

CHANGE AND REMEMBRANCE: HOW PROMOTING THE KETTLE CREEK
BATTLEFIELD WENT FROM THE MEANS TO BECOMING THE END IN ITSELF

by Robert S. Davis

An earlier draft was published as "Change and Remembrance: How Promoting the Kettle Creek Battlefield Went from the Means to Becoming the End in Itself." *Journal of the Georgia Association of Historians* 24 (2003): 61-79.

"... getting its history wrong is part of being a nation." ---Ernest Renan

Battlefield commemoration largely began in the decades after the American Civil War as veterans and families of veterans sought to memorialize the enormous sacrifices of that conflict within, at least, the last years of the survivors of those deadly events. Such efforts had almost never occurred before. Early America had fewer resources for such memorials and had devoted almost all of its resources towards building a nation rather than commemorating its founders. Even the Centennial of the American Revolution hardly resulted in new battlefield and historic preservation. Continuous public awareness of the early history of the United States hardly extended beyond books and articles. Efforts to preserve battlefields of the Revolution on something approaching what had been done for the Civil War really only began in the first decades of the Twentieth Century, generations after the participants in those battles had passed on and after many of the sites had been permanently lost.

Kettle Creek, Georgia, became particularly representative of the preservation of Revolutionary War battlefields and how those efforts continue to face obstacles in both coming late in their history and in a modern world increasingly removed from such a distant past. On February 14, 1779, a Revolutionary War battle occurred on Kettle Creek, near the present day town of Washington, in Wilkes County, Georgia. Misunderstandings about it in legend and history began almost at once. In that fight, 340 Georgia and South Carolina militiamen under Andrew Pickens, John Dooly, and Elijah Clarke attacked some 600 Americans who supported the British cause and were on the march to join a British force in nearby Augusta. By that afternoon, the Patriot militiamen had won the day against their neighbors. Twenty or more of men believed to have been Loyalists lay dead on the ground. The militiamen had suffered four men killed, three mortally wounded, and fourteen or fifteen other casualties. This engagement gave Georgia's rebellion against Great Britain one of its few, and certainly it's most memorable, victories in battle.

This battle, or brawl, at Kettle Creek was not a large military action, even by the standards of that war. It represents, however, a great deal about the American Revolution the South. As a contemporary wrote of such clashes of arms:

Most of these actions would in other wars be considered as skirmishes of little account, and scarcely worthy of a detailed narrative. But these small actions are as capable as any of displaying conduct. The operations of war being spread over the vast continent . . . it is by such skirmishes that the fate of America must be decided. They are therefore as important as battles in which a hundred thousand men are drawn up on each side.¹

British, Hessian, and northern Loyalist troops had invaded and overrun Georgia in a grand plan to produce an American counter revolution. Kettle Creek demonstrated that this idea lacked critical local support. The thousands of imagined Loyalists became the reality of only hundreds

of remnants from fringe communities of Baptists, Quakers, North Carolina Regulators, “white Indians,” bandits, and other persons more concerned with reaching British protection than dying as martyrs to the king’s cause at the hands of their mainstream rebel neighbors. At least seven of the men captured at Kettle Creek went to the gallows for civil crimes despite efforts by the king’s officers to have the men taken at the battle regarded as prisoners of war.²

This view of the battle’s representative value, however, belongs to sophisticated revisionist scholarship that began during the Bicentennial of the American Revolution. Earlier research gave promoters of the battle and its legends few facts from which to provide their accounts of the battle. Over the years, that event became “Georgia’s Link to Yorktown,” “The Gettysburg of the Revolution,” and “Georgia’s Valentine,” although the first claim would be a difficult connection to make and, of the last, it would seem incredulous to believe that its participants appreciated St. Valentine’s Day. Preservation of the site and the legends of the battle’s participants developed with little more than a date and the name of a place. Its popular promotion would, in time, compete with documented history.

