WINDING DOWN THE WAR IN SOUTHEAST FLORIDA

by Joe Knetsch

The summer of 1841 was hot and brutal. For the first time in the history of the Second Seminole War (1835-1842), United States Army forces under the command of Colonel William Jenkins Worth, had conducted a summer campaign against an evasive Indian foe. All previous campaigns were conducted during the cooler, dryer periods between late fall and late spring. No one, not even the intrepid United States Deputy Surveyors, ventured into the swamps of Florida during the “sickly” season, when the tepid airs of the “miasma” rose from the wet ground to kill and incapacitate those who ventured inland from the coasts. The insufferable summer of 1841 was no different in that respect.

Colonel Worth was well aware of the effects of the weather upon his troops. But, discounting prevailing medical theories and the advice of his own medical corps, this protegé of General Winfield Scott ordered his troops into the fields. He did this because he felt it necessary to end the war and was under heavy pressure to do so. He also felt that putting the troops in the field would lessen the negative effects of garrison duty, as he noted to Adjutant General of the Army, Roger Jones:

*It stands thus then; there is much & distressing sickness and deaths, (people die everywhere) but the burden of the afflictions grows out of garrison service. The cause, absence of mental & physical excitement, heavy food in excess, & greater facilities for inordinate indulgence.

It would also have the benefit of placing the enemy on notice that no season would be safe; that the Army would and could capture and kill at any season. Carrying the war into the enemy’s territory during the “sickly” season would disorient the enemy and would make them more vulnerable to capture and defeat.

For most of their cumulative four-year history, the three successive military posts in the New River area, designated Fort Lauderdale, served as launching points for expeditions into the Everglades with the expectation of capturing the elusive Seminoles. These expeditions, which began shortly after Major William Lauderdale arrived on New River in the spring of 1838, continued until the closing months of the war. In “Winding Down the War in Southeast Florida,” Joe Knetsch analyzes the final major campaign launched from Fort Lauderdale and other points along the lower east coast in the fall and winter of 1841. In addition he provides a look at the background and personalities of the officers involved in the campaign.

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Colonel William Jenkins Worth (courtesy of U.S. Army).

Seminoles and add to the destruction of their crops. It would, in the opinion of Colonel Worth, shorten the war. Ending the war was something his more illustrious predecessors had not been able to do. Therefore, the health costs to the troops would be minimal when compared to lives saved by ending the conflict, already in its sixth year.

Not every officer stationed in Florida agreed with Worth. After campaigning all summer in stifling heat and humidity, and not finding a single Indian, Captain John Rogers Vinton had his doubts, especially after facing his “enormous sick lists.” Vinton had noted Childs’ “good fortune” in hunting the Seminoles and their allies during the summer campaign, but his success was accomplished with great strain and persistent pursuit. Under direct orders from General Walker Armistead, then commanding in Florida, Childs had been the officer responsible for the capture of Coacoochee, his brother, and the brother of King Philip, all under a flag of truce. For this act Childs received some condemnation in the national press, although most Floridians rejoiced at the news. Childs failed to capture the rest of the band at that time, most fleeing into the adjacent Everglades. The major then ordered portions of the Third Artillery, which he commanded in East Florida, in pursuit. On June 25, 1841, Captain Martin Burke received orders to lead his fifty-three men, in boats, from Fort Dallas on a “search and destroy” mission to the islands of the Everglades. Burke’s force failed to capture any of the enemy, but destroyed numerous recently abandoned fields of crops. The mission also provided Worth and Childs information that the Seminoles and their allies were on the move in the Everglades, in small, separated parties. For the remainder of the summer, troops under Childs, in conjunction with the naval forces under Lieutenant John T. McLaughlin of the famous Mosquito Fleet, moved constantly across the Everglades from posts in southern Florida. As Worth’s aide-de-camp
(and later son-in-law), Lieutenant John T. Sprague, noted: “The past, however, taught one thing not to be mistaken, though painful and revolt­
ing — that the Indian’s ally was the summer season.” This ally had to
be overcome, along with the enemy’s forces, if the war was to be brought
to a conclusion. Hence, the need for the expeditions of Burke, McLaughlin and the others.

