



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY STAFF REPORT**

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**HISTORIC RESOURCES REVIEW BOARD HEARING,  
OCTOBER 15, 2021**

**A. Application Summary**

**I. General**

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**Name:** Loxahatchee Battlefield National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Nomination

**Request:** Loxahatchee River Battlefield Park/ Riverbend Park

**Acres:** Approximately 168.78 acres (based on UTM references)

**Location:** Indiantown Road/Loxahatchee River, Palm Beach County/Town of Jupiter

**Project Managers:** Christian Davenport, County Historic Preservation Officer/Archaeologist  
Bryan M. Davis, CNU-A, Urban Designer/Principal Planner

**Applicant:** Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources

**Owners:** South Florida Water Management District & Palm Beach County

**Staff Recommendation:** The Loxahatchee Battlefield ***meets the eligibility criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places*** based upon the findings and conclusions in this report.

## II. Assessment & Conclusion

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The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Nomination would, if ultimately approved by state and federal officials, list the Loxahatchee Battlefield site in the NRHP. The NRHP is a list of places of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture on a national, state or local level; such places may be a district, site, building, structure, or object. Listing in the NRHP is both honorific, and affords a NRHP-designated resource consideration of effect upon and protection from impacts by federally funded and licensed projects.

The Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources (DHR) prepared a NRHP Nomination for the Loxahatchee Battlefield site (see Exhibit 3). The Loxahatchee Battlefield is the site of two separate battles fought a little more than a week apart, between the US military against the Seminole and Mikasuki in the Second Seminole War (1835-1842). Under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, DHR is **soliciting local review and recommendation concerning the eligibility of the Loxahatchee Battlefield for listing in the NRHP** in accordance with 54 U.S.C. 302504 (see Exhibit 2). The completed NRHP Nomination Form indicates the Loxahatchee Battlefield is significant on the local and state level under Criterion A, "The Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history" due to its association with the "Military", the date of "1838", and also that the battlefield retains its integrity as a resource (NRHP eligibility requires a resource to have both significance and integrity). The proposed boundaries for the Loxahatchee Battlefield NRHP site comprises approximately 170 acres, where Indiantown Road crosses the Loxahatchee River, and is located within the Town of Jupiter and unincorporated Palm Beach County. The land is owned by the South Florida Water Management District and Palm Beach County. The area south of Indiantown Road lies within two County Parks, Loxahatchee Battlefield Park, and Riverbend Park.

The proposed nomination represents an opportunity to fully acknowledge the significance of this historic resource, which was recognized by the County in 1999, when the entirety of what was then known as Riverbend Regional Park Historic District was placed on the County's Register of Historic Places, in part for its association with the Loxahatchee Battlefield. However, the County found it significant for multiple additional reasons (thousands of years of prehistoric settlement, 19<sup>th</sup> century Native habitation, pioneer farmsteads, farms and citrus industry), which are not referenced in the state's NRHP nomination. DHR is electing to nominate only the Loxahatchee Battlefield. However, listing in the NRHP affords the same honor, recognition and protection regardless of the number of criterion it meets, and level of significance. As such, staff recommends that the County support the proposed NRHP nomination for the Loxahatchee Battlefield.

## III. Hearing History

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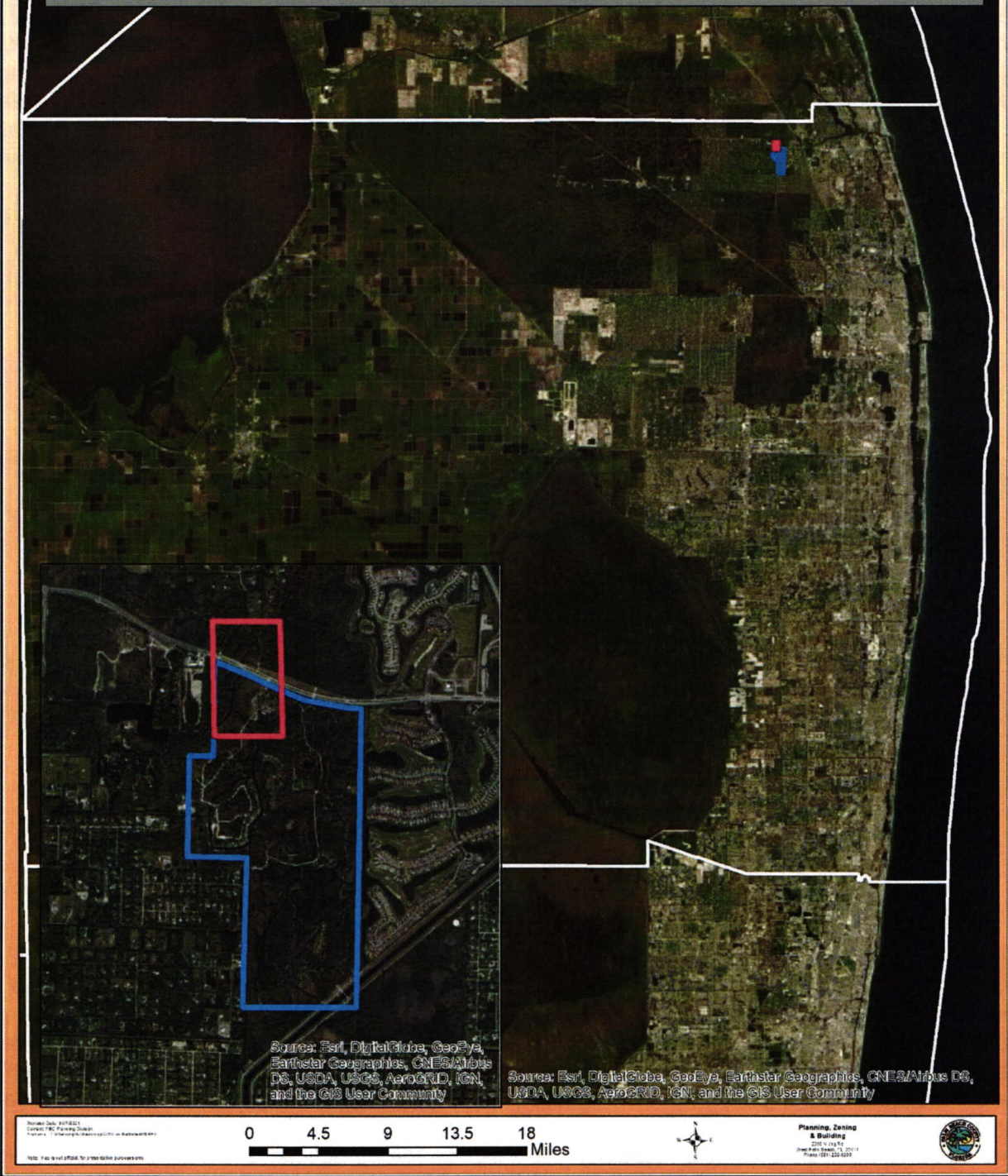
**Historic Resources Review Board:** October 15, 2021

**Board of County Commissioners:** Scheduled for October 28, 2021

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# Proposed NRHP District Location

2021 Proposed NRHP district in red  
Blue boundary depicts Riverbend Park Historic District  
as designated by the BCC (1999)



## B. Introduction & Review

### I. Historic Background

The Second Seminole War (1835-1842) was the longest of all the wars of Native American removal and relocation, and was fought during Florida's Territorial Period (1821-1845). The war was fought largely to clear the Florida peninsula of "Seminoles" (who were not a unified nation but rather a collection of disparate bands of people) to enable American settlement. In January 1838, two separate military engagements between the US military and Native Americans were fought within the vicinity of the Loxahatchee River and Indiantown Road in what would be the last battles of the Second Seminole War (see Figure 1). Collectively these two engagements are referred to as the Battles of the Loxahatchee. Both engagements were fought by a conglomeration of Seminole and Mikasuki forces escaping from American troops following the largest battle of the war, the Battle of Okeechobee (December 25, 1837).



Figure 1 Detail of Seminole War Map (1845), depicting the approximate locations of the First and Second Battles of the Loxahatchee

#### First Battle of the Loxahatchee

Unaware that the Battle of Okeechobee and its results, Lieutenant Levin M. Powell (USN) led a mixed-force detachment of 108 sailors, army regulars, and volunteer militia, tasked with sailing down the east coast of Florida, to penetrate the Everglades and render help to the army, as well as deter trade between the Native Americans and Cuba and the Bahamas. Not only was Powell's detachment formed of personnel from different services of the military, but there were African Americans and whites serving together. On January 15, 1838, while exploring the Jupiter Inlet and seeking signs of Seminole habitation, Lt. Powell's forces noticed smoke rising inland. His detachment sailed inland up the Loxahatchee River before disembarking. Powell conducted his force of 80 soldiers and sailors overland where they captured a Seminole woman who in turn led them into an ambush at the head of a cypress swamp. The combined US forces advanced west for some distance to a second cypress swamp before encountering intense native resistance at the site of a Seminole encampment late in the afternoon. With all the officers wounded (including

Powell and the group's surgeon), plus many more casualties endured and panic setting in, topographical engineer Joseph E. Johnston led the rear-guard action all the way back to the boats, allowing the detachment to escape under the cover of darkness, preventing a massacre. The American riverine force then sailed north along the Indian River to the newly established Fort Pierce, arriving the following day. American losses were five dead and 22 wounded.

### **Second Battle of the Loxahatchee**

Overall commander of the American forces in Florida was Major General Thomas S. Jesup. General Jesup was informed by Lt. Powell of the Battle of the Loxahatchee, and resolved to attack the Seminole settlement there. General Jesup led the largest American force of the entire war—over 1,500 soldiers, comprised of dragoons, artillerymen, and volunteers—inland from Fort Pierce, before turning south towards the Loxahatchee. Around noon on January 24, 1838, Jesup's advance guard, the dragoons (infantry mounted on horses), were fired upon entering a dense hammock at the native crossing place on the Loxahatchee River. General Jesup quickly engaged a force estimated to be between 200-300 Seminole and Mikasuki in a frontal assault, and at one point attempted to lead the battle on foot before sustaining injury from his glasses being shot off of his face. Colonel William Harney led his dragoons in a flanking maneuver around the Seminoles, who then retreated into the swamps, with some American pursuit. The accounts of the Second Battle indicated it lasted less than an hour, with seven Americans killed in action and 31 wounded. In both battles, there are no recorded instances of any Seminole/Mikasuki killed or wounded in action. In the aftermath of the battle, a soldier's remains from the Lt. Powell's battle was located, indicating the two battles were fought over portions of the same terrain. As a result of the Second Battle, over 500 Seminoles and 150 Black Seminoles were either captured or surrendered to American forces at what would become Fort Jupiter, and subsequently relocated to the Oklahoma Territory.

## **II. Significance of the Battles**

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The Battles of the Loxahatchee were a turning point in the Second Seminole War, as they marked the end of "formal battles" between American and Seminole forces—the conduct of war changed to that only of skirmishes and raids by guerrilla forces or small military groups, and effectively knocked the Seminoles out of the war (however, the Mikasuki remained). Those Seminoles who survived the Battles either fled inland into swamps or surrendered, and then relocated to the Oklahoma Territory. As a result, the remaining Native population was so diminished and dispersed that they ceased to be able to engage in a set battle—in effect, the American forces achieved their objective of Seminole removal and relocation from all but the most remote aspects of the Everglades. However, it would take another four years of ambushes, skirmishes, and continued loss of life on both sides before the war was concluded.

The Second Seminole War was a contributing reason towards Florida's statehood in 1845. The war was both long in duration, and costly in terms of men, materiel, and money to the United States government. Shortly after the Battles, in May 1838, the Florida territory held a referendum on statehood which passed. A constitutional convention was convened on December 3, 1838, which ran through January 11, 1839, and produced a constitution for a new state government. Then, in 1842, Congress passed the Armed Occupation Act, which granted land to anyone willing to settle and occupy land for a fixed period, thereby actively promoting settlement, and continuing pressure on any remaining Natives. Although the Armed Occupation Act did not result in any long-term settlement in the area, it marked the beginning of a series of government efforts to promote settlement in southern Florida.

Collectively, the Battles are locally significant as they serve as the beginning of a sporadic occupation of the northernmost extent of Palm Beach County that led to the pioneer era of Palm Beach County History. After the battle, Fort Jupiter was established by General Jesup on nearby Pennock Point, and for a brief time was the “seat of war.” Fort Jupiter became the name of and contributed to periodic occupation and eventual settlement of the area. The “General Eustis Trail,” the route taken by Jesup’s forces to the battle, which crossed the battlefield itself, was the link between the Loxahatchee River and the interior of the peninsula, and was the basis for the wire trail and early alignments of Indiantown Road. Thus, Powell’s route down the Indian River to the Jupiter Inlet/Loxahatchee River roughly corresponds to the coastal route later followed by Flagler’s Railroad, and Jesup’s trail similarly represents a hybridization of Indiantown Road and the Beeline Highway to the interior of the state. These represent two of the key transportation corridors that access modern Palm Beach County, and are first evident in 1838.

One of the complicating factors in any understanding of significance of the battles is that any history of the Seminole War is effectively one-sided based on the written historical record. Despite the richness of Seminole and Mikasuki culture and language, there was no written account from the perspective of the indigenous people who were fighting for their very survival and way of life. Also, it is difficult to gauge how large (or small) their forces were, their losses, and the leadership involved. Select official correspondence from key American military figures exists, as does a journal from a surgeon who was involved in the Second Battle of the Loxahatchee. At best these provide sparse, anecdotal information on the composition of Seminole and Mikasuki resistance and the population they defended, but offers no insight into their motivations. One such example of this is whether or not Arpaika (also known as Sam Jones), who was an elder, recalcitrant and influential Mikasuki medicine man and leader who was fervently opposed to any relocation, was actually present for the Battles of the Loxahatchee (he commanded a portion of the forces at the Battle of Okeechobee).