The reality of the historical event initially fared better. News of the battle quickly spread through the Loyalist and Patriot communities, as shown in letters buried in the British archives until well into the twentieth century.³ Colonel John Dooly wrote an account of the battle only two days after it happened that found its way to Major General Benjamin Lincoln, commander of the Southern Department. Brigadier General Andrew Williamson repeated Andrew Pickens’ report of the same to Lincoln in a letter on February 20, 1779.⁴ Lincoln allowed an abstract from the Williamson letter to appear in a South Carolina gazette. The press in other states soon

reprinted that report.⁵ The earliest histories of the American Revolution in the South also mentioned the battle which continued to find at least brief references in later works.⁶

The Dooly and Williamson letters, however, remained in private hands as part of the papers of Revolutionary War General Benjamin Lincoln. Most of the Lincoln papers became even more inaccessible when they were broken up and individually sold to collectors sometime in the late 1800s. Eventually the Kettle Creek letters found their way to manuscript collections in university libraries to wait cataloging, coincidentally, until almost the bicentennial of the battle. During the years 1840 to 1891, Lyman C. Draper of Madison, Wisconsin, collected original records and memoirs of the battle of Kettle Creek, as a very small part of his extensive research into the lost history of the Southern frontier. Even Draper, however, found his mass of materials almost inaccessible and publication of his materials, in any form, largely beyond his means. His collections became part of the holdings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, following his death in 1891, but remained little used until calendars of the documents and microfilm became available decades later.⁷ These documents, like information from Revolutionary War gazettes, immediate post war histories, and federal pension claims of service by veterans of the battle, remained outside of the access of most scholars until the modern development of microfilm.

Even Kettle Creek, as a place, had, until recently, a largely lost past. The stream likely received its name from an Indian kittle, or fish trap. The creek as a named place does not appear on two early 1770s maps of the Wrightsborough/Little River area. It had that name at least as early as 1773, although that year it appears anonymously, but in detail, on a survey of the territory then called the Ceded Lands. Truly part of the Southern frontier, the area had been the lands of neighboring Cherokee and Creek Indians as recently as 1773 although an Edmund Gray

had started a small white settlement on the Little River that had been abandoned due to his political troubles by 1755 and had been formally recalled by 1759. A Captain McFarlin's South Carolina troops camped on the creek to combat Indian raids in 1776. Georgia's revolutionary state government included the area in what was then Wilkes County, Georgia's first county, in 1777, on the then northern-most frontier of Georgia. By 1779, two major paths converged on the north side of the creek and then crossed the stream where the close proximity of two hills forced the creek and its swamp to narrow at today's War Hill. In this cane-choked bend, travelers could find relatively easy passage across the water to the south side of the stream. By then, some settler had established a cowpen at the southern end of a large flat ridge to the northwest of the present-day War Hill and the modern monuments. Archaeology in 2008 by Dan Elliott shows that the battle of February 14, 1779, occurred there when the Loyalists stopped there to rest and to slaughter a cow they had found. The fighting ended where the path crossed the swamp on the west side of today's War Hill.⁸ Pickens also brought his South Carolina troops back to Kettle Creek in 1781 en route to an invasion of the Cherokee lands. Creek Indians destroyed Robert McNabb's Kettle Creek fort/residence in 1778 and 1781. He still rebuilt and on January 3, 1782, while his family and neighbors took refuge in his fort, he and other men were ambushed and killed by Creek Indians. Later in 1782, a notorious Patriot horse thief named Colonel Josiah Dunn, while serving with Elijah Clarke, died in a night skirmish against Loyalists at the mouth of the creek and like near one of the Philip's forts.⁹

The battlefield might have achieved wide spread notoriety had it been mentioned in Mason Weems' widely read historical romances that gave such Southern heroes of the Revolution as William Jasper, John Newton, and Francis Marion widespread fame. William

Gilmore Simms also did not mention it in his popular antebellum Southern novels, however, quite possibly because the era's compilers of South Carolina publications of Revolutionary War records, his documentary sources, only found passing mentions of Kettle Creek.¹⁰ In Wilkes County, David Hillhouse interviewed senior citizens about the Revolution for some brief articles on the local history that he published in 1826 but he failed to include any mention of the battle. He only mentioned the creek, and then misleadingly, as a major waterway.¹¹

