

TEA TIME TALK

(BY WILMA J. MARCH)

Commemorating the centennial of the Dade Massacre, the culmination of a long and bitter feud between the southern red-skins and the United States government, at which the entire American forces were exterminated, thousands gathered on Dec. 25th, 1935, at Dade Memorial Park, near Bushnell, Florida, upon sacred ground to pay tribute to those soldiers who were fulfilling orders and to those red-skins who felt their cause was justifiable.

Judge J. C. B. Koonce of Eustis, Florida, has spent years in studying and writing about the Florida Indians. Perhaps no one in the State is more sincerely interested or better versed on Indian affairs than he. I have much to tell you about this subject too but I shall give first place to the worthy and venerable Judge, who so very graciously gave me permission to use some of his material. Both the Judge and Senator F. L. Touchton of Dade City told me that they greatly appreciated my interest in the Centennial and stated it was particularly noticeable in view that many local people evinced little interest, the territory being too commonplace and too local to create in them much appreciation. So next week I shall tell you in my own words of my visit to the Centennial Commemoration last Saturday. I met and talked with many Floridian satellites including Gov. Dave Sholtz, Nathan Mayo, State Commissioner of Agriculture, General Vivien Collins, W. Stanley Hanson, Seminole interpreter, Miss Charlotte Conrad, supervisor of the Federal Health unit over the entire red-skin population of Florida, several Senators, representatives of the Florida News Service, United Press and Associated Press, and last but not least I talked with Mrs. Minnie Moore Willson of Kissimmee, whose book, "The Seminoles of Florida", is a fascinating story of a race which is rapidly becoming extinct, but which has played a lasting and colorful part in the history of a nation.

So this week I am sending you the story of the Seminole Indians, the historical background and foreword, and the account of the Dade Massacre, all of which were written by Judge Koonce. I trust you will enjoy them for they are wonderfully fine reading.

In the near future I am sending you an article on "Philippino Superstitions" especially written for "The Standard" by a friend of mine, Prof. Hadwen H. Williams, F.R.G.S., late of the Philippines and Central America. He is connected with several publications in Europe and the Orient and he chose this topic for his thesis, prior to receiving his degree as a life Fellowship member of the Royal Geographical Society in London.

You say they have all passed away, That noble race and brave,
That their light canoes have vanished From off the crested wave,
That through the forests where they roamed,

There rings no hunter's shout,— But the name is on your waters,
You may not wash it out.

—Lydia Huntley Sigourney

The Dade Memorial Park, near Bushnell in Sumter County, Florida, is the State's tribute to those pioneer patriots who here made the sacrifice supreme that civilization might follow. While thus we seek to perpetuate in the hearts of succeeding generations the heroic valor of Major Dade and his men, justice demands that we do not forget those free sons of the forest who by the cruel fate of war were driven from their haunts. It is the immutable law of progress that in every age and every clime the superior race must dominate and sooner or later the story is ever the same, the primitive must yield domain. Still always there is something pathetic in the lasting tragedy of even the savage surrendering his ALL and bidding adieu to the land that was his own.

According to the "Special Report of the Florida Seminole Agency by Louis A. Spencer", being U.S. Senate document No. 102, presented by Senator Fletcher August 19th, 1921,— "The population of the Florida Seminoles is made up of two distinct tribes, speaking different languages and having little in common. The

Northern tribe, locally known as the Cow Creeks, numbering 115, speak the Muskogean language, while the Southern tribe, known locally as the Big Cypress Indians, with a population of 339 speak a dialect language known as Miccosukee." During the Indian wars the two tribes maintained a defensive alliance, but did not mingle socially and intermarriage between them is of rare occurrence.

From other sources we learn that the Seminoles were originally members of the Creeks, a tribe that lived in Georgia and Alabama. In 1750 Secoffee, one of the Creek chiefs, with several hundred followers located in the vicinity of what is now Micanopy in Alachua County. In 1808 still another band of Creeks under Micco Hadjo settled near Tallahassee where they absorbed a weak band of Indians called Miccosukees.

