

PRESS RELEASE

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Archaeologists Discover Revolutionary War Carr's Fort on Georgia Frontier

Wilkes County, Georgia – Archaeologists with the LAMAR Institute discovered the location of Carr's Fort, a significant frontier fortification that was attacked on February 10, 1779. The discovery was funded through grants from the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program, Kettle Creek Battlefield Association, and The LAMAR Institute. The month-long search by a team of six researchers encompassed more than 2,700 wooded acres of the Beaverdam Creek watershed. Battlefield archaeology at Carr's Fort yielded about a dozen fired musket balls, several musket parts and several hundred iron and brass items from the 18th century.

Robert Carr was a Captain in the Georgia Patriot militia and by 1778 his frontier home became a fort for more than 100 soldiers. In late 1778, the British launched a campaign to reclaim the southern colonies, which included a major recruitment effort among the frontier settlers. On February 10, Carr's Fort was occupied by 80 Loyalists (Tories) led by captains John Hamilton and Dougald Campbell. Almost immediately, 200 Georgia and South Carolina Patriot militia, who had been hot on the trail of the Loyalists, laid siege to the fort in an attempt to take it back. An intense fire fight raged for several hours, in which more than a dozen were killed or wounded on each side. Patriot forces, commanded by Colonel Andrew Pickens, were ordered to break off the siege after he received word of that larger party of 750 Loyalists advancing from the Carolinas. The Patriots rode off taking the Loyalist's horses and baggage with them. The Loyalists marched several hundred miles back south to rejoin the main British invasion force. Several weeks later, Captain Carr was killed at his home by a raiding party of Loyalist Creek Indians, while his wife and children escaped.

"The search for Carr's Fort was like looking for a needle in a haystack, only harder. We had no map and few descriptions of the fort, so its location was entirely unknown. Historians and land surveyors provided some clues to about a dozen potential target areas, which helped narrow the search. The LAMAR field team discovered Carr's Fort on the last hour of the last day of the field project. Although our funds were depleted, I had no trouble convincing my crew to return with me to volunteer with me for another day or two to better establish the identity of the archaeological finds as Carr's Fort", stated Daniel Elliott, President of the LAMAR Institute. The archaeological team used metal detectors to systematically comb the woods for any evidence of the fort and battlefield. Each find was labeled and carefully plotted using GPS technology. More than a dozen 18th century settlements were located, but none of these proved to be the fort.

Wilkes County was a hot-bed of revolutionary fervor during the American Revolution. The discovery of the archaeological remains of Carr's Fort indicates great potential that remnants of more than 30 other forts in Wilkes County may still exist. The identification of such resources can provide important new information on Georgia's role in the American Revolution and how this international conflict affected remote frontier settlements.

Researching, locating, identifying, and interpreting fortifications and battlefields is one of The LAMAR Institute's research focuses. This includes the Colonial, Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and the Civil War periods. Prior investigation of Revolutionary War sites has included the battle fields of Kettle Creek, New Ebenezer, Sansavilla Bluff, Savannah, and Sunbury. A complete report on the Carr's Fort Battlefield project will be available to the public in early 2014.