

the largest cattle ranch in Spanish Florida and for the next 250 years, was the scene of indian battles, pirate raids and kidnappings.

If it's plants and wildlife you wish to see, the Preserve has recorded more than 800 species of flora and 350 species of fauna. With its huge alligator population, *Paynes Prairie* is also a great place to see these fascinating reptiles up close.

The Preserve provides all kinds of activities, cycling paths, hiking, canoeing, fishing, camping and even RVing. There are also picnic areas for those who prefer a short visit.

The gate to Paynes Prairie is just beyond the village of Micanopy. See exit 374 for driving directions [Hrs: 8-dusk; \$4/vehicle; ☎ 352-466-3397].

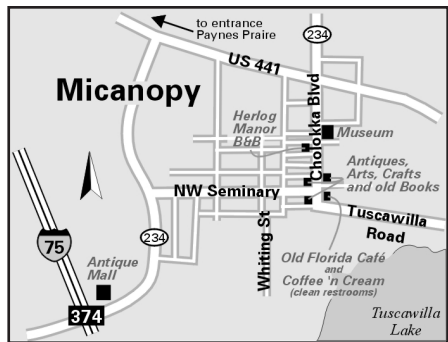
**Exit 374-Micanopy:** Originally a Timucuan settlement with a 10,000 year history, *Hernando de Soto* passed by in 1539. This lovely town is a delightful place to visit at any time but particularly on a hot Florida day. Live oaks with hanging moss provide shady canopies over its quiet streets and lanes, making browsing *Micanopy's* restored 19th century antique and curio stores a very pleasant task. **Delectable Collectable Antiques, Treasured Collections** and a wonderful old book store; there's something here for everyone.

The **Micanopy Historical Society Museum** (Open Daily; Hrs: 1-4; \$2; ☎ 352-466-3200) is housed in the **1890 Thrasher Warehouse**. As you walk north on Micanopy's main street—*Cholokka Boulevard*—formerly an

ancient Indian trading path, you'll find the **Museum** on the right just past the corner of *Bay St/6th Ave*.

But Micanopy has not always been so sleepy. Its original Seminole village name was *Cuscawilla*. In the early 19th century, a trading post was established on the old Indian trading trail, now Micanopy's main street, *Cholokka Blvd*.

In 1835, the settlement found itself in the midst of the *Great Seminole War* with the local Indian chief, *Mikanopy* and his friends *Osceola* and *Chief Alligator* from *Alpata Telophka* (Lake City), leading the Seminole warriors against the *US Army*. As a result, the Army built **Fort Defiance** near present day *Cholokka Blvd*. Later, burnt to the ground it was rebuilt and named **Fort Micanopy**.



*Micanopy* is so close to the I-75 exit that it only takes a few minutes to visit. Once there, you will not want to leave this place where time stands still.

▲-**Take exit 374 east** on CR234; **bear left** at bend and **turn right** on *Seminary St* to reach the junction with Micanopy's main street, *Cholokka Blvd* (1.3 miles, 2km).

▲-To visit *Paynes Prairie*, **turn left** on to *Cholokka* and drive to the junction of *US441* (4/10th mile, 1km); **turn left** on to *US441* for 1/2 mile; Entrance is on your right.

**Mile 372.5-Marion Co.:** Named for *Gen. Frances Marion* of the Revolutionary War. The county seat is *Ocala*. Marion is known for its thoroughbred racehorses which include several Kentucky Derby winners.

**Exit 358-Indian River Citrus:** Florida is one of the few places I know where you can pull

### Insider Tip - Old Florida Cafe

If it's lunch time and you need an excuse to get off I-75, then consider the **Old Florida Cafe** in Micanopy. Homemade soup, excellent sandwiches, fresh salads - at very reasonable prices, will fill the bill.

We like to sit outside on the white-fenced, vine-draped veranda under the hanging moss of the cool Live Oaks lining *Cholokka Boulevard* and watch the people enjoying the old-time main street. Or if you prefer, look for an air-conditioned table inside the Cafe.

Open daily 11a-4p; Phone: 352-466-3663

PAYNES PRAIRIE - named after King Payne, a Seminole chief killed in the Seminole War.

MICANOPY - (pronounced, "mik [like Mickey Mouse] - an - no - pee"), after Seminole Chief *Mikanopy*, whose name came from "miko" meaning "chief" and "onàpà" meaning "upper."