The Creeks called these two bands "Seminoles", meaning "Run-aways". The activities of the first Seminole war were in Northern or West Florida and in lower Alabama and Georgia. At the conclusion of the first war the Indians occupied East Florida, with the exception of the St. Augustine zone, and they numbered about four thousand with about one thousand fugitive negro slaves. September 18th, 1823, by the treaty made at Camp Moultrie (six miles below St. Augustine) they agreed to keep within a reservation the north line of which was about where Ocala now stands. May 9th, 1832, another treaty was made at Paynes Landing (ratified April 8th, 1834, with a supplemental treaty April 12, 1834) by the terms of which the Seminoles were to be removed at the expense of the government to a point beyond the Mississippi River, three years being allowed for the emigration. This treaty, however, was not approved by the great majority of the Seminoles and in addition to the dissatisfaction it caused King Osceola had a personal grievance which, after the lapse of time, we must now admit, was more real than fancied. President Andrew Jackson, who as commander in chief of the American army had conducted the first war, was very firm in his demand for removal. General Wiley Thompson was then (1835) in command of Indian affairs in Florida and was stationed at Ft. King (about six miles from where Ocala now is). The situation became so alarming that Major Dade and a company of 108 men left Ft. Brooke (Tampa) on December 23, 1835, to go to the relief of General Thompson. They had reached the point where the park now is on December 25th, when they were ambushed by the Indians under Micanopy. The same day Osceola killed General Thompson and his aide at Ft. King. Judge F. C. Cumberly has written a splendid history of the massacre which has been published as U.S. Senate Document No. 33, Aug. 13, 1921. Also Mr. A. H. Roberts of Tallahassee has a well written story of it in the January, 1927, "Quarterly" issued by the Florida Historical Society (Vol. 5, No. 3). Space here will not permit us to follow the doleful war which lasted until about 1842, when the Indians finally gave up the fight and most of them emigrated to the West (Indian Territory) where they now number about 2500. The small remnant in Florida occupy the Everglades. To Mrs. Minnie Moore Willson of Kissimmee belongs unlimited praise in securing for these unfortunates some degree of proper recognition. Her book on the "Florida Seminoles" is a charming work. A study of the Seminoles discloses that as a whole they were exceptional in morals and character.

The name "Tustenuggee" chosen for the Lodge in the Dade Memorial Park is not in honor of any particular Indian, the word means "War Chief". Many of these lilted Indian names still linger to give peculiar charm to our lakes and rivers. In these names one seems to hear the ripple of the streams and the music of the song bird. Sometimes they vision the forest primeval, the majestic oaks draped with the silver grey moss, and sometimes, in twilight gloom apart, they suggest the pine trees whispering heart to heart. They bring thoughts of God's golden sunshine, the pallid silver of the moon, and the rain-bow's glorious hues. They seem to bear the fragrance of the orange blossom, the

wild jessamine and the modest violet, while not the least charm of all they speak the voice of freedom and liberty—once the priceless heritage of the vanquished race.

THE DADE MASSACRE AND DADE PARK

Foreword

One hundred years is a brief span in the life of a nation, but within that space of time many events may transpire and a wilderness peopled only by savages may be transformed into a peaceful land of civilization and prosperity. Such progress, however, must come through sacrifice of labor and life by those who lay the foundation upon which prosperity is built. One hundred years is a brief span in the life of a nation, but it is long enough to demand fitting tribute to those pioneer patriots who made the sacrifice supreme that renders possible the full enjoyment of the wonderful land we call Florida.

At the place now known as the Dade Memorial Park, just outside the corporate limits of Bushnell, in Sumter County, one hundred years ago was enacted a historic tragedy which was unusual and was the first of only three events of the kind in the history of the entire United States—the extermination of an entire American force by the enemy.

The massacre of Major Francis Langhorne Dade and his command of one hundred and eight men and officers, December 28, 1835, at this point, antedated the tragedy of the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas, by about three months, and the Custer Massacre in the far west by forty-one years.

Historical Background

In 1750 the Creek tribe of Indians occupied the country along the Chattahoochee river in Southern Georgia. One of their chiefs, Secoffee by name, came to this country with a following of several hundred of the tribe and settled around where Micanopy now is. In 1808 still another band under Micco Hadjo settled around Tallahassee absorbing a weak band of Indians called Missosukies. The Creeks gave to all these the name of Seminole, meaning run-aways or deserters.

Secoffee was attached to the English, and fiercely hated the Spaniards and the allied Americans. He was very much upset over the treaty of 1783 by which Florida reverted to the Spanish government and he prepared to make war against the Spaniards and Americans. While so engaged he was taken ill and died. To his two sons, Paynes and Bowlegs, he left as an inheritance his enduring hatred of his avowed enemies and they undertook to carry out their father's purposes.

