

175 Years Ago Second Seminole Indian War Ends

By Helen Vogt Greene

The City of Lake Worth is named for Brigadier General William Jenkins Worth. On August 14, 1842, Worth is credited with bringing “the largest and most costly of the Indian conflicts of the United States” to an end.

William Jenkins Worth was born in Hudson, New York in 1794. His parents, who help establish Hudson, New York, were wealthy whalers and Quakers.

Worth distinguished himself as a soldier at an early age. By 18, he was the aide to the famous military soldier of the day, Brigadier General Wingfield Scott.

The career of Worth covered the War of 1812, Second Seminole War and the Mexican-American War. These wars included 13 major battles, which have left their mark on history.

Following the War of 1812, Worth became the first Commandant of Cadets at West Point. He had earned the rank of Colonel.

In 1841, Worth became the Commander of the new Eighth Infantry Regiment and was assigned as the 13 commander in the Second Seminole Indian War in Florida.

Worth led his troops against native Indians that had banded together and were called the Seminoles.

Some of the leaders of the Seminoles were Osceola, Holata Mico (Billy Bowlegs) and Ar-pi-uck-I (Sam Jones).

New techniques, introduced by Worth that he had taught at West Point, were used. To name two: Blood Hounds were brought in from Cuba. Battles, that usually ended for the summer, were fought all year long.

Following some of the bloodiest battles, the Seminoles had lost an estimated 3,000. The fighting ended on August 14, 1842. There was no peace treaty and as part of the agreement, 4,000 Seminoles were transported by train to Indian Territory, Oklahoma.

Three hundred and fifty Seminoles were allowed to remain north of Lake Okeechobee. This was the ‘fuse’ that lighted the Third Seminole War.

For his service in the Florida campaign, Worth was made a Brevetted Brigadier General in March, 1842. The State of Florida honored him and a body of water called Lake Worth, (now called the Intracoastal Waterway). In October, 1912 Lucerne, because there was already a Lucerne in Florida, changed its name to Lake Worth.

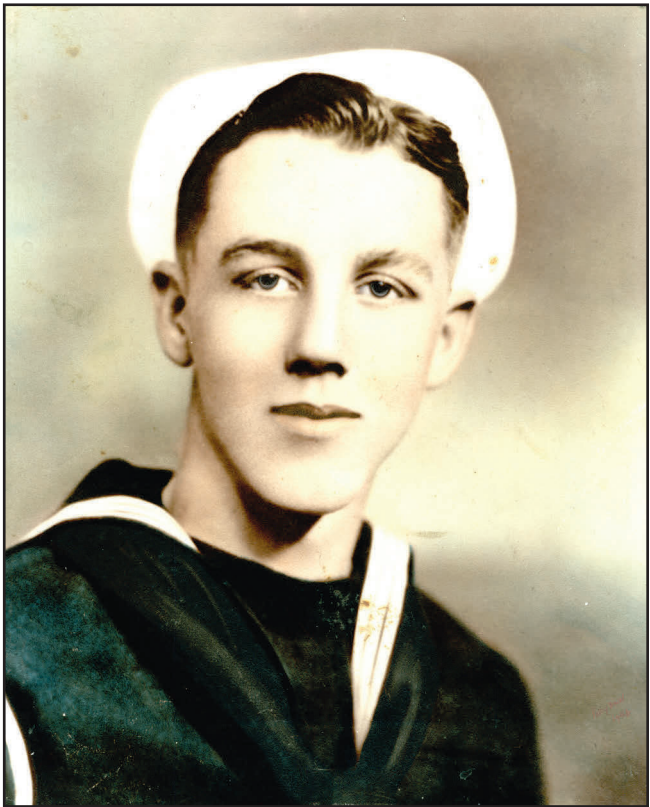
One of the major battles in the Second Seminole Indian War was the Battle of Loxahatchee. An historian and sought after speaker, Richard Procyk makes his home in Jupiter.

Procyk wrote the book: “Guns Across the Loxahatchee: An archao-historical investigation of the Seminole War sites in Florida with special focus on the Battle of Loxahatchee.”

Procyk brings 20 years as a police detective and 15 years with the Palm Beach County Historic Resources Review Board. It is the mission of the HRRB to oversee the historic preservation efforts of PBC.



Major General William Jenkins Worth is credited with bringing the six year Second Seminole Indian War to an end on August 14, 1842. A 51 foot granite monument, honoring General Worth, stands at Broadway and fifth Avenue in New York City. It is NYC’s second oldest monument.



Donald Ernest Lee was the first casualty of World War II from Lake Worth. Lee died in action in the Philippines on December 13, 1941. His Purple Heart and certificate were received from the Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox on December 4, 1943. His family donated these items to the Lake Worth Historical Museum.

As a member and a member of the Advisory Board of the Loxahatchee River Historical Society, Procyk’s dedication and knowledge has earned him a place in the well-respected Palm Beach County historical community. He is the recipient of the Judge James R. Knott and Bessie DuBois awards for historic preservation.

Procyk’s book “Guns Across the Loxahatchee...” provides the reader with the close-up and understandable events that happened just north of us in Jupiter.

Visitors are welcome to ‘walk through history’ at the Loxahatchee River Battlefield Park at Riverbend, Palm Beach County maintains this park and it is located on 680 pristine acres at 9060 W. Indiantown Road in Jupiter.

Today, history, more than ever before, is under attack. Norman Cousin once said... “History is a vast warning system.” Are we listening to these warnings?

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