



Newsletter of the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association, Inc. Editor: N. Walker Chewning

Vol. 5 No. 1

<http://www.kettlecreekbattlefield.org>

Jan ~ Mar 2016

**Abundance of natural
history, plants, and animal
life also attractive at Kettle
Creek**

By JOE HARRIS



Linda Chafin and Jan Coyne of the Georgia Botanical Garden discuss a Paw Paw patch along Kettle Creek at the foot of War Hill. The small tree produces the only edible fruit of a tree indigenous to the United States. Its name comes from a rough similarity to papaya. Its reported natural range is somewhat north of the Kettle Creek location. With actual construction of the Kettle Creek Battlefield War Hill Loop Trail scheduled for this fall, interpretive signage planning is underway. A dozen sites along the trail, with

signage and benches, are already scheduled for installation.

Although providing the history of the 1779 battle is the force behind the effort, the natural history of the site is also a major attraction. The site's volcanic origin, evidence of pre-history animal life, current wild flowers, and age of the forest all appeal to a wide variety of professionals and amateurs including, of course, bird-lovers. A recent two hour visitor to the site identified 30 bird calls.

Linda Chafin and Jan Coyne of the Georgia Botanical Garden, with Kettle Creek Battlefield Association (KCBA) Chairman Joe Harris, recently walked the Loop Trail and spent hours making notes, taking pictures, and tagging specific sites of likely tourist interest. "This place is so much fun I'd almost do this job for nothing," Chafin said. "It is truly a hidden botanical jewel." In order to get the work done, the KCBA contracted with the UGA Carl Vinson Institute for the job.

"Atamasco lilies are in full bloom in early March and the Trilliums are also starting their season now," Chafin said. Harris commented that the Atam-

ascocily's scientific name, *Zephyranthes*, comes from the Greek God of the west wind, Zephyrus, whose wife was the goddess of flowers. "It is a favorite of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas," Harris said.

Chafin noted the abundance of trout lilies in bloom. "The trout lily people should be meeting here instead of south Georgia," Chafin said. "There is no better display in Georgia than on the south side of War Hill. The leaf is dark spotted, like the side of a trout," she said. Harris noted that it flowers early in spring, then totally disappears for the rest of the year. It is a favorite of native plant societies of Florida, North Carolina, and Arkansas, though it grows over most of the eastern United States.

Chafin will prepare a draft copy of a legend which refers to numbered posts around the trail and will be available for tourists. "This should be complete by the time trail construction is finished." Harris said.

Clarke too bored, impatient to retire after the Revolution

By JOE HARRIS



Gary Doster set the record straight concerning Elijah Clarke in his talk for the Washington Kiwanis Club. Elijah Clarke is a well-known figure in Georgia history. He earned his stature fighting the Creek and Cherokee nations, and later in the struggle against the British during the American Revolution. After defeating Loyalist forces at the Battle of Kettle Creek in 1779, he led his militia in a further series of clashes in Georgia and South Carolina through the end of the war. He was wounded a number of times, and rewarded with a plantation following the American victory.

With such a résumé, you'd think Clarke might be ready to retire to the quiet country life. But Gary Doster, a retired wildlife biologist and now avid student of early American history, set the record straight in a presentation to the Washington Kiwanis Club last week.

Expanded walking tours to show off new finds at Kettle Creek battlefield

By KIP BURKE

This year's Revolutionary Days observance of the 1779 Battle of Kettle Creek expanded to meet the growing interest of members of the service.

"Last year, the Friday battlefield tours at Kettle Creek drew more than 77 visitors, virtually all from outside our area," Sons of the American Revolution Events Chairman Thomas Owen said. "Thus this year, the SAR placed

an 18th Century encampment at War Hill on Friday, February 12. There were uniformed re-enactors present and a box full of Revolutionary-era artifacts found by the 2009 Lamar Institute survey will be on display.”

The tours were conducted from noon-4:30 p.m. by U.S. Army retired Lieutenant Colonel Allen Burton and Kettle Creek Battlefield Association President N. Walker Chewning.

In previous years, the battlefield tours were simultaneous with events in downtown Washington on Saturday. This year, ongoing archaeological studies, including the search by cadaver dog teams that helped locate the long-lost Liberty Church site and cemetery north of War Hill, and the work on the War Hill Loop Trail, have given visitors much more to see at the battle site than in previous years.



