

UCF's Veterans Legacy Program



VA



**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**
National Cemetery
Administration



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

**Department
of History**



Seminole Wars Mini Tour

NB: Before you begin preparations for your tour or classroom lesson please note we have created a short orientation presentation. If you plan to go to the cemetery, you may want your students to do the [UCF VLP Mini Tour Cemetery Tour Intro](#). It provides helpful information for any tour. If you plan to do your lesson in your classroom, please use the [UCF VLP Mini Tour Classroom Intro](#). If you would like an editable PowerPoint version of this presentation, please reach out to Dr. Amelia Lyons at UCF ucf.vlp@ucf.edu.

Seminole Wars: Historical Context

What led to Dade's Battle?

The First Seminole War in 1817-1818 began from tensions with the Native Americans in the Eastern parts of Florida. The US military also wanted to secure the Southern border for slavery and encouraged white settlement in Florida.

In 1832, tension was at an all-time-high and the Treaty of Payne's Landing was signed. Several chiefs agreed to move to Indian Territory in what we know now as Oklahoma. Many Seminole Indians refused to relocate and decided to fight for their homes.



Stop 1: National Cemetery (Flagpole):

What is a National Cemetery?

A United States National Cemetery is a military cemetery that contains graves of US military personnel, veterans and sometimes their spouses or children.

*You can stand at the flagpole or the grassy area near it.

To set the mood you can either play 'Taps' or have the students say 'The Pledge of Allegiance.' A moment of silence would also be appropriate.

Cemetery Etiquette:

When you are in a cemetery, we are there to honor those who have passed away. The earliest marked burial is from 1828. The cemetery

is closed to new internments, but spouses and children of currently buried Veterans are still able to be buried there in Section E.

Please do not stand, sit or climb on any of the monuments, gravestones, or headstones. You do this out of respect for those who have passed, but also with the cemetery being so old, we want to preserve its history and legacy.

Have a respectful voice level and always have walking feet.

Buried Separately:

Not every grave plot has a body buried beneath it. Grave markers in national cemeteries which have "In Memory Of" inscribed on the tombstone are called cenotaphs. Cenotaphs are used to memorialize and honor someone who is buried elsewhere or there was no body to be recovered.

An example of one of these cenotaphs can be seen at Stops 2 and 5 of the tour.

Unknown Soldiers:

Identifying soldiers wasn't always easy; some soldiers were buried without being identified, and in some cases, records have been lost from the original burial. As technology advances, research is able to help us to identify some of these soldiers who would otherwise have remained unknown.



What are the Coins on the Headstones?

When a coin is left on a headstone, it is an indication to the deceased Veterans family that someone is visiting and remembering their loved-one.

As you are leaving a coin, say the Veteran's name out loud.

Leaving a stone on a headstone is a Jewish tradition of remembering those who have passed away.

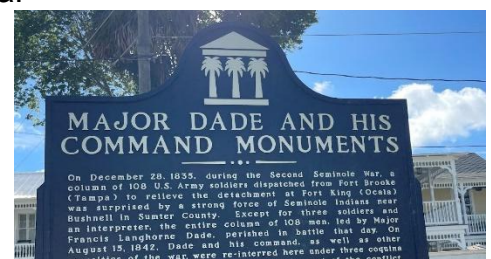
Once a month, all the coins are collected and donated to the cemetery beautification fund.

****Feel free to bring a bag of pennies so the students can leave one at the sites they visit. Your students can also paint rocks and leave them on the headstones.****

Cemetery Pyramid Construction Material:

The pyramids in the back of the cemetery are made of a material called 'coquina'. Millions of years ago, tiny coquina clams lived off the coast of Florida. The coquina clams are the tiny colorful clams that you can see at the beach. As the coquina clams die, they form compacted layers over hundreds and thousands of years. They end up covered by soil and eventually the coquina is dug up and used as a building material.

The Castillo de San Marcos National Monument is also made of coquina.