The battle of Kettle Creek finally moved into popular history in Georgia through volume two of Hugh McCall's *The History of Georgia* in 1816. His detailed, but not always accurate, account of the events of the campaign that led to the battle almost certainly came from correspondence with Andrew Pickens (d. August 11, 1817). He likely supplemented that information with stories told to him by Elijah Clarke and other veterans and, possibly, details from his father's now lost journal.¹² Subsequent publications of the history of the battle, until the bicentennial of the American Revolution, almost exclusively paraphrased the account in McCall's book, doing what historian Nicholas J. Saunders described, in another context, as "weaving stories that were further embroidered with each retelling."¹³

That public notice of the battle generated by McCall thus started the tradition of bestowing participation in the battle upon the memories of long deceased Georgia heroes of the era. Former governor George Rockingham Gilmer started this trend when he published a parable, in 1851, of how slave Austin Dabney kept to his place in plantation society Georgia. According to Gilmer, that Dabney had been awarded a pension, land, and his freedom for having been disabled by a wound in the battle of Kettle Creek did nothing to affect his humility, or his status, with the white family that fulfilled Georgia law by acting as his guardian as a free man. Records recently

discovered in the National Archives show, however, that Dabney actually received his wound in Augusta in May, 1781 or 1782.¹⁴

Eventually, other popular works on Georgia's past bestowed undocumented service at Kettle Creek to such exceptional people of the 1800s as Nancy Hart, a woman, and Abram Simons, allegedly a Jew. A story of later Governor Stephen Heard being captured at Kettle Creek serves as an explanation of how his slave woman engineered his escape in a basket of clothes.¹⁵ The lost significance of the battle represented complex issues about what historians Wallace Brown and Robert M. Calhoon referred to as Revolutionary War clusters of "cultural minorities." Legends of the battle, such as the accounts of Dabney, came to bestow participation in the battle on members of minorities and other women who were thus also depicted exceptions to the institutionalized norms of the antebellum slave society. At the same time, the white Loyalists who made up the original minorities increasingly came to be denounced in folklore.¹⁶

The Kettle Creek heroes, whatever purpose they served, first appear in an era of increased appreciation of the American Revolution. As the last veterans became fondly remembered grandparents and great-grandparents, their war became romanticized. The federal government responded with an act in 1832 that eventually created 80,000 claims by veterans and widows of veterans of the Revolution. Some of these claims are detailed records of service at even obscure engagements like Kettle Creek, making those battles particularly important to the descendents of those veterans and for historians. An imaginary vignette of the battle began to appear in prints by the 1840s. In 1846, Georgia newspapers published a satirical speech by a Revolutionary War veteran named "Mr. Beeswax" that has elements suggesting that the author obtained information from an actual veteran of the battle.¹⁷

Interest in the battlefield site, however, came only on paper and largely by default. A community grew up around the battlefield after the war. Directly on the battlefield, or immediately north of the site, Archibald Simpson, alleged to have owned the cow slaughtered by the Loyalists preceding the battle, helped to establish the Liberty (Kettle Creek) Presbyterian Church that welcomed services for all faiths. The term “Liberty” had come to mean the name of the political party that opposed the British, not some concept of civil rights or freedom. Established by Reverend Daniel Thatcher in 1795, it may have included a cemetery of the battlefield. The last years of the war had so little regard for the differences of others that the murder of unarmed prisoners of war in the South became a cynical joke called “granting a Georgia parole.” Its cemetery could have been started with the dead of the battle. William Hammett, a veteran of the battle who had been wounded there and who lost two brothers in that fight, owned the battlefield. There Jeremiah Fletcher became involved in a brawl with Kettle Creek veteran Peter Strozier at Hammett’s still house in 1790. General Andrew Pickens, the commander of the victorious forces in the battle, acquired a grant for 300 acres nearby although he never lived there. Franklin College, what became the University of Georgia, became the first state supported institution of higher education with the acquisition of 5,000 acres not many miles to the west of the battlefield but in another county. Local people, however, eventually moved the Revolutionary War road to the south rendering it an obscure place in the woods even to the present day.¹⁸

Connections to the battle subsequently disappeared. The church moved and even its few grave markers have disappeared in recent years. The meadow at the battlefield likewise vanished as did all other significant Revolutionary War sites in Georgia such as Burke County Jail, Fort

