

Veterans Legacy Program Curricular Materials

Both Sides of Seminole Battles

Grade(s):

4

Time (minutes):

Can be extended over several class periods or condensed into one.

Lesson Overview:

Students will summarize and compare/contrast different perspectives of the Seminole War.

Students will discuss which side they feel is just – The Americans or The Natives.

The lesson is designed for students to be exposed to the real relationship between the Natives and Americans and shift their thinking away from the Traditional Thanksgiving mindset. Throughout the lesson students should be challenged to express what is happening and discuss how their previous teachings are much different than the accounts that they are reading from.

Relevant Social Studies Standards:

SS.4.A.3.10 - Identify the causes and effects of the Seminole Wars.

Required Materials:

Resources are all included at the end of this lesson plan.

Teachers will need to be familiar with material before presenting content.

Learning Objectives:

I can summarize and compare two different accounts of a Seminole War battle.

I can decide which side was just, defend my side and try to convince other students to side with me.

Special Vocabulary:

Treaty, migrate, conflict

Procedure:

Prior Knowledge: Students should have an understanding of European explorers coming to Florida and their reasoning behind it (gold, glory, God). Students should also understand how the well-being of the Native people in Florida was not regarded by these explorers, even while the Territory of Florida changed hands between many Nations. The argument “the Natives were here first” has to be used plenty by the teacher as well as “these countries have a right to this land as they paid full price for it.” Students will be given multiple accounts of the same battle – from the Native side and from the

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American side. Students will summarize each, compare and contrast the accounts and discuss who they thought was “right” in their doing.

Lesson:

- After building the prior knowledge, introduce the cartoon <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b36096/> and ask students to describe what is happening.
 - Probe them: “Is this the right thing to do? How do you think people felt about this? What would you do in this situation, as an American? Etc.”
- Diving deeper: Parts of a letter to the Seminole from President Jackson can be read to students to get them thinking beyond the “Traditional Thanksgiving” images of the relationships between Natives and Americans.
 - The passage can be found on page three of this article, http://digitalcollections.fiu.edu/tequesta/files/1986/86_1_01.pdf .
 - Here it is also:
 - On March 27, 1835, an address by President Jackson was read before the assembled Florida Indian chiefs. Although it began "My children" and ended "your friend A. Jackson," in between it revealed the un-veneered harshness of Jackson's intentions. "The game has disappeared from your country," he wrote, "your people are poor and hungry ... The tract you ceded will soon be surveyed and sold and immediately occupied by a white population . . . You have no right to stay ... I have directed the commanding officer to remove you by force."
- Probe them:
 - “Are there any words/phrases that make you believe that President Jackson has the best interests of the Seminole in mind? Are there any words/phrases that make you believe that President Jackson has the best interests of the Americans in mind? Who do you think should have control of the land of Florida during this time in history?”
- American Ransom Clarke’s Account:
http://digitalcollections.fiu.edu/tequesta/files/1986/86_1_01.pdf starts on page 8. **(These passages are included below)**
 - The reading is long. I recommend taking bits and pieces of the passage to help generate the idea that the Seminole are bad. This will help disintegrate the illusion of the Traditional Thanksgiving.

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- After taking bits and pieces from article copy and paste them to print for each student to have one. Read passage whole group, probing throughout, and have students write a summary of the account on the back. This will be for them to keep.

(After writing this summary the lesson could be over for today.)

- Seminole Alligator's Account: Same link above, page 10.
 - This account is much shorter. The whole thing could be read aloud, taking out a few inappropriate terms if desired.
 - Print hand out for each student so that they can write summary on back.
- Seminole Pacheco's Account: Same link, page 11.
 - This is an interesting account as he is a Seminole but it is unclear as to where his allegiance stands.
 - This could be a deep conversation with students.
 - Read aloud and write summary.
 - (These two summaries can be the end of the second day if you choose.)
- Compare/Contrast Clarke and Alligator's account. Have them create a graphic organizer to help list event.
 - Teacher can use Pacheco's account to spark debate. "Why is he with the Americans? Why didn't the Seminole kill him? Which side does he back? Why is his account important?"
- If there is enough knowledge and interest established, teacher can now have students choose a side to defend – America or Seminole. Who was right? Who was wrong? Why?
 - Allow them to try to convince other students. Instigate the debate.

