial government.

[79] Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 25:294-295.

volunteers and any militia already on duty, provided that the command not exceed 500 men. Call's area of operations extended from Tallahassee to the Seminole reservation. Walker gave Call three objectives: protect the citizens of the Alachua frontier, arrest the Seminoles who murdered Private Dalton while carrying mail in the summer of 1835, and assist Clinch in his attack on hostile Seminoles in an effort to force them to accept migration.[80]

Call quickly set about to raise the 300 mounted men in Middle Florida. He assembled his brigade staff and a portion of Leon County's 7th Regiment in Tallahassee. On December 8, Call gave "a very able and appropriate address" where sixty men immediately volunteered to form a company under command of Oramel H. Throop. Captain Throop's company was proudly described by the *Tallahassee Floridian* as "well mounted" and making a "very handsome appearance." They were part of the first wave in the call for Middle Florida volunteers. Throop's company was placed in a battalion composed of volunteer companies from Jefferson, Madison, and Gadsden Counties and commanded by Colonel Richard C. Parish and Leigh Read. Soon other companies arrived in Tallahassee to assemble the battalion, including Captain William D. Harrison's company from Quincy.[81]

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[80] Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 25:293-295.

[81] *St. Augustine Examiner*, December 12, 1835, 3; "From the Tallahassee Floridian, 12th Dec.," *People's Press & Wilmington Advertiser,* January 1, 1836, 2; Oramel H. Throop, Capt., W. H. Brewster, 1st Lt., Joseph Charles, 2nd Lt., and James Stewart, 3rd Lt., and Capt. William D. Harrison, 2 Reg't. Florida Militia, Indian wars from 1815 to 1858, in *Returns of Killed and Wounded in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British, and Mexican Troops,* compiled 1850-1851, documenting 1790-1848, microfilm publication M1832, 1 roll, ARC ID: 1184633, Records of the Adjutant

It is likely that captains Throop and Harrison already held commissions in the enrolled militia. This may have been an important distinction, since the acting governor initially turned down offers of assistance from new independent volunteer militia companies. Clement W. Stephens was elected that December as captain of a new independent volunteer militia company called the Jefferson Horse Guards. But when Stephens requested his company's acceptance into service, Acting Governor Walker wrote that he could not commission him and his officers since the territorial laws did not allow for volunteer companies.[82] While the militia laws of Florida no longer explicitly authorized volunteer companies—having that provision deleted from the 1833 law—there was already a precedence set in accepting them in the militia. The Territorial Legislature specifically constituted the St. Augustine Guards and Spring Cove Guards in 1833 and 1835.[83] Furthermore, Walker had written to Call only three days earlier authorizing the general to accept volunteers "as may tender their services."[84] Walker's interpretation of the law shows how disconnected from necessity and reality Florida's militia laws were. Volunteer companies could be turned down for service, even while the territory struggled to make the enrolled militia a meaningful and responsive organization.

General's Office, 1780s–1917, Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, DC, https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3652/.

[82] Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 25:111, 293-294.

[83] DuVal, *Compilation of the Public Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, Passed Prior to 1840*, 411, 416-417.

[84] Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 25:293.

Although he did not commission Stephens, Walker, recognized the utility of his command. "I should be gratified however that this company should proceed to a perfect organization as it is possible their services may be required, and I have little doubt that at the approaching Session of the Legislature, the present difficulty to commissioning the Officers will on application be removed."[85] The Legislature did amend the militia laws later. Passed only one month after Stephen's request, on January 15, 1836, the amendment authorized the governor to seek and accept volunteer companies, commission their officers, and assign them to regiments.[86]

It is unknown what happened to Stephens' company. Like many militia companies who served as minutemen in their hometown, there is no indication they were federalized or paid for service. As seen in the incident involving the Spring Cove Guards, militia often acted on their own accord or as a posse in the service of the sheriff, without pay and little remaining record of service. Their service was important, however, to the settlers and townspeople as an immediate response force. The Jefferson Horse Guards likely dissolved after the crisis since there is no further record. The *Tallahassee Floridian* also reported that Colonel Dempsey Pittman's company from Jackson County arrived in Tallahassee but there is no record or further indication that Pittman's company joined the battalion on their campaign. Judging by Pittman's rank, he was likely the commander of

[85] Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 25:293-294.

[86] Ibid., 25:405-407.

the 3rd Regiment of enrolled militia from Jackson County. It is also likely that Pittman's company served as unpaid home guards.[87]

Call's small staff comprised of only a few trusted advisors which included Lieutenant Colonel William Bailey as his brigade inspector and Majors Robert Gamble and Richard G. Wellford as his aides-de-camp.[88] These officers were fellow Jacksonians from the Tallahassee Nucleus. Like the majority of militia officers from the Tallahassee region, they were investors in the bank and railroad. Bailey and Gamble were plantation owners and served in the War of 1812. The youngest officer on Call's staff, Wellford, was the personal secretary to the governor. All of them had distinguished familial lineages with militias and the regular army.[89]

With his staff formed, Call next went to Hickstown—a small settlement named for the deceased Mikasuki chief Tokse Emathla, better known by his Anglicized name John Hicks—in Madison County. There he continued his approach of speech-making to appeal to men's patriotism and want for glory, while playing on their fears of dangerous Seminoles run amok. Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Parkhill, an Irishman who emigrated to

[87] "From the Tallahassee Floridian, 12th Dec.," *People's Press & Wilmington Advertiser,* January 1, 1836, 2.

[88] Lt. Col. William Bailey, and Maj. Richard G. Welford, Call's Brigade, Florida Volunteers, Indian wars from 1815 to 1858, in *Returns of Killed and Wounded in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British, and Mexican Troops*; Application, 1520, certificate no. 3730, service of Robert Gamble, Jr. (aide-de-camp, Gen. Call, Florida Militia, Florida War) in "Index to Indian Pension Files, 1892-1926," Record Group 15, National Archives, Washington, DC.

[89] Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 25:288, 783.

Virginia and served in the War of 1812 before becoming one of the largest landowners near Tallahassee, commanded this second battalion of volunteers.[90]

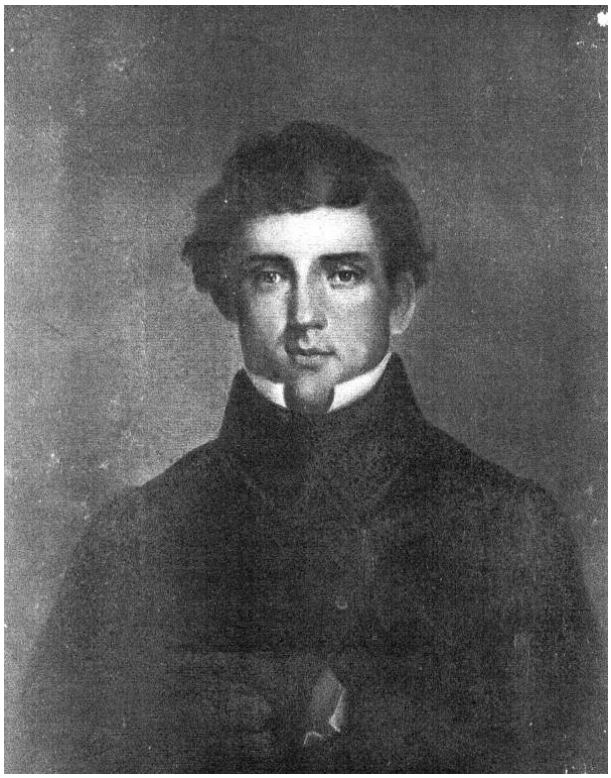

Figure 7. Colonel Samuel Parkhill

Source: Samuel Parkhill - Leon County, Florida, black and white photonegative of painting, 3 x 5 in., Florida Memory: State Archives of Florida.

Call—the master persuader and orator—raised a mounted force of six companies totaling nearly 300 volunteer mounted militia from Leon, Jefferson, Jackson, Madison

[90] Doherty, *Richard Keith Call*, 24-25; Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 71; "From the Tallahassee Floridian, 12th Dec.," *People's Press & Wilmington Advertiser*, January 1, 1836, 2.

and Gadsden Counties for a thirty-day enlistment (see figure 17).[91] These enlisted volunteers were frontiersmen, mainly planters from the rich-soil region of the red hills of which Tallahassee was the center. Their ranks also included some laborers and specialists such as printers, carpenters, mechanics, and saddlers. Their ages ranged from 18 to 44 years old, but the majority were on the younger side.[92] They were rough men who wore homespun clothes and twisted palm leaf hats.[93] They went into militia service in the same attire as they would for any other work, and they carried their own rifles or shotguns. The only marked difference of an officer being that he carried a sword.[94]

Nearly all of Florida's volunteer militia companies during the Seminole wars were mounted and Call's Brigade of 1835 was no exception. The companies were most often described as mounted men, although sometimes newspapers inappropriately called them cavalry. In practice the men fought like dragoons, which were mounted infantrymen who moved on horse but fought on foot. Although there were recorded occasions of mounted charges, these were hasty reactions to Seminole ambushes. All six of the

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[91] *American State Papers,* 6:1068. Caroline Mays Brevard, "Richard Keith Call," *Publication of the Florida Historical Society* 1, no. 3 (1908): 9, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30138222; "Jacksonville and the Seminole War Part II," *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (1925): 15-21, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30149623; Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 25:300. Figures in the *American State Papers* add up to 288 total officers and men in active federal service, although it is not certain the militia rosters were completely accurate or accounted for.

[92] Review of muster rolls from 1835 through 1858 in Florida Department of Military Affairs, Special Archives Publication, no. 67-76, 5:78-79, 82-85.

[93] Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 29.

[94] John Bemrose, *Reminiscences of the Seminole War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1966), 38; Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 88.

volunteer companies raised in Call's Middle Florida force were mounted. The volunteers were good riders and brought their own trusted horse. The officers frequently brought two; one for themselves and one for their slave, euphemistically referred to as their body servant. This stood in sharp contrast to the regulars where only the officers had horses, and even the regular officers did not bring slaves on expedition. The Florida volunteers valued their horses so much that physical descriptions and appraisals of their horse were frequently listed on the muster rolls. Of note, guns were not listed, even when volunteers brought their own.[95]

The call to arms against Indians was not unusual for the settlers and many viewed it as a break from normal life and an opportunity for adventure. Colonel Achille Murat, an early Florida Militia leader who served under Call in the 1827 Indian crisis, wrote that to the volunteer "a campaign is really a party of pleasure."[96] The volunteers expected a short duration campaign, full of excitement and glory, with a chance to kill Indians. This excitement, however, would quickly wane as the anticipated short duration expeditions of Murat's time in service gave way to a seemingly unending war. Call led his highly enthusiastic force of Middle Florida volunteers to rendezvous with an East Florida force of 200 men from Hernández's 2d Brigade at Newnansville and take them under his command.[97]

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[95] Review of muster rolls from 1835 through 1858 in Florida Department of Military Affairs, Special Archives Publication, no. 67-76, 5:78-79, 82-85. The mustering officer estimated the value of each horse so the government could reimburse lost horses.

[96] Hanna, *A Prince in Their Midst*, 127-128.

[97] Doherty, *Richard Keith Call*, 96.

Hernández, acting in accordance with the law that authorized the brigade commanders to order out any portion of the militia in case of sudden invasion or insurrection, already had two regiments on duty—the 2d and the 4th—when Acting Governor Walker ordered him to send 200 mounted men to support Call.[98] In fact, most of his 4th Regiment had been in active service since November 10.[99]

Hernández had four regiments on the east side of the Suwannee River: the 2d consisted of St. Johns and Mosquito Counties, the 4th of Duval and Nassau, the 6th of Alachua and Columbia, and the 10th of Monroe (see figure 14).[100] Ostensibly, the 10th Regiment, with headquarters in Key West, reported to Hernández, but it is clear that because of the remoteness of their location they were not at his disposal.[101] Facing an immediate threat to St. Augustine, the sugar plantations to the south in Mosquito, and the settlers in the Alachua interior, Hernández had only one regiment to offer: the 4th Regiment of Duval and Nassau.

Hernández and Call could not have been any more different in raising militia for the emergency. Call's experiences began in a war volunteer regiment from Tennessee. In

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[98] DuVal, *Compilation of the Public Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, Passed Prior to 1840*, 395.

[99] *American State Papers,* 6: 1068.

[100] Regiments of the Florida Militia as of 1835 as listed in DuVal, *Compilation of the Public Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, Passed Prior to 1840*, 393.

[101] Monroe County, which incorporated the Everglades and today's most populous section of the state—Miami and Fort Lauderdale—was then uninhabited by Americans, except for Key West and a few minor settlements. Key West was only accessible by water route.

a typical war volunteer unit, an influential community leader used his personal appeal to raise a regiment and get elected as its commander. While Call was still a young lieutenant serving with Jackson he wrote, "I would rather be a private in a volunteer company than a brigadier general of drafted militia."[102] Hernández' experiences defending St. Augustine while still under Spanish rule were in the traditional enrolled militia. While Hernández appreciated the use of volunteers, he was quick to draft men if necessary.[103] Call's appeal for volunteers in December 1835 shows that his regiments were probably less formed than Hernández's. This is apparent since Call mustered each regiment on a town square, and instead of ordering a single enrolled militia company to duty, asked for volunteers from among a crowd. None of Call's companies were referred to by a letter, whereas all of Hernández' companies from the 2d and 4th Regiments were lettered and acted as organic companies and battalions.

The 4th Regiment was one of the stronger regiments in the state. It was headed by Colonel John Warren with his trusted companions Lieutenant Colonel William J. Mills and Major Isaiah D. Hart who commanded the 1st and 2d Battalions, respectively. All three of these influential officers were from Jacksonville. Warren had served with Jackson during the expedition into West Florida known as the First Seminole War, and he was the one who suggested naming the new town after his former commander in 1822.

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[102] Doherty, *Richard Keith Call,* 24-25; Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 2.

[103] This conclusion is based on Hernández' correspondence throughout Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 23 and the fact that he did accept independent volunteer companies in his brigade. Some of these were chartered by the Territorial Legislature, such as the St. Augustine Guards, and some—although not chartered—were named, such as the Florida Rangers and Mosquito Roarers. This conclusion differs from Bittle's conclusion; see Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 22-23.

Hart was a veteran of the Patriot War of 1812 and is considered the founder of Jacksonville.[104] Mills served as the Jacksonville's first mayor.[105]

Colonel Warren's entire regiment was supposed to be mounted, although not every soldier had their own horse. Six of the companies were entirely mounted under command of captains William Turner (William Haddock later took over this command), James Dell, Joseph B. Lancaster, William B. Ross, Daniel Vaughan, and Alexander W. Crichton. Captain James E. Hutcheson's company was split into two detachments. Hutcheson led the mounted detachment, while Lieutenant Elijah Bleach led the dismounted infantry detachment, although Bleach, his officers, and noncommissioned officers rode horses. Captain Daniel S. Gardner's company from Jacksonville was entirely dismounted infantry, except for himself and few of his soldiers, like Harrison R. Blanchard who brought his own horse (see figure 18).[106]

Hernández ordered Warren to provide one battalion for immediate service in the Alachua frontier immediately after receiving Walker's order. That same day, on December 7, Warren ordered Mills to be ready to take three of his companies and march with him toward Wetumpka, an area just southeast of Clinch's plantation. Mill's

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[104] John Warren, William J. Mills, and Isaiah D. Hart, 4 Reg't. Florida Militia, Indian wars from 1815 to 1858, in *Returns of Killed and Wounded in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British, and Mexican Troops*; Thomas Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida, and Vicinity, 1513 to 1924* (Jacksonville: Florida Historical Society, 1925), 46, 53-56, 340; *Jacksonville Courier*, November 19, 1835, 1.

[105] Davis, *History of Jacksonville*, 74.

[106] *Jacksonville Courier*, December 24, 1835, 2; *American State Papers,* 6:1068; Florida Department of Military Affairs, Special Archives Publication no. 67-70, *Florida Militia Muster Rolls: Seminole Indian Wars*, vols. 1-10, https://archive.org.

battalion, with 120 men total, consisted of Companies A, B, and C, under commands of captains Ross, Lancaster, and Hutchison. Warren placed Major Hart in command of all militia forces at and near Jacksonville and ordered Mills to detail one of his companies to Hart. Mills, in turn, ordered Captain Daniel Gardiner to hold his Company D at Jacksonville but be ready for a moment's warning to join them.[107]

Warren had Hart send mounted patrols around Jacksonville and surrounding communities to search for and arrest any militiamen who failed to report to duty and "all slaves and free persons of color" who were not with their owner or overseer since he feared the Seminoles would seek their cooperation.[108] Hart stationed one company in the city and detachments at Mandarin and Garey's Ferry (now Middleburg).[109] Warren also published a public notice in the *Jacksonville Courier* just before he marched south with Mill's battalion warning the public of his authority to arrest black slaves and freemen who were found by themselves.[110]

Warren marched with Mill's battalion south from Jacksonville toward Garey's Ferry on December 9; and from there to Newnansville on December 11. As Warren and Mill's Battalion moved farther into contested territory, he incorporated into his formation

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[107] *Jacksonville Courier*, December 10, 1835, 3; *Jacksonville Courier*, December 24, 1835, 2. Walker's order to Hernández was dated December 6, 1835 and likely received the next day; see Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 25:290.

[108] *Jacksonville Courier*, December 24, 1835, 2.

[109] Ibid. The company in Jacksonville consisted of one captain and 25 men. The detachments at Mandarin and Garey's Ferry (which was referred to as Whiteville in the newspaper) had one lieutenant and 12 men each. This could have been all one company. It was not likely Gardiner's Company since they were mostly dismounted.

[110] *Jacksonville Courier*, December 10, 1835, 2.

militia companies from the 6th Regiment of enrolled militia from Columbia and Alachua Counties. This included Captain John McLemore's "Columbia Volunteers" and companies commanded by Captains Summerall and William Gibbons.[111]

Call's force from Middle Florida met with Warren's regiment near Newnansville on December 15. Call now had a brigade of 500 militia in two regiments. Warren's command was designated as the 1st Regiment of Florida Volunteers, a provisional regiment which included Mill's battalion and the battalion from Columbia and Alachua Counties. Although no major commanded that battalion, it seems McLemore was the senior captain and de-facto commander. Colonel Parish's command from Middle Florida was designated as the 2d Regiment. These regiments of volunteers should not be confused with the two regiments of the enrolled militia: Warren's 4th Regiment and Parish's 7th Regiment. Call's Brigade then started slowly south toward Fort Crum at Micanopy; thirty miles distant.[112]

Two days later, their column reached the northern end of the Alachua savanna, also known as Payne's Prairie. It was a vast lowland savanna which the naturalist William Bartram once described as "a level, green plain, above fifteen miles [across], fifty miles in circumference, and scarcely a tree or bush of any kind to be seen on it. It is encircled with high, sloping hills, covered with waving forests and fragrant orange

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[111] "Jacksonville and the Seminole War Part II," 19-20; *Jacksonville Courier,* December 17, 1835, 2. The Columbia Volunteers were a wartime volunteer company from Columbia and Hamilton Counties, totaling 50 men. Summerall's first name is unknown.

[112] *Jacksonville Courier,* December 24, 1835, 2; Williams, *The Territory of Florida,* 219; Doherty, *Richard Keith Call*, 96; Davis, *History of Jacksonville*, 457.

groves, rising from an exuberantly fertile soil."[113] There, Call and his officers learned that the Seminoles had torched several plantations in the prairie region and heard of the ambush of Captain Priest's patrol more than a week earlier.[114] Colonel Warren took two of his companies, under command of Captains John McLemore and Joseph B. Lancaster, southwest to search for Seminoles among the pasturelands near Priest's plantation at Wacahoota. Not wanting his supply train to slow their movement, Warren sent it ahead along the road toward Micanopy on December 18.[115]

Captain Richards commanded the supply train totaling thirty men with three wagons of supplies and a cart of ammunition. The detachment rode along a road that passed around the flooded prairie. An advance guard of five mounted militia rode a few hundred paces in front of the wagons and a rear guard was equally manned and spaced behind. The rest of the men advanced in the middle with the wagons. As they reached an area on the south end of the savanna called Black Point (also called Kanapaha Prairie)

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[113] William Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, George, East & West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges, or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Cactaws* (Philadelphia: James & Johnson, 1791), 187. https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/bartram/bartram.html.

[114] *Niles' Weekly Register* (Baltimore), 52: 395-398, (Baltimore). https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006903835; Monaco, "Alachua Settlers and the Second Seminole War," 24. Samuel Parkhill recalled in July 1837 (printed in *Niles' Weekly Registry,* 52:397) that Call's force met with Warren's in Payne's Prairie, not Newnansville. His account appears to be accurate although it was written a year and a half after the event and doesn't account for why the two forces would not meet at the assigned rendezvous: Newnansville.

[115] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War,* 101-102; Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 72-73; Monaco, "Alachua Settlers and the Second Seminole War," 24; "Indian Hostilities," *Richmond Enquirer*, January 5, 1836, 2.

near the site of the June 1835 Hickory Sink skirmish, the advance guard unknowingly trotted past a party of about eighty Seminoles waiting in ambush.[116]

The Seminoles, led by Osceola himself, waited for the advance guard of five mounted militia to pass down the road for the three wagons to roll into sight. The Seminoles ambushed the unsuspecting wagons and most of the wagoneers fled into the brush. One man returned fire but, after firing three shots, was severely wounded. Five of the ten guards quickly rushed to the scene. The volunteers' reaction was unorganized and in the face of the powerful Seminole force, some of the guards—including the commander—retreated south toward Micanopy instead of going to the wagoneers' aid.

Captain McLemore, upon hearing the gunfire, raced toward the beleaguered column with thirty men. The Seminoles fired upon them as soon as they arrived and shot both of McLemore's horses. With McLemore now on foot, he raised his sword in the air and ordered his men to charge. Reportedly, only the orderly sergeant obeyed the first order. At the second order about half of his command followed the captain. The second charge disbursed the Seminoles long enough to allow his men to take the surviving wagon and four wounded men and make their way south to Fort Crum. As Warren's force regrouped at Fort Crum, they realized that part of Richard's detachment was missing and had made it six miles south to Fort Defiance at Micanopy.[117]

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[116] The Kanapaha Botanical Garden sits next to Lake Kanapaha near modern day Gainesville. This is likely close to the battle site. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 101-102; Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 72-73; Monaco, "Alachua Settlers and the Second Seminole War," 24; "Indian Hostilities," Richmond Enquirer, January 5, 1836, 2.

[117] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War,* 101-102; Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 72-73; Monaco, "Alachua Settlers and the Second Seminole War." 24; "Indian Hostilities," *Richmond Enquirer,* January 5, 1836, 2; William Wragg. Smith,

The militiamen suffered high casualties, although it is difficult to ascertain exact figures. Lieutenant William W. Smith wrote in his 1836 account of the war that eight militia were killed, one mortally wounded, and five others wounded. In addition, five horses were killed and six wounded.[118] Call's report stated that three militia were killed and six wounded.[119] A report published on December 31, 1835 in the *Jacksonville Courier* reported the casualties as three killed and eight wounded, although this may not have accounted for any who died of wounds or were missing.[120] The December 18 skirmish, later named by historians as the Battle of Black Point, was the first battle of the Second Seminole War—occurring ten days prior to the infamous massacre of Major Dade's column of federal soldiers. The Seminoles battled with the U.S. military—albeit a Florida Militia wagon train—and won their first victory in the new war. They made off with Warren's ammunition, medical instruments, and papers.[121]

Sketch of the Seminole War, and Sketches During a Campaign (Charleston: Dan J. Dowling, sold by J. P. Beile and W. H. Berrett, 1836), 6, 17.

[118] Smith was not at the skirmish but served with the 1st South Carolina Volunteers in Florida during Scott's 1836 campaign. Smith, Sketch of the Seminole War, 17.

[119] *Returns of Killed and Wounded in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British, and Mexican Troops*, compiled 1850-1851, documenting the period 1790-1848 (1851), 39, microfilm publication M1832m ARC ID: 1184633m Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s-1917, Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, DC, https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3652/.

[120] "Jacksonville and the Seminole War Part II," 15-21.

[121] Ibid. Warren reported (printed in *Richmond Enquirer*, January 5, 1836, 2): "Killed, Serg't Hunt, privates Tillin, and U. Roberts, and five others not known; wounded six, one mortally (Weeks;) escaped sixteen" in "Indian Hostilities."

When Call passed through the scene of action two days later his men gathered what supplies were left and continued on. Then the advance guard of his brigade, led by George Fisher of Captain Throop's company, encountered a small band of Seminoles burning a house owned by Malachi Hagan. The advance guard engaged the Seminoles who fled into a nearby hammock.[122] The main body of Call's brigade quickly caught up and Call ordered some 100 men to box them in on three sides and then ordered the center unit to charge into the hammock. Colonels Parish and Read led the center line. This line dismounted and rushed into the thicket where a fierce fight ensued. During the firefight, Captain Lancaster saw a Seminole near a felled tree but tripped as he approached. The Seminole fired at Lancaster from behind the upended roots and wounded him in the neck. Lancaster was saved when Private John Curry shot and killed the Seminole warrior.[123]

Call's force prevailed after a quick fight. Six Seminoles were killed, and the rest retreated into the swamp. While much better organized and cohesive than Captain McLemore's response to the supply train ambush, Call's men still suffered four wounded,

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[122] Smith, *Sketch of the Seminole War*, 17; Pvt. George Fisher, Capt. Throop's Company, 2 Reg't Florida Militia (Col. R. C. Parish), Indian wars from 1815 to 1858, in *Returns of Killed and Wounded in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British, and Mexican Troops*.

[123] "Mr. Curry of Mandarin" was described in the *Jacksonville Courier,* December 31, 1835 and in Smith, *Sketch of the Seminole War,* 18. John Curry was born January 25, 1811 and died November 29, 1882. Curry was a private in the 6th Regiment during the 1835-1836 campaign and captained a company in 1839-1840. Pvt. John Curry, 6 Reg't Florida Militia (1835-6) and Capt. John Curry, Curry's Company, 1 (Warren's) Florida Mounted Militia (1839-40), Indian wars from 1815 to 1858, in *Returns of Killed and Wounded in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British, and Mexican Troops.*

including Lancaster and Lieutenant George Johnson of the 2d Regiment.[124] Call and Warren's troops gathered together at Fort Crum before they finally arrived at Clinch's plantation on December 24—Christmas Eve.

