



Dade's Last Command

Mr. Frank Laumer

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From the Foreword:

"The definitive account of the march and annihilation of Major Francis Dade's column of 108 men in December 1835. . . . Extensive knowledge of the soldiers, the Seminoles, and the terrain is woven into the text. There does not exist a more vivid, but at the same time historically accurate account of a single action in U.S. military literature."

"...a gripping account of the infamous Dade Massacre and probably the best book ever written about the Second Seminole War."--Matt Percy, *The Journal of America's Military Past*

Dade's Battle in December 1835 precipitated the Second Seminole War. It was the first American war fought over the issue of slavery, Frank Laumer writes, and it occurred principally because of white determination to protect the institution.

In their search for runaway slaves, white citizens of Georgia and Florida invaded Seminole land and met with resistance; the violent encounters that followed led to Dade's Battle. As a result, Laumer says, the escape hatch was closed, Native Americans were removed from the land, and Florida was made "safe" for white expansion.

Coupling thirty years of research with a passion to understand the fate of Major Dade's command and the motivations of the attacking Seminoles, Laumer has written a vivid account of a battle that changed Florida's history. After walking Dade's route on the Fort King Road from Tampa to the battlefield north of the Withlacoochee River--wearing the complete woolen uniform of an enlisted man, carrying musket, canteen, pack, bayonet, and haversack--Laumer can describe not only the clothing and weapons of the soldiers but also the tension and fear they felt as they marched through Seminole territory. He has also assessed the position of the Seminoles, sympathizing with the choices forced by their leaders.

Laumer also describes the backgrounds of the soldiers who marched under Dade and the role of much-maligned black interpreter, Louis Pacheco, and he offers new insights on the mistakes made by the commanders who ordered the march.

More than the account of a single military action, *Dade's Last Command* is the story of good and decent men "who died violent and terrible deaths to perpetuate a political and social evil."

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