



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

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Kettle Creek Battlefield Group Gets Support from Georgia State SAR

By KIP BURKE

The heads of Sons of the American Revolution chapters from all over the state of Georgia meet on October 26th and voted to donate \$40,000 to the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association to help purchase land around the historically important Revolutionary War battle site in rural Wilkes County.

KCBA members and directors met in Barnesville with the state SAR Board of Managers to discuss their progress in bringing the Kettle Creek Battlefield Master Plan to fruition, the KCBA's Thomas Owen said. "The overwhelming majority of the SAR presidents from all over the state voted in favor of awarding \$40,000 to the association to help purchase land," he said. "This gives us the option of possibly purchasing 100 more acres that are part of the master plan. This is the first large and significant expansion of the battlefield site."

"For more than 100 years, the SAR and DAR, along with Wilkes County leaders, have supported the preservation of the pristine battle site," he said. "In 1899, the National Society of the DAR purchased 12.5 acres of land to preserve War Hill, the center of the battlefield," Owen said. "Then in 1930, the DAR obtained the services of the federal government to install the war memorial obelisk commemorating the 1779 battle. Since 1930, we believe, and certainly since 1960, War Hill Road and New Salem Church Road have been maintained by the county to allow public access to War Hill, according to Wilkes County Commission Chairman Sam Moore."

In recent years, the Kettle Creek Chapter of the DAR, along with SAR and DAR chapters from surrounding counties, have donated amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000. "They realize how absolutely vital it is to preserve this pristine Revolutionary War battle site, and how important it is to maintain public access and increase public visits to the site," Owen said.

In April, the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners approved the Kettle Creek Battlefield Master Plan developed by Jason Hardin of the Regional Commission. At that meeting, Chairman Sam Moore said, "This was a very important battle and I think this gets the information out there better than it has been before. This was the only [Revolutionary War] battle that was won in Georgia and we are really proud that it was here," he said.

When it is implemented, the first stages of

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the plan would add walking trails around War the course of the 1779 battle and its impor- Hill, have picnic tables and restrooms built at tance to the American Revolution. the site, and would add signage that explains