Call's arrival was a welcome sight for the beleaguered commander, especially since Call's militia brigade was twice the size of Clinch's force of some 250 U.S. Army regulars.[125] In the weeks before the militia had arrived and with hostilities imminent, Clinch had fortified his Auld Lang Syne plantation to use as his headquarters in the upcoming expedition into the Seminole's homeland only twenty-five miles to the south. He ordered Captain Gustavus S. Drane to construct a picket fort. Soldiers felled pine and fir trees and brought them to the plantation by ox to construct a twelve-foot-tall picket fence in the shape of a 150-by-80-yard rectangle. They constructed a two-story blockhouse on the eastern end and mounted a large howitzer which could fire across the field into the hammocks. The fort was dubbed Fort Drane to distinguish itself from the plantation itself, although it invariably went by Auld Lang Syne for some time.[126]

Call sent a dispatch back to Acting Governor Walker as soon as he arrived at Auld Lang Syne telling him about the two skirmishes with Seminoles and requesting 250 more troops be sent from Middle Florida. Once Walker received the letter, he would

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[124] *Returns of Killed and Wounded in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British, and Mexican Troops*, 1851, 39. Bittle wrote that the militia casualties were three killed and seven wounded. Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 73.

[125] *United States Gazette* (Philadelphia), January 23, 1836, 4. Newspapers reported that Clinch had 212 Regulars and 550 Volunteer Militia.

[126] John Bemrose, *Reminiscences of the Seminole War,* ed. John K. Mahon (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1966), 35-36.

comply with Call's request and raise one company each in Gadsden, Leon, and Jefferson Counties and two companies from East Florida. This additional mounted force would not reach Clinch's plantation until after Call's brigade was on its way home for discharge.

While the Florida volunteers and regulars readied at Clinch's Auld Lang Syne for what they believed would be a quick expedition to capture or kill the armed bands of Seminoles, the Seminoles exacted revenge with a decisive blow against federal authority. Two bands of Seminole warriors simultaneously laid traps on December 28. That day nearly sixty miles south of Micanopy, along the military road, Major Francis Langhorne Dade was leading a column of 108 red-legged infantrymen from Fort Brooke to Fort King to reinforce the Indian Agency there. A Seminole force led by Chief Micanopy himself, along with his subordinate war chiefs Alligator (also known as Halpatter-Tustenuggee) and Jumper, had been following Dade's column for days as they traveled the 125 miles to Fort King. As Dade's column reached the open pinelands near Wahoo Swamp, they relaxed their security, pulling in their flanking soldiers to make the last day's march quicker. The Seminoles were dressed in their finest clothing for combat. Wearing leather and moccasins, their faces colored by red and black war paint, they moved through the pine barren to position for the ambush.[127]

Several hundred Seminole warriors laid or kneeled behind palmettos and pine trees and waited for Chief Micanopy to initiate the assault. Dade's battalion marched in

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[127] John T. Sprague, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War*, (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1848), 90, https://archive.org/details/originprogressa03spragoog; Michael G. Anderson, *Staff Ride Handbook for Dade's Battle, Florida, 28 December 1835: A Study of Leadership in Irregular Conflict* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013), https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/educational-services/staff-rides/StaffRideHB_DadesBattle.pdf, 32-37.

front of the trap at about eight in the morning. Micanopy stood above the palmettos and fired a single shot at Dade, striking him in the chest and killing him immediately. The ambush began and fire erupted from hundreds of Seminoles. The first volley killed or wounded half of Dade's command. The remaining soldiers scattered, hiding behind trees and firing into the thickets. The ranking surviving officer Captain George W. Gardiner ordered a defense around the lone cannon. The crew unlimbered the gun and fired in the direction of the attack. The cannon crew quickly became the Seminoles' primary target. As the crew was cut down more men took their place and continued firing shot at the attackers. Although the cannon fire was ineffective, the psychological effect of its boom and the fierce resistance by the musket men persuaded the Seminoles to withdraw after an hour.

Captain Gardiner realized the Seminoles may come back and that he had to assemble his men to defend the wounded. Gardiner took advantage of the respite and his men quickly constructed a low log breastwork shaped in a triangle to protect the cannon and crew. After forty-five minutes, the Seminoles reattacked the crippled force, advancing in open order to lessen the effects of the cannon. The defenders could not hold out, and in the face of nearly six hours of battle, ran out of cannon shot and musket balls. When the fire completely stopped the Seminoles simply walked up to the breastworks. They killed some soldiers that were found alive, searched their sacks and equipment, and took scalps. The last remaining officer, Second Lieutenant William Bassinger, stood up,

and offering his sword, pleaded for an end to slaughter before he too was killed. Of Dade's 108 men present at the battle, only two enlisted men survived.[128]

Osceola had planned to be at the main ambush of Dade's column, but had to deal with the man who had put him in chains: Indian Agent Wiley Thompson. Osceola told Alligator that he would see to Thompson personally. At Fort King, only thirty miles south of Micanopy, Osceola and about sixty others waited for two days in the scrub brush for Indian Agent Wiley Thompson to leave the safety of the fort. On the afternoon of the 28th, Thompson took his accustomed walk, smoking a cigar and chatting with Lieutenant Constantine Smith of the 2d U.S. Artillery. They walked down the mile-long trail leading from Fort King to the home and store of Erastus Rogers, the fort sutler. About halfway along the walk and within clear view of the fort, Osceola and the Seminoles ambushed Thompson and Smith. The two were killed instantly, receiving some twenty-four and thirteen bullets each. The war party ascended on the bodies and mutilated them, cutting their scalps into pieces for souvenirs. They then moved to Roger's house and fired into it and then set it ablaze. Three men and a boy were killed inside.[129] Erastus Rogers was later found dead 400 yards beyond his house.[130]

The Fort King troops did not fire a single shot at Osceola and his Seminoles. When the attack occurred the majority of the effective force, numbering around forty-six, were digging trenches outside the fort's walls. They did not have their muskets and the

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[128] Anderson, *Staff Ride Handbook for Dade's Battle*, 36-42.

[129] Sprague, *Florida War*, 89.

[130] Henry Prince, *Amidst a Storm of Bullets: The Diary of Lt. Henry Prince in Florida, 1836-1842,* ed. Frank Laumer (Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 2012), 9.

rest of the small garrison were laid up with sickness. Although the Seminoles could be seen, the two six-pounders did not have a clear field of fire. The commander decided to defend the fort, bracing for an attack by what they believed was a far superior Seminole force. Even when an attack did not come, they dared not to venture beyond the fort; instead, they awaited anticipated reinforcements from Dade. What the Fort King garrison obviously did not know was that Dade and his men were already dead.

Osceola's band of warriors rushed to Wahoo Swamp to meet up with Micanopy's force. Arriving late in the night, they found that Micanopy's Seminoles had already annihilated Dade's command. The Seminoles rejoiced through the night with liquor and dancing.[131]

Meanwhile at Fort Drane, and unaware of the complete destruction of Dade's column, Call and Clinch made plans to attack the Seminole stronghold called the Cove of the Withlacoochee. It was in this large dense wooded area in the Seminole reservation along the Withlacoochee River that Call and Clinch suspected the armed Seminole warriors had secreted their families into.

As may be recalled, Walker gave Call loose orders to protect settlers, but to avoid entering the Seminole reservation unless Clinch requested him to mount an offensive with him. Call was an aggressive commander and no doubt wanted to take the fight into the Seminole's own homeland. There is debate as to who actually initiated the idea to attack the Seminoles in the Cove. Call later claimed that it was he who persuaded Clinch

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[131] Smith, *Sketch of the Seminole War*, 13-14; Sprague, *Florida War*, 89-91. Accounts written by white men stated that Osceola traveled from Fort King to Wahoo Swamp that same evening—a distance of 25 to 40 miles, depending on where they met in the swamp. It is likely that Osceola and his band were on horses.

to attack the Seminole stronghold, although it is apparent that Clinch was already preparing for an expedition by the massing of his forces at Fort Drane. The only importance in denoting this is that the two would eventually criticize each other for lacking preparation and commitment. What was immediately clear, however, was that the offensive had to be short and start quickly, since by the time Call's volunteers had arrived at Fort Drane they had less than a week left under their month-long commitment and there was little chance the militia would voluntarily reenlist for longer.

The combined force of U.S. Army regulars and volunteers spent several days gathering rations from the countryside in preparation for the march. They procured enough for three days' worth of rations in each soldier's haversack and another four days' worth packed in the twenty-seven wagons of Clinch's supply train. The fort presented an "unusual scene of bustle," regular Private John Bemrose later recalled, "of excitement and alacrity."[132]

The combined force reorganized on December 25 for the campaign into the Cove of the Withlacoochee. Clinch took overall command of the combined force and many of the Florida Militia became a part of his staff. Colonels Samuel Parkhill and Leigh Read became his adjutant general and inspector general, respectively. Several of the militia officers served as aides, including his brother-in-law, Colonel John H. McIntosh, Jr., and Major J. S. Lytle. Clinch organized his six under-strength companies of regulars, totaling about 200 artillerymen, into a battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Fanning. Clinch effectively had two maneuver elements directly under his

[132] Bemrose, *Reminisces,* 39.

control—Fanning's Battalion and Call's Brigade with its two volunteer regiments (see figure 19).

The Florida Volunteers also provided a medical staff, including surgeons Dr. James H. Randolph and Dr. Joseph A. Braden of Tallahassee. Leaving one regular company behind with approximately 100 sick, the combined force of about 700 men under command of Clinch marched south from Fort Drane into Seminole territory led by Indian guides.[133] Clinch's army marched in three columns. The regulars, on foot, protected the wagons in the center, while the mounted militia searched for Seminoles along the march. Parkhill described Warren's 1st Regiment on the left and Parish's 2d Regiment on the right as "raking the country as the army moved."[134]

On the night of December 30, they encamped five miles from the river. The officers ordered their men to sleep without fires so they would not give away their position, but it was too late.[135] Seminole scouts had been following them since at least the day before and reported to Micanopy and Osceola that a large formation of troops was approaching the Withlacoochee River. Osceola, now dressed in a U.S. Army coat taken from one of the dead, Alligator, and a force of some 250 Seminole warriors (of

[133] *Niles' Weekly Register,* 52:397; Doherty*, Richard Keith Call*, 96; Reports from Clinch and Samuel Parkhill to R. Jones, Adjutant General of the U.S. Army printed in *Pittsburgh Gazette,* January 29, 1836, 2.

[134] Samuel Parkhill recalled the movement in columns in *Niles' Weekly Register*, 52:398.

[135] *Niles' Weekly Register,* 52:398.

which thirty were Black Seminoles) rushed north with the intent to ambush the troops as they crossed the river.[136]

The army awoke in the early morning and started moving well before sunrise. On this last day, the force moved in a single column. Colonel Samuel Parkhill led with the advance guard, followed by the regulars, then Clinch and Call together in the middle, and the militia brigade in the rear.[137] Clinch's Indian guides were shocked when they reached the Withlacoochee River at four in the morning on December 31. The planned crossing point was not shallow and fordable as expected, but deep, swift, and fifty yards across. Recent rains had swelled the river so that it was impossible to cross except without a bridge or boat. Colonel Parkhill and Captain Charles Mellon of the 2d U.S. Artillery, and one of Mellon's soldiers went up the river a short distance to search for a fordable spot. Not finding one, they returned and that's when two of Mellon's soldiers spotted a single Indian canoe on the other side of the river and swam across to retrieve it. Clinch decided to press on with the river crossing. The infantry would get shuttled over in the single canoe and the mounted men would have to swim their horses over.[138]

The main force dropped their baggage and provisions just short of reaching the river crossing. Regular army officer Lieutenant Francis L. Dancy commanded the baggage guard which included a few noncommissioned officers, a number of soldiers, medical steward John Bemrose and five men sick with fever. The whole detail amounted

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[136] Sprague, *Florida War,* 89-91.

[137] *Niles' Weekly Register,* 52:398.

[138] *Republican Farmer and Democratic Journal,* January 27, 1836, 2; *Niles' Weekly Register,* 52:398.

to less than fifty men. Clinch then led his force of regulars and militia to the river, and they began using the canoe to shuttle men to the south bank. Clinch led with Lieutenant Colonel Fanning's battalion of regulars and his personal staff of militia officers. Call's volunteers secured the near side and awaited their turn to cross. The Seminoles were actually waiting in ambush farther north where the river was fordable, but upon learning that part of Clinch's force was already across the river, they rushed to meet them.[139]

The crossing was painstakingly slow. Only six to eight men could be shuttled across each trip and at least one man had to row the canoe back to continue the process. The regulars did not bring horses or equipment, except their arms. Lieutenant Bennett M. Dell, a forty-two-year-old militia officer from Newnansville, stripped down and swam his horse over.[140] His effort proved how impractical it was to have the entire militia force swim across since he could not bring his weapons across—lest they get soaked—and it took great strength and skill to swim his horse over. Clinch, Parkhill, and some of the militia officers took the canoe across while having Indian guides swim their horses over. Colonel Parkhill had a slave with him who followed behind with a makeshift raft carrying his weapons, saddle, and holsters.[141] The regulars finished crossing at noon and Call started shuttling some of his militia across the river without their horses.

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[139] *Niles' Weekly Register*, 49:366; Bemrose, *Reminisces,* 43.

[140] Bennett Maxey Dell (whose name was frequently misprinted as Dill) was a planter, miller, and builder of the first jail in Alachua County at Newnansville. See Jess G. Davis, *History of Gainesville, Florida with Biographical Sketches of Families,* 1966*,* 22, https://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00016410/00001.

[141] George C. Bittle, "The Florida Militia's Role in the Battle of Withlacoochee," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (1966): 304, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30147228; Long, *Florida Breezes*, 202-203; Patrick W.

Colonel Warren, Major James G. Cooper, Lieutenant Jonathan H. T. Yeoman and some twenty-seven volunteers had made it across the river as Clinch's force, which had moved single file along a path, reached a small opening 400 yards south of the river. Fanning's regulars then stacked arms and rested. The Seminoles, having enough time to reposition, were hidden among the thick palmettos and trees. They could clearly see the regulars in the open but were hidden from view. Then, as Fanning's men rested, the Seminoles attacked.[142]

The ambush caused immediate chaos among the federal ranks as men fell in the fusillade. The regulars quickly grabbed their guns, formed in two ranks, and returned fire. The Seminoles shouted and fired rapidly with rifles at Fanning's regulars armed with slower-loading muskets. Clinch and his volunteer inspector general Leigh Read both dismounted in a hurry. Read's horse was shot and Read was slightly wounded. The federal troops, in disarray, fell back some 100 yards. The officers—namely Clinch, Parkhill, and Fanning—stopped the retreat and reformed the artillerymen in line who fired blindly into the hammock across the field. Clinch dispatched Leigh Read to find Call and get assistance from the volunteers. The federals could not see their enemy and just could not keep up the fire with their muskets as well as the Seminoles with their rifles. In the desperate situation, Fanning convinced Clinch that he must charge the

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Rembert, *Aristocrat in Uniform: General Duncan L. Clinch* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1963), 104.

[142] Clifton Paisley, *The Red Hills of Florida, 1528-1865* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989), 95; Sprague wrote that 27 militia crossed the river in Sprague, *Florida War,* 92; Mahon wrote that somewhere between 30 and 60 militia crossed in Mahon, *The Second Seminole War,* 110.

enemy, and after some reluctance, Clinch allowed him to do so. Fanning's battalion made three bayonet charges into the scrub brush obscured in gun smoke. After the third, the Seminoles broke and withdrew out of sight.[143]

The volunteers on the northern bank were not left without their own fight. When the Seminoles attacked Fanning's Battalion, men from Captain William Wyatt's Jackson County volunteers were fashioning a floating bridge with logs and rope.[144] Shortly after the shooting began, a volunteer on the north bank shouted a warning to Colonel Warren, "The Indians are coming!"[145] Warren and the approximately twenty-seven volunteers on the southern bank turned to face across the river where they thought the militia brigade was being attacked, but they quickly realized the Seminoles were firing from their side of the river. Warren and his men wheeled about to face the Seminoles and fired into them at close range. Warren's men and the militia on the northern bank both poured fire into the Seminoles who may have been trying to cut off the regular force from the river. This fight took place at the same time Clinch's regulars were being attacked in the open field 400 yards to their south. Call claims this action prevented Clinch's men from being flanked.[146] It was soon after Warren's men engaged the Seminoles that Leigh Read

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[143] Brevard, "Richard Keith Call," 9; *Republican Farmer and Democratic Journal,* January 27, 1836, 2; Report from Clinch dated January 4, 1836, printed in *Pittsburg Gazette,* January 29, 1836, 2; Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 77-86; Rembert, *Aristocrat in Uniform,* 104.

[144] Report from Clinch dated January 4, 1836, printed in *Pittsburg Gazette,* January 29, 1836, 2.

[145] *Republican Farmer and Democratic Journal,* January 27, 1836, 2.

[146] *Florida Herald* (St. Augustine), November 13, 1837, 1-2.

reached the river and told Call to come personally—that Clinch's troops were in danger of being overrun. Call swam his horse across the river during the firefight.[147]

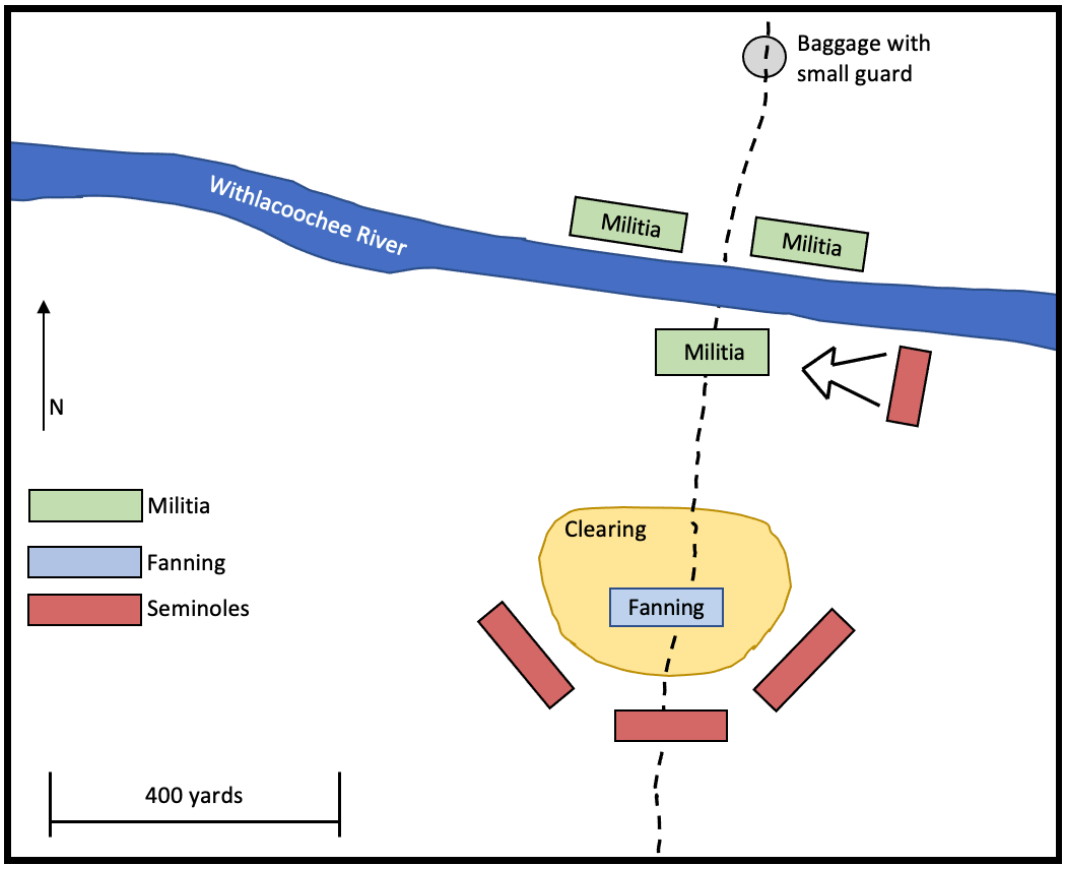

Figure 8. Map of the Battle of the Withlacoochee

Source: Created by author.

Call decided to leave most of his militia brigade on the other side since they were uncertain if the Seminoles would attack from the rear. Eventually, somewhere between thirty and sixty volunteers crossed the river. The entire fight lasted just over an hour. The

[147] *Republican Farmer and Democratic Journal*, January 27, 1836, 2.

regulars suffered four killed and fifty-two wounded. Seven volunteers were wounded; four from Warren's East Florida Volunteers, including Warren himself, and two men from Leon County.[148]

With an untenable position in the opening surrounded by a dense woodline, Clinch ordered his federal troops back to the river. There, they regrouped with Call's small militia force on the southern bank. Although the Seminoles stopped firing at Clinch's force, they continued to whoop and make noise from a distance. Convinced of the danger to their force, especially with night approaching, they had to cross the river and abandon the campaign. An exhausted Clinch turned over command of the evacuation to Call whose volunteers finished building a hasty bridge of log and rope that they had started before the battle. Call organized a horseshoe-shaped defense on the southern bank with Fanning's battalion in the center and two small militia detachments guarding each flank. The militia on the northern riverbank lined the river for 200 yards in each direction to cover the crossing and fired at will across the river where they believed Seminoles were hiding. The officers and militiamen who had their horses with them swam back across. It took three hours to move all the men back across the river, including the

[148] *Republican Farmer and Democratic Journal*, January 27, 1836, 2.

wounded and dead.[149] A company of volunteers secured the retreat but the last man to cross the log bridge was Lieutenant Colonel William Mills of the Florida Militia.[150]

Clinch's force then made their way to Fort Drane. The troops expected an ambush as they marched back, but luckily for them the Seminoles did not attack again. They arrived at Fort Drane on January 2 and the next day Call led his Middle Florida Volunteers back to Tallahassee where they were released in the first two weeks of January. The East Florida Volunteers departed for Jacksonville on January 4.[151] The *Jacksonville Courier* described the arrival of the men under command of Colonels Warren and Mills, "Their browned faces, the whiskers and mustachios of many of the men, their arms and dress, give the appearance of veterans, just returned from a severe campaign, and a desperately fought battlefield."[152]

In the meantime, Call and his officers had returned to a heroes' welcome in Tallahassee. Citizens held a public dinner for them in which toasts were given to good relations between the militia and regulars, foreshadowing the tense relationship which soon developed.[153] The *Richmond Enquirer* published an account from a letter written by

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[149] "Further Advices from Florida," *Richmond Enquirer,* January 26, 1836, 2; Mahon, *The Second Seminole War,* 110. It is unclear how many of the men were mounted at the fight on the south bank of the river. At least some of the militia officers and men did swim their horses over. It seems that Clinch was the only U.S. Army regular to have his horse.

[150] *Florida Herald* (St. Augustine), November 13, 1837, 1-2.

[151] *Republican Farmer and Democratic Journal*, January 27, 1836, 2.

[152] "From the Jacksonville Courier, 7th inst.," *Mississippian* (Jackson), January 29, 1836, 2.

[153] Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 82.

someone in Monticello, Florida, praising the volunteers. The writer specifically drew attention to the bravery of Colonels Samuel Parkhill, John Warren, William Mills, and Leigh Read; Lieutenant Colonel William Bailey, Major Robert Gamble, Major Richard G. Wellford, Captain James Scott and Lieutenant John A. Cuthbert—all of whom had crossed the river during the battle.[154] Clinch specifically commended many of the Florida Militia officers, especially calling out Parkhill who, while performing "the duties of Adjutant General, displayed much military skill, and the utmost coolness and courage throughout the whole action." Clinch also applauded Leigh Read, who served as his inspector general, and had "displayed much firmness" even when he was slightly wounded, and his horse shot from under him.[155] Call wrote to Governor Eaton that their crossing was successfully done "in the presence of the enemy who covered our whole front."[156] He also wrote to his old friend and mentor, President Jackson, presenting the fight in a favorable light and calling for more aggressive action against the Seminoles.

The Battle of the Withlacoochee was indecisive for both the whites and Seminoles. Historian John K. Mahon wrote that it gave the whites the erroneous impression that they could bring the Seminoles to battle in large groups to fight "more or less white-style," instead of the small attacks and ambushes the Seminoles would

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[154] "Extract of a Letter to a Gentlemen in this City from his friend at Monticello," *Richmond Enquirer,* January 30, 1836, 3.

[155] Reports from Clinch and Samuel Parkhill to R. Jones, Adjutant General of the U.S. Army printed in *Pittsburgh Gazette,* January 29, 1836, 2.

[156] Brevard, "Richard Keith Call," 10.

habitually use. For the Seminoles, it produced a dangerous feeling that they could beat the U.S. Army and militia.[157]

Perhaps more dangerous to the white citizens was the animosity between militia and regular officers that festered in the aftermath of the battle. Clinch and Call were seemingly on good terms during and immediately after the battle, but in spite of Call's portrayal of victory-by-withdrawal, the campaign failed to capture or disarm the Seminoles. The regulars and militia soon blamed each other. Clinch and Call accused one another of failures in open letters published in the newspapers. Call later insisted that his force had not been raised to campaign against the Indians in the first place, that they were raised to protect settlers and that he had only suggested the campaign in the Cove of the Withlacoochee to take advantage of the volunteers' last five or six days of service. Call wrote that he wanted a swift strike, planning to march the thirty-some miles from Fort Drane to the Cove in one day. Call accused the regulars of slowing the march by bringing the baggage train. Call also accused them of giving away their intentions with poor field discipline since nearly every regular soldier brought a dog with him. This, Call claimed is what slowed their march and allowed for the Seminoles to mass against them.[158]

Call also blamed Clinch for lacking a means to cross the Withlacoochee. The problem with this claim is that both he and Clinch believed they would cross at a fordable point and would therefore not need bridging equipment. Although, it is easy to question why Clinch would divide his force along a wide river with only a single canoe to connect

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[157] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 112.

[158] *Florida Herald* (St. Augustine), November 13, 1837, 1-2; Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 76.

the two, and clear evidence the Seminoles were before them. The feud between Clinch and Call was only a taste of the growing animosity between the militia and the regulars.

Despite this, Call's leadership was pivotal during the Battle of the Withlacoochee and the preceding skirmishes. He led the attack on the Seminole band near the Malachi Hagan house with remarkable tactical proficiency gained from his military experience and training. Call also showed determination and much-needed energy during the Battle of the Withlacoochee. This leadership was especially crucial after an exhausted Clinch turned over command to Call who then led the withdrawal across the river.