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STATEMENT OF ALLIGATOR

Just as day was breaking we moved out of the swamp into the pinebarren. I counted, by direction of Jumper, one hundred and eighty warriors. Upon approaching the road, each man chose his position on the west side; opposite, on the east side, there was a pond. Every warrior was protected by a tree, or secreted in the high palmettoes. About nine o'clock in the morning the command approached. In advance, some distance, was an officer on a horse, who, Micanopy said, was the captain; he knew him personally; had been his friend at Tampa. So soon all the soldiers were opposite between us and the pond, perhaps twenty yards off, Jumper gave the whoop, Micanopy fired the first rifle, the signal agreed upon, when every Indian arose and fired, which laid upon the ground, dead, more than half the white men. The cannon was discharged several times, but the men who loaded it were shot down as soon as the smoke cleared away; the balls passed over our heads. The soldiers shouted and whooped, and the officers shook their swords and swore. There was a little man, a great brave, who shook his sword at the soldiers and said, 'God-dam!' no rifle ball could hit him. As we were returning to the swamp supposing all were dead, an Indian came up and said the white men were building a fort of logs. Jumper and myself, with ten warriors returned. As we approached we saw six men behind two logs placed one above another, with the cannon a short distance off. This they discharged at us several times, but we avoided it by dodging behind trees just as they applied the fire. We soon came near, as the balls went over us. They had guns but no powder; we looked in the boxes afterwards and found they were empty. When I got inside the log pen, there was three white men alive, whom the negroes put to death, after a conversation in English. There was a brave man in the pen; he would not give up; he seized an Indian; Jumper's cousin, took away his rifle, and with one blow with it beat his brains, then ran some distance up the road; but two Indians on horseback overtook him, who, afraid to approach, stood at a distance and shot him down. The firing had ceased, and all was quiet when we returned to the swamp about noon. We left many negroes upon the ground looking at the dead men. Three warriors were killed and five wounded.

Statement of Ransom Clarke

It was 8 o'clock. Suddenly I heard a rifle shot in the direction of the **advance guard**, and this was immediately followed by a musket shot from that quarter. Captain Fraser had rode by me a moment before in that direction, I never saw him afterwards. I had not time to think of the meaning of these shots, before a **volley**, as if from a thousand rifles, was poured in upon us from the front, and all along our left flank. I looked around me, and it seemed as if I was the only one left standing in the right wing. Neither could I, until several other vollies had been fired at us, see an enemy and when I did, I could only see their heads and arms peering out from the long grass, far and near, and from behind pine trees. The ground seemed to me an open pine barren, no hammock near that I could see. On our right, and a little to our rear, was a large pond of water some distance off. All around us were heavy pine trees, very open, particularly towards the left and abounding with long high grass. The first fire of the Indians was the most destructive, seemingly killing or disabling one half our men.

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We promptly three ourselves behind trees, and opened a sharp fire of **musketry**. I for one, never fired without seeing my man, that is, his head and shoulders -- the Indians chiefly fired lying or squatting in the grass. **Lieutenant** Bassinger fired five or six rounds of canister from the cannon. This appeared to frighten the Indians, and they retreated over a little hill to our left, one half or three quarters of a mile off, after firing not more than 12 or 15 rounds. We immediately then began to fell trees, and erect a little triangular breastwork. Some of us went forward to gather **cartridge boxes** from the dead, and to assist the wounded. I had seen Major Dade fall to the ground by the first volley, and his horse dashed into the midst of the enemy. Whilst gathering the cartridges I saw Lieutenant Mudge sitting with his back reclining against a tree - his head fallen, and evidently dying-. I spoke to him, but he did not answer. The interpreter, Louis, it is said, fell by the first fire. (We have since learned that this fellow shammed death - that his life was afterwards spared through the intercession of the chief Jumper, and that being an educated negro, he read all the dispatches and letters that were found about the dead to the victors.)

