

Second Seminole War (1835-1842) Fortifications (Forts, Camps and Blockhouses) in the Volusia and Flagler County Area

By Randy Jaye

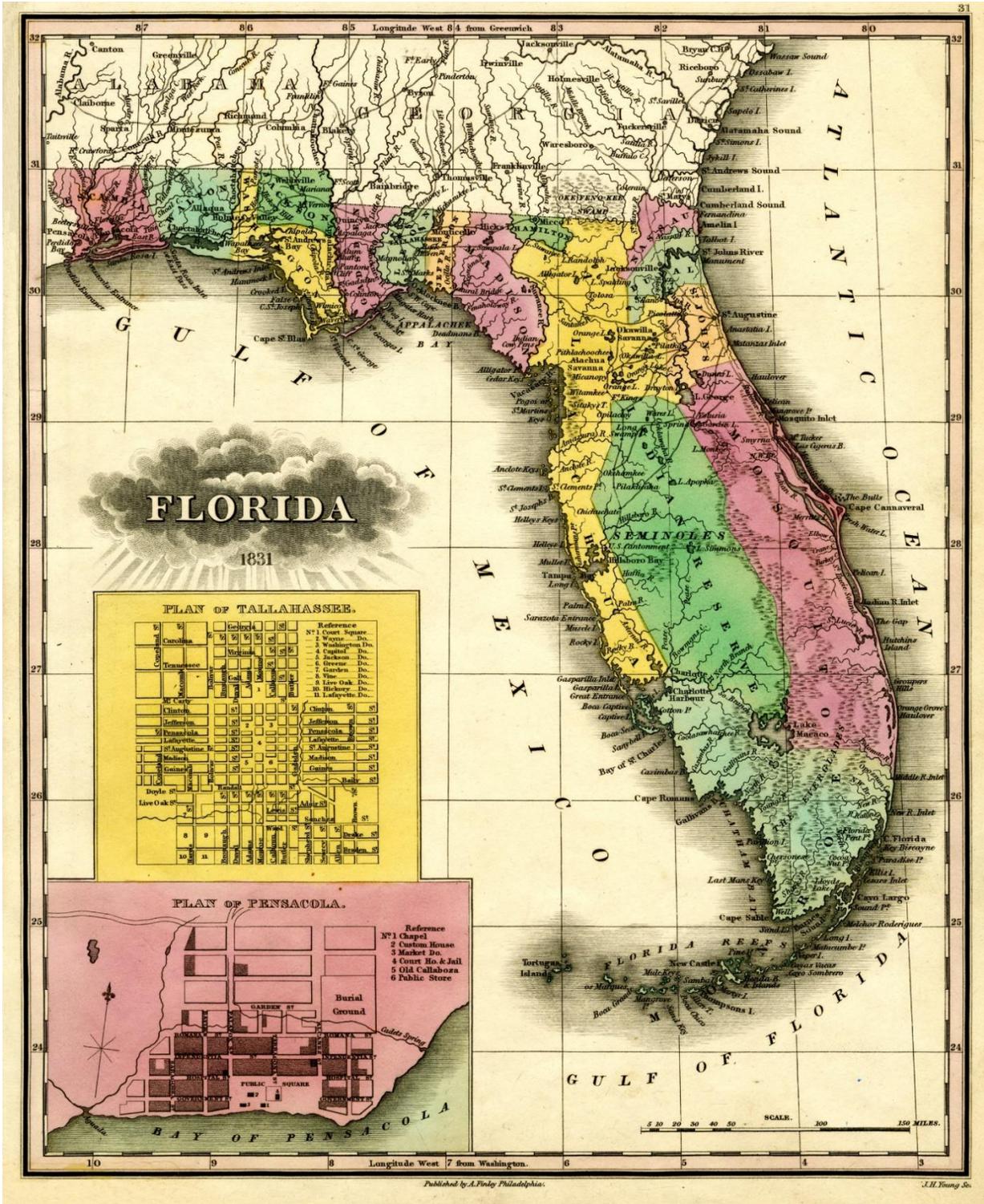
Author's Notes:

- (1) *There is not much existing information about the history of most of these military fortifications¹ due to the fact that they were temporary, built during wartime and record keeping was certainly not a priority at the time.*
- (2) *It is possible that there were other fortifications within the boundaries of the present-day Volusia and Flagler County area during the Second Seminole War (also known as the **Florida War** and the **Seminole War**) that are not included in this article.*