Tactically, the Florida militia performed as well as their regular army counterparts. While there were many episodes of what historian George Bittle described as a "dangerous individualism" as seen at the Battle of Black Point where Warren's militia failed to mount a cohesive counterattack and suffered high casualties, the experienced veteran militia leaders were also able to bring the militia into a coordinated envelopment attack on Seminoles in the same ground two days later.[159] Of course, the annihilation of Dade's entire command cannot be overlooked when making comparisons to the Florida Militia's performance when ambushed. A key difference in capabilities is that the Florida Militia were mounted and able to escape the ambush kill zone.

Most importantly, regarding the effectiveness of the Florida Militia, was how adaptative the territorial and militia leaders were. The Legislature was about to start their annual session just days after the Battle of the Withlacoochee where they would address many of the organizational and recruitment issues.

[159] Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 72.

CHAPTER 4

DEFENDING THE FRONTIER

As Clinch and Call's combined force were still fighting the Seminoles under the leadership of Micanopy and Osceola at the inconclusive Battle of the Withlacoochee, another branch of the conflict was escalating. A Mikasuki band led by chief Philip, known to the whites as King Philip, and a Black Seminole band led by John Caesar, accelerated their campaign to ravage the Eastern Florida sugarcane plantations. In the course of two weeks, beginning on Christmas Day, Philip's and Caesar's bands laid waste to nearly every single plantation east of the St. John's River south of St. Augustine. Clinch believed he hardly had enough regulars to even guard the military forts dispersed across the territory, and protection of the eastern towns and plantations fell solely on Hernández's East Florida Militia.[160]

Plantations along the eastern shore had been under threat with small attacks for more than a month before the New Year. In early November 1835, Black Seminole John Caesar with a war party of about 200 others set fire to David Dunham's mansion at New Smyrna.[161] Hernández responded by ordering Warren's 4th Regiment and part of 2d Regiment into active service between November 10 and 13 to protect the plantations south of the city, including his own Mala Compra plantation.[162]

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[160] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 102. Clinch had only 26 officers and 510 enlisted men in all of Florida as of December 9, 1835.

[161] Myer M. Cohen, *Notices of Florida and the Campaigns* (Charleston: Burges & Honour, 1836), 87-88.

[162] *American State Papers,* 6:1069. Mala compra is Spanish for bad purchase.

As Hernández mustered in his militia, the Seminoles under John Caesar continued to burn plantations to the ground, chasing off white settlers and taking their slaves. In just a couple of weeks, Caesar took nearly 300 slaves into their band.[163] This produced considerable fear among the white planters, and it was likely that many of the blacks, feeling liberated by the Black Seminoles, might have enthusiastically joined. Caesar himself had been a slave to a Seminole chief before he was freed, and the Black Seminoles had frequent contact with plantation slaves and sometimes inter-married.[164] With this threat and the aforementioned order from Acting Governor Walker, Hernández mustered the rest of the 2d Regiment into active service in mid-December.

As stated earlier, the way in which Hernández called forth his militia differed significantly from the way Call requisitioned war volunteers. Hernández's 2d and 4th Regiments were more organized than the regiments of Middle Florida and had longer-established units like the Florida Rangers which had been in existence since 1826 and the St. Augustine Guards which were constituted by the Legislature in 1833. Both the Florida Rangers and the St. Augustine Guards were volunteer militia companies in the 2d Regiment of enrolled militia. This regiment exemplified the dual system of enrolled and volunteer militia operating together. Lieutenant Colonel José Simeon Sanchez, from St. Augustine, commanded the 2d Regiment. Most of his regiment was mounted, although some of the companies, such as the St. Augustine Guards, were dismounted (see figure 20).

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[163] Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 87-88.

[164] Kenneth Wiggins Porter, "John Caesar: Seminole Negro Partisan," *Journal of Negro History* 31, no. 2 (1946): 190-207, https://www.jstor.org/stable/i327576.

Just days after Warren and Mill's Battalion of the 4th Regiment marched to meet Call and Clinch (and later fought in the Battle of the Withlacoochee), Hernández had ordered Major Benjamin Putnam's Battalion, on December 17, to establish outposts along the Halifax River south of St. Augustine. Putnam's Battalion was to defend plantations and search for Seminole war parties. Putnam's battalion consisted of Company A "St. Augustine Guards," Company B "Mosquito Roarers," and Companies C and D of the 2d Florida Militia Regiment. Putnam's battalion moved south along Kings Road to St. Joseph's where he left the dismounted Company D under command of Captain James Keogh to guard the road. Putnam continued south until he reached John Bulow's plantation and mill known as Bulowville on December 28.[165] Bulow's property was on a low bank of land along vast flooded swamplands ideal for the largest sugarcane plantation in Florida.

There Putnam established a base of operations. He fortified the house and buildings using cotton bales as a breastwork. His troops occupied every building, to include the slave quarters. Companies B and C, mounted and under command of Douglas Dummett and John S. Williams respectively, left the base each morning in search of Seminoles along Kings Road and the surrounding plantations. They returned each night, usually without incident.[166]

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[165] U.S. Congress, Senate, Public Documents of the Senate of the United States, 25th Cong., 3rd sess., December 3. 1838, 1-13; Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 87.

[166] U.S. Congress, Senate, Public Documents of the Senate of the United States, 9; Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 87.

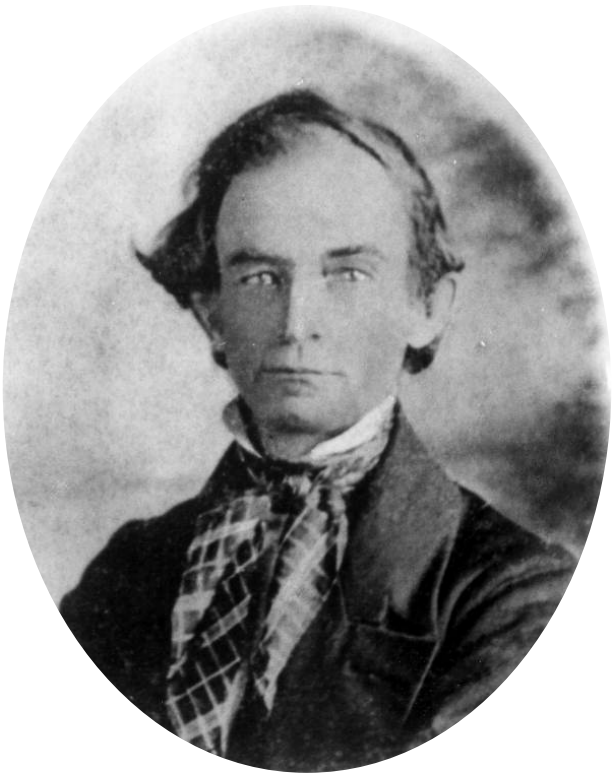

Figure 9. Major Benjamin A. Putnam

Source: Benjamin Alexander Putnam – Palatka, Florida, black and white photoprint, 10 x 8 in., Florida Memory: State Archives of Florida.

Hernández ordered Putnam to search some of the abandoned plantations to the south and retrieve any valuable supplies. Sanchez sent Captain George L. Phillips' Company G "Florida Rangers" to relieve Captain Keogh's Company D at Picolata so that Keogh's men could rejoin Putnam's battalion. Keogh's infantry company arrived at Bulowville where Putnam ordered them to remain and guard their camp.[167] Throughout this operation the Florida Militia commanders successfully employed the mounted

[167] Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 88, 91.

companies to scout while the infantry companies guarded fixed sites. Problems came when Putnam's infantry operated without the mounted men to reconnoiter.

Putnam decided to search the abandoned plantations by boat to avoid Seminole ambush and so they could haul anything valuable back to camp. The next morning, on January 17, Putnam took two infantry companies, the St. Augustine Guards commanded by Captain Kingsley B. Gibbs, and Dummett's Mosquito Roarers, on three boats and traveled down the Halifax River to recover stores left in the plantations.[168] The force amounted to about forty militiamen.[169] They first landed at Dummett's own plantation in the afternoon and found that the buildings had already been ransacked, although not set afire. At about four in the afternoon, they re-embarked towards George and James Anderson's Dunlawton Plantation.

The party could see smoke in the distance and presumed it was coming from the Dunlawton Plantation. Putnam wanted the boats to land away from the fires so they could disembark safely and advance up to the site on foot, but the lead boat misunderstood and brought them right up to the shore near the burning home and outbuildings. Putnam's force landed near dusk, but the fires lit the area. Putnam decided to investigate the sugar house one mile north, but only a short distance from their boats they found a herd of cattle corralled and readied by the Seminoles to take away. The officers conferred and decided that they could ambush the Seminoles as they came back in the morning to take the cattle. Putnam's force moved further down the road, took cover in and around two

[168] Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 87.

[169] *Niles' Weekly Register,* 49:393.

slave quarters on either side of the road, and awaited the Seminoles' return.[170] Certainly, the presence of one of Dunlawton Plantation's owners, George Anderson, gave Putnam's men an advantage in knowing the terrain. Anderson might have been the one to have suggested using the slave quarters.

In the early morning of January 18, two Seminoles approached the awaiting militiamen from the sugar house. Captain Dummett fired first, signaling the ambush. One Seminole was killed instantly and fell onto the road. The other ran off a short distance before he too was shot down. Putnam, at first extended his militiamen in line in the pine barren, but hearing a large force advancing, and fearing being cut off from his boats, he decided to move back to the charred dwellings closer to the river.[171]

Within fifteen minutes of holding their defensive line, the Seminoles attacked Putnam's right flank and front. Being greatly outnumbered, perhaps two to one at this point, Putnam felt his forces could not hold their hastily defended position. Putnam ordered his men to retreat after only a fifteen-minute fight. As the men hurried toward the river, they discovered that the receding tide anchored their boats in the mud. The militiamen scrambled to haul their three boats out of the muck and into the river with the Seminoles directly on their heels. Putnam realized they needed time to get the boats out, and he ordered some of his men to halt and face the Seminoles advancing along the road. The Seminoles took cover among the ruined house and structures and kept up their fire. Just then another party of Seminole warriors advanced, led by a warrior on horseback. This

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[170] Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 91-92.

[171] Ibid., 92-93; *Niles' Weekly Register,* 49:393.

warrior must have been either Coacoochee, also known as Wild Cat, or his father Philip. Putnam's defensive position gave way, and his men hastened their retreat to their boats in the face of what Putnam estimated as 150 Seminole warriors.[172]

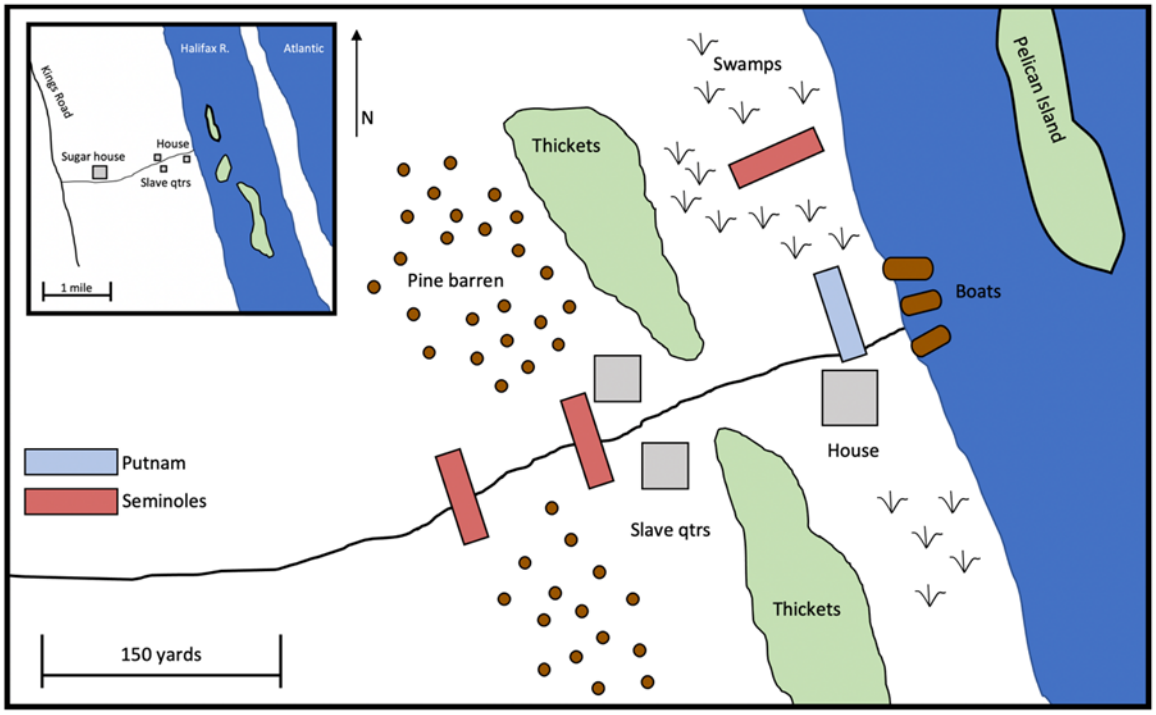

Figure 10. Map of the Dunlawton Skirmish, January 18, 1836

Source: Created by author. NOTE: This map shows Major Putnam's disposition when he made the decision to retreat to his boats.

The Seminole warriors chased the militiamen into the muddy riverbed where the crew of the largest whaling boat abandoned their craft and swam over to the other boats already in the river. The Seminoles seized the whaler, loaded it with ten warriors, and

[172] *Niles' Weekly Register*, 49:393; Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 92-93; Williams, *The Territory of Florida*, 224-225.

pursued the retreating militia in their boats. The Seminoles killed a slave named Will and nearly every militiaman was wounded during the fight on the river. One of the militiamen, George Marks, could not reach the other two boats already underway and swam to Pelican Island in the middle of the river.[173]

Most of the militia's waterlogged guns became useless. The men with working guns fired at the Seminoles in the whaler keeping them back. One of the boats, struggling with its overburdened load of men, landed briefly on Pelican Island to lighten the load. The men got out, still within sight and range of the Seminoles on shore and of the Seminoles in the whaler. Militiaman Edward Gould, either misunderstood the captain's intent or in fear, leapt from the boat and ran into the woods. The men called for his return, but when he did not come back the boat left without him.[174]

The militia raised the boats' sails and sped up the Halifax as fast as they could, fearing a Seminole ambush at every tight spot on the river. Putnam's men reached Bulowville in the afternoon and sent a mounted party down the beach to search for their missing comrades Marks and Gould and a small group of slaves. They found all except Gould, who Marks recalled finding on the small island shortly after he swam there. Marks implored Gould to swim with him to the sand bar on the farthest side of the river where they could walk north, but Gould said he was not able to swim the distance. Marks left Gould on the island and swam across the eastern portion of the river. From his new position across the river, he saw the Seminoles search the island. Although he did not see

[173] Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 94-95.

[174] Ibid.

the Seminoles take Gould, in all probability, the Seminoles killed him. Gould was never found.[175]

The short fight was brutal. The militia suffered seventeen wounded; two of whom later died from their wounds. Two of the black slaves with the militia were also killed.[176] One militiaman, John D. Sheldon, was shot twice: once in his right arm above the elbow and also right in between the eyes where the bullet luckily just pierced his skin.[177] Putnam claimed they killed ten to sixteen Seminoles in the fight.[178] Despite being overrun, historian George Bittle concluded that Putnam's militia probably put up a good fight, especially considering they "had the courage to rally under fire."[179] Even so, the results of this skirmish showed how capable the Seminoles were at defeating a small, dismounted force, especially if led by less experienced officers such as Putnam.

Putnam's battalion abandoned their camp at the Bulowville Plantation during the night of January 23. The infantry evacuated on boats and traveled back up the Halifax River to St. Josephs. The Seminoles immediately occupied the plantation and set ablaze every building. Only the charred blackened coquina walls stood like tombstones

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[175] Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 94; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 49:393, 396; Williams, *The Territory of Florida*, 224-225; Florida Department of Military Affairs, Special Archives Publication no. 67-76, *Florida Militia Muster Rolls: Seminole Indian Wars,* vol. 8, https://archive.org.

[176] *Niles' Weekly Register*, 49:393; Williams, *The Territory of Florida*, 224-225.

[177] Jane Murray Sheldon, "Seminole Attacks near New Smyrna, 1835-1856," *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (1930): 188-196.

[178] Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 95-96; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 49:393.

[179] Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 66-67.

afterward. Soon, Hernández's militia were in and around St. Augustine, guarding the city. The plantation lands south of St. Augustine were no longer in the hands of the white settlers. Hernández's East Florida Militia succeeded in protecting St. Augustine city but failed in their mission to protect the East Florida plantations. By the time a South Carolina Volunteer regiment occupied the lands south of St. Augustine in early February, nearly every plantation and sugar mill between St. Augustine and New Smyrna had been destroyed, their stores looted, and their slaves gone.[180]

There were many reasons for the inability to protect the plantations. First, the plantations were scattered along the Halifax River with only the King's Road and river to connect them. Because the plantations were so dispersed, the settlers could not assist each other in defense. The militia commanders effectively used the mounted and infantry militia for different missions, but there were just not enough of them. Hernández's East Florida Militia was split among three areas of operation: St. Augustine, the eastern shore plantations, and the Alachua frontier. There were only a few hundred Florida Militia operating in the eastern shore—a number outmatched by the Seminoles there. The mounted militia patrols alone could not protect any place they did not permanently occupy. Once a patrol moved on to another location, the Seminoles could lay waste with absolute impunity. The Florida Militia just could not muster enough men to protect the eastern plantations against the highly mobile and adaptive Seminoles. An unintended benefit of the total destruction of the eastern plantations was to allow the U.S. Army and

[180] *Niles' Weekly Register,* 49:394; Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 81; Woodburne Potter, *The War in Florida: Being an Exposition of its Causes and an Accurate History of the Campaigns of Generals Clinch, Gaines, and Scott* (Baltimore: Lewis & Coleman, 1836), 126.

Florida Militia to abandon that area and concentrate their efforts on defeating the Seminole warriors.

As the militia and settlers in the eastern plantations retreated to St. Augustine, Call's Brigade mustered out of active service, and Clinch's regulars hunkered down in their forts. A single mounted volunteer battalion from Middle Florida patrolled the Alachua frontier. Governor Eaton wrote to Secretary of War Cass on January 9 that since Call's Brigade had been released from service and "a few regulars equal to garrison duty" and the Middle Florida battalion where all that was then "in the field" against a much larger Seminole force.[181] It was the lone offensive force in the Alachua frontier from the beginning of January to the first week of February when the battalion mustered out.

This battalion was the additional mounted militia unit Call had requested from Acting Governor Walker when Call first saw Clinch's situation at Fort Drane weeks earlier on December 24. Upon receiving Call's request, Walker had ordered Colonel John C. Love to muster fifty men from the 5th Regiment in Quincy, instructing Love that volunteers were preferred, but drafted men would do. He gave the same instructions to the commander of the 9th Regiment at Monticello, Colonel James L. Parish and to the 7th Regiment at Tallahassee. Walker requested 100 additional men from Hernández' brigade to meet at Auld Lang Syne, although it does not appear that these East Florida Militia troops were raised.[182]

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[181] Carter, *Territorial Papers,* 25:302.

[182] Ibid., 25:297-299; *United States Gazette* (Philadelphia), January 23, 1836, 4.

Major Richard Haywood, of the 7th Regiment of enrolled militia, commanded the new battalion of three companies. Captain M. M. Caswell and Captain Abraham "Abram" Bellamy commanded the companies from Gadsden and Jefferson, respectively, and Captain Augustus Alston commanded the company called the Leon Volunteers. The battalion of about 180 men was described in the *Pensacola Gazette* as "composed mostly of young men. They are well mounted and made a fine appearance."[183] The Middle Florida battalion started for Fort Drane on January 1, unaware of the massacre of Dade and 105 of his men, which occurred only days prior.[184]

Colonel Richard C. Parish, returning from Call's expedition, met the battalion en route and took command of it.[185] Parish was a North Carolinian by birth who had settled in Tallahassee and owned a plantation on Lake Miccosukee. Two of his relatives, Colonel James L. Parish and Captain John D. Parish, also held prominent places in the Florida

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[183] *American State Papers,* 6:1069; *Richmond Enquirer*, January 14, 1836, 2. The newspapers reported the force to be 150 men. The *American State Papers* recorded a more accurate picture with nine officers and 180 men among the three companies. Caswell's Company: 3 officers, 52 men. Bellamy's Company: 3 officers, 79 men. Alston's Leon Volunteers: 3 officers, 49 men.

[184] *Richmond Enquirer*, January 14, 1836, 2.

[185] It is not clear how Parish returned so quickly, however, it is certain that Parish led "2d Volunteer Regiment" in Call's brigade and was present at the Battle of Withlacoochee. Parish is noted as being with Call's brigade as late as December 26, 1835 by Warren in a letter found at "From the Jacksonville Courier, Dec. 31st," *Huntsville Democrat*, January 27, 1836, 2. Parish is also noted in the reports from Clinch and Samuel Parkhill to R. Jones, Adjutant General of the U.S. Army printed in *Pittsburgh Gazette*, January 29, 1836, 2.

Militia. Parish was already sixty-two years old when he led the battalion on its expedition.[186]

Parish's battalion soon met hostiles on their route near the Suwannee River. Newspapers reported that Captain Alston's Leon Volunteers fought a band of Seminoles near the river on January 9, "The Indians were routed, and some numbers slain. The loss of the volunteers was very inconsiderable."[187] The battalion continued their march and reached Fort Drane that day or the next where Parish reported to Clinch. Undoubtedly, Clinch was relieved to now have a mounted force under his command. On January 10, Clinch ordered Parish to "scour the country" for Seminoles. After two days of patrolling and not finding any, Parish's battalion marched back to Fort Drane on January 12. On their march back, Parish's men saw smoke in the distance near an area called Wetumpka (now present-day Lowell, Florida) and Parish sent Captain Bellamy's company and a detachment commanded by Lieutenant Bannerman forward to inspect the scene. Before the advance party reached Wetumpka, they unknowingly approached a band of Seminoles lying in wait among the dense saw palmettos along the road. The small group of Seminoles waited as the advance party passed and then ambushed Bellamy's company.[188]

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[186] It appears that Richard and John D. Parish were brothers, based on research compiled on ancestry.com. "Col Richard Parish," Find a Grave, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/5541265/richard-parish. Mary Karen Clements, "Richard C. Parish in Roberts Family Tree," Ancestry, https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/151722352/person/142010897124.

[187] *Wilmington Advertiser*, February 12, 1836, 2.

[188] "From the Tallahassee Floridian of the 30th," *National Gazette*, February 15, 1836, 2; *Niles' Weekly Register,* 50:38.

Hearing the ruckus, Parish rushed the other companies forward along the road and right into the trap laid by a larger formation of Seminoles. The main Seminole force ambushed Parish from both sides of the road. The volunteers made a hasty attempt to charge on horseback, but the vegetation forced them to dismount. Now on foot, Parish's battalion charged again and broke one of the Seminole fighting positions. Captain Bellamy's company with Bannerman's detachment, nearly a half mile away, pushed back their attackers and then returned to the main body. As night drew near and with two wounded, Parish decided to stop the pursuit in the dark thickets and reformed his battalion on a small hilltop in the open pinewoods.[189]

Parish's volunteers rested that night, laying with their guns under them, ready for renewed fighting in the morning. The Seminoles disappeared during the night into the swamps and Parish's regiment went unmolested. The following morning, the volunteers found six or seven dead Seminoles. Parish may have faced as many as 100 Seminoles in the fight.[190] Two days later, Parish's battalion marched to Fort King, then to a Seminole village called Powell's (Osceola's) Town where they burned the remaining wooden structures, before returning to Fort Drane.

As the militia continued to fight small actions against the Seminoles, assembly areas like Fort Drane were bustling with activity. Supplies and rations were moved into

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[189] "From the Tallahassee Floridian of the 30th," *National Gazette*, February 15, 1836, 2; *Niles' Weekly Register,* 50:38.

[190] The *Tallahassee Floridian* accounted six Seminole dead; the *Niles' Weekly Register* stated there were seven Seminole dead and two militia wounded. "From the Tallahassee Floridian of the 30th," *National Gazette*, February 15, 1836, 2; *Niles' Weekly Register,* 50:38.

the interior forts and regulars and volunteers from other states started to arrive in the ports to prepare for a large offensive. Parish's battalion arrived back at Fort Drane just as a column of fifteen wagons arrived from Picolata. Among the wagon train was a regular with the 4th U.S. Infantry, Second Lieutenant Henry Prince, whose diary provides a glimpse into the challenges faced at the fort. In addition to serving as an assembly area for newly arriving troops, and a logistics hub, Fort Drane served as hasty hospital for the many wounded from the Battle of the Withlacoochee. The regulars were also busy drilling and clearing trails.[191]

News arrived at Fort Drane, on January 21 that Dade's command was cut off. The officers and troops did not know yet that the Seminoles had killed Dade and all but two of his men. The news put the regulars and volunteers in a heightened state, and they were constantly alarmed in the dark nights by wild boars, bears, and wolves. On one dark midnight (January 23) a sentinel fired on a patrol without presenting a challenge first. The sentinel's shot hit its target, although it was not an enemy or a wild animal. The regular soldier had shot a sergeant and broke his leg just above the ankle joint. The next morning Parish's battalion fired by company into the thickets to thwart any would-be attackers. Two days later one of the volunteers shot a hog in the night which they believed was a Seminole. On January 31, news arrived that Brigadier General Call was on his way back to Fort Drane with his brigade of militia.[192] Although this provided some relief to the garrison's soldiers, it was merely a rumor. Call had only stood up a

[191] Prince, *Amidst a Storm of Bullets*, 5-6. Prince arrived at Fort Drane with only a detachment of 4th U.S. Infantry; the majority of the regiment was still at Fort Brooke.

[192] Prince, *Amidst a Storm of Bullets*, 5-6.

battalion in Tallahassee and they were still awaiting transport to Tampa. These rumors and late news only highlight the problems with inaccurate communications, especially in Florida where it was dangerous to send lone or small groups of messengers.

The officers of Parish's volunteer force were well acquainted with each other, and in many cases, close friends. One of Alston's lieutenants was William Ward, a temperamental young West Point cadet. He left the academy on furlough and returned to Tallahassee so that he could care for his family's property after learning that his father had died. Ward had been home only a few days when he heard Alston was raising a company to fight Indians. He volunteered, seemingly with the intent to return to West Point after a quick campaign.[193] Parish and Alston were family friends of the Wards, but after two weeks of a grueling campaign chasing elusive Seminoles and facing deprivations and ambush, the familial niceties eroded.