The core of the Third Artillery was stationed with Childs at Fort Pierce as the fall campaign of 1841 began. Using a number of intelligence sources, Childs formulated a plan of attack along the eastern coast south of his position. The major ordered Virginia-born Lieutenant Edward J. Steptoe south with fifty men in eight boats to explore the branches of the “Alleatsokee” River, going as far up these forks as possible with the boats. Within five miles of the head of the “right” branch, the lieutenant found General Eustis’ trail, made during the Jesup campaign of 1837-38. Just prior to Steptoe’s return, the captain of the steamboat Gaston informed Childs that he had observed a vessel landing “two barrels of beef” which was quickly retrieved by twenty Indians on the beach. Captain Richard D. A. Wade, Third Artillery, had been assigned to scout this area, but he was still in the Everglades, near Lake Okeechobee, and not expected to reach the beach quickly enough to capture this band of warriors.

Childs decided to take Steptoe’s command and companies commanded by Lieutenants Edward O. C. Ord, Thomas W. Sherman and George Taylor south in an attempt to seize this band of the enemy. The total command, consisting of five officers and eighty non-commissioned officers in thirteen boats, left Fort Pierce on September 6, 1841.

Part of Childs’ command entered the Atlantic at Jupiter Inlet and followed the coast for twenty miles, with a parallel company on land to look for the haulover into the “Hillsborough Lagoon.” Much to the major’s surprise he found a freshwater lake thirteen miles long and one to two and a half miles wide [Lake Worth]. The southern outlet of this lake was covered in sawgrass and impassable for the boats. He estimated that this lake was fifteen miles from the actual Hillsboro Lagoon as shown on his inaccurate map. Using his field glasses he espied a number of small islands in the lake which, upon examination, contained only one occupation and a corn field. However, on the sea coast side of the lake, the major’s force discovered, “extensive fields of corn, pumpkins, potatoes, the Indian pea, melons, tobacco, rice & sugar cane in the highest state of cultivation.” These the major ordered destroyed. He described the entire length of coast as a continuous field broken by sawgrass and bushes, but all connected by a trail. There were no Indians to be found; it was obvious that they had spotted his command coming down the coast. The major’s command spent five days on the lake destroying the “luxuriant fields,” which he estimated would yield over two thousand bushels of potatoes and several hundred bushels of corn. It took eighty men two full days to destroy these crops. Childs felt that this was a heavy blow to the Indian’s supply base.

Days before Childs’ expedition, Captain Burke left Fort Dallas for Fort Lauderdale, assuming temporary command there. He reported leaving Fort Lauderdale on September 3 with 119 men and six officers in boat companies. Following New River into the Everglades, this command soon spotted a new boat trail in the sawgrass leading to one of the numerous small islands. The Indians, Burke surmised, had spotted his command and fled into the adjacent swamp, leaving behind one rifle, two canoes, a small skiff, and most of their camp utensils, including numerous blankets. They also abandoned their tools for harvesting coontie, which were destroyed by the troops. Following a “squaw guide,” the command continued toward Lake Okeechobee. Noticing smoke in the distance, Captain Burke assumed it was a warning to other Indians of their presence. The guide told them that the smoke was a signal to gather the women and children, but not a warning. Discounting this explanation, Burke ordered his troops further into the glades toward the smoke. Approaching the lake from its southern extremity, Burke’s men soon spotted two Indians on the shore, calling upon them to land. The captain was suspicious of such a call and
told the interpreter to ask them to come forward under the assurance of safe conduct. They came and told Burke that they were the Indians who had abandoned the island the day before. They had recently come from the Big Cypress, south of the Caloosahatchee River, via Fisheating Creek, and had gone to all of the usual places. Finding no food or other Indians, they stated they were willing to leave Florida. When these “captives” were pressed for the whereabouts of Sam Jones, they remarked that the last they knew he had gone to the hunting grounds south of Fort Dallas, Burke’s point of departure.14