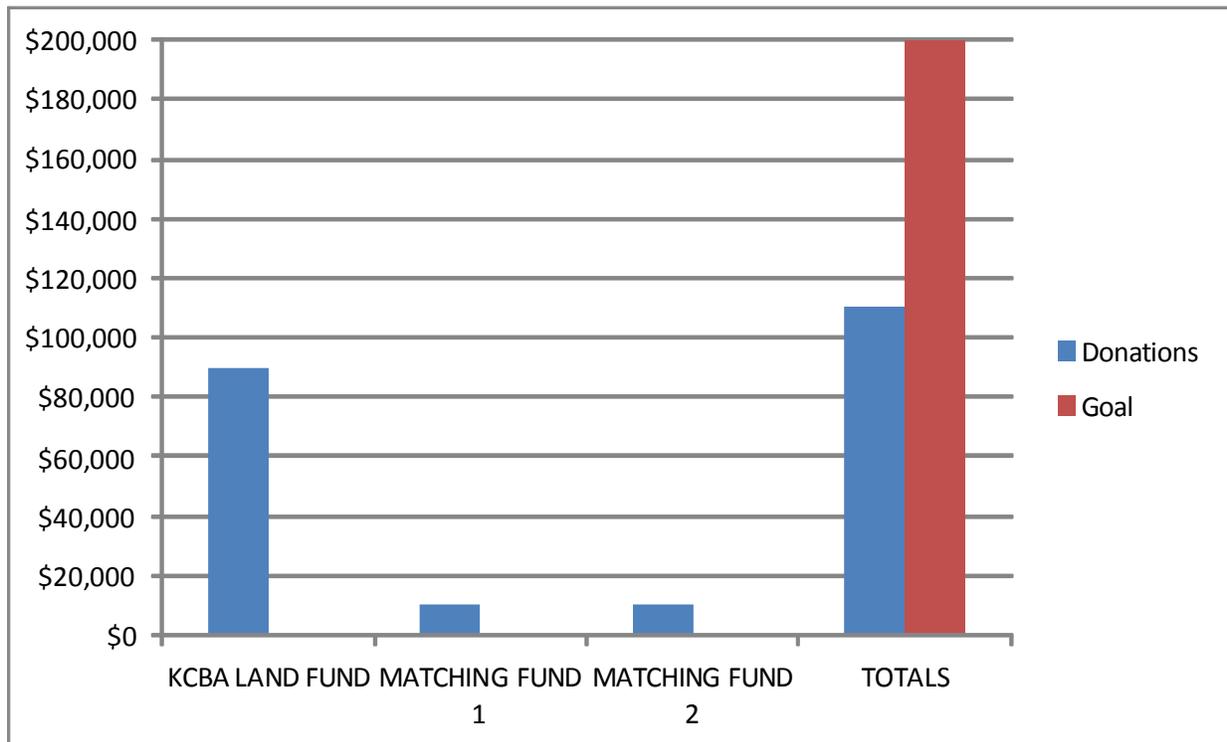
BATTLEFIELD FUND DRIVE A SUCCESS

At the end October 2013, the KCBA efforts to raise donations to purchase additional land to expand the Kettle Creek Battlefield exceeded \$100,000.00. Through the effort of many individuals and organizations with both small and large contributions, the amount the KCBA has been successful in raising is sufficient to purchase more than 50 additional acres for the Kettle Creek Battlefield expansion project.

Not since 1920, and the first efforts by the ladies of the DAR, has there been such excitement for preserving this historic site. "It's a good feeling to be a part of the preservation of this battlefield," said Walker Chewning, President of the KCBA. "I believe that all of those who contributed to this effort can be proud to have helped to preserve this site for future generations."

The KCBA has entered into purchase negotiations with the present land owners and expects to complete the contract by the end of December 2013. With this purchase, the KCBA has begun the process to acquire the entire core area of the Kettle Creek Battlefield and develop a state of the art historical park. This is the beginning, and much additional work will have to be accomplished in the future to reach the completion of the project.

Kettle Creek Battlefield Land Purchase Fund Drive



A Special Thanks All Donors

Associations

Kettle Creek Battlefield Association

SAR Chapters

Button Gwinnett Chapter, SAR
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Washington Wilkes Chapter, SAR
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Dispatch Spotlight

Every organization needs professional resources to drive objectives. It is rare when one single person steps forward to fulfill this need, but the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association and the Washington-Wilkes Chapter Sons of the American Revolution have such an individual. A charter member of both organizations his fidelity to duty, service and education is unparalleled among our ranks. An ardent professional he has devoted his life in service to America as a career U. S. Army officer, historian and educator.

Born and raised in Washington, Georgia, in the shadow of the Kettle Creek Battlefield, American history was in his blood. Attending Georgia Military College and then graduating from the University of Georgia he was commissioned into the U. S. Army. A long and distinguished career was to follow with assignments in the United States, Europe and three tours in Vietnam. His military career spanned nearly a quarter century and in between assignments it included the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, a Master of Business Administration from the New York Institute of Technology, and a Master of History from Old Dominion University.

A premier authority on the Battle of Kettle Creek he has volunteered countless hours and labor to promote and preserve our American heritage. Whether speaking on the American Revolution or the War Between the States his ability to capture the moment for his audience is unprecedented. He has volunteered for programs at Kettle Creek and the Washington City Library during the GASSAR Revolutionary War Days and is always available to serve. If a Chapter of the SAR-DAR needs a program he is always there to help. If a tour guide is required for visitors, events or family reunions he is always available to assist. His unselfish devotion to education is further driven as a Professor of

American History at Georgia Regents University in Augusta.

On the road in Wilkes County we can tell who is in the truck by the faithful Beagle companion by the name of "Elijah Clarke" sitting by his side riding shotgun.

Professionally and personally, an individual whose life has been devoted to serving God and Country, the Kettle Creek Battlefield Association honors our unsung hero, LTC U. S. Army (ret.) Emory Allen Burton.