The volunteers were at their heart, rough and tumble pioneers whose pride was sometimes exceeded by their tempers. On January 30, Ward was "ordered to duty that is performed by tours, when it was not his tour."[194] Ward refused his shift, placing his commanders in a predicament. Ward may have been angry over Parish's decision to extend the men past their term of service to await other militia reinforcements.[195] Parish could not let the lieutenant disobey an order, lest all orders be subject to debate. Parish believed he could convince the young Ward to relent, but the two exchanged words that

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[193] *Jacksonville Courier,* February 11, 1836, 2.

[194] Prince, *Amidst a Storm of Bullets*, 6.

[195] *Charleston Courier,* February 24, 1836, 2.

only devolved the situation from that of an officer refusing a superior's orders into a battle between two men's personal honor. Parish asked Ward why he was "willing to bring disgrace on himself and his family by his misconduct." Ward replied, "By God sir, you cannot bring disgrace upon me and my family." Parish ended with "go on then and I'll see if I can't hereafter have my orders obeyed."[196]

The tension did not cool overnight. The following day, Parish ordered Ward's arrest. As the guards approached Ward's tent, he emerged armed with one pistol in his right hand and two in his left. Ward dared anyone to try and disarm him. As a crowd gathered, Ward asked "is there any man who will suffer me to be treated in this way?" Alston told Ward "he had no right to make such an appeal to his men."[197] Alston tried to calm Ward, asking him to drop it, and return to his tent.

An officer rushed from the scene to find Parish, warning him that Ward had indeed gone to his tent, but only to retrieve arms. The officer urged Parish to arm himself and told him there was a shotgun in a nearby tent.[198] The crowd parted as Parish arrived with shotgun in hand. Parish again ordered the guards to arrest Ward, but the guards

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[196] James M. Denham, "'Some Prefer the Seminoles': Violence and Disorder among Soldiers and Settlers in the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (July 1991): 53, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30148093. An account from Capt. C. M. Thurston, 3d U.S. Artillery circulated in the *Pensacola Gazette*, February 20, 1836, 3; "Trial of Colonel Parish for Killing Lieutenant Ward," *Army and Navy Chronicle,* 2:152; and *Niles' Weekly Register,* 50:38.

[197] Denham, "Some Prefer the Seminoles," 52-53.

[198] Prince, *Amidst a Storm of* Bullets, 5-6. The officer is identified as Captain Holstein by Prince; however, no other record of Holstein can be found. It is possible that Prince transcribed the officer's name incorrectly, thus the name is left from the body of this thesis.

stood still.[199] Ward shouted back at Parish, "God Damn your soul, I will put a ball through you and as many more who attempt to disarm me." As Ward raised his pistol, pointing indiscriminately amongst the crowd, Parish discharged a shotgun blast at near point-blank. "O Lord," Ward screamed, and as Prince described, Ward fell to the ground "perfectly torn open." As the crowd watched, stunned in horror, Ward lay dying on the ground for fourteen minutes.[200]

Clinch ordered a court martial where Alston testified on behalf of Parish stating that Ward first "raised his pistol and pointed it at the crowd." "From what I know of [Ward]," Alston continued, "he would shoot any man who would have attempted to lay his hands upon him."[201] The inquiry pointed to the necessity of Ward's shooting once the young lieutenant had become belligerent. Clinch supported Parish in the end, but opinions varied. The officers of Parish's battalion supported the colonel, whereas the privates believed the killing unjust. In effect, the killing of Ward, which was supposed to restore order, left it teetering delicately on a balance. News soon reached William Ward's older brother, George Taliaferro Ward in Tallahassee. The elder Ward—a long-serving Florida Militia officer—blamed his erstwhile friend Alston for not preventing the young Ward's murder and swore revenge.

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[199] Denham, "Some Prefer the Seminoles," 52-53.

[200] Prince, *Amidst a Storm of Bullets*, 5-6.

[201] Denham, "Some Prefer the Seminoles," 53.

Colonel Parish's Battalion soon left Fort Drane and headed home to be released, leaving Clinch with only five companies of regulars.[202] They returned to Tallahassee having completed their term of service on February 7.[203] The *Florida Intelligencer* reported on Captain Alston's Leon Volunteers:

> In the course of their short campaign, they met with but a single opportunity of exhibiting their prowess, and upon this, they signalized themselves by the repulse of a large body of Indians, exceeding the combined forces under Col. Parish by one-third. In this engagement but one of the volunteers was killed. The Indians fled to a neighboring hammock and taking advantage of the thicket and the near approach of night, escaped. The next morning the troops scoured the hammock, but the enemy had vanished. The appearance of this troop upon their return from the war, was, in the highest degree, creditable to its commander, Capt. Alston. They seemed indeed nothing daunted, but ready and anxious to take the field. Many of them have already enlisted for another term of service.[204]

Indeed, many of the volunteers did reenlist into a battalion then being raised in Tallahassee by Call and Leigh Read for the third offensive expedition in just two months by volunteers from Middle Florida. After two expeditions from Middle Florida volunteers, it was quite clear that there was still an urgent need for militia protection, not only in the Alachua frontier and along the east coast, but in Middle Florida itself. Parish and his men arrived home to reports of three families having been "murdered between St. Marks and Tallahassee, together with an overseer."[205]

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[202] *Niles' Weekly Register,* 49, 441.

[203] *American State Papers,* 6:1068.

[204] "From the Florida Intelligencer, Feb. 11," *Arkansas Gazette*, March 8, 1836, 3.

[205] *Wilmington Advertiser*, February 12, 1836, 2.

Parish resigned his militia commission shortly after returning home amidst the short-lived outrage over Ward's death.[206] George T. Ward held Alston responsible and later challenged him to a duel. Both survived, albeit severely wounded.

William Ward's death by the hand of a fellow militia officer was not the last life senselessly extinguished in moments of anger—in fact, anger and tempers became the signature end to many of the most remarkable early Florida Militia leaders. This case exemplifies the lack of military discipline and the importance of personal honor among the Florida Militia. While their mounted patrols brought a necessary capability to the immobile regulars, the militia's infighting and frequent ill-discipline caused headaches for some of the regular commanders. Of course, the senior regular officers were not without their own squabbles—especially seen between Major Generals Winfield Scott and Edmund Gaines.

Secretary of War Lewis Cass appointed Major General Winfield Scott to take command of all troops in Florida in early January. The appointment was intended to consolidate the theater of war under a single commander. The Florida territory had been subdivided under the two military commands of the United States, with the eastern half of the territory under Scott's command and the western half under Major General Edmund P. Gaines' command. The dividing line ran south through the Indian Reservation.

Before Scott left Washington, he met with the president. Jackson was impatient and did not understand why Clinch and Call failed to defeat the Seminoles at the Battle of

[206] *Niles' Weekly Register,* 50:38.

the Withlacoochee. The date of removal, January 1, had passed with the Seminoles still in total control of their lands and people, and the white settlements abandoned. Jackson gave Scott ruthless advice on how to defeat the Seminoles: find their women and children. Finding them, he proposed, would force the Seminole warriors to battle where they could be defeated in one decisive action. Scott left the capital city on January 21 and headed south.[207]

Scott was an exceptional military commander, having earned an esteemed reputation and promotion to brigadier general of the line and a brevet promotion to major general by 1814. He was proficient in European tactics, even producing the U.S. Army's manual on infantry tactics, but the European tactics were ill-suited for Indian warfare. Scott traveled with a band, furniture, wines, and other unnecessary luxuries. He wore thick, expensive uniforms even in the Florida heat. Scott's penchant for the finer things and military pomp later earned him the nickname "Fuss and Feathers." Most damaging to his Florida command would be his inability to adapt to irregular warfare. He disliked the "rough dress of the woods fighters," and did not approve of "taking to trees as the natives did."[208]

Scott planned to drive the Seminoles out of the cove and into the savannahs where they could be captured or killed. The prisoners would then be forced to relocate to Indian Territory outside of Florida. His plan required a force of 5,000 troops, and he received authority from President Jackson to call up five regiments of volunteers. Scott issued an

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[207] Timothy D. Johnson, *Winfield Scott, The Quest for Military Glory* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 112-113.

[208] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 140.

order calling for two volunteer regiments from South Carolina, two from Georgia, and one from Alabama. Each regiment would consist of 740 men and would be drafted into service for three months. This force of 3,700 would supplement the 550 Regulars already in Florida. Scott also requested, although did not receive, a friendly Creek regiment of 500 warriors to be used as scouts. Using natives was typical during the Indian wars in the Southeast, but they would not have been as effective as scouts in the unfamiliar Florida terrain. Conspicuously, Scott did not request assistance from the Florida militia. He ordered Hall rifles, knapsacks, and camp equipment for the volunteers, but soon learned there were not enough of the single-shot, breech-loading Hall rifles and that the War Department could not acquire knapsacks or other equipment for the volunteers. He ordered as many rifles and muskets as could be secured from the Augusta arsenal to be immediately sent to Tallahassee. One month later, on February 7, a mounted guard entered Tallahassee, escorting a wagon delivery of a "stand of 700 arms."[209] Without enough government firearms, the volunteers would largely equip themselves with their own personal firearms. Although Scott left Washington in January, he took nearly two months to reach Florida. He spent almost two weeks in Savannah alone, meticulously planning supply details and requisitioning volunteers, and only arrived at the Army depot at Picolata, Florida on February 22.[210]

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[209] "From the Tallahassee Floridian of the 30th," *National Gazette*, February 15, 1836, 2.

[210] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 142-154; Johnson, *Winfield Scott*, 115.

Showing the problems with communication, Major General Edmund P. Gaines heard of Dade's massacre while in New Orleans before those on the Florida peninsula itself. News traveled faster by sea than across the Florida territory. It was January 15 when the report reached Gaines from the two survivors who had made their way to Fort Brooke. Gaines was in command of the Army Department of the West, and half of Florida was under his regional command.[211] Unaware of orders for Scott to take special command of all action in Florida, Gaines built an expeditionary force of the 4th U.S. Infantry commanded by Lieutenant Colonel David Twiggs and a Louisiana Volunteer Regiment.[212]

Gaines and his small fleet steamed from New Orleans on February 4 and arrived in Pensacola two days later where he heard of Scott's appointment to command, but without seeing the actual order, he was unsure of its veracity. Gaines learned the truth of the command situation when he landed in Tampa: Secretary Cass had appointed Scott in command of the army in Florida, and Gaines had new orders to report to the Texas border. Gaines debated the orders with his officers. Here Gaines was, already in Florida with a large relief force, and without Scott even in the territory. Gaines was also concerned about Clinch's situation. The question he faced was whether he should

[211] Gaines' command included all of Middle and West Florida, Key West, and the ill-defined Indian Reservation.

[212] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 144.

continue on, knowing of the orders for him and Scott, or whether he should return to Louisiana.[213]

Gaines had a predisposition for action and despised his rival, Scott. Furthermore, his officers questioned when Scott might arrive from Washington. Gaines believed Scott was too calculating and cautious and that he would probably take his time to build up forces and supplies. The commander of Louisiana volunteers, Colonel Persifor F. Smith, further influenced Gaines' decision to stay by telling him that his volunteers would leave with him if the general returned to New Orleans.[214]

Gaines decided to march into the Seminole territory hoping to draw the Seminoles into battle. Gaines organized his force of 1,100 men into a "light brigade" of three sub-commands: the 4th U.S. Infantry, the Louisiana Volunteer Regiment, and a battalion of 3d U.S. Artillery fighting as infantrymen. Twenty-seven "friendly Indians" accompanied them.[215] These were likely Seminoles awaiting removal from Florida. Eminent Seminole War historian John K. Mahon wrote that a Florida Militia force under command of Leigh Read joined Gaines' campaign from Tampa, although evidence of Read and his

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[213] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 144-146; Monaco, *The Second Seminole War and the Limits of American Aggression*, 66.

[214] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 144.

[215] Ethan A. Hitchcock, *Fifty Years in Camp and Field: Diary of Major-General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, U.S.A,* ed. William A. Croffut (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), 86; McCall wrote later that the force was 980 men. George A. McCall, *Letters from the Frontiers: Written During a Period of Thirty Years' Service in the Army of the United States* (Philadelphia: Lippincott & Co, 1868), 310, 321. Hitchcock wrote in his diary that there were 1,100 men.

battalion's disposition seems to counter that.[216] Although it seems that there were no Florida Militia forces with Gaines, it is important to cover his campaign for context.

Gaines' brigade took one six-pound cannon and marched toward Fort King on February 13, along the same military road Dade had marched only a month and a half earlier. Gaines and his men were the first whites to come across the site of Dade's defeat. They found the battlefield just as the victorious Seminoles left it one month and a half earlier. The carcasses of horses and men were left exposed in the sun. Decomposing and likely picked at by buzzards and boars, the soldiers were indistinguishable. Gaines' officers knew Dade and his officers well and identified their comrades by rings, gold teeth, pins, pistols, and other items left on them. Gaines had them buried in a mass grave on the field. They recovered Dade's six-pound cannon from the swamp into which the Seminoles had thrown it and placed the cannon upright at the head of the mass grave. His band played a funeral march as the formation marched in a circle around Dade's log breastworks.[217]

Gaines reached Fort King on February 22, after a seven days' march, surprising the single artillery company defending the garrison. But the fort had little provisions and not nearly enough to supply Gaines' enormous force. Needing food and forage, Gaines sent all of his horses twenty-two miles north to Fort Drane to retrieve any supplies that could be spared. The party arrived back at Fort King with just a few days' rations. Gaines

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[216] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 146.

[217] Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 97; Hitchcock, *Fifty Years in Camp and Field*, 90-91; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 146.

decided to march back toward Fort Brooke via a more direct route in hopes that it would cut off a days' march and perhaps give them chance to battle the Seminoles.

On February 26, Gaines marched out of Fort King southward toward the battlefield on the Withlacoochee where Clinch and Call failed to dislodge the Seminoles. When his three columns reached the wide river on February 27, they found themselves in a similar situation as Clinch and Call—without a place to cross. As his men inspected the river for fordable points a fire erupted from the southern bank. The Seminoles killed one of Gaines' men and wounded eight others in the half-hour fight. The next day, Gaines attempted to find another river crossing only two miles west when the Seminoles again attacked, killing Lieutenant James F. Izard of the 1st Dragoons. The ensuing battle kept Gaines from crossing the river, and he had his men erect hasty log breastworks away from the river in the pine savannah. Gaines dispatched a messenger to Fort Drane to tell Clinch to bring reinforcements and provisions. Gaines decided to make his stand at this hasty fort dubbed Camp Izard against an estimated 1,500 Seminole warriors led by Osceola, Alligator, Jumper, and John Caesar.[218]

The Seminoles besieged Gaines for eight days, inflicting five dead and forty-six wounded and nearly starving them all. During this time, Gaines was wounded and lost his two front teeth from a glancing shot. Still, Gaines' force held out, and the Seminoles called for a parley in the evening of March 5.[219] Gaines agreed, and on the morning of

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[218] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 147; Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 98.

[219] McCall, *Letters from the Frontiers*, 331-332; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War,* 149.

March 6, about 300 armed Seminoles filed out from near the river and stopped about 300 yards from Camp Izard. Gaines acted with caution, believing it to be a ruse and sent his aide-de-camp Captain Ethan Allen Hitchcock to negotiate with a small group of Seminoles. The deliberation was short. Hitchcock told the Seminoles that government forces were continuing to grow in Florida and would arrest or kill any Indian with a rifle. Hitchcock then contradicted the U.S. government's position of Indian removal by telling them that if they retreated to their reservation and put down their weapons they would be left alone. The Seminoles wanted the soldiers to leave the area and told them that the Withlacoochee River would be their boundary. The truce parties then split allowing the Seminole leaders to confer. Osceola and Jumper led the truce party for its second round of talks in the afternoon. They spoke for some time, each side reiterating their requests when, suddenly, the advance guard of Clinch's relief force entered the prairie. Not understanding the situation and alarmed at the presence of the Seminoles, the advance guard opened fire and the Seminoles fled.[220] In truth, neither party was able to commit to a peace agreement. Gaines did not have authority for the U.S. government, and the real decision-maker for the Seminoles, Micanopy, was not present.

The advance guard was probably led by Florida Militia units. Historian George C. Bittle attributed the advance guard attack from Clinch's force to a Florida volunteer unit commanded by John McLemore, who may be remembered as the captain of the Columbia Volunteers.[221] Colonel James Gadsden, the former regular army officer—

[220] Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 99-101.

[221] Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 90-91.

turned Leon County planter and militia officer—was also present with the relief force.[222] The presence of either of these officers indicates that there may have been volunteers from Middle Florida, although the incomplete federal muster rolls do not identify any. It is clear that at least a group of Alachua and Columbia volunteers was with the relief force. George A. McCall, a regular army officer with Gaines recalled that a "squadron of mounted men, raised in the counties immediately north of Fort Drane" had made up a portion of Clinch's force.[223] They are said to have graciously supplied their own provisions of biscuits and corn to the emaciated men of Gaines' command—who had been three days without food after eating their horses and dogs.[224]

Clinch marched to Gaines' rescue against orders from Scott to remain at Fort Drane. His help was necessary since Gaines' force was in desperate need of food and ammunition. Although it was the Seminoles that sought a truce, it was they who were in the position of power. Clinch brought forty head of cattle to feed the armies with his relief party. The Seminoles kept their promise not to attack, although Micanopy never came before them to make a lasting peace.

Gaines turned over his command of the brigade and Camp Izard to Clinch and made his way to Fort Drane. Days later Scott arrived and the two generals begrudgingly shared meals and space in the small camp. Captain Hitchcock recalled a dinner where the two generals did not even speak to one another, "The meeting between the two generals

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[222] Hitchcock, *Fifty Years in Camp and Field*, 95; Sprague, *Florida War*, 124.

[223] McCall, *Letters from the Frontiers*, 330.

[224] Cohen, *Notices of Florida*, 101.

was cold in the extreme." Gaines and Hitchcock, left Fort Drane on March 14, riding by horse six days along the 150-mile wooded trail to Tallahassee where exaggerated stories of his campaign had preceded him. Tallahasseeans were abhorred to hear that Scott denied Gaines aid during his dire situation. Citizens turned out en masse for Gaines' arrival and offered him a public dinner, but he politely declined and went to St. Marks on his way to New Orleans.[225]

Although Gaines declared victory, the emergency was far from over. The existing peace was tentative and depended on further development of the truce agreed upon at Camp Izard. However, Scott did not seek peace with the Seminoles; he did not even attempt to talk to them before he started his ill-fated campaign. It was clear to Scott that the Seminoles could only be removed by force.

The month of January exposed the jealousies between senior army officers to Floridians. There also continued a deep animosity festering between the regulars, militia, and the Florida citizens. Despite Scott attempting to write out the Florida Militia from his campaign, Florida's territorial and militia leaders worked to keep them in the action. When Scott finally assembled his army in Florida, he would be surprised when a battalion of Middle Florida volunteers raised by Call appeared in Tampa.

The Florida Militia again proved that mounted operations were effective against the Seminoles, so long as there was enough forage to feed their horses. Militia infantrymen were best suited for defense since they were too slow to catch the Seminoles and endangered themselves to being destroyed as Dade's column. The last campaign of

[225] Hitchcock, *Fifty Years in Camp and Field*, 95-96.

the first fighting season, however, would be fought on ground unfavorable to horses and Call and Read would experiment with the Florida Militia's first completely light infantry battalion.

CHAPTER 5

FLORIDA MILITIA IN SCOTT'S CAMPAIGN

In the aftermath of the Battle of the Withlacoochee, Gaines' temporary truce with the Seminoles at Camp Izard, the destruction of East Florida plantations, and the upcoming Scott campaign, Florida's territorial leaders doubled down on their support for the war. The Territorial Legislature opened its annual session with many important bills concerning the militia, and the governor authorized Call to raise another force from Middle Florida in response to Clinch's request for more militia at Fort Brooke.

As soon as Brigadier General Call returned to the capital following the Battle of the Withlacoochee, he started recruiting volunteers from Tallahassee and the surrounding counties to form a light infantry battalion. It was unusual for Floridians to volunteer as dismounted infantry and this was the first dismounted infantry force larger than a company ever mustered into active service in the Florida Militia. There were several reasons for deciding to raise an infantry battalion instead of a mounted one.

First, the battalion was joining Scott's campaign which was largely dismounted. Scott himself requested that volunteers leave their mounts because of the cost and difficulty to supply feed to the horses during the campaign. Just to carry feed required substantially more wagons, horses to pull the wagons, and details to protect the wagon trains. In addition to problems supplying feed, there was little to no forage between Fort Brooke and the Cove of the Withlacoochee where Scott planned to conduct his campaign. Even though the Florida men wanted to ride into battle, the prospect of losing their own horses to starvation likely made walking more palatable. Lastly, the battalion was going to travel by ship to Fort Brooke and there may not have been enough available shipping

to move men, horses, and wagons. In all likelihood, Call and his officers made the decision to raise a dismounted infantry battalion for a combination of these reasons.

Instead of raising the battalion of volunteers by himself, as Call had done before, he relied on his militia captains to raise their respective companies. Several of Call's friends and members of the Jackson Nucleus raised volunteer companies in Tallahassee and Leon County. Isham G. Searcy, the former Adjutant General of the Florida Militia, and Leslie A. Thompson, the editor of the *Florida Advocate* who served four years as the intendant (mayor) of Tallahassee, raised the Leon Volunteers and Tallahassee Guards, respectively.[226] John Tatum, a Governor Eaton-appointed justice of the peace, raised a mixed company of volunteers and drafted men from Leon County.[227]

By mid-January, Call assembled a battalion of seven companies in an area near Tallahassee called Camp Brown.[228] The other companies were from and named after surrounding counties: Captain Shaw's Gadsden Volunteers, Captain Abraham K. Allison's Franklin Volunteers, and Captain John Townsend's Jefferson Militia. A seventh company commanded by Captain Frederick L. Ming from Marianna rounded out the new force called the Florida Battalion (see figure 21). The volunteers held an election for the

[226] Doherty, *Richard Keith Call*, 71, 80; Groene, *Ante-Bellum Tallahassee*, 176; *American State Papers,* 7:273.

[227] Carter, *Territorial Papers* 25, 105. Tatum was appointed as one of the justices of the peace for Leon County on February 10, 1835.

[228] Doherty, *Richard Keith Call*, 71, 80; Groene, *Ante-Bellum Tallahassee*, 176. Camp Brown was likely named after Florida's Adjutant General, and future governor, Thomas Brown.

battalion officers and chose Call as their battalion commander with Colonel Leigh Read as the battalion's major.[229]

As Call's battalion was forming, the Territorial Legislature passed a flurry of militia reforms in the session between January 4 and February 14, 1836. The recent violence invigorated interest in the militia and several counties requested to have their own regiment instead of sharing with another county. Of course, this also gave these counties the prestige of electing their own regimental colonel and other field grade officers. The 11th and 12th Regiments of enrolled militia were constituted in Franklin and Columbia Counties, and the 13th Regiment was formed in the more sparsely populated Madison and Hamilton Counties. The new law also broadly gave the governor the authority to raise as much militia as necessary to bring a speedy end to the war.[230] To that end, the Legislature also unanimously passed a bill authorizing the purchase of "all the rifles, muskets and other implements of war for sale at this time in Tallahassee, for the purpose of arming the volunteers, and placing the country in a situation of defence (sic)."[231]

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[229] In the *American State Papers*, Ming is misprinted as "Wing," *American State Papers,* 7:273; Capt. Frederick L. Ming's Co., Read's Battalion, Florida Volunteers, Indian wars from 1815 to 1858, in *Returns of Killed and Wounded in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British, and Mexican Troops.* "From the Tallahassee Floridian of the 30th," *National Gazette*, February 15, 1836, 2; "Florida, from the Tallahassee paper, February 13, 1836" *Mississippian*, March 11, 1836, 2.

[230] DuVal, *Compilation of the Public Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, Passed Prior to 1840,* 405-410.

[231] Florida Legislature, *A Journal of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida,* 14th sess., Tallahassee, January 4, 1836, 58-59, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044097936686. This bill, sponsored by Thomas M. Blount, authorized the purchasing committee to distribute arms "to the commanding officer of volunteer regiments, battalion or company, or of any body of citizens, who may

The most important reforms to the 1833 militia law addressed the ambiguity over whether the governor could accept independent volunteer companies into service and the authorized length of active service. This first issue addressed the controversy that arose when then Acting Governor Walker had denied Clement Stephens' commission in the Jefferson Horse Guards a month earlier. The new law explicitly stated "that the governor of the Territory of Florida is hereby authorized and empowered to make proclamation for and receive volunteers, to organize them into companies unless already formed, commission officers when duly elected, and assign them to their respective regiments or commands."[232] The second issue addressed the fact that the conflict had outlasted the first enlistment period of thirty days and that if the militia had longer enlistments, they may have ended the war soon after the Battle of the Withlacoochee. The Legislature therefore extended the active service period during times of "invasion, insurrection, or any other imminent danger" to six months unless discharged sooner.[233]

Captain Leslie Thompson immediately sought to have his company, the Tallahassee Guards, recognized by the Legislature before the session closed. This afforded the benefits of prestige, long-term issue of arms and equipment, and independence from the enrolled militia. The Territorial Legislature constituted the independent volunteer company on February 12, 1836. The law authorized one captain,

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organize themselves for the purpose of aiding in defence (sic) of the country." It is unclear, however, if this volunteer battalion was provided arms or if the volunteers used their own weapons.

[232] DuVal, *Compilation of the Public Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, Passed Prior to 1840*, 405-410.

[233] Ibid., 406.

four lieutenants, five sergeants, four corporals, and up to one hundred men.[234] Unlike the war volunteer companies, the Tallahassee Guards and other recognized units were to be uniformed and retain government issued arms year around. They were expected to "procure a stand of colors" to represent the unit and to drill at least four times a year. Its members were exempt from other duty under militia law—mainly being individually drafted. However, the company as a whole, could still be drafted by the territorial or federal government. The men were allowed to adopt rules and regulations by majority vote and with approval of the captain.[235] Although the other companies in the new volunteer battalion were not constituted and governed by law, they acted along similar principles as the Tallahassee Guards.

The formation of this battalion and quick constitution of the Tallahassee Guards exemplifies two distinguishing characteristics of the militia. First, an appointed or elected commission in the enrolled militia did not entitle one to an equivalent rank or position in a war volunteer force. Call and Read are prime examples of this. They were a brigadier general and colonel in the enrolled militia, however, in the newly raised war volunteer force called the Florida Battalion there were no brigadier general positions. Both were elected to lead the Florida Battalion and took the ranks of colonel and major, respectively.