Network of Fortifications throughout the Area

There were many fortifications built near vital road and waterway routes and around large Plantations as protection against Seminole Indian² attacks. But, they were typically constructed hastily from logs, tree branches, hay and straw bales, stacked rocks and included ditches and embankments of earth. They were mostly simple defensive structures and were used as supply depots, transportation and communication links, shipping points, field hospitals and housing for troops. They usually did not, and could not, accommodate large numbers of troops, horses or supply wagons. Therefore, the Seminoles and their allies (the Black Seminoles³ and runaway slaves) were not very intimidated by their presence and actually destroyed many of them during attacks. The Florida Territory's difficult terrain, Guerrilla warfare tactics and the elusiveness of Seminole warriors helped to overtake the defenses of many of these fortifications. And, when the Seminoles found them abandoned they purged supplies and burnt most of the associated building structures.

Following is a listing that includes the name(s), years active, location (in present-day terms), and a brief history of the known fortifications that existed in the present-day Volusia and Flagler County area during the Second Seminole War.



Florida Territory Map of 1831 – The Seminole Indian Reserve (highlighted in green) in the middle of the Florida Territory. Source: floridamemory.com. Note: The Indian Removal Act signed by President Andrew Jackson on May 28, 1830 authorized the removal of southern Indian tribes (including the Seminoles) to be moved west of the Mississippi River in exchange for their land. This was a major factor in starting the Second Seminole War.

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Addison Blockhouse (a.k.a. Fort Duncan McRee)	1836	The Addison Blockhouse Historic State Park, Ormond Beach (Volusia County)
<p>Brief History: The former Carrickfergus Plantation buildings, blockhouse⁴ and sugar mill (built between 1807 and 1825) were burnt in an attack led by the Seminole warriors King Philip⁵ and Wildcat⁶ in early 1836. South Carolina militia troops then built a fortification around the ruins of the kitchen. They named the fort after the owner of the property, Duncan McRee. It was utilized as a defensive structure for about a month and during a battle with the Seminoles three troops were killed here. Additional information can be accessed at Florida State Parks – the Addison Blockhouse Historic State Park: https://www.floridastateparks.org/park-history/Addison-Blockhouse</p>		



Addison Blockhouse - Florida State Parks.