Cornwallis, Fort Howe, and the British fortifications, almost beyond memory.¹⁹ Adiel Sherwood wrote of Kettle Creek as the site of a Revolutionary War battle in his 1827 gazetteer of Georgia. The first specific reference to the battlefield only appeared in 1837 when an anonymous writer from nearby Washington in Wilkes County reported that he understood that traces of the battlefield could still be seen but that any certain memory of its location had been or would soon be lost. In 1847, William Bonner published a detailed map of the state of Georgia that he compiled from information sent to him by local county officials. The map for Wilkes County included the location of the Kettle Creek battlefield and of Revolutionary War Heard's fort.²⁰

Where so many men had fought and some had died became a neglected place in the woods whose importance remained known only to local families who had connections to the battle. In 1865, the Wilkes County residents again used the site of the 1779 battle as a cow pen but, by then, only because it had become so obscure, as a physical place, that invading federal troops would presumably not be able to find it. Thomas W. Callaway's 1877 map of Wilkes County showed the location of the battlefield but no roads anywhere near it. In nearby Washington, Georgia, Eliza Bowen wrote articles about the battle in the local newspaper as early as 1879 but bemoaned the fact that many relics had been removed from the battlefield over the years with no effort made to preserve them locally for public display. Ten years later she admitted that she was probably one of only two people in Washington to have visited the site, although she noted that "it would make a very pleasant summer day's excursion to go up to the battlefield and carry a lunch."²¹

In 1886, Henry T. Slaton, the owner of the battlefield property, sought to draw notice to the site with a lengthy article that received widespread publication in the Georgia press, based in

supposition and local tradition that firmly placed Kettle Creek in the very small world of Georgia folklore. In his article, he described a Civil War style battle that he proclaimed as “the turning point in the South of the American Revolution” and “one of the most momentous battles of the Revolutionary War.” He portrayed the enemy as 900 Indians, Loyalists, and red coated British regulars who traveled down roads that existed more in his time than during the Revolution.²²

Kettle Creek, as an object of interest of any type, did not emerge from obscurity again until 1900. By then the Daughters of the American Revolution had been formed with a Wilkes County chapter. This organization required proof of descent from Patriots of its members and also sought to raise public awareness of the War of Independence at a time when patriotism had risen following the establishment of American possessions overseas. Meadow “Metta” Andrews Green, regent of the Wilkes County Chapter of the DAR and cousin of Eliza Bowen, persuaded her banker husband to purchase twelve and one half acres of the battlefield for seventy-five dollars and to donate the land to the Wilkes County Chapter. The African American woman who owned the property later remarked that even the people immediately living around the battlefield knew nothing of its importance until Green had stirred up local interest in the site. She went on to explain that the creek derived its name from the cooking gear lost by the Loyalists in the battle.²³

Green and her sister, Civil War writer Eliza Frances Andrews, began a campaign to persuade Congress to erect a monument at the site. In 1911, they hosted Major Horace P. Williams of the ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts during his trip to Atlanta. He visited Kettle Creek battlefield as part of his organization’s efforts to mark all battlefields in the United States. Williams promised to help the Daughters of the Americana Revolution and the people of Washington, Georgia, in acquiring a \$5,000 appropriation from

Congress for the monument. That effort failed but, before it did, the sisters used a growing interest in the Revolution and Georgia history to push this effort by publishing a list of names of men thought to have been in the battle in 1902. This list included Samuel Davis, father of Jefferson Davis, and the other notables of legend. Although only 340 men served in militia at Kettle Creek on February 14, 1779, the various lists of participants grew to eventually include some 600 names, including men later documented as not even coming to Georgia until after the American Revolution. After ten years, the initial monument effort failed but the tradition of the Kettle Creek lists continued and, eventually, included a list entered into the official records of Congress. Throughout America, persons have tried without success to document the possibility, as presented by these lists, of particular ancestors having been at the battle.²⁴ While the interests in these lists grew, however, the battlefield remained an obscure, almost unreachable, spot in a dense wood.