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[234] Robert S. Miller and David C. Wilson were elected the first and second lieutenants. The company's third lieutenant, Alexander F. DuVal, was a cousin to former Florida Governor William P. DuVal.

[235] DuVal, *Compilation of the Public Acts of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, Passed Prior to 1840*, 416-418.

The second noteworthy characteristic exemplified by the Florida Battalion is that it composed of all three categories of Florida Militia: enrolled militia, volunteer militia, and war volunteers. The battalion itself was a war volunteer unit made up of elements of each of the three categories of militia; it was raised for a single purpose and the enrolled militia ranks of Call, Read, and others did not equate to their war volunteer rank. The Tallahassee Guards were the only constituted volunteer militia company in the battalion. The Leon Volunteers, Gadsden Volunteers, and Jefferson Militia were in the traditional vein of war volunteer companies. They organized specifically for the new campaign and likely disbanded afterward. The Franklin Volunteers were an in-between of the two. Although not technically in the volunteer militia since they were not constituted by the Legislature, they were a standing company seeking permanent recognition. The Legislature later approved their request to join the ranks of the volunteer militia and changed their name to the Franklin Guards in 1843.[236] Captain Tatum's Leon County drafted men where likely raised through volunteers and draftees selected from Leon County's 7th Regiment of enrolled militia. It had actually been unusual in Middle Florida to draft men during this time since so many readily volunteered. The need for draftees may have foreshadowed the later reluctance of Florida men to volunteer for the seemingly endless Second Seminole War.

[236] Florida Legislature, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida,* 21st sess., January 2, 1843, 222, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044097936751.

What made the Florida Battalion most unusual, however, was the addition of Apalachicola Seminoles to its ranks.[237] These Apalachicolas were recruited at the request of Governor John Eaton, who sent acting Superintendent of Indian Removal David M. Sheffield to their reservation to persuade some to join the volunteer battalion forming in Tallahassee.[238] The Apalachicolas had a long history of cooperating with the white settlers and were likely motivated to assist the governor to prove their loyalty and thereby retain their reservation along the Apalachicola River.[239] Sheffield recruited eleven Apalachicolas to join and the contingent arrived with Sheffield in Tallahassee on February 7.[240] Although, the army had a history of using American Indians in service, this is the first recorded instance of Indians in the Florida Militia. Eaton appointed them all as privates in Tatum's company, although it seems they acted as a separate detachment of scouts for the battalion.[241]

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[237] The Apalachicolas were a subtribe of Seminoles who because of their separation from the other Seminole tribes increasingly sided with the white settlers and government. Their name was variably spelled as Appalachicola.

[238] David Sheffield to Secretary of War Lewis Cass, February 9, 1836 in U.S. Congress, House, HR 271, 24th Cong., 1st sess, 1836, 12-13, 259-260. Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida,* 69-70. Sheffield was an Indian sub-agent in the Tallahassee Indian Office who was sympathetic to the Apalachicolas' plight and took responsibility of Indian Affairs after Wiley Thompson's death.

[239] Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida,* 69-70.

[240] David Sheffield to Secretary of War Lewis Cass, 259-260.

[241] Capt. Tatum's Co., 2 Reg't. Florida Militia, Indian wars from 1815 to 1858, in *Returns of Killed and Wounded in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British, and Mexican Troops.*

The eleven Apalachicolas had a mix of traditional and English names: Choluhajo Billy, Tom Grace, Joe Riley, John Sampson, John Wacco, Yahhajo, Sam, Toney, John, Johnson, and Taylor.[242] Like their white counterparts, they brought their own weapons and were clothed in everyday attire. Except, everyday attire for the Indians looked quite different than the white militiamen. The one who went by the name of Sammy was described as wearing red pants with a calico hunting shirt.[243]

In the first week of February, Eaton ordered the Florida Battalion to proceed to Fort Brooke and join Major General Scott's army. Eaton then informed Scott by letter that a Florida Battalion of two hundred and fifty volunteers would embark for Tampa from St. Marks.[244] The Florida Battalion marched to the port of St. Marks on February 14 where they awaited ship transport to Fort Brooke. The Tallahassee newspaper described the battalion, "They are well armed and equipped, and make a very soldier-like appearance."[245] Call remained at his home in Tallahassee, delaying the departure of the Florida Battalion while his wife Mary was suffering a serious illness. Mary prodded her

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[242] These names are recorded as such in Capt. Tatum's Co., 2 Reg't. Florida Militia, Indian wars from 1815 to 1858, in *Returns of Killed and Wounded in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British, and Mexican Troops.*

[243] *New Yorker,* January 7, 1837, https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_New_Yorker/g784AQAAMAAJ. This description of Sammy's clothing was from an account written toward the end of 1836, but the clothing was typical during the time of the Florida Battalion's expedition.

[244] Sprague, *Florida War,* 117.

[245] "Florida, from the Tallahassee paper, February 13, 1836" *Mississippian,* March 11, 1836, 2.

husband to leave her, convincing him that she was getting better. Finally, Call joined his battalion, and they boarded the revenue cutter *Dallas* at St. Marks on February 28.[246]

Mary's condition worsened, however, and one of Call's servants rushed on horseback to St. Marks to inform him. The *Dallas* had not yet set sail, so he took a small craft out to the ship to deliver the news that Mary was now on her deathbed. Call rode twenty miles back to Tallahassee as fast as his horse could take him, even killing the poor steed from exhaustion. But he arrived too late to see his wife alive. A torch lit funeral was held in the family cemetery on the evening of February 29 where Mary still rests beneath century-old live oaks draped in Spanish moss. Call, bereaving his love in Tallahassee, could not bring himself to lead the battalion and turned command over to his young protégé Leigh Read.[247]

Leigh Read remains one of the most divisive figures in the story of the Florida Militia. Historian John Mahon described the "swashbuckling Floridian" as one who "habitually dwelt in a medium of violence."[248] Read was a native Tennessean whose birth name may have been Isaac de Brierleigh Read, although he is only known to have gone by Leigh Read while in Florida.[249] He moved to Tallahassee in 1831, settling just north of the town, in an area called Centerville. Although Read himself had not been a

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[246] *American State Papers,* 7:270. Captain Green commanded the cutter *Dallas*.

[247] Doherty, *Richard Keith Call*, 98-99.

[248] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 146, 153.

[249] Jay G. Cisco, *Historic Sumter County, Tennessee with Genealogies of the Bledsoe, Cage, and Douglas Families, and Genealogical Notes of Other Sumter County Families* (Nashville: Folk-Keelin Printing Co., 1909), 184-185.

part of Jackson's conquest of Spanish Florida, he aligned himself to the Nucleus political camp and soon became an important member. He studied law and worked in Call's legal office before being admitted to the bar in April 1833. He married into wealthy families, first marrying Maria Bellamy in 1835. She was the daughter of the Jefferson County planter, John Bellamy, who had constructed the road from St. Augustine to Tallahassee. After Maria's untimely death, Read remarried in 1838. His second wife, Eliza Branch, was a daughter of one of the most influential families in the region—the Bradford-Eppes-Branch clan.[250] The Bradford-Eppes-Branch families were among the wealthiest in early Florida. Collectively the three families owned over 500 slaves and 13,000 acres in Leon County by 1850.[251] Eliza's father, John Branch had already made an impressive name for himself. Before he even moved to Florida to establish Live Oak Plantation on Lake Jackson in Leon County, he had already been the governor of North Carolina, a Senator from that same state, and Secretary of the Navy under President Jackson. In 1844, President John Tyler appointed Branch as territorial governor of Florida.

Read himself rose to prominence and even infamy. His violence became renowned after a gruesome bout with a fellow Tallahassee attorney. Only two years after acceptance to the Florida bar, Read challenged Oscar White to a duel. Both White and Read had been sworn into the bar on the same day in 1831, but they were from rival political factions. The feud began after an argument over a race for Florida's territorial

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[250] James M. Denham, "The Read-Alston Duel and Politics in Territorial Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 68, no. 4 (1990): 427-46, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30150885.

[251] Paisley, *The Red Hills of Florida*, 219-221.

delegate. White's uncle, Joseph M. White, and Read's mentor, Richard Call, were in the running against each other. The argument ended when Read challenged White to a duel. The two soon met at the racetrack (presumed to be near Lake Ella) in front of a crowd. The two started at each other's backs, paced, turned, and fired. Read's shot struck White in the thigh. After other shots missed—and out of loaded guns—the two continued with bowie knives in a particularly ferocious and bloody fight. White slashed Read in the side as each wrestled to kill the other. Eventually, bleeding and exhausted, the fight ended with both still alive.[252] It would not be Read's last episode of personal violence.

Major Read's Florida Battalion arrived at Tampa Bay in the first days of March.[253] Historian George Bittle wrote that Read "refused to serve in a regular army unit and even camped his force on the other side of the Hillsborough River from the regulars."[254] They were soon joined in the area by volunteers from Alabama. Colonel William Chisholm and eight companies of the Alabama Volunteer Regiment arrived at Tampa Bay on March 5 and disembarked their ship the next day at Fort Brooke. The fort, which would soon become one of the largest forts of the era and the most important in the

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[252] Denham, "The Read-Alston Duel," 427-46; Jackson Wilder Maynard, Jr., "According to Their Capacities and Talents": Frontier Attorneys in Tallahassee during the Territorial Period" (Master's thesis, Florida State University, 2004), 52-53, https://fsu.digital.flvc.org/islandora/object/fsu:180905/datastream/PDF/view.

[253] If the Florida Battalion departed St. Marks on February 29, then they likely entered Tampa Bay by March 2. There are discrepancies in histories and accounts as to the arrival. Mahon wrote in *History of the Second Seminole War* that Read's Florida Battalion was already in Tampa by February 9, 1836 and marched with Gaines, although this is incorrect. In *American State Papers,* 7:273, Scott stated that Read's Battalion arrived between March 1 and 10, and Lindsay wrote that the Florida Battalion had arrived before March 6.

[254] Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida," 94.

Seminole War, already had wooden barracks, a wharf, stables, and houses for officers. Some civilian residences and stores were built on the military reservation as well.[255] It had two blockhouses and the stockade fence was surrounded by concealed holes with sharp stakes meant to impale and entrap attackers.[256] The Alabama Volunteers camped in the sprawling grounds just outside of the stockade.

Whether Read's decision to encamp on the west side of the Hillsborough River was to avoid interaction with the regulars or not, he was—for a few days—escaping the unfolding drama between the Alabama Volunteers and the regular army officer in command, Colonel William Lindsay. Lindsay was the commander of the 2d U.S. Artillery and former aide to Major General Jackson during the Seminole campaign of 1818. Lindsay had arrived with the Alabamians and took overall command of the force of Alabama and Florida volunteers. From the first day of the Alabama Volunteers' arrival, Lindsay issued immensely unpopular orders. He forbade sutlers from selling alcohol to his soldiers and volunteers. Also, he tightly rationed the issuance of ammunition to the point where the volunteers felt they were being put in danger of not being able to defend themselves from Indian attack. Ensign Alexander B. Meek, a graduate of the University of Alabama and officer in the Alabama Volunteers who would be appointed Attorney General of Alabama immediately after his return from the war, wrote in his diary, "I am somewhat dissatisfied at present as our commanding officer Col. Lindsay seems not to

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[255] James W. Covington, "Life at Fort Brooke 1824-1836," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (1958): 319-330, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30139842.

[256] John K. Mahon, ed., "The Journal of A. B. Meek and the Second Seminole War, 1836," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1960): 307-308, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30140613.

know what to do, and has us here with but 4 rounds of cartridges . . . This has created great dissatisfaction among the officers and men—being almost a mutiny with the latter."[257] The men were greatly concerned that if the Seminoles attacked, the Alabamians would only have four rounds and then the bayonet. Lindsay's justification was that the volunteers disregarded orders, wasted rounds on shooting cattle and deer, and put the entire force in danger with their ill-disciplined fire.[258]

Lindsay's concerns were not without warrant. Unlike the regular soldiers, the militiamen would frequently hunt on their accord. Lindsay's concern for ill-discipline was exemplified when, on March 10 at three in the morning, a sentinel from the Alabama volunteers fired on a scouting party of about 100 of Read's men. The Alabama soldier, Private James Garner, said he hailed the unknown group of men, but since they did not reply or halt, he fired.[259]

As Scott's army built up forces and supplies at Volusia, Fort Brooke and Fort Drane, Read's Florida Battalion clashed with Seminoles in the thickets north of Fort Brooke. On March 9, Captain Allison's Franklin Volunteers "had a skirmish near his camp, not far from Fort Brooke. He routed the Indians, whom he judged to be a thousand strong, and took considerable plunder."[260] A few nights later, on March 12, large fires

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[257] Mahon, "The Journal of A. B. Meek and the Second Seminole War, 1836," 309.

[258] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 153.

[259] Mahon, "The Journal of A. B. Meek and the Second Seminole War, 1836," 309-310.

[260] Samuel G. Drake, *Aboriginal Races of North America* (New York: Hurst & Company Publishers, 1880), 431, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30140613.

were spotted east of Fort Brooke near the Alafia River. Colonel Lindsay ordered Read to take his battalion and "scour" the countryside in search of the Seminoles. Read's battalion marched toward the source of the fires that night. Read's men surprised a group of Seminoles in their camp the next morning, killing three. They also captured six horses as the Seminoles hastily retreated across the Alafia River.[261] Like so many engagements, the Seminoles quickly and easily disappeared.

With no orders yet from Scott, Colonel Lindsay decided to "make a forward movement" and constructed a blockhouse and stockade at the intersection of the main road to Fort King and the Hillsborough River. The blockhouse guarded the main bridge over the river and served as a place to store subsistence. Lindsay's force now composed of the entire ten-company Alabama Volunteer Regiment, Read's Florida Battalion, and one company of Louisiana volunteers set out on March 15 for the bridge. It took two days to reach the site since Seminoles had burned bridges along the route, and the force started construction of the stockade they named Fort Alabama. Lindsay left Read and the Florida Battalion to guard Fort Alabama and returned to Fort Brooke to resupply on March 20. It took less than a day to march back now that the bridges were repaired. Upon returning to Fort Brooke, Lindsay found that a friendly Indian had brought a dispatch from Scott detailing the campaign plan.[262]

Scott's complex plan was to march three columns—or wings as Scott called them—from Fort Brooke, Fort Drane, and Volusia and converge on the Seminoles at the

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[261] *American State Papers,* 7, 273.

[262] Ibid.

Cove of Withlacoochee.[263] Scott envisioned his three wings pushing the Seminoles into an area west of the Withlacoochee River where they could be killed or captured. Clinch commanded the northernmost wing which was the main effort and the largest of the three. His wing was to march from Fort Drane, cross the Withlacoochee River, and drive the Seminoles into the two wings led by Lindsay and Eustis who were to block their escape. Clinch's wing was the hammer to Eustis and Lindsay's anvils.

Clinch's wing of 1,968 officers and men contained volunteers from Louisiana, Georgia, and Florida, and about 720 regulars. A large portion of this force, including Colonel Persifor F. Smith's Louisiana Volunteer Regiment and about 270 regulars were veterans of the Camp Izard siege. Major Cooper's 1st Battalion of Georgia Volunteers and some Florida militia rounded out Clinch's wing.[264] The Camp Izard veterans were "walking skeletons," malnourished and exhausted from weeks of campaigning with little food.[265] Scott accompanied Clinch's wing and took on Gadsden, the militia colonel and experienced Indian fighter, as his chief of staff. Scott later told the president that Gadsden "knew more of Florida and the Seminoles than any three individuals with the army."[266]

Brigadier General Abraham Eustis' wing started from St. Augustine, traveling down to Volusia, where it crossed the St. Johns River just south of Lake George. Eustis' objective was to reach a Black Seminole village called Peliklakaha, and then move west

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[263] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 151.

[264] Cohen, *Notices of Florida,* 187. The Florida militia were likely mounted men from Alachua County or nearby.

[265] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 143-154.

[266] Sprague, *Florida War,* 135.

when they heard from the other two wings.[267] Eustis had 1,400 men with him. The majority of which were South Carolina volunteers, including one mounted and one infantry regiment and a separate infantry company called the Columbia Volunteers. The mounted South Carolina regiment commanded by Colonel Goodwyn was the only major mounted force in Clinch's entire operation. Eustis' wing also included a battalion of four red-legged infantry companies from the 1st U.S. Artillery.[268]

Colonel William Lindsay, at Fort Brooke, led the southernmost wing of 1,250 regulars and volunteers. The largest portion of Lindsay's wing was Chisholm's Alabama Volunteer Regiment made up 750 of the men. Read's 250-man Florida Battalion, then at Fort Alabama, was attached to Chisholm's Alabama regiment. The remaining 240 or so men of Lindsay's wing consisted of a small battalion of U.S. artillery acting as infantry, a company of Louisiana volunteers, and a small detachment of marines from the frigate *Constellation* anchored in Tampa.[269] Lindsay's objective was to reach an area known as Chickuchatty west of the Cove of the Withlacoochee, near present day Brooksville, and stand ready for the coordinated attack with Clinch and Eustis.[270]

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[267] Peliklakaha was also known as Abraham's village.

[268] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War,* 156. Colonel Goodwyn commanded the mounted S.C. volunteer regiment, Colonel Abbot H. Brisbane commanded the S.C. infantry volunteer regiment, Captain Elmore commanded the Columbia Volunteers, and Major Reynold Kirby commanded the battalion of U.S. artillery.

[269] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 153.

[270] This Creek village is alternately spelled Chocachatti, but this thesis will use Covington's spelling in *The Seminoles of Florida*.

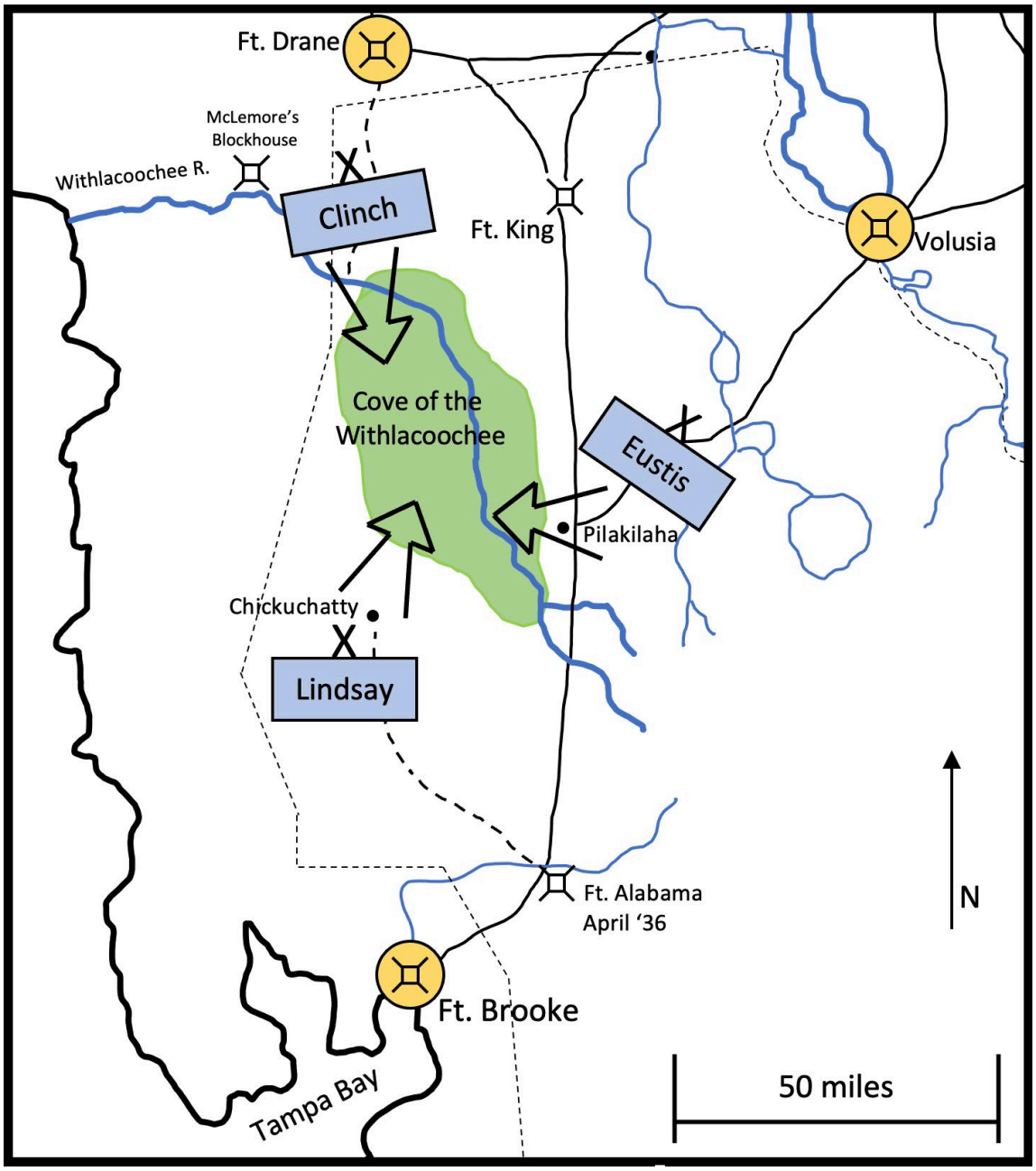

Figure 11. Map of Scott's Campaign

Source: Created by author.

Since sending runners through the Seminole's Cove of the Withlacoochee was impossible, the three wings were to communicate their position by firing a cannon each

morning and evening. Supposedly, each wing would be able to hear the other's cannon fire and estimate their distance and direction. Eustis' and Lindsay's wings were to reach their starting positions at the edge of the cove on March 25 and hold until they heard from Scott and Clinch. Timing and synchronization were critical to Scott's campaign.[271] Scott, ultimately, gravely underestimated his adversaries and the difficulties they would face in the Cove of the Withlacoochee.[272]

The Cove was a vast cypress swamp. It was difficult terrain to traverse and easy for the Seminoles to hide and ambush American columns in the dense forests. Colonel Lindsay, who had fought the Seminoles in Western Florida, later described the thickets as so dense that an "Indian who gets perhaps ten feet in them is not to be seen afterwards and cannot be overtaken."[273] The area surrounding the Cove was a vast series of sweeping hammocks and swamps interspersed with savannahs. Western Florida, which included Tallahassee and Pensacola, had similarly frustrating terrain, but on a much smaller scale. But unlike the western part of the territory, there was little natural forage for horses.

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[271] Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars*, 112-113; Monaco, *The Second Seminole War and the Limits of American Aggression,* 74.

[272] It should be noted here that many historians agree that Scott's campaign plan was foolhardy. Mahon wrote that the only praise he could offer was that with all of the difficulties it was "surprising that Scott got his three wings into the wilderness and back again at all, for the campaign was by no means a work of genius" (*History of the Second Seminole War,* 166). Russell Weigley described Scott's campaign as an "unwontedly Napoleonic maneuver." Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 67.

[273] *American State Papers,* 7:137.

The rivers were especially difficult and dangerous to cross since there were generally no cleared landings and Seminoles could easily ambush from the dense underbrush. The Seminoles lived in dispersed villages of a dozen or less wooden structures where they grew corn, beans, and squash on their small farms. Finding the Seminoles was difficult, and the expeditions led by Clinch (including Call's brigade) and Gaines both failed to penetrate the Cove.

In spite of these difficulties, Colonel Lindsay confidently marched his wing from Fort Brooke and met Read's battalion at Fort Alabama on March 22. Lindsay ordered Captain Henry S. Marks in command of the company of Louisiana volunteers to stay behind at Fort Alabama and guard the important crossing site. Lindsay left an additional 30 sick men who could not keep up at Fort Alabama and continued their march toward Chickuchatty.

Again, tensions arose between the regulars and volunteers in Lindsay's wing. Many of the volunteers had a fantasy notion of what fighting Indians would be like. Proud, romantic, and prejudiced, emotion drove the volunteers. They wanted glory and revenge.[274] The Seminole War was anything but glorious. The Seminoles continuously harassed and ambushed the column as it marched across a hilly section of Florida, where mile-long hammocks were broken up by pasture or pond. Visibility along the road was

[274] This assessment of their motivations is based on many readings, including Monaco's chapter on treaties and reservations in *The Second Seminole War and the Limits of American Aggression*, and Missall and Missall's descriptions of greed and hatred in their chapter on the Americans in *The Seminoles Wars*. There were many contemporary accounts which captured the emotion-filled rhetoric, including Call's town-square speeches, Murat's romantic recollections of Indian warfare and Cohen's poetic account of romanticism mixed with dreaming of "bacon and hard bread" (*Notices of Florida,* 129).

generally poor and favored ambush. They used flankers to keep the Seminoles from surprising the column, but they could do little to stop Seminole harassment in the rear and against the flankers. On March 26, after passing an area called Elochuteka, Seminoles attacked the flankers. They killed one of the Alabama Volunteers and wounded another before a company of Alabamians charged into the hammock and drove back the attackers. Lindsay's force encamped near a pond that night and Seminoles fired at the men as they drew water. Colonel Lindsay responded by firing a shot of canister across the pond which dispersed the Seminole band for the night. Another ambush killed a private and wounded two more Alabama volunteers the next day. Lindsay's wing continued their highly contested movement until they reached Chickuchatty on March 28—several days behind schedule.[275]

Colonel Lindsay's wing established a bivouac near the abandoned village and named it Camp Broadnax after Lindsay's inspector general. Later that day, a group of Seminoles attacked a detachment of soldiers guarding the horses near their camp. Captain Abraham Allison and Lieutenant William M. Roulett led a detachment of Floridians, alongside two Alabama companies, and charged the attackers, who then dispersed.[276]

Lindsay's wing continued to face daily skirmishes with the Seminoles. One engagement particularly stood out for its Seminole-on-Seminole violence and its implications in the Apalachicola Seminole community. On March 29, the detachment of

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[275] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 154.