Another item of significance is the role that persons of African descent played in the Battles of the Loxahatchee. They were involved on both sides of the battles. Lt. Powell’s detachment of both African Americans and whites at the First Battle was hardly the normal composition for any unit in the American military until well after the Second World War, but reflected the expediency needed to find competent soldiers and sailors capable of conducting riverine operations. “Black Seminoles” were also involved on the Native side. The Seminole Wars, more than any other American wars against the Natives, were influenced by the larger question of slavery. Southerners sought the removal of Seminoles from Florida as they were perceived to offer a safe haven for runaway slaves, and threatened the institution of slavery itself. As such, blacks who were free, escaped slaves, and slaves owned by Seminoles all took part in the Seminole Wars, were actively involved in all aspects of battle, and equally bore the brunt of the outcome. Accordingly, General Jesup’s prosecution of the war consistently attempted to split blacks from the Seminoles and encouraged them to help American forces against the Natives.

Another aspect of the Loxahatchee Battles frequently remarked upon is the surprising number of historical figures associated with battles. Many military officers present at the Loxahatchee Battlefield would later go on to be prominent figures or have significant roles in the Mexican-American War and Civil War (both Union and Confederate). See Exhibit 1 for more information on the historic figures.

### **III. History of the Area following the Battles**

The archaeological record indicates that the area may have been re-occupied by Seminoles after the battles. No battles from the Third Seminole War (1855-1858) are recorded/reported, although archaeological evidence suggests there may have been skirmishes in the area. However, Fort

Jupiter was periodically occupied and abandoned during the Third Seminole War, as well as relocated from Pennock Point to the south side of the Loxahatchee River. The "General Eustis Trail" became Indiantown Road/Wire Trail. Nothing much happened in the area until the 1880s when citrus groves were established. Palm Beach County Parks Department information indicates that fruit from the citrus groves planted in the 1880s in the vicinity of the battlefield won Best of Show at the International Exposition (World's Fair) in Chicago in 1893, and became the basis for what we now know as "Indian River citrus." Citrus and limited fruit production, as well as recreational hunting and lodging then prevailed in the area. By the 1950s the area was sparsely developed and used for cattle grazing. Florida's Turnpike to the east became operational in 1957. Evidence of a Second Seminole War battle was encountered since at least the late 1950s when Reese Farms exposed artifacts during grove operations. The presence of the Battlefield was promoted in hand flyer advertisements through the 1960s. The Town of Jupiter annexed several properties along Indiantown Road during the 1960s. By the 1970s, portions of the property opened for tourism and housed a petting zoo and tram tours. Riverbend Mobile Home Park operated briefly in the 1970s before being abandoned and ultimately acquired by the County in 1977. In the 1980s, a packinghouse, which was located on the north side of Indiantown Road, was commonly known to contain hundreds of Second Seminole War era artifacts that had been unearthed over the years of grove operations; however, the packinghouse was later destroyed in a fire. Knowledge of the battles were generally known, as from the 1960s through the present, there are numerous reports of persons with metal detectors collecting Second Seminole War era artifacts in and around the area. Public awareness and debate regarding the Battles of Loxahatchee erupted in 1989, when avocational historians and artifact collectors alleged that the battles were fought near the Indiantown Road crossing of the Loxahatchee River (previously it was held that the battle was fought further north along the river up in Jonathan Dickinson State Park). This public discourse led to professional archaeological studies discussed below.

Beginning in the 1980s the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) began acquiring lands around the Loxahatchee River under the Save Our Rivers Program. The segment of the Loxahatchee River from Indiantown road to Jonathan Dickinson State Park was designated as a Wild and Scenic River in 1985 (1.3 miles are wild, 5.8 miles are scenic, with .5-mile as recreational, totaling 7.6 miles). In 1986, SFWMD leased the newly acquired lands south of Indiantown Road to the County as an expansion of the potential recreation area intended for the old Riverbend Mobile Home Park. This led to a massive restoration effort, including the removal of exotic vegetation that had taken hold of the property and the re-creation of historic hydrologic conditions. In this environmental restoration, water would be provided for the wetland areas that had been previously drained for farming activities. By 1994, Riverbend Regional Park had grown to 684 acres in land area.

Riverbend Park was first opened to the public in 2007. In 2008, a Florida Heritage Landmark (Historic Marker sign) was placed at the battlefield for Powell's Battle. In 2010, a Florida Heritage Landmark (Historic Marker sign) was placed at the battlefield for Jesup's Battle. In 2009-10 Parks received money from the National Park Service to develop a master plan to protect and interpret the battlefield sites. In 2010, Riverbend Regional Park was split into two parks, with the western portion being renamed to Loxahatchee Battlefield Park in an effort to draw attention to the historic events that occurred there in January 1838 and its role in the County, region and Florida history.

#### **IV. National Register of Historic Places**

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The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by Congress in 1935, and significantly expanded by the National

Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. To be considered eligible for this designation, the property must meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation which examines the property's age, significance and integrity.

#### **Historical Significance Criteria for the Evaluation for Listing in the NRHP:**

- a. *That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or*
- b. *That are associated with the lives of significant persons in or past; or*
- c. *That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or*
- d. *That has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.*

In addition to significance, a NRHP-listed resource must also have integrity of the resource itself. Simply, integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. Integrity is often a subjective evaluation, but at its core, it is related to the physical features of the resource itself and how they correspond to the significance. The NRHP considers seven (7) aspects of integrity: Location; Design; Setting; Materials; Workmanship; Feeling; Association. Most but not all of the aspects must be present in order to convey significance; however, integrity is best evaluated by simply asking "whether or not the resource maintains the identity for which it is significant?"

As of October 2021, there are 74 resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) within the geographic boundaries of Palm Beach County. Of these, only three (3) are archaeological in nature, four (4) are transportation related, and the remaining are historic buildings. As such, the Loxahatchee Battlefield, would be the only NRHP-listed resource in the County that is both a battlefield site and an archaeological site.

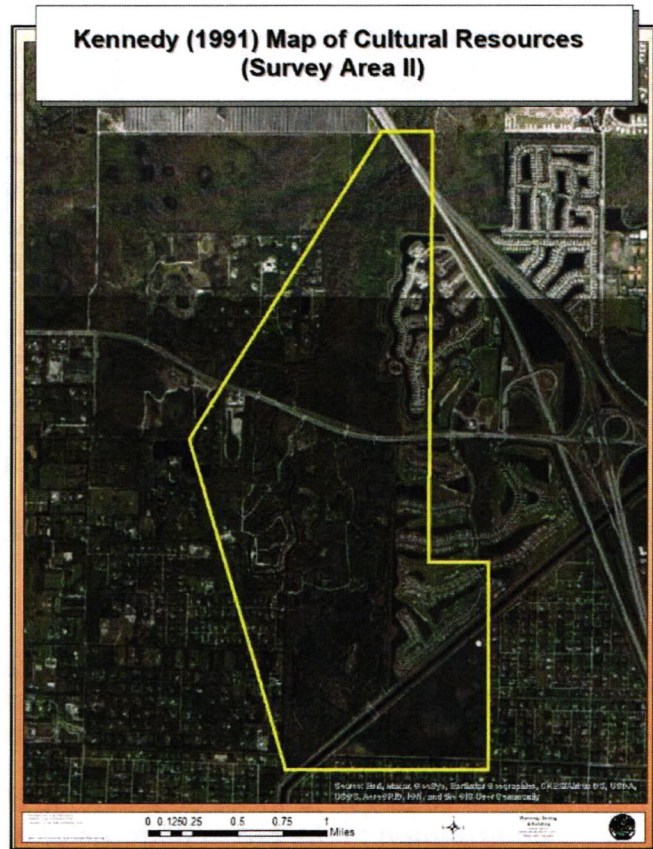
## **V. County Register of Historic Places and NRHP nomination efforts**

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In 1991, Professor Jerald Kennedy (FAU) completed a preliminary survey of archaeological resources within the County. Relevant to the Loxahatchee Battlefield site, this survey denoted a region from the Florida's Turnpike bridge over the Loxahatchee River along the eastern and western sides of the river (the approximate location shown in yellow on the map to the right). Within this area, FAU noted the presence of several prehistoric sites and the former General Eustis Trail going through the Riverbend Trailer Park. During the testing stage of this undertaking Kennedy uncovered several lead balls (bullets) thought to be from the Second Seminole War and one Minié bullet, thought to be from either a Third Seminole War skirmish or dropped by an early pioneer to the region.

Over the course of the 1990s, the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy (AHC) conducted multiple archaeological investigations within the vicinity of the Loxahatchee River and Indiantown Road. Collectively these investigations by AHC refined the Kennedy boundary, and importantly concluded that the first and second battles occurred, at least in part, within the boundaries of Riverbend Regional Park. A historic designation application was submitted to the County's Historic Resource Review Board (HRRB) for consideration for inclusion in the County's Register of Historic Places. After considerable discussion and review, the HRRB made the recommendation to forward the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. The criteria of significance then under Article 7 of the Unified Land Development Code were as follows:

- a) **Associated with the life of a major person important in the County, State or National History**
- b) **The site of a historic event significant in County, State or the Nation.**
- c) **Associated in a significant way with major historic, cultural economic , military or political event**
- d) **Exemplifies the historic, political, cultural or economic trends of the community in history**
- e) **Associated in a significant way with a past or continuing institution, which has contributed, to the life of the County.**



In 1999, a resolution to enact a designation for the Riverbend Regional Park Historic District was submitted and approved by the Board of County Commissioners on April 20, 1999 (Resolution R-1999-684), placing the entirety of Riverbend Regional Park on the County's Register of Historic Places as it contained significant portions of the Loxahatchee Battlefield. Since this time, various County efforts sought a NRHP designation for the battlefield.



In 2002, the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy (AHC) completed an archaeological and historical resource survey of the County. This is the first time all archaeological sites (known at that time) and conservation zones are placed into a Geographical Information System (GIS). The conservation zone for the battlefield is established and the entire report submitted to DHR in December 2005. This shape file served as the basis for all future County NRHP applications (indicated with the magenta boundary on the map to the left, with the 2021 proposed NRHP boundary indicated in red).

In 2006-07, the County Archaeologist prepared and submitted a draft NRHP nomination application for preliminary review to the State Archaeologist at DHR, using the 2005 AHC map as the boundaries of the Battlefields, with the period of significance being 1838 and the following NRHP criteria (Criteria A, B, & D):

- A) The property must be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history,**
  - a. The resources represents the last two battles of the Second Seminole War.
    - i) Lt. Powell's use of integrated fighting sailors (different from Marines)
    - ii) Development of Riverine Warfare Tactics still used by the US Navy
    - iii) Origins of what would become the US Army's Second Cavalry (Second Dragoons)
    - iv) Last time Dragoons were used as mounted cavalry until the Civil War
  
- B) The property must be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.**
  - a. General Jesup
  - b. Lt. Powell, the father of riverine warfare tactics
  - c. The early careers of multiple Civil War officers (both Union and Confederate)
  
- D) The property must show, or may be likely to yield, information important to history or prehistory.**
  - a. Numerous cultural resource management (CRM) surveys have recorded the presence of multiple prehistoric and historic sites.

However, given the size of battlefield (as established by AHC), the draft application was determined logistically to be too complicated for a NRHP nomination as the resource was spread across multiple overlapping jurisdictions (South Indian River Water Control District (SIRWCD), South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), Jonathan Dickinson State Park (JDSP), Palm Beach County (PBC), Town of Jupiter (TOJ), and Loxahatchee River Environmental Control District (ENCON). Also, it included two private properties, Hatcher and Reese Estates, which were subsequently acquired by the County.

The County Parks and Recreation Department in 2008-2010 secured a National Park Service grant under the American Battlefield Protection Program, which utilized Environmental Sciences, Inc. (ESI) for additional archaeological investigation, synthesized the collective findings of studies to date, and assessed the battlefield for NRHP eligibility. To that end, ESI defined the “core battlefield” and the “battlefield extents” as not being wholly within Riverbend Park, and determined the battlefield to be eligible under NRHP criteria A and D (association with significant events—battle; show or likely to yield information important to history or prehistory—archaeology). However, ESI made no determination regarding local/state/national significance, and did not assess the integrity of the battlefields.

In 2014, the Riverbend Park Manager revised the existing NRHP nomination by synthesizing the findings from all known archaeological reports at that time and submitted a preliminary draft for review by DHR. Again the period of significance being 1838 and the Criteria justifications being:

**A) *The property must be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history,***

The resources represents the last two battles of the Second Seminole War; all sub points were discussed but removed from consideration.

**B) *The property must be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.***

General Jesup (a controversial American general); all sub points were discussed but removed from consideration.

**D) *The property must show, or may be likely to yield, information important to history or prehistory***

Numerous CRM surveys have recorded the presence of multiple prehistoric and historic sites.

The 2014 draft was deemed insufficient, due to a lack of corroborating historical documentation regarding the battle. This is problematic as only one published book focuses on the Loxahatchee Battlefield, *The Guns Across the Loxahatchee* by (Jupiter resident and former HRRB-member) Richard Procyk (1999). As such, the County Historic Preservation Officer gathered not only historic journals and references mentioned in Procyk’s book but also combed academic institutions for works on the Second Seminole War and hundreds of Cultural Resource Management reports seeking further information.

In an effort to address the 2014 insufficiencies, Jacob Kitain (PBC Historic Preservation Student Intern) tracked down references dealing with the Second Seminole War, and more specifically those concerned with the two Loxahatchee battles of January 1838. These references were synthesized and combined with the previously collected documentation into a more complete historical narrative. This was given to PBC Parks and Recreation Department staff for inclusion into what was then the latest NRHP nomination application in 2017. However, the document was put on hold due to staffing issues.

Then, in 2020, PBC Department of Parks and Recreation was tasked with completing the NRHP nomination application and approached the County Archaeologist and Ms. Holly Torres (President of the Loxahatchee Battlefield Preservationists) to assist. Early in 2021, Ms. Torres submitted a draft NRHP application to DHR for review and to receive input on how to further complete the nomination process using the existing criteria. This version was in a narrative format. However, feedback from DHR indicated that more supporting documentation was suggested, as well as a better means to physically define the geographic area.

