

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

OKEECHOBEE BATTLEFIELD

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: OKEECHOBEE BATTLEFIELD

Other Name/Site Number: 8Ob10 (General Taylor's Camp), 8Ob13 (Okeechobee Battlefield site)

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 4 miles southwest of Okeechobee along the north shore of Lake Okeechobee

Not for publication: ___

City/Town: Okeechobee

Vicinity: ___

State: Florida

County: Okeechobee

Code: FL093

Zip Code: 33472

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: ___

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): ___

District: X

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

2

2

Noncontributing

15 buildings

___ sites

1 structures

___ objects

16 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 2

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register _____

___ Determined eligible for the National Register _____

___ Determined not eligible for the National Register _____

___ Removed from the National Register _____

___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: DEFENSE

Sub: battle site

Current: AGRICULTURE

Sub: agricultural field

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: N/A

MATERIALS: N/A

Foundation:

Walls:

Roof:

Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The site of the Okeechobee Battlefield (8Ob10) is located along the north shore of Lake Okeechobee, approximately 4 miles southeast of the present day town of Okeechobee, Florida. The area includes the campsite of General Zachary Taylor's troops (8Ob13), the defensive position of the Seminoles on a hammock, and the area in between where Taylor's troops charged the Seminole position.

Environmental Setting: At the time of the engagement on December 25, 1837, the battlefield was more overgrown and lush because the water table of Lake Okeechobee was higher. During the early nineteenth century three distinct environmental zones made up the area of conflict, on the eastern side of Mosquito Creek, and north of Lake Okeechobee (See Figure 1).

The northern section was a pineland area, where Taylor established a base camp, on December 24, 1837 (See Figure 1). According to an historical study of the battlefield,

The pineland area, referred to as "hard" ground (Buchanan 1950) and "firm" (Gentry 1937) in historical accounts, was likely to have been dry, especially as December is in the dry season. The camp area may have been at least partially cleared as it was described as a recently vacated Miccosuki camp, with 200-300 head of grazing cattle and cooking fires still burning when the troops arrived (Taylor 1838) [Masson et al. 1987:12].

To the south of the pineland area was a swampy sawgrass prairie (See Figure 1) that formed about a one-half mile wide band around the lake. The sawgrass was about six feet high and the swampy conditions would impede the advance of Taylor's troops. It was through this sawgrass prairie the American troops would have to advance to attack the Seminoles who had established a defensive position on a natural cypress hammock (See Figure 1), near the sandy lake shore (Masson et al. 1987:12).

This raised hammock, or cypress stand, constitutes the third environmental zone, and was formed by a berm of sand that parallels Lake Okeechobee. This slightly raised and wide natural levee, that formed an excellent growing area for cypress and hardwood trees, was referred to in nineteenth century accounts as a hammock (Masson et al. 1987:12).

One of the best accounts of the ecology of the battlefield was given by Captain Backus, of the 6th United States Infantry:

. . . on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee is a cypress hammock about 300 yards in width. On the north of the hammock is a wet [sawgrass] prairie, [saw]grass five or six feet high. The prairie is about a half mile in width from north to south then comes an open hard country pine woods [DeVane 1978].

In the twentieth century, water control projects, and lowering of the Lake Okeechobee water table for agricultural activities dried up the swampy sawgrass prairie. Private cattle ranchers removed most of the pineland trees and filled in natural depressions to create an improved condition for cattle raising (Masson et al. 1987:11). The present condition of the pinelands

and sawgrass prairie is as follows:

The Taylor Camp site is located in a park-like setting of improved pasture, with scattered tall pines, large oaks, cabbage palms, palmettos, thick sod ground cover, and several small cypress ponds. This pineland flatwood area is located on a gradual sloping landform that ranges from 26' above sea level from the north to 21' southward where the flatlands terminate adjacent to what in historic times was a sawgrass marsh. This sawgrass marsh is now altered as a result of drainage. West of the pine flatlands is the now-channelized Mosquito Creek drainage, and on the north is a small cabbage palm hammock [hammock] which occupies the south bank of a nameless tributary to Mosquito Creek. On the east the pineland is bordered by Nubbins Slough which is now rerouted into a man-made canal. Historically, the marsh was a transitional [sawgrass prairie] wetlands between the uplands and Lake Okeechobee [Masson et al. 1987:11].

The slightly elevated cypress hammock is still visible and is marked by a variety of trees and vegetation. However, some portions of the hammock have been destroyed by modern construction activity for State Highway 15.

Archeological Investigations: The Christmas Day battle, fought on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee, was well known in the history of the Seminole Wars, but identifying the location of the actual site proved to be more elusive. There were no white settlers living in the vicinity of the battle prior to the event and it would be more than half a century before the community of Okeechobee, Florida would be founded west of the site.

Several historians attempted to locate the site during the early twentieth century, but the lowering of the water table for agriculture changed the natural landmarks noted in the historical accounts of the battle. Fortunately, the Seminoles maintained an oral tradition of the battle location. Billy Bowlegs III, a Seminole, was 94 in 1957 when he visited the battle site with Park DeVane, and told the historian of the exact location of the battle based on oral history provided by his mother to Billy when he was a boy (Steele 1987:42). It was this general location that was designated as a National Historic Landmark on July 4, 1961.

A landmark boundary survey was undertaken by the Atlanta office of the National Park Service in 1981 and the proposed 640 acre boundary was accepted by the National Park Service in 1985 (McKithan n.d.). However, the author of this study noted:

The boundary for Okeechobee Battlefield was drawn to coincide with the general location of the battle. Considerable archeological study would be necessary to establish the exact battle lines [McKithan n.d.].

In 1984, archeologists, from Piper Archeological Research, Inc. began the first archeological search for physical evidence of the battle site in conjunction with a Section 106 federal project on the northern shore of Lake Okeechobee. Although no 1830s artifacts were found, their work stimulated Archeological and Historical Conservancy, Incorporated, to undertake subsequent investigations of the north shore of Lake Okeechobee (Carr and Steele 1986:1-2).

Archeologists with the Conservancy, Robert S. Carr and Willard Steele, undertook a detailed analysis of the original documents on the battle in order to identify natural landmarks that might assist in locating the exact site. This work allowed them to identify certain areas noted historically that could help in this effort, such as the Miccosukki camp (which became Taylor's camp), the swamp between Taylor's camp, and the cypress hammock used as a defensive position by the Seminoles (Carr and Steele 1986:13-16).

This group also looked at alleged battlefield artifacts found in previous years and attempted to plot their location. With this information the Conservancy conducted a metal detector survey, in 1986, that uncovered three lead musket balls and two iron kettle fragments, in the central area of the present National Historic Landmark boundary which they believed constituted Taylor's camp. Robert S. Carr and Willard Steele also identified the location of the hammock defended by the Seminoles (Carr and Steele 1986:19-20, 30).

In the following year (1987), the Conservancy fielded an archeological crew to conduct test excavations and shovel tests on potential sites found in the previous year (See Figure 2). This work was complemented with a remote sensing scan of the battlefield that identified numerous anomalies, or possible metallic objects associated with the battle (Masson et al. 1987:17).

This work uncovered numerous artifacts, in the area now designated as Taylor's Camp (8Ob13), including three iron mattocks, a socketed bayonet, a brass belt clip, 32 lead musket balls, lead slag from the production of musket balls, two iron gun barrels, a brass rifle side plate, a brass ramrod tip, a lead flint patch, a knife tip, a sword tip, an ax, three pewter General Service buttons, a silver ring (possibly Seminole), a horseshoe, two iron files, two iron spurs, a glass bottle, and iron kettle fragments (Masson et al. 1987:39-54). The location of Taylor's Camp has allowed historians and archeologists to correlate this area with the existing hammock that served as the Seminole's defensive position, and the area of the sawgrass swamp situated between these two points (Masson 1987:60-61). These three areas are within the presently defined National Historic Landmark boundary for Okeechobee Battlefield.

The archeological and historical work conducted by the Conservancy has demonstrated that the actual site of the Okeechobee Battlefield, containing Taylor's camp (8Ob13), the area of the sawgrass swamp, and the hammock area, constitutes an area smaller than the National Historic Landmark boundary approved in 1985. The new proposed boundary for the Okeechobee Battlefield is shown on the attached USGS map and Figure 6, which shows the three battlefield components.

