



Dade Battlefield Society's
*Fort Armstrong
Gazette*
AUTUMN 2013



Lest We Forget by Steve Rinck



Photo by Nancy Rinck

On August 24th, ten members of Dade Battlefield Society joined with nine other reenactors in St. Augustine to commemorate the end of the Florida Wars. This was the 6th annual ceremony conducted at the National Cemetery there, the final resting place of those who perished during the Second Seminole War, including Major Dade and his command. It was our honor to once again make our 6-pounder cannon an important part of the event, ably transported and operated by the Peace River Artillery. A 13-man contingent of

1842 soldiers led a parade to the distinctive pyramids protecting the remains of the fallen. With the national flag and Company B, 3rd Artillery banner waving, distant cannon fire accompanied a 6-musket salute over the gravesites.

At the luncheon that followed, DBS member Lt. Colonel (Ret.) Gregory Moore described his new book, *Sacred Ground: The Military Cemetery at St. Augustine*, and thanked everyone for their help in the day's events. Later, Colonel (Ret.) Joseph Naftzinger

said, "We've grown each year and this one has clearly been the best yet, largely due to the generous participation of the Seminole Wars Foundation, West Point Society of North Florida, Dade Battlefield Society, and the 450th Military Commemoration Committee."

We look forward to continued involvement in this important commemoration, and are especially excited about the plans for city-wide celebrations of the 450 years of Saint Augustine planned for November of 2015.

Living History Musings

This article is the fourth in a series dealing with items and activities of interest for reenactors and others sharing a love of American history.

WHY I REENACT

by Preston Dale Beremand

There are three reasons why I reenact. The first is that it is recreational. Speaking for myself, I enjoy camping, the camaraderie, swapping tales and information about historical things, and examining antiques. I believe other reenactors like these things, too. And, judging from comments I have heard, the public enjoys our activities, as well.

The second reason for reenacting is that it is educational. We study



Photo by Willis Tate

historical events and culture so that our portrayals may possess a high level of authenticity. Because of this, the public will learn from us both at reenactments and at

programs that some of us provide to schools, state parks, museums and elsewhere.

The third purpose for our doings is a memorial one. It is right that we should remember the efforts and sacrifices of all participants in any historical event that we portray. Perhaps more than any other reason, actively commemorating Dade's Battle and the Seminole fight for independence is the best thing we can do to prevent such events from becoming doomed to obscurity in the public imagination.

The Premier Event by Steve Rinck

That's how many participants and other interested parties continue to refer to Dade's Battle Reenactment, as the "Premier event in the Seminole War calendar." We obviously feel great pride when hearing this, for we know that the "premier" designation means not only that ours is the first reenactment each year, but also that it continues to be recognized for its high degree of authenticity as we tell the full story, from both the military and Seminole points of view. In addition to



the proper historical treatment that all have come to expect, some new faces and events will highlight a fresh and friendly approach for participant and public

alike. We will be establishing interactive, family-oriented activities, reinstating the 1830's church service, and welcoming a new park manager for whom all this will truly be constituting a real "premiere"! Members are always admitted free, so make

sure to remember
**DADE'S BATTLE OF 1835
REENACTMENT,
JANUARY 4 and 5, 2014.**

What's New at Dade Battlefield State Park?

Third in a series about the multitude of workshops, craft sessions, wildlife explorations and other types of interactive experiences that are being offered throughout the year.

Moonlight Sonata by Kristin Wood

The sun has gone down at Dade Battlefield and a whole other world starts to come to life. A barred owl swoops down low over the lodge and lights on a tree. About to begin a night foraging mission, the raptor's silhouette is seen by the group of people who have braved the night air and mosquitoes. A green tree frog calls loud courtship quonks from a nearby bush over the Dade ditches that are now full of water from recent rains. A flock of black-bellied tree ducks whistles overhead as they start their nocturnal feeding in nearby ponds and fields.