By the eighth of September, Burke’s command, still scouting the southern shore of Lake Okeechobee, arrived at an old palmetto fortification [Fort McRae]. After failing to meet the two warriors who had agreed to bring in their women and children, Burke ordered a more intensive scout of the southern rim of the lake, taking three days provisions to sustain the troops. Less than four hours from the stockade their boats were hit by a quick moving storm from across the lake, and the vessels driven ashore. Luckily, none of the provisions or men were lost in this storm. On advice from the “squaw guide,” Burke reasoned that they were at least five days from Fort Dallas. Regrouping and judging the stores on hand at Fort McRae to last at least eight days, Burke proceeded south to find the outlet of “Inchahatchee” which reportedly led from the southern end of Lake Okeechobee into the Everglades. Failing to find this outlet, the command was forced to find another way back to Fort Dallas. Finding an easier route with fewer haulovers, the entire command spent the night of September 16 at Fort Lauderdale with all provisions exhausted. They returned the next day to Fort Dallas via the inland route through the Rio Ratones [Snake Creek]. Only one warrior returned with Burke, but he was “willing and anxious” to act as a guide for the troops.15

About the same time Burke was returning to Fort Dallas, a local wrecker reported to Captain Richard Wade, commanding at Fort Lauderdale, that he had seen two men, who looked like Indians, along the beach, south of New River Inlet. Captain Wade immediately sent a twenty-five-man force in canoes under Lieutenant Francis O. Wyse, to the scene.16 Wyse’s men arrived too late to intercept the men, but found a fresh trail and followed it for several miles. Signs left by the two men indicated to Wyse that they may return to the inlet, and he decided to stay the night near the inlet. In order to cut off all retreat, he sent a messenger back to Fort Lauderdale, advising Wade to send troops to “Lake Tompkins.”17 The troops dispatched by Wade to “Lake Tompkins” left Fort Lauderdale at three o’clock in the morning and arrived about sunrise. Examining the eastern shore of the lake produced no evidence or recent signs, but the southern end of the lake held more promise. Led by the intrepid Lieutenant George H. Thomas, later famous to history as the
“Rock of Chickamauga,” the command proceeded in its canoes, following an old creek leading from the southern extremity. After three to four miles the mangroves crowded in so as to block further passage. Thomas observed no recent signs of improvements in this secluded waterway and concluded his difficult search when “the only axe we had” was lost overboard. Meanwhile, Wyse waited in vain at the inlet for the two men to return.

Throughout the month of October 1841, troops under the command of Major Childs, now numbering eight companies of the Third Artillery, were on the move in the Everglades. Captain Burke made one of the more memorable scouts of the war in south Florida when he traversed the Everglades. In cooperation with Naval Lieutenant John T. McLaughlin, Burke reached “Chikkos Island” on October 11. The combined force numbered 260 men. This group arrived at the “Lower Landing” on the 14th, later than they had anticipated. Returning to a point between Shark River and a position supposed to be northeast of Fort Harrold, the troops paddled and slogged their way up innumerable inlets, lagoons and sloughs, one taking three quarters of the day to traverse. They did not reach the Everglades proper until the nineteenth, when they sighted their first enemy and gave chase, capturing only one canoe. The entire country was covered with water, and trails were difficult to locate. Nine days later the entire command arrived at Punta Rassa, near the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River. On November 2, Burke’s command was ordered to return to Fort Dallas via the Caloosahatchee River, Lake Okeechobee, the Loxahatchee River and the coast. The only physical result of the expedition was the destruction of a large number of Indian huts and corn fields. However, according to John T. Sprague, this expedition caused, “much apprehension in the Big Cypress Swamp,” and showed the enemy that a large force was capable of reaching anywhere in the Everglades at any time of the year. The reason for the cross-peninsula return, improbable as it may seem, was to catch Sam Jones’ group by surprise. Like so many reports of his whereabouts, this one proved false.

