



Dade Battlefield Society's
*Fort Armstrong
Gazette*
SPRING 2014



Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway Article and photo by Melanie Butler



On January 25, Dade Battlefield hosted a ribbon cutting to celebrate the official opening of the Scenic Sumter Heritage Byway. South Sumter High School's NJROTC led by senior Troye Joiner, multiple volunteers and reenactors, and local and state officials helped to make the celebration of the new addition a success. Attending dignitaries included Assistant Secretary of Transportation Brian Blanchard, Senator Wilton Simpson, Representative H. Marlene O'Toole, County Commission Chairman Al Butler, Commissioners Don Hahnfeldt and Don Burgess, Tax Collector Randy Mask, and Sheriff Bill Farmer.

Jim McAllister demonstrated how American citizens lived and thrived off the land in the 19th Century by demonstrating how livestock was branded, how food was prepared, and how cattle were handled. He also allowed some smaller children—as well as some high school seniors—to test out his cow whip, drawing a lot of guests' attention.

Dale Beremand, Rich Reaume and Steve Rinck illustrated territorial survival while portraying 1835-era soldiers. These were just a couple of exhibits that made the ribbon cutting ceremony—and the activities that followed—an event to be

experienced by people of all ages. Reenactors also set up a timeline display of guns ranging from 1835 weapons to modern assault rifles used in 2012. A US Marine commented on the gun display, amazed at the history spread out on the table before him, explaining the military uses of weapons depending on each branch's preference. Based on the comments from the group, the photographers' comments, and the feedback from guests, the event was enjoyed by everyone, and the Scenic Byway will be well-explored and documented throughout its time.

On The Trail Once Again by Steve Rinck



For the 34th time, and 178 years after the actual event that we commemorate, reenactors portraying Seminoles and United States soldiers came into conflict upon meeting on the military road between Fort Brooke and Fort King. On January 4th and 5th, we fielded 115 living historians and although the actual battle participants were 2 1/2 times that number, we took pride in our efforts to convey the spirit of the struggle between armed and committed adversaries. Authenticity

demands that the battle's immediate outcome is always the same, but it nevertheless continues to remind us of the far more-reaching issues that dominated so much of our nation's first century: slavery and Native American subjugation.

Most people who have ever been seriously involved in the reenactments at Dade Battlefield recognize the many contributions of Dade Battlefield Society lifetime member Frank Laumer, whose

original research and dogged determination has led to him being the primary force behind making our annual presentation into the premier event it has come to be. This year's Reenactment and Trade Fair weekend was dedicated to Frank, author, researcher, and adventurer who, for more than half a century, has dedicated himself to teaching us about the significance of Dade's Battle to the development of Florida and to the United States as a whole.

Kristin Wood Recognized by Park Service

Dade Battlefield Historic State Park's Kristin Wood was honored recently as "Employee of the Month of December 2013" by District 4 of the Florida Park Service.

According to the District's news release, the program recognizes employees who consistently exhibit an attitude of dedication, enthusiasm, professionalism, self-motivation, and cooperation toward the Florida Park Service and its mission.

The release notes that Kristin was hired in August 2011 as an

Administrative Assistant, that she performs well in that role but that she brought with her a wealth of experience in event planning and interpretation, and that she puts those skills to good use on a regular basis in helping to plan and execute a wide variety of programs throughout the year.

The release concludes: "The primary focus of the park will always center on it being the site of a battle that played an enormous role in Florida's history, but Kristin's many classes and programs have helped greatly in



KRISTIN WOOD

Photo by Lucille Lane

encouraging park visitors to explore Dade's natural resources as well as casting a broader net around the historical themes interpreted there. Her energy, enthusiasm and positive attitude infect the volunteers that she eagerly leads. Well done, Kristin!"

What's New at Dade Battlefield State Park?

Fourth 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.

Every year Dade Battlefield Historic State Park sponsors one or two workshops called Trash to Treasure. These hands-on workshops help participants explore turning recyclables into useful or ornamental crafts and accessories. Old magazines, discarded newspapers, bottle caps, pop top tabs, old copy paper, greeting cards, empty salsa jars, and beach shells are some of the items that become a new craft or accessory to display proudly in one's home!

This year the blenders whirled loudly as purple, blue and red smoothies were created – but not the edible kind! These smoothies were all a part of the papermaking process. Participants cut colorful plant parts up to add to the smoothie solutions and then ran this through a deckle/screen

Trash to Treasure by Kristin Wood



operation. For the crowning touch, more flowers or plant parts were added and then lastly the freshly created paper is ironed to finish the drying process. Now the homemade paper embossed with fern or flower imprints

is ready to be sent out as a special invitation to a Dade happening!

In another corner of the Trash to Treasure workshop participants busily rolled pieces of shredded copy paper that become part of the ancient art of quilling. The creative person can turn coiled pieces of paper into attractive butterflies, flowers, animals, scenes and more. Jewelry anyone? Recycled paper is becoming widely popular in making magazine beads for necklaces and earrings. Old magazines can be used to make realistic butterflies that can be part of your next

themed birthday party. Be sure to visit the park during the Annual Art in the Park on March 15th when some of these Trash to Treasure activities will be demonstrated again.

Living History Musings

CARE OF IRON by Preston Dale Beremand

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

Although reenactment firearms are the focus of this guide, the information can be applied to any iron or carbon steel item.

1. To remove light rust, use a light oil such as 3 in 1, and 4.0 or finer steel wool to rub out corrosion. Use a light touch! Remember that many antiques, including gun barrels, are made of pure iron and are very soft.
2. Grind wheels or steel brushes should not be used to remove rust. These can remove original finish and actually remove soft iron.
3. Use no chemical rust removers, naval jelly, muriatic acid, or other corrosives. Such items will eat away finish and metal.
4. To preserve the finish of finely polished iron and steel, automotive paste wax can be applied. Some waxes have acids in their ingredients, so care must be taken. Pastes such as Simonize are best.
5. Do not store iron or other metal objects on bare wood, since it is acidic and will cause corrosion.
6. Guns should be stored outside of cases in a safe place. Closed cases in a humid environment can collect moisture and allow rust to form.

7. Weapons should never be displayed near ovens, fireplaces or other heat sources. Continual exposure to heat can cause shrinkage and warping of wooden stocks.

8. Keep the temperature in a gun's storage area as stable as possible.

Temperature swings can cause condensation on metal surfaces.

9. Finally, and by personal opinion, avoid using original items in reenacting. The more use, the more wear and tear, causing some loss of value. It is best to use a reproduction while reenacting.

Although not a complete list, it is my hope that these recommendations will help to keep our history alive and meaningful for future generations.

Christmas on the Florida Frontier

Photos from the December 7, 2013 event

by John Lysne