## VI. 2021 DHR NRHP Nomination

### Loxahatchee Battlefield

#### BOUNDARY MAP

9060 Indiantown Road  
Jupiter, Palm Beach  
County, FL

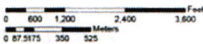
#### UTM References:

- 1) 17R 581514 2980055
- 2) 17R 582124 2980048
- 3) 17R 582102 2979167
- 4) 17R 581489 2979168

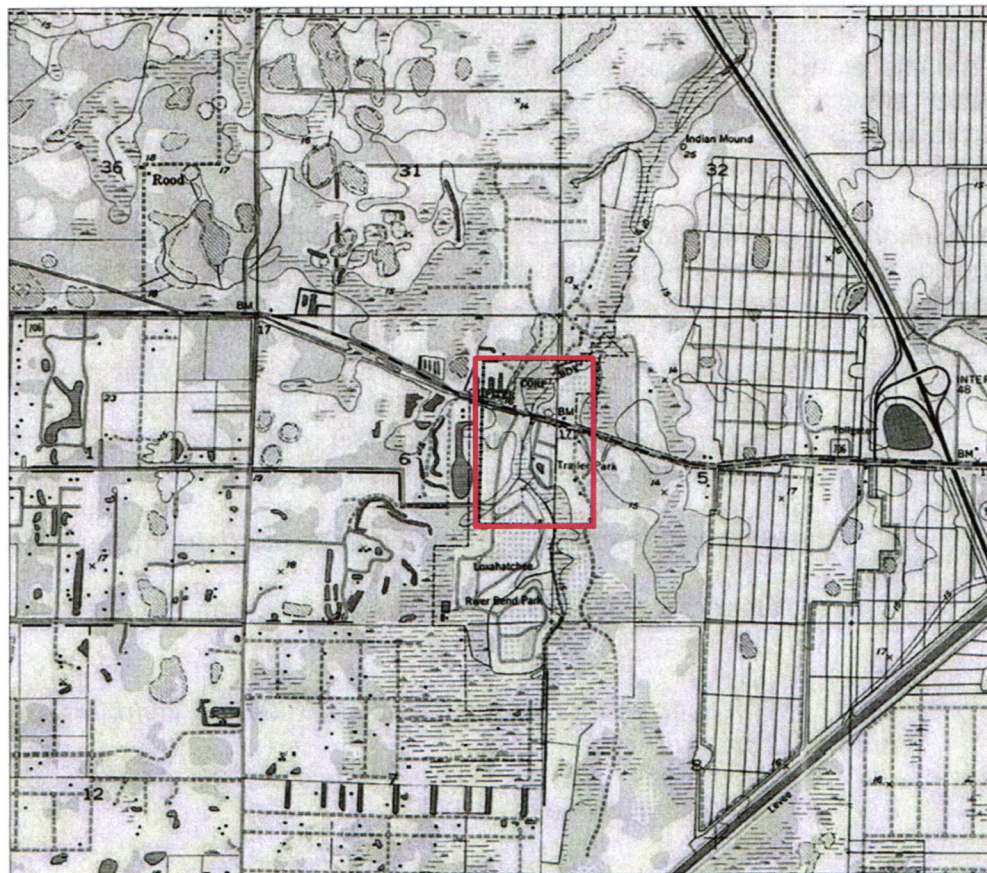
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 NR Boundary

N  
1:10,000

  
0 600 1,200 2,400 3,600  
0 91.4175 305 925

Prepared by:  
Andrew Waber  
Florida Division of  
Historical Resources



In February 2021, Ruben Acosta with DHR contacted the County Archaeologist regarding the NRHP process for the battlefield. In conversation, he stated that as 2021 represents Florida's bicentennial as United States territory, there is great interest in nominating resources to the NRHP which are from this territorial period of significance. Previous NRHP submissions and existing site reports were reviewed by Jason O'Donoghue, with DHR's Bureau of Archaeology, who concurred there is enough significance to the resources within the Park to seek a NRHP nomination. However, the problem of the boundaries remained unsolved. Given the amount of disturbance on site over the years (land clearing for farming, roads, a trailer park, park development, environmental restoration) combined with extensive looting over the years, it is unlikely the true dimensions could reasonably and defensibly be determined. As such, DHR changed the approach to the nomination to one that focused archaeological sites known to be associated with the battlefield, strengthening the significance of the battlefield itself within the nomination (effectively de-emphasizing the other known associations indicated in the historic and archaeological records). It was also decided that DHR would take the lead on the NRHP process and assigned Andrew Waber, with the Survey and Registration Office at DHR, since he had extensive experience in preparing similar NRHP nominations from this time period. However, the present effort is not exclusively a DHR-run nomination. County staff had many conversations with DHR regarding the history of the battles, the nature of the sites under consideration, noting where artifacts that had been recovered are now residing in various private collections. County Parks staff provided a diversity of information regarding when properties were acquired, photographs and numerous points of contact to collaborate histories and affected property owners. The

Loxahatchee Preservationists also provided extensive information, helping to flesh-out knowledge. DHR concluded as follows:

**Period of Significance:** 1838, Second Seminole War.

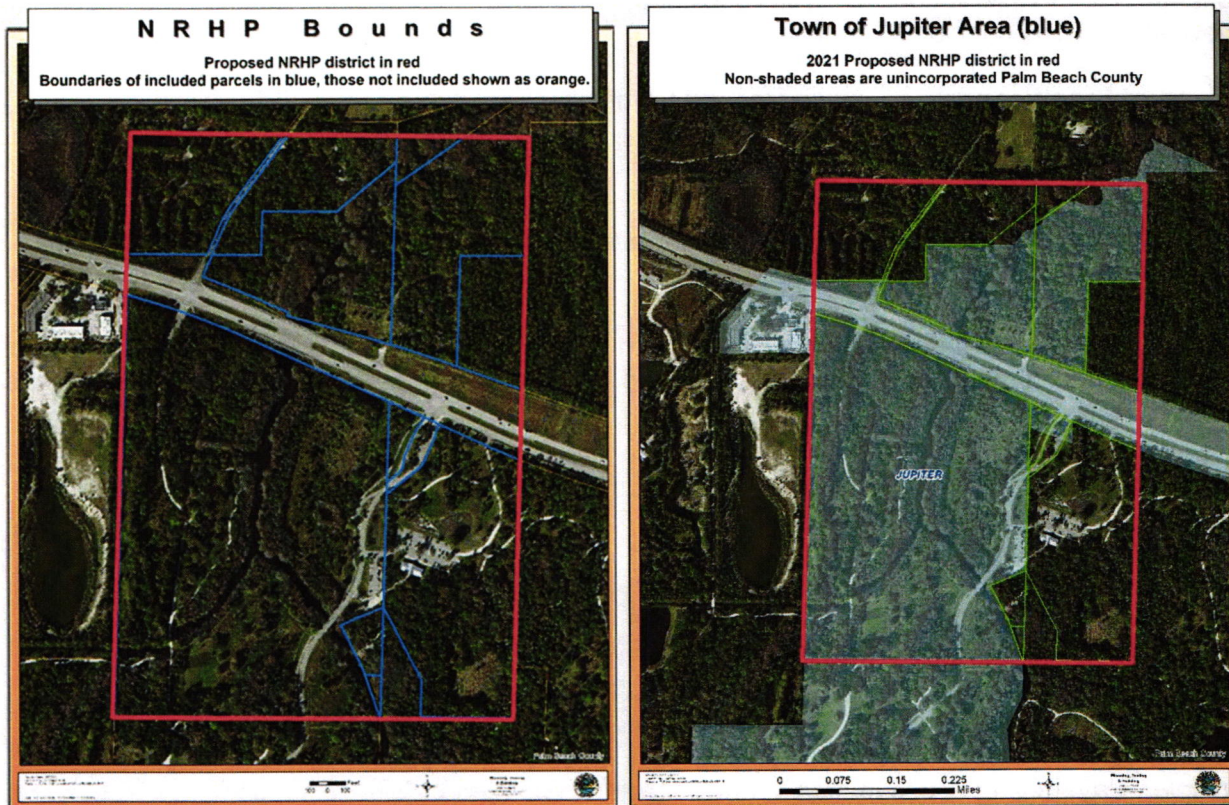
**NRHP Evaluation Criteria Findings:**

- a. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

DHR determined that the Loxahatchee Battlefield site is historically significant at a state and local level for its role in the Second Seminole War and the early development of the state, and that the resource maintains integrity.

**Staff Analysis:** The distinction between the County’s 1999 placing Riverbend Park in the Palm Beach County Register of Historic Places and the proposed NRHP listing for the Loxahatchee Battlefield comes down to approach. The County’s effort in 1999 was deliberately wide-ranging in response to the available archaeological data, which indicated multiple layers of occupation and habitation over time, well into the pioneer era of Palm Beach County. The 1999 County effort was an attempt to encompass not only the battlefields, but also the pre-history of the wider area—it reflected the knowledge available at the time, and the boundaries of the Park under County ownership and lease. There was no attempt to sort or prioritize the considerable archaeological information for historical significance, and represents an optimistic, all-inclusive approach. In contrast, the proposed NRHP nomination is one that reflects more recent research and investigation, and is a consolidation and select refinement of a growing body information (and interpretation) since 1999. Therefore, the DHR nomination it is narrowly focused on the Loxahatchee Battlefields only. The proposed NRHP boundaries are a surgical attempt to tightly construe the battlefields and their relationship to the Loxahatchee River, and do not follow any parcel lines or ownership patterns. As such, only 98.96 acres of the entire 167.78 acres of the NRHP boundary are common to, or overlap with, land the County’s designation. A total of 69.82 acres are north of Indiantown Road—although considered in prior archaeological studies and nominations—would be newly designated lands. Only a few acres of this land is County-owned, with the remainder owned by the South Florida Water Management District. Furthermore, of the 168.78 acres within the NRHP boundary, 126 acres are within the municipal boundaries of the Town of Jupiter, while only 42.78 acres are within unincorporated Palm Beach County.





Returning to the NRHP criteria: previous County nomination efforts consistently indicated significance based on Criteria A & D, and in several cases Criterion B (association with persons significant in our past) was also included due to the astounding number of historical figures who happened to be present at or participated in the battles in January 1838 (see Exhibit 1). Criterion B usually is applied when a person is linked to a place/property, which reflects their involvement with that place over time, and if their occupation of that place is linked to their period of significance (e.g., Thomas Jefferson with his principal residence at Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia). None of the historical figures were present at the battlefield for long, nor were their careers defined by the events on the battlefield itself. An example of this is the case of Lt. Powell, over the remarkable naval career of Levin Powell, the First Battle of the Loxahatchee is the only real blemish. Additionally, Criterion D (not included in the DHR-prepared nomination), is related to “information potential,” and typically is the criterion used for placing archaeological sites on the NRHP. Although archaeology has been and will continue to be critical to understanding of the Loxahatchee Battlefield, there is a thread inferred throughout much of the considerable volume of archaeological reports and NRHP nomination efforts to date, that prior ground disturbance by agriculture, combined with the potential for undocumented material already recovered residing with private collectors, and such actions may have compromised the integrity of the resource. Nevertheless, Criterion A, for the Loxahatchee Battlefield, remained a consistent factor in every NRHP nomination effort by the County, and also the County’s 1999 listing in the County Register was in part because Riverbend Regional Park encompassed portions of the two Second Seminole War battles.

Staff noted that the DHR evaluation of the Battlefield included an evaluation using the military’s “KOCO process” for understanding militarily significant terrain involved in the battles. References to the terrain are recorded in the limited written accounts of the battles and are further corroborated by the extant site conditions and archaeological investigations undertaken to date.

This is an evaluation not previously done in prior County efforts. For the First Battle (Powell's), the key terrain features included a creek, two cypress swamps, a trail, and a village. The Second Battle (Jesup's) key features include the military trail, the Loxahatchee River crossing, the cypress slough, the open pine woods, and the Native encampment. Although not referenced in the NRHP nomination, the successful assessment of integrity may be due to the environmental restoration and responsible management of the Loxahatchee River and Riverbend Park leaving it far more bucolic and "natural" in appearance than it might otherwise have enjoyed more than 30 years ago after a century of agricultural operations. In retrospect, assessment of integrity is something that was notably lacking in many of the prior County efforts. There is an acknowledgement that Indiantown Road traverses the Battlefields within the proposed boundary, however it is not something that compromises the integrity of the proposed district; rather it included is a non-contributing resource. DHR concluded that both battles had key terrain involved, that most of it is still evident, and as such, the battlefields maintained integrity for all seven aspects required for inclusion in the NRHP. Staff agrees with DHR's assessment of integrity.

Finally, a listing in the NRHP for the Loxahatchee Battlefield is consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan. County Direction #16 indicates that preservation and interpretation of archaeological resources as stewards of the nation's diverse cultural heritage, as well as retaining a local sense of place by preserving and protecting historic places, is a desirable outcome for community residents. It in part helps to accomplish the stated Goal, Objective and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan's Historic Preservation Element, to recognize the importance of the County's historic and cultural resources, while expanding public awareness of the contribution the resources make to residents of the County.

**Assessment and Recommendation:** The DHR prepared a NRHP nomination for the Loxahatchee Battlefield on approximately 170 acres. This nomination represents the best opportunity to date to achieve the long-desired recognition for these final Second Seminole War battles. Staff finds that the proposed nomination is eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A (association with events that have made as significant contribution to broad patterns of our history), due to its association with the US Military during the Second Seminole War in 1838, that the battlefield is significant at the local and state level, and that it maintains integrity. Inclusion in the NRHP affords the same honor, recognition and protection regardless of the number of criterion it meets, and level of significance.

Therefore, staff recommends ***a finding of NRHP eligibility for the Loxahatchee Battlefield*** for the reasons contained within this report.