By November Major Childs had put into motion a large number of scouts and had brought troops from Fort New Smyrna, under Captain Vinton, to Fort Lauderdale. The most successful of these scouts was led by Captain Richard Wade, who left Fort Lauderdale and headed north with three officers and sixty non-commissioned men, in twelve canoes. In his report, Captain Wade noted, “We proceeded by the inland passage to the northward, coming out in the bay at the Hillsborough Inlet, and in such manner that our canoes were concealed from the view of an Indian, whom I there discovered fishing on the Northern point of the inlet; I made the requisite dispositions immediately to land, and succeeded in surprising him.” Wade, “operating on his hopes and fears,” pursued the frightened man to lead them to his encampment, which was then surrounded and assaulted by the troops. The result was the capture of twenty Indians and the killing of eight attempting to escape. Following a small stream as far as possible, the command encamped. On the following day, one of the prisoners, the noted guide, Chia-chee (often referred to as simply Chi), led the force to another village where an additional twenty-seven Seminoles were captured and a “large quantity of provisions” destroyed. The soldiers continued north to Lake Worth, “where [they] found and destroyed a canoe, a field of pumpkins, and an old hut.” One more Indian surrendered to Wade before he went back to Fort Lauderdale. Upon his return, Wade allowed Chia-chee to return to the swamps and bring in six additional Indians. Wade’s recapitulation indicated a total of eight Indians killed, fifty-five captured and many provisions and materials destroyed. The expedition’s most important gain, however, was the acquisition of a reliable guide, who continued in service throughout the remainder of the war.

Major Childs was pleased with the results of Wade’s actions and
noted that he was assisted by Lieutenants Thomas and Ord and Assistant Surgeon Emerson. Not everyone had such a glowing opinion of the operation. Captain John Rogers Vinton emphasized the role of luck and good fortune more than the abilities of those involved. Wade, he believed, owed his “good fortune” to outside aid more than personal attributes, zeal or military ability. “The public prints,” he noted, had praised the success of Colonel Worth’s entire operation and, in the usual fashion, failed to see his faults. In this treatment, the press was repeating what it had done with every new leader who commanded in the swamps of Florida. Stating that he believed Worth a man deserving of success for his zeal and spirit, Vinton warned of the fates of others before him. He concluded by declaring that the war “is but a hunt after all,” and that accident had as much to do with success as thorough planning and execution.

By the time Vinton arrived at Fort Lauderdale on November 5, 1841, Wade had already left the fort and headed north on the scout reported above. Immediately, Vinton was advised by Captain Cooper of the schooner Francis that he had seen two Indians near the mouth of the Hillsboro, apparently gesturing to the schooner to come ashore. Vinton quickly dispatched Lieutenant William Harvey Churchill to the scene. After marching twelve to fourteen miles to the place described by Captain Cooper, Churchill found evidence of three Indians on the beach, two large and one small, possibly a child. He followed their tracks in the not so romantic moonlight until they terminated on the south shore of Hillsboro Inlet. Having no means of crossing the inlet, and knowing that Wade’s forces were in the area, Churchill returned to Fort Lauderdale. No speculation explains why these Indians risked capture on a beach near an active military post.

While Vinton, Churchill and Wade were occupied with their endeavors, Lieutenant Francis O. Wyse returned to Lake Worth to destroy more fields on the western shore. The large number of fields, especially on the eastern margins of the lake, indicates the fertility of the area which, in later years, attracted pioneers to south Florida. It also shows the lack of accurate geographic knowledge the Army possessed about this vicinity.

Given the activities of the Army during the campaigns of 1837, 1838 and 1839, this fact is surprising. Wyse’s scout produced no prisoners or enemy casualties, only the destruction of an isolated field.