[276] The Alabama companies were commanded by Captains James G. Blount and Richard T. Nott. Lieutenant Roulett is identified in 1st Lt. William M. Roulett, Read's Battalion, Florida Volunteers, Indian wars from 1815 to 1858, in *Returns of Killed and Wounded in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British, and Mexican Troops.*

eleven Apalachicola Seminoles encountered a Seminole subchief named Charley Fixico riding his horse alone. Charley Fixico was known by many in the Florida Battalion as a leader of a band of 80 warriors. He was also known to be a fierce warrior having earned the name "Fixico," which is a Seminole title given for fearlessness in battle. Several of the Apalachicolas fired at the chief and one aimed for his horse's nose so that the horse would buck his rider off and thereby save the horse for their capture. The Apalachicolas hit their mark, scalped the dead warrior, and took his horse, old rifle, and ammunition before returning to camp. Their killing of the subchief gave the Apalachicolas considerable clout when they returned home where one of their warriors was given the name Tiger King.[277]

On the night of March 29, the Seminoles attacked the flank guarded by the Florida Battalion. The sentinels alerted the battalion, and they repulsed the attack. The following night Seminoles probed every side of the camp.[278]

The threat from the Seminoles was only outweighed by the scarcity of provisions. By March 30, food had become so scarce for Lindsay's wing, he had to send two detachments in search of cattle. Captain Taylor of the Alabama Volunteers led one group, while Roulett led a detachment from the Florida Battalion. An additional battalion of 250 from the Alabama Volunteers covered their movements. The foraging was successful in

[277] *New Yorker*, January 7, 1837; Mahon, "The Journal of A. B. Meek and the Second Seminole War, 1836," 314-315; Potter, *The War in Florida*, 178. Definition of fixico found in Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 10.

[278] *American State Papers,* 7:273.

bringing in cattle to subsist Lindsay's wing for four more days, although they were "destitute of bread and salt."[279]

The war was becoming one of survival in the face of ambush, starvation, and disease for the soldiers in Lindsay's wing. Colonel Lindsay bore the brunt of the volunteers' frustration. His unpopularity with the volunteers started upon their first acquaintance, owing to the ban on consuming alcohol and withholding of ammunition. He had also made his men carry their packs with equipment and provisions since his force was so short of wagons. The volunteers, unaccustomed to orders, became insubordinate. Earlier, when Lindsay had forbidden liquor, men from the Alabama Volunteers docked the tail and mane of Lindsay's horse. They bitterly complained while on the march that he had not planned for enough wagons.[280]

Read, on the other hand, was well-liked by his men in the Florida Battalion. He led an opposition to Lindsay, accusing him of blundering and even of cowardice. Read's divisive conduct was later noticed by many in power and even pitted Eaton and Call against each other—at least in considering Read's worth. Eaton wrote to President Jackson that Read was an anti-Jackson man, but Read's mentor Call also wrote to the president saying the opposite was true and argued for Read's promotion to brigadier general and command of the 1st Florida Brigade.[281] Call's argument won the day and

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[279] *American State Papers,* 7:273.

[280] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 153-154.

[281] Ibid.

Jackson eventually promoted Read and placed him in command of the brigade by the summer of 1836.[282]

Lindsay's wing became more desperate after a second attempt at finding cattle failed. They fired their cannon daily but never head a reply. Without enough provisions to further sustain his force, and having heard nothing of Scott or Eustis, Lindsay decided to march his column back to Fort Alabama and then to Fort Brooke where the nearest food and supplies were being delivered from New Orleans.

When Lindsay's column arrived at Fort Alabama, they found that Marks' company had been under siege from the Seminoles for several days. The Seminoles had killed one of Marks' volunteers and wounded two others. Captain Marks' volunteers, in return, killed fifteen of their attackers. The Seminoles, unable to carry the fort or retrieve their dead, continued to harass the Fort Alabama blockhouse until Lindsay's column approached. In a letter to Scott, Lindsay commended Marks and his men for conducting themselves with "coolness and courage" during the siege. Lindsay's column reached Fort Brooke on April 4 and rested. They had been in the field for fourteen days on ten days' rations.[283]

Eustis' wing faced similar circumstances, reaching their starting point at Pelikilaha on March 30, five days late. They burned a nearby village on the next day but being so late and hearing nothing of the other wings, Eustis made the decision to march to Fort Brooke. They arrived on the same day as Lindsay's wing.

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[282] Carter, *Territorial Papers* 25, 748.

[283] *American State Papers,* 7:273.

Clinch's fight southward fared no better than Lindsay or Eustis. Scott, commanding the entire operation, traveled with this wing, the main effort. Clinch rested his weary troops who had recently fought at Camp Izard until March 26, presuming that the other wings were already marching to their positions. Clinch's wing marched twenty-five miles from Fort Drane to the Withlacoochee River, reaching Camp Izard on March 28 where they rested for the night. To entertain his men, the band played cheerful music for the evening meal. While the men ate in by the light of their campfires, Seminole sharpshooters shot and killed two of Clinch's men.[284] This lack of discipline showed how ill-prepared the men were for Indian warfare.

Despite showing ill-discipline at the campsite, Clinch was prepared to assault across the river. He brought with him a supply train of pack animals and wagons, two six-pound cannons, and two large flatboats affixed to wheels. The cannons and sharpshooters covered the river crossing. Aside from small ambushes and skirmishes, Clinch's wing did not encounter the main body of Seminole warriors. Clinch's force slowly moved through the swamps as men felled trees, stripped them of branches, and laid them side by side to build a corduroy road for the wagons.[285]

Eventually Clinch's wing found themselves in the same predicament as the others, and after days of searching in the Cove, and with no contact made with the other two wings, Scott had to make a decision. Scott ordered Clinch's wing to march to Fort Brooke to resupply.

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[284] Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars*, 112; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 143-154.

[285] Patrick, *Aristocrat in Uniform*, 129.

Scott's campaign failed for many reasons, including a reliance on precision and communication, a lack of supplies, and a lack of guides who could reconnoiter and assess avenues of approach. His operation was designed for one professional army to attack another; it did not hold up against fighting guerrillas who easily slipped through army formations or hid in the jungles. Scott's communication plan completely failed. The sound from the daily cannon fire designed to alert the columns of each other's movements did not carry in the dense hammocks.[286]

Most of Scott's command lacked supplies and the means to carry them. While Clinch's wing had wagons, the others did not. None of the wings had enough hard tack and bacon and all three wings converged on Fort Brooke in a desperate state for food. The combination of heat and sickness took a harder toll on the troops than the Seminole attacks. Scott described the heat as "so oppressive, that the troops could not execute even ordinary marches."[287] Clinch's wing was so burdened by measles and mumps that Scott ordered a fort constructed near Lake Holathilikaha to house the sick while the remaining troops could continue their march to Fort Brooke. Clinch left Major Mark A. Cooper, commander of the Georgia Battalion, with a single company called the Macon Volunteers

[286] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 152. Some of Clinch's men claimed to have heard another wing fire their cannons, but it was unlikely since the wings were never closer than thirty miles apart.

[287] Sprague, *Florida War*, 141.

to protect the invalids. Scott, Clinch, and the able men continued on to Fort Brooke where they arrived on April 5, only a day after Lindsay's and Eustis' wings had.[288]

The troops had relied on sinkholes and ponds for water, many of which partially dried up in the early summer. What's more, the shallow tepid water available was "filled with vegetable matter and animalculae" which left many soldiers and officers so sick that they could "neither ride nor march."[289] Measles also spread through the ranks of Lindsay's column. The sick crowded the limited wagons of Lindsay's wing.

The expedition's horses were in dire need of food as well. The wings started the campaign without a sufficient amount of corn feed and much of what they had was spoiled. Foraging provided too little food to make up for the men's exertion in the heat, and the columns of troops walked beside their horses for much of their journey. The surviving horses made it to Fort Brooke in terrible condition.[290] Scott reported that the horses belonging to the mounted men were "utterly incapable" of further service.[291]

Scott's army further lacked guides and irregular Indian forces. The Secretary of War had earlier denied Scott's request for a regiment of 500 Creek warriors, but they would not likely have been any use in guiding his columns anyway. Clinch's column from Fort Drane had Indian guides, but Scott bemoaned they did not know the

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[288] Cohen, *Notices of Florida,* 190; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 157. The Macon Volunteers' lineage is perpetuated by Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 48th Infantry Brigade (Georgia Army National Guard).

[289] Sprague, *Florida War*, 141.

[290] Ibid., 142.

[291] *American State Papers,* 7:268.

"intricacies of *The Cove*, a Cretan labyrinth, held from the knowledge of the white man, as the sacred groves of the Druids were never entered except by the initiated. In short, all the difficult parts of Florida were, to the whole army, one *terra incognita*."[292]

Scott's army had arrived at Fort Brooke in a pitiful state and having failed to even bring the Seminoles to fight. Read's Florida Battalion detached from the Alabama regiment shortly after arriving at Fort Brooke in preparation to muster out of active service. On April 14, Gadsden, then Scott's chief of staff, ordered Read to conduct one more operation before their return to Tallahassee, a reconnaissance of the mouth of the Withlacoochee River:

> Embark with your whole battalion, including invalids and sick, for the mouth of the Withlacoochee, and that you come to anchor in the nearest and safest accessible harbor to the mouth of the stream, and that you proceed with your effective force (leaving your sick and invalids on board) with the boats at command, to examine its entrance, and *to penetrate as far as practicable,* and consistent with the security of your command.[293]

Read was to provide detailed descriptions of the anchorage, riverbanks, the navigability, and suggested sites for supply depots to be established. Gadsden informed Read that, while there was no evidence the enemy had occupied the river's mouth, the Seminoles were likely in the area. Gadsden cautioned Read to avoid any combat because he did not want the Florida Battalion being cut off without assistance. Gadsden told him that Scott relied on Read's own "prudence and discretion" regarding when to end his mission. "This

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[292] Sprague, *Florida War*, 142-143.

[293] Ibid., 149-150.

duty performed, you will proceed to St. Mark's Florida, in the transports, where your command will be honorably discharged."[294]

There were many problems with this order. First, Read was not supposed to even report directly back from his reconnaissance. Once the mission was complete, Read and the Florida Battalion would muster out of service in Tallahassee and presumably any intelligence would be transmitted by boat back to Fort Brooke. This meant, there would be a substantial delay in the report. The second, and most concerning, was that Gadsden did not mention that a Florida militia company had established a supply depot, called Camp McLemore, on the river some weeks earlier and that no one had heard from them since. Thus, with ignorance of Camp McLemore, Read's Florida Battalion sailed from Fort Brooke to the mouth of the Withlacoochee River.

Read's battalion was transported on one small and two large schooners, two cutters, a large scow, and many other boats and yawls. The most experienced pilot of Florida's Gulf Coast, Captain William Bunce, led the naval force to the river's mouth, sailing from Tampa about April 17.[295] The transport ships brought Read's force to the mouth of the Withlacoochee River, about six miles north of the present-day town Crystal River. Read left the majority of his troops aboard the transports since, he claimed many were sick and lacked safe drinking water. Read took a small detachment several miles up the swampy Withlacoochee to scout the river's banks. When they reached a flatboat

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[294] *American State Papers,* 7:276.

[295] Sprague, *Florida War,* 144; Dorothy Dodd, "Captain Bunce's Tampa Bay Fisheries, 1835-1840," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (1947): 246-256. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30139688.

broken in two, they decided to turn around. Read must have thought he had done enough to satisfy his vague order and started his ships for St. Marks. Read's Florida Battalion reached Tallahassee on April 26 where they were released from duty on April 29.

The political situation in Tallahassee had changed considerably in Leigh Read's favor, while Read was away. President Jackson had appointed Call the territorial governor of Florida. His appointment came only two weeks after his wife Mary's death. Call accepted the office and petitioned Jackson to appoint Read to his former post as brigadier general and commander of the 1st Brigade, Florida Militia. Immediately afterward, Call set off for Mobile to secure supplies for his militia. He had barely left Florida when he received news that Scott was leaving the Alachua frontier, recalling all of the federal troops to concentrate in forts, and releasing the militia. Scott was preparing the army in Florida for what was then termed the "sickly season"—the summer months when the majority of people died from disease in the hot mosquito-ridden climate. The troops were to largely stay garrisoned in their forts and no expeditions were planned. Call returned to Tallahassee to raise another Florida volunteer brigade and plan for a summer campaign, without the assistance of federal troops.[296]

Scott, facing overwhelming scrutiny of his command in Florida by Floridians and Congress, needed an escape. An uprising of Creeks in Alabama created a fear in Washington that they may unite with the Seminoles and create a larger war. On April 15, Secretary Cass ordered Scott to take deal with the Creeks in Alabama as soon as he could

[296] Doherty, *Richard Keith Call*, 99; Sprague, *Florida War*, 113.

turn over his command in Florida.[297] Scott's successor was not so apparent. Clinch was Scott's preferred general, but Clinch submitted his resignation again and this time the Secretary of War accepted it. As the volunteer troops from other states rapidly sailed for their home ports at the end of their enlistments and the federal troops moved to their protective forts, a lone Florida Militia company called the Jefferson Volunteers was left behind in the frontier.

The story of the Jefferson Volunteers is important because it exemplifies the problems with rapidly organizing Florida Militia units for war and keeping track of them on the battlefield. In order to understand how army and militia leaders lost accountability of the Jefferson Volunteers it is necessary to go back to early March and cover events occurring in conjunction with Scott's campaign preparations.

The Jefferson Volunteers were officially designated Company A, 9th Regiment, Florida Militia.[298] Their captain James M. K. Holleman was from a small community called Marion (later renamed Waukeenah) just twenty miles east of the capitol. The majority of Holleman's men were planters and acquaintances who also came from Jefferson County. The *Tallahassee Floridian* described them as "some of the best shots in Jefferson County."[299] The company mustered into service March 3—one month after Read's Florida Battalion was formed—with the captain, three lieutenants, fifty-five men,

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[297] Johnson, *Winfield Scott*, 115.

[298] Their designation is revealed through letters from Captain L. B. Walker reprinted in the *Poughkeepsie Journal*, June 8, 1836, 2 and *Niles' Weekly Register,* 50:322. The *Niles' Weekly Register* incorrectly wrote his regiment as the 19th.

[299] "Late and Important News from Florida," *Burlington Free Press*, June 10, 1836, 2.

two musicians, and a commissary soldier.[300] At least one of the men among them was a medical doctor.

The Jefferson Volunteers had arrived at Suwannee Old Town by mid-March where they received their orders from Major John McLemore. McLemore, a medical doctor and militia officer from Monticello, Florida who had come to the rescue at the Battle of Black Point, offered Scott to establish a supply base on the Withlacoochee River before Scott's campaign.[301] Colonel Gadsden accepted the offer on behalf of Scott and in a letter dated March 25, he ordered McLemore to establish a fort on the river, just northwest of the Seminole stronghold in the Cove of the Withlacoochee. The small fort was to provide a safe area to store provisions and provide a staging point for Scott's operations. Gadsden wrote that it was most probable that Clinch's wing would be "detained in that vicinity many days reconnoitering the hammocks and searching for Indians in the jungles and thickets of that section of country. If so, your co-operation [sic], and the supplies which you report you can bring, may prove of essential service." Gadsden told McLemore to ascend the river up to the rapids and then:

> On reaching the point on the Withlacoochee designated, you will use all due precautions to secure your boat and command, by building a block-house, or by the construction of some other defence [sic] until you hear from or of the army. If

[300] Samuel Pasco, "Jefferson County, Florida, 1827-1910," *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1929): 238, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30149712; Robert Gamble, "1844. Robert Gamble's accounts of Seminole Indian War Tales three incidents," Richard Keith Call Papers, Florida Memory: State Archives of Florida, Gamble wrote that the company had a captain, two lieutenants, and fifty-nine men, which is only slightly different from Pasco's summary which seems to be more accurate and is recorded in this thesis.

[301] John McLemore usually lived in Jefferson County but also had business claims in Columbia County and at one time commanded a company called the Columbia Volunteers.

> after, however, the 2d or 3d of April you receive no tidings of or from this wing, under the command of General Clinch, you may be sure that it has proceeded south, to unite with Eustis and Lindsay; and having left the Withlacoochee, your detention on its waters will be no longer necessary. You will, therefore, return without delay to your post on the Suwannee, there wait the further orders of the commanding-general, or those which may be transmitted to you from the executive of Florida.[302]

McLemore and the Jefferson Volunteers left Suwannee Old Town about March 26; the same day Clinch's wing started their march. The Jefferson Volunteers loaded their provisions of jerked beef and 600-700 bushels of corn onto a ninety-foot-long barge, barricaded to protect them against Seminole attack. They traveled down the Suwannee River, into Waccasassa Bay, and then up the Withlacoochee River for ten to twelve miles until they reached rapids and could advance no further. They quickly constructed a stockade with eight-foot-high walls and started to build a two-story log blockhouse with a pine bark roof. By the time the Jefferson Volunteers finished the blockhouse and established Camp McLemore, on April 5, they were not only several days past Gadsden's deadline to return to Suwannee Old Town, but all three of Scott's wings were already at Fort Brooke.[303]

McLemore decided to keep the Jefferson Volunteers at Camp McLemore while he reported to the command at Suwannee Old Town. He did not want to abandon Camp McLemore since it had shelter, munitions, and provisions of beef and corn to last two weeks. The volunteers continued to improve on the camp, digging a well near the edge of

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[302] Sprague, *Florida War*, 153-154.

[303] Pasco, "Jefferson County, Florida, 1827-1910," 238-239; Sprague, *Florida War*, 150, 154-155. Sprague wrote that the blockhouse was completed on April 5; Pasco wrote that it was on April 10. Whatever the exact date, it was well-past the date they were supposed to abandon the supply depot.

the fort and improving their fortifications. McLemore, 1st Lieutenant Joseph McCants, and five men returned to Suwannee Old Town by boat to inform Scott of the supply depot. Before they left, McLemore told Holleman that he would relieve them in eight to ten days. Unfortunately for the men at the blockhouse, McLemore became sick with fever died before he could follow through with their relief. A report of McLemore's death and the blockhouse's disposition was finally delivered to Call in Tallahassee at the end of April.[304]

In typical fashion, the Seminoles soon attacked the Camp McLemore blockhouse. On the morning of April 9, a force of about 150-200 warriors surrounded the blockhouse on three sides. A surgeon with the Jefferson Volunteers, Dr. Samuel A. T. Lawrence, remembered the engagement lasing nearly two hours, but "they found out to their sorrow, that our reception was not only too warm, but that they had ventured too near us without due reflection."[305] The Seminoles continued to harass the blockhouse nearly every day and on April 13 killed Eli Sealy, the first of the volunteers to die.[306] Lawrence remembered a particularly large attack that lasted nearly three hours and left them with three slightly wounded:

> On the 15 April, we were attacked by a body of the savages who had completely surrounded us, and whose number we computed at 4 to 500, though we have since heard that Powell [Osceola] had 1000 to 1500 of them. This was the hottest engagement we had during our stay at the Ouithlacoochee (sic). They fired their guns by hundreds at the same moment at our blockhouse, and succeeded in taking

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[304] Pasco, "Jefferson County, Florida, 1827-1910," 238-239; Drake, *Aboriginal Races of North America*, 431; Sprague, *Florida War*, 150, 154-155.

[305] Drake, *Aboriginal Races of North America*, 431.

[306] "Florida," *Poughkeepsie Journal*, June 8, 1836, 2.

> our only means of escape, our boat—which they took down the river and destroyed after the battle.[307]

The Jefferson Volunteers believed they killed one of the Seminole chiefs, and then killed four to five warriors who attempted to recover his body during the April 15 attack.[308] The Seminoles took their boat—as Lawrence described—cut it in two with axes, and let it drift downriver where it would eventually be discovered by Read during his river reconnaissance. The boat was the only means of escape for the Jefferson Volunteers. The Seminole warriors eased their harassment at times, but always kept surveillance on the blockhouse.

On April 24 the Seminoles attacked again. This time they set the roof ablaze by shooting fire-arrows into it. "This arrow-firing was performed by 26 of their men, whilst about 3 to 500 used their guns," Lawrence recalled, "We had on this occasion, two or three of our men wounded. We probably killed 40 or 50 of the Indians."[309] The volunteers managed to put out the fire using water from their well but not before the entire roof burned away, leaving them exposed to the weather. Lawrence continued, "The night after the battle, we heard their chief hail us, and say, 'that he was going away in the morning, and would trouble us no more.' He kept his promise very well, though he did give us about 100 guns the next morning, ere he left."[310]

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[307] Drake, *Aboriginal Races of North America*, 432.

[308] "Florida," *Poughkeepsie Journal*, June 8, 1836, 2;

[309] Drake, *Aboriginal Races of North America*, 431-432.

[310] Ibid.

As previously written, Read arrived in Tallahassee on April 26 just after Governor Call received notice of McLemore's blockhouse. The two conferred and Read told Call that he had reconnoitered the Withlacoochee and found one half of a large flatboat that apparently had been cut in two with a dull axe and an "inexperienced hand."[311] Call requested that Clinch, who just arrived back at Fort Drane, immediately send a mounted rescue party to the Camp McLemore blockhouse.[312] After conferring with his officers, however, Clinch decided that his force, now reduced to only about 300 regulars and volunteers, was too small and weak from the recent campaign and sickness. Furthermore, only days before Clinch's return, Seminole warriors assaulted Fort Drane in a rare night attack from one to three in the morning. The detachment guarding the fort fought off the Seminoles, but the attack was harrowing. Clinch did not think he could further split his forces to guard the fort and rescue another, especially since his attached volunteers were about to be released with the expiration of their enlistments. Clinch relayed Call's letter to Scott in St. Augustine, which Scott received on May 1. Clinch then replied back to Call that he could not rescue the company at the blockhouse some forty miles away, and that he recommended a volunteer company from Suwannee Old Town make the rescue. Nearly another month passed as the three generals exchanged letters charging each other with responsibility while the Jefferson Volunteers continued to fight for their survival.[313]

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[311] Sprague, *Florida War*, 150-151.

[312] Ibid., 150.

[313] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 159-160; Matthew T. Pearcy, "'The Ruthless Hand of War': Andrew A. Humphreys in the Second Seminole War," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 85, no. 2, (Fall 2006): 133, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30150701.

The Jefferson Volunteers were in a desperate situation. With their roof destroyed by fire, the volunteers and their provisions were exposed to the almost daily rains and direct sun. The meat spoiled and their corn molded. They were trapped in the small camp where they could not separate the sick from the able nor could they make defensive adjustments. Their well was just outside of the stockade and Holleman wanted to enlarge the walls to ensure they could access the well and to give them more space. In a moment when it seemed the enemy was not around, on May 3, the captain took a squad outside of the blockhouse to work on the staked fence. Just as they started work, a group of Seminoles ambushed them, killing Holleman with a shot in the neck and wounding several of the militiamen. The work detail ran back into the sally port as other volunteers covered their retreat. The volunteers retrieved their dead captain's body that evening and placed it into a makeshift body bag made from tent cloth. They weighed it down with rocks and lowered it into the river for his burial. Lieutenant L. B. Walker assumed command in the wake of their captain's death.[314]

With no word from McLemore and only two weeks of provisions, many in Florida believed that the Jefferson Volunteers had perished from famine or by the same fate of Dade's command, as evidenced in the May 5 printing of the *St. Augustine Herald*.[315] That attitude changed when three of Holleman's volunteers arrived in Tallahassee in mid-May.

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[314] Pasco, "Jefferson County, Florida, 1827-1910," 240; Gamble, "1844. Robert Gamble's accounts of Seminole Indian War Tales three incidents."

[315] *St. Augustine Herald*, May 5, 1836 reprinted in *Niles' Weekly Register,* 50:207.

Figure 12. Attack on the Camp McLemore Blockhouse

Source: T. F. Gray and James, *Attack of the Seminoles on the Block House,* 1837, lithograph, hand-colored, Library of Congress.

Knowing the danger of sending a message back to Tallahassee and believing that Scott himself may be coming to the fort to retrieve the supply of corn, Walker delayed sending any men out of the fort to carry the message. A week after Holleman's death, and with no sign of relief, Walker decided he could wait no longer for help and that he had to send a small party to deliver a letter for McLemore, who he incorrectly assumed was alive. Walker chose three men for the dangerous duty: Sergeant John M. Leek, John Rogers, and John Riley. On May 10, Walker wrote a letter detailing their location and dire situation. He gave it to the three messengers to deliver to McLemore. They left the blockhouse in total darkness at eleven in the evening and walked to the riverbank where

they boarded a patched-up Indian canoe and started to Suwannee Old Town. They men paddled out of the Withlacoochee River, into the bay and attempted to enter the Suwannee River, but Seminoles fired at them near the river's mouth. The men then turned away and went to St. Marks where they eventually delivered Walker's letter directly to Governor Call and Leigh Read in Tallahassee.[316]

Walker's letter told of the constant attacks and their being "entirely out of every necessary of life, except corn and water." The men had been waiting as told for relief from the army. "We have not heard or seen anything of the army—or any person, except Powell's [Osceola's] *yelling devils*."[317] Walker's letter told the story of a fighting band, grossly outnumbered 100 to 1, who wished they could attack the Seminoles, but lacked sufficient men. Even in starvation Walker wrote that his men were fighters who wished to silence the "*yelling devils*."[318]

The story of the stranded and surrounded company of Florida Volunteers enraged Floridians and captivated readers around the country as far north as New York and Vermont.[319] The public blamed Scott for leaving the company to its fate, although historian John K. Mahon wrote that Scott probably never even knew of the company or

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[316] Pasco, "Jefferson County, Florida, 1827-1910," 241; Drake, *Aboriginal Races of North America*, 432; "Florida," *Poughkeepsie Journal*, June 8, 1836, 2.

[317] Lieutenant L. B. Walker's May 10 letter to the deceased McLemore reprinted in Poughkeepsie Journal, June 8, 1836, 2.

[318] "Florida," *Poughkeepsie Journal*, June 8, 1836, 2; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 160

[319] "Florida," *Poughkeepsie Journal*, June 8, 1836, 2; "Late and Important News from Florida," *Burlington Free Press*, June 10, 1836, 2.

the Camp McLemore blockhouse. The Tallahassee *Floridian* reported in early May, "Gen. Winfield Scott was burned in effigy. We first rode him on a rail, and then on Washington square [in downtown Tallahassee] burned him."[320]

Read raised a volunteer force to rescue Holleman's company. With Read were Captain Augustus Alston and Captain James Willis, who together commanded a total of ninety-eight volunteers from Leon County.[321] Read's party departed on May 22 aboard the steamboat *Minerva* with a large flatboat in tow.[322] They arrived at the mouth of the Withlacoochee two days later and used the flatboat to ascend the river under cover of night. Read and the Leon Volunteers landed at the blockhouse uncontested and evacuated the Jefferson Volunteers. Dr. Lawrence gave thanks "to God, and the bravery and gallantry of the Volunteers under Col. Read, we are indebted for our lives." By the time of their rescue, Lawrence recalled, "the officers were 21 days living on corn, without salt or meat, and the men about 28 days."[323]

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[320] Mahon*, History of the Second Seminole War*, 160; *Vicksburg Whig*, June 2, 1836, 3.