<b>Exhibits</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Notable Biographical Capsules	E-1
2. Correspondence from DHR	E-3
3. Loxahatchee Battlefield NRHP Nomination	E-5

## Exhibit 1

### Notable Biographical Capsules

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Select notable personages associated with the First and Second Loxahatchee Battles, and their biographies follow:

- **Lieutenant Levin M. Powell**, USN, was known as the “pioneer of riverine warfare” based on his work between March 1836—May 1838 along the coastline of Florida during the Second Seminole War—tactics developed included integrated personnel (with sailing and land combat training) operating from small craft along coastal/river locations attacking inland in opportunistic raids—these tactics were studied and employed over a century later during the Vietnam War; he was a career naval officer retiring with the rank of Admiral;
- Lt. Henry W. Fowler (US Army) commanded one division of Powell’s detachment forces, was also a commander of Company I of the First Artillery, was wounded in both legs during the First Battle. He later became a Lt. Colonel during the American Civil War leading the 63rd Regiment known as the *Irish Brigade*, one of the most respected units during the war (until they were decimated at the Battle of Antietam fighting to take the “Bloody Lane” from the Confederates).
- Joseph E. Johnston, Topographical Engineer, successfully defended the American forces retreating from the First Battle of the Loxahatchee; as a result of the experience in the First Battle, he re-joined the army, serving with distinction in the Mexican American War. Best known as a Confederate General during the Civil War, notably leading forces in the Peninsula campaign and the defense of Atlanta; He eventually became a congressman and was the US Commissioner of Railroads under President Cleveland.
- Acting Lieutenant William P. McArthur USN in charge of one craft involved in Powell’s expedition, led one division of the detachment at the First Battle, and shot in both legs during the conflagration. He recovered, and later was a hydrologist, surveying various coastlines, before eventually surveying the pacific coast for the US Geological Survey during the California gold rush.
- Lt. Robert McLane (USN) served under Powell at the First Battle. During the American Civil War, he went to DC to successfully garner support for Maryland not to be raised by Federal Troops. Following the war his diplomacy skills were recognized, as he was appointed to be the ambassador of Mexico, China and France.
- Lt. John B. Magruder (USA) served as part of the riverine forces commanded by Powell on the Florida coast. He later became Major General Magruder of the Confederate States of America and lead the Battles of Yorktown, the Seven Days Battle and the Battle of Malvern Hill.
- **Major General Thomas S. Jesup**, USA, Quartermaster General of the Army (before and after the Second Seminole War), regarded as the father of the modern quartermaster corps. Jesup was both the most successful and controversial General during the war, as he was remembered for capturing multiple Seminole leaders under flags of truce; also his leadership saw nearly 2,000 Seminoles captured and relocated to Oklahoma; Major William Lauderdale, leader of 400 Tennessee Volunteers at the Second Battle; later established Fort Lauderdale on the New River, namesake of the city.
- Lt. Colonel James Bankhead was commanded by Jesup. Upon hearing of Powell’s defeat he was dispatched to what would become Ft. Jupiter. In the American Civil War he was the commander of the US Army’s Department of the East. He headquartered in Ft. McHenry in Baltimore.

- Second Lt. John Clifford Pemberton served in the artillery at the Battle of the Loxahatchee. During the Civil War, Lt. General Pemberton (CSA) commanded forces at Vicksburg, and upon defeat, surrendered to General Grant.
- Jubal Anderson Early was an officer (rank unknown) and was instrumental in supplying Fort Jupiter following Powell's defeat. During the Civil War he fought with the CSA. After extorting the town of Hagerstown, MD, he marched east and threatened to sack Frederick, MD but would spare the small town for \$200,000. The town complied and were forced to sponsor the rose and saber ball in his honor. Upon learning of this extortion scheme General Lee relieved him of duty. It is unclear what transpired but Early continued to lead troops through the remainder of the war. However, upon hearing of Lee's surrender Early and several of his men fled to Mexico and later Canada.
- Second Lt. Braxton Bragg was an artillery officer at the Battle of the Loxahatchee. During the American Civil War, Confederate General Braxton Bragg commanded the Battles of Shiloh and Perryville. He was a brilliant tactician, often holding off forces with far greater numbers. Fort Bragg home of the US Airborne and Special Forces is named after him.
- Benjamin Huger (rank unknown) at the Battle of the Loxahatchee became a general in the CSA and lead the Peninsula Campaign in Virginia and several of the battles during the Seven Days Battle.
- Christopher Quarles Tompkins was commissioned into the artillery and sent to Florida where he fought at the battle of the Loxahatchee. During the Civil War he lead the 22<sup>nd</sup> Virginia Infantry.
- Second Lt. Tomas Sherman served in the artillery at the Battle of the Loxahatchee and became Brigadier General in the Union Army capturing Port Royal under Flag Officer Samuel F. DuPont.
- First Lt. Robert Anderson was in the Construction Pioneers of Company D of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Artillery at the Battle of the Loxahatchee. He was placed in command of cutting the military trail in pursuit of the fleeing Seminoles after the battle. Obtaining the rank of Major he was the commander of US forces at Fort Sumter in Charleston at the start of the Civil War.
- Second Lt. Seth Thornton was an officer in the Second Dragoons at the Battle of the Loxahatchee. He and 500 men were captured by Mexican soldiers, giving the US the pretext for starting the Mexican-American War. Thornton claimed he thought they were in the United States. However, it was shown they were actually well inside the Mexican border. This fact was twisted, unknown or overlooked at the time and war was declared.

The records of the Dragoons and the Alabama and Tennessee Volunteers are spotty, incomplete and in the worst case, no longer exist, so it is very difficult to say who else may have been involved at the Second Battle of the Loxahatchee. However, there are several potentially important historical figures. In the absence of further supporting documents, and to avoid speculation or perpetuating unsubstantiated involvement, these will not be discussed at this time.

## Exhibit 2 Correspondence

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### FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

**RON DESANTIS**  
Governor

**LAUREL M. LEE**  
Secretary of State

September 2, 2021

Mr. Christian Davenport  
County Archaeologist  
2300 North Jog Road  
West Palm Beach, FL 33411

Re: Loxahatchee Battlefield (PB08401), 9060 Indiantown Road, Jupiter, Florida 33478

Dear Mr. Davenport:

A Florida National Register Nomination Proposal for the above referenced property has been prepared by the State Historic Preservation Office. We solicit your review and recommendation concerning eligibility in accordance with the procedures established by the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (54 U.S.C. 302504), which created the basis for the participation of Certified Local Governments in the Florida National Register of Historic Places nomination process.

According to the Act, before properties within the jurisdiction of the certified local government may be considered by the State to be nominated for inclusion on the National Register, the State Historic Preservation Officer shall notify the owners, the applicable chief local elected official, and the local historic preservation commission. The commission, after reasonable opportunity for public comment, shall prepare a report as to whether or not such properties meets the eligibility criteria. Within sixty days of the notice from the State Historic Preservation Officer, the chief local elected official shall transmit the report of the commission and their recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer. If no such report and recommendation are received within sixty days, the State shall proceed with the nomination process.

If either the preservation agency or the chief local elected official supports the nomination of the property, the proposal will be scheduled for consideration by the Florida National Register Review Board. We have tentatively scheduled the nomination for the above property for consideration by the Florida National Register Review Board at their November 4, 2021 meeting.

If both the commission and the chief local elected official recommend that a property not be nominated to the National Register, the State Historic Preservation Officer shall take no further action, unless within thirty days of the receipt of such recommendation by the State Historic Preservation Officer an appeal is filed with the State. Any party may file an appeal with the State Historic Preservation Officer. If the State Historic Preservation Officer, after hearing the appeal, determines that the property is eligible, he shall proceed with the nomination process. The State Historic Preservation Officer shall include any

**Division of Historical Resources**  
R.A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399  
850.245.6300 • 850.245.6436 (Fax) • FLHeritage.com



Mr. Davenport  
September 2, 2021  
Page Two

reports and recommendations from any party along with the nomination submitted to the Keeper of the Register.

We look forward to your recommendation and comments regarding this property. If we can be of any further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me at [Ruben.Acosta@dos.myflorida.com](mailto:Ruben.Acosta@dos.myflorida.com) or 850-245-6364.

Sincerely,



Ruben A. Acosta  
Survey and Registration Supervisor  
Bureau of Historic Preservation

raa

Enclosures

**Exhibit 3**  
**Florida DHR Nomination for the Loxahatchee Battlefield**

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Loxahatchee Battlefield

other names/site number PB08401

**2. Location**

street & number 9060 Indiantown Road N/A  not for publication

city or town Jupiter N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Palm Beach code \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 33478

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is: Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

- entered in the National Register
  - See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
  - See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Loxahatchee Battlefield  
Name of Property

Palm Beach County, FL  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing		Noncontributing	
0	1	buildings	
1	0	sites	
0	1	structures	
0	0	objects	
1	2	total	

**Name of related multiple property listings**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DEFENSE: battlefield

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A  
walls N/A  
roof N/A  
other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Military

**Period of Significance**

1838

**Significant Dates**

1838

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository

# \_\_\_\_\_

Loxahatchee Battlefield  
Name of Property

Palm Beach County, FL  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** approximately 170 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	8	1	5	1	4	2	9	8	0	0	5	5
	Zone		Easting												
2	1	7	5	8	2	1	2	4	2	9	8	0	0	4	8

3	1	7	5	8	2	1	0	2	2	9	7	9	1	6	7
	Zone		Easting												
4	1	7	5	8	1	4	8	9	2	9	7	9	1	6	8

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Steve Bergkamp, Parks Coordinator; Andrew Waber, Historic Preservationist

organization Palm Beach County Dept. of Parks and Recreation date May 2014; July 2021

street & number 9060 Indiantown Road telephone (561) 746-6489

city or town Jupiter state FL zip code 33478

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name various

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

LOXAHATCHEE RIVER BATTLEFIELD  
JUPITER, PALM BEACH CO., FL  
DESCRIPTION

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**SUMMARY**

The Loxahatchee River Battlefield, which is located north and south of Indiantown Road (State Road 706) in what is now Jupiter, Florida, consists of a single site encompassing two battlefields fought within close proximity of each other during the Second Seminole War in 1838. The primarily flat terrain, which is dominated by the adjacent Loxahatchee River, features a mixture of cypress swamps, bottomland hardwood, hammocks, and marshlands within the river basin. Along the edges of the basin are upland oak and pine forests dominated primarily by slash pine, myrtle oak, and saw palmetto. Although local informants reported area residents finding battlefield artifacts as early as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first formal archaeological investigations took place here in the early 1990s. Although impacted by modern ground disturbances and years of amateur collectors and looters, archaeologists have found a number of artifacts likely connected to the battle, including musket balls, buckshot, a Kaskaskia copper point, metal fragments consistent with artillery shell, artillery buttons, and evidence of historic Seminole encampments on the site.

There have been some changes that have taken place to the landscape since 1838. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, citrus growing took place over much of the battlefield. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Indiantown Road connecting Indiantown to Jupiter was laid out and later expanded into a four-lane highway in the 1990s. Most of the battlefield south of Indiantown Road, which is county-owned, was converted into a public park. The county constructed support buildings and a parking lot over the location of a 20<sup>th</sup> century trailer park, along with an access road and trails. Despite these changes, however, the battlefield retains its integrity for listing.

**SETTING**

The Loxahatchee River Battlefield is a Second Seminole War battlefield located near the town of Jupiter in northern Palm Beach County, Florida. The immediate surroundings are mostly undeveloped but the battlefield is not far from residential and commercial development to the east, south, and west. West Indiantown Road, a divided four-lane highway that is the most significant modern intrusion, bisects and partially obscures the battlefield. The highway, which runs east-west, crosses over the Loxahatchee River. The battlefield is located adjacent to the river, which snakes its way north to south along the west side of the site. The river heavily impacts the landscape, with a mixture of cypress swamps, bottomland hardwood, hammocks, and marshlands within the river basin. Along the edges of the basin are upland oak and pine forests dominated primarily by slash pine, myrtle oak, and saw palmetto.

**DESCRIPTION**

The Loxahatchee Battlefield is primarily undeveloped, with all of the land falling under public ownership (Photos 1-17). The county converted the core of the battlefield south of Indiantown Road into Loxahatchee River Battlefield Park, in which they built an access road, park buildings, a parking lot, and trails. Portions of

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National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2

LOXAHATCHEE RIVER BATTLEFIELD  
JUPITER, PALM BEACH CO., FL  
DESCRIPTION

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the battlefield have been either covered over or destroyed by modern development such as the construction and widening of Indiantown Road and fill dirt from citrus growing operations and a historic trailer park built in the vicinity. There are two non-contributing resources, the park building and West Indiantown Road, which postdate the period of significance.

Battlefield Analysis

The National Park Service uses the KOCO A process developed by the United States military to evaluate the military significance of the terrain. KOCO A stands for Key Terrain/Decisive Terrain, Observation, Cover/Concealment, Obstacles, and Avenue of Approach/Withdrawal.

**Key terrain** ~ any local feature that dominates the immediate surroundings by relief or some other quality that enhances attack or defense...

**Decisive terrain** ~ ... Ground that *must* be controlled in order to successfully accomplish the mission. It is relatively rare and is not necessarily associated with a formal Course of Action, or present in every situation. Terrain is identified as decisive when it is recognized that the mission depends upon its seizure or retention. *Key terrain typically offers control of a local objective or an important transportation route...*

**Observation** ~ the ability to see friendly and enemy forces and key aspects of the terrain in order to judge strength, prevent surprise, and respond to threats.

**Field of fire** ~ an area that weapons may cover/fire upon effectively from a given position. A unit's field of fire is directly related to Observation.

**Dead space** ~ an area within the maximum range of a weapon or observer, which cannot be covered or seen from a particular position...

**Cover** ~ protection from enemy fire...

**Concealment** ~ protection from enemy observation and surveillance...

**Obstacles** ~ natural or manmade terrain features that prevent, impede, or divert military movement. *Existing obstacles* are already present on the battlefield and not placed there through military effort. They can be natural... or cultural... *Reinforcing obstacles* are placed on the battlefield through military effort and are designed to strengthen the terrain. Reinforcing obstacles include such things as entrenchments, earthworks, and abates...

**Avenue of approach** ~ relatively unobstructed ground route that leads to an objective or to key terrain

**Avenue of withdrawal** ~ relatively unobstructed route that leads away from an objective or key terrain

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National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 3 LOXAHATCHEE RIVER BATTLEFIELD  
JUPITER, PALM BEACH CO., FL  
DESCRIPTION

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**Mobility corridor** ~ area where movement is channeled due to terrain constrictions, e.g., road over a causeway. *The size of an attacking unit is limited by the breadth and difficulty of its Avenue of Approach.*<sup>1</sup>

One of the hindrances to the fully evaluating the Battle of Loxahatchee are the rather vague descriptions of the two engagements that took place here. As ESI noted in their 2010 report, the flat topography, subsequent alterations to the landscape, uncertainty relating to avenues of approach and withdrawal, and the lack of permanent buildings and structures at the time of the battle all limit the identification of clear defining features.

Defining Features of Powell's Battle

In the descriptions of Powell's battle, he approached the Seminoles and Mikasukis from a southwesterly direction via a trail at the end of a cypress swamp. During the battle, Powell and his men crossed a creek, likely the Eastern Slough, and pushed the Seminole and Mikasuki defenders back roughly 700-800 yards to another cypress swamp and the location of a Seminole/Miccosukee village before being forced to retreat.