Vann's Creek Ceremony December 7th

This year will be the 7th Anniversary Ceremony of the Battle of Vann's Creek and the speaker will be Dr. Allan Kulikoff, Abraham Baldwin Distinguished Professor in the Humanities at the University of Georgia. He will be speaking on **Wartime Destruction, Chaos, and Depression during the American Revolution.**



Dr. Kulikoff teaches several areas of history including early American history and the history of capitalism in the colonies and the new nation. Among other topics, he has published three books, the first on slave society in early Virginia

and Maryland, the second on the origins of American capitalism, and the third on the development of agrarian society in seventeenth and eighteenth century America. He is currently working on three projects: a biographical interpretation of Benjamin Franklin as a man of many masks; a book on the impact of the American Revolutionary War on wartime and post-war society and economy; and an analysis of Franklin in American popular culture from 1790 to 2015.

The public is encouraged to attend and be a part of the annual ceremony held at Vann's Creek (at the Pavilion on Richard B. Russell's State Park in Elbert County, GA) to honor the memory of those who fought at the battle February 11th, 1779, 11:00 am.

Myths of the American Revolution

A noted historian debunks the conventional wisdom about
America's War of Independence

• By John Ferling
Illustration by Joe Ciardiello

VI. General Washington Was A Brilliant Tactician And Strategist

Among the hundreds of eulogies delivered after the death of George Washington in 1799, Timothy Dwight, president of Yale College, averred that the general's military greatness consisted principally in his "formation of extensive and masterly plans" and a "watchful seizure of every advantage." It was the prevailing view and one that has been embraced by many historians.

In fact, Washington's missteps revealed failings as a strategist. No one understood his limitations better than Washington himself who, on the eve of the New York campaign in 1776, confessed to Congress his "want of experience to move on a large scale" and his "limited and contracted knowledge . . . in Military Matters."

In August 1776, the Continental Army was routed in its first test on Long Island in part because Washington failed to properly reconnoiter and he attempted to

defend too large an area for the size of his army. To some extent, Washington's nearly fatal inability to make rapid decisions resulted in the November losses of Fort Washington on Manhattan Island and Fort Lee in New Jersey, defeats that cost the colonists more than one-quarter of the army's soldiers and precious weaponry and military stores. Washington did not take the blame for what had gone wrong. Instead, he advised Congress of his "want of confidence in the Generality of the Troops."

In the fall of 1777, when Gen. William Howe invaded Pennsylvania, Washington committed his entire army in an attempt to prevent the loss of Philadelphia. During the Battle of Brandywine, in September, he once again froze with indecision. For nearly two hours information poured into headquarters that the British were attempting a flanking maneuver—a move that would, if successful, entrap much of the Continental Army—and Washington failed to respond. At day's end, a British sergeant accurately perceived that Washington had "escaped a total overthrow,

that must have been the consequence of an hours more daylight.”

Later, Washington was painfully slow to grasp the significance of the war in the Southern states. For the most part, he committed troops to that theater only when Congress ordered him to do so. By then, it was too late to prevent the surrender of Charleston in May 1780 and the subsequent losses among American troops in the South. Washington also failed to see the potential of a campaign against the British in Virginia in 1780 and 1781, prompting Comte de Rochambeau, commander of the French Army in America, to write despairingly that the American general “did not conceive the affair of the south to be such urgency.” Indeed, Rochambeau, who took action without Washington’s knowledge, conceived the Virginia campaign that resulted in the war’s decisive encounter, the siege of Yorktown in the autumn of 1781.

Much of the war’s decision-making was hidden from the public. Not even Congress was aware that the French, not Washington, had formulated the strategy that led to America’s triumph. During Washington’s presidency, the American pamphleteer Thomas Paine, then living

in France, revealed much of what had occurred. In 1796 Paine published a “Letter to George Washington,” in which he claimed that most of General Washington’s supposed achievements were “fraudulent.” “You slept away your time in the field” after 1778, Paine charged, arguing that Gens. Horatio Gates and Greene were more responsible for America’s victory than Washington.

There was some truth to Paine’s acid comments, but his indictment failed to recognize that one can be a great military leader without being a gifted tactician or strategist. Washington’s character, judgment, industry and meticulous habits, as well as his political and diplomatic skills, set him apart from others. In the final analysis, he was the proper choice to serve as commander of the Continental Army.