[321] "Colonel" Augustus Alston identified in *Poughkeepsie Journal*, June 8, 1836, 2. Captain Willis identified in *Niles' Weekly Register* 50, 322. This is likely Captain James Willis since he was attached to Major McCant's Battalion at Suwannee Old Town after the rescue mission; see Capt. James Willis' Co., McCant's Battalion, 4th Regiment, Florida Militia, Indian wars from 1815 to 1858, in *Returns of Killed and Wounded in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British, and Mexican Troops.*

[322] Mr. Perry captained the Minerva.

[323] Drake, *Aboriginal Races of North America*, 432; "Capt. Holloman's Command," *Wilkes-Barre Advocate*, June 22, 1836, 2; "Late and Important News from Florida," *Burlington Free Press*, June 10, 1836, 2; Gamble, "1844. Robert Gamble's accounts of Seminole Indian War Tales three incidents."

Read brought Walker and his command to Suwannee Old Town where he left Captain Willis with part of the Leon Volunteers and instructed Walker to bring his men to Monticello to muster out of service.[324] Read then returned to Tallahassee where he was given a hero's welcome. His rejoice would not last long. Like his mentor Call, Read soon became a widow. His wife Theresa died less than two months later, on July 10, 1836.[325]

In the month after Scott left the territory, the federal troops withdrew to the protection of their stockades, out-of-territory volunteers returned to their home states, and the Florida Militia focused on protecting their homes. In the power vacuum, the Seminoles committed widespread destruction across Florida. Settlers in the Alachua and Suwannee frontiers and in the sugarcane plantations along the east coast had been under attack for months, but in May 1836 violence reached the capitol region itself. Small attacks on white settlements occurred in Jefferson County where about 300 settlers from rural areas crowded in Monticello for their safety as Indians burned rural homes and destroyed crops. Citizens in Apalachicola, St. Marks, and Tallahassee called forth their militia companies to guard their hometowns. The *Vicksburg Whig* reprinted a letter it received from a militia soldier in the Tallahassee Guards which summarized the general feeling in Florida:

> This country is in a most alarming state. Gen. Scott has gone off the field and left our frontier entirely defenceless [sic]. The Indians are all around us but have not attacked this place [Tallahassee] yet, but we are expecting it every night. A guard is kept up every night, and I was myself on guard, as a member of the

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[324] *Niles' Weekly Register,* 50:322.

[325] "Maria Theresa Read," Find a Grave, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/67207831/maria-theresa-read.

> 'Tallahassee guards,' on last night. Judge Randall's plantation has been attacked, and one negro killed, and a white man wounded. Robert Gamble's place has also been attacked. John Gamble has been driven from his plantation, and obliged to take refuge with his brother, who with Judge Randall has kept his station. A company of horse has been sent to their relief, and while they were there the Indians went to St. Marks, and attempted to take that place, but they soon repulsed them with three cannon, which they happened to have. We understand the Indians have also attacked Fort Drane and Fort Brooke, and at the latter place killed 20 men. All this has happened since General Scott has left the field![326]

Florida's citizens and militia were not the only ones angry with Scott. Late in the year, Jackson ordered the U.S. Army's commanding general, Major General Alexander Macomb, to initiate a court of inquiry to investigate Scott's failure.[327] At the heart of the inquiry were rivalries between Scott and Gaines, Jackson, Call, and many others. In the courtroom were the only three major generals in the U.S. Army: Macomb, Scott, and Gaines.

Scott and Gaines, who both represented themselves at the November 1836 hearings, hurled damming insults at one another. Scott accused Gaines of spoiling his campaign and causing its failure. Gaines in return lambasted Scott for his "childish audacity" in denying him supplies and aid when surrounded at Camp Izard. In remarks that earned him censure from the court, Gaines proclaimed to the court that Scott was "the second United States general officer who has ever dared to aid and assist the open enemy of the republic in their operations against United States forces . . . The first great

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[326] *Vicksburg Whig*, June 2, 1836, 3; also found in the *Voice of Sumter*, May 24, 1836, 2.

[327] U.S. Congress, House, *Proceedings of the Military Court of Inquiry in the Case of Major General Scott and Major General Gaines,* HR 224, 24th Cong., 2d sess., 1837, 7, https://archive.org/details/proceedingsofmil00scott. The court of inquiry began on November 28, 1836 and closed on January 30, 1837. Macomb was the ranking army general; both Gaines and Scott were the only two breveted major generals.

offender was Major General Benedict Arnold; the second, as your finding must show, is Major General Winfield Scott."[328]

Scott's insults toward the Florida volunteers punctuated the proceedings. Scott claimed that Read's battalion was the only force that failed to reach its objective (in Read's river reconnaissance). This was a dubious claim since Read's objective was arguably met; Read did reconnoiter the river until he saw evidence of Seminole activity. Furthermore, Scott's entire command had failed to bring a decisive end to the war. It is noteworthy that Scott despised Call for his public denunciations against him, and that Scott transferred that dislike to Call's protégé Read, who commanded the only major Florida force under Scott's command. Scott challenged not only Read and Call, but Jackson as well, "I feel and know the risk I incur by the use of this language. Major Read is the favorite of Governor Call, and his excellency's support may well turn the tables against me at Washington."[329]

Scott tried to balance his rebuke of Florida militia leaders by praising the individual volunteers—a tactic used to divide the soldiery from their officers so that the sting of criticism may not be felt by the larger constituency. Scott's attempt to disassociate the volunteers from their organizations was weak: "Those patriotic volunteers . . . were, no doubt, many of them, sometimes inefficient, from the mere awkwardness of the inexperienced; but they very generally brought with them to the war high chivalry, which always inspires the wish of personal distinction, and this was

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[328] U.S. Congress, House, *Proceedings of the Military Court of Inquiry*, 608-609.

[329] Sprague, *Florida War*, 156.

frequently and nobly attained by individuals and detachments."[330] Scott's accusations and derisions only furthered the divide between the regulars and the people and politicians who supported the militia.

This quarrel between officers exemplifies the effect individual leaders had on the successes and failures of the Florida militia. Although Read was not alone in his divisive conduct, he fostered a dangerous animosity toward his regular counterparts that may have contributed to insubordination or apathy among the ranks of his Florida Battalion. On the other hand, leaders like Gadsden and the officers at the Camp McLemore blockhouse exemplified the enthusiasm and competence of so many in the Florida Militia. Gadsden especially provided invaluable expertise as Scott's chief of staff, both in his ability and in his knowledge of the operational environment.

In spite of the frequent mutual acrimony between the militia and the regulars, territorial leaders proved effective at altering the militia's organization and policy to meet the war's demands. This is exemplified in the rapid creation of an infantry battalion, instead of the usual and preferred mounted unit, and in the crucial policy changes which allowed for permanent volunteer units and extended length of war service.

[330] Sprague, *Florida War*, 145.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Only months before Scott left the territory, the Florida Militia had fielded a force of 500 mounted men for an offensive campaign in the Alachua frontier while at the same time deploying hundreds of militiamen in defense of the sugarcane plantations south of St. Augustine. Three commanders—Clinch, Gaines, and Scott—with combined forces of regulars and militia failed to defeat the Seminoles during the winter and spring of 1835-1836. Floridians entered the summer in a strictly defensive posture. The Alachua frontier and the east coast plantations were completely abandoned, and the Florida Militia was largely reduced to individual companies protecting their own settlements.

The Second Seminole War continued for another seven years. As the war progressed and moved farther south on the peninsula, the regulars replaced the militia more and more in offensive operations, but the conduct of offensive operations changed. Just after Scott's failed campaign, Gadsden argued for a more dispersed approach where smaller detachments would comb the countryside. Although Scott initially turned down Gadsden's proposal as too dangerous because of the susceptibility to defeat in detail, Scott eventually suggested the approach to Secretary Cass, and Brevet Brigadier General Zachary Taylor employed this with varying success while he commanded the war in Florida.[331]

Military commanders still conducted a few large offensive operations after Scott's campaign, however, the majority of operations shifted to smaller units which conducted

[331] Johnson, *Winfield Scott*, 120.

small mobile patrols from fortified bases—similar to Hernández's operations along the East coast plantations at the beginning of the war.

By the Spring of 1840, the Florida Militia controlled the territory north of Tampa Bay, which was largely clear of Seminoles, while the regulars operated to the south. Congress passed the Armed Occupation Act of 1842 encouraging the migration of armed white settlers into the former Seminole reservation. The goal was to place security on the armed settlers so that the army could disentangle itself from the long war. The war finally and unceremoniously concluded after seven years when the government declared its end on August 14, 1842. Most of the Seminoles had been transferred to Indian territory out west, but a few hundred determined Seminoles remained in the inaccessible southern portion of the territory.[332] The war involved a total of approximately 10,000 soldiers—and every unit in the regular army at one time or another—1,000 sailors, and 30,000 militia.[333]

During the opening campaigns of the Second Seminole War, the Florida Militia proved adept at converting their political and physical resources into combat power, the very definition of military effectiveness.[334] The Florida Militia—and the Territorial government whose members were often one and the same—adapted their leadership,

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[332] The government told the Seminoles in August 1842 that they could exist in Florida as long as they stayed south of Fort Brooke and the Pease River. The Seminoles soon moved farther south into the safety of the Everglades.

[333] Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 325; Mahon, *History of the Militia and the National Guard,* 88. All of these figures are approximations.

[334] This definition comes from Millett, Murray, and Watman, "The Effectiveness of Military Organizations," 1-2.

organization, and policy to meet the war's demands, expand their capabilities and increase their effectiveness.

As proven throughout this thesis, many Florida Militia leaders were veterans and second or third generation militia officers. They were well-educated, outstanding, wealthy citizens, who involved themselves in all aspects of shaping the new territory. They held multiple roles in their life; they were at the same time a plantation or business owner, a doctor or lawyer, a government official such as land surveyor, mayor, or legislator, as well as a Florida Militia officer. The Florida Militia consisted of the who's who of government, law, medicine, railroad, banking, and business.

While some of the upper-class Floridians started out as enlisted members of the militia, they largely stuck to the officer corps. Nevertheless, they had more similarities with the men they led than the regular army officers had with theirs. The enlisted Florida Militia, like their leaders, were largely born in the South. They were all white, except for a handful of friendly Indians. Like most Americans, many desired a quick, decisive and glorious battle with the Seminoles.

The homogeneity of the Florida Militia, made up of Southern officers and men provides a sharp contrast with the regular army whose mainly foreign-born soldiers were led by a mix of Northern and Southern officers, with the junior officers largely educated at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Although, the regulars and militia were equally prejudiced, the Florida Militia were uniquely driven by self-serving motivations: to conquer the territory and expand their slave industries.

The Florida Militia also retained many members, both enlisted and officer, who continued to serve throughout the war. These volunteers often served with one unit after

another. Pay alone encouraged some to seek perpetual service since the federal payroll was often more lucrative than yeoman farming, but there was a deeper motivation for most. These consistent volunteers enjoyed the camaraderie and social benefits of service. The consistent volunteers created a warrior caste in the territory that provided the future leaders, both in government and in the militia, during the many conflicts to come. The soldiers of the Second Seminole War became the leaders of the Third Seminole War, and soldiers from that war became the leaders of Florida's units in the Civil War.

The Florida Militia were impressive at many tactical tasks owing to their unique organization. While the regular army, at the outbreak of war, consisted mainly of dismounted artillery and infantry, the Florida Militia was mostly mounted. The mounted militia were able to cover greater distances than the dismounted regulars and better suited to pursue and even to escape ambush. Their mounted capability also enabled the Florida Militia to be generally better at reconnaissance than their regular army counterparts.

The Florida Militia were not just better at reconnaissance because of their mobility; they were more familiar with the terrain since the leaders and men were from the area of operations. There were also examples of militia officers like Gadsden and Call who spent time as land surveyors in Florida. Gadsden had even surveyed land in the contested areas before the war. On the other hand, Clinch, a regular army commander who had lived in Florida for decades had a terrible understanding of the terrain just outside of his own plantation. In the December 1835 expedition, Clinch got lost within miles from his home and failed to find a fordable crossing—even with Indian and black guides.

Both the regulars and Florida Militia used blacks and friendly Indians as guides. The Florida Militia leaders often used their own slaves as guides since their slaves often comingled with the Seminoles and sometimes knew the language. The Florida Militia also incorporated, on one occasion, Indians into their formation to act as scouts. While Scott requested friendly Creeks to serve in his campaign, they were not from Florida, and in the end, the Secretary of War did not authorize them for Scott's campaign. The use of black or Indian guides was generally beneficial as long as they were from the area.

The Florida Militia were not always as impressive in their conduct. There were frequent accounts of ill-discipline and some insubordination, as evidenced by Leigh Read who fostered animosity among the volunteers and their regular army commander, and as seen with Lieutenant William Ward who refused his duty, challenged his colonel, and ultimately died for his insubordination.

Much weight has been placed on the Florida Militia's lack of discipline in written histories, but the regulars did not have a stellar record with discipline either. The feud between Scott and Gaines, which at the end of 1836 was put on full display in a court of inquiry, greatly compromised the government's war aims by undermining unity of effort, wasting provisions, and tarnishing the U.S. Army's reputation with the public. Tactical ill-discipline was exemplified by Major Dade whose failure to deploy soldiers on the flanks and whose allowance of his men to button their coats over their muskets resulted in their destruction. Only the regulars had an entire battalion annihilated by the Seminoles. Fanning showed equally poor judgement when his battalion crossed the Withlacoochee River, stacked arms, and rested, in spite of being in Seminole territory. The point of these examples is that both the regulars and militia had problems with

discipline. The key difference between the regulars and the Florida Militia is that the latter's mounted capability proved effective in escaping ambush kill zones and helped them overcome some of their lack of discipline.

One capability where the Florida Militia showed remarkable improvement was on the policy level. The Florida territorial government and militia were politically ineffective when the war began. The territory struggled to maintain and expand the militia in the 1820s through the early 1830s. Part of this was due to a general lack of urgency across the public and part was because the Florida government made the enrolled militia the preeminent force for emergency response. As has been seen, most of the enrolled militia regiments were shell organizations which did not muster or drill. In spite of the enrolled militia concept's unpopularity and ineffectiveness, many political and militia leaders held on to the notion that the enrolled militia was the best way to raise a force. This is in part because the alternative was the independent volunteer militia whose company-held elections endangered the politically powerful from holding officer positions.

The governor and Legislature recognized the necessity to authorize independent volunteer militia units, but these never grew above company-level. Florida's political and militia leaders failed to even secure enough guns and accoutrements to arm the militia. This was an inexcusable failure, as the federal government appropriated for arms, but only provided them to states and territories that submitted militia returns. The Florida government did not turn in militia returns and therefore received relatively few arms during the war.

The war energized the public, militia, and political leaders of the territory. The Territorial Legislature overcame their initial inertia and enacted policies to make the

Florida Militia more capable by authorizing independent volunteer companies, organizing new enrolled militia regiments at several counties' requests, and expanding enlistments from one to six months.

In spite of their flaws, the Florida Militia overcame many of their early failures, and showed remarkable tenacity and esprit de corps. Owing to the collective volunteerism, individual bravery, and their political will to win, the Florida Militia proved to be as effective as their regular counterparts and provided necessary and unique capabilities in prosecuting the war.

APPENDIX A

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1835

MAY	Agent Thompson arrested Osceola in mid-May.
18-20 JUN	Hickory Sink skirmish between Spring Cove Guards and Seminoles.
11 AUG	Mikasuki Seminoles killed Private Dalton out of revenge.
10 NOV	Hernández ordered Warren's 4th Regiment activated for East Florida defense.
28 NOV	Osceola killed Charley Emathla.
6 DEC	Acting Governor Walker ordered Call and Hernández to raise forces to assist Clinch and the Alachua frontier.
7 DEC	Seminoles attacked Captain Priest's Alachua volunteers.
8 DEC	Call raised Middle Florida Volunteers for the Alachua country offensive.
9 DEC	Warren and Mill's Battalion marched from Jacksonville to Wetumpka.
15 DEC	Call's Brigade formed when East and Middle Florida Volunteers met near Newnansville.
18 DEC	Seminoles ambush a militia wagon train at the Battle of Black Point.
24 DEC	Call's Brigade arrived at Fort Drane and sends Acting Governor Walker a request for another Middle Florida volunteer battalion.
25 DEC	Mikasuki chief Philip Emathala began to destroy East Florida sugarcane plantations.
28 DEC	Chief Micanopy's band of Seminoles destroyed Dade's battalion and simultaneously Osceola's band killed Agent Thompson. This is generally considered the start of the Second Seminole War.
28 DEC	Major Putnam occupied Bulowville Plantation.
28-29 DEC	Major Haywood organized a Middle Florida volunteer per Call's December 24 request and soon after marched to link up with Colonel Parish.

30 DEC	Clinch's combined force encamps five miles from the Withlacoochee River.
31 DEC	Battle of the Withlacoochee.

1836

1 JAN	Government deadline for Seminole removal.
1 JAN	Haywood's battalion left Tallahassee for the Alachua frontier.
2 JAN	Clinch's combined force returned to Fort Drane.
3 JAN	Call's Middle Florida Volunteers returned to Tallahassee to muster out.
4 JAN	Warren's East Florida Volunteers returned to Jacksonville.
4 JAN	Territorial Legislature began their month-long annual session.
5 JAN	Jackson appointed Scott as commander in chief of action in Florida.
9 JAN	Parish and Haywood's battalion fought a band of Seminoles near the Suwannee River.
12 JAN	Seminoles ambushed Parish and Haywood's battalion near Wetumpka.
15 JAN	Report of Dade's massacre reached Gaines before Clinch or Call learned.
18 JAN	Skirmish at Dunlawton Plantation between Philip's Seminoles and Putnam's battalion.
21 JAN	Report reached Clinch at Fort Drane that Dade's battalion was "cut off."
21 JAN	Scott, having been appointed by Jackson in early January, left Washington for Savannah on his way to Florida.
23 JAN	Philip's Seminoles burnt Bulowville after Putnam's evacuation.
24-29 JAN	Call and Leigh Read formed the Florida Battalion in Tallahassee.
30 JAN	Lieutenant Ward refused Parish's order.
31 JAN	Parish killed Lieutenant Ward; False report arrived at Fort Drane that Call was on his way with another brigade.
4 FEB	Gaines' expeditionary force steamed from New Orleans to Florida.

7 FEB	Gaines arrived at Pensacola and learned that Scott was to take overall command in Florida; decided to continue with his force anyway.
7 FEB	Parish's battalion returned to Tallahassee to muster out.
12 FEB	Territorial Legislature constituted the Tallahassee Guards, an independent volunteer militia company.
13 FEB	Gaines' force marched from Tampa toward Fort Brooke and discovered Dade's dead men.
14 FEB	Territorial Legislature closed their month-long annual session.
14 FEB	The Florida Battalion reached the port of St. Marks and awaited transportation to Fort Brooke.
22 FEB	Gaines' force reached Fort King.
22 FEB	Scott arrived at Picolata, Florida.
26 FEB	Gaines marched from Fort King toward the Withlacoochee River on his way to Fort Brooke.
27 FEB	Seminoles attacked and surrounded Gaines at the Battle of Camp Izard; Gaines built a hasty defensive position, and the Seminoles began a nine-day siege of Gaines' force.
28 FEB	The Florida Battalion boarded the cutter *Dallas* at St. Marks. They likely sailed the following day and arrived at Fort Brooke on March 2.
3 MAR	Jefferson Volunteers mustered into service in Jefferson County and marched to Suwannee Old Town soon after.
6 MAR	Gaines and Seminoles held a parlay and agreed to leave one another alone; Clinch's relief force of regulars and militia arrived during the parlay.
9 MAR	Franklin Volunteers skirmished with Seminoles near Fort Brooke.
12 MAR	Scott arrived at Fort Drane about this date.
14 MAR	Gaines left Fort Drane for Tallahassee and then to New Orleans.
17 MAR	Lindsay with the Alabama Regiment and the Florida Battalion started construction on Fort Alabama, completing it two or three days later.
22 MAR	Lindsay's wing started their march to reach their starting position for Scott's three-pronged attack.

25 MAR	Date planned for Scott's three wings to reach their starting positions at the edge of the Cove of the Withlacoochee.
25 MAR	Gadsden accepted McLemore's offer to build a blockhouse on the Withlacoochee River.
26 MAR	Clinch' wing (with Scott) started their movement from Fort Drane and reach the Withlacoochee River on March 28.
28 MAR	Lindsay's wing reached their starting position, three days behind schedule.
29 MAR	Apalachicola Seminoles with the Florida Battalion killed Charley Fixico.
30 MAR	Lindsay's wing started to search for cattle since they were nearly out of provisions.
30 MAR	Eustis' wing arrived at Peliklakaha, their starting position, five days late.
31 MAR	Lindsay and Eustis, unbeknownst to each other, without subsistence and not hearing from each other, decided to return to Fort Brooke for supplies.
4 APR	Lindsay's and Eustis' wings reached Fort Brooke.
5 APR	Clinch's wing (with Scott) reached Fort Brooke.
5 APR	The Jefferson Volunteers completed the Camp McLemore blockhouse.
9 APR	Seminoles first attacked the Camp McLemore blockhouse.
14 APR	Gadsden ordered Read's Florida Battalion to detach from the Alabama Regiment and reconnoiter the mouth of the Withlacoochee River.
17 APR	Read's Florida Battalion sailed from Fort Brooke and conducted their reconnaissance of the river.
24 APR	Seminoles set Camp McLemore blockhouse roof ablaze.
26 APR	Read reached Tallahassee and conferred with Call who had just learned of the Camp McLemore blockhouse.
29 APR	The Florida Battalion mustered out on April 29 at Tallahassee.
3 MAY	Seminoles killed Captain Holleman at the Camp McLemore blockhouse, and L. B. Walker took command of the Jefferson Volunteers.
10 MAY	L. B. Walker wrote a letter to Call and three militiamen left the Camp McLemore blockhouse and delivered it to Call several days later.

22 MAY	Read's volunteer force left St. Marks and rescued the Jefferson Volunteers two days later.
7 NOV	Court of Inquiry into the conduct of Scott and Gaines convened in Frederick, Maryland.
21 NOV	Call led the last campaign of 1836 which culminated with the Battle of Wahoo Swamp.

APPENDIX B

MAPS

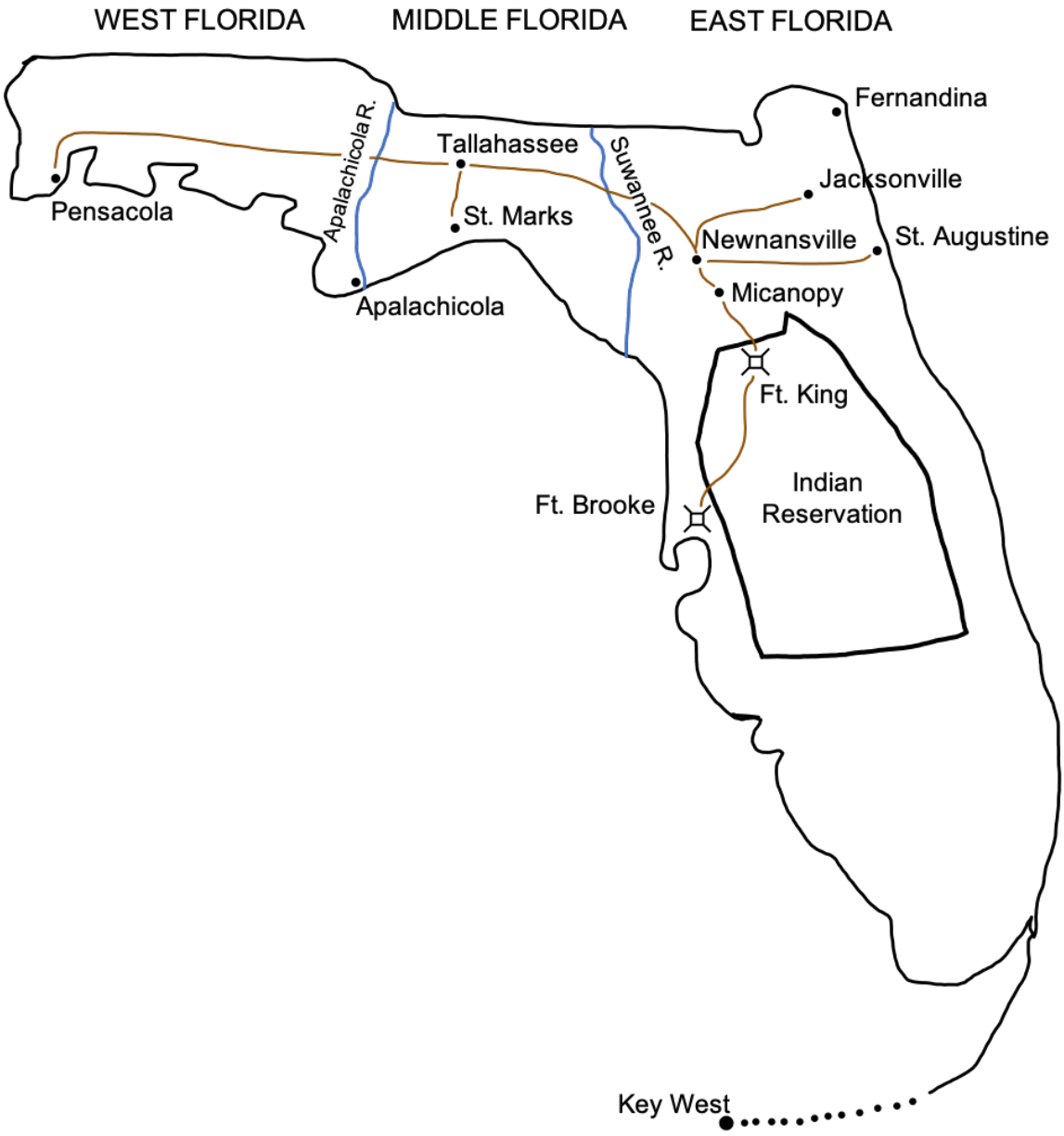

Figure 13. Map of Florida Districts

Source: Created by author. NOTE: This map shows the three Florida districts in relation to major rivers, roads, and settlements.