Recently, the improvements at War Hill have allowed groups of middle school students to walk the battlefield and learn about the 1779 battle as part of their Georgia history curriculum. “Having a real life experience nearby for students in history classes offers an exceptional opportunity for area teachers. The Revolutionary War battlefield is that kind of place,” said KatyMeech, W-WMS eighth grade history teacher.

This year, other than the expanded tours on Friday, events were on much the same schedule as in years past. On Saturday, February 13, at 8:30 a.m., there was a presentation on the Battle and History of Wilkes County in the Mary Willis Library. From 9 a.m.-noon, costumed reenactors conducted living history exhibits on The Square in Washington.

The annual Revolutionary War Parade around The Square kicked off on Saturday at 10:45, followed at 11 a.m. by a dramatic black-powder skirmish portrayal of Battle of Kettle Creek at Ft. Washington Park. The solemn wreath-laying ceremony at War Hill was conducted at 2:30 Saturday afternoon.

The Revolutionary Days weekend ended Sunday, February 14, at 9 a.m. with a Colonial worship service at historic Phillips Mill Church.

Archaeology, new trails to enhance Revolutionary Days

By KIP BURKE

This year, a growing part of the Revolutionary Days observance was the focus on revelations and artifacts discovered in recent archaeological studies of the 1779 Battle of Kettle Creek, and the access provided by new trails that allowed visitors to explore far more of the battle site than ever before.

To help interpret the new historical information, the Georgia Sons of the American Revolution placed an 18th-

century encampment at War Hill on Friday, February 12, SAR President Thomas Owen said. "There will be uniformed re-enactors present, and there will be a display of artifacts found on the battle site during the 2009 Lamar Institute archaeological survey," he said. The studies by the Lamar Institute archaeologists and other historians have revealed far more precise information about how and where the critical battle actually happened than was previously known.

Armed with that information, retired Army Lieutenant Colonel Allen Burton and Kettle Creek Battlefield Association President N. Walker Chewing conducted tours from noon-4:30 p.m. on Friday, February 12. "Walking the actual terrain provides a unique insight to the battle that cannot be gained from just reading historic documents or books," Army historian Steven Rausch said at last year's tour.

That terrain is now much more accessible due to the new trails, designed by retired UGA forester Walter Cook, which are being blazed in the battlefield's core area. Although the trail system is still far from complete, one of two pedestrian trail bridges that connect the War Hill Loop Trail with the Liberty Church and Hammett farm sites will allow experienced hikers to leave the Loop Trail and reach the 1780s Liberty Church site and cemetery following a flagged route of less than half a mile. A second bridge, connecting the Loop Trail to the Hammett Farm site, is underway.

As in years past, families enjoyed the highlights of Revolutionary Days

observance including the colorful historical pageantry of Saturday morning's parade around The Square at 10:45, followed by a skirmish re-enactment behind the courthouse, both performed by re-enactors dressed in historically accurate Revolutionary War uniforms and frontier clothing.



Other historical re-enactors give living history demonstrations on aspects of life in Wilkes County during the Revolution.

Not all the weekend was aimed at education or fun. On Saturday afternoon, the Revolutionary heritage groups from all over the region gathered on War Hill for the wreath-laying ceremony, a solemn commemoration of those who fought and died in the battle.

The Revolutionary Days weekend wrapped up at 9 a.m. Sunday at the annual colonial worship service at historic Phillips Mill Church.

In conjunction with Revolutionary Days, the Robert Toombs House Family and Friends presented a living history program entitled "Silhouettes of the Revolution" on Saturday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

"Visitors will enjoy historic food and recipes and demonstrations of cutting silhouettes, then make their own,"

curator Marcia Campbell said. “Silhouettes of the Revolution are life-size images of the Patriots who tell the stories of Sergeant Major John Colley, Major Robert Augustus Toombs, and Colonel John Abbott who were ancestors of the owners of the Robert Toombs House. The grandfather of the second owner, Walton Harris, served in the battle and presented his experiences during the battle. George Walton, signer of the Declaration of Independence, told his unique connection to Wilkes County and the Robert Toombs House.”

Tread in the steps of Patriots touring the battlefield

By KIP BURKE



New trail markers and bridges now make the Kettle Creek battlefield more accessible and understandable for visitors this weekend. This year’s observance of the 237th anniversary of the Revolutionary War Battle of Kettle Creek once again filled Washington-Wilkes with colorful pageantry, and tours of the newly accessible areas around the battlefield began on Friday at noon.