Major Thomas Childs, like many of his fellow commanders, had only one real goal for his 1841 campaigns, the capture of the elusive Sam Jones and his followers. Almost every major move of the Third Artillery was dictated by the supposed or rumored whereabouts of this Native American master of guerrilla warfare. The capture or destruction of Sam Jones became an obsession. Almost every piece of correspondence from Childs notes this. Concerning the destruction of the fields at Lake Worth, Childs wrote, “My opinion is that these fields belonged to Sam Jones & his party & that Indians were sent from Okeechobee to tend them.” When Burke’s expedition into the Everglades included the capture of an Indian who, “I think will be invaluable if an expedition goes again to the Everglades for Sam Jones.” When Chia-chee, or “George” as the major referred to him, was brought in, the determined Childs rewarded him with a bag containing one hundred dollars, to guarantee his faithfulness to the Army, even though “George,” the major reported, “cannot say were Sam [Jones] is, but some where in the Everglades.” His interviews with the others captured with Chia-chee proved equally fruitless. “Thus far,” he recorded, “I have not been able to gather any information as to Sam Jones' where abouts. They say they have not seen him for a long time.” But, he continued, “I am trying to ingratiate myself into their confidence & in a few days I hope to find out how much they know. I would not advise these Indians to be removed from this so long as there is any hope of bringing in others.”

This tactic, like all others for gaining access to Sam Jones, ended in failure. Captain Vinton had informed Childs just two days prior to the above letter that this group of Indians had reported that Sam Jones and forty-five warriors were on an island in the Everglades. However, Childs did not take heed of

![Image](image.png)
this advice and vowed "to make a
dash at Sam Jones wherever I may
find him with as gallant a set of of­
ficers & soldiers as ever invaded the
Everglades." Childs had one fear—
that Wade's successful capture of the
fifty-five would induce Sam Jones to
move further into the Everglades.32

The compulsion to bring in the
evasive leader and his followers gave
rise to interesting, continual specu­
lation. Whether reading the papers
of Captain Vinton, the narrative of
John T. Sprague or the letters of the
commanders found in the Letters Re­
ceived by the Office of the Adjutant
General, it is hard to escape the con­
clusion that this wily leader had his
eenemies totally confused and baffled.

Following reports of Jones being in
the vicinity of the Loxahatchee River,
troops of the Third Artillery were
poured into the area. News that he
was headed for or in the Big Cypress
led Colonel Worth to order troops un­
der Major William Belknap, Captain
McLaughlin and Major Childs to con­
verge on that region. When the ex­
peditions under Captains Vinton and
Burke had covered portions of this
ground, the speculation was that
Jones had fled to the prairies of the
Kissimmee or toward Fisheating
Creek. As Childs proffered again: "I
think it important that troops be sent
to the Kissimmee, to which place Sam
Jones will probably go if routed out
of the Locha-Hatchee."33 The evasive
tactics used by Jones, following the
pattern set by Coacoochee, Osceola,
Tiger-Tail, Alligator, King Philip,
Octiarche and others during this war
in the midst of Florida’s uncharted
wilderness was too much for officers
trained in set-piece military theory.
To their credit, the campaigns of
Worth and Childs were relatively ap­
propriate adjustments to these tact­
cics.

An additional point does need
emphasis here — offensively, the
Army was heavily handicapped by
lack of accurate geographical knowl­
edge. This woeful weakness should
not surprise us when we reflect that
the best known map of the era, that

of John Lee Williams (1837), does not
show Lake Okeechobee. As the ac­
counts of Childs’ September expedi­
dition demonstrate, Lake Worth was
not on his charts. This virtual store­
house of agricultural supplies for the
Seminoles and their allies was unre­
corded on any map of the time, even
though a major battle had been
fought under General Thomas Jesup
on the banks of the nearby
Loxahatchee River three years ear­
ier. Clearly this important area was
ignored and unscoffed by the Army
prior to the arrival of the Third Ar­
tillery in 1841. These examples re­
peat in nearly every region of Florida,
including the vicinity west of Tallah­
assee, where the last of the “ren­
egade Creeks” under Pascoffer
surrendered to Captain Ethan Allen
Hitchcock in January of 1843, nearly
five months after the conclusion of
the war.34 This lack of specific geo­
graphical knowledge greatly affected
the Army’s attempts to capture and
deport the elusive Seminoles and
their allies from the swamps of Florida.