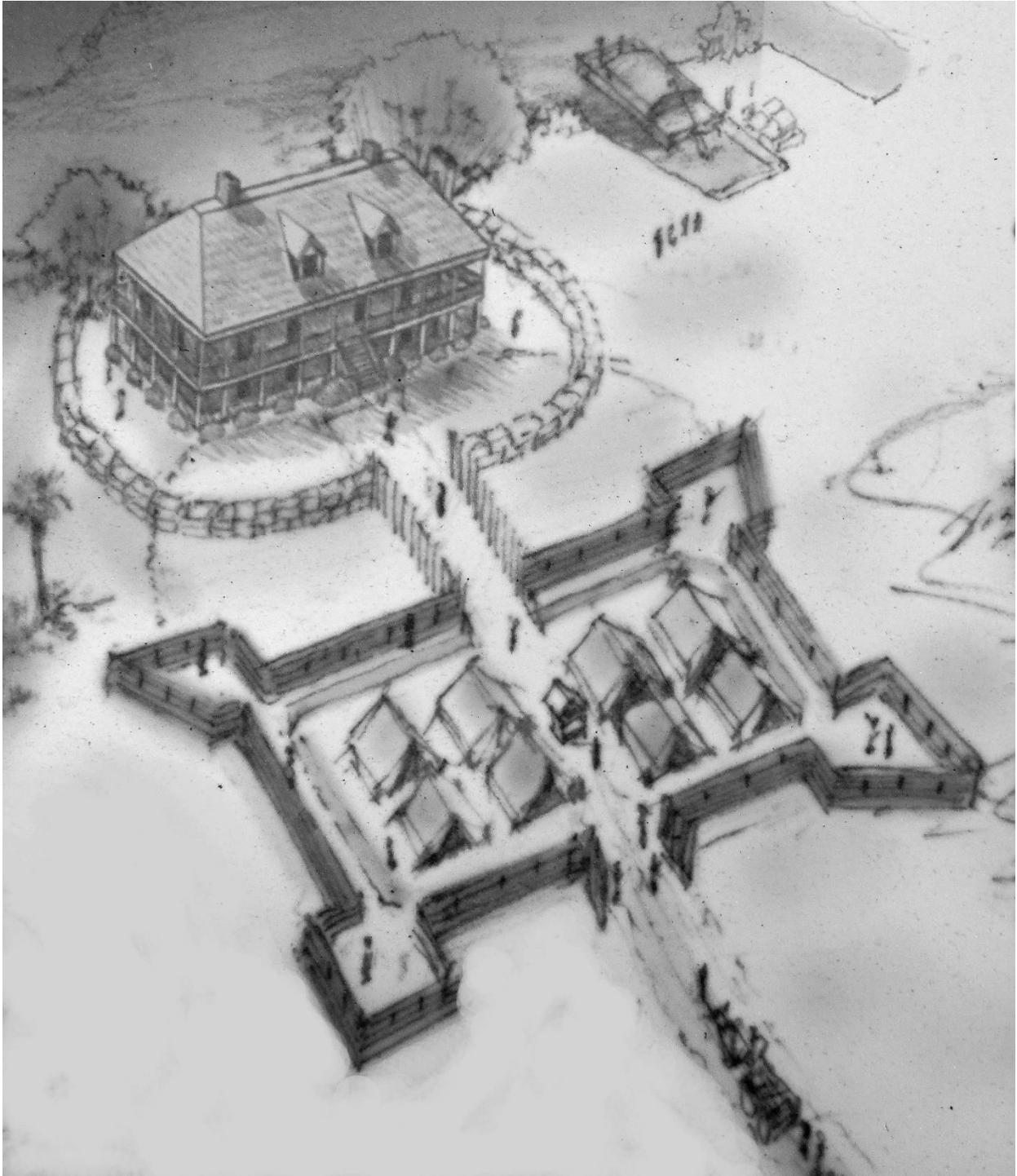


Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Bulowville Fortress (a.k.a. Fort Bulow and Post at Bulow)	1836	Bulow Plantation Ruins Historic State Park, Flagler Beach (Flagler County)

Brief History: The owner of the Bulow Plantation, John Joachim Bulow (1807-1836), was friendly with the Seminoles and resisted U.S. Army occupation of his property. But, troops did seize his property and use his slaves, oxen and supplies to build a fortification in front, and around, his main house. After food ran short, and many troops returned injured from their defeat at the Battle of Dunlawton, the U.S. Army abandoned this fortification. On January 31, 1836, the Seminoles and their allies burnt and destroyed the fortress, main house, sugar mill, slave quarters and other buildings. Additional information can be accessed at Florida State Parks – the Bulow Plantation Ruins Historic State Park: <https://www.floridastateparks.org/park/bulow-plantation>



Bulow Plantation Sugar Mill Ruins – some of the coquina rock still shows burning scars from 1836 when the Seminoles burnt the plantation and all associated buildings.



An artist's concept of what the Bulowville Fortress might have looked like in 1836 – Source: William "Bill" Ryan.

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Camp Darley	1836	Ormond Beach (Volusia County)
<p><u>Brief History:</u> In 1836, General Joseph Hernandez⁷ (1788-1857) sent Major Benjamin Putnam⁸ (1801-1869) to Darley's Plantation (formerly known as the Rosetta Plantation and was then owned by Thomas Dummett (1775-1839) near the town of Ormond) to protect it from Seminole raids. After the U.S. militia quickly established a camp Major Putnam realized it was not feasible to defend against the Seminoles. He abandoned the camp and withdrew to the Bulowville Fortress. The Seminoles found Camp Darley abandoned and burnt the sugar plantation and rum distillery buildings. Additional information can be accessed at Ormond Beach Historical Society – the Dummett Plantation, The McRae Plantation, and the Addison Blockhouse: http://ormondhistory.org/the-dummett-plantation-the-mcrae-plantation-and-the-addison-blockhouse/</p>		



Dummett Plantation (Camp Darley) Sugar Mill and Rum Distillery Ruins.

 <p>Joseph Martin Hernandez</p> <p>First Delegate to the United States Congress from the Territory, and Brigadier General of the Militia of Florida</p>	
<p><i>General Joseph Hernandez.</i></p>	<p><i>Major Benjamin Putnam.</i></p>

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Camp Dunlawton	1836	Port Orange (Volusia County)
<p><u>Brief History:</u> The Florida militia built this temporary fortification at the Anderson or Dunlawton Plantation. In January 1836, Major Putnam and a detachment of troops (St. Augustine Guards and Captain Douglas Dummett’s Company) were sent to remove the corn supplies before they fell into the hands of the Seminoles. When they arrived the plantation buildings were already on fire. They waited until the next morning to confront the Seminoles when the “Battle of Dunlawton” broke out. Being outnumbered and defeated Putnam ordered a retreat. They made it back to the Bulowville Fortress but 3 were dead, 13 wounded and 2 were stranded on Pelican Island (one of which was never heard from again). Camp Dunlawton was then abandoned by the militia. Additional information can be accessed at Dunlawton Sugar Mill Gardens – Dunlawton History: http://dunlawtonsugarmillgardens.org/about.html</p>		



Dunlawton Plantation Ruins – cooking kettles and coquina rock walls.

