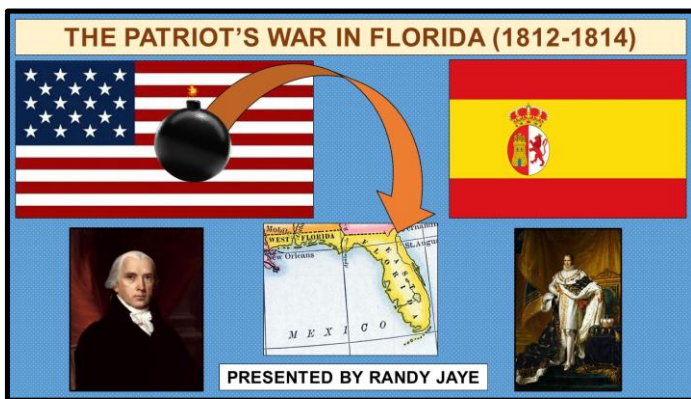


The Patriot's War in Florida (1812-1814)

Presented by Randy Jaye

Since the Patriot's War was fought on a regional scale and did not include any legendary or charismatic generals or fabled battles, and has been overshadowed by the War of 1812, it has been virtually forgotten in U.S. history. The war evolved into bloodbath of ambushes and scorched-earth warfare tactics and the Seminole Indians and their allies joined the conflict on the side of the Spanish.

U.S. strategies, disgraceful and otherwise, helped lay the groundwork for continued and long lasting policies associated with international affairs, expansionist politics (efforts to obtain all lands in North America), the continued enslavement of Blacks and discrimination and displacement of Native Americans.



The Patriot's War (sometimes referred to as the Patriot's Rebellion) was an armed conflict that occurred in Spanish East Florida, before and during the War of 1812. The United States unwisely, illegally and clandestinely supported insurrectionists from Georgia as they attempted to incite a revolt to subvert Spanish rule in East Florida and seize the geographically important territory. The war evolved into bloodbath of ambushes and scorched-earth warfare tactics where many plantations and farmsteads from the Georgia border to south of St. Augustine were looted or set aflame. Supporters of the United States'

quest to seize East Florida stated they wanted to limit British influence in North America, stop smuggling, and prevent deserters and runaway slaves from seeking asylum in the Spanish territory.

On January 15, 1811, Congress passed a secret act in closed session for acquisition of Spanish East Florida called the No-Transfer Resolution. This act was the first U.S. government statement regarding its own security, which opposed the transfer of territories from one European power to another in the Western Hemisphere. The No-Transfer Resolution established a formal U.S. policy toward its goals of seizing Spanish borderlands.

Madison appointed former Georgia governor, General George Mathews, as an agent who led a contingent of militia forces (made up primarily of disloyal Spanish subjects, and volunteers from Georgia and Tennessee who were promised 200 acres of Florida land in return for their service). This group of militia forces became known as the "Patriots" and declared themselves in a revolt against Spain.

On May 5, 1814, the Seminoles ambushed, killed and scalped the Patriot's main leader Buckner F. Harris. Spanish East Florida's governor Sebastián Kindelán y O'Regan promptly paid the Seminoles a bounty reward for killing Harris.

After the death of Harris and no support from the U.S. government the Patriot's War was extinguished in Spanish East Florida.



Randy Jaye has recently researched and nominated 5 properties that have been successfully added onto the National Register of Historic Places. He is the author of several recent books including: *Flagler County, Florida: A Centennial History* (2017); *Perseverance: Episodes of Black History from the Rural South* (2020); *Jim Crow Era Propaganda, Artifacts and Upheavals in Florida* (2022), *Florida Prohibition: Corruption, Defiance and Tragedy* (2024), and *Florida Flashpoints: Extraordinary Moments from Spanish Colony to the Space Age* (2025). He also writes articles for historical journals, local newspapers, magazines, online publications, and has appeared on several radio shows and PBS documentaries. He earned both a Master's degree and a Bachelor's degree from California State University.