By this time Florida's climate was attracting people from other states and they were encroaching upon the territory of the Seminoles. By way of retaliation the Indians raided the plantations of the whites and did not hesitate to steal their cattle and worst of all, the run-away negro slaves found ready refuge with the Indians who welcomed them to their camps. King Payne and Bowlegs were most active in this regard. A small force of Georgia troops came down in 1812 and made war upon the Seminoles. Several battles were fought around Bainesville and Newman's Lake. In one of these King Payne was mortally wounded. The Indians were defeated.

In 1813 the Creek Indians incited by the great Shawnee chief Tecumseh, and further encouraged by the English Agents organized a force of about one thousand warriors and made war against the whites in Southern Alabama and Georgia. The next year General Jackson was placed in charge of Indian affairs and he soon drove the Indians into the swamps of Florida or compelled them to take refuge with the English who were then occupying Pensacola. There were intermittent scrimages between the whites and reds for the next two or three years.

Late in 1817 the American forces under General Gaines made an attack upon the Indians at Fowltown, twenty miles above the Florida line on the Apalachicola river killing four warriors and one squaw, and destroying the settlement. This was the beginning of the first Seminole Indian war. General Jackson was an aggressive fighter and he waged a relentless war against the Indians. Space does not permit me to mention

all the engagements. Jackson's acts were severely criticized by many people who believed in fair play, and he had to defend his action before Congress. In a communication to Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun, he defined his position as "The immutable principle of self defense, authorized by the laws of nature and of nations". He claimed all his acts were for the preservation of the United States as a whole. The policy of General Jackson, the immutable law of self-preservation and the everlasting record of a stronger race crowding the primitive race out of fertile lands and finally dispossessing them led to the second Indian War.

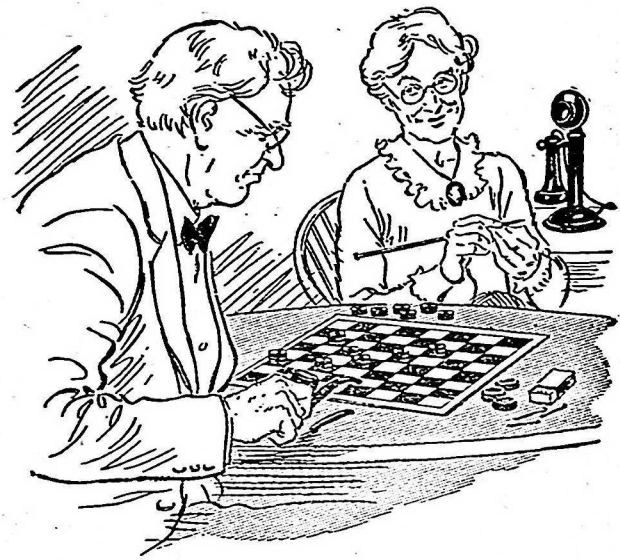
At the conclusion of the first war the Indians occupied all of East Florida with the exception of the St. Augustine zone and in 1822 numbered about four thousand Indians and one thousand slaves.

Beginning with Jackson's administration as Governor of Florida the United States Government made the Governor of the State superintendent of Indian affairs. But in 1823, during the administration of Governor Duval, Col. Gad Humphries of New York was made Indian Agent by President Monroe and took up

his residence at Fort King (near where Ocala now is). Col. Humphries undertook to treat with the Indians and bring about a friendly settlement of difficulties. His efforts resulted in the first treaty at Camp Moultrie, six miles south of St. Augustine in September, 1823. By this treaty the Indians agreed to keep within a reservation south of where Ocala now stands. They were to receive six thousand dollars in cash and five thousand dollars annually thereafter.

A second treaty was concluded at Paynes Landing in May of 1832, whereby certain named Indians were to visit and investigate lands west of the Mississippi which was proposed as a Seminole reservation. These chiefs made the investigation and reported in March 1833. Another treaty was then made at Fort Gibson whereby it was agreed that the Indians, according to the terms of the Paynes Landing treaty, were to immigrate to the lands so selected but not until April 1834 was the Paynes Landing treaty finally ratified. Under the terms of this treaty the Indians were allowed three years to immigrate.

In the meantime General Wiley (Continued on page 7, column 4)



Filling in Time until 7 o'clock

With the supper dishes cleared away, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Banks sit down each Wednesday evening to a rollicking game of checkers. Really they are just filling in time until their son John makes his weekly long distance call from a far-away city—a few minutes after 7 when Night Rates are in effect.

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