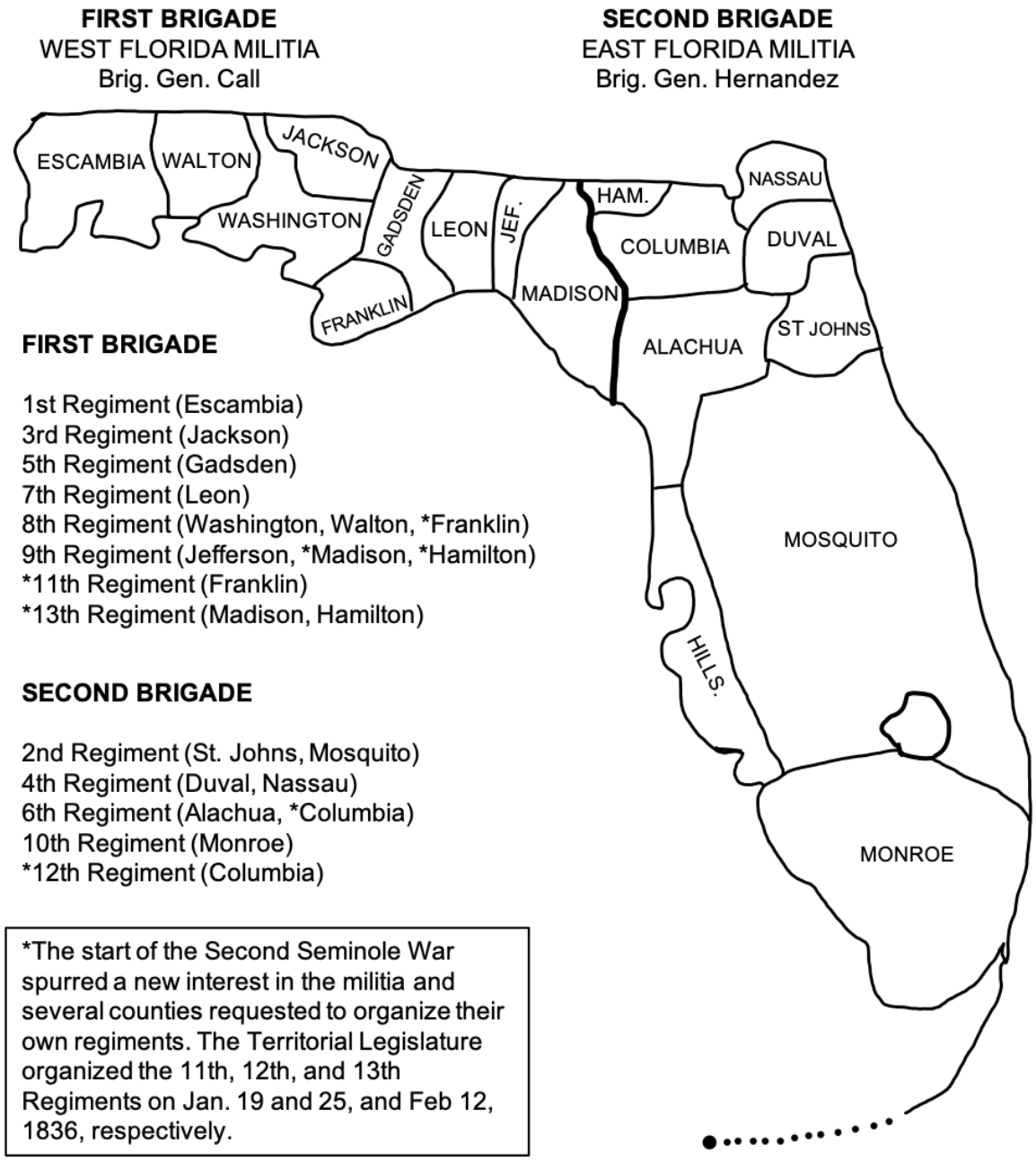

Figure 14. Map of Florida's Enrolled Militia Regiments, 1835-1836

Source: Created by author.

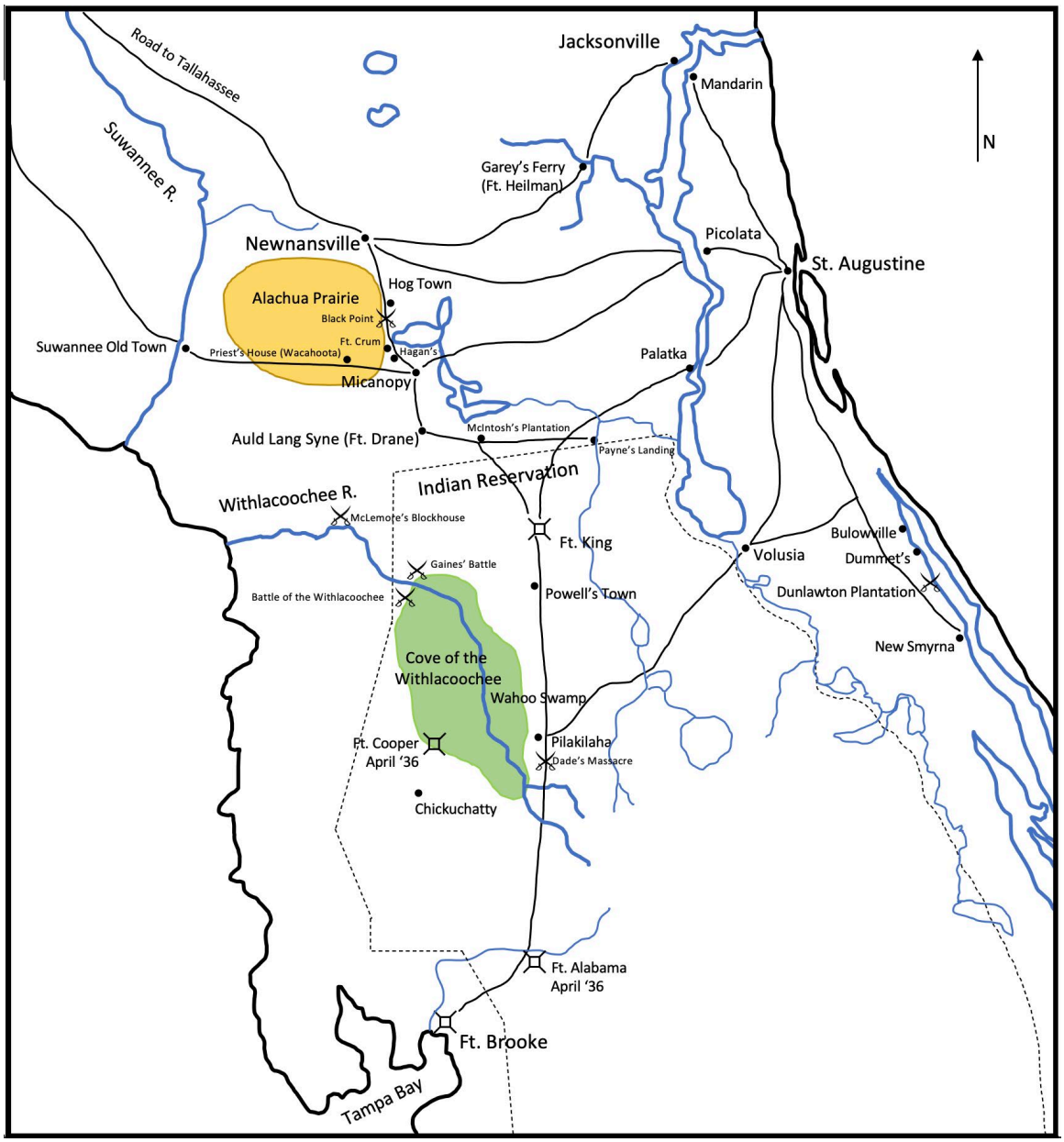

Figure 15. Map of Florida

Source: Created by author. NOTE: This map shows pertinent towns, forts, and plantations during the period December 1835 through April 1836. The Indian Reservation's boundaries were ill-defined, especially along the eastern boundary.

APPENDIX C

ORGANIZATION CHARTS

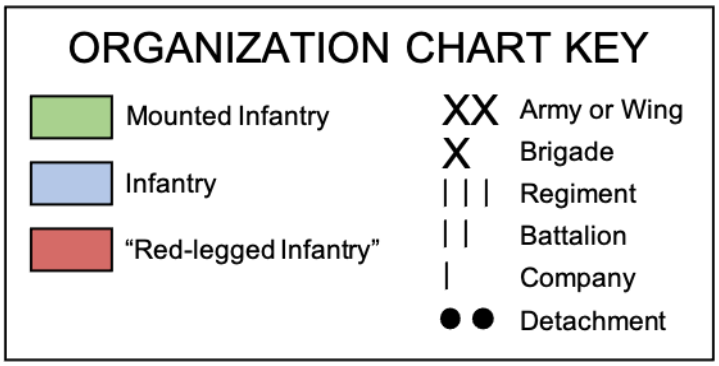

Figure 16. Organization Chart Key

Source: Created by author. NOTE: This key is used for all of the following organization charts. The regulars and militia all fought as infantry. The key difference is that most of the regulars were organized as artillery and acted as "red-legged-infantry" and most of the Florida Militia were mounted infantry. The following units are a mix of war volunteers, volunteer militia, and enrolled militia. Regular army units are only listed if they were integrated. The unit's home county, enrolled militia regiment number, and company letter and name are listed when known. A white box indicates that a unit existed, but commander and designation are not. This is not an all-inclusive list of Florida Militia formations; some companies that acted independently, like the Jefferson Volunteers are not included.

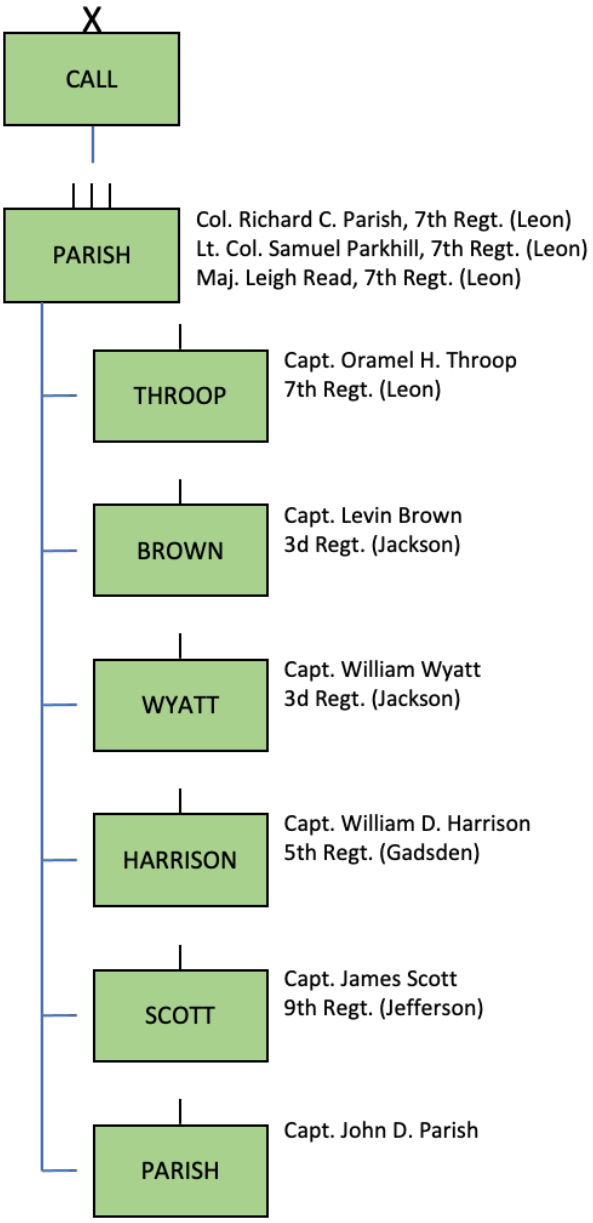

Figure 17. Call's Middle Florida Volunteers from December 1835 to January 1836

Source: Created by author. NOTE: This regiment became the 2d Florida Volunteer Regiment of Clinch's combined force. This war volunteer regiment was divided into two battalions.

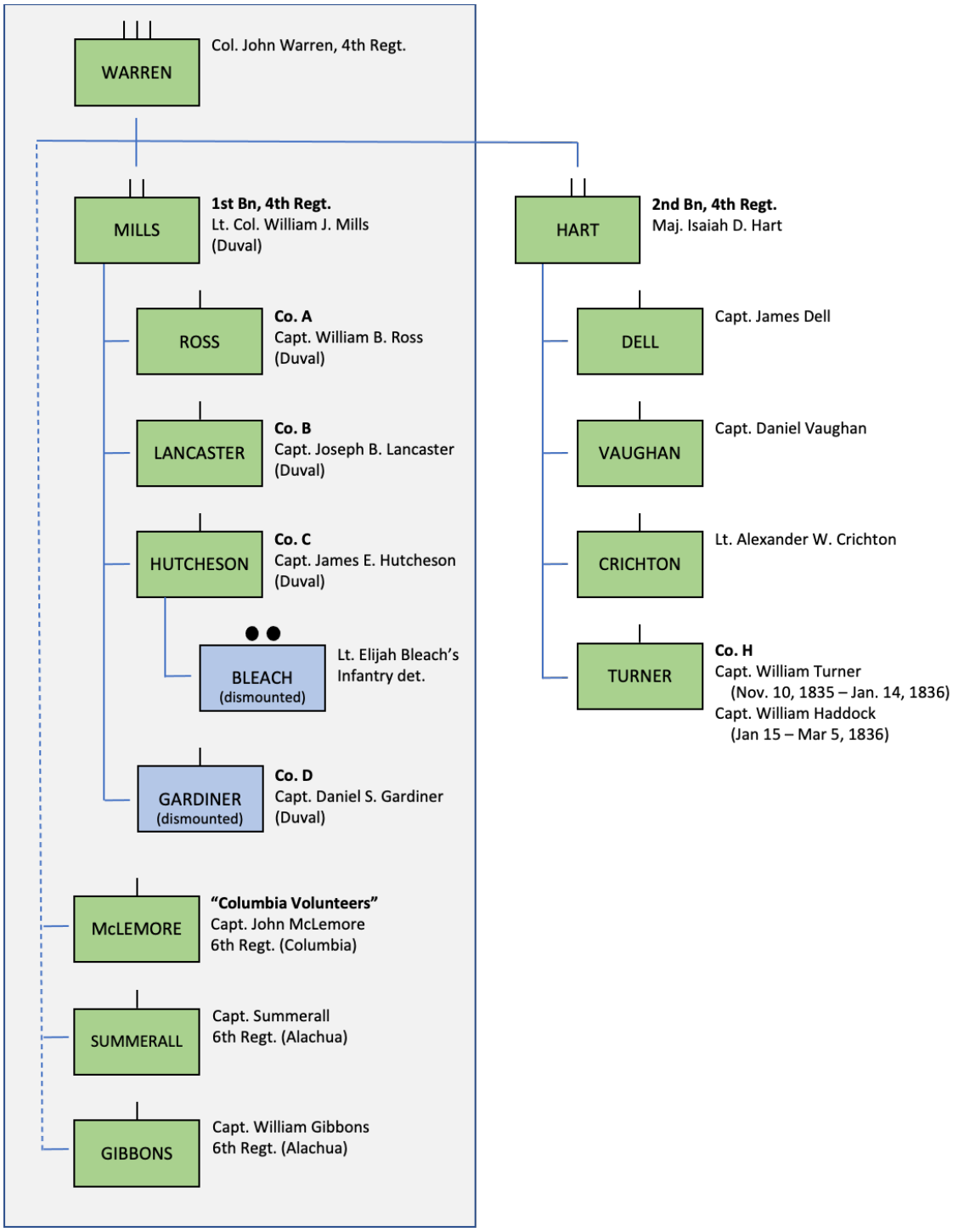

Figure 18. Warren's command from December 1835 to January 1836

Source: Created by author. NOTE: Pictured is Warren's 4th Regiment of Enrolled Militia and attached companies from 6th Regiment. The grey box indicates the formation designated as the 1st Florida Volunteer Regiment in Clinch's combined force.

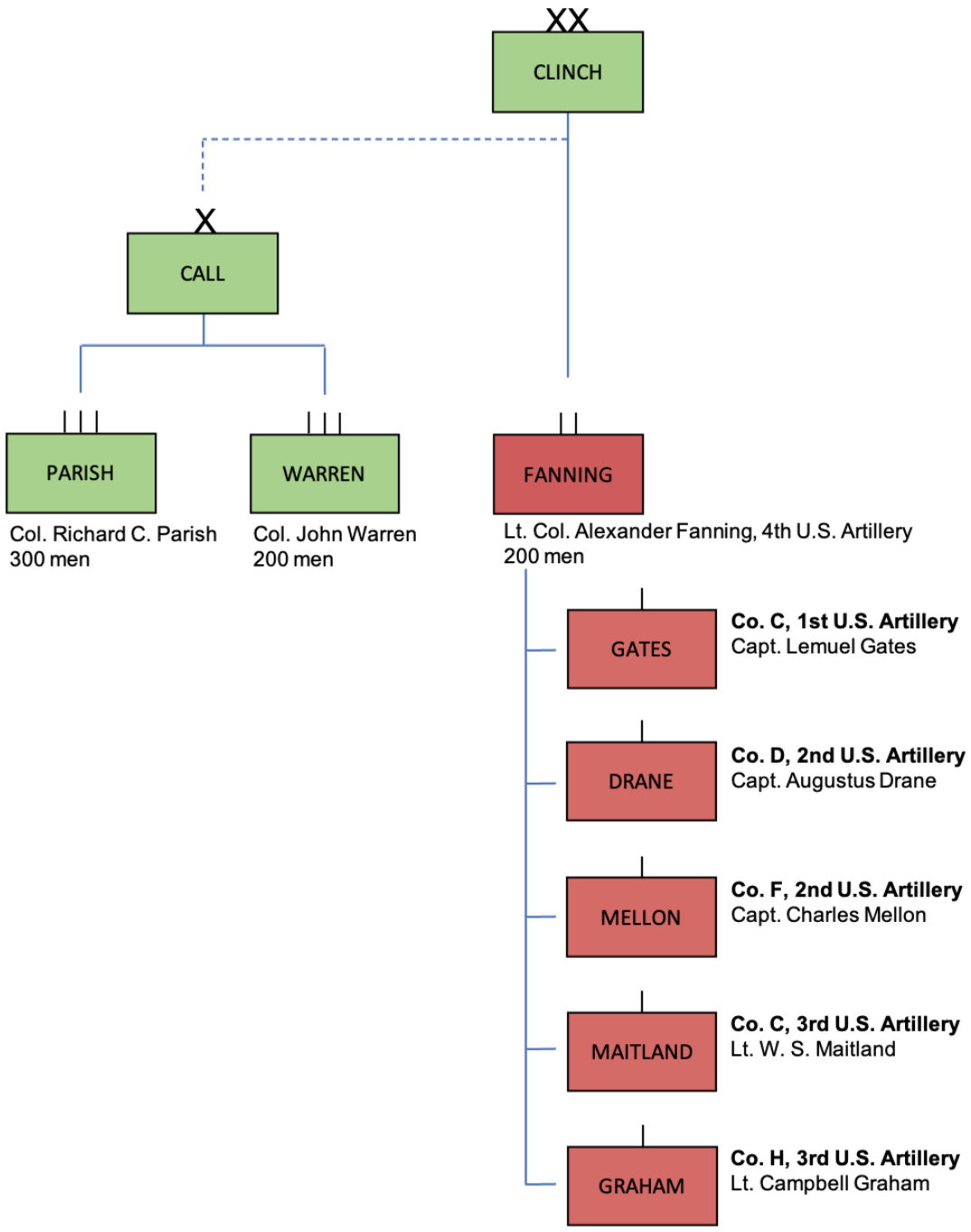

Figure 19. Clinch's combined force from December 25, 1835 to January 1, 1836

Source: Created by author.

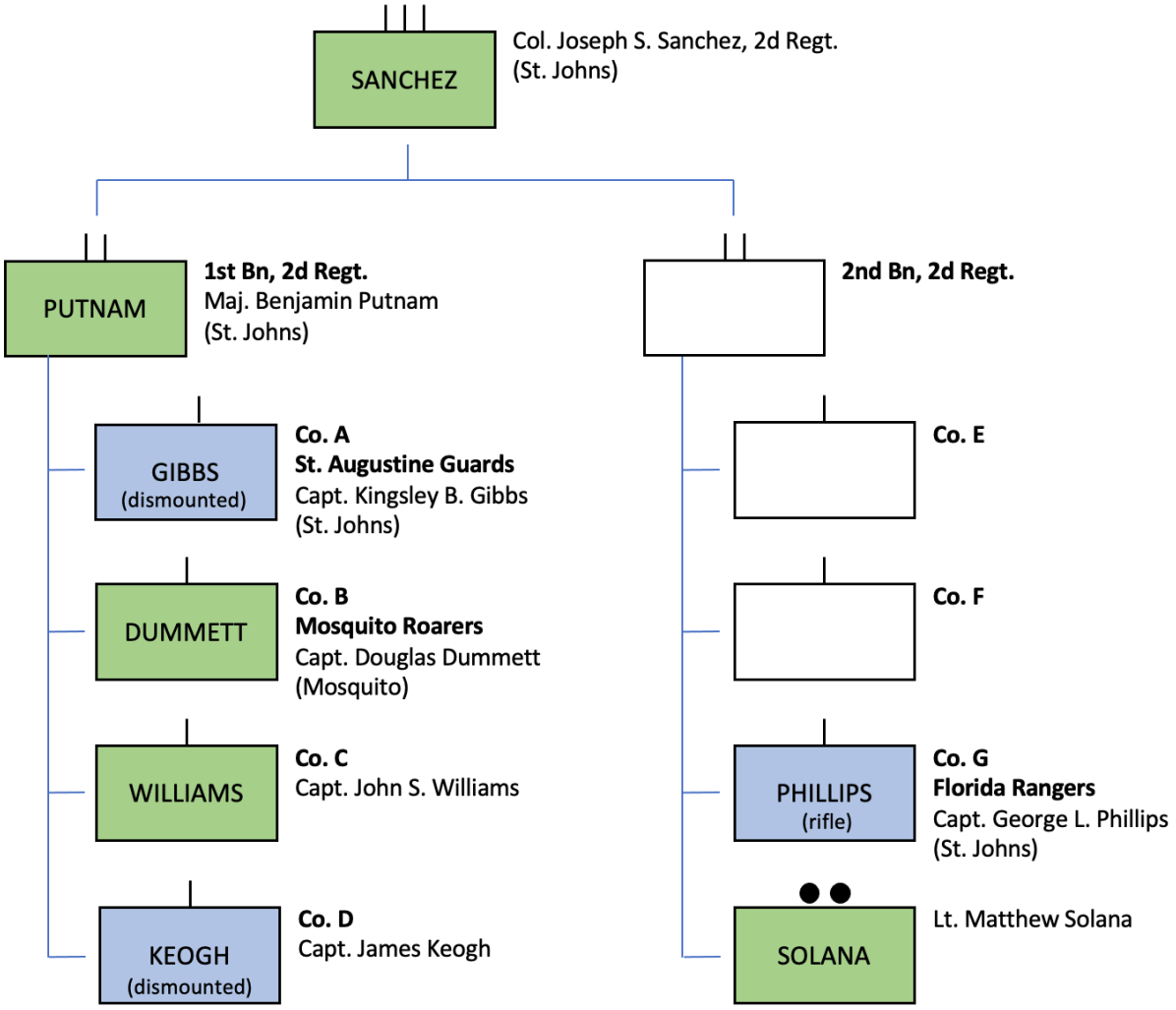

Figure 20. Sanchez's 2d Regiment of Enrolled Militia

Source: Created by author. NOTE: This chart includes all known units within Sanchez's 2d Regiment.

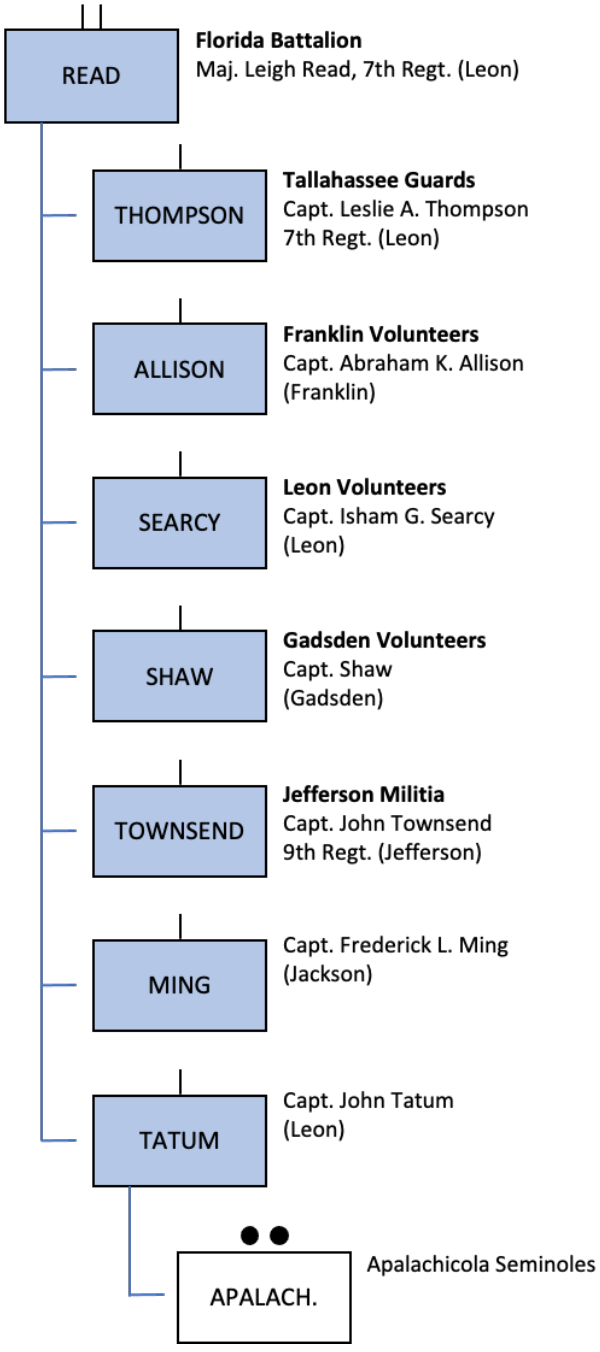

Figure 21. Read's Florida Battalion

Source: Created by author.

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