

Unveiling of Battlefield Art

'Battle of the Loxahatchee' on canvas Saturday

By GUY BACHMANN

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Celebrated artist Jackson Walker will unveil the first ever painting of the "Battle of the Loxahatchee" on Saturday, April 18 at 10 a.m. at Loxahatchee River Battlefield Park in Jupiter.

Walker has been commissioned by author James Snyder to have this painting depicted in Snyder's latest book featuring natural and historic scenes along the Loxahatchee River.

Walker is a renowned painter of military battle scenes, and whose works are displayed in the Florida House on Capital Hill in Washington D.C.

THE BATTLE OF THE LOXAHATCHEE

The Battle of the Loxahatchee was the last major standing battle of the Second Seminole War, the longest and most expensive Indian War in American history.

More than 1,500 soldiers and volunteers met a resistance force of several hundred red and black Seminoles along the wild and scenic Loxahatchee River on Jan. 24, 1838.

Nine days earlier, a probing expedition of 100 sailors, soldiers and marines ran into a Seminole village on the east side of the river; and being outnumbered barely escaped with their scalps. This engagement was known as "Powell's Battle."

These men made it back to the newly built Fort Pierce, and word was given of the location of the Seminoles to General Jesup who was on a 200-mile march south from Fort Mellon (modern Sanford). Jesup thus coordinated his large force to engage the Seminoles at the Loxahatchee.

The scene shown in Walker's to-



PROVIDED PHOTO/ARTWORK/JACKSON WALKER

A previous painting by celebrated artist Jackson Walker is known as "Here We Make Our Stand" which depicts one of the many battles fought during the Second Seminole War.



PROVIDED PHOTO/LAURIE CORRY

"Indian Crossing" markers were installed last year at the location where Walker's painting will set the scene for the battlefield depiction.

be-unveiled painting would be the apex of the battle.

This is where the Tennessee Volunteers ran into a buzz saw of Seminoles situated on the east side

of the river. This spot today is known as "Indian Crossing."

Local legend Richard Procyk, author of "Guns Across The Loxahatchee," suggested this location for Walker's painting, and has orchestrated this event.

FASCINATING STORY

There is a fascinating story about this specific part of the battle.

It has been known to historians for years that some "confusion" had occurred here. It has never been understood why Jesup lead the attack himself across the river.

Jesup was the general in charge of the theater of war in Florida. And even in those days it was unheard of for a general to lead such an assault. A few years ago a dealer in antiquities approached Procyk with a letter from an eyewitness in the battle who saw what transpired.

According to this letter, the Tennessee Volunteers - after taking heavy casualties - halted their advance across the river. One month earlier, at Zachery Taylor's Battle of Okeechobee, the Missouri Volunteers were decimated by the Seminoles in a frontal assault at a hammock. The Tennessee Volun-

teers were aware of this.

Jesup rides up to the scene and exhorts the commander of the volunteers to lead his men across the river. The commander of the Tennessee Volunteers was Major William Lauderdale, who eventually would have a fort named after him.

THE WITNESSED EVENT

According to the witness, Lauderdale refused this order. Jesup, seething with rage, put his pistol to the head of the major and said, "Either you lead your men across this river or I will blow your head off."

The intractable Lauderdale still refused to budge.

Visibly shaken, Jesup dismissed Lauderdale, pulled out his sword and told the men to follow him across the river. As Jesup runs down to the bank of the river, he turns around and sees that no one is following him! He is then shot immediately in the eye and had his glasses shattered.

Incredibly, this event was covered up by the military and was never mentioned in the official battlefield reports.

Procyk and the Loxahatchee Battlefield Preservationists speculate that Lauderdale's intimate friendship with Andrew Jackson may have had something to do with this.

Walker and Snyder, along with Procyk and myself, will be speaking at this monumental and gala affair.

We will be touring the battlefield and showing the public the scene where the drama took place ... and which has been depicted in the incomparable Walker painting.

COME & SEE

Come out and see this important American history that took place here in Jupiter.

Loxahatchee River Battlefield Park is located adjacent to Riverview Park at 9060 Indiantown Road, one mile west of Florida's Turnpike.

Guy Bachmann is president of the Loxahatchee Battlefield Preservationists.