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Fort Barnwell (a.k.a. Fort Columbia.)	1836	Volusia (Volusia County)

Brief History: Established on March 21, 1836 on the east bank of the St. Johns River near the town of Volusia by Captain Elmore's South Carolina Volunteer troops. It is believed that it was built very quickly of inferior materials and in the stockade style shortly after Fort Volusia was completed. In April 1836, the Seminoles attacked the fort and killed two troops. This post was commanded by Major William Gates (1788-1868), 1st U.S. Artillery who was nearly dismissed from his command for not effectively defending it. He was then court-martialed for cowardice due to not retrieving the bodies of two slain soldiers who were mutilated and scalped by the Seminoles. It is not known how long this fort was occupied by U.S. troops or when it was abandoned. Additional information can be accessed at Fortwiki.com: [http://fortwiki.com/Fort_Barnwell_\(2\)](http://fortwiki.com/Fort_Barnwell_(2))

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Fort Birch	1839	Alamana (Volusia County)

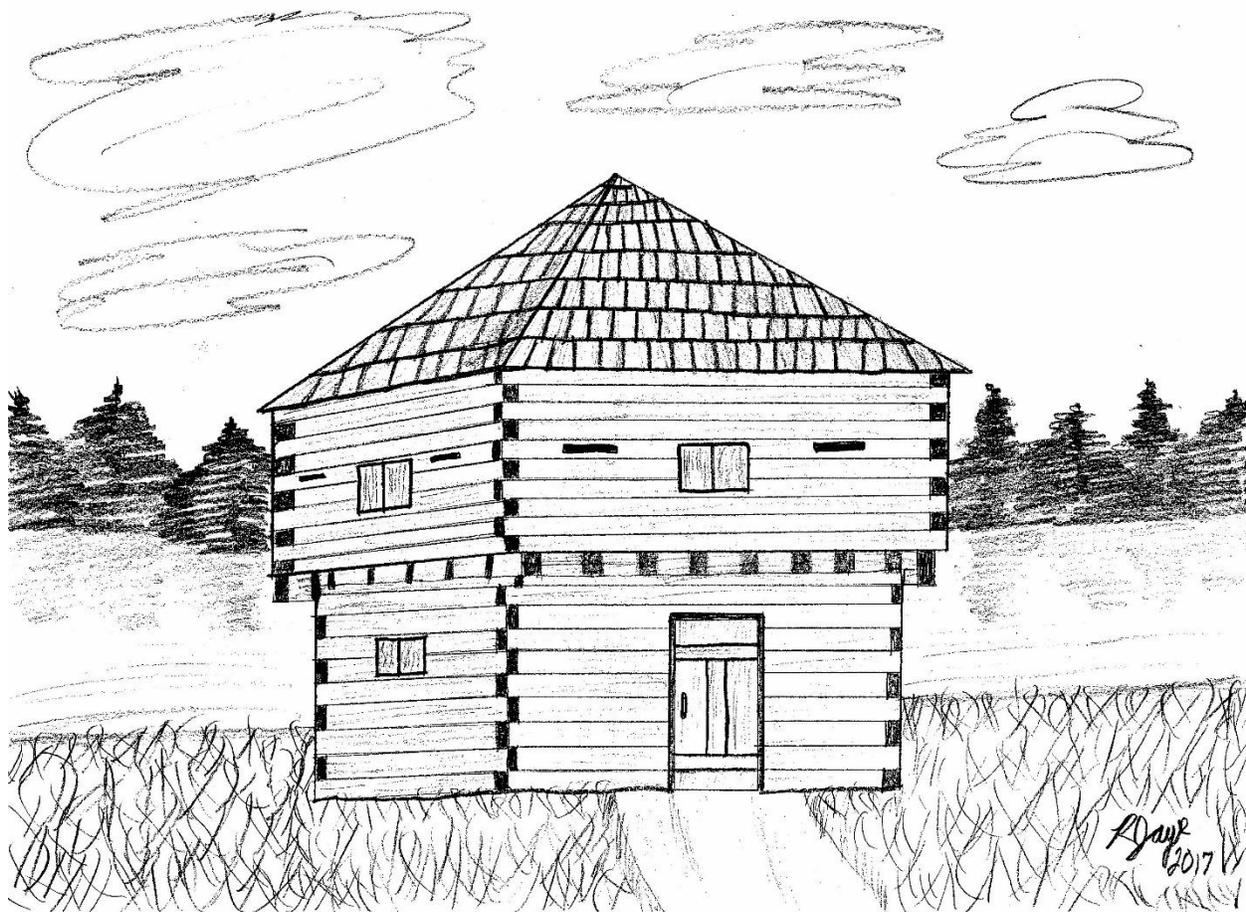
Brief History: Believed to be built by the U.S. militia in 1839 near Lake Ashby. Not much is known about this fort including how long it was occupied by U.S. troops or when it was abandoned. Fort Birch is listed on Fortwiki's Seminole War Forts: http://fortwiki.com/Seminole_War_Forts_List