The War Department finally erected a shaft monument on the site in 1930 as one of many monuments, large and small, created at government expense during the era of the Great Depression. Because of the site's isolation, a road and bridge had to be cut to the west side of the site for the dedication ceremony and dinner that was held there on a cold and wet June 6, 1930. The monument commemorated a place that had no other physical reminders of its historically significant past. Even the creek had been channeled (ditched) in 1920-1921 to ease the effects of flooding.²⁵

After the crowds and dignitaries left, the battlefield again lapsed into an obscurity that lasted for decades. By the 1950s, almost no one, even in Wilkes County, knew of the significance of the site. A few visitors, including some relic hunters, made the difficult trek to the site. In 1942,

for example, William Lake, a newspaper reporter from Union, South Carolina, found a cannon ball at the battlefield that he donated, not to a museum, but to the World War II scrap metal drive.²⁶

Kettle Creek battlefield as history, legend, and historic site emerged parallel with historical awareness in Georgia. The county maintained the wagon path to the east side of the site after the monument commemoration bridge on the west side collapsed. In 1958, the state of Georgia erected two aluminum markers relating to the battle site and, in 1960, antiquarian and veterinarian Dr. Turner Bryson persuaded the last surviving members of the Wilkes County Chapter of the DAR to assign the ownership of the property to the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners. Had he not taken this action, theoretically the property would have passed to their descendents upon their deaths. Bryson and others were working to find a place for Wilkes County in the modern world that both preserved and used the area's extensive history. He had created the Callaway Plantation historic site to educate the public on his county's past and, in 1962, he formed the Kettle Creek Battlefield Commission to try to establish a "first rate park" at the battlefield. Bryson had the site cleaned up, the road maintained, and picnic tables erected. By 1975, however, the picnic tables had been broken and the historical marker dedicated, by Senator Richard B. Russell, had been shot full of holes and then stolen.²⁷

Kettle Creek commemorative efforts, however, continued to expand and to serve their own ends without regard to the reality of the event or the site. In 1962, Bryson arranged for the first symbolic reburial of a Revolutionary War veteran at the battlefield, an idea that, many years before, Met Andrews had opposed as disrespectful of the deceased veterans of the actual battle. The newly created Kettle Creek Chapter of the DAR has continued this program, although to

date only one of the soldiers represented by the reburials has been documented as having been in the Battle of Kettle Creek. On June 24, 1967, a “reenactment” of the battle took place at nearby Washington, Georgia with soldiers in Continental and British uniforms. Visiting dignitaries, also in period dress, included the governor of Georgia. Although this gala event raised public awareness of the battle, it only too well represented how commemorating the battle, in little more than name only, had grown to such an extent that “Kettle Creek” could serve as a major tourist draw without in any ways involving the site of the battle or even careful attention to the details of the historical event.²⁸

Similar situations have existed in other areas of Georgia folk history, historic preservation, and documentary research.²⁹ Accurately evaluating the historical past seemed particularly dire for anything relating to the American Revolution. In-depth, credible research in that area of Georgia’s past published before 1958, and even before 1975, consisted of hardly more than Judge Alexander A. Lawrence’s publications relating to those years in his native Savannah.³⁰ Director of the Georgia Department of Archives and History Louise Frederick Hays, for example, wrote an historical novel on the life of Elijah Clarke that promoted the story of the battle of Kettle Creek. She presented the book as a documented history and misled readers, including a number of scholars, to believe that she had credible surviving records when she actually placed people and events in the battle that came purely out of her imagination. In 1973, Wilkes County writer Janet Harvill Standard, author of another novel about Elijah Clarke, compiled a book of published accounts of the battle of Kettle Creek that all originated from the publication by Hugh McCall in 1816.³¹

For Kettle Creek, this situation might well have continued into the present except for the largely accidental intervention of a few individuals. The Kettle Creek Chapter of the DAR nominated the battlefield site for a national park in 1972 but the National Park Service turned down acquisition of the site due to a NPS report in 1960 that had described it as lacking national significance. A similar effort to have the site placed on the National Register of Historic Places also failed. David Mercer Sherman, a hiker and Georgiana enthusiast from Albany, Georgia, serendipitously visited the site of the battle in 1973 and subsequently nominated it for a state park under the Georgia Heritage Trust program. He urged that it contain several hundred acres so as to preserve as much of the natural appearance of the area during the American Revolution as possible.³²