VII. Great Britain Could Never Have Won The War

Once the revolutionary war was lost, some in Britain argued that it had been unwinnable. For generals and admirals who were defending their reputations, and for patriots who found it painful to acknowledge defeat, the concept of fore-ordained failure was alluring. Nothing could have been done, or so the argu-

ment went, to have altered the outcome. Lord North was condemned, not for having lost the war, but for having led his country into a conflict in which victory was impossible.

In reality, Britain might well have won the war. The battle for New York in 1776 gave England an excellent opportunity for a decisive victory. France had not yet allied with the Americans. Washington and most of his lieutenants were rank amateurs. Continental Army soldiers could not have been more untried. On Long Island, in New York City and in upper Manhattan, on Harlem Heights, Gen. William Howe trapped much of the American Army and might have administered a fatal blow. Cornered in the hills of Harlem, even Washington admitted that if Howe attacked, the Continental Army would be “cut off” and faced with the choice of fighting its way out “under every disadvantage” or being starved into submission. But the excessively cautious Howe was slow to act, ultimately allowing Washington to slip away.

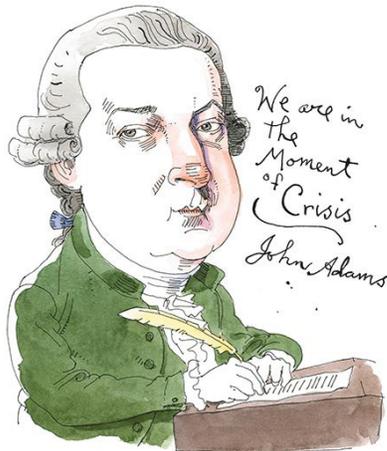
Britain still might have prevailed in 1777. London had formulated a sound strategy that called for Howe, with his large force,

which included a naval arm, to advance up the Hudson River and rendezvous at Albany with General Burgoyne, who was to invade New York from Canada. Britain’s objective was to cut New England off from the other nine states by taking the Hudson. When the rebels did engage—the thinking went—they would face a giant British pincer maneuver that would doom them to catastrophic losses. Though the operation offered the prospect of decisive victory, Howe scuttled it. Believing that Burgoyne needed no assistance and obsessed by a desire to capture Philadelphia—home of the Continental Congress—Howe opted to move against Pennsylvania instead. He took Philadelphia, but he accomplished little by his action. Meanwhile, Burgoyne suffered total defeat at Saratoga.

Most historians have maintained that Britain had no hope of victory after 1777, but that assumption constitutes another myth of this war. Twenty-four months into its Southern Strategy, Britain was close to reclaiming substantial territory within its once-vast American empire. Royal authority had been restored in Georgia, and much of South Carolina was occupied by the British.

As 1781 dawned, Washington warned

that his army was “exhausted” and the citizenry “discontented.” John Adams believed that France, faced with mounting debts and having failed to win a single victory in the American theater, would not remain in the war beyond 1781. “We are in the Moment of Crisis,”



he wrote. Rochambeau feared that 1781 would see the “last struggle of an expiring patriotism.” Both Washington and Adams assumed that unless the United States and France scored a decisive victory in 1781, the outcome of the war would be determined at a conference of Europe’s great powers.

Stalemated wars often conclude with belligerents retaining what they possessed at the moment an armistice is reached. Had the outcome been determined by a European peace conference, Britain would likely have retained Canada, the trans-Appalachian West, part of present-

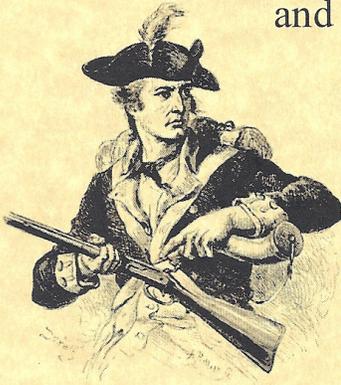
day Maine, New York City and Long Island, Georgia and much of South Carolina, Florida (acquired from Spain in a previous war) and several Caribbean islands. To keep this great empire, which would have encircled the tiny United States, Britain had only to avoid decisive losses in 1781. Yet Cornwallis’ stunning defeat at Yorktown in October cost Britain everything but Canada.