Aware of this weakness, the
Army made efforts to co-opt captives
at every opportunity. In the case of
Chia-chee, he was given one hundred
dollars to remain loyal and lead the
troops into the unknown Everglades.
Dispatch from Major Thomas Childs at Fort Lauderdale to Captain Vinton directing Vinton to report to Fort Pierce shortly before leaving south Florida.

in pursuit of Sam Jones. Immediately after his capture, this reliable guide led Lieutenant Wyse to planting grounds and villages on the western shore of Lake Worth. When the Prophet was rumored to be leaving the Big Cypress for a lake guarded by mangroves near Key Biscayne, Chia-chee was officially cited by Colonel Worth as the most reliable source to explain how to attack that position. At the time, Chia-chee had been assigned as guide to the Mosquito Fleet under Captain John T. McLaughlin. Worth also relied upon Chia-chee’s advice to inform Major Belknap of the most likely locations to find the Prophet in the Big Cypress. Although this reliance upon one guide was unusual, Chia-chee had proven himself to Worth and Childs.

Other sources of intelligence were also taken seriously. When such information came that Sam Jones was definitely on the Loxahatchee, troops from Fort Lauderdale under Captain Wade were dispatched to the vicinity. Wade’s assignment was to scour the area along the coast, past Lake Worth and toward the headwaters of the Loxahatchee River. He was then to descend the river and scout along the way to Fort Jupiter, before heading back to Fort Lauderdale. Wade’s movements were to be timed to coincide with a more westerly route taken by troops under the command of Captain Vinton. Even with the aid of “two good guides,” Wade could not control the unfavorable December weather, and the two forces essentially operated independently of each other. This created a gap through which, if needed, Sam Jones and his band could easily have escaped detection.

John Rogers Vinton was elated to have a chance to pursue Sam Jones. Writing from Fort Lauderdale on November 29, 1841, Vinton informed his mother of his most recent illness and incapacity, noting that it had prevented his partaking of the most recent movements by Major Childs. Yet he was excited to be in all the “bustle & enterprise of an active campaign.” His long duty at Fort New Smyrna was less active than posts like Fort Lauderdale. Vinton felt that the upcoming campaign was vital for the Third Artillery because unless the Seminoles were captured and removed, the regiment would be stuck in Florida indefinitely. By December 15, Vinton was writing home to inform his family that he was leaving Fort Lauderdale and that his command numbered 120 men in nineteen boats. The goal was again the capture of “the old fox” Sam Jones. Once again, Captain Vinton was to be disappointed, noting: “it has not been my good fortune to meet & capture Sam Jones.” The dejected captain could only speculate as to his time of departure from Florida and complain about the sameness of the Florida landscape. However, for John Rogers Vinton, his active campaigning in Florida was over. He soon shipped to Georgia and points further north.

Vinton’s route was up the western side of Lake Worth to the Loxahatchee River, where he was scheduled to meet Captain Wade, and thence west over the wet prairies of the “Halpatioka” swamp, west of Fort Pierce. Guided by “old Georgy” and Johnny Tigertail, with Negro John as his interpreter, Vinton felt sure he would meet with success. But as the days wore on and the waters of the swamps grew cooler, Vinton’s command was forced to find whatever signs they could and follow them to their conclusions. Their only “capture” was the Indian known as Katsa...
Micco, "a wild & eccentric Character, associated with no party—though an actual relative of Sam Jones himself." West of Fort Pierce, the command did find some villages, abandoned but recently farmed. Some islands in this swamp contained old camp sites, with canoes and some more or less wild crops still producing—all of which were destroyed. Thus, Vinton's last campaign in Florida uncovered only old camps, worn out tools, and one, semi-exiled Indian.42 Held up by winds, rising water, numerous cypress swamps and low marshes, Captain Richard Wade fared no better.43 The last major scouts from Fort Lauderdale had concluded without results.

Neither Childs, Worth, Vinton, Wade nor McLaughlin ever found or captured the elusive Sam Jones. As the war wound down and eastern posts like Fort Lauderdale were abandoned, no word surfaced of his capture or whereabouts. Without accurate maps, Indian guides provided advice, but failed to lead the Army to its goal. As Childs informed Worth, communication with Sam Jones was effectively precluded, "All the Indians refuse to go to Sam Jones they say if they know where he was they would not dare to go, as he would kill them, this in view of a bag of dollars I exhibited belonging to the Q'master."44 In spite of inducements, the guides failed to take the Army to Sam Jones. With inaccurate maps, reluctant guides, Congress eager to end a political nightmare and thousands of troops dead, wounded or ill, the result was the continued freedom of a small number of Seminoles, Miccosukes, escaped African-Americans and other "remnants" left in the vast uncharted lands of South Florida.

