Ocmulgee
NATIONAL
MONUMENT
GEORGIA
Ocmulgee National Monument preserves the remains of an unusual concentration of Indian villages. It was the first scientifically excavated large Indian site in the United States, and one was found on the Macon Plateau. They probably inhabited central Georgia for about 5,000 years. Their distinctive grooved spear points have been found all over the United States, and one was found on the Macon Plateau. They probably inhabited central Georgia for about 5,000 years.

Shellfish Eaters (Archaic Period).—These Indians, the next group to come to this section, were attracted to the central Georgia region by beds of mussels in the rivers. They also hunted deer and bear, and with the spear and spear thrower. Because they made no pottery, but by about 500 B. C. they had learned to make crudely decorated pottery of clay mixed with grass or moss fibers. Their distinctive spear points, net sinks, and pottery have been found scattered in small camps in the Macon area. They probably left the region by about 100 B.C. Early Farmers (Swift Creek Period).—This is the third group of Indians. They lived here from about 100 B. C. until A.D. 900. They were probably the religious and political leaders of the town. There they drank the sacred cassena tea and deliberated on affairs of state. The head of the town was left open to admit light and to use as an escape for the smoke.

The restored earthlodge as seen from the museum building.

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SPANISH, ENGLISH, AND FRENCH INFLUENCE (Creek Period)

In 1540, Hernando de Soto marched through Georgia seeking gold, glory, and converts for Christianity. Within a hundred years Florida was settled, and the Creeks came under pressure from the white man. Soon, too, England settled Carolina, and France settled Louisiana. The English were the most energetic in exploring the South and were the most successful traders. By 1690, a Carolinian had established a trading post at Ocmulgee Old Fields, and the Creeks had moved back there to be near the glamorous goods the trader offered in exchange for deer skins. The copper bells, steel knives, guns, cloth, beads, mirrors, and rum of European trade soon began to replace native Indian craft, and the life of the Indian itself was changed from that of an independent farmer to a hunter dependent on the trader for many necessities. The remains of the Trading Post, with the huts of the Indians around it, have been excavated. Burials of the Indians are preserved just as they were buried over 200 years ago.

The Creeks soon became involved in the rivalries of Spain, England, and France for the possession of the New World. In 1703, Col. James Moore led 50 Carolinians and 1,000 Creek warriors from Ocmulgee to destroy the Apalachee settlements in Florida, from which the Spanish obtained much of their food. In 1713, Emperor Brim of the Creeks decided to drive the English out of Carolina and then attack the Spanish and French in turn. The resulting "Yamassee War" was unsuccessful, and the Creeks were forced to move west. Ocmulgee Old Fields was deserted, but the Creeks claimed it until 1821, when they finally ceded it to the United States.

THE MONUMENT

Ocmulgee National Monument, established in 1936, is located on the eastern edge of Macon, Ga., on U.S. 80 and 129. It consists of 638.48 acres in the Macon Plateau area and 43 acres in the detached Lamar area in the river swamps, 3 miles below Macon. A paved road leads from the monument entrance to the museum and administration building and to the Mounds and the Trading Post areas. The detached Lamar area is not open to the public at present.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

You may visit the monument from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. The 25-cent admission fee to the museum and earthlodge is waived for children under 12 years of age and groups of school children 18 years of age or under when accompanied by adults assuming responsibility for their safety and orderly conduct. The museum contains exhibits which help to explain the archaeological features of the monument. Organized groups are given special service if advance arrangements are made with the superintendent. Neither picnic nor camping facilities are available.

ADMINISTRATION

Ocmulgee National Monument is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Macon, Ga., is in immediate charge.