

SS8H3 The student will analyze the role of Georgia in the American Revolution. The intent of this standard is for students to gain a better understanding of the events that led to the Revolutionary War and the significant people and events of the war in Georgia.

- a. Explain the immediate and long-term causes of the American Revolution and their impact on Georgia; include the French and Indian War (Seven Years War), Proclamation of 1763, Stamp Act, Intolerable Acts, and the Declaration of Independence.

The French and Indian War

The traditional immediate and long-term causes of the Revolution did not have the same direct impact on Georgia as they did on other colonies. For example, the *French and Indian War* (1754-1763), a conflict between France and England for control of the rich fur area of the Ohio river valley, was fought far from Georgia's borders and initially had a small impact on the state. However, after the British won the French and Indian War, which was part of a larger worldwide war called the Seven Years War, they obtained Canada and all land west to the Mississippi River. Though not directly involved, Georgia's borders expanded to the St. Mary's River to the South, the Mississippi River to the West, and land around Augusta to the North. Due to the economic cost of this war, there were two important events that led to conflict between Britain and its colonies. The first was the *Proclamation of 1763*, and the second was a series of taxes, including the *Stamp Act* (1765), that led to colonial discontent.

The Proclamation of 1763

The Proclamation of 1763 was issued by King George III and forbade colonists from settling lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. The Proclamation was issued in order to stabilize relations between Great Britain and the Native American tribes who lived in the area. Because the British were virtually bankrupt from the Seven Years War, they could not afford to fight another costly war with the Native Americans over territory. However, the colonists, many of whom participated in the war in hopes of gaining new land, were extremely upset by the Proclamation of 1763. In fact, many simply ignored the Proclamation and settled the new lands anyway.

The people of Georgia did not share the same reactions to the Proclamation of 1763 for two reasons. First, the young Georgia colony was small and most colonists

were still nestled on the Georgia coastline, a major trade route. Secondly, Georgia gained land and resources from the Spanish and their Native American allies after the French and Indian war. This new land was located south of the line drawn by the Proclamation of 1763, opening new coastal land for Georgians to settle.

The Stamp Act

Due to the debt that the war caused the British government, members of Parliament believed that the colonists should be responsible for taking on some of the financial burden by paying new taxes. Up to that point, the British government had traditionally left the role of tax collection to the Colonial Assemblies. Being directly taxed for the first time, without colonial "representation" in the British Parliament, led to protests throughout the colonies.

One of the earliest and most controversial taxes was the Stamp Act of 1765. This act put a direct tax on items that were commonly used by almost every colonist, including newspapers, licenses, and legal documents. Reaction to this act in the colonies was swift and often violent. Colonial leaders made formal speeches against the act and joined to form the Stamp Act Congress. Average citizens reacted more violently and protested by hanging effigies of Parliamentary leaders and royal governors, attacking the homes of British officials, and tarring and feathering tax collectors. Some of these citizens, mainly from the middle and upper classes, joined a group called the "**Sons of Liberty**" in response to these taxes. Eventually, due to colonial pressure, the British Parliament repealed the Stamp Act, but issued others. These acts caused even more discontent and set the stage for the Revolutionary War.

Due to Georgia's small population, strong royal governor, James Wright, and economic dependence on Great Britain, its response to the Stamp Act was not as violent as it was in other colonies. In fact, Georgia was the only colony where a small number of stamps were sold. Nonetheless, there was some resistance to the Stamp Act. Several prominent Georgians spoke out against this act and on November 6, 1765, a group affiliated with the Sons of Liberty called the "**Liberty Boys**" was established to oppose the Stamp Act.