Notes

1 Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series) 1822-1860, Record Group 94, Roll 244, W 434-Z, 1841 (Washington: National Archives and Records Service, 1964), Microcopy No. 567. Letter of July 24, 1841, Worth to Jones. Hereafter, LRAG, date of letter and correspondents. All letters quoted from this source are from Roll Number 244, except endnotes 42 and 43.

2 Vinton Papers, Manuscript Department, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. Letter of October 31, 1841, Vinton to " Friend." A microfilm copy of these papers related to his Florida service is available at the Broward County Historical Commission, which the author wishes to thank for making them accessible for this article.

Vinton was a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, Class of 1817. Appointed from Rhode Island, he was assigned as "Third Lieutenant" in the Corps of Artillery. Rising to second lieutenant in late 1817, he spent many of his early years on garrison duty in the South, particularly Charleston, South Carolina. He transferred to the Third Artillery in late 1821 and remained with this unit until his death, at the siege of Vera Cruz, Mexico, March 22, 1847. Although he had served as aide-de-camp to Major General Jacob Brown, his fortunes did not rise until he was made captain in December of 1835. Transferred with his regiment to Florida, he served here throughout the entire Seminole War, much of the time as commander at Fort New Smyrna. His service during the Mexican War, prior to his death, was rewarded with the rank of brevet major for his gallant conduct during the Battle of Monterrey, in September 1846. [See George W. Cullum, Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N. Y., Volume 1 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891), 159-60.

3 Ibid. [Vinton Papers].

Cullum, Biographical Register, 115-116. Cullum also includes a short biographical sketch of this remarkable man. After leaving Florida in 1842, he served at a number of posts on garrison duty, before being transferred to the Texas frontier. During the Mexican War, Childs saw extended action in the battles of Resaca-de-la-Palma, Monterrey, Vera Cruz, Cerro Gordo and in the defense of Puebla. For his services in Mexico he was promoted to brevet colonel, major (full service rank) and brevet brigadier general for his "gallant and meritorious service in the defense of Puebla." After this war, he continued to command in various capacities, including the garrison at Fort McHenry, Maryland. Transferred to Florida in early 1852, he was charged with the command of all East Florida. However, while at Fort Brooke (Tampa), he contracted the dreaded yellow fever and died there October 8, 1853.


6 Sprague, Florida War, 280. Cullum reports that the New York-born Burke was a graduate of the Academy in the Class of 1836. Upon graduation he was immediately sent to Florida as a brevet second lieutenant on July 9, 1838. After the war, he served as instructor of infantry tactics at the Academy and on garrison duty. His service in the Mexican War included the battles of Vera Cruz, Cerro Gordo (receiving a brevet major's rank for gallantry) and the siege and capture of Mexico City. He returned to Florida during the Indian Scare of 1849-50. After duties in the East, he was transferred to the Washington Territory (after refusing a governorship of the Utah Territory). Steptoe saw extensive action against the Indians of Washington. For his service in the Northwest, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1863. Because of ill health, he was forced to resign his position in November 1861 and died at his home near Lynchburg, Virginia, April 1, 1865. Cullum, Biographical Register, 689.

7 Edward Dean Arden. Wade was appointed to the Corps of Artillery on October 27, 1820. The New York-born lieutenant transferred to the Third Artillery in 1822 and received his promotion to first lieutenant in 1828. Wade was promoted to captain on December 26, 1840, and was awarded a promotion to brevet major for his gallant services during the war against the Florida Indians. During the Mexican War, he received a promotion to lieutenant colonel for his gallant and meritorious service at the Battle of Molino del Rey in 1847. He did not live long after his promotion, passing away on February 13, 1850. Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, Volume 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 991.
Edward Otho Cresap Ord of Maryland graduated from the Academy in the Class of 1835 and was promoted to first lieutenant in July 1841. He received his promotion to captain in 1850. Ord’s career in the service found him extensively involved in the War Between the States, being mustered out of volunteer service with the rank of major general. He received much recognition for his gallantry and leadership during that bitter conflict. Returning to the service after the war, he was promoted to brigadier general in 1866 and retired from active service with the rank of Major General of the United States Army in January 1881. He died two years later on July 22, 1883. Heitman, *Historical Register*, 759.