Site Integrity: In 1837, the area of the battlefield crossed three natural vegetation zones, along the north shore of Lake Okeechobee. The first was a pineland forest where the Miccosukki established a camp and where Taylor subsequently encamped. The second was a sawgrass swamp area south of the pineland forest, and the third area was a hammock area covered with trees (See Figures 1 and 3).

During the twentieth century the construction of drainage canals, as part of public works projects, and private land modifications have changed the vegetation conditions of many

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natural areas around Lake Okeechobee. In particular, the owners of the pineland forest area have removed most of the vegetation and plowed the soil to a depth of about 6 inches to convert the land to dairy pasture. The public works projects have resulted in the draining of the sawgrass swamp area, which is also used today as pasture. The hammock is still generally intact with its natural vegetation (Masson et al. 1987:11-12).

In spite of these modifications, the site of the battlefield still contains integrity in terms of place and setting, as well as intact archeological remains as demonstrated by the archeological testing effort (Masson et al. 1987).

The only non-contributing properties within the battlefield area are fifteen modern buildings and a portion of state highway 15 noted on the USGS map.

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

SUMMARY

On the northern shore of Lake Okeechobee, on Christmas Day of 1837, American Regular Army Infantry and Missouri Volunteers, under the command of General Zachary Taylor, won a decisive victory over the largest concentration of Seminole and Miccosuki warriors assembled during the Second Seminole War. The war would continue on with hit-and-run attacks for another five years, but the defeat of the Native Americans at this battle marked the turning point in the struggle, as they never again engaged in a pitched battle.

The site of this historic event was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1961. It is considered nationally significant under National Historic Landmark Criterion 1 because this military action was the decisive action leading to the emigration of thousands of Seminoles to Oklahoma, and the eventual end of the Second Seminole War.

Historical Background to the Second Seminole War

The roots of the conflict, in the early nineteenth-century, between the United States government and the Seminoles within the state of Florida are historically complex. The Seminoles, as a cultural group, only came into existence in the late eighteenth-century, as a result of the amalgamation of the splintered remains of previously intact tribal entities that had been displaced by British, French, and Spanish colonial policies. This cultural tendency to incorporate divergent groups was also extended by the Seminoles to numerous escaped Black slaves.

The Seminoles were a composite tribe of Muskogee and Hitchite, of Upper and Lower Creeks and Yamasses, and of Negroes or the descendants of Negroes who had run away from South Carolina to Florida and became Spanish subjects [Caruso 1963:378].

The earliest people to be identified as Seminole were Creek migrants who came into the Florida panhandle area in the early eighteenth century. These migrations of small bands and groups of Creeks were partly in response to Spanish appeals for Native American settlers to re-settle the depopulated Apalachean mission areas decimated by the British in the first decade of the eighteenth century, and partly in response to British colonial and Creek hostilities over lands in Georgia (Boyd 1949:25; Fairbanks 1978:165).

The first recorded use of the term "Seminole" was in 1765 when William Gerard DeBrahm used it in his map of Florida (Weisman 1989:37). It was only later in the late eighteenth-century that the term is used with any regularity in application to a distinct group of people (Weisman 1989:10). Seminole is a derivation of the Spanish term *cimarrone*, meaning "wild" or "runaway" (Sturtevant 1971:105; Fairbanks 1978:171).

Several scholars have formulated chronological schema for the Seminole. Although the chronologies differ in detail and terminology, they yield the following general division: 1) colonization, 1716-1760; 2) enterprise, 1760-1820; and 3) removal and withdrawal, 1820-1860.

Colonization

Originally, Creek immigrants settled principally in the old Spanish provinces of Apalachee, around present-day Tallahassee and Potano, near present-day Gainesville. These first Seminoles, or more correctly, proto-Seminoles, began to come into Florida following the Yamassee War in Georgia in 1715. Persuaded by Spanish agents, Creeks and the remnants of some Florida groups settled in north and north central Florida (Milanich and Fairbanks 1980:253; Weisman 1989:7). They were attracted to the old Spanish provinces of Apalachee and Potano, presumably by the presence of fertile agricultural lands, extant cleared fields, and possibly by the feral cattle that were relics of the seventeenth-century Spanish cattle-ranching venture (Fairbanks 1978:168). Several Native American towns were established in the vicinity of Tallahassee and Gainesville, with smaller communities on the Apalachicola River, and around Lake Miccosukee (Rolle 1977:48).

Enterprise

The years 1760 to 1820 span the British colonial period (1763-1783), and the Second Spanish colonial period (1783-1821), in Florida. At this time the Seminoles took on a cultural identity separate from their Creek predecessors and became known as the Seminoles (Fairbanks 1978:169; Kersey 1987:21-30). The advent of the British in 1763 occasioned great changes in Seminole society. Trading posts were established by the British in or near major Seminole towns. The economy changed from one based essentially on subsistence to one based on trade, herding, and cultivation of cash crops for export (Payne MS:5-9).

Population increased steadily, particularly with the addition of large numbers of runaway slaves from South Carolina and Georgia, who were incorporated into the Seminole tribe. In addition to the areas occupied in the Colonization Period, the Seminoles founded new settlements in the Brooksville region north of Tampa, in the lake district north of Orlando, and in the Cove of the Withlacoochee, north of Brooksville (Payne MS:5).

This prosperity began to decline toward the end of the Spanish control of Florida, however, with the incursions by American troops into Seminole territory. The First Seminole War, 1817-1818, was the first of several attempts to usurp the lands of the Seminole, and to enforce fugitive slave laws on the Black members of the tribe.

Removal and Withdrawal

In 1821, Spain ceded Florida to the United States. Under American rule two events occurred that were to have far-reaching effects on the Seminole way of life. In 1823, the Treaty of Moultrie Creek provided for the removal of all Indians from their agricultural lands to an

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inland reservation in central Florida (See Figure 4). This reservation was so barren that their traditional methods of subsistence were useless (Mahon 1967:73; Fairbanks 1978:185). In 1832, the Treaty of Payne's Landing called for the complete removal of Seminoles from the territory of Florida, west of the Mississippi River (See Figure 4) (Mahon 1967:75).

These measures precipitated the Second Seminole War of 1835-1842, when, under the leadership of Osceola, many Seminole groups opted to fight rather than submit to removal. This war, and the removal which followed in its wake were responsible for a dramatic reduction in the Florida Seminole population from 5000 in 1820, to less than 500 in 1847 (Payne MS:10). The few Seminoles left in Florida after the 1840s fled to the hammocks of the Everglades. Despite conflict with American settlers, leading to the Third Seminole War in 1855-1858, a few small groups managed to establish themselves in the swamps of south Florida. Eventually, at the turn of the century, the remaining Seminoles and United States government established a series of reservations, in the Everglades of south Florida and north of Lake Okeechobee (Payne MS:10).

The Second Seminole War

In accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Payne's Landing (1832), a group of prominent Seminole leaders were allowed to inspect the suitability of the new reservation lands west of the Mississippi River, prior to actual removal. The decision of this delegation was a prerequisite to the removal being implemented. Among these Seminoles were Alligator, or Halpatter Tustenuggee, and Apeika, or Sam Jones, who would both play a major role in the coming conflict (Steele 1987:28, 39).

Several of the Seminole members of the delegation, including Alligator and Apeika, voiced opposition to lands presented to them in Arkansas. However, some members of the delegation signed the Treaty of Fort Gibson which called for the immediate removal of the Seminole from Florida (Steele 1987:28).

Upon their return to Florida, those who had not signed the Fort Gibson Treaty agitated to remain in Florida. They argued the 1823 Moultrie Creek Treaty, giving the Seminoles the interior of Florida as a reservation (See Figure 4), still had until 1843 to remain in effect, and that the 1832 Payne's Landing Treaty was invalid as the lands presented to the Seminoles by the government were not suitable (Steele 1987:28). In response, the Indian agent, General Wiley Thompson, struck the names of Alligator, and Apeika, and other dissenting chiefs from the governments roll of chiefs, hoping to diminish their influence (Steele 1987:28).

After nearly four years of fruitless negotiations, between General Thompson and the Seminoles:

The Indians were given until January 1, 1836 to assemble for emigration at Fort Brooke. In Alligator's words, "We had been preparing for this for more than a year. Though promises had been made to assemble on the 1st of January, it was not to leave the country, but to fight for it." On December 28, 1835, 180 Indians ambushed the command of Major Francis L. Dade, which consisted of 112 men near Bushnell, Florida. Only two soldiers survived [Steele 1987:28].