Evaluating Powell's Battle Using KOCOA:

There are five principal landscape features described in Powell's Battle: the creek, two cypress swamps, a trail, and the Seminole/Miccosukee village. The creek, which is likely the Eastern Slough of the Loxahatchee, was a key avenue of approach, a key element of the terrain, an area of observation for the Seminole/Mikasuki warriors, an area in the field of fire for both sides, and an obstacle for the advancing American forces. The unnamed "heavy trail" that Powell's forces used, which was the principal avenue of approach and likely withdrawal, has never been definitively located but was likely somewhere on the northeast side of the battlefield. The Seminole/Mikasuki village was a key element of the terrain, decisive terrain for both the Seminole/Miccosukee defenders and the American attackers, an area of observation, and an area in the field of fire. It was that the Seminoles and Mikasukis turned back the American forces and won this initial engagement. The location of this village has been determined to be most likely somewhere in the vicinity of the Shrunk Tract north of Indiantown Road. The precise locations of the cypress swamps are unclear but the second swamp located adjacent to the village was likely in the vicinity of the Shrunk Tract. These would have been key elements of the terrain and obstacles for the advancing and later retreating American force.

Defining Features of Jesup's Battle

In Jesup's Battle, soldiers followed a Native American trail, which was likely the military trail referenced in later maps, in a southeast direction before locating Seminoles and Mikasukis at a crossing point on the

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<sup>1</sup> "Battlefield Mapping Methodology," p. 5-6, in National Park Service, *Battlefield Survey Manual* (Washington, 2016), <http://npshistory.com/publications/battlefield/battlefield-survey-manual-2016.pdf>.

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Loxahatchee River. The U.S. army then passed through a dense cypress slough roughly half a mile wide before emerging into open pine woods on the south or east side of the hammock. It was here that the Seminole/Miccosukee village was located. After the battle, the soldiers crossed the river either to the north or west and camped underneath oak trees.

Evaluating Jesup's Battle using KOCO A

There are five key terrain features described in Jesup's Battle: the military trail, the Loxahatchee River crossing, the cypress slough, the open pine woods, and the Seminole/Mikasuki encampment. The unnamed trail, which is most likely the Military Trail referenced on later maps, was a major avenue of approach for Jesup's forces. This was most likely the linear resource located from the western side of Riverbend Park and extending northeast across Indiantown Road into the Shrunk Tract. The Loxahatchee River crossing was another avenue of approach and an obstacle for Jesup's army. The location of this crossing was most likely in the vicinity of the Loxahatchee River Battlefield Park south of Indiantown Road. The cypress slough was a key area of the terrain, an avenue of approach and an obstacle for Jesup's army, an area of cover, concealment, and observation for the Seminoles and Mikasukis, and an area in the line for fire for both the U.S. army and the natives. This slough was likely a hydric hammock surrounding the Loxahatchee River found in the vicinity of the crossing near Loxahatchee River Battlefield Park. The open pine woods between the slough and the village was a key terrain, an avenue of approach and observation for the U.S. army, and an area in the field of fire for both the U.S. army and the natives. This stretch of pine woods was most likely in the Shrunk Tract between Indiantown Road and the village. Much as in the Powell engagement, the Seminole/Mikasuki encampment was both a key element of the terrain and a decisive element of the terrain for both the natives and the army. It was the hub of Seminole/Mikasuki resistance and its seizure was the chief military objective of the battle. It was a place of observation and in the field of fire during the second engagement. It was clear to observers immediately after the fighting that this village was the same village attacked by Powell less than two weeks earlier when they found the body of a sailor from Powell's detachment nearby.

**PREVIOUSLY INVESTIGATED SITES**

Within the battlefield are several collective sites, each of which have been assigned their own Florida Master Site File number:

PB7944 (Shrunk Site #1)

Researchers from Florida Atlantic University recorded this site in the early 1990s. They determined that this site was a mixture of a prehistoric midden with components of the Seminole wars era. They found a Seminole Kaskaskia copper point, musket balls, and buckshot during the initial survey. Archaeologist Robert Carr and AHC also investigated this site a few years later in the mid-1990s.

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PB7945 (Shrunk Site #2)

This site featured exclusively historic period artifacts mostly military in nature. Materials here consisted of musket balls, buckshot, a Minnie ball, an artillery button, and an iron mattock. Additional investigations at this site show that it was originally a prehistoric camp and later a military encampment possibly associated with the Third Seminole War.

PB7979 (Riverbend Park Site #7)

This site is located in the northwest corner of Riverbend Park and was recorded by AHC. Among the artifacts uncovered within the hammock was a 19<sup>th</sup> century knife blade, buckshot, musket balls, and a square nail. Within the adjacent swamp, a brass military button was found, likely associated with the battle. In the pinelands, there were three areas found to contain lead shot, including .69 caliber balls and shot recovered in a line and buckshot found in a circular scatter pattern. Archaeologists determined that two of the three areas represented either direct military action connected to the Battle of Loxahatchee or a military encampment associated with the battle.

PB7980 (Riverbend Park Site #8)

This site represented a possible location of the military trail used by General Thomas Jesup, based upon calculations drawn from an 1845 map. Although two faint ruts were detected roughly eight feet apart, investigators from AHC could not find definitive diagnostic evidence of the period. They did find a broken copper fastener and spent musket ball within the area.

PB8009 (Windmill Site)

Investigations at this site yielded a number of likely battle-related artifacts, including lead balls and worked metal. There have been several large pieces of metal uncovered here that resemble artillery shell and pieces of metal with what appears to be iron shot fused to the inner wall. It is likely derived from a Congreve rocket or some other projectile.

PB8209 (Seminole Skirmish Site)

This site was the likely a skirmish location of Seminole and Miccosukee defenders. Archaeologists found evidence of fired and unfired small caliber musket balls scattered and in clusters. They also recovered lead plummets or pendants at the site, further strengthening a possible Seminole/Miccosukee connection. This site is now mostly destroyed.

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PB8211 (Packing House Site)

This site, which is the location of two former citrus packing houses, primarily contained late-19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century artifacts associated with the citrus industry. Investigators found musket balls likely associated with the Battle of Loxahatchee within this site.

PB11418 (Eustis Military Trail)

This site marks the military road known as the Eustis Trail, which the U.S. Army used to transport soldiers and supplies between Fort Jupiter and Fort Van Sweringen.

Informant Accounts

Local residents and amateur collectors and archaeologists have been finding battle-related artifacts in the vicinity for many years prior to any formal archaeological investigation. According to local lore, two of the early citrus growers in the area came across bones and artifacts connected to the fighting that included muskets. A former caretaker of the Reece property, which was located within what is now the county-owned park, who resided nearby, collected numerous artifacts connected to the battle. The caretaker buried the artifacts in an undisclosed location. A unnamed former county employee, who was a relic hunter, allegedly found musket balls, buckles, and other items within the roots of trees that lined the river nearby. Among these artifacts were grape shot, proof that Jesup's forces were here as they alone used this material. Road workers working on the construction of Indiantown Road also came across numerous artifacts likely connected to the battle. These accounts, although anecdotal, lends circumstantial support to the location of a significant concentration of military materials in the vicinity commensurate with an engagement.

**Archaeological Data**

Over the past 19 years, extensive archaeological research has been conducted within the study area and in its immediate vicinity. More than 43 archaeological sites have been recorded in the Riverbend Park property, including ten sites believed to be related to the Loxahatchee Battlefield.

For many years, the precise location of the Loxahatchee River battlefields remained a matter of conjecture. Few accounts of the battle were written, and even fewer could be called comprehensive. Two of the most important documents from the time, the battlefield accounts of Powell and surgeon Dr. Jacob R. Motte, place the location of Powell's battlefield as between cypress swamps about a half-mile apart, on the eastern side of the Loxahatchee River. While Jesup's battle is located on the western side of the river, the battlefields are very close together. For years, advocates and local historians contended that the Battle of the Loxahatchee River had been fought in present-day Riverbend Park. Until 1989, popular history improperly placed the location of the

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battle within Jonathan Dickinson State Park, several miles north of Riverbend Park. This is because Motte's account of Jesup's battle states that the Army crossed the river north to south, rather than west to east. There is a 90-degree bend in the Loxahatchee River within the state park, presenting itself as north to south as Motte had said. No archaeological artifacts have been found substantiating this claim, however.

Florida Atlantic University Investigations

While artifacts have been found as early as 1978, the first serious archaeological study of the Loxahatchee Battlefield occurred in 1991, when the Florida Atlantic University (FAU) Department of Anthropology conducted a cultural resource assessment survey in connection with the proposed realignment of Indiantown Road (SR706). FAU staff and students undertook a Phase I survey and later a Phase II investigation of the Gildan right-of-way and in the process identified the Riverbend Park Site (PB7511), which they initially thought to be earthworks.

In 1993, FAU returned to do additional work in conjunction with the Indiantown Road realignment project. One of the three tracts of land they investigated was the Shrunken Tract, in which there were two sites recorded (PB7944 and PB7945) that had potential Seminole/Miccosukee artifacts. Within PB7944, in addition to prehistoric ceramics, archaeologists also found a Seminole Kaskaskia copper point, musket balls, and buckshot at the site. They determined it was Seminole campsite with remnants of prehistoric occupation. With PB7945, they found primarily military artifacts, most of which were Second or Third Seminole War period. These artifacts consisted of items such as musket balls, buckshot, a Minnie ball, an artillery button, and an iron mattock. Researchers determined that this site was first a prehistoric camp, and later a military encampment, with possible association with the Third Seminole War.

Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc., Investigations

Following FAU's work, the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc. (AHC) started a Phase I survey of Riverbend Park in 1994. AHC found a total of five sites with military deposits and six sites that contained evidence of Seminole/Miccosukee presence. They concluded that both Powell's and Jesup's battles took place within what is now Riverbend Park. After a Phase II investigation, AHC concluded that there was a Seminole presence that continued here after the Second Seminole War.

From December 1995 to January 1996, AHC returned to investigate the southern portion of PB7945. This survey consisted of surface collection, metal detection, and (4) 1m test units. They found a mixture of prehistoric, Seminole, and U.S. military artifacts. Among these items were musket balls, a Seminole lead plummet, and a brass knuckle that likely belonged to a U.S. soldier, which they found within 30m of the riverbank.

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In the summer of 1996, AHC conducted a Phase I survey of the Berg property, located between Jupiter Farms Road and Taylor Road. A metal detector survey uncovered items along the southern border of the property that were likely associated with Jesup's camp formed after the battle. Subsequent Phase II testing of the site found additional materials likely associated with Jesup's camp. Further investigations in 1996 connected to the road widening of Indiantown Road found two additional sites, PB7979 and PB8209, that contained Seminole War artifacts.

Environmental Services, Inc., Investigations

In 2010, archaeologists working for Environmental Services, Inc. (ESI) investigated the Loxahatchee Battlefield site, conducting an archaeological assessment on 137 acres. There were several purposes for the investigation: to compliment and collate existing data; provide a cohesive archaeological picture of the battlefield in anticipation of preparing a National Register nomination; identify predictable off-property locations for cultural deposits related to the battlefield; and assess the battlefield for National Register eligibility.

ESI conducted a series of shovel tests over 11 different test areas supplemented with metal detecting. In total, they uncovered 20 prehistoric and 77 historic artifacts. Of the historic artifacts, 18 of them postdated the Second Seminole War and the remaining were unidentified metal fragments of indeterminable age. In one testing area, they uncovered a broken mule shoe, which may be from Second Seminole War period but was difficult to verify. In investigations near the Windmill Site (PB8009), ESI uncovered large metal fragments resembling the characteristics of an artillery shell. There were other metal fragments that had what appeared to be iron shot fused to the inner wall, which possibly derived from a Congreve rocket or some other projectile. Aside from this, there were few additional artifacts uncovered, due in large part to a combination of extensive site disturbance, intensive looting, and the introduction of fill dirt in key areas such as the former trailer park. They speculated, however, that much of the site may still remain under the fill dirt.

ESI identified PB7979, PB7976, and PB7944 as in the heart of the core battlefield and PB7945 as the likely location of Powell's incursion into the Seminole village. Stratigraphic profiles of PB7944, PB7945, and PB7979 also suggested that intact deposits connected to the sites still exist belowground. A number of core battlefield components, including PB8208, PB8211, PB7980, and PB7973 were either completely gone or heavily disturbed due to the Indiantown Road project. Based upon their investigations and evaluations of previous fieldwork done on the battlefield, ESI developed a map for the core battlefield. They also identified possible areas for further evaluation that may yield archaeological information pertinent to the battle.

**Alterations**

There have been a number of changes that have taken place at the Loxahatchee Battlefield since 1838. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the area underwent extensive citrus growing, which led to extensive ground

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disturbance. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Indiantown Road, which connected Indiantown to Jupiter, was constructed through the area. In the 1990s, the road was expanded into a divided four-lane highway, significantly impacting the battlefield. Its construction and expansion has led to the full or partial destruction and obscuring of portions of the original battlefield. Sometime in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, a trailer park was built over portions of the former citrus field. A significant amount of fill dirt was placed over the area when the trailer park was built, leading to some speculation that there are artifacts to be found. Much of this land has since been reclaimed by the state of Florida, Palm Beach County, and the city of Jupiter. Aided in large part by archaeological investigations first started with the expansion of Indiantown Road, Palm Beach County has since converted portions of Riverbend Park into the Loxahatchee River Battlefield Park. The elements of the former trailer park have been replaced by park support buildings and structures. The county has also added an access road, trails, and a parking lot. The land north of Indiantown Road, which is state-owned, remains undeveloped and largely unchanged.

**Integrity**

Archaeological investigations, historical research, and informant interviews has led researchers to determine with a fair degree of certainty that the events of the Battle of Loxahatchee at least partially took place within the current boundaries. The construction and expansion of Indiantown Road, activities of looters and amateur archaeologists and collectors, and post-1838 settlement and development has resulted in the removal of numerous artifacts and the destruction or obscuring of several known archaeological sites associated with the battle. Despite this, archaeologists have been able to thoroughly investigate, record, and collect artifacts from areas of the site affected by road construction and formally concluded with a fair degree of confidence the battle's location in the vicinity, including the likely location of the Seminole and Miccosukee village, based upon material evidence. There are also certain areas disturbed by modern development such as the ground underneath the former trailer park on the south side of Indiantown Road (now underneath county park building and parking lot) that are highly likely to retain artifacts due to the depth of fill dirt placed over the ground. Stratigraphic testing of several known sites within the battlefield show evidence that intact deposits connected to the sites still exist belowground. The land to the north of the Indiantown Road, although historically disturbed by some of the same activities that took place to the south of the road, retained material evidence of both the battle and occupation of the site. Subsequent research and investigations may lead to an expansion of the boundaries. As a result, the battlefield retains its integrity of location and association.