Stop 2: Dade's Battle (Sign Near Entrance)

On December 28, 1835 a 'column' (formation of soldiers) of 107 officers and men were headed from Fort Brooke on the Tampa Bay to Fort King in present-day Ocala. Their commander was Brevet Major Francis Langhorne Dade. On the way, they were attacked by 180 Seminole warriors in a pine forest in current day Bushnell.

All but three soldiers were killed and only six Seminole warriors fell during the battle. In 1835 it was named 'Dade's Massacre.'

This event marked the start of the Second Seminole War.



Stop 3: The Dade Monument Obelisk

As you approach this stop, you can point out the symmetry of the obelisk and the pyramids behind. It is a great focal point as visitors walk down the central sidewalk that divides the cemetery.

The Dade Monument Obelisk:

The Dade Monument Obelisk was erected in 1844 at the close of the Second Seminole War. It is in memory of Major Dade and his men who died during Dade's battle, as well as others that perished during the period of conflict with the Natives of Florida. This monument has special meaning because its construction was funded with the pay of soldiers and officers of the barracks. Many men donated a day's pay towards the construction.

The Obelisk's Message:

While there was no official "end" to the war in the typical sense of a treaty or defeat, the monuments represented to the U.S. that the conflict was over and offered a sense of resolution. The Seminole did not see the end of the war as a concession and did not surrender to the U.S.

You can take some time to read (or have students read) the sides of the obelisk. The four sides of the obelisk share messages to memorialize those lost in the wars. It references a list of officers buried here or elsewhere, which has only just recently been rediscovered and used to further identify and honor these men. The author of a published version, Colonel John Titcomb Sprague's gravesite can be seen at Stop 7.

As you complete a circle around the obelisk, stop between the pyramids and the obelisk for Stop 4.

Stop 4: The Dade Pyramids

What are the Dade Pyramids:

In 1842, at the end of the Second Seminole War, Dade and his men were reburied (reinterred) here. At the time, the site was still called the St. Francis Barracks, which was eventually designated as the St. Augustine National Cemetery in 1881. The three pyramids we see here were built above their burial sites as a memorial - which is believed to be the oldest memorial in any national cemetery.



The Pyramids over Time:

The pyramids were constructed of coquina and were originally stuccoed white as seen in the photograph from 1886. Over time, the white stucco has worn off, and today the pyramids appear in their original exposed coquina.

Dade's Pyramids/New Research:

The plaque under the pyramids states that 1,468 men are buried here, however, according to the recent research and discoveries of Dr. Amy Larner Giroux, Associate Director of the Center for Humanities and Digital Research at the University of Central Florida, there are actually closer to 140 men buried in this location. Different sources will share discrepancies of whether 2 or 3 men survived Dade's Battle.

Veterans Interred Here:

As research continues to properly identify the men buried under the pyramids, more information is being gathered about their identities. The UCF Veterans Legacy Program is working to identify and document the stories of these Veterans to preserve their legacy. Currently, there are seven published biographies through the UCF VLP specifically about Veterans interred under the Dade Pyramids. They can be accessed here:

[John Craig \(1805–1835\)](#)

[Edwin DeCourcy \(1808–1835\)](#)

[Cornelius Donovan \(1813–1835\)](#)

[Samuel Hall \(1810–1835\)](#)

[John Keirns \(1805–1835\)](#)

[Michael Kenny \(1802–1835\)](#)

[Richard Bourke \(1808–1835\)](#)

As more biographies are written and published, they will be available on the UCF VLP website: [Veterans Legacy Program](#)



Stop 5: Doctor Charles Noyes (Section A, plot 10)

Illness and Injury During the Seminole Wars:

Medicine was not nearly as advanced during the time of the Seminole Wars as it is today. Diseases such as malaria, dysentery, cholera, hepatitis, and even yellow fever claimed the lives of many soldiers. Disease was so rampant during this time that military operations would be suspended during the summer time, known as the sickly season. This pausing of operations each summer contributed to the length of the war, where the Second Seminole War would ultimately last for seven years

before the United States Army declared victory.