As a result of Sherman's efforts, the then Historic Preservation Section of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources hired Robert S. Davis as Georgia's first history intern to write a report on the site's potential as a state park. Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr. of the DNR served as his supervisor and co-author. The resulting 1975 report included research into Kettle Creek as a place, a historical event, and as a source of legend. Modern biographies of Andrew Pickens and the late Wilma Waites of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History brought to these researchers' attention the Draper manuscripts. Use of a Revolutionary War pension deposition in Standard's work led to a search of the pensions as a source of information.³³ A nationwide search by mail sought to locate not only information on the historical event at Kettle Creek but also the papers of the officers who might have been informed of the battle. The value of the widely scattered Benjamin Lincoln papers came to the surface from these queries, including John Dooly's account of the battle written only two days after it happened. Yale University, coincidentally, had this document but had only processed it hours before receiving the request for it! A 1779 map turned up in private possession in Scotland that confirmed the details of the location of the site as given in the initial accounts of the battle by Dooly, Pickens, and Williamson.³⁴ Thomas provided the first title trace of the ownership of the property. As a

consequence of the final report, works on the American Revolution in the South published during and since the Bicentennial have had the advantage of access to source material beyond McCall's history.³⁵

A severe economic downturn in the late 1970s killed the plans for making the site any sort of state park although Thomas succeeded in having forty acres of the site placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. The Georgia legislature appropriated \$10,000 for the site to compensate for funds from the Bicentennial that never materialized. Lucy Singleton and Turner Bryson used the funds to set up a formal gate and make other improvements to the site. The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners and the Georgia Sons of the American Revolution, in cooperation with many other groups and individuals, today maintains the original twelve and one half acre site for tourists.

As with almost all Revolutionary War sites, virtually nothing remains of the battlefield as it would have appeared in 1779 but, in the commemorations in 1979 and 2004, documented history has at last played a role in the public presentations. The site now has a historically accurate historical marker and, as appropriate for the traditions of the battle, a monument with a list of the names of the soldiers in the battle as the work of the Kettle Creek Chapter of the DAR. This latest incarnation of the Kettle Creek list, however, has only participants whose presence can in some ways be documented. It also includes names of Loyalists, the Americans who fought for the king's cause on that ground on February 14, 1779, and a feature that may be unique to the Kettle Creek monument.

The site still has problems that it shares with most Georgia historic sites. Important parts of the battlefield remain in private ownership. Although relic hunters have found such significant items as a mastodon tooth, rare Indian artifacts, and Anglo-European items on the site, extensive

professional archaeological work still needs to be done at Kettle Creek. In 2008, Dan Elliott and the Lamar Institute conducted the first professional archaeological study of the site. This survey uncovered, among many important findings, that legend and lore had moved the battlefield from the west side of War Hill and an unnamed hill to the north of the battlefield, to the east side of the hill and the monument.³⁶ No ecological studies have been made to determine what, if anything, of the modern flora might relate to the Revolutionary War era.

Over the years, the history of the physical location, the popular remembrance, and the scholarship of the battle of Kettle Creek each seemed to each go its own way. Now, as an example of what has frequently happened in modern times with much of Georgia history, different historical currents have finally come together. For Kettle Creek, the historic site, the history, and the traditions now support each other.

NOTES

¹ Quotation from The Annual Register or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature for the Year 1781 (London, 1781): 83.

² Robert S. Davis, Kettle Creek Battle and Battlefield (Washington, Ga., 1978), 1-18.

³ Walter Scott to Alexander Cameron, March 27, 1779 and Edward Wilkinson to John Ramsey, March 2, 1779, Colonial Office Papers, CO 5/80, folios 179-84, British Public Record Office, Kew.

⁴ John Dooly to Samuel Elbert, February 16, 1779, Misc. Mss. 174, Yale University Libraries; Andrew Williamson to Benjamin Lincoln, February 20, 1779, Benjamin Lincoln Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁵ Robert S. Davis and Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Kettle Creek: The Battle of the Cane Brakes (Atlanta, 1975), 114.

⁶ Charles Stedman, The History of the Origin, Progress and Termination of the American War, 2 vols. (London, 1794), 1: 120; David Ramsay, History of the Revolution in South Carolina, 2 vols. (Trenton, N.J., 1785), 2: 13-15.

⁷ Josephine L. Harper, Guide to the Draper Manuscripts (Madison, Wi., 1983), xi-xxvii.