The Treaty of Paris, signed on September 3, 1783, ratified the American victory and recognized the existence of the new United States. General Washington, addressing a gathering of soldiers at West Point, told the men that they had secured America’s “independence and sovereignty.” The new nation, he said, faced “enlarged prospects of happiness,” adding that all free Americans could enjoy “personal independence.” The passage of time would demonstrate that Washington, far from creating yet another myth surrounding the outcome of the war, had voiced the real promise of the new nation.

Historian **John Ferling**’s most recent book is *The Ascent of George Washington: The Hidden Political Genius of an American Icon*. Illustrator **Joe Ciardiello** lives in Milford, New Jersey.

TAKE NOTICE!

This is to Proclaim to the citizens of Georgia
and to Other Colonies.....



Revolutionary Days
February 7, 8 and 9, 2014
Washington,
Georgia
and the
Kettle Creek
Battlefield

- 9:00 a.m. to 12 Noon Saturday Morning, Feb. 8th
Thirty Historical performers in the Town Square, Mary Willis Library, Robert Toombs House & Washington Historical Museum. Parade will start at 11:30 am behind the Courthouse at Fort Washington Park and end there. A dramatic portrayal of the Battle of Kettle Creek will be presented in Fort Washington Park at 12:00 noon.
- 2:30 p.m. Saturday Afternoon, Feb. 8th
Pageantry at the Kettle Creek Battlefield includes Continental Army, Georgia militia, Fife and Drum music, Musket Volley and Wreath Presentations.



Georgia Society
Sons of the American Revolution
<http://www.georgiasocietysar.org/>

All Activities Are
FREE
For more details call:
Washington-Wilkes
Chamber of Commerce
At (706) 678-5111

See the website for more info;
Kettle Creek Battlefield Association
<http://www.kettlecreekbattlefield.org/>

REVOLUTIONARY DAY

Celebrating 235th Anniversary of the Battle of Kettle Creek

-Friday, February 7th.

- 2:30-4:30 pm- Battlefield Tour. Steve Rauch will be at *War Hill*, to guide and discuss the Battle of Kettle Creek -- tour for visitors who wish a pre-event orientation. Maj. Steven J. Rauch is a U.S.A. Ret.; Command Historian Army Signal Center Fort Gordon and adjunct Professor of Military History Georgia Regents University.
GPS: N33.691 W82.886

- SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8th

- 9:00am -12:00 noon: "Celebration of History." Thirty Historical Performances in Washington Town Square, Mary Willis Library, Robert Toombs House and Washington Historical Museum.
- 11:30 am Parade: Assemble at back of the Courthouse, march to Town Square, and end at Fort Washington Park.
- 12:00 am Dramatic Portrayal of the Battle of Kettle Creek in Fort Washington Park.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8th .

- 8:30 am. In the Mary Willis Library, Steve Rauch will present the American Patriots in the Hornets Nest from Vann's Creek to Augusta.
- 9:30am- 11:30 am: Battlefield Walking Tour - led by Army historian at Kettle Creek Battlefield. Warhill Road:
GPS: N33.691 W82.886
- 10:00am- 5:00pm: Open house and Exhibit Washington, Mary Willis Library, 204 E. Liberty Street, Robert Toombs House Historic Site, 216 E Robert Tombs Avenue Washington Historical Museum, 308 E Rob Toombs Avenue.
- 2:30pm: Battlefield Memorial Ceremony. Pageantry at Kettle Creek Monument on W Hill, including presentation of wreaths and musket salutes.
GPS: N33.691 W82.886

Sunday, FEBRUARY 9th .

- 9:00 am: Colonial Worship Service Phillips Mill Baptist Church 5479 Greensboro Rd, Washington, GA 30673 (706) 678-7825
- 11:00am: Heroes of the Hornet's Nest Ceremony, Elijah Clarke State park, 2959 McCormick highway, Lincolnton; 7 miles northeast of Lincolnton on U. S. Hwy. 378 (tel # 706-359-3458)

Sponsors:
Georgia Society SAR, Kettle Creek Battlefield Association; Athens Chapter SAR, Samuel Elbert Chapter SAR, Washington-Wilkes Chapter SAR, Kettle Creek Chapter NSDAR

Wilkes County; City of Washington; Washington-Wilkes Chamber of Commerce; Washington-Wilkes Historical Foundation; Washington Historical Museum and The News-Reporter.