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Doctor Charles Noyes graduated from the University of Pennsylvania as a Doctor of Medicine. Three years later he began working as an Assistant Surgeon for the Florida Army. He worked at two different forts during his time with the Florida Army, where it can be presumed he tended to many soldiers dealing with illness and injury from the Second Seminole War. In 1841 he came down with a fever which ultimately took his life. Medical officers were an essential part of the war effort as disease ran rampant through the troops. Due to the nature of their job, many other doctors would also contract disease during their service. Doctor Charles Noyes was one of 10 medical officers to die of disease during the Second Seminole War.



Stop 6: Margaret Stafford Worth/Major General William J. Worth (Section A, plot 18)

Veterans are not the only ones who can be buried in national cemeteries; family members, such as spouses and children of Veterans can also be buried in these

locations. One such example is Margaret Stafford Worth, who was the wife of Major General William J. Worth, an important figure in the second Seminole War.



The Second Seminole War was a costly and lengthy war, and the United States was eager to end it. In 1841, Colonel William J. Worth “took charge of operations against the Seminoles and devised tactics to bring the war to a close”. One of those tactics included encouraging white settlers to return to their homes in an effort to push Seminole Indians further out. After the end of the Seminole War, Worth moved to Texas where he continued his military career in the Mexican American War. Colonel William J. Worth is buried in a New York cemetery.



Stop 7: Mary Worth Sprague/Colonel John Titcomb Sprague (Section A, plot 87)

Mary Worth Sprague was the wife of Colonel John Titcomb Sprague, aide to Major General Alexander Macomb during the Second Seminole War. During John’s time working with Alexander Macomb, he married Macomb’s daughter, Mary.

John T. Sprague wrote a book detailing the Second Seminole War, an invaluable resource for historical details about this conflict. The book titled *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War* was published in 1848. Dr. Giroux used the original book of the dead at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), which Sprague used to transcribe the dead for his book.



Stop 8: The Seminoles (Flagpole)

It is important to give context to the Seminole Wars from the perspective of the Seminole Indians. These series of wars were the Seminoles fighting

to protect the lands they called home. The First Seminole War took place between 1817-1818, led by Andrew Jackson.

Some years later, the United States government would again push for the removal of Seminole Indians to western lands. The Second Seminole War officially began after the Dade Battle in 1835. This was a costly and lengthy war, the longest and most expensive war in US history at the time.

The third Seminole War would begin in 1855 and last until 1858.

Show What You Know

Take this paper home and share with your friends and family what you learned!



Stop 1 at the Flagpole:

- What is a National Cemetery?
- Cemetery Etiquette
- Coins on a Headstone
- “In Memory Of”
- Unknown Soldiers
- The Pyramids are made of Coquina

Stop 2 at Dade’s Battle Historical Marker:

- What led to Dade’s Battle?
- Dade’s Battle started the Second Seminole War

Stop 3 The Dade’s Battle Obelisk:

- Who is this monument honoring?
- Who paid for it?

Stop 4 The Dade’s Pyramid:

- What are the Pyramids?
- Pyramids ‘Then & Now’
- New Research
- Veterans Interred in the Pyramid
- Illness and Injury During the Seminole Wars



Stop 5 Dr. Charles Noyes:

- What was his job during the Second Seminole War?

Stop 6 Margaret Stafford Worth/Major General William J. Worth:

- What makes Margaret Stafford different from the other buried in the cemetery?
- What was Major General’s tactic for white settlers to help end the Second Seminole War?

Stop 7: Mary Worth Sprague/Colonel John Titcomb Sprague:

- Look up the book John T. Sprague wrote, titled, “The origin, progress, and conclusion of the Florida war.”
- How does this book relate to what you learned in the Cemetery today?

Stop 8: The Seminoles:

- Why did the Native Americans fight in the Seminole Wars? What were they protecting?
- Where were several thousand Native Americans forced to move?

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