We had barely raised our breastwork knee high, when we again saw the Indians advancing in great numbers over the hill to our left. They came on boldly till within a long musket shot, when they spread themselves from tree to tree to surround us. We immediately extended as Light Infantry, covering ourselves by the trees, and opening a brisk fire from cannon and musketry. The former I don't think could have done much mischief, the Indians were so scattered.

Captain Gardner, Lieutenant Bassinger, and Dr. Gatlin, were the only officers left unhurt by the volley which killed Major Dade. Lieutenant Henderson had his left arm broken, but he continued to load his musket and fire it, resting on the stump, until he was finally shot down towards the close of the second attack, and during the day he kept up his spirits and cheered the men. Lieutenant Keyes had both his arms broken in the first attack; they were bound up and slung in a handkerchief, and he sat for the remainder of the day until he was killed, reclining against the breastwork - his head often reposing upon it - regardless of everything that was passing around him.

Our men were by degrees all cut down. We had maintained a steady fight from 8 until 2 p.m. or thereabouts, and allowing three quarters of an hour interval between the first and second attack, had been pretty busily engaged for more than 5 hours. Lieutenant B. was the only officer left alive and severely wounded. He told me as the Indians approached to lay down and feign myself dead. I looked through the logs, and saw savages approaching in great numbers. A heavy made Indian of middle stature, painted down to the waist, (corresponding in description to Micanopy) seemed to be chief. He made then a speech frequently pointing to the breastwork. At length, they charged into the work; there was none to offer resistance, and they did not seem to suspect the wounded being alive - offering no indignity, but stepping about carefully, quietly stripping off our accoutrements and carrying away our arms. They then retired in a body in the direction from whence they came.

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Immediately upon their retreat, forty or fifty negroes on horseback galloped up and alighted, tied their beasts, and commenced with horrid shouts and yells the butchery of the wounded, together with an indiscriminate plunder, stripping the bodies of the dead of clothing, watches, and money, and splitting open the heads of all who showed the least sign of life, with their axes and knives, and accompanying their bloody work with obscene and taunting derisions, and with frequent cries of "what have you got to sell?"

Lieutenant B. hearing the negroes butchering the wounded, at length sprang up and asked them to spare his life. They met him with the blows of their axes, and their fiendish laughter. Having been wounded in five different places myself, I was pretty well covered with blood, and two scratches that I had received on my head gave to me the appearance of having been shot through the brain, for the negroes, after catching me up by my heels, threw me down, saying "d. . n him, he's dead enough!" They then stripped me of my clothes, shoes and hat, and left me. After stripping all the dead in this manner, they trundled off the cannon in the direction the Indians had gone, and went away. I saw them first shoot down the oxen in their gear, and burn the wagon.

One of the soldiers who escaped, says they threw the cannon into the pond, and burned its carriage also. Shortly after the negroes went away, one Wilson, of Captain G's company, crept from under some of the dead bodies, and hardly seemed to be hurt at all. He asked me to go back to the Fort, and I was going to follow him, when, as he jumped over the breastwork, an Indian sprang from behind a tree and shot him down. I then lay quiet until 9 o'clock that night, when Decourcy the only living soul beside myself, and I started upon our journey. We knew it was nearest to go to Fort King, but we did not know the way, and we had seen enemies retreat in that direction. As I came out I saw Dr. G. lying stripped amongst the dead. The last I saw of him whilst living, was kneeling behind the breastwork, with two double barrel guns by him, and he said, "Well, I have got four barrels for them!" Captain G. after being severely wounded, cried out, "I can give you no more orders, my lads, do your best!" I last saw a negro spurn his body, saying with an oath, "that's one of their officers." (G. was dressed in soldier clothes.)

My comrade and myself got along quite well until the next day, when we met an Indian on horseback, and with rifle coming up the road. Our only chance was to separate - we did so. I took the right, and he the left of the road. The Indian pursued him. Shortly afterwards I heard a rifle shot, and a little after, another. I concealed myself among some scrub and saw palmetto, and after awhile saw the Indian pass, looking for me. Suddenly, however, he put spurs to his horse and went off at a gallop towards the road.

I made something of a circuit before I struck the beaten track again. That night I was a good deal annoyed by the wolves, who had scented my blood, and came very close to me; the next day, the 30th, I reached the Fort.

