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Promoting Philately in the Sunshine State

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Special Issue Florida Seminole Wars Fort Covers and Correspondence

Special Agent, Army of Florida
Canton, Fla. July 25th 1846

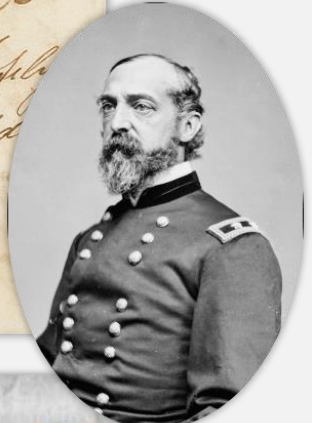
Sir

I have the honor herewith to forward copies of all my official correspondence for the month of July, except that which the War Department and the Department of the Gulf have also the honor to acknowledge the receipt during the same period, of General Cass' Special Order, No. 21 of 25th.

I am, Sir,
Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
Wm. D. Moshley
Major General
Commanding the Army of Florida

To Mr. General
Washington

To his Excellency
July 26 1846
William D. Moshley
Governor of Florida
Tallahassee
Florida



Fort Myers Fla
August 15-16-1846



Mr Geo W. St
General
S. Am

John Beard Esq
Register of State Lands
Tallahassee
Florida

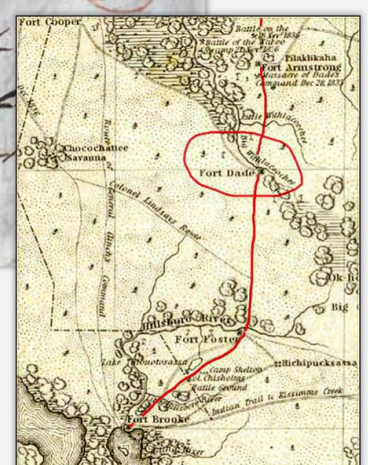


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Danger in the Florida Frontier

By Chris Kimball



Micapony's Seminoles ambush Major Francis Dade's 110-man column in December 1835.
(Courtesy of the Warfare History Network.com)

The Second Seminole War 1835-1842 was also known as the Florida War, and was the longest, most expensive Indian war the United States fought in the 19th century. At its height in 1837 and 1838, half the U.S. Army was in Florida. Casualties were high, but mostly from diseases in the southern climate. The only way to communicate into the interior was by foot, wagon, mule or horse. The unsung hero of the war was the Express Rider who carried thousands of messages over dirt trails during the seven-year war.

In 1838, General Zachary Taylor developed a system of twenty-mile squares in Florida. This entailed a central fort in each square, with a garrison of soldiers. In 1839, he reported to Congress that during his two years as commander of Florida forces, his soldiers had constructed fifty-three new forts or outposts, 848 miles of wagon roads, and 3643 feet of causeways and bridges. These joined the forts and roads which had been constructed during the previous two years before Taylor's command.¹

Daily correspondence and reports from these forts and outposts were ultimately sent to Washington. Communication to and between more than two hundred forts over what was easily a thousand miles of roads was a daunting task for any Express Rider and mail delivery. Letters packed into leather saddle bags were sent on their perilous way, using either civilian riders or soldiers. Lieutenant A.T. Lee authored the poem, *The Florida Express Rider*, which described challenges of the rider.

“When the wild whoop tells me of danger near,
I crouch in my saddle, but not in fear,
For I know there's a hand that can always save,
Whilst a God watches over the young and brave.”²