Attack of the Seminoles on the Blockhouse - Library of Congress.

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Fort Caben (a.k.a. Fort Caven – which is most likely a misspelling.)	1834-1839	Near St. Johns Park on the banks of Crescent Lake (Flagler County)

Brief History: It is believed that Fort Caben was erected by the U.S. Army to prevent Seminole raiding parties traveling on boats or canoes on the St. Johns River from attacking the Atlantic side plantations to its east. It was most likely abandoned, or burned down, sometime in the late 1830s as no mention of it after that time is documented. The site of Fort Caben is in a densely wooded and secluded area and would require an experienced archaeologist to locate the exact spot where it once stood.



Artist's concept of what Fort Caben might have looked like in the late 1830s. It was most likely a blockhouse style fortification that was close to the St. Johns River and erected on the banks of Lake Crescent.

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Fort Call	1836-1838	Volusia (Volusia County)
<p><u>Brief History:</u> This fortification was built nine months after Fort Barnwell was completed by the U.S. militia. It was utilized and occupied for two years. Not much is known about military operations or the usage of this fort. In 1845, a Methodist church was built on the site where it once stood. Additional information can be accessed at NorthAmericanForts.com – Florida Forts – Central Florida – Seminole War Forts – Volusia County: http://www.northamericanforts.com/East/flcentral.html#sem</p>		

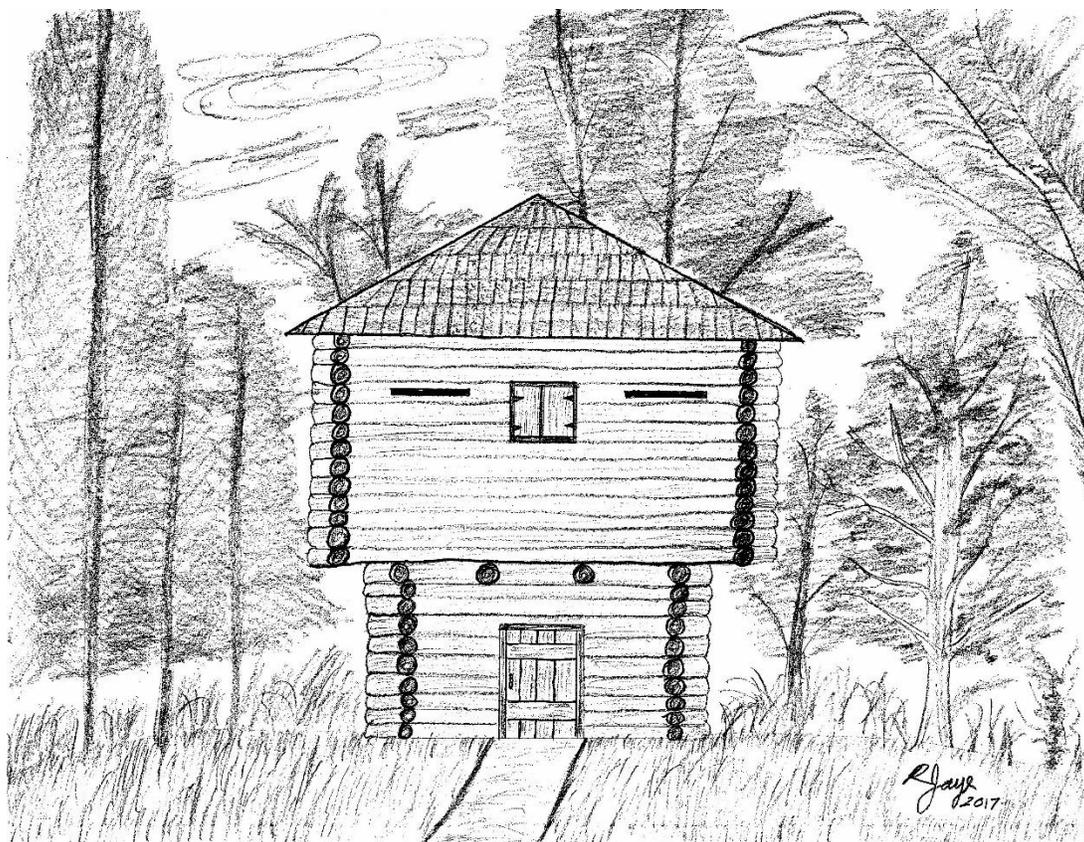
Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Fort Florida	1836-1841	Debary (Volusia County)
<p><u>Brief History:</u> This fortification was built in 1836 and used as a U.S. Army depot. General Winfield Scott⁹ (1786-1866) selected its location which was to the east of the St. Johns River. It was abandoned sometime around 1841.</p>		