The group continues marching bravely on the Dade trails with back-up flashlights in their pockets

just in case the night gets too scary for them. A lone bat circles above their heads on its nightly search for moths and beetles. A glimmer of light blinks in and out in the pine flatwoods as firefly males blink their courtship message to waiting females. The group rounds a corner on the trail where a grassy area teeming with wolf spiders awaits them only to be spotted with flashlights held at eye level. The wolf spider eyes sparkle back at the flashlight holders like diamonds. These spiders are out on a prowl, ambushing unsuspecting insect prey. The group spots several of these predatory spiders and then tuck their flashlights away. After a moment spent adjusting eyes to the darkness once again, the group now heads around another trail bend



BARRED OWL

Photo by Myrna Erler Bradshaw

to oooh and ahh over the rising full moon as it brilliantly shines through the majestic longleaf pines. It has been another wonderful night walk at Dade Battlefield Historic State Park.

Seminole War Events Calendar 2013/2014

Oct. 19 & 20: Alligator Warrior Festival, O'Leno State Park, High Springs

Nov. 23 & 24: Soldier and Militia Encampment, Fort Christmas Historical Park, Christmas, Fla.

Dec. 13 & 14: Candlelight Experience at Fort Foster, Hillsborough River State Park

Jan. 4 & 5: Dade's Battle Reenactment

Jan. 18: Battle of Loxahatchee, Riverbend Park, Jupiter

Feb. 1 & 2: Big Cypress Shootout, Billie Swamp Safari, Big Cypress Reservation

Feb. 8 & 9: Fort Foster Rendezvous, Hillsborough River State Park

Feb. 22 & 23: Battle of Okeechobee Reenactment, Okeechobee Battlefield Historic State Park.

Doubling up on Fun and Learning

by Steve Rinck

After the success of last year's first Pioneer Day Camp, Dade Battlefield Park continued it and then added a 2nd week later by creating the new Nature Day Camp, also designed for 8 to 12-year-olds. Park staff and a host of volunteers contributed their time and talents to provide truly unique experiences for the children of nearby communities.

As a testimony to the camps' impact, here is a portion of a letter we received: "I want to tell you how grateful we are for the wonderful Pioneer Camp that my grandson attended. I believe he learned more about early Florida life in five days than he would have ever learned in the same time frame at school. He told me that it is a

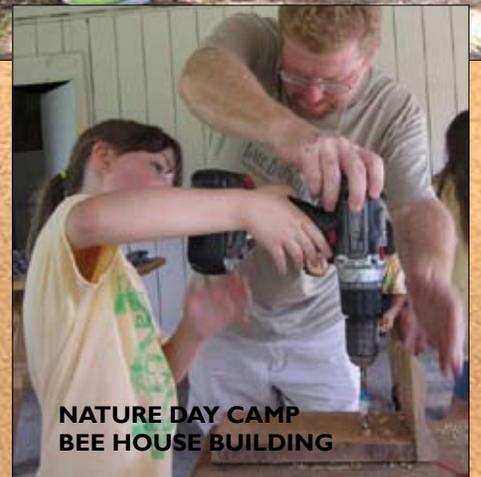


PIONEER DAY CAMP

Photo by Lucille Lane

good thing that he is only eleven years old----so he can attend again next summer."

We'll be looking forward to welcoming this young man back in 2014, along with all the other youngsters whose positive responses make it all worthwhile!



**NATURE DAY CAMP
BEE HOUSE BUILDING**

Photo by Kristin Wood

Increasing our Historical Footprint by Steve Rinck

Since the time of its construction in 1957, our park museum has told the story of Dade's Battle and the overall history of Florida's Indian Wars. This is, of course, as it should be, since what happened here played such a significant and far-reaching role in affecting the major events of the 19th Century. Recently, however, there has been renewed interest in the lesser-known connection the park has with the most influential event of the 20th Century, World War II.

From January to June, 1944, the U. S. Army 622nd Air Warning

Signal Company was stationed at what was then called Dade Memorial Park. A contemporary sketch by one of the men stationed there shows a number of tents, mess hall, supply room, shower room, and motor pool stretched out south, east, and north of the breastworks area on the actual battle site of 1835. Other structures were peppered throughout other nearby areas, too, effectively transforming the park into an active military base. By 2005, this reality was being reflected by an annual World War II commemoration day, which has now developed into a

2-day event complete with Allied and Axis reenactor encampments and battle skirmishes open to the public.

Recently, supervisors from the Florida Park Service have been consulting with Dade Battlefield staff and Society members about how the museum can be transformed once again so as to include exhibits that display what took place on our grounds both in the 1830s and the 1940s.

To be continued.