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JACKSONVILLE AND THE SEMINOLE WAR
1835-36

PART III

INDIAN HOSTILITIES ¹

Latest Intelligence

Last night Capt. Ross, with several of his company (who preferred riding in the night to sleeping at Black Creek and marching in today) arrived in town. After the battle at Withlacoochy, the forces under Generals Clinch and Call returned to Camp Lang Syne. On Sunday last, Gen. Call, with the volunteers from Middle Florida started for home ; and on Monday Cols. Warren and Mills with the volunteers from East Florida, set out on their return, and were last night at Black Creek. They will reach this place tonight.

The volunteers served their time, one month for which they offered their services. The want of provisions and of every necessity to prevent extreme suffering, and the impracticability of following up the victory gained over the Indians induced them to return.

It is said that Gen. Call intends to raise fifteen hundred men by drafts from the militia and return to the aid of Gen. Clinch. The East Florida people will have enough to do, and we fear more than they can do, on the home stations, to prevent the Indians from extending their ravages farther north. Gen. Clinch must of necessity wait for reinforcements - his forces are hardly sufficient to protect his posts. The

¹ The Courier, Jacksonville, Florida, Jan. 7, 1836.

whole of East Florida is in danger. The Indians have possession of the Southern portion of it as far north as Bulow's, forty miles south of St. Augustine - Picolata on the St. Johns - Whitesville on Black Creek - Alligator and Suwannee - an extensive and exposed frontier. It is the general opinion that unless adequate aid is immediately extended to us, the whole of Florida, east of the Suwannee River, will be inevitably ruined. We must not only abandon our property to destruction, but stripped of all our hard earnings, must fight for our lives, our women and our children.

Head Quarters,
Fort Drane, Jan. 3, 1836.

General Circular to all the good Citizens of Duval and Nassau. - The army took up the line of march on the 29th ult. and on the morning of the 31st at day break, arrived at the Withlacoochee, and found the river too high to ford, commenced swimming horses and sent one man over for a canoe that was seen on the opposite bank, and in it began to cross the regular troops, at twelve o'clock there were over all the regulars, and about fifty of the militia, when we were soon informed that Indians were coming, and but a moment elapsed, before a furious fire was heard in our front; Col. Warren and myself immediately formed and extended our line from the river out through the swamp to the pine barren, and saw the regular troops on our right hotly engaged with about three hundred Indians ; we were ordered to remain stationary and prevent the Indians entering our lines. After repeated solicitations on the part of Col. Warren and myself, we took the responsibility on ourselves, and Col. Warren led the right to the left of the

regulars, and I was stationed on the left of our own line when a charge was made, which, after about ten minutes more of sharp fighting, forced them to retreat, and the battle ended. We make out forty Indians killed, and wounded we suppose in proportion, the precise amount we cannot tell as they carried them off - the loss is severe on our part. Gen. Clinch says, that in many much greater battles, a much less number has been killed and wounded. Further particulars will be told on Friday next, when we will be at Jacksonville. I can now write no more.

W. J. MILLS, Lt. Col.

² Cols. Warren and Mills, with the volunteers from this place have just arrived --- Their browned faces, the whiskers and mustachoes of many of the men - their arms and dress, give them the appearance of veterans just returned from a severe campaign and a desperately fought battle field.

³ Return of the killed and wounded in the battle of Withlacoochee, Dec. 31, 1835.

Regular troops - 2 artificers and 2 privates, killed - 1 captain, 1 first lieutenant, 1 2nd lieutenant, 2 sergeants, 4 corporals, 43 privates, wounded.

Militia, 4th Regiment - wounded, Col. Warren, Major Cooper, severely, Lt. John Youmans, privates, James Tyson and John Higginbotham.

Aggregate, 4 killed, 59 wounded, - out of 227 men in battle.

Many were shot through their clothes, and some horses killed and wounded, Col. Warren's wounded. Gen. Clinch, one ball through his cap and had one through his jacket sleeve. The firing was heavy, and

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

the bushes literally cut up around us, how it was that more were not shot I cannot tell.

