

They were looking for a hilltop, near water. They found such a spot 3 miles east of here on the first high ground west of the Silver Spring. Now the sound was of axes and the great pines on the hill began to fall to be used for the walls and blockhouses of the fort. The year was 1827.

The fort was similar to wilderness forts constructed by the French and the English during the 1600's and 1700's. It was the same type of picket fort constructed by George Washington at Fort Necessity in 1754. It was similar to the British Fort William Henry captured by the Marquis De Montcalm in the siege of 1757 and memorialized in James Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*.

Like Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, Fort Sill in Oklahoma, and Fort Laramie, in Wyoming, Fort King advanced the frontier. Many of these frontier forts became our cities. Fort Pontchartrain, became Detroit, Fort Dearborn became Chicago, Fort Pitt became Pittsburgh, Fort Brooke became Tampa, and Fort King became Ocala.

For 15 years (1827-42) Fort King was to be a main stage in the heroic and tragic saga of the advance of the American Frontier in Florida. It was constructed to administrate the Treaty of Moultrie Creek which relocated the Seminoles to central Florida. Fort King was to promote law and order in the wilderness by protecting the Seminoles from trespassing settlers and adventurers.

Initially, Fort King and the Indian Agency were viewed positively by the Seminoles. As Coahajo said to Gad Humphreys, the Indian Agent in Jan 1829, "This house was built for us, so that when we had any difficulty, we might come here and settle it." It represented the 'Great Father's' (i.e., the US President's) commitment to them for their safety and well being. Chief John Hicks said to Gad Humphreys "We know that the Great Father's power is great, and he can do with us as he chooses; but we hope that his justice is as great as his power." They trusted the Great Father and his Indian Agents. To the Seminoles, Fort King was a symbol of hope.

But the Great Father could not stop the overwhelming advance of the white settlers, the whisky peddlers, and the slave hunters. Two years after being constructed, Fort King was abandoned due to budget cuts from the recession of 1829. The Seminoles were left without the soldiers to protect them from marauding whites. Justice lapsed.

The government reduced their annuity. The Seminoles could not buy corn. They began to starve. Captain John Sprague wrote: "The Indian, exasperated by repeated wrongs, was reckless of the future—indeed, cared but little of results. Revenge, ever sweet to him, whatever may be the consequences, was all he sought."

Fort King stood empty for 3 years (1829-32), but the Seminoles did not disturb it. The Seminoles waited for the return of the soldiers to protect them under the terms of the Treaty of Moultrie Creek. However, in May 1832, the Great Father (Andrew Jackson) made them sign a new treaty at Paynes Landing on the Oklawaha River.

In June 1832, one month after the signing of the Treaty of Paynes Landing, the soldiers returned. Fort King was re-garrisoned. But now the Seminoles were told that they must leave Florida entirely and forever. Instead of a symbol of freedom, hope and justice, Fort King and its soldiers became a symbol of hate and oppression.

On to the stage came a new Seminole—His name was Osceola. His first appearance to the world was at Fort King in October 1834. Here, the defiant young war chief rejected the US orders to leave Florida and threatened war unless the Seminoles were left alone. There was no trust left.

Then came the fateful day of Dec 28, 1835. That morning 40 miles to the south along the

Fort King Road, the Seminoles ambushed and annihilated two companies of US Army regulars in route to Fort King. That afternoon, Osceola shot and killed the Indian Agent Wiley Thompson outside the walls of Fort King. The Second Seminole War had begun.

During the seven year guerilla war that followed, every major general and every regiment of the US Army was stationed at or passed through Fort King. Here stood the Generals: Gaines, Scott, Clinch, Jesup, Taylor, and Armistead. Here stood the junior officers Worth, Johnson, Prince, Bragg, Meade, and Pemberton—men who would gain fame in the Mexican and Civil Wars. And here stood the enlisted men: Bemrose, Clarke, and hundreds of others who served in the Florida War.

