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## Names and Places

Historical Illiteracy is a major concern nationwide and is reflected locally in how we name our streets and places.

A recent survey of our street names in Jupiter indicate a major disconnect with our rich historic past. Some of this failure to remember our history is created by town planners, politicians and developers who either failed to know our history, or worse, are indifferent to it.

List here are some of the people and the events that took place in Florida and especially in Jupiter that are historically significant.

When Juan Ponce de Leon put ashore at the Jupiter Inlet in the spring of 1513, he and his men had a brief skirmish with the hostile "Jobe" tribe. Forced to leave, he moved south where he met the friendly "Abaioa" tribe, whose friendship he mentions in his ship's log.

Developers were right this time in using this name, with a slight change, to "Abacoa," however, they could have given him some recognition by naming one of the streets, "Ponce de Leon Blvd."

Many of the names we see in Florida had their origin dating back to the Seminole Wars (1817-1858). For over forty years the Seminoles fought the Army, Navy and Marines to a standstill; they still consider themselves the "unconquered people." (Wars ended in Truce not Treaty).

The names include famous Indians and U.S. soldiers and sailors who were sent here to remove the Seminoles and send them west of the Mississippi to Indian Territory. Many of the soldiers fought in local battles or were assigned to the Jupiter area; many were famous in American history. Their names have an immediate recognition value that would remind residents and visitors alike of the long historic past Jupiter enjoys.

Street names would be a gentle reminder that Jupiter was impacted twice in 1838, by the two battles of the Loxahatchee River during the Second Seminole War. For those who are unaware, the Second Seminole War was the longest, bloodiest, and most costly Indian War in American history—forty million dollars spent more than the American Revolution.

During the First Battle of the Loxahatchee on January 15, 1838, Lt. Levin M. Powell, (USN) and his sailors were almost massacred by the fierce Seminole guerrilla fighters. Nine days later on January 24, 1838, Maj. Gen. Thomas S. Jessup with the largest army ever assembled during the war (1500 troops) met 300 Seminoles on the banks of the Loxahatchee in the last standing battle of the Second Seminole War.

Two presidents fought in these wars, Andrew Jackson (First Seminole War), our seventh president, and Zackary Taylor, (Battle of Okeechobee), twelfth president. Many of the command officers, who would later serve in the Civil War, fought here in Jupiter on January 15<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 1838, these, are: Major Gen Thomas S. Jessup, commander of all the troops serving





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in Florida. Jessup was accused of “tarnishing” the nation’s honor by capturing Seminoles under a white flag of truce. A street near the battlefield might read, “General Jessup’s Way.”

Other famous soldiers: Robert Anderson (later the federal commander at Fort Sumter). Major William Lauderdale, (cut a trail from Jupiter to New River. The for he built there is now known as Fort Lauderdale and the road, “Military Trail”) Joseph E. Johnston, (saved Lt. Powell and his men from being massacred, later Confederate general who battled William Tecumseh Sherman during the Civil War.) Sherman assigned to Fort Pierce captured famous Seminole Chief Coacoochee (Wildcat).

Others detailed here: Braxton Bragg, Joseph Hooker, John Magruder, Abner Doubleday, Jubal Early, Ambrose Hill, Edward Ord, and John C. Pemberton. Others in Loxahatchee battles: General Abraham Eustis, William Harney, David Twiggs, and Levin Powell.

An interesting sidelight: Robert E. Lee was assigned to Jupiter in 1849 as a surveyor. George Gordon Meade was assigned to Jupiter to design the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse in 1854. The two men never met in Florida; however in 1863 they met at Gettysburg. You know the rest of the story.

The Seminoles were remarkable in their fight to remain in Florida. During this seven year war (1835-1842), some 40,000 American troops, both regulars and volunteers, came in and out of Florida in an effort to defeat 1500 Seminoles and 500 of their black allies (former slaves). In 1837 alone there were 9,000 troops commanded by General Jessup, however, the Seminoles held and the war continued for another twenty years.

The most famous Seminole name of course was Osceola. It is unfortunate that many of our school children have no idea who he was, nor the other Indian heroes we will list here. Osceola was that larger than life firebrand resistance leader, who died a martyr fighting for the land he loved – Florida.

Other famous Indians include: Micanopy, Chief of all the Seminoles, Coacoochee (Wildcat), Sam Jones (Arpeika), Billy Bowlegs, Tiger Tail, Jumper, Emathla, Alligator, Tuskegee, King Philip, and Halleck Hadjo. Two black warriors who were major players during the Seminole War were Abraham (Leader of the black warriors), and John Cavallo, partner of Wildcat, who helped take their people to Mexico.

Sam Jones, Wildcat, Tuskegee and Halleck Hadjo often frequented the Seminole Village on the Loxahatchee River in Jupiter.

We mention the two battles of the Loxahatchee because the represented not only the largest single capture of Jessup’s campaign (600 Seminoles a month later), but also a “turning point” in American history. Jessup had sent a message to Washington requesting that the war be ended and the Seminoles be allowed to remain in the Everglades; Feb 11, 1838. The answer was received March 17<sup>th</sup>; “Request denied”, and the war went on for another twenty years. This pivotal event took place in Jupiter in a war that is almost forgotten. Naming some of our streets and places reflecting this history may be one way of honoring those who fought and died here. Read more about the Seminole Wars in “Guns across the Loxahatchee”, available at the Loxahatchee River Historical Society which operates the visitor center, at the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse, in Jupiter Park. Other books, collectibles and Lighthouse tours are offered.