W. J. MILLS, Lt. Col.

INDIAN AFFAIRS ⁴

The mail rider, Green Bush, leaving this place last Monday for St. Augustine, returned in haste, stating that as he approached twelve mile swamp, about halfway between this and St. Augustine, he saw three Indians with guns in their hands, step from the bushes into the road, not more than one hundred yards before him. Seeing him they stopped and stood still in the road. He turned and fled from them as fast as his horse could carry him.

The report that there were Indians in Twelve Mile Swamp, was strengthened by reports received Tuesday morning from Mandarin, to which place Maj. I. D. Hart immediately went in order to learn the truth. Messrs. Brush and Bynom report, that being on their way from St. Augustine to Mandarin, they were fired upon in the swamp by a party of Indians waylaying the road.

Col. Mills with about forty men from this place and Mandarin, proceeded yesterday morning in search of the Indians.

A report was brought to town last night by Mr. Blair, that an Indian was seen yesterday evening near Messrs. Palmer & Ferris' present establishment, one mile from Mr. Blair's plantation, and within seven of this city. Col. Warren and Major Hart with 15 men, set off at daylight this morning to scour the hammock where the Indian was said to have been seen.

The residents on the banks of the St. Johns from this place to Picolati, have removed their families to

⁴The Courier, Jan. 14, 1836.

this city and to Mandarin. Many of the plantations are entirely abandoned. Considerable alarm has prevailed during the last few days. Some families, roused from their slumbers, have hastily left their dwellings in the night time and sought safety by repairing to our city.

Many other reports, unauthenticated, of Indians having been seen at various places, between this and Picolati and St. Augustine, are in circulation, and we wait anxiously for their refutation or confirmation.

The schooner George & Mary, arrived Sunday evening last, bringing five hundred stand of arms and a quantity of ammunition, sent to this place by Col. Eustis, commanding officer of the United States forces at Charleston, at the request of our military officers.

It is possible that the danger to which we are exposed, "has been exaggerated," but our deliberate opinion is, that the reverse is the fact - that the danger has been *extenuated*, and that even our own citizens have thought too lightly of the numbers and prowess of the Seminoles. It seems that they have determined with this last remnant of their nation, to fight with the white man, a last desperate battle in a hopeless defense of their towns, their homes, their country, and the monumental mounds where sleep the mouldering bones of their sires and slaughtered warriors. Each red man seems resolved to sacrifice his life as dearly as possible.

Since the engagement on the banks of the Withlacoochee or Amaxura River, and the final retreat of our forces, and re-crossing the river in the face of an exulting and bantering foe, (for such we are told is the fact, notwithstanding the charge of the Regular troops, and of the volunteers across the river, silenced

the fire of the Indians,) they seem to have become emboldened, to extend their ravages farther north and nearer to St. Augustine and this place, than is consistent with our safety.

We wish by no means to exaggerate our danger, nor do we believe that anything has appeared in our columns calculated to do so ; yet we would much prefer that the charge of exaggeration should be preferred against us, than that of having by our incorrect statements lulled our citizens into the belief of a false and fatal security when danger is at their doors.

In times of such excitement and alarm as the present, when a thousand varied rumors of the same transaction are in circulation, we are aware of the difficulty, nay, almost impossibility of giving in a public print correct statements of every transaction and matter necessary to be known.

“On Friday the 29th ult., our eyes beheld a most pleasing sight. The Steamer Florida a little before sundown rounded up to our wharf, under martial music, and with the beautiful company- the **“RICHMOND BLUES”** on her upper deck. Their arrival was hailed by a salute from our two cannon, and those on board the Jefferson and the Ariel, then at anchor in the river opposite our town. The cheers of our citizens were answered by those of the Volunteers. A thrill of joy was felt by every citizen of Jacksonville, on beholding a band of so fine looking and gallant young gentlemen, who had made such generous sacrifices to rush hither to the aid of bleeding Florida. Augusta has acted indeed most liberally and nobly. Her citizens, by their public appropriations and private donations have shown that they are among the most liberal and philanthropic and patriotic people

⁵ *The Courier*, Jacksonville, Florida. Feb. 4, 1836.

on earth. Besides the liberal appropriation of \$10,000 to defray the expenses of equipping, etc., the Volunteers, we are informed by the best authority, that many gentlemen of Augusta, put fifty, and one hundred dollar notes into the hand of Capt. Robertson, telling him to take it, and to allow none of his company to suffer for the want of those comforts which money could purchase. - Should the circumstances of the brave youth under his command require it; Capt. Robertson has been assured that almost any amount of money would be made subject to his order by the liberality of the people of Augusta.

