

# Heroes of the Hornet's Nest: Elijah Clarke & John Dooly

Two of Georgia's most noteworthy heroes of the American Revolution -- Colonels Elijah Clarke and John Dooly -- rest today on the land where over 230 years ago they "stung like hornets," routing British, Loyalists and Indians alike with their fiery swarms while keeping Georgia true to the Patriot cause.

On the shore of Clarks Hill Lake in Lincoln County's Elijah Clark State Park are the graves of Patriot Gen. Elijah Clarke and his wife Hannah Harrington Clarke. A short distance away at Dooly Springs is the site where Loyalists, afraid of his power and opposed to his cause, murdered in his home Patriot Col. John Dooly, the first Commander of the Wilkes County Georgia Militia.

Elijah Clark State Park maintains a renovated log cabin, furnished and equipped much like a Georgia backcountry home of circa 1780. Living history displays, tours, and demonstrations offer the opportunity to revisit lives of two of Georgia's Revolutionary Heroes.

The Park's Nature Trail is named for Hannah Harrington Clarke. She served the Revolutionary cause as a courageous and steady Patriot, refusing to run from the dangers of war. Pillaging British and Loyalists burned her home, destroying all her belongings and leaving her to care for eight children as best she could. Once Loyalists stole her horse as she attempted to reach her wounded husband, and another time her mount was shot from under her as she rode with two of her children to escape. Hannah Clarke lived to the age of ninety and now rests in a grave beside her husband.

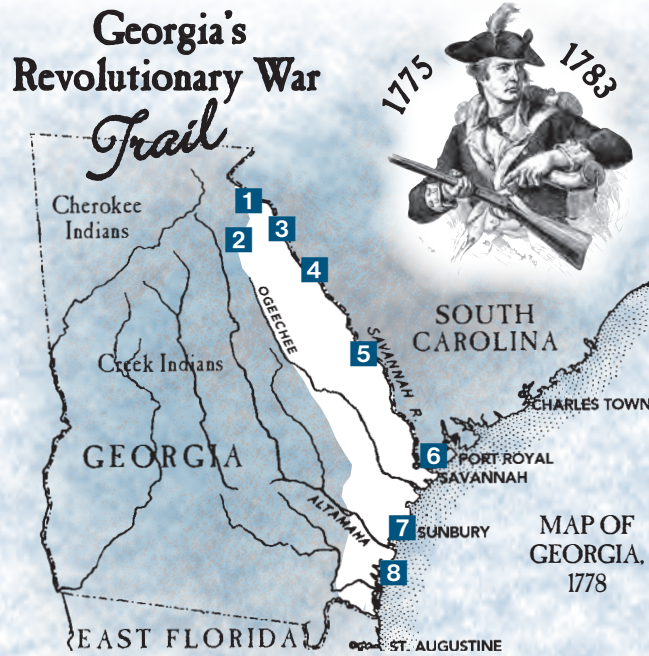


## Annual Celebration of "Heroes of the Hornets Nest"

Second Friday in February  
Elijah Clark State Park  
Lincoln County, GA  
GPS: N33.856 W81.466



[www.gasocietysar.org](http://www.gasocietysar.org)  
Georgia Society Sons  
of the American Revolution



## American Revolution in Georgia

- 1 Elbert County — Fight at Van(n)'s Creek  
GPS: N34.162 W82.744
- 2 Wilkes County — Battle of Kettle Creek  
GPS: N33.691 W82.886
- 3 Lincoln County — Elijah Clarke & John Dooly:  
Heroes of the Hornet's Nest  
GPS: N33.856 W82.410
- 4 Augusta — Sieges of Augusta and Revolutionary  
Capital of Georgia GPS: N33.476 W81.964
- 5 Screven County — Battle of Brier Creek  
GPS: N32.811 W81.466
- 6 Savannah — Battles of Savannah,  
Royal & Revolutionary Capital of Georgia  
GPS: N32.076 W81.100
- 7 Liberty County — Sunbury, Fort Morris & Midway  
GPS: N31.764 W81.279
- 8 St. Simons Island — Frederica Naval Action  
GPS: N31.224 W81.393



*"Discovering Our Heritage  
and History"*

# "Heroes of the Hornet's Nest"

*Elijah Clarke and John Dooly*

*The Georgia backcountry was  
called "the Hornet's Nest"  
because of the stinging attacks  
made by the Patriots against the  
British, Loyalists and Indians.*



# Heroes of the Hornet's Nest

## *Elijah Clarke and John Dooly*

**E**lijah Clarke was a true frontiersman, hardy and brave, and seemingly unafraid of anything the British and their allies could offer. Undeniably Georgia's most capable and committed Revolutionary War Commander, Elijah Clarke was born in North Carolina, lived in South Carolina as a young man, and moved to the Ceded Lands of Georgia in 1774. He was elected Captain of the Wilkes County Militia to protect the settlements on Georgia's northwestern frontier from attacks by the Cherokee and Creek Indians.