The setting has been most impacted since the original battle back in 1838. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, much of the area was cleared out and used for citrus growing. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Indiantown Road was constructed connecting Indiantown to Jupiter, a roadway which was widened into a divided four-lane highway in the 1990s. This section near the Loxahatchee River has long been used as an overland thoroughfare, however, a point that was critical to the placement of the Seminole/Mikasuki encampment and the fighting of the battle itself. The construction of the road and its subsequent widening is in many ways a continuation of a

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land use pattern dating back to before Florida achieved statehood in 1845. The military trail or road carved by Jesup's army was featured in some of the earliest survey maps of the area. Although the highway obscures portions of the battlefield and alters its setting and feeling, it was the construction and widening of the road that led to the discovery of the battlefield in the first place. The county converted portions of the battlefield south of Indiantown Road into a public park, which entailed constructing an access road, hiking trails, a parking lot, and small support buildings and structures. Many of these elements were simply built over a preexisting trailer park that was built here in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Aside from the park resources, which do not overwhelm the landscape, the battlefield remains largely open and undeveloped to the north and south of the highway. Key elements of the landscape, including the adjacent Loxahatchee River and the mixture of cypress swamps, bottomland hardwood hammocks, and marshlands within the river basin and the upland pine and oak forests along the edges of the basin remain. The South Florida Water Management District is the primary owner of the area to the north of Indiantown Road within the Shrunk Tract, which was the most likely location of the Seminole/Mikasuki village crucial to the battle. This area has been largely undeveloped or returned to nature. Although the setting has been impacted, the battlefield retains its integrity of setting. As the most important elements of the battle, which was the river and varied landscape along the basin, have been mostly retained, the battlefield also retains its integrity of feeling.

Aside from the Seminole village, which was hurriedly constructed by retreating members of the Seminole and Miccosukee tribes and was temporary in nature, the battlefield itself had little to no additional manmade features upon which conventional analyses of material, design, and workmanship integrity of many historical battlefields are normally evaluated. The structural evidence of their occupation would be virtually non-existent. The Seminoles and Mikasukis relied on the natural topography and waterways to form their defense and counteract their disadvantage in numbers. Archaeological evidence found onsite consistent with a military skirmish and a Seminole/Mikasuki encampment has led archaeologists to conclude with a fair degree of certainty that at least portions of the village at the center of both engagements was to the north of Indiantown Road within the Shrunk Tract. Jesup's men also cut a road or trail to the west of the battlefield that likely crossed the Loxahatchee River to the south of Indiantown Road within the boundaries of modern-day Loxhatchee River Battlefield Park. Research has located one linear resource, the PB11918, in the vicinity of the battlefield that was likely a small portion of the military trail built by the U.S. army that served as the main avenue of approach for Jesup's army. Although the road or trail was a key part of the battle and more research would be needed to definitively link this trail to the military trail, the battlefield itself possessed little in the way of structural elements that would be reasonably expected to survive. The battlefield therefore retains its integrity of materials, design, and workmanship.

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**SUMMARY**

The Loxahatchee Battlefield is significant at the local and state level under Criterion A in the area of Military. The period of significance is 1838, the date of the two engagements that comprise the Battles of the Loxahatchee. The site marks the location of two Seminole War battles fought less than two weeks apart in 1838 primarily between American forces and the Seminole and Mikasuki tribes. The site was the last major conflict of the Second Seminole War, a war that was the longest and costliest conflict with the Native Americans in U.S. history. These battles, which took place shortly after the Battle of Okeechobee, marked a significant turning point in the war. Soon afterwards, over 500 Seminoles and Mikasukis surrendered to the U.S. army and were deported to what is now Oklahoma. Although the war lingered on until 1842, it was mainly skirmishes between small detachments of military patrols and Native American bands primarily seeking to hide and avoid deportation.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

**The First Seminole War**

The Battles of the Loxahatchee took place in early 1838 during the Second Seminole War of 1835-1842, which is the second of three wars fought in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century collectively called the Seminole wars. These conflicts comprised but a portion of the larger Indian Wars waged against the Native Americans during the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The relationship between the United States and the Native Americans of Florida was not a stable one, with animosity between the two groups existing since the American Revolution. The birth of the United States created a political entity that was incompatible with the Native Americans, and coexistence was almost inconceivable.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the decades between the American Revolution and the War of 1812, tensions between Native Americans in Florida and white settlers increased, and would reach a boiling point in 1816.

The British regarded the Native Americans of the eastern seaboard to be important geopolitical allies. Many Native Americans sided with the British in the War of 1812.<sup>3</sup> The Creek War, which was fought primarily in what is now Alabama in 1813 and 1814, pitted Red Stick Creeks against the American army, state militias, and their Native American allies. This war was fought concurrently with the ongoing War of 1812. The British used Florida as a base of operations for providing supplies to the Red Stick Creek, Seminoles, and Miccosukee. The end of the Creek War, which resulted in the Treaty of Fort Jackson, and the end of the War of 1812 and departure of the British was disastrous for the Creek. They were forced to cede over 23 million acres of land in

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<sup>2</sup> John K. Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War 1835-1842 Revised Edition (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1991), 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

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what is now Georgia and Alabama. Many Creek refugees, including prominent future leaders such as Osceola, fled south into Spanish Florida and joined the Seminoles. During the War of 1812, the British built several fortified installations along the Spanish-occupied lands along the Apalachicola River. One of the British forts along the river was Prospect Bluff, known derogatorily by the locals of the time as “Negro Fort.” The fort was home to several hundred Seminoles and Black Seminoles. The presence of a military fortification manned by a large number of freedmen and formerly enslaved African Americans along the Apalachicola River unnerved plantation owners in neighboring Alabama and Georgia, who clamored for its removal. On orders from Jackson, the fort was to be captured and its occupants relocated. After about eight rounds of “hot shot” (cannonballs heated to a red glow), the ninth shot hit the fort’s powder magazine, and the resulting explosion leveled the fort and instantly killed around 250-270 of the 300-320 known occupants of the fort.<sup>4</sup> The Americans later rebuilt a fortification over the ruins of Negro Fort, which they named Fort Gadsden.

The cession of Mikasuki land by Creek leaders (whose authority he did not recognize) at the Treaty of Fort Jackson and the sudden presence of American soldiers and surveyors at Fort Scott across the river from his village of Fowltown angered Mikasuki leader Neamathla. He ordered Col. Edmund Gaines not to cross the Flint River. In response, Gaines ordered an attack on Fowltown in November 1817, killing five natives and burning the village. In retaliation for this attack, a group of natives attacked a boat along the Apalachicola River loaded with U.S. army soldiers, killing 37 of the 40 soldiers along with six women and four children. Known colloquially as the Scott Party Massacre, this event drew national attention. General Andrew Jackson was ordered to Fort Scott to conduct a campaign as best he saw fit, thus starting the First Seminole War. This war was a brief conflict. By May 1818, Andrew Jackson’s army had invaded Florida (then a Spanish territory) and destroyed several Seminole and Mikasuki villages, including Tallahassee. He also took the Spanish fortification of St. Marks, and it was here where he tried and later executed two British citizens, an incident which had international implications. Spain protested these incursions onto her soil, but lacked the military power to retaliate.<sup>5</sup> The result was international reprimand of Jackson’s actions and a brief closing of negotiations with Spain. With little military strength to enforce its rule on the territory, Spain eventually ceded Florida to the United States in 1821.<sup>6</sup>

The American takeover of Florida in 1821 signaled a change in the fortunes of Seminoles and Mikasukis living in the territory. During the Second Spanish Period, trade flourished between the Seminoles and the Spanish and British. The wealth and independence generated by this trade greatly augmented the power of autonomous bands within the Lower Creek operating in Florida. When the United States first took over, they at first pursued a policy of restriction, which they partially achieved through the Treaty of Moultrie Creek, signed in 1823. In exchange for renouncing their rights to all other lands in Florida, the government granted them a large

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>6</sup> Richard J. Procyk, Guns Across the Loxahatchee: Remembering the Seminole Wars (Cocoa: Florida Historical Society, 2011), 26.

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reservation in central Florida. Eventually, larger national policies advocated by President Andrew Jackson pushed for complete Native American removal from east of the Mississippi River. The passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830 made this an official government policy. With this goal in mind, the American government sought a new treaty, the Treaty of Payne's Landing, which was signed under dubious circumstances in 1832. The treaty required all Seminoles to remove to the Creek reservation west of the Mississippi River in what is now Oklahoma, where they would live under the jurisdiction of the Creek confederation. A contingent of Seminole leaders were sent to the Creek reservation to assess the lands and inquire from Creeks already living there. Although they signed the treaty, the Treaty of Fort Gibson, the returning Seminole leaders quickly reneged on it, claiming coercion and declaring the agreement null and void.

**The Second Seminole War**



Osceola, circa 1842  
(Source: State Archives of Florida)

The United States government appointed Wiley Thompson as Indian Agent to negotiate a peaceful surrender and transportation of the Seminoles. As it became apparent that they were not going to leave, Thompson requested and received military assistance. As the army started to mobilize in the area to enforce the treaty in 1835, the Seminoles were ready to fight for their land. On December 28, 1835, Seminole forces ambushed a U.S. army detachment under the command of Major Francis Dade en route to Fort King (near present-day Ocala, Florida) from Fort Brooke (near present-day Tampa, Florida). Known as Dade's Battle, only three soldiers and an enslaved translator survived the attack.<sup>7</sup> Within days, a combined force of U.S. regulars and Florida militia under the command of Brigadier General Duncan Clinch, unaware of the fate of Major Dade's force, marched on Native American settlements along the Withlacoochee River. It was here that Seminole and Mikasuki warriors under the leadership of Osceola confronted them. The ensuing battle, the Battle of Withlacoochee, resulted in a Seminole victory, as they forced the Americans to retreat. These engagements along with the attack on Fort King that resulted in the death of Thompson, which occurred on the same day as Dade's Battle, marked the official beginning of the Second Seminole War.

In the aftermath of the battles, the United States government felt justified in retaliating against the Seminoles. Major General Winfield Scott arrived in Florida and assumed command of the army. Complicating Winfield's

<sup>7</sup> Michael V. Gannon, *Florida: A Short History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 32.

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General Thomas Jesup, circa 1840  
(source: State Archives of Florida)

campaign was Brigadier General Edmund Pendleton Gaines, who arrived in Florida without authorization. Initially marching to Fort King, Gaines decided to retreat after finding a lack of provisions there. Confronting Seminoles along the way back, American forces under Gaines' command were trapped at Camp Izard, a small wood breastwork. Scott, who personally blamed Gaines for ruining his campaign, initially refused to come to his aid. Gaines narrowly avoided a fate similar to Dade after Clinch came to his rescue. Shortly afterward, Gaines left Florida, leaving Scott to carry out his plans of attack in Florida. What Scott and his predecessors failed to realize is that they had heavily underestimated their opponent. The Seminoles knew the territory much better, and used their surrounding environment to their advantage. The ability of the Seminoles to attack the Americans quickly and disappear into the swamplands epitomized guerilla warfare. Scott's campaign failed, and the guerilla tactics of the Seminoles, combined with disease and unfamiliar terrain and exhausting climate, led to the drained Army's retreat in mid-1836. An attempt by Florida Governor Richard Keith Call to attack the Seminoles at the Cove of the Withlacoochee and at Wahoo Swamp in late 1836 also met with failure.

After the failures of Gaines and Scott, Major General Thomas S. Jesup was given command of the Army in Florida. It was under Jesup's leadership that the tide of the war began to change. He kept pressure on the Seminoles by wearing their forces down and, through unconventional methods, capturing their chiefs. On September 10, 1837, the Army captured King Phillip, one of the most important chiefs in Florida, near present-day Port Orange. Later that year, under a white flag, Jesup ordered the arrest of Osceola and Coacoochee (Wild Cat), and held them at Fort Marion (Castillo de San Marcos) in St. Augustine. Though Coacoochee escaped and returned to the fighting, Osceola remained a prisoner and died at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina.<sup>8</sup> In order to force the Seminoles into relocation, Jesup's plan was to sweep south down Florida with three columns of Army regulars and volunteers, and push the Seminoles southward.<sup>9</sup>

In command of the central column was Colonel Zachary Taylor, a future President of the United States. Taylor's forces fought the first major action of the campaign on Christmas Day 1837 at the Battle of Lake

<sup>8</sup> Michael Grunwald, *The Swamp: the Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2007), 48.

<sup>9</sup> Procyk, *Guns Across the Loxahatchee*, 71.

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Okeechobee. The Army faced a well-prepared force of approximately 400 Seminoles led by Coacoochee, Alligator, and Sam Jones (Arpeika). Despite having to cross a wide slough with tall sawgrass in order to engage the Seminoles, Taylor still ordered a frontal assault. The result was the bloodiest encounter of the war. A total of 26 Americans were killed and 112 were wounded, while 13 Seminoles were killed and 19 were wounded, more casualties than any other engagement in the war. Though the Army suffered the greater number of casualties, Taylor succeeded in driving the Seminoles further south.<sup>10</sup> The battle was hailed as a great victory for Taylor, who earned the moniker "Old Rough and Ready." Driven out of the Okeechobee region, the Seminoles moved eastward towards the Loxahatchee River, where Powell and Jesup would meet them on the field of battle.

