

Author:

Swearingen, Joseph Van, 1799-1837.
Papers, 1834-1839.

Title:

1 folder (44 items).

Description:

FL. Misc. Ms. Box 87

Local Call No:

Notes:

Soldier. Enlisted as Brevet Second Lt. on July 1, 1824 in the U.S. Army 6th Infantry and was promoted to Captain on July 31, 1837. He was killed in action on December 25, 1837 during the Second Seminole War at Lake Okeechabee, Fla.

Correspondence, newspaper clipping, data sheet.

In his letters to his sister he misses the family and hopes to have time to see them in the future. He is well and his military duties in Missouri, Louisiana, and Florida keep him active. In his letters from 1837 he says he is looking forward to active in the Floridas. The collection includes a copy of his service record sent to his sister dated July 14, 1839.

Subjects:

Swearingen, Joseph Van, 1799-1837 --

Correspondence.

Soldiers -- Florida -- Correspondence.

Seminole War, 2nd, 1835-1842 -- Personal

narratives.

Florida -- 12000 CEEUS

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Journey into Wilderness

An
Army Surgeon's Account
of
Life in Camp and Field
during the
Creek and Seminole Wars
1836-1838

BY
Jacob Rhett Motte

EDITED BY
JAMES F. SUNDERMAN

"... you have men, and so have we, you have powder and lead,
and so have we, your men will fight, and so will ours, till the last
drop of . . . blood has moistened the dust. . . ."
(Osceola, Seminole Indian Chief, to Brigadier General Duncan
L. Clinch, February 2, 1836.)

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA PRESS
Gainesville
1953

in Camp and Field;

Companying

freedom and adventure

among

not an domestic opponent;
their recent hostilities.

With

from Florida Dangers

~~Wrote~~

By John W. Green

~~Wrote~~

~~Wrote~~

~~Wrote~~

Medical Dept

M. J. Offenberg.

who have fought and the courage
of triumph and the grief of
for finding and the great return
not brought and the general man.

~~Wrote~~

collected with engraving.

Title page from J. Rhett Motte's Journal

teen rank and file. It had wounded Capt. G. Andrews W. H. T. Walker,¹⁰ and seventy six rank and file. It must have been a hard contested struggle, in which every officer, company of one regiment, including the orderly sergeant either killed or wounded, while its commander and staff where they fought, in the hottest of the action.¹⁰

The Missouri Volunteers, who were with Col. Taylor, sustained a serious loss in the death of their commander, Col. Gentry. He fell mortally wounded at the head of his regiment—while encouraging his men to the charge.

Thus did our gallant little army once more prove its invincibility, though at so great a sacrifice; but not greater than was counterbalanced by the advantages that no doubt accrued from this victory.¹⁸ And it remained for Congress to show a nation's gratitude by providing for the families of those martyrs in their common country's

row strip of land between the Atlantic ocean, and the *Okechobee* lake, our troops were expecting soon to give a very good account of the enemy, it being impossible for them to escape unobserved; or retreat much farther south, without being stopped by the water. By the arrival of Capt. H. [Harvey] Brown we first learnt the particulars of a disastrous victory, which the division under Col. Taylor had gained over the Indians,—disastrous, inasmuch as he lost five officers, twenty five privates killed, and over a hundred wounded.

It seemed that on the evening of the 24th Decr, Col. Taylor captured an Indian on the Kissimmee river, from whom he learnt that *Alligator* with all the war spirits of the Seminoles, and *Sam Jones* or *Abika*, with a hundred and seventy five *Mickasukies* were encamped not many miles distant on the east side of the Kissimmee, and near the Lake *O-ke-cho-bee*. The Colonel consequently under the reluctant guidance of the captured Indian, who had no taste for being hung, went in search of the enemy; and after passing several cypress swamps and dense hammocks, reached the vicinity of their encampment on Christmas morning.⁹

The Indians in expectation of an attack, had selected one of the most difficult places to approach in Florida; having a swamp nearly a mile wide in front, which was unpassable for horses, and almost for foot. They had also cleared away the palmetto from before the hammock in which they were stationed within rifle range of the skirts; and as the Army charged, received them with a deadly fire, which brought nearly one tenth to the ground.⁷ Notwithstanding the warm and destructive fire which was kept up, the sixth and part of the fourth Infantry pressed forward; gained the hammock; and after fighting severely for more than an hour, completely routed the enemy,⁸ who were driven in every direction, leaving the field with ten of their number dead upon it, in possession of our troops, and innumerable traces of blood where they had dragged others off.⁹

The sixth Infantry suffered most severely. It lost its Lt. Col. A. R. Thompson,¹⁰—Adjutant J. P. Centry,¹¹—Capt. Van Swearingen,¹²—and 1st Lt. F. J. Brooke,¹³—its Sergt. Major, and nine-

This is a detailed map of the Pearl and Hermes Islands area, showing a grid of numbered sections (1-36) and various geographical features. The map includes labels for 'PEARL ISLAND', 'HERMES ISLAND', 'SAND GRASS', 'IMPRACITABLE SAND GRASS', and 'PINE'. It also shows 'DAY BEACH' and 'DAY BEACH' at the top. The map is a technical drawing with a grid overlay, likely for land management or surveying purposes.

1. Need to clearly establish where Section Line is (Lat's 80.15°?). Is it further north than current boundary? Waste pond just west of top of sand dome - is this present day marsh? If so, line is further north. Also, note bend in U.S. - this map shows fort in creek in bend. These two pieces of evidence suggest that fort is North of current ~~line~~ line and that west of fence (just north of big pine tree in overgrowth was myrtle/pine glade)

7:55,
I ignore these notes
for now - they'll
make more sense
when we meet
an-afte'.
Clunko