

BATTLE OF KETTLE CREEK

Remarks of Judge Ed Butler, Secretary General, NSSAR, principal speaker, Kettle Creek Battle ceremonies, at the Pope Center on Feb. 14, 2009, in Washington, GA.

President Towns, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. We are here today to honor the memory of the Georgia patriots who fought near here 230 years ago today. Through their courage and determination, they defeated an army with over twice as many men under arms.

The **Battle of Kettle Creek** was the most important battle of the American Revolutionary War to be fought in Georgia. The battle was fought on February 14, 1779, near this location at Battle Hill. The victory by the American Patriot Militia virtually ended the movement to remain loyal to the England among Georgians. Loyalist and neutral Georgians were no longer vocal opponents.

The Patriot force that engaged a larger Tory Militia force was led by Colonels Andrew Pickens, who later was promoted to General; John Dooly, who was later murdered by British regulars; and Elijah Clarke, who was also later promoted to General.

Andrew Pickens lead his own force of 200 militiamen and was joined by the force of 100-140 militiamen led by John Dooly. Together, these 300-340 men launched a surprise attack on the Tory force of 700 men led by Colonel James Boyd. Pickens' force circled and followed the Tory force without their knowledge until he launched the surprise attack on February 14, 1779. The encamped Tories were not wholly surprised, as their pickets fired upon approaching Patriot scouts. Thereafter, a fierce battle ensued and Tory leader James Boyd was killed. Immediately following the Tory leader's death, his force dissolved and fled the battlefield, allowing victory to the Patriots. In April of 1779 five of the Tory prisoners captured at the Battle of Kettle Creek were hanged.

The Loyalist Militia sustained losses of 40 killed and 70 captured. The Patriot Militia sustained 27 deaths, 23 wounded and 22 captured.

Elijah Clarke was born in 1733, in Anson Co., NC, and died in Augusta, GA in 1799, as a Georgian hero of the American Revolutionary War.

Clarke moved from North Carolina to Wilkes Co., GA in 1774, where he joined the Patriot Militia. During the war, he served under Andrew Pickens and alongside John Dooly in various skirmishes including the battles of Alligator Bridge and Kettle Creek.

In September 1780, Clarke led an army in an unsuccessful attempt to reclaim Augusta, GA from the British. He would later succeed in taking the city with Andrew Pickens in a two-month siege beginning on April 1781.

After the war, Clarke served in the Georgia General Assembly from 1781 to 1790. He died in Augusta, GA in 1799. He was buried in his Lincolnton State Park. Many of us will visit his grave site tomorrow morning.

Clarke's son John served as the Governor of Georgia from 1819 to 1823. Clarke County, Georgia is named in honor of Elijah Clarke.

Clarke and his actions, along with those of Francis Marion, the “swamp fox”, served as one of the sources for the fictional character of Benjamin Martin in *The Patriot*, a motion picture released in 2000.

Source: *Wikipoedia*