**Powell's Battle**



Levin M. Powell  
(source: William B. Cogar, *Dictionary of Admirals of the U.S. Navy 1862-1900*  
(Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1989))

The encounter known as Powell's Battle was the result of careful preparation by the Seminoles and poor timing by the Americans. While the Seminoles from the Lake Okeechobee engagement were moving southward, a detachment of soldiers and sailors commanded by Navy Lieutenant Levin M. Powell was patrolling the east coast near the Jupiter Inlet.<sup>11</sup> While here, he spotted smoke rising from a distance and decided to investigate its source. Leaving 23 sailors behind with their boats, Powell and a contingent of 55 sailors and 25 artillerymen disembarked and proceeded to follow the trail. A notable feature of Powell's detachment was that it included free African Americans fighting alongside whites. Army surgeon Dr. Jacob R. Motte noted that the motley group of soldiers and sailors resembled the keys of a piano.<sup>12</sup> During their pursuit of the Seminoles, the men captured and interrogated an elderly Seminole woman, who told them she would lead them to where the Seminoles were making camp. In actuality, the woman was leading Powell's forces into a trap. Having no knowledge of the Battle of Lake Okeechobee, Powell stumbled upon the camp of Tuskegee, Halleck Hadjo, and Sam Jones' retreating Okeechobee fighters.<sup>13</sup>

On January 15, 1838, Powell and his 55 sailors and 25 soldiers were met by the Seminoles along the Loxahatchee River. He had greatly underestimated the size of the Seminole and Mikasuki force, losing four

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>11</sup> Arbuthnot, et. al., "Archaeological and Historical Investigation," [3-8].

<sup>12</sup> Procyk, *Guns Across the Loxahatchee*, 74.

<sup>13</sup> Arbuthnot, et. al., "Archaeological and Historical Investigation," [3-8]-[3-9].

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Image of Seminoles hiding from  
U.S. Marines, circa 1835  
(Source: State Archives of Florida)

men while 22 were wounded. The only reason that the battle did not end in a massacre is that artillery fire provided by future Confederate general Joseph E. Johnston, who led the artillery after the commander Lt. Henry Fowler was wounded, gave cover for Powell's retreating forces. His clothes perforated by several bullets, Johnston took command of the detachment after all of the officers including Powell were wounded.<sup>14</sup> Johnston was the last to leave the battlefield, and the last to board a boat. In the dark, he was almost left behind. Powell stopped briefly along the river so that they could tend to the wounded. Afterward, he and what was left of the detachment proceeded to Fort Pierce.

Among the American casualties was naval surgeon and noted botanist Dr. Frederick Leitner. A respected naturalist and close friend of Dr. Motte (an eyewitness of both Powell and Jesup's battles), Leitner received a mortal bullet wound at the battle.<sup>15</sup> Conflicting accounts describe Leitner as being left for dead, captured by the Seminoles, and subsequently killed by a Seminole warrior.<sup>16</sup> Leitner's death shocked the public, and he and his work were compared to that of John Audubon.<sup>17</sup> It is unclear how many

Seminoles were killed, as they took their dead with them from the battlefield. Four were confirmed killed and an unknown number were injured. After the fact, Powell blamed his defeat on the incompetence of the men in his detachment rather than acknowledge the careful strategy of the Seminoles. Powell instead insisted that the soldiers and sailors alike were equally untrained, undisciplined, and unprepared.

### Jesup's Battle

By January 2, 1838, Gen. Jesup and mounted unit arrived at Fort Pierce on the Indian River, where they were soon joined by troops under the command of Gen. Joseph Hernandez. When Powell's detachment returned to Jesup's camp, General Jesup decided to proceed immediately and confront the Seminoles gathered on the Loxahatchee. On January 24, Jesup's force of 500 Tennessee and Alabama Volunteers, 600 dragoons (mounted infantry), 400 artillery, and 35 Delaware Indians set out in the direction of Powell's battlefield. Later that day,

<sup>14</sup> Procyk, *Guns Across the Loxahatchee*, 77.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Bradley M. Mueller, "A Phase I Cultural Resource Assessment Survey of a Portion of Riverbend Park Within the Town of Jupiter, Palm Beach County, Florida" (AHC Technical Report No. 803, Davie, 2007), 46.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

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U.S. Army cavalry shooting Waxe-Hadjo, circa 1835  
(source: State Archives of Florida)

as the army closed in on the Seminoles, the Second Dragoons first came under attack. Jesup ordered the remaining dragoon units and mounted personnel to the front to reinforce them.<sup>18</sup> It is unknown who was commanding the Seminole forces during this battle, or if they had a commander at all. The Seminoles once again chose the battlefield, which was a half-mile wide cypress swamp.<sup>19</sup> The thick hammock, deep muck, and dense number of cypress knees made mounted combat difficult, and eventually forced the dragoons to dismount. As Taylor had done at the Battle of Lake Okeechobee, Jesup ordered a direct charge into the enemy forces. Facing heavy musket fire (occasionally at close range), the dragoons and volunteers charged the fortified

Seminole camp, with support provided by the artillery's six-pounders (small cannons that fire a six-pound cannonball), howitzers (large cannons that fired a 12-pound cannonball), and Congreve rockets (conical, tripod-mounted, powder-propelled projectiles known for their demoralizing whizzing sound and terrible accuracy).

Despite the barrage of bullets, the Army pushed the Seminoles across a 35-foot wide portion of the Loxahatchee River to a second position which the Seminoles had prepared beforehand, clearing the areas around the trees for better visibility, cutting notches into the trees to rest their rifles, and taking positions up in the trees overlooking the river.<sup>20</sup> Through their preparation, the Seminoles were able to funnel the Army into their field of fire. Meanwhile, Colonel William S. Harney managed to cross the river with about 15 men from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dragoons and take a flanking position which hastened the Seminoles' retreat. Ironically, these men who survived the crossing to flank the Seminoles had no weapons to fight them with, as their powder and guns were wet from the river crossing. After the battle, Harney noted how surprised he was that the Seminoles retreated and did not notice that the soldiers were effectively unarmed as their gunpowder was not dry.<sup>21</sup> Under the heaviest fire, the Tennessee Volunteers began to lose forward momentum, and it was at this time that Jesup decided to lead their charge personally. Jesup dismounted, drew his pistol, and urged the volunteers to push forward. Upon reaching the riverbank, Jesup turned to look behind him, only to see that he was alone. As he turned, a musket ball

<sup>18</sup> Procyk, *Guns Across the Loxahatchee*, 78.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-80.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>21</sup> Mueller, "A Phase I Assessment," 49.

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Seminole village, circa 1837  
(source: State Archives of Florida)

struck his glasses, shattering them and leaving a deep cut on his left cheek below the eye. Jesup picked up the remains of his glasses, yelled for the volunteers to charge, and moved to the rear of the battle.<sup>22</sup>

After crossing the river, Harney's men came across a stretch of open pine woods, where they found the Seminole encampment. The Seminoles never intended to fight a prolonged battle, and broke off into several groups and retreated south, melting into the hammock while being pursued by the artillery. While tending to their wounded and dead, Jesup's men found the body of a sailor from Powell's battle in the vicinity of the encampment, indicating that the two battlefields were relatively close in proximity to one another.<sup>23</sup> With seven

Americans dead and 31 wounded and an unknown number of Seminole casualties, the Battle of the Loxahatchee River was a victory for Jesup. Afterwards, the army re-crossed the Loxahatchee River, where they set up camp underneath oak trees before heading to present-day Pennock Point to begin construction of Fort Jupiter.

### The Black Seminoles

A crucial element of the Seminole fighting force at the time of the Battle of the Loxahatchee River was the Black Seminoles. They comprised a mixture of freedmen and runaways who lived among the Seminoles, and people enslaved by the Seminoles, all of whom were of African descent. By 1838, many of the "Red" [Native American] Seminole warriors and leaders were either dead or captured. Black Seminole leaders such as Abraham, John Cavallo (a.k.a. John Horse), and Sampson led the Seminole forces in some of the fiercest fighting of the Second Seminole War.<sup>24</sup> Prior to the Seminole Wars in 1783, the British freed around 8,000 enslaved African-Americans in appreciation for their assistance against the Americans during the American Revolution. Many of them moved into Florida, and by the end of the war, they numbered 11,000.<sup>25</sup> When the Spanish regained Florida after 1812, a number of these freedmen moved to the Bahamas and other territories of

<sup>22</sup> Procyk, *Guns Across the Loxahatchee*, 81.

<sup>23</sup> Arbuthnot, et. al., "Archaeological and Historical Investigation," [3-12].

<sup>24</sup> Isa H. Bryant, *We R Florida* (West Palm Beach: Florida Black Historical Research Project, 1996), 11.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

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Negro Abraham,

Black Seminole leader Abraham, circa 1836  
(source: State Archives of Florida)

the British Empire. Those who remained played an important role in defending Florida from white settlers. The destruction of the fort at Prospect Bluff in 1816 hardened the resolve of the Black Seminoles, and strengthened their alliance with the Seminoles. Florida's cession in 1821 led to federal support of the seizure of Seminole lands, the later relocation of Red Seminoles to lands out west, and the re-enslavement of Black Seminoles, whom the government deemed as escaped slaves.<sup>26</sup>

The majority of the Seminole fighters at the Battle of the Loxahatchee River were in fact Black Seminoles. Their role in both Powell and Jesup's battles was not unnoticed by the whites fighting against them. After the battle, both Red and Black Seminoles welcomed a truce offered by General Jesup at Fort Jupiter. Jesup appealed to the U.S. President to allow these Seminoles to maintain a reservation on Florida land, but the federal government instead ordered Jesup to capture every Seminole at the fort. In the largest single capture of the war, Jesup's army took 166 Black Seminole fighters into custody, along with 514 Seminole men, women, and children.<sup>27</sup> The captured Seminoles were then relocated to Oklahoma, where the Black Seminoles later ran into trouble with the Creeks who wished to re-enslave them. As a result, John Cavallo took a large group of Black Seminoles south into Mexico, where they remained for a time before returning to Oklahoma.<sup>28</sup>

**Historic Context After the Battle of Loxahatchee (1838-1861)**

On January 27, 1838, the soldiers began building a picket fort located three miles from the Jupiter inlet, which was designated as Fort Jupiter.<sup>29</sup> Until Jesup's departure in May 1838, Fort Jupiter served as the headquarters for the war in Florida.<sup>30</sup> Located on what is known today as Pennock Point, the fort was the stopping point for supplies heading southward from Fort Pierce, and would be the starting point for the captured Seminoles as they

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>29</sup> Kenneth J. Hughes, A Chronological History of Fort Jupiter and U.S. Military Operations in the Loxahatchee Region 1838-1858 (Fort Lauderdale: Florida Coast Research and Publishing, 1992), 19.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 27.

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were taken to present-day Tampa for removal from Florida. In March 1838, Samuel Colt, famed weapons manufacturer and inventor, travelled to Fort Jupiter to demonstrate his new repeating rifle. William S. Harney was so impressed by them he outfitted his unit with them in their pursuit of Sam Jones. During a parley at the fort with Tuskegee and Halleck Hadjo, Jesup received orders to end the parley and remove the Seminoles outright. Jesup and his men then proceeded to capture the 513 Seminoles at the camp.

After the Battle of the Loxahatchee River, the captured Seminoles were escorted to Tampa along the Florida extension of the infamous "Trail of Tears." Once in Tampa, the Seminoles would be shipped off to the government-designated lands in Oklahoma. Jesup's campaign, culminating in the Battle of the Loxahatchee River, resulted in the capture of over 2,400 Native Americans and African Americans. The capture and surrender of 500 Seminoles as a result of the Battle of the Loxahatchee River represented the largest single capture of Jesup's Florida campaign, and few Seminoles were left in Florida by the end of the war.<sup>31</sup>

The Second Seminole War lingered on until 1842, with territorial skirmishes and brief exchanges of gunfire replacing the pitched battles of the first three years of the war. This change in the war directly stems from the Battle of the Loxahatchee River, the effects of which led to the capture of a significant portion of the Seminole fighting forces. Eventually, the remaining Seminoles were allowed to live on an informal reservation in southwest Florida, while those who remained outside of the reservation were rounded up and moved out west. The monetary cost of the Second Seminole War was high, with estimates around \$40,000,000.<sup>32</sup> Of the 40,000 regulars and volunteers who served during the conflict, 1,500 died, mostly from disease.<sup>33</sup> The total number of Seminoles killed in the war is unknown, but many homes, villages, and lives were lost to bullets, starvation, and disease. A large number of white settlers died at the hands of the Seminoles, but a specific number or estimate is unknown.

After 1841, the army abandoned the fort and the Loxahatchee region went quiet once again. During the period between 1841 and 1855, the government surveyed the coastline and selected a location for a proposed lighthouse on Jupiter Inlet in 1853.<sup>34</sup> This lighthouse, designed by Lieutenant George G. Meade and completed in 1860, directly contributed to the development and growth of the town of Jupiter. In 1855, U.S. Secretary of War Jefferson Davis initiated a program that included reactivating military posts along the southern Florida peninsula. Captain John A. Haskin was instructed to consider occupying a position at or in the vicinity of old Fort Jupiter.<sup>35</sup> A newer fort, also known as Fort Jupiter, was built a few miles closer to the inlet than Jesup's

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<sup>31</sup> Arbuthnot, et. al. "Archaeological and Historical Investigation," [3-13].

<sup>32</sup> Procyk, *Guns Across the Loxahatchee*, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 325.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

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fort and the foliage around it was cleared. Lieutenant Ambrose P. Hill commanded the fort. The new Fort Jupiter was unable to be completed due to a yellow fever outbreak that led to the evacuation of the fort.<sup>36</sup>

During and after the Loxahatchee conflict, Major Lauderdale and the Tennessee Volunteers constructed a road that spanned from Fort Jupiter to Fort Lauderdale. This road became known as Military Trail, and is still called thus by locals today. As noted previously, another trail was constructed too, this one to a fort near Tampa. This trail was used to take captured or surrendered Seminoles to ships that would take them to the Oklahoma reservations, and is known as the southern extension of the "Trail of Tears." Although warfare with the Native Americans would die down after the Third Seminole War, conflict with the Native Americans of the Midwestern plains would arise after the end of the Civil War.

### **Third Seminole War**

At the end of Second Seminole War, peace had come to Florida for a time. As settlers continued to move closer to the reservation, a 12-mile un-settle-able buffer zone around the reservation was established. Although the Seminoles mostly kept to themselves within the reservation, a band of raiding warriors led by Billy Bowlegs began burning down white properties and occasionally killing settlers. This led to an increased U.S. military presence in Florida, while officials continued to push for total Indian removal from Florida. By this time, Major General David E. Twiggs was commanding officer in Florida, and Brigadier General William S. Harney returned to Florida in 1856 to command the federal troops. By 1855, more than 700 troops were stationed across Florida. The Third Seminole War began when Billy Bowlegs and his Seminoles led a raid on a camp near present-day Fort Myers on December 20, 1855.<sup>37</sup> The war had few large battles, and was comprised mainly of quick Seminole raids and American retaliations. By 1858, the Seminoles had become weary of further loss and conflict, and agreed to relocation to Oklahoma. The remaining Seminoles moved deep into the Everglades, where whites did not want to settle. Today, the Seminole and Mikasuki tribes reside on reservations in south-central Florida, and maintain tribal governments and tribal traditions.