Clarke

In charge of the Wilkes County Militia on Patriot Col. Andrew Pickens' left flank, Lt. Col. Clarke was a dynamic fighter in the Battle of Kettle Creek, one of Georgia's most memorable victories during the American Revolution. On February 14, 1779, Georgia and South Carolina Patriot Militia routed the much larger Loyalist (those with allegiance to the King of England) force. The Patriot victory at Kettle Creek halted the rallying of Loyalists following the capture of Savannah, thwarted British strategic plans, and forced, for a time, the British withdrawal from Augusta.

When the Whig government in Augusta collapsed in May 1780, and with all of Georgia under British control, Clarke and some Georgians continued their fight for independence in the Carolinas. Using guerilla tactics, Clarke inflicted heavy tolls on the British and Loyalists at Wofford's Iron Works, Cedar Springs, and Musgrove's Mill. Col. Isaac Shelby reported, "ceasing in the midst of battle to look with astonishment and admiration at Clarke fighting" at Musgrove's Mill.

In September 1780, Clarke led an unsuccessful

attempt to reclaim Augusta. Less than a year later in June 1781, Clarke's Militia, as part of a larger force, were able to claim victory at Augusta and return Georgia's backcountry to the Patriots.

Elijah Clarke was a contributing factor in the Patriot success at Kings Mountain as well. Clarke was leading 700 militia and their families to safety in the Carolina mountains in October 1780, when his pursuer, British Major Patrick Ferguson, was surrounded at Kings Mountain and killed and his Loyalist force defeated by the Patriot Militia.

Besides being seriously injured several times, Clarke suffered bouts with smallpox and mumps during the Revolution. After Kings Mountain, Clarke joined Patriot Militia Gen. Thomas Sumter and in November, fought in that command at Fishdam Ford and at Blackstock's where the Patriots defeated the notorious British Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton. At Long Cane in December 1780, Clarke was wounded and carried from the battlefield. Less than three months later he was again leading his determined men, this time in a fierce engagement at Beattie's Mill.

In October 1782, Clarke fought and won his last battle, this time in Indian territory against long time adversary Loyalist Lt. Col. Thomas Waters. This victory brought an end to the Cherokee War, and along with the British evacuation of Savannah, the American Revolution was finally over in Georgia.

Clarke continued to serve in the militia after the Revolutionary War, fighting the Indians as he had done in his earlier days and rising to the rank of Brigadier General. He retired with his wife, Hannah Harrington Clarke to "Woodburn" at Grayball which was in current Lincoln County. The plantation, once owned by Thomas Waters, was awarded to Clarke by the grateful State of Georgia. Nearby Clarke County is named for the Revolutionary patriot. At his death on December 15, 1799, one day after George Wash-

ington's death, Elijah Clarke was still revered as a Georgia hero.

John Dooly, born in Virginia, but by 1771, moved to the South Carolina backcountry where he was a surveyor and merchant. When the Ceded Lands in Georgia became available, Dooly built a home, ferry, and mill in Georgia. After disaffected Indians began a campaign of terror, Dooly became the first Commander of the Wilkes County Militia. A "real Liberty man" according to a veteran some years after the war, Col. Dooly was a very competent leader of the Wilkes County Militia in numerous skirmishes with Indians and Loyalists.

On February 14, 1779, along with Clarke and Pickens, Dooly routed Loyalist Col. (James or John) Boyd's forces at Kettle Creek, a few miles from Dooly's home. Later in 1779, Dooly led his militia when the Patriots and French tried to re-take Savannah. After Charleston fell in May, 1780, Dooly took parole along with Pickens and many others.

Elijah Clark State Park encompasses the homestead where Dooly lived with his wife and children and where in 1780, he was killed by vengeful Loyalists. He was targeted because he had been an outstanding Patriot leader and was reported to be preparing to rejoin the fight when he was killed. Dooly County is named for the Revolutionary patriot.

According to legend, when Dooly was murdered in 1780, Elijah and Hannah Clarke rushed to his home to assist his family and to help with his burial on his land near Dooly Springs. Another legend says that



Georgia Patriot Nancy Hart, called "War Woman" by local Indians, was responsible for the hanging a few days later of members of the Loyalists who had martyred her kinsman, John Dooly.

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