The Intolerable Acts

The 1773 the **Boston Tea Party** took place in Massachusetts as a protest of the Tea Act, another tax created to raise revenue for the British government. In response to the destruction of the tea, the British issued what the colonist called the *Intolerable Acts* which included four punitive acts designed to punish the

Massachusetts colonist for the Boston Tea Party. The British refused to repeal these acts until the tea was paid for. Under these acts the British closed the port of Boston, the Massachusetts colonists could not hold town meetings unless authorized by the Royal Governor, and any British official that committed a capital crime was sent back to England to stand trial. The final act made such an impression on the colonist that its prohibition was written into the **U.S. Bill of Rights**. This act, called the **Quartering Act**, forced the citizens of Massachusetts to house and feed British soldiers at their own expense.

The colonial reaction to these acts was even more intense than their reaction to the Stamp Act. These acts unified many colonial leaders in a belief that the British Parliament was violating their natural and constitutional rights. Due to their outrage, 12 colonies sent representatives to the **First Continental Congress** where the members agreed to support a colonial boycott of British goods and pledged military support to Massachusetts if they were attacked by the Great Britain.

Once again, Georgia's response to the Intolerable Acts was minimal due to the colony's divided loyalties. Royal governor James Wright was instrumental in slowing down the reactions of the Georgia colonist; however, those outraged by the Intolerable Acts and loyal to the patriot cause, such as Noble W. Jones and Peter Tondee, began to gather strength in Georgia. Nevertheless, Georgia was the only colony that did not send a representative to the First Continental Congress.

The Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence was the document officially declaring the colonies' independence from Great Britain. It was adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. The declaration was drafted by Thomas Jefferson.

By this point in Georgia, Royal Governor James Wright had been ousted from power and the colony was under patriot rule. Three Georgians, *Button Gwinnett*, *Lyman Hall*, and *George Walton*, attended the Second Continental Congress and signed the Declaration of Independence.

Note: When examining the signatures on the Declaration of Independence, one may notice that, almost symbolizing the separation Georgia had from the other colonies throughout much of the early Revolutionary Period, the signatures' of Georgia's three representatives are isolated on the far left hand corner of the document.

Students should understand that the Declaration of Independence is a document that is divided into three parts. The first part, the **Preamble**, explains to the

reader about the natural rights of all people (though this has been debated) and includes the famous quote "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The second part includes a list of grievances against King George including "imposing taxes without our consent" and "quartering large bodies of troops among us." The final part is the actual "declaration of independence" and is where the colonists officially severed ties from the mother country.

Note: Students should also understand that the patriots who signed this document, including John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin, put their lives on the line. Had Britain won the war, these men would more than likely have been executed as traitors to their country.

The Loyalist

The *Loyalists*, as their name implies, were loyal to England and did not want the colonies to break away from the mother country. Many influential colonial Georgians remained loyal to England including Royal Governor James Wright, land owner Thomas Brown, and minister John J. Zubby. Some, such as Brown, took up arms against their fellow Georgians who sided with the patriots. Most of the loyalist landowners forfeited their land to the patriots and left after the war.

Note: Loyalists were also called **Tories**.

Elijah Clarke

One of the more well-known Georgia patriots was Lieutenant Colonel Elijah Clarke (1742-1799). Clarke was a poor farmer from North Carolina who moved to Georgia around 1773. Interestingly, his name was listed on a petition to support the King in 1774, but he quickly joined the Georgia militia when the fighting broke out in the colony. Early in the war, Clarke fought both the Creek and Cherokee who had sided with the British.

Clarke's most famous act was his leadership during the patriot victory at the *Battle of Kettle Creek*. During this battle, Clarke led a charge against loyalist troops that helped win the battle and boost morale for the Georgia patriots. After this battle, Clarke led guerilla fighting against British troops in Georgia and South Carolina. Based on his military accomplishments, Clarke County was named in his honor.