⁸ Richard M. Lederer, Jr., Colonial American English (Essex, Ct., 1990), 129; Robert S. Davis, Quaker Records in Georgia (Augusta, 1983), 16, 180, 260; Mary B. Warren, comp., Georgia Governor and Council Journals, 6 vols. to date (Athens: Heritage Papers, 1991-), 4: 168, 170, 171; Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek 5; Edward J. Cashin, Governor Henry Ellis and the Transformation of British North America (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 62-63; Alex M. Hitz, “The Earliest Settlements in Wilkes County,” Georgia Historical Quarterly 40 (winter 1956): 260-65. A Slaton family legend has it that the cattle butchered by the Loyalists belonged to Archibald Simpson, in the care of local resident John Nelson. Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek 6, 10. A frontier “cowpens” was more than merely a split rail pen. A typical cowpen of that place and period had almost all of the features of a farm and even a frontier fort. It usually included cabins, riflemen armed to hunt game, and even crops, surrounded by a broad meadow that made any assault a dangerous proposition. Andrew Pickens, in the first battle fought in South Carolina during the American Revolution, had helped to successfully use a cowpens as a defensive position at Ninety Six against these same Loyalists and others in 1775. John H. Logan, A History of the Upper Country of South Carolina from the Earliest Period to the Close of the War of Independence, 2 vols. (Charleston, S. C., 1859), 1: 152-53; John Bartram, “Diary of a Journey Through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida,” ed. Francis Harper, in Transactions of the American Philosophical Society (New Series), vol. 38 (1942), pt. 1, p. 26; Clyde R. Ferguson, “General Andrew Pickens” (Ph. D. diss., Duke University, 1960), 24-26.

⁹ Louise F. Hays, comp. "Indian Depredations, 1787-1825," 5 vols. (unpublished typescripts, Georgia Archives, Morrow, 1938), 1: 435, 2: 118, 749, 963-964; Revolutionary War pension claim of Robert Ellis, SC S 32244, Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files, 1800-1900 (National Archives microfilm M804, reel 917); Robert S. Davis, Georgians in the American Revolution (Greenville, SC: 1986), 27; "Micajah Brooks Sen.," Southern Recorder (Milledgeville), September 27, 1859; clipping from Historical Magazine in Frontier Wars Papers, 2 UU 222, Lyman C. Draper Collection; Davis, Quaker Records in Georgia, 166 n. 8.

¹⁰See Lewis Gaston Leary, The Book Peddling Parson: An Account of the Life and Works of Mason Locke Weems (Chapel Hill, NC, 1984) and John Caldwell Guilds and Caroline Collins, William Gilmore Simms and the American Frontier (Athens, Ga., 1997).

¹¹Savannah (Georgia) Georgian, May 17, May 22, June 5, June 22, 1826.

¹²Hugh McCall, The History of Georgia: Containing Brief Sketches of the Most Remarkable Events, 2 vols. (Savannah, 1811-1816), 2: 80. Compare McCall, 2: 193-204 with Andrew Pickens to Henry Lee, August 28, 1811, Thomas Sumter Papers 1 VV 107, Lyman C. Draper Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society.

¹³Nicholas J. Saunders, Alexander's Tomb: The Two Thousand Year Obsession to find the Lost Conqueror (New York: Perseus Book Group, 2006), 117.

¹⁴See the sketch of Austin Dabney by Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr. in Kenneth Coleman and Charles Stephen Gurr, eds., Dictionary of Georgia Biography (Athens, Ga., 1983), 239-40.

¹⁵Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 76, 89. Many of these stories first received widespread publication in such works for young people as A. C. Whitehead, Makes of Georgia's Fame and Name (Boston, 1913) and Howard Meriwether Lewis, Grandmother Stories from the Land of Used-to-Be (Atlanta, 1913).

¹⁶Wallace Brown, The Good Americans: The Loyalists in the American Revolution (New York, 1969), 46.

¹⁷John C. Dann, ed., The Revolution Remembered: Eyewitness Accounts of the for Independence (Chicago, 1977), xvi; Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 5, 49-50; "Homespun Yarns," Federal Union (Milledgeville), July 28, 1846. Until the Twentieth Century, the paper copies of the depositions from these claims remained buried in the files of the War Department and in local court minutes to all but researchers as intrepid as Lyman Draper. Harper, Guide to the Draper Manuscripts, 311.