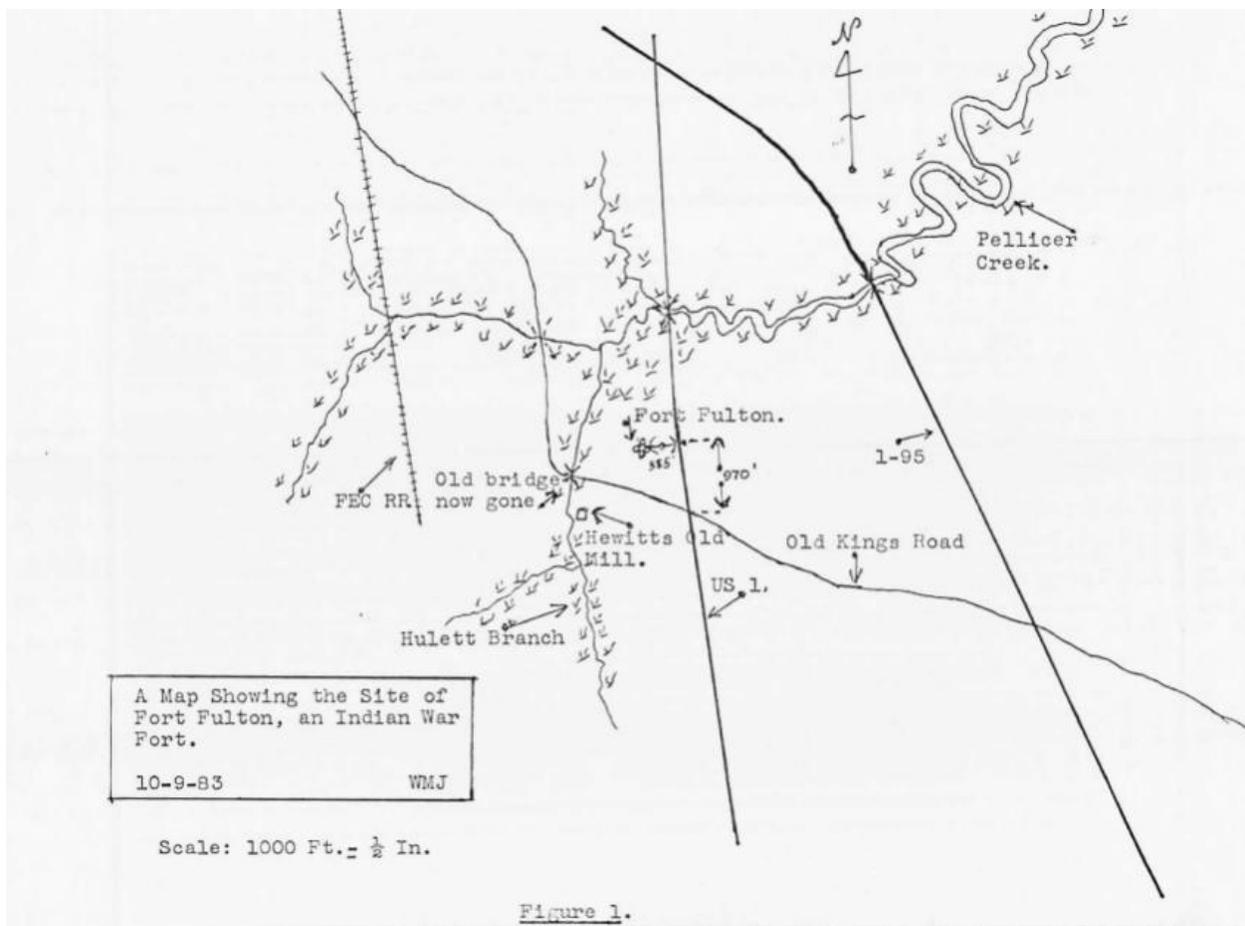
General Winfield Scott (1786-1866) - painting is circa 1835.