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The defeat of American forces at Dade Battlefield (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1973), caused a general Seminole uprising. Osceola, the acknowledged leader of the Seminoles, killed Indian Agent Thompson at Fort King, present-day Ocala, Florida, on the same day Dade's command was destroyed. The next day (December 29, 1835), Alligator and Osceola attacked General Duncan L. Clinch, at the ford of the Withlacoochee River, and forced him to withdraw (Steele 1987:29).

Throughout 1836, and the first half of 1837, the American forces under General Thomas Sydney Jesup, conducted a ruthless series of campaigns to force the Indian groups to surrender. Jesup's men burned villages, killed hundreds of cattle and livestock, and destroyed food larders throughout the length of the Florida peninsula (Caruso 1968:384). In March of 1837, a major chief, Micanopy met with several other Seminole chiefs to negotiate a peace with Jesup, that was formalized in the same month with a treaty that stipulated the Indians would remove themselves west of the Mississippi River (Steele 1987:3). Within a month, over 700 Seminoles gathered at Camp Dade awaiting transports to the west. Believing the war to be concluded, Jesup began dismissing the volunteer state units and reassigning regular forces out of Florida. On April 19th, 1837, Jesup wrote to Secretary of War, Joel R. Poinsett, "The war, I hope, is over" (Steele 1987:1).

However, on the night of June 2, 1837, Apeika and Osceola, with 200 warriors invaded the Seminole camp, at Camp Dade, and removed all the assembled people inland (Caruso 1968:385; Steele 1987:3). Jesup, embarrassed with the dramatic failure of his negotiations, reported that the war would now become one of extermination (Steele 1987:3). Immediate requests for substantial troop increases brought regular Army units, from Missouri and Pennsylvania, along with numerous volunteer state militia and scout units of Chippewa, Delaware, Shawnee, Choctaw, Osage, and Creek, to Florida (Steele 1987:3).

Meanwhile, with the forces at hand, Jesup could report by October 1837, he had pushed the Seminoles southward below Lake Monroe and Tampa Bay, and had captured or caused the surrender of numerous chiefs and their bands, including Osceola (Steele 1987:4).

Osceola and several chiefs were captured on October 22, 1837, while negotiating with American forces under a flag of truce, an action which was considered a violation of the laws of civilized nations, but an action which removed much of the Seminole leadership. The Indians were originally imprisoned in Fort Marion, the old seventeenth-century Spanish stone fort of Castillo de San Marcos, in St. Augustine, but Coacoochee (Wildcat) escaped in November of 1837 with twenty-one other Seminoles. The Army then removed the remaining Seminoles to Fort Moultrie in Charleston, South Carolina, where Osceola died in early 1838 (Caruso 1968:387).

The incident of Coacoochee's escape was the single most influential event which led to the Battle of Okeechobee. Coacoochee arrived at Apeika's encampment as the latter was preparing to surrender his people for removal to the Army. After recounting his experience in Fort Marion to Apeika, Coacoochee joined Apeika and moved their people south to Lake Okeechobee, where Alligator and Halleck Tustenuggee had assembled their people to fight removal (Steele 1987:33).

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While these activities occurred in Florida, regular and volunteer Army units were moving toward the state. In particular, the 1st Infantry was brought from the western frontier to Jefferson Barracks, in Missouri, and placed under the command of General Zachary Taylor. While at Jefferson Barracks they were joined by six hundred Missouri Volunteers, under the command of Colonel Richard Gentry. By October 1837, both groups were on steam transports heading down the Mississippi (Steele 1987:5).

Arriving in Tampa Bay, the Missourians were attached to the 1st, 4th, and 6th Infantry under Taylor, and marched inland to Fort Frazier toward Lake Okeechobee, where scouts had indicated a major gathering of Seminoles. According to Willard Steele:

On December 23, Taylor left Fort Bassinger in search of Apeika who with Alligator and Coacoochee had gathered nearly half of the Florida nation on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee. The Indians would have to make their stand at Okeechobee or resign themselves to subsisting in the swamp lands of southern Florida [1987:7].

On the morning of Christmas Day Taylor's command located a Seminole camp in the pinelands surrounding Lake Okeechobee. They also took a Seminole captive that pointed out a large hammock about a mile from the Indian camp where the Seminole were waiting for the army. General Taylor had the men establish camp while he held a council of war with his officers. Taylor's plan of attack would have the army march straight on the hammock in two lines, the first composed of Colonel Gentry's Missouri Regiment with Gilliam's Spies on his left and Morgan's Spies on his right; the second line would be composed of the 4th and 6th Infantry, on the left and right, respectively; and the 1st Infantry would be held in reserve (See Figure 5). The volunteers were to start the fight, and then fall back behind the regulars when the fire became too intense (Steele 1987:9).

The Seminole position was well chosen. The tree-covered sand ridge, or hammock, they occupied was separated from the pineland, where Taylor established camp, by nearly three quarters of a mile of almost impassable swamp. In many places the swamp was waist deep, and the sawgrass was often over their heads. In addition, in front of the hammock the grass and scrub had been cut down for twenty yards to create a clear field of fire (Steele 1987:10).

The army found crossing the swamp difficult. The columns halted twice to rest, the second time only 200 yards from the hammock. At this point, Gentry reformed his lines of Missouri volunteers and ordered an advance on the hammock. As Gentry's line advanced, its right approached part of the hammock that projected out into the sawgrass swamp. When the Missourians got to within 100 yards of the main hammock a flanking fire came from their right where the Indians had positioned themselves on the projection (See Figure 5) (Steele 1987:11).

As the Americans continued to advance, Gentry was shot in the chest. Still able to command he ordered his men to stand fast and return fire instead of retiring behind the 6th and 4th Infantry, as ordered. The 6th Infantry soon joined the Missourians and returned the fire of the Seminoles. By now Gentry had received a second and fatal wound in the abdomen, several of the regular officers in the 6th Infantry were dead or wounded. At one point, the 6th Infantry

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fell back to regroup, and the Seminoles used this opportunity to counterattack, but the 6th and the Volunteers soon rallied and pushed the Seminoles back on the hammock (Steele 1987:12-13).

As the Volunteers and the 6th entered the hammock, the 4th Infantry pressed the attack on the Seminoles right flank. Most of the non-combatants, warriors, and the chiefs, including Apeika, Halleck Tustenuggee, Coacoochee, and Alligator escaped west along the shore of Lake Okeechobee. By three o'clock the battle was over. Twenty-six American soldiers had been killed (Colonel Gentry would die later in the day), and 112 men were wounded, Seminole casualties would not be known (Steele 1987:14-16).

The next day, December 26th, was spent burying the dead and preparing litters for the wounded. Taylor's camp was struck on the following day and the army returned to Fort Bassinger on the 28th (Steele 1987:18). According to Steele: "Although the Second Seminole War would drag on for four more years, the Battle of Okeechobee was the final blow from which the Seminoles would never recover" [1987:18].

Zachary Taylor received some criticism for allowing the Volunteers to take the brunt of the fight at Okeechobee, however, his part in the battle earned him a promotion to Brigadier General, and on May 15, 1838 he replaced the departing Jesup as commander of the army in Florida. In addition, to actively pursuing the Seminoles in a series of battles until the end of the war in 1842, Taylor adopted an interesting stratagem to deny the Seminoles free reign in Florida. He divided the southern area of the state into twenty mile squares. A military post was established in each square. The garrison of each post blazed the boundaries of the square and surveyed it. Each post was only a days march apart and could easily support contiguous posts under attack. During the first year of his command, Taylor established 53 new military posts, opened 848 miles of wagon roads and 3,643 feet of causeways and bridges (Steele 1987:23).

Taylor left his Florida command on April 21, 1840, and was assigned to the First Department of the Army, with his headquarters at Fort Jesup (designated an NHL in 1961), in northwest Louisiana. Five years later, Taylor opened the war between the United States and Mexico by moving his forces from Fort Jesup to the Rio Grande River, in Texas. Taylor's victories over Mexican forces in Texas at Palo Alto (May 8, 1846), and Resaca de la Palma (May 9, 1846) (both designated NHLs in 1960), and his defeat of Generals Pedro de Ampudia and Santa Anna at the Battles of Monterrey and Buena Vista/La Angostura, respectively, in Mexico, during the Mexican War, caused the Whig party to nominate him as their successful candidate for President. Taylor died shortly after taking office on July 9, 1850 (Steele 1987:24).