Note: After the war, Clarke led a checkered life. In 1789, he tried to create his own country, called the "**Trans-Oconee Republic**," after defeating the Creek

Indians in present day Walton County. He was also involved with the **Yazoo Land Fraud**, and became entangled in two plots to illegally invade East Florida. Clarke died in 1799, discredited and almost bankrupt. Nonetheless, despite his questionable actions, Clarke's descendants continued to be involved in Georgia politics, including his son John Clark, who became governor of the state. For more information about Elijah Clarke his impact on had on Georgia's Revolutionary War effort see:

The New Georgia Encyclopedia: "Elijah Clarke"

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-668&hl=y>

Austin Dabney

Austin Dabney (1765-1830) was a slave who fought under Elijah Clarke during the Battle of Kettle Creek. Dabney served in the place of his master Richard Aycock, who used Dabney as a substitute in order not to fight himself. Dabney is thought to be the only African American who fought at the Battle of Kettle Creek. He was an artilleryman and was severely wounded during the fighting. One of his fellow soldiers, Giles Harris, took Dabney to his home and cared for Dabney while he recovered. Harris's kindness fostered a close bond between Dabney and the Harris family, who Dabney continued to work for after he was granted his freedom. Dabney even paid for Giles Harris' son's college expenses at the University of Georgia.

Due to his bravery during the Battle of Kettle Creek, the state of Georgia paid for Dabney's freedom from his former master. The state also gave Dabney a grant for 50 acres of land for his service during the Revolution; the only African-American to receive one. Later, Dabney received an additional 112 acres from the state and a federal "invalid pension" of 60 dollars a month (which was increased to 96 dollars a month) due to the wound he received at Kettle Creek.

For more information about Austin Dabney see:

The New Georgia Encyclopedia: "Austin Dabney"

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-3298>

Nancy Hart

Nancy Hart was a Georgia patriot who is most well-known for capturing and killing several loyalist soldiers who invaded her cabin during the Revolution. With a combination of bravery and deception, she was able to take the rifles of the men who barged in to her home. Besides this famous escapade, Nancy Hart was known for being a six foot tall, fiery red-haired and crossed-eyed "war woman." A cousin of Revolutionary War General Daniel Morgan, Hart served as a patriot spy during the war and is rumored to have fought in the Battle of Kettle Creek. Hart County

was created and named in her honor in 1853. In addition to the county, Hart has been honored in Georgia by both a town and lake being named after her, as well as a Georgia Highway.

Note: As discussed in the GPS Georgia Story "Nancy Hart," there are many different versions of the Nancy Hart story. This offers teachers a great opportunity to discuss with their students how history is not always concrete series of dates and facts, but a collection of stories that need to be analyzed to gain a better understanding of what actually happened. One way to do this is to have students analyze several sources about Nancy Hart and have them develop their own version of the story based on the evidence they read.

For more information about Nancy Hart see:

The New Georgia Encyclopedia: "Nancy Hart"

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2876&sug=y>,

GPB's Georgia Stories: "The Nancy Hart Story"

http://www.gpb.org/georgiastories/story/nancy_hart_story

Georgia's Signers of the Declaration of Independence

Georgia's three signers of the Declaration of Independence were interesting individuals who had very different fates after signing one of the nations' most important documents.

Button Gwinnett

Button Gwinnett (1735-1777) was born in England and arrived in Georgia in 1765. Upon arriving in Georgia, he bought St. Catherine's Island, Mary Musgrove's former home. Gwinnett became involved in Georgia politics in 1769, though financial troubles caused him to withdraw from public life in 1773. During the Revolutionary War Period, Gwinnett reentered the political scene, and in 1776 was selected to attend the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. As a member of the Congress, he strongly supported Independence from England. Upon his return from Philadelphia, he was instrumental in the creation and passage of the **Georgia Constitution of 1777**. He also became embedded in a political rivalry with Lachlan McIntosh, which would prove to be deadly. After McIntosh publically criticized Gwinnett, Gwinnett challenged him to a duel. The duel took place in May 1777. Both men shot one another; however, Gwinnett's wounds were fatal. He died on May 19, 1777. Gwinnett County was named in his honor.

Note: Because Gwinnett died shortly after signing the Declaration of Independence, he is the signer with the fewest known signatures in existence. Due to this, Gwinnett's signature is highly sought after by autograph enthusiasts. In 2010, a letter he wrote sold for \$722,500.