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Fort Fulton	1840-1842	Near Old Kings Road and Pellicer Creek (west of present-day U.S. Highway 1 (Flagler County))

Brief History: Joel Roberts Poinsett (1779-1851), who served as Secretary of War from March 7, 1837 to March 5, 1841 made plans to abandon Fort Hanson (located eighteen miles southwest of St. Augustine, St. Johns County) and Fort Peyton (originally called Fort Moultrie which was located 6 miles west of St. Augustine, St. Johns County) in favor of three new forts being established in their place. Only Fort Fulton was built and completed on February 21, 1840. It is not clear how long it was an active military post as it was likely used for short periods of times and left abandoned between U.S. militia occupations as troops were moved back and forth to St. Augustine. It is likely it was abandoned, or destroyed, at or near the end of the war. Interestingly, it is shown on one 1846 Florida map but no other known documents mention it after the war.



An artist's concept of what Fort Fulton might have looked like in the late 1830s. It was most likely a blockhouse style fortification. It was strategically located near Pellicer Creek and Old Kings Road in a heavily wooded area.



Map showing the site of Fort Fulton during the Second Seminole War.



Osceola - Seminole War Leader during the Second Seminole War.

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Fort Kingsbury (a.k.a. Camp Kingsbury)	1837-1840	Enterprise (Volusia County)

Brief History: This fortification was built on top of an old Indian midden and named after Lt. Charles E. Kingsbury, 2nd U.S. Dragoons who died of disease on June 9, 1837 at Fort Mellon (Sanford, Seminole County). This log stockade fort was one of a line of military posts that stretched from New Smyrna to Tampa and was a “satellite” post of Fort Mellon. It was abandoned in 1840. Additional information can be accessed at Volusia County, Florida – Fort Kingsbury and the Second Seminole War: <https://www.volusia.org/residents/history/volusia-stories/enterprise-on-the-st-johns-river/fort-kingsbury-and-the-second-seminole-war.stml>



Map showing the location of Fort Kingsbury during the Second Seminole War.

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Fort New Smyrna (a.k.a. Fort Smyrna and Camp near New Smyrna.)	1837-1841	New Smyrna Beach (Volusia County)

Brief History: Fort New Smyrna was established in May of 1837, by the U.S. Army 1st Artillery detachment, under the command of Captain Lucian Bonaparte Webster (1801-1853). It had 41 men, including 39 non-commissioned officers and 2 commissioned officers originally occupying it. The fort was set up as a staging area and a provisions depot for General Thomas Jesup’s 1837-38 campaign against the Seminoles. Additionally, it was the headquarters for the troops stationed at Fort Ann at Haulover (Merritt Island, Brevard County).

It was abandoned in November 1841 and the troops were transferred to Fort Lauderdale (Broward County). Additional information can be accessed at Volusia County, Florida – Historical Highlights of New Smyrna’s Past: <http://www.volusia.com/explore-volusia/history/hidden-treasures/>

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Fort Preston	1837	Spring Garden Lake, near De Leon Springs (Volusia County)

Brief History: It was built as a blockhouse style fortification and is believed to have been operational during the Second Seminole War and occupied by U.S. militia troops. No documents are known to tell of its use during the Second Seminole War. It is known to have been used by U.S. Troops during the Civil War.



Sign for Fort Preston - circa 1953.

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Fort Volusia	1836-1857	Volusia (Volusia County)

Brief History: This fortification was built on an Indian midden by the South Carolina Volunteers, commanded by Captain Benjamin T. Elmore and Lt. Irving’s company of artillery in 1836. It was utilized and occupied at different times throughout the Second Seminole War. It was one of the only forts to survive the Second Seminole War in this area and was used up to 1857 when it was abandoned. Additional information can be accessed at NorthAmericanForts.com – Florida Forts – Central Florida – Seminole War Forts – Volusia County: <http://www.northamericanforts.com/East/flcentral.html#sem>

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Mala Compra Fortress (a.k.a. Post at Mala Compra.)	1835-1836	Palm Coast (Flagler County)

Brief History: The Mala Compra plantation was taken into military possession by the U.S. Army and the cotton warehouse was fortified and used as a military post. It was also used as a holding place for slaves recaptured from the Seminoles. Detachments of U.S. Army troops moved to other military posts in the area leaving the Mala Compra Fortress temporarily unoccupied by military forces. The Seminoles burnt all the buildings on the plantation in 1836 after they discovered it was unprotected by U.S. Army troops. Some 80 slaves were scattered or taken by the Seminoles. Additional information can be accessed at VisitFlorida.com – Mala Compra Plantation of Palm Coast: A Florida Archaeological Site: <http://www.visitflorida.com/en-us/things-to-do/arts-history/mala-compra-archeological-site-in-palm-coast-fl.html>



Main house kitchen area ruins – fireplace, flooring and foundations of the Mala Compra Plantation.

