

MICANOPY TRUST for HISTORIC FORTS & BATTLEFIELDS

Battle of Micanopy
Fort Defiance



Battle of Welika Pond
Fort Micanopy

1835-1842

Mission Statement

We are a local, non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation and promotion of recently discovered Second Seminole War sites located within the Micanopy town limits.

Historical Synopsis

The territorial village of Micanopy played an especially vital role during the opening phase of the Second Seminole War. Located in the heart of the former Seminole homeland, Micanopy was the closest town to the Seminole reservation and was thus extremely vulnerable to attack. At the commencement of hostilities in December 1835, the village had been transformed into a militia fort (Fort Defiance) and was enclosed by pine-log palisades. Settler families from the surrounding areas sought shelter and safety within the barricades, but were then rapidly subjected to famine and disease.

After the U.S. Army took control of the fortified village during the summer of 1836, Seminoles under the command of Osceola attacked during two successive engagements: the *Battle of Micanopy* and the *Battle of Welika Pond*. Because the army could claim success amid an otherwise bleak period during the Florida campaign, President Andrew Jackson and the War Department were keen to draw national attention toward these battles and intensive press coverage ensued.

Any sense of victory, however, was short-lived. Exhausted, malaria-ridden troops were soon ordered to be withdrawn from the remote Florida

interior. Fort Defiance (Micanopy) was evacuated and then set fire in order to deprive Seminoles of any advantage. During the following winter a newly built Fort Micanopy—at 250 feet square, one of the largest wooden forts—stood at the site of the former village. Fort Micanopy was the command post for all the garrisons in the vicinity and for a time General Zachary Taylor, future president, led the Army of the South from this post. By war's end, more soldiers died in combat here than at any other fort in Florida.

Strategic Goals

Micanopy's forts and battlefields embody two major themes in American history: Jacksonian expansionism and Indian removal. Given the importance of our sites, archaeologist and Micanopy Trust board member Gary Ellis has recommended that National Historical Landmark status be pursued. Ellis has a record of success in these matters, as he led a similar campaign for Ocala's Fort King a few years ago. In addition, we intend to establish—following the guidelines and concerns of the town commission and the historic/planning board—a professional quality museum dedicated to our Seminole War sites. Educational kiosks are also envisioned as being integral to our efforts. Finally, we will develop marketing that will raise public awareness of Micanopy's unique military and Indigenous legacy.

We look forward to working with all interested parties in order to realize these goals.

C. S. Monaco, PhD, *Founding President*

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