Following the initial series of engagements, most of which the Seminoles won, US forces withdrew from the interior of Florida abandoning Fort King in May 1836. The Seminoles stood victorious. At this zenith of their success and hopes, the Seminoles burned the hated Fort King to the ground.

But it would be a short lived victory. The Army returned a year later and rebuilt Fort King. It would be garrisoned throughout the remaining 5 years of the war and from here the Army of the South would direct dragoon and infantry units in unrelenting search and destroy missions against the Seminoles.

When it ended in 1842, most of the Seminoles had been killed or captured and relocated to Indian Territory in Oklahoma. These native Americans constitute the Seminole Nation of today. An unconquered and defiant few withdrew to the vastness of the Florida Everglades and survived to the present as the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

In March 1843, Fort King was abandoned by the US Army for the last time and transferred to the people of Marion County. The Fort was used as the County's first courthouse and public building. In 1846, it was dismantled by the citizens of Marion County for its lumber. The great pines had done their job.

Hated and loved, Fort King was the stuff that dreams are made of. To the pioneers, it represented America in the wilderness. It was to these people—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, The Bill of Rights, and freedom and democracy as we knew it. To the Seminoles—this fort was first a symbol of justice and goodwill and then a symbol of arrogance, intolerance, and persecution. Hated and loved—In the end, Fort King is us.

The historical significance of Fort King is that it links us to our past and to our future. To stand on that hilltop puts us in the footsteps of Osceola and the native Americans who roamed and lived on this land for thousands of years before the Spanish, French, English, and Americans ruled it. It is a place in the modern city that links us to our wilderness past. It reminds us of the difficulties faced by our young republic in maintaining justice and peace on the Frontier. It is how we got here. Here is our story on the exact spot of land where it all happened.

The lesson learned from Fort King is our need to assimilate and accept people of other cultures who in the final analysis value being American as much as we. Can we become a better people? The fact that we stand here as friends with the Seminoles, the very people we oppressed at the start of our State, is a testament that we can. Fort King is a place of hope.

THE ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11

**HON. DANNY K. DAVIS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 7, 2004*

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, combating terrorism has emerged as one of the most important U.S. foreign policy and national security priorities. The number of terrorist groups is reportedly growing and the technology to inflict mass casualties is becoming more readily available. The United States and other cooperating nations are confronted with four major tasks, namely, (1) deterring and identifying terrorists and their sponsors and supporters (2) weakening terrorist financial ability and infrastructure (3) making potential targets extremely difficult to be accomplished, and (4) containing damage in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. Given these priorities Congress and the administration should accept the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Report as a guidance document toward effectively combating terrorism without diminishing the people's civil liberties and rights.

Combating terrorism requires government activity designed to gather information on, and restrict the activities of individual terrorists and groups seeking to engage in direct or indirect terrorist activity. This is a challenge facing the Congress as to how—in a growing age of globalization, deregulation, democracy and individual freedom—to institute effective communication between various intelligence agencies, information sharing across Federal, State and local governments and private sectors and the method of implementing regulatory and monitoring systems which will help deter, identify, and track terrorists and stop their activities.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTION  
HONORING THOSE VOLUNTEERS  
WHO HELP AMERICA'S MILITARY  
FAMILIES

**HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 7, 2004*

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer, along with my colleague and friend Representative JO ANN DAVIS from Virginia, a resolution honoring those who selflessly volunteer their time and energy to support America's brave military families.

Mr. Speaker, since the conflicts in Afghanistan and in Iraq began, the strain on our military families has been tremendous—with extended tours of duty and several activations and reactivations.

During this time, our military families face unique and trying challenges. While their loved ones are deployed overseas or away for extended periods, these families must cope with the anxiety and a fear of a different kind than experienced in combat.

This anxiety can be just as intense. "Will my husband come home?" "Is my daughter's unit in the line of fire?" "How will I make ends meet while the kids' father is gone?" "How should I explain this to our kids?"

These are the questions that race through the minds of the spouses and the children of