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
Post at Orange Grove Plantation	1835-1836	Daytona Beach (Volusia County)

Brief History: The Orange Grove Plantation was occupied as a military post by Major Kirby and two companies of U.S. artillery. Kirby commandeered the plantation’s flatboat and loaded it with supplies for Colonel Brisbane’s troops. The Seminoles burnt the plantation when the troops were away, and the owner, Samuel H. Williams, hid behind a palmetto tree and watched as his property was being destroyed.

Fortification Name	Year(s) Active (Approximate)	Location
St. Josephs Fortress (a.k.a. Camp Brisbane.)	1835-1836	Palm Coast (Flagler County)
<p><u>Brief History:</u> The St. Josephs plantation was taken into military possession by the U.S. Army and the main house was fortified and used as a military post. A field hospital was also set up on the property. This fortress was the main military depot for the entire region south of St. Augustine. The detachments of U.S. Army troops moved and left this fortress temporarily unoccupied and when the Seminoles found it abandoned in 1836 they burnt all the significant buildings. Today, a shopping center at the intersection of Old Kings Road and Palm Coast Parkway in Palm Coast sits on top of its original site.</p>		

End Notes:

- ¹ A **fortification** is defined as a defensive wall or other reinforcement constructed to strengthen a building or area against attack.
- ² The **Seminole** Indians were originally members of the Creek Indian nation (Lower Creeks) who migrated from Georgia and Alabama to Florida in the 1700s. After the Creeks settled in Florida they were renamed to the Seminoles. Most now live in Oklahoma and the minority in Florida. They survived 3 wars against the United States government during the 19th century. In the late 19th century, the Florida Seminoles received 5,000 acres of reservation land. In the 1940s, their government reorganized, but it was not until 1957 that they received federal recognition from the United States government.
- ³ The **Black Seminoles** were descendants of free blacks and escaped black slaves (called maroons). They allied and lived with or near the Seminole Indians in Spanish Florida, the Florida Territory and in the states of Florida and Oklahoma. Some Seminole leaders actually held Black Seminoles as their slaves.
- ⁴ A **Blockhouse** is a fort made of squared or round timbers with a projecting upper story and had peepholes and openings from which to fire rifles. They offered minimal protection against Seminole Indian attacks and served as a storehouse for arms and ammunition. The room on the upper floor jutted out over the base which allowed defenders to shoot down on attackers if they tried to sneak up and set fire to the wood structure. Guns could be aimed through portholes that were placed in the floor and through all four walls.
- ⁵ **King Phillip** (also known as *Ee-mat-la*) (1739-1839) was an aged Seminole war chief during the Second Seminole War. He was captured at the Dunlawton Plantation (Camp Dunlawton) and held prisoner at Fort Marion in St. Augustine. In 1839, while being transported west to Indian Territory he died.

⁶ **Wild Cat** (also known as *Coacoochee* or *Cowacoochee*) (1807/1810-1857) was a leading Seminole chief after the death of war leader **Osceola** (1804–1838) during the later years of the Second Seminole War.

⁷ General **Joseph Marion Hernandez** (1788-1857) was a plantation owner (St. Josephs, Mala Compra and Bella Vista located in what is now Flagler County), and the first delegate from the Florida Territory and the first Hispanic to serve in the United States Congress (1822 to 1823). He was also a Brigadier General in the U.S. Army during the Second Seminole War and the commanding officer who disgracefully, under the orders of General Thomas Jesup (1788-1860), captured and imprisoned the Seminole war leader Osceola under a flag of truce.

⁸ Major **Benjamin Alexander Putnam** (1801-1869) was a U.S. Army officer who served in the Second Seminole War. Putnam County, Florida is named after him. He was also the first president of the Florida Historical Society.

⁹ General **Winfield Scott** (1786-1866) was known as "Old Fuss and Feathers" and the "Grand Old Man of the Army", and served on active duty as a general longer than any other person in American history. His military career spanned 53 years. In 1852, he was the Whig Party candidate for the President of the United States but lost the election to Democrat Franklin Pierce.

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