The Seminole chief Alligator, or Halpatter Tustenuggee, after the Battle of Okeechobee, escaped with his people, but the constant offensive movement of the Army caused him to surrender in April 1838. He was removed to Arkansas in 1839, but returned to Florida to help the Army negotiate with different bands of Seminoles to come in to be removed to Arkansas (Steele 1987:29).

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Coacoochee, or Wildcat, whose escape from Fort Marion caused Apeika to join him in the fight at Okeechobee, was captured for a second time in 1841. He was sent to Arkansas, but twice (1844 and 1850) led groups of Seminoles off the reservation there, because of differences between his group and the Creeks with whom they were forced to share their reservation. The second time Coacoochee and his group left the reservation (1850) they moved to Mexico and obtained land from that government in return for fighting against the Comanche. Wildcat died in Mexico in 1857 (Steele 1987:33).

Halleck Tustenuggee eluded capture by the army until April 29, 1841, when he surrendered. Sent to Arkansas on July 14, 1842, he later died on the reservation (Steele 1987:37).

Apeika, or Sam Jones, the Spiritual Leader of the Seminoles, at the time of the Second Seminole War was probably between seventy and ninety years of age. After the battle he took his band into the Loxahatchee Swamp, and later further south to Pine Island. At the end of the war (1842), his small band was still living in the Everglades having successfully eluded the army. His last years were spent attempting to maintain peace between the Seminoles and the army (Steele 1987:40).

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

Previously Listed in the National Register.

Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.

Designated a National Historic Landmark.

Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #

Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

OKEECHOBEE BATTLEFIELD

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository):

Archaeology and Historical Conservancy, Miami, Florida

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 440 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Northing	Easting
A	17	3010680	521330
B	17	3011000	521640
C	17	3010160	522660
D	17	3007060	522900
E	17	3009100	521320

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary for the property is an irregular polygon whose vertices are defined by the UTM points listed above. Beginning at point A, proceed in a northeasterly direction for 1500 feet to point B; then in a southeasterly direction for 4400 feet to point C; then due south 8000 feet to point D; then in a northwesterly direction for 7000 feet to point E; then north for 5000 feet back to point A.

Boundary Justification:

The 1985 National Historic Landmark Boundary was drawn to coincide with the general location of the battle. Since that time, however, further historical, environmental, and archeological investigations of the battle site have occurred. This work has more precisely identified the battle area (8Ob10) and Taylor's Camp (8Ob13) (see Figure 6). Based on this new information a smaller area than the boundary originally established in 1985 is proposed.

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Mark R. Barnes, Ph.D.
Senior Archeologist
National Register Programs Division
National Park Service, SERO
1924 Building
100 Alabama Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
(404) 562-3173

Technical Assistance Provided by:

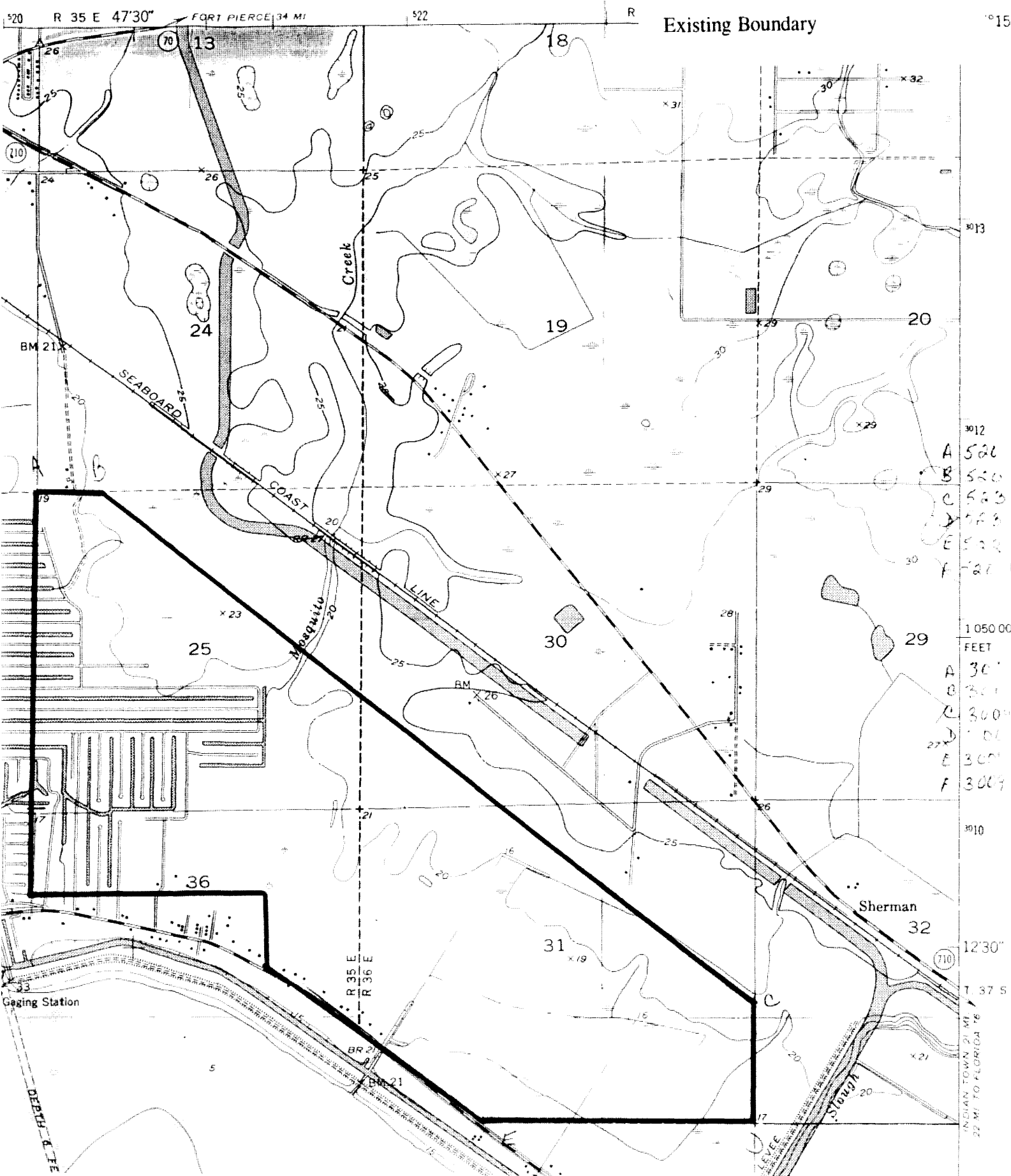
Mr. Robert S. Carr
Executive Director
Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc.
P.O. Box 450283
Miami, Florida 33145
(305) 325-0789

Date: May 27, 1998

OKEECHOBEE BATTLEFIELD

Okeechobee, Florida

Existing Boundary



1050 000	A	526
FEET	B	520
	C	523
	D	523
	E	522
	F	521
	A	30'
	B	30'
	C	300'
	D	100'
	E	300'
	F	300'