Lyman Hall

Lyman Hall (1734-1790) was born in Wallingford, Connecticut. He graduated from Yale University and became an ordained minister in 1747, but after several controversies, he gave up the ministry to practice medicine. Hall moved to Georgia in 1760. Hall was the only Georgia representative in the Second Continental Congress in 1775. Though he participated in debates he abstained from voting because he did not represent the entire state. Once Gwinnett and Walton joined him in 1776, he voted for independence from England and signed the Declaration. Upon returning to Georgia, Hall was elected Governor in 1783 and was instrumental in the founding of the **University of Georgia**. Hall County was named in his honor.

George Walton

George Walton (1749?-1804) was arguably the most politically successful of Georgia's three signers. Walton was born in Virginia around 1749, though his exact year of birth is unknown. He moved to Georgia in 1769, and established himself as one of the most successful lawyers in the colony. In 1776, he was appointed as a representative to the Second Continental Congress where he signed the Declaration of Independence.

Upon returning to Georgia, Walton served in the Georgia militia and was eventually captured by the British. After being released in a prisoner exchange, Walton was elected governor. His first term was short lived, as he was elected to Congress after serving as governor for two months. Following the war, Walton served as Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, a second term as governor in 1789, as an U.S. Senator, and finally as a superior court judge. Walton died February 2, 1804. Walton County was named in his honor.

Note: A fun way to help students remember the individuals of the Revolutionary War, such as Hall, Gwinnett, and Walton, is to have them create mock "Facebook" pages for these men and women. There are several free "Facebook" templates that can be located with a simple internet search. For more information about the Georgia's signers of the Declaration of Independence see: *The New Georgia Encyclopedia*: "Button Gwinnett"

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2543&hl=y>,

The New Georgia Encyclopedia: "Lyman Hall"

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-664&hl=y>,

The New Georgia Encyclopedia: "George Walton"

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-665>

The Battle of Kettle Creek

Though the Battle of Kettle Creek was not as important as other major American victories such as Trenton, Saratoga, and Yorktown, this battle raised the morale of

the Georgia patriots, gave them much needed supplies, and set the stage for several victories in the southern back country toward the end of the Revolutionary War.

The Battle of Kettle Creek took place on February 14, 1779. The Georgia militia, led by Elijah Clarke and Thomas Dooly, attacked an encampment of 600 British Loyalist. Though outnumbered, the patriots routed the Loyalist troops, bringing a much needed victory to the patriot cause after several prior defeats. Based on their heroic actions in the battle both Clarke and Austin Dabney became Georgia heroes.

For more information about The Battle of Kettle Creek see:

The New Georgia Encyclopedia: "The Battle of Kettle Creek"

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-1088&hl=y>

The Siege of Savannah

In 1778, the British recaptured Savannah making Georgia the only colony to be officially retaken by the British during the war. In reality, there were "two" Georgia's during the war. The patriot held countryside and the British held cities of Augusta and Savannah. In October 1779, a joint force of French and patriot troops attacked Savannah in hopes of retaking the city. This attack was a dismal failure. After five days of intense shelling from French ships and patriot batteries, little damage was done to the British military but several civilians in the city were killed. When the French and American troops finally attacked the city, they were easily defeated by the British troops. When the fighting ended, over 800 allied troops were killed compared to 18 British soldiers. Savannah stayed in British hands until 1782.

Though the Siege of Savannah was a failure for the patriots, several American heroes emerged from the battle. One was Count Casimir Pulaski, a Polish nobleman who was killed leading a charge. Another hero, Sergeant William Jasper, was also killed while attacking a British position. Additionally, a group of black soldiers from Haiti heroically protected the allied retreat and saving hundreds of allied soldiers' lives in the process.

For more information about the Siege of Savannah see:

The New Georgia Encyclopedia: "The Revolutionary War in Georgia"

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2709&hl=y>,

GPB's Georgia Stories: "Savannah Under Attack"

http://www.gpb.org/georgiastories/story/savannah_under_attack