About one o'clock Saturday morning they left for Picolata, whence they proceed by a perilous route, to the Head Quarters of Gen. Clinch.

[A roster of the company follows.]

On Friday evening about thirty mounted Volunteers from the Counties of Glynn and Camden, Geo., accompanied by Col. McIntosh, arrived in our town. They are of the most respectable and wealthy inhabitants of that section.

This small band of brave hearts designed to join Gen. Clinch, by proceeding direct to Head Quarters, let the dangers which beset their way be what they might.

[A list of their names follows.]

The steamer J. D. Mongin, Capt. Curry, passed this place, making a short stay at our wharf, on Saturday evening last, on her way to Picolata. The Mongin had on board about 116 Volunteers from Savannah. Said Volunteers were intended as a reinforcement to the gallant band under Capt. Stephens, except the "Phoenix Riflemen", who, we understand are to remain on board the Mongin, while

plying up and down the River. This steamer has been chartered for said purpose, by the ever liberal citizens of Savannah, to whom it must be a gratification to know that the timely arrival of Capt. Stephens and his fellow Volunteers at Picolata, saved that important post, and doubtless Mandarin and Jacksonville, in fact the whole river to the Bar, from the hands and torch of the Indians. The sacrifices of business and of comforts, which the officers and men, composing that corps of first Volunteers have made, entitle them to great credit and to the thanks of the inhabitants of Florida.

We are requested by the Glynn and Camden Volunteers thus publicly to tender their respectful thanks to the ladies of Jacksonville, and among them to Mrs. Hart particularly, for the kindness and hospitality extended to them during their sojourn in Jacksonville.

⁶ We are happy to state that Maj. Cooper, whom we saw a few days since, and who was severely wounded in the battle of Ouithlacoocy, is rapidly recovering from his wound. The ball entering his chest on the left side high up, was taken out of his back. Maj. Cooper is said to have conducted most gallantly at Ouithlacoocy.

A CARD

The undersigned officers, who served in the campaign against the Seminole Indians, and who are still in the field giving all the aid in their power to their country, having seen with regret a statement in some of the papers that a part of this Regiment deserted from the field at Withlacoochee during the action, take this opportunity of saying that this statement is untrue, and request the public to suspend any opinion

⁶ *Ibid.*

on the subject until the official report of Gen. Clinch is seen, when if credit is not given to those who merit it, a correct account will be published which will be supported by affidavits of all the officers and men present in the battle.

JOHN WARREN, Col. 4th Reg. F. M.
W. J. MILLS, Lt. Col.,
J. G. COOPER, Major.

⁷ The most cheering intelligence is now received from every quarter. Volunteers, militia, and regulars are coming to our protection, and to enforce the stipulation of the treaty made for the removal of the Seminoles. The Florida arrived at the wharf Monday evening last, bringing the *Richmond Hussars*, another company of Volunteers from Augusta, Georgia, under the command of Capt. Samuel Bones. The spirited and philanthropic movements of Augusta, demand from us the highest commendation, and have created a debt of gratitude which we can never duly repay. But Augusta, with its heroes, will long be remembered.

The Florida also had on board a company of Volunteers from Darien, under the command of Capt. T. F. Bryan. The citizens of Darien were among the foremost to feel and to act in the cause of their suffering fellow citizens. Many will receive the gratitude of suffering hearts, which, though no opportunity occur of expressing it, will be long felt.

Since our last we have heard nothing more of the movements of the Indians. They seem to be either preparing to make an attack on Tampa Bay, or they are concentrating themselves for a desperate struggle with the whites. If "Osceola" is with them, we doubt not they will fight bravely and gloriously.

⁷ *Ibid*, Feb. 11, 1836.