With the growing popularity of the battlefield tours, the Georgia Sons of the American Revolution will place an

18th-century encampment at War Hill on Friday afternoon, February 12, Georgia SAR President Thomas Owen said. “There were uniformed reenactors present, and a display of artifacts found on the battle site during the 2009 Lamar Institute archaeological survey,” he said.

Retired Army Lieutenant Colonel Allen Burton and Kettle Creek Battlefield Association President N. Walker Chewning will conduct Friday’s tours from noon-4:30 p.m.



New displays explained the progress of both Patriot and Loyalist forces before and during the Battle of Kettle Creek. As always, there was the popular reenactment of skirmish from the battle, a historic costumed Colonial parade around The Square, living history performances, a battleground memorial service, battleground tours, and a Colonial worship service.

As in years past, history came alive at 9 a.m. Saturday all around Washington’s Square with performances by Revolutionary War personalities portraying General George Washington, Elijah Clarke, Nancy Hart, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson among others.

“There will be opportunities to play Colonial games, drill with the

Georgia Militia, learn about the Revolutionary War battle flags, sign a Patriot's Oath, and see demonstrations of daily life, such as spinning, weaving, trapping, leatherwork and other colonial crafts," Owen said.



After cadaver dogs located buried human remains at several spots on the battlefield, crosses now mark those locations, all of which are visible from the newly marked trails. Just as they did last year, at 10 a.m., Georgia SAR militia re-enactors fired a musket salute adjacent to the Black Revolutionary Soldiers monument on The Square to honor all those who fought.

At 10:45, the Revolutionary Days parade took place, beginning behind the Wilkes County courthouse. Organizers encouraged everyone to go to join the Revolutionary Days parade. "Led by the Sons of the American Revolution with Revolutionary War battle flags, we encourage everyone to participate in colonial or patriotic colors," Owen said.

Just after the parade, the popular Kettle Creek battle reenactment took place at 11 a.m. in Fort Washington

Park behind the Wilkes County Courthouse.

MORE EXCITING NEWS **FROM THE KCBA**

By N. WALKER CHEWNING



In December, KCBA board member David Noble was instrumental in arranging for Dan Bigman, owner of Bigman Geophysical, to use cadaver dogs to locate the graves of Revolutionary War soldiers buried on the Kettle Creek Battlefield. During the search of approximately 15% of the battlefield, the cadaver dogs were able to discover 12 possible burial sites. Even after watching the dogs conduct their search, many wondered if it was really possible for these cadaver dogs to locate remains that have been buried for over 200 years.

In January the members of the Atlanta Chapter SAR donated the funds to conduct another search using Ground Penetrating Radar and a finders probe. To the delight of those who accompanied the operator, strong anomalies were found at the same sites that the cadaver dogs had discovered.

When the finders probe was used, the existence of grave sites was substanti-

ated. These findings corresponded to the archeological findings reported in the Lamar Institute Study in 2008, “Stirring Up a Hornet’s nest: The Kettle Creek Battlefield Survey”.



Based on the success of the cadaver dogs and the GPR study, the KCBA has applied for a grant with the GA Department of Natural Resources through the city of Washington to expand this effort over the remainder of the battlefield which is owned by the county. We believe that this expanded search for gravesites will result in the discovery of additional Revolutionary War graves located on the Kettle Creek Battlefield.

New trails, bridges make a visit to the battlefield at Kettle Creek an eye-opening look at history

By KIP BURKE



If you haven’t been out to the Kettle Creek battlefield area recently, I encourage you to visit this weekend. It’s an eye-opener, and it will bring the battle to life for you – especially the newly found graves, marked by small white crosses.

Wilkes County has been blessed to have one of the few undeveloped Revolutionary War battlefields in Georgia, but for years it was so undeveloped it was hard for visitors to get a clear understanding of the land on which the Patriots attacked the British-led Loyalists 237 years ago this week.

It was even hard to find unless you knew where to look.

Thanks to the work of many hands, led by members of the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association and KCBA Chairman Joe Harris, new signs help visitors find Kettle Creek, and gone are the impenetrable overgrown woods. Now the hillsides are cleared of brush, and new trails go around the base of War Hill and, with the help of new footbridges, to outlying sites that had a critical role in the battle. The trails aren’t finished yet, but they’re easily walked already.

As I walked the War Hill Loop Trail last Saturday, I was stunned to see small white crosses, seven of them, that bring to life, if you will, the reality that men died here. In December, cadaver dogs, trained to detect human remains, identified four possible gravesites on and around War Hill and three

more on the Liberty Church site north

To tell the story of the battle, colorful new map displays show the new trails and the old paths taken by those soldiers approaching the site, and with the landscape so visible, it's far easier to imagine the scene that day, February 14, 1779.