Thomas W. Sherman graduated from the Academy in 1836, having been appointed from his native Rhode Island in 1832. Like many of his class, he spent much of the time from graduation until the end of the Seminole War in active service in Florida. During 1838, he received his promotion to first lieutenant. At the beginning of the Mexican War, he was promoted to Captain of the Third Artillery. He served with distinction and commanded a battery during the Battle of Buena Vista, for which he received a brevet major promotion. After this war, he was assigned to the western frontier, spending much time in Kansas, where he played a role in quelling some of the outbursts in that area prior to the Civil War. During the War Between the States, Sherman served in the Maryland and Capitol areas helping to shore up Washington’s defenses and keeping open the lines of communication. He organized part of the expedition which seized Fernandina, Florida, and commanded a division in the siege of Port Royal, South Carolina. Transferred to the Army of the Tennessee, he saw almost continuous action on that front until sent to the Department of the Gulf in late 1862. In May 1863, he led a division in the expedition to Port Hudson, Louisiana, where, on May 27, he lost his right leg leading an assault on the town. For his services during the war, he received a brevet major generalship. Returning to active service after the war, he saw little but garrison duty, ending his last assignment, Key West, Florida, in 1870. He retired from active service on December 31, 1870, and died nine years later at Newport, Rhode Island. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, 642-43.

Georgia-born George Taylor was a member of the Academy Class of 1837. He was promoted to first lieutenant on July 7, 1838, in recognition of his service in Florida. Further service, like that detailed in this article, earned him a promotion to brevet captain in 1842. After a stint as Assistant Professor of Mathematics at the Academy, he saw extensive service in the Mexican War. Taylor was involved in the battles of Resaca-de-la-Palma, Monterrey, Palo Alto, Cerro Gordo, Huamantla and Atlixco. For his bravery and meritorious conduct he was promoted to brevet major. George Taylor, along with his wife and 180 others, met a tragic end, drowning off the Capes of the Delaware when a violent storm raked the steamer *San Francisco* on December 24, 1853. He was thirty-seven years old at the time of his death. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, 679-80.

Maryland-born Francis O. Wyse was another member of the Class of 1837 who was sent, almost immediately after graduation, into the heat and discomfort of Florida. Like others, he rose in the ranks to first lieutenant, on July 31, 1838. After his Florida service, he spent much time on garrison duty until the outbreak of the Mexican War. After a promotion to Captain of the Third Artillery in March 1847, Wyse saw action in the affair at Calabaza River, for which he received a brevet major rank. He spent much of the time between this war and the War Between the States in garrison duty along the Northwest coast and participated in the Spokane expedition of 1858. On the eve of the Civil War, he was promoted to Major, Fourth Artillery. By the end of the year, he had been further promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. During the first two years of the war, he served on recruiting duty and was the disbursing officer in Baltimore. He resigned his commission on July 25, 1863. Wyse was later reinstated as an additional Lieutenant Colonel, Fourth Artillery, on February 19, 1879 and officially retired by an act of Congress on February 28, 1879 as a result of government reduction in the Army and clearing of the rolls. He spent the remainder of his life on his farm near Pikesville, Maryland. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, 693-94. For Wade’s report of the dispatch of Wyse’s command, see LRAG, letter of September 27, 1841, Wade to Childs. LRAG, letter of September 19, 1841, Wyse to Wade. “Lake Tompkins” (named for former commander of Fort Lauderdale Christopher Q. Tompkins) was renamed Lake Mabel in 1883 by early surveyor and property owner Arthur T. Williams. Today it forms the turning basin of Port Everglades.

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