12'30"
T 37 S
INDIAN TOWN 21 MI
22 MI TO FLORIDA '6

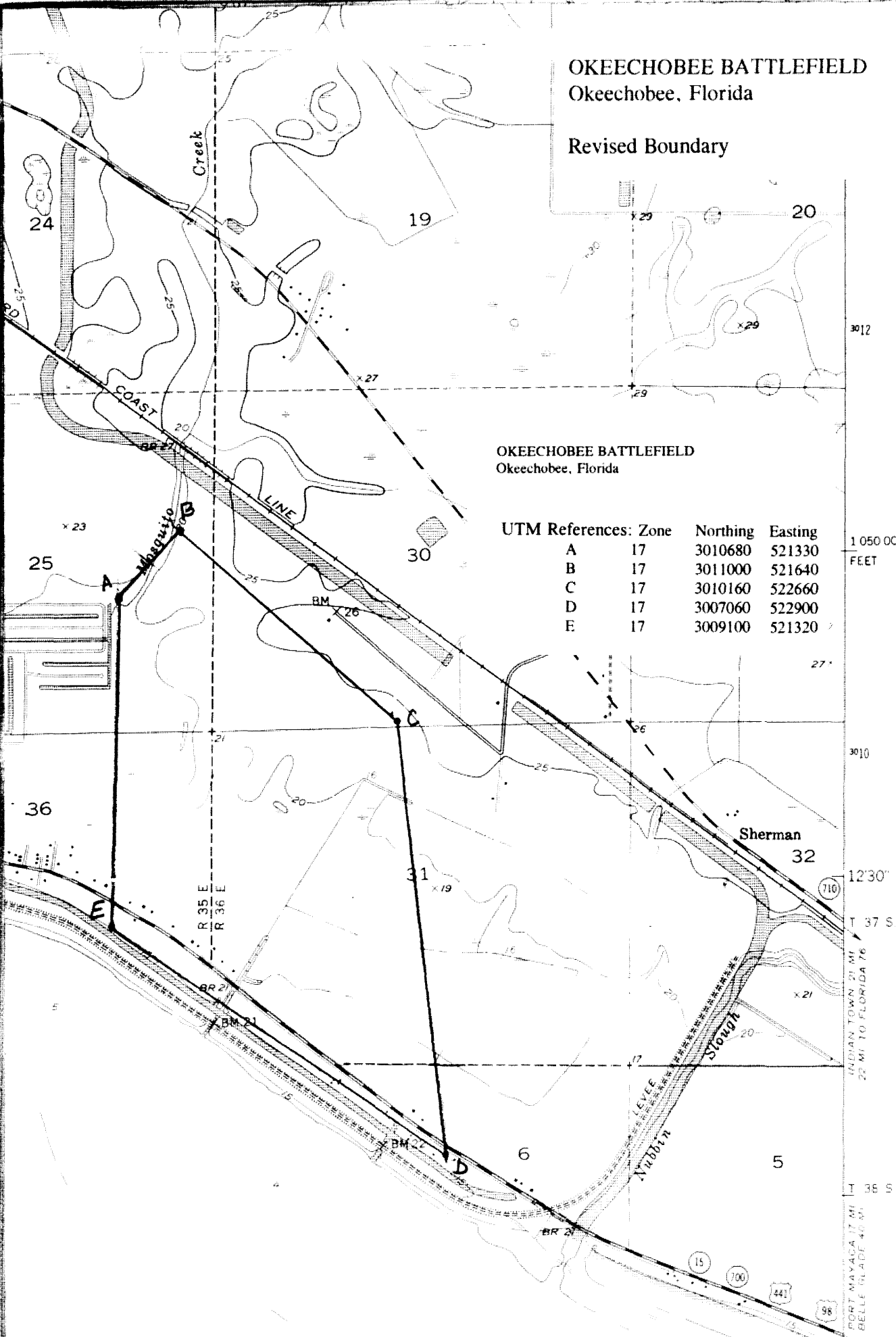
OKEECHOBEE BATTLEFIELD
Okeechobee, Florida

Revised Boundary

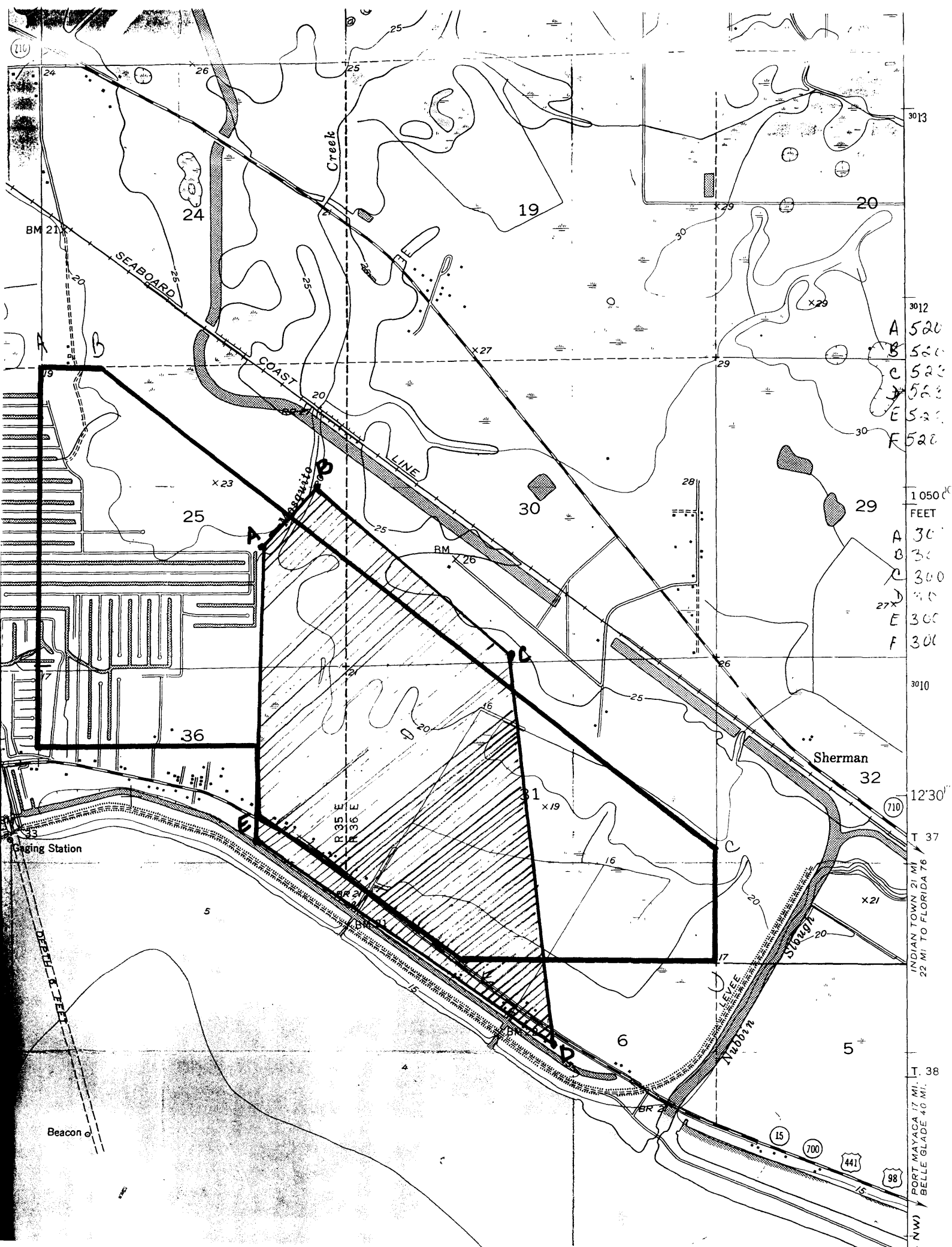
OKEECHOBEE BATTLEFIELD
Okeechobee, Florida

UTM References:	Zone	Northing	Easting
A	17	3010680	521330
B	17	3011000	521640
C	17	3010160	522660
D	17	3007060	522900
E	17	3009100	521320