¹⁸Davis, Georgians in the American Revolution, 28; Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 10, 45, 95, 113b; George Howe, History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina, 2 vols. (Columbia, 1870), 1: 659; [no author], History of Liberty Church, Wilkes County, Georgia (Richmond, Va.,

1904), 1; Robert S. Davis, "A Georgia Loyalist's Perspective of the American Revolution," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 81 (spring 1997): 119, fn. 3, 138.

¹⁹ Efforts were made in Augusta to locate the site of Elijah Clarke's battle for the town in 1760 from the 1840s to 1902 but without any particular success. Robert S. Davis, "Just Where Was the Mackay House?" Ancestoring XII (Augusta, 1987), 67-70.

²⁰ Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 5, 49-50; "From the Southern Spy," Federal Union (Milledgeville), August 22, 1837.

²¹ Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 15-19; Mary B. Warren, comp., Chronicles of Wilkes County, Georgia (Athens, Ga., 1978), 18.

²² "The Battle of Kettle Creek," Atlanta (Georgia) Constitution, April 19, 1886.

²³ Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 51.

²⁴ Ibid., 83-89, 127-28; "Macon Society News," Atlanta (Georgia) Constitution, May 20, 1900; [no title], *Atlanta Georgian and News*, October 10, 1911; "Mrs. Robert E. Park's Address to Daughters of Revolution," November 8, 1900, "Magnificent Shaft to Mark Kettle Creek Battlefield," The Constitution (Atlanta), February 27, 1910. Lands claimed on the creek in 1774

discredits the legend that it obtained its name from Loyalist cooking pots lost in the 1779 battle.

Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 113b n. 107.

²⁵ Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 51-53.

²⁶ Ibid, 53.

²⁷ Davis, Georgians, 29, 31.

²⁸ Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 54-57; Davis, Georgians, 29, 31. The Washington-Wilkes Museum in Washington, Georgia, does today have a shot, probably from a swivel gun, identified as found at the Kettle Creek battlefield.

²⁹ For other examples of conflict between reality and legend in Georgia history, see the articles in past issues of the Georgia Historical Quarterly by E. Merton Coulter on the Toombs Oak, the tree that owned itself, the Tait/Dooly duel, Nancy Hart, Dade County, and other Georgia legends cited in Arthur Ray Rowland and James E. Dorsey, A Bibliography of the Writings on Georgia History 1900-1970 (Spartanburg, SC, 1978), 62, 303-305.

³⁰ Rowland and Dorsey, A Bibliography, 155-56.

³¹ Louis F. Hays, Hero of Hornet's Nest: A Biography of Elijah Clark, 1733-1799 (New York, 1946); Janet Harvill Standard, comp., The Battle of Kettle Creek: A Turning Point of the American Revolution in the South (Washington, Ga., 1973).

³² David M. Sherman to author, March 21, 2004.

³³ Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 57-58. The biographies of Pickens include Alice N. Waring, The Fighting Elder: Andrew Pickens, 1739-1817 (Columbia, SC, 1962) and Clyde R. Ferguson, "General Andrew Pickens" (Ph. D. diss., Duke University, 1960).

³⁴ Robert S. Davis, "An Old Map Documents Revolutionary War Sites," Georgia Historical Quarterly, 69 (1986): 518-22.

³⁵ Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 142-52.

³⁶ Notebooks, Joseph M. Toomey Collection, Georgia Archives, Morrow, Ga.; Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 95. For information on Little Kettle Creek see Mark Gelbart, *Georgia before People: Land of the Sabertooths, Mastodons, Vampire Bats, and Other Strange Creatures* (Raleigh, 2012). The National Park Service, however, has included the Kettle Creek battle related sites in a survey of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 locations. Mathew McDaniel, "National Park Service Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Historic Preservation Study" (2002), a copy of which is in the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of

Natural Resources. For the archaeological survey see Daniel T. Elliott, "*Stirring Up a Hornet's Nest*": *The Kettle Creek Battlefield Survey* (Savannah, 2009), available on line at the Lamar Institute website at: <http://shapiro.anthro.uga.edu/Lamar/>