Friday afternoon's tours, led by experts in the battle, are an excellent opportunity to see the battlefield and to learn exactly what we now believe happened, to see where it happened, and to get the clearest picture yet.

The new trails are now connected with two pedestrian trail bridges, so that visitors can leave the War Hill Loop Trail and go across Kelley Branch to the Liberty Church and Hammett farm sites. An experienced hiker can now leave the Loop Trail and reach the 1780s Liberty Church site and cemetery following a flagged route of less than half a mile. A second bridge, connecting the Loop Trail to the Hammett Farm site, is underway. Walker Chewning, president of the KCBA, along with Sam Moore, chairman of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners, have been the driving forces behind getting the bridges and trails in place. The trails were designed by Walter Cook, a retired UGA forester who has designed more than 100 forest trails in Georgia and South Carolina. Dr. Richard Bennion and Randy Clayton cleared the trails. When the trails are well established, the KCBA can seek funding for grading and surfacing.

New bridge at Kettle Creek gives hikers connection to church site

By JOE HARRIS



This bridge across Kelly Branch, tributary to Kettle Creek, leading from the War Hill Loop Trail north to the Liberty Church Trail, is one of two soon to be complete in the Kettle Creek Battlefield core area. One of two pedestrian trail bridges which connect the War Hill Loop Trail with the Liberty Church and Hammett farm sites is now complete at the Kettle Creek Battlefield development area. An experienced hiker can now leave the Loop Trail and reach the 1780s Liberty Church site and cemetery following a flagged route of less than half a mile. A second bridge, connecting the Loop Trail to the Hammett Farm site, is underway.

The bridges cross Kelly Branch which is a north/south tributary to Kettle Creek and draws from two ridges, one of which was the site of the Hammett Farm and the other Liberty Church. Patriot troops pursued Loyalists along these ridges in the 1779 battle. Trails along these routes were designed by Walter Cook, a retired UGA forester who had designed more than 100 forest trails in Georgia and South

Carolina.

“Trails can’t run straight uphill,” Cook said, “this would facilitate erosion. Also, they need to present special features such as a tree’s unusual size, beauty, rarity, etc.” Cook’s specialty was forestry aesthetics – unusual among forestry majors.

Construction of the bridges to the north side of the battlefield core area has been vigorously pursued by Walker Chewning, president of the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association (KCBA), with Sam Moore, chairman of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners. Moore said the job could be done in winter when other jobs slack off for Richard McAvoy and his team. So the work is underway.

Trails were flagged by Cook many months ago and some clearing has been done by Dr. Richard Bennion working with Randy Clayton.

Malaysian family visits States, stops here to see

Kettle Creek

By JOE HARRIS



Kettle Creek Battlefield visitors stand on War Hill and face south where the major part of the battle took place.

The Ng family from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, began a trails tour here, their second trip to the site. They are (l-r) Shin, Boon, Karen, and Zheng. Malaysian family from Kuala Lumpur visited the Kettle Creek Battlefield recently. Boon Thiam and Karen Ng were completing a few stops of business and friend connections in the United States including Joe and Dot Harris who had known them since their college days.

The Harrises served as the host family for them during four years at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Two of their sons, Shea Shin and Shea Zheng from the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom, and University of California-Davis, were with them.

The family visited the battlefield three years ago at which time Boon Thiam became a Gen. George Washington member of the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association. They walked the War Hill Loop and the Summit Trails. Atamasco lilies were in full bloom on the southeast side of War Hill. Paw-paw and Trillium, along the creek, were at their peak for the season. A nearby rare orchid, lacking chlorophyll thus growing like a mushroom, was also identified.

Ng is CEO of Biomed Diagnostics with offices in five countries in Southeast Asia. On this trip to the United States, he stopped to visit Immucor, Inc. in Norcross which supplies his company with over \$700,000 in blood diagnostic items each year. “It was my first visit there, even though I have been selling their products for over 25

years,” he said, “and I distribute for Immucor in Malaysia and Singapore.”

They completed their time in Washington and the U.S. following an Easter service at First Baptist Church and lunch with the Harrises.

Trail design expert explains features at Kettle Creek site

By JOE HARRIS



“Trails for hiking don’t go the way the crow flies,” explained Walter Cook at a recent chapter meeting of the W-W SAR. “On hill-sides especially, trails are designed to prevent erosion. Also, a little diversion might show off a park feature of cultural or natural history importance.”