1 050 000
FEET



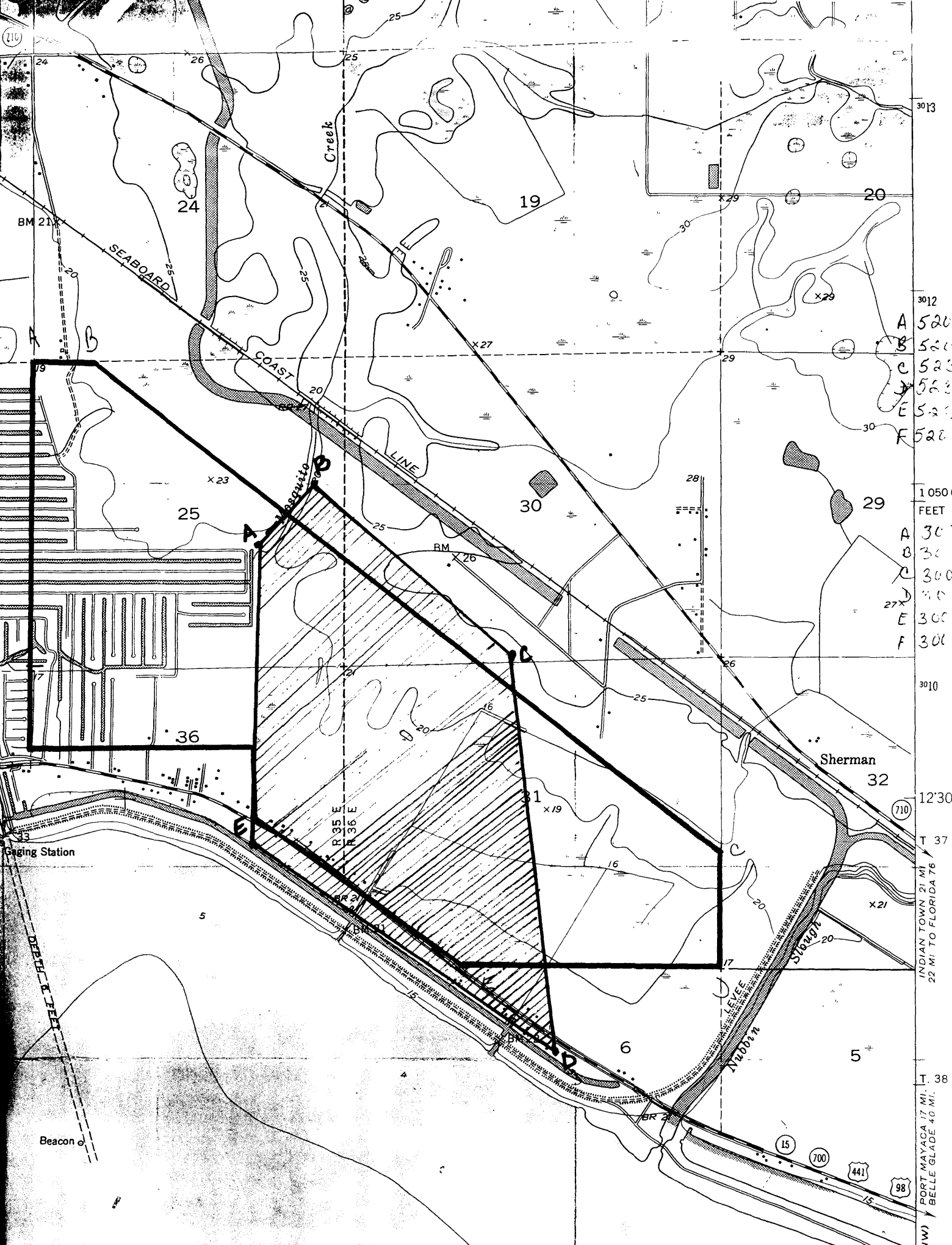
INDIAN TOWN 21 MI
22 MI TO FLORIDA 76
T 37 S
T 36 S
PORT MAYACA 17 MI
BELLE GLADE 40 MI

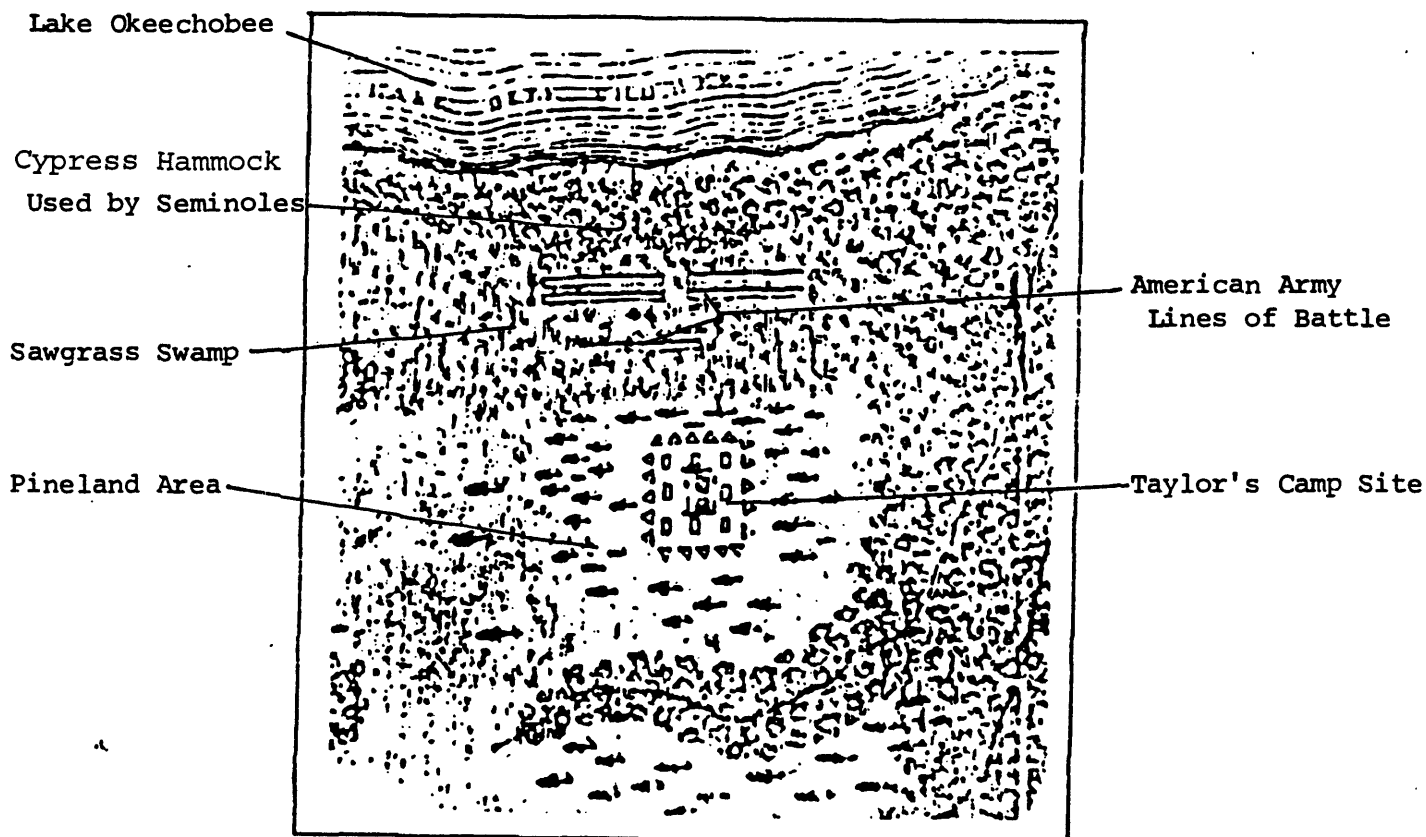


A	520
B	500
C	520
D	520
E	520
F	520

	1050	FEET
A	30	
B	30	
C	300	
D	30	
E	300	
F	300	

3013
3012
3010
12'30"
T 37
INDIAN TOWN 21 MI.
22 MI. TO FLORIDA 76
T 38
PORT MAYACA 17 MI.
BELLE GLADE 40 MI.
NW





Map of Battlefield of Dinnes, 1838.

Figure 1. Shows the layout of the Okeechobee Battlefield and the three natural environmental zones making up the battle area. Note that the top of the map is to the south.

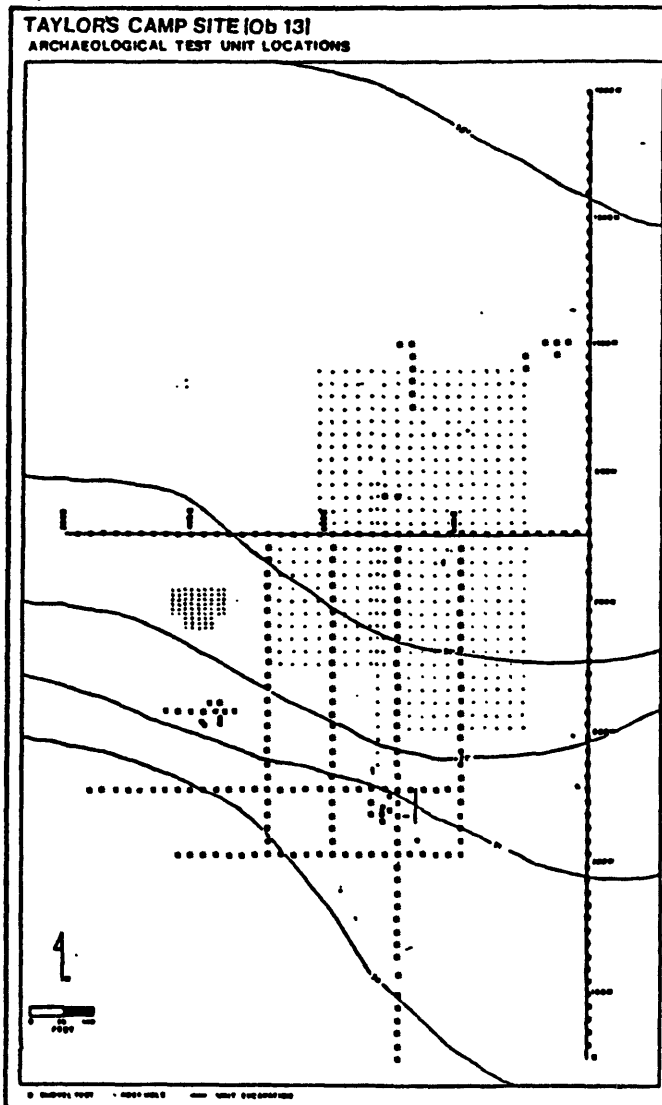


Figure 2. Archeological Test Unit Locations which were used to define the area of Taylor's Camp (8Ob13) in the northern area of the battlefield.