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Steele, W. S. 1986 *Last Command: The Dade Massacre*. Tequesta. 12-14

STATEMENT OF PACHECO

About 10 o'clock, while I was with the advance guard, Captain Frazer and I turned aside to examine an old gray horse we found by the road, and finding it worthless, had returned to the road, and had nearly overtaken the advance guard, when I heard a single rifle shot, and I looked back to see if someone was shooting game, but just in time to see Major Dade fall just in front of me, shot in the breast. Although this was perfectly open country, and I had just looked carefully for Indians ahead, the country was now filled with large numbers of them on our left, coming for us with the war-whoop; I immediately threw down my gun and laid down behind a tree, very much frightened. As I could speak the Seminole language, I begged each one for my life, as they leveled their guns at me, and they were not a few, telling them I was a slave and was doing what I was bidden, etc. Finally Jumper, the chief in command, interfered and ordered as well as he then could, that I should not be shot, but even after this, one Indian was determined to kill me, but fortunately another Indian got his rifle ball stuck in his gun and ran, when the other Indians seeing this one run, became frightened, and all ran, when Jumper again took me and put me under guard. The same Indian, though, still assured me that when he came back he would kill me yet, but, luckily for me, he was shot by the whites. The battle lasted from about 10 o'clock in the morning until nearly sunset.

An extended statement from Alligator, as well as a map of the Dade Battle can be accessed here:

<https://www.floridamemory.com/blog/2013/11/15/dades-battle-december-28-1835/>

Alligator's Account of the Dade Battle

“We had been preparing for this more than a year. Though promises had been made to assemble on the 1st of January, it was not to leave the country, but to fight for it. In council, it was determined to strike a decided blow about this time. Our agent at Fort King [General Wiley Thompson] had put irons on our men, and said we must go. Oseola [or Osceola] said he was his friend, he would see to him.

“It was determined that he [Oseola] should attack Fort King, in order to reach General Thompson, then return to the Wahoo Swamp, and participate in the assault mediated upon the soldiers coming from Fort Brooke, as the negroes there had reported that two companies were preparing to march. He was detained longer than we anticipated. The troops were three days on their march, and approaching the Swamp.

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Here we thought it best to assail them; and should we be defeated the Swamp would be a safe place to retreat.

“Our scouts were out from the time the soldiers left the post, and reported each night their place of encampment. It was our intention to attack them on the third night, but the absence of Oseola and Micanopy prevented it. On the arrival of the latter it was agreed not to wait for Oseola, as the favorable moment would pass.

“Micanopy was timid, and urged delay. Jumper earnestly opposed it, and reproached the old chief with indecision. He addressed the Indians, and requested those who had faint hearts to remain behind; he was going, when Micanopy said he was ready. Just as day was breaking we moved out of the swamp into the pine-barren. I counted, by direction of Jumper, one hundred eighty warriors. Upon approaching the road, each man chose his position on the west side; opposite, on the east side, there was a pond. Every warrior was protected by a tree, or secreted in the high palmettoes.

“About nine o’clock in the morning the command approached. In advance, some distance, was an officer on a horse, who, Micanopy said, was the captain; he knew him personally; had been his friend at Tampa. So soon as all the soldiers were opposite, between us and the pond, perhaps twenty yards off, Jumper gave the whoop, Micanopy fired the first rifle, the signal agreed upon, when every Indian rose and fired, which laid upon the ground, dead, more than half the white men. The cannon was discharged several times, but the men who loaded it were shot down as soon as the smoke cleared away; the balls passed far over our heads.

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“As we approached, we saw six men behind two logs placed one above another, with the cannon a short distance off. This they discharged at us several times, but we avoided it by dodging behind the trees just as they applied the fire. We soon came near, as the balls went over us. They had guns, but no powder; we looked in the boxes afterward and found they were empty. When I got inside the log-pen, there were three white men alive, whom the negroes put to death, after a conversation in English.

“There was a brave man in the pen; he would not give up; he seized an Indian, Jumper’s cousin, took away his rifle, and with one blow with it beat out his brains, then ran some distance up the road; but two Indians on horseback overtook him, who, afraid to approach, stood at a distance and shot him down. The firing had ceased, and all was quite when we returned to the swamp about noon.

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