Cook de- signed the four major trails on the Kettle Creek Battlefield which, according to the National Park Service, is the site of the only significant Patriot victory in Georgia during the American Revolution.

“The 1779 battlefield site has much to offer,” Cook said. “It is there for the heritage tourist group which looks for depth in historic sites and a wide variety of interesting features.” On the other hand, Cook described the interest of the school-age visitor as a getaway experience. “In fact, most park visitors want the space experience, a change from the fenced-in, man-made environment, whether woodland, seashore or the mountains,

and once there, they want to know about the site, to be entertained by the unfamiliar,” he said.

Cook pointed out that the specific trail dimensions must accommodate those attracted to the site. He noted that the school-age visitor needs a wider trail. “They don’t walk in single file, they get together in groups. Couples also require more width, about six feet,” he explained. Cook himself likes a chipped hardwood trail surface because it is natural and walkable unlike pine bark or surfaces foreign to the area, like crusher run. Yet hard surfaces are needed for wheelchair use, he said.

“Trails should lead to a specific place. They need a destination and an origin. Yet, they can follow a historic course like that of Elijah Clarke, Pickens or Dooley, in the battlefield case,” Cook said.

Historian Allen Burton has pointed out that the current Hammett farm trail follows the approximate route of Pickens, Dooley and their Patriot militias as they pursued forces loyal to the British crown and headed towards Wrightsboro and Augusta. “The trail leading to the Hammett farm could properly be called the Pickens Trail,” Burton said.

Cook is retired from the UGA Warnell School of Forestry and has designed nearly 100 park trails in Georgia and South Carolina. He specialized in esthetic forestry, a somewhat rare specialty. “Forests are beautiful and so are trees; I just like to walk in the woods,” Cook said.

Joe Harris reported that two new trails are now ready for hikers. He described the Hammett farm and Liberty Church trails as having been cleared by Dr. Richard Bennion and Randy Clayton. He also mentioned that the contract for the final archeological study of the War Hill Loop Trail has been approved. Following the study, the trail can be completed with benches and interpretative signs, possibly within a year.

DAR Georgia Day Presentation

By N. WALKER CHEWNING

Each year, chapters of the Georgia DAR celebrate the founding of the colony of Georgia with a celebratory luncheon and salute to Gen. James Oglethorpe. This year on February 6, the celebration was held in Canton, Georgia, and the speaker was KCBA President N. Walker Chewning. The celebration was attended by 150 DAR ladies and their guests, and Mr. Chewning gave a presentation on the Battle of Kettle Creek and the continuing effort to preserve this historic battlefield.

The presentation included a summary of the events leading up to the Battle of Kettle Creek, efforts of the DAR to begin preservation of the battle site in 1920, and the current efforts to expand by purchasing additional battlefield acreage along with the creation of a historical public park on the site.

All of the attendees were encouraged to attend the upcoming celebration of the Battle of Kettle Creek in February and to see the many changes that have occurred since the addition of the newly acquired 60 acres which the DAR supported with their many contributions.

Regent Loriann White of the Hightower Trail Chapter DAR introduced the speaker and afterwards presented the speaker and the KCBA with an award of appreciation for their continuing effort to preserve the Kettle Creek Battlefield.

2016 Membership Drive

With the beginning of the Battle of Kettle Creek Celebration the KCBA starts its annual membership and fund raising drive.

Although much has been accomplished since 2011 there is still much more that needs to be done. We need your financial support to continue to develop and preserve this historic battlefield. Remember we currently control only 20% of the core area of the battlefield and 80% remains with private land owners.

You may renew your membership or contribute to the Land Fund on Page #12.

Thank you for your support

2016 Membership Renewal

Membership Levels

Patriot Membership

- Student: \$10.00
- Adult: \$25.00
- Family: \$50.00

Life Membership

- Col. Andrew Pickens Member \$500.00
- Col. John Dooly Member \$1,000.00
- Col. Elijah Clarke Member \$2,500.00
- President George Washington \$5,000.00
- Kettle Creek Battlefield Legacy Member \$25,000.00

Life Members can continue to reach higher levels of membership through cumulative gifting. Additional donations can be made separately or along with the membership renewal.

We need your continuing support in order to preserve the historic Kettle Creek Battlefield

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Please make your check payable to **Kettle Creek Battlefield Association, Inc**

Send to :
Kettle Creek Battlefield Association, Inc.
P. O. Box 729
Washington, GA 30673