

**Kettle Creek Battlefield
American Revolutionary War National Park Study**

**Remarks by N. Walker Chewning
Chairman of the Board of the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association
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Good Afternoon!

Why does **the Kettle Creek Battlefield in Georgia** during the **American Revolution in 1779** deserve your attention?

First:

- As soon as most people hear “Georgia” they think of the Civil War.
- That was an important conflict, but **today we are focusing on the American Revolution: the war that led to the formation of the United States of America...**
- **...and** the War that has resulted in all of us being able to meet together- **here-** today.

Second:

- There were **several American Revolutionary War engagements** in the **Colony of Georgia** during the **War for Independence...**
- **... but the Battle of Kettle Creek was the only engagement the Patriots won in Georgia.**

Third:

- The Kettle Creek Battlefield is **ALSO A CEMETERY FOR SOLDIERS who died in that battle.**
- **18 graves have been located by cadaver dogs and verified by ground penetrating radar, archaeological studies of grave sites, and soil analysis.**

Fourth:

- **The Kettle Creek Battlefield is a pristine site: After the battle, the area returned to its agricultural roots. No development has been made to the currently-owned 252.5 acres in over 200 years.**

Fifth:

- **In 2019, the State of Georgia, the 13th American Colony, has NO American Revolutionary War National Parks.**

How did the American War for Independence come to Georgia?

- The American Revolution began in Massachusetts in 1775.
- Despite numerous battles to subdue the American Revolution in the Northern Colonies, by 1777, the war was at a stalemate. Britain was also at war with France and Spain, so the British reduced their forces in the Northern Colonies.
- The British turned to what they called a “Southern Strategy”. The strategy was to increase the size of their fighting force by recruiting Loyalist in Georgia and the Carolinas.
- The British captured Savannah and Augusta and then moved into backcountry of Wilkes County and the Battle of Kettle Creek ensued.

The Battle of Kettle Creek

- After 30 days in the Carolinas, Col. Boyd planned to return to Augusta through Wilkes County, Georgia.
- Col. Pickens, Col. Clarke and Col. Dooly had been in searching for the British Regiments when they heard the drum beats of the British forces along Kettle Creek on the morning of February 14, 1779.
- As Col. Pickens advanced towards the British encampment his scouts engaged British pickets slaughtering a stolen cow at the top of a ridge north of Kettle Creek and the battle began.
- The British commander, Col. Boyd, was mortally wounded in the first engagement and his troops began to flee, closely pursued by Patriots.
- Major Spurgin, now in command of the British troops, tried to defend a hill on the south side of Kettle Creek, but that defense also failed.

- Patriot leader Col. Clarke's horse was shot from under him while crossing Kettle Creek and he was given another mount by Austin Dabney, an African American Patriot, who later received a war pension and land grant.
- As the battle ended some British troops surrendered, some fled to Augusta and other were left dying on the battlefield.
- Col. Pickens ordered that British Commander Col. Boyd be given a Christian burial, and they released some of the Loyalists as a reward for burying the dead soldiers where they had fallen.
- The battle was reported in newspapers as far away as Boston, Philadelphia, and London.
- Some notable statements made about the Battle of Kettle Creek include:
General George Washington: "The defeat broke the spirit of the Tories... and preserved quiet in the West."
Patriot General Andrew Pickens: "I believe it was the severest check and chastisement the Tories received in South Carolina or Georgia."
- In 2011 the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association was created to facilitate preservation and land acquisition. It's fundraising efforts among individuals and local organizations in 2013 resulted in the purchase of an additional 60 acres of the battlefield. This first acquisition of land in over 100 years gained the interest of the American Battlefield Trust. In 2017 an additional 180 acres was acquired with the help of The American Battlefield Trust, Campaign 1776 and the Watson Brown Foundation.
- Current efforts have resulted in a significant increase in park visitation and this has economically benefited the seven rural counties in the area.
- Becoming a member of the National Park system would gain the Kettle Creek Battlefield national visibility and increase visitation. It would have a positive economic impact on all of the counties in the area.
- The Kettle Creek Battlefield would be the first and only American Revolutionary War Park in the State of Georgia.
- Where other Battlefields have fallen to commercial encroachment the Kettle Creek Battlefield has been preserved in a pristine condition. Here the visitors are able to lose themselves in history and step back in time to become a part of this important event in American History.