The outbreak of the Third Seminole War in December 1855 convinced the Army to reactivate Fort Jupiter. By 1857, two veterans of Jesup's Battle returned to fight the Seminoles. William S. Harney was in command of the federal troops in Florida and John C. Pemberton returned to the Loxahatchee region as Captain of Company E. They reactivated Fort Jupiter on March 14, 1857. The fort served as an important embarkation point for boat patrols and surveys of the rivers of the Florida interior, a crucial part of the war effort. By May 1857, the army patrolled many of the waterways around St. Lucie and the Indian River, yet they could not find the whereabouts of the Seminoles.<sup>38</sup> When the Third Seminole War ended in 1858, the necessity of Fort Jupiter ended. Like most

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>37</sup> Procyk, *Guns Across the Loxahatchee*, 96-97.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 86.

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of the other fortifications in Florida, the army evacuated Fort Jupiter, and the empty fort weathered and decayed away.<sup>39</sup> The 20-year existence of Fort Jupiter, the construction of the Jupiter Lighthouse, and the development of the town of Jupiter were all the direct result of the Battle of the Loxahatchee River. The exploration of the Loxahatchee region by the U.S. military revealed areas previously unknown to and unsettled by white men.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE – CRITERION A: Military**

Impact of the Battles of the Loxahatchee River on Florida

The Battles of the Loxahatchee, coupled with the earlier Battle of Okeechobee, marked a significant change in the Second Seminole War. They were the last military engagements in the war that can be considered conventional battles with substantial forces on both sides, although the Seminoles and Mikasuki were outnumbered. The surrender of over 500 Seminoles and Black Seminoles shortly after this battle permanently altered the course of the war. Although the war lasted until 1842, subsequent engagements were primarily small skirmishes between Army and Navy patrols and remnants of the Seminoles and Mikasukis who were largely in hiding and seeking to avoid detection and deportation.

The battle also led to a division between the Seminoles and the Mikasukis.<sup>40</sup> When the Seminoles surrendered after the battle, they told the soldiers that they were fighting a Mikasuki war (and not a Seminole one), and even offered to guide them against the Mikasuki.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>40</sup> Arbuthnot, et. al., "Archaeological and Historical Investigation," [3-13].

<sup>41</sup> Robert S. Carr and Alison Elgart-Berry, "Designation Report for a Segment of the Old Indiantown Road, Palm Beach County, Florida" (AHC Technical Report No. 508: Davie, 2004), 13.

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### Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary encompasses portions of West Indiantown Road (Florida State Road 706), Taylor Road, the Loxahatchee River, and parcel numbers 00424105000003080, 00424105000003100, 30424105000003060, 00424105000003120, 00424105000003140, 00424105000007020, 00424106000001050, 00424106000001100, 00424106000005020, 00424106000005090, 30424106000001020, and 30424106000001040 of the Palm Beach County, Florida, Property Appraiser's Office Records (July 19, 2021). Please see boundary map for more details.

### **Boundary Justification:**

The boundary includes the property that past archaeological investigations have determined to be the core battlefield of the Battles of the Loxahatchee. The portions of the southern end of the boundary encompass areas where oral histories have mentioned artifacts being found. Contemporary accounts of Jacob R. Mott also references much of the action in this vicinity. Future investigations and fieldwork may necessitate a further expansion of the boundary.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

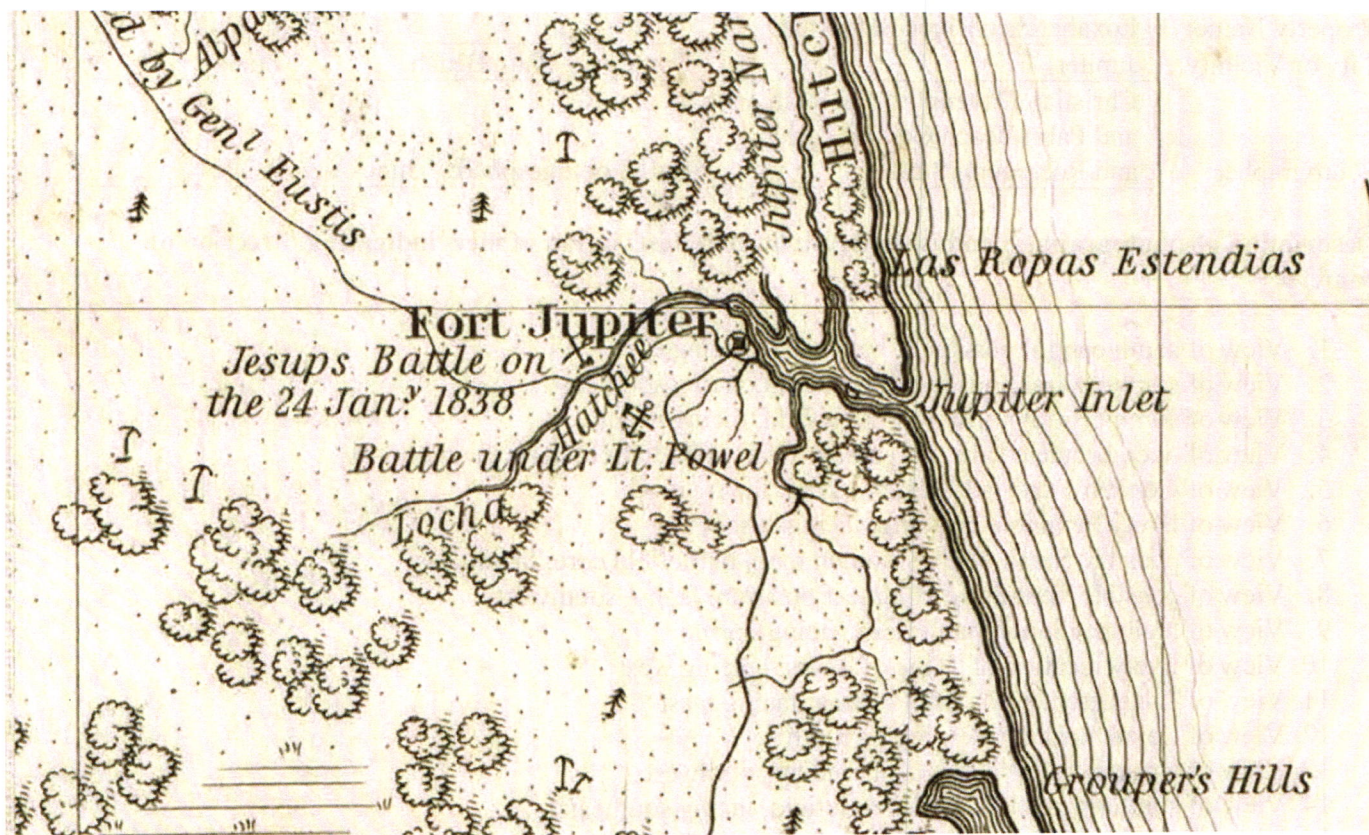
## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number      Figures      Page   1  

LOXAHATCHEE RIVER BATTLEFIELD  
JUPITER, PALM BEACH CO., FL  
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Figure 1

Detail from "Map of the Seat of War in Florida" showing the locations of Fort Jupiter and the Battles of the Loxahatchee, circa 1838



Source: Library of Congress

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number          Photos          Page   1   LOXAHATCHEE RIVER BATTLEFIELD  
JUPITER, PALM BEACH CO., FL  
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

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Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered in the order they are referenced in the manuscript, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log.

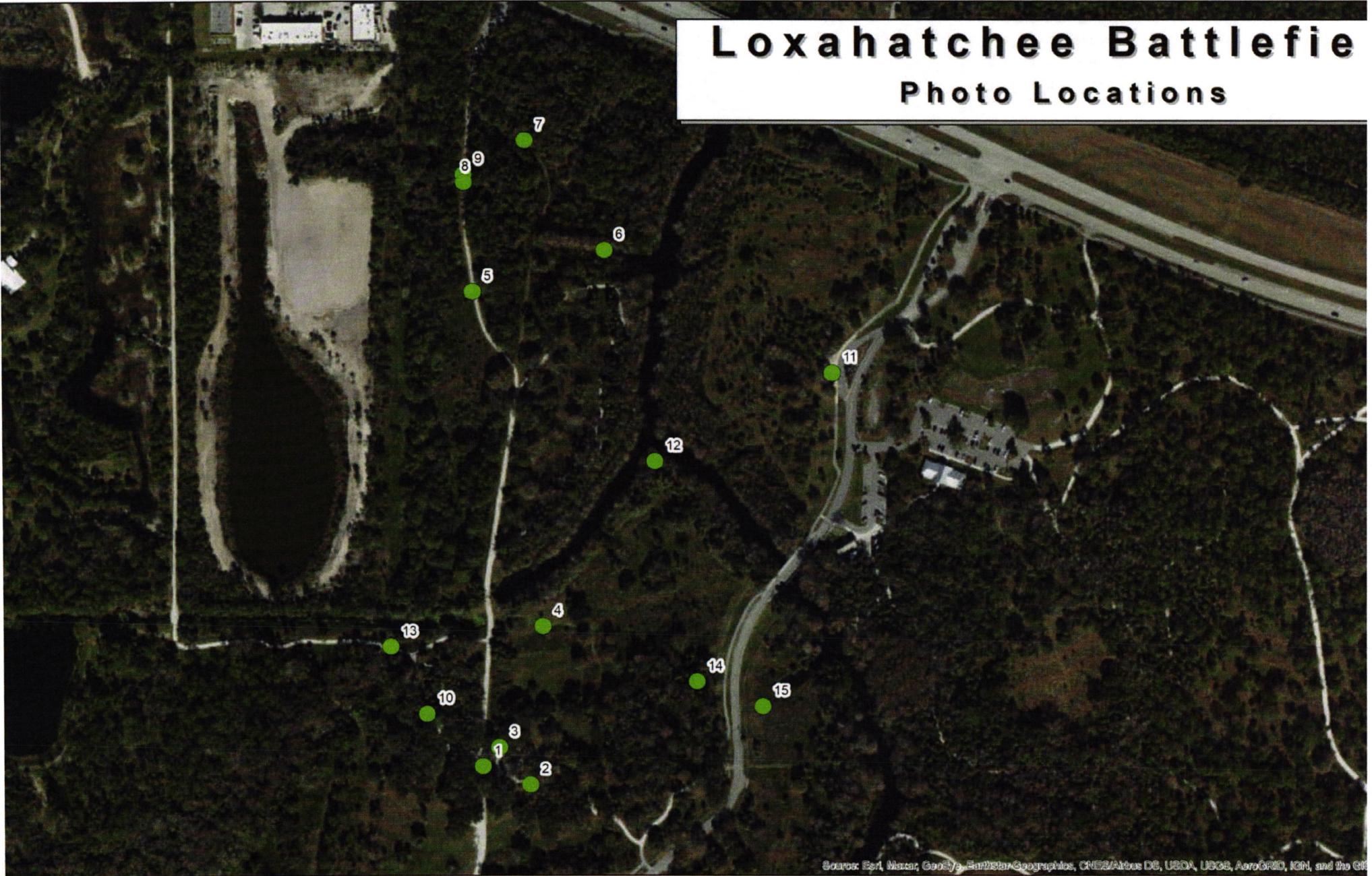
Property Name: Loxahatchee River Battlefield  
City or Vicinity: Jupiter County: Palm Beach State: FL  
Christian Davenport, Pat Rash,  
and Palm Beach County Parks  
Photographer: and Recreation Staff Date Photographed: June-August 2021

**Description of photograph(s) and number, including description of view indicating direction of camera:**

1. View of south central portion of battlefield, facing east
2. View of south central portion of battlefield, facing southeast
3. View of south central portion of battlefield, facing north
4. View of open protected area on southern end of battlefield core, facing north
5. View of General Eustis and Jesup's Trail, facing north
6. View of likely Seminole crossing, facing east
7. View of possible Seminole position on main battlefield core, facing east
8. View of possible Tennessee volunteer position, facing southwest
9. View of main portion of battlefield, facing north
10. View of likely location of "Tree of Tears," facing west
11. View of Loxahatchee Battlefield Plaza, facing west
12. View of Loxahatchee River, facing north
13. View of western battlefield slough, facing southwest
14. View of southern portion of the battlefield, facing southeast
15. View of southwest end of battlefield, facing southwest
16. View of the Shrunk Tract, facing southeast
17. View of Loxahatchee River, facing northeast

# Loxahatchee Battlefield

## Photo Locations



Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS

File Name Here  
Date Here  
Path & Filename Here



**Planning, Zoning  
& Building**  
2300 N Jmg Rd  
West Palm Beach, FL 33411  
Phone (561) 233-5300

Official, for presentations purposes only

# Loxahatchee Battlefield

## BOUNDARY MAP

9060 Indiantown Road  
Jupiter, Palm Beach  
County, FL

UTM References:

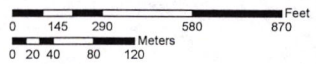
- 1) 17R 581514 2980055
- 2) 17R 582124 2980048
- 3) 17R 582102 2979167
- 4) 17R 581489 2979168

Datum: WGS84

 NR Boundary



1:2,400



Prepared by:  
Andrew Waber  
Florida Division of  
Historical Resources



# Loxahatchee Battlefield

## BOUNDARY MAP

9060 Indiantown Road  
Jupiter, Palm Beach  
County, FL

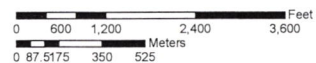
UTM References:

- 1) 17R 581514 2980055
- 2) 17R 582124 2980048
- 3) 17R 582102 2979167
- 4) 17R 581489 2979168

Datum: WGS84

 NR Boundary

N  
1:10,000

  
0 600 1,200 2,400 3,600 Feet  
0 87.5175 350 525 Meters

Prepared by:  
Andrew Waber  
Florida Division of  
Historical Resources