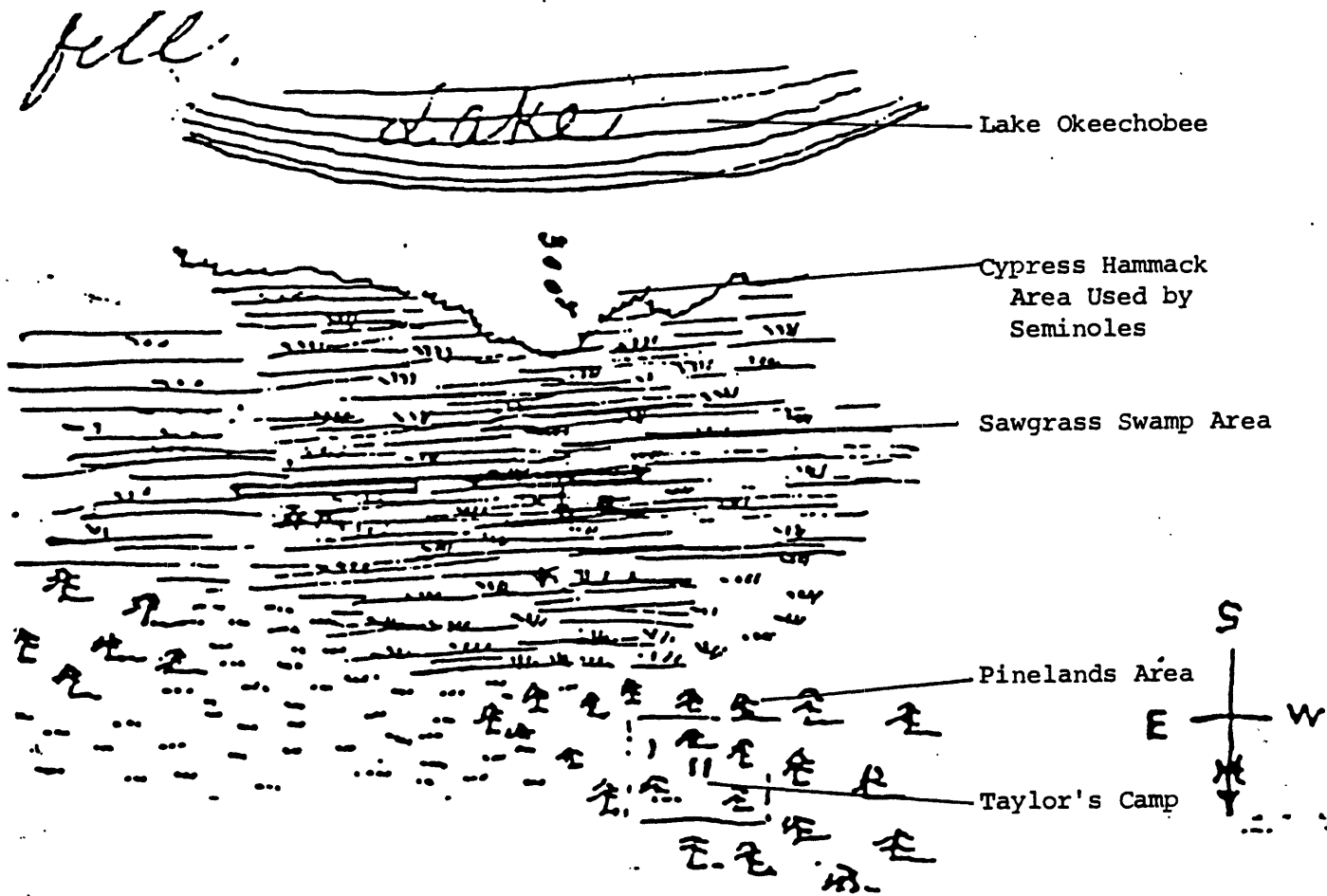


Figure 3. Prince Map of the Okeechobee Battlefield drawn in 1838. Shows the environmental zones of the Battlefield and Taylor's Camp.

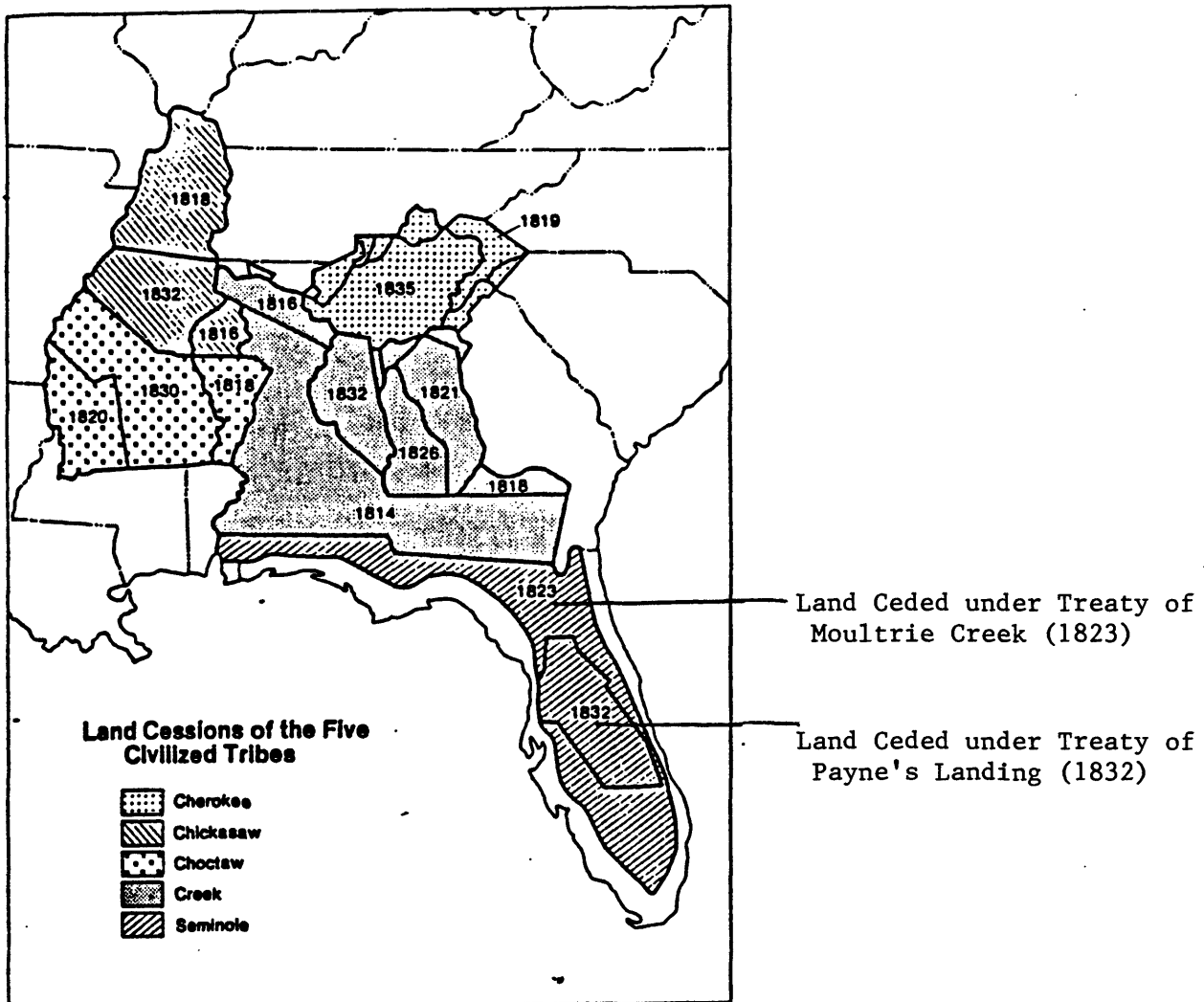
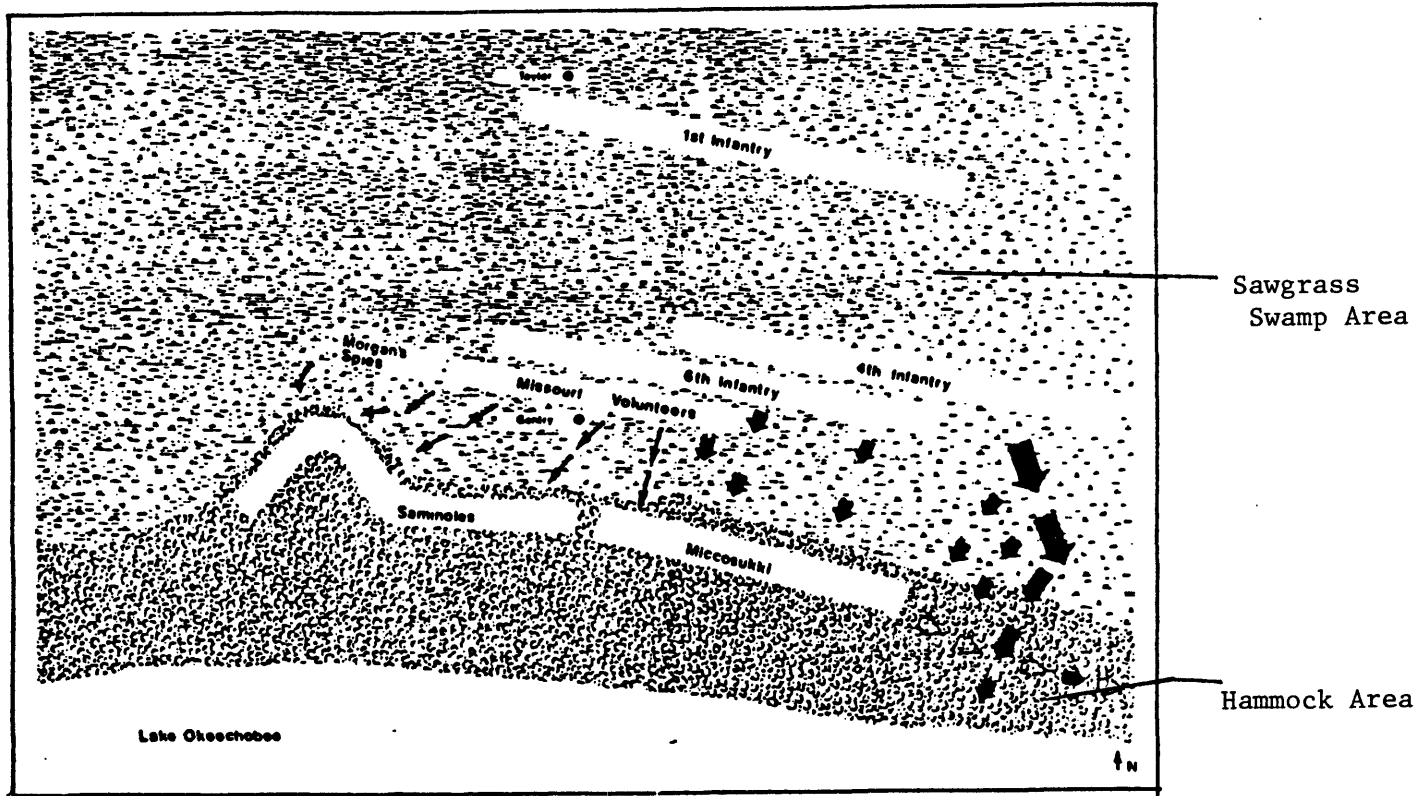


Figure 4. Land in the Southeastern United States ceded by Native Americans to the United States through Treaties. Shows areas in Florida ceded by the Seminoles through the Treaty of Moultrie Creek (1823) and Treaty of Payne's Landing (1832).



Reconstruction of the Battlefield.

Figure 5. Reconstruction of the Battle lines at the Okeechobee Battlefield - Christmas Day - 1837.

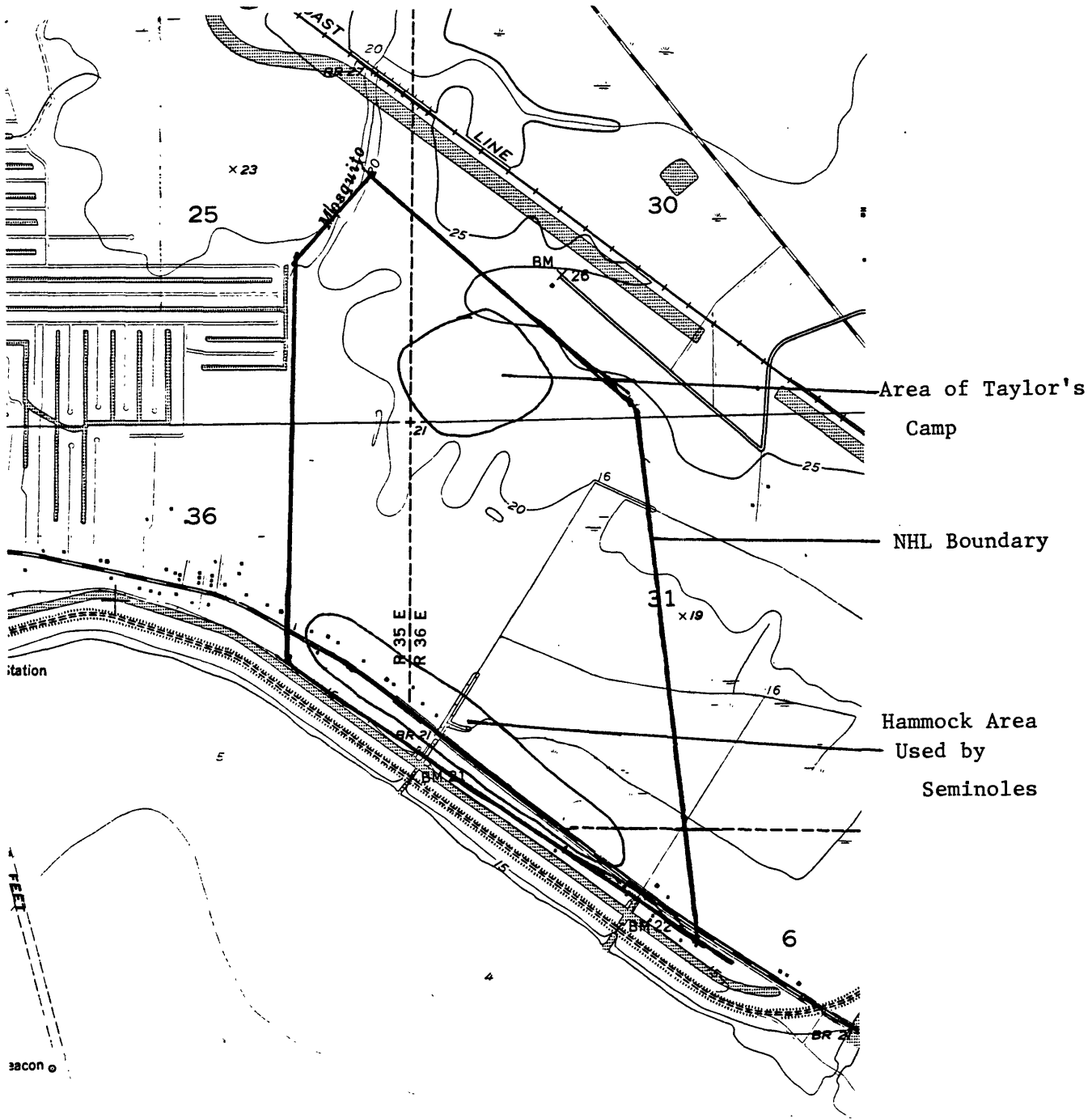


Figure 6. Shows the proposed new boundaries for Okeechobee Battlefield showing the locations of Taylor's Camp, and the hammock used by the Seminoles.