About Your Visit

Ocmulgee National Monument is on the east side of Macon, Ga., on U.S. 80. Main access is from Int. 75 to Int. 16 east, at the north end of Macon. Take the first or second exit from Int. 16 and follow the signs one mile to the park entrance.

A detached area, called Lamar, is located in the swampy three miles below Macon and is not presently open to the public. The park is open daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with extended summer hours; closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. The park has a small picnic area for use by visitors. The closed camping area is eight miles west, away of Macon.

The visitor center houses a major archeological museum. Tours of the Earthlodge, a ceremonial building with an original floor 1,000 years old, leave from the museum.

The Temple Mount drive, a half-mile long, leads to the three largest mounds of the Macon Plateau and the site of the American Revolution. Thanks to the patient research of modern archeology, the lives of the people who built these mounds and lived in this area from about A.D. 900 to 1100 unfold for visitors on the grounds and in the museum of Ocmulgee National Monument.

Yet even a thousand years ago the Indians who built these mounds did not arrive in a virgin wilderness. They were neither the first nor the last people to occupy this spot.

For more than 10,000 years men have sought their habitat, primarily on the coast. They built these mounds and lived in this area from about A.D. 900 to 1100 unfold for visitors on the grounds and in the museum of Ocmulgee National Monument.

Hunts and Gatherers (Paleo-Indian and Archaic Periods)

The first known trace of man on the Macon Plateau consists of a fluted stone spear point of a type dated about 11,000 years ago. This is one of the earliest public buildings in the United States. People who built these mounds and lived in this area from about A.D. 900 to 1100 unfold for visitors on the grounds and in the museum of Ocmulgee National Monument.

Ocmulgee National Monument, Georgia

"on the east bank of the river lie the famous Ocmulgee fields where are yet conspicuous very wonderful remains of the power and grandeur of the ancients of this part of America, in rows of a capital town and settlement, as vast as tillled hills, terraces, etc. . . ."

The Travels of William Bartram, 1774

Today visitors can still see the "artificial fields" and other evidence of the ancient town which intrigued Bartram when he passed by at the time of the American Revolution. Thanks to the patient research of modern archeology, the lives of the people who built these mounds and lived in this area from about A.D. 900 to 1100 unfold for visitors on the grounds and in the museum of Ocmulgee National Monument.

We do know that about this time the world's climate began growing warmer. The glaciers of the ice age melted back dramatically, and many of the large animals that flourished during glacial times became extinct. In a relatively short time the environment of the East became much as it was when the European explorers arrived. For many thousands of years the Indians lived as hunters and gatherers with the resources of the land. Prehistoric Indian crafts and life are held on the grounds throughout the summer season.

In the Mother Earth Environmental Study Area (ESA) the natural and cultural environments of the past and present are interpreted and interpreted through an ESA guide, which can be obtained at the visitor center. Groups should make reservations in advance.

Administration

Ocmulgee National Monument, established in 1916, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Box 4186, Macon, Ga. 31208, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Depart­ment of the Interior has responsibility for most of our na­tional parks and historical places, whose address is Box 4186, Macon, GA 31208, is U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Box 4186, Macon, GA 31208, is in immediate charge.

The Department assumes no legal or moral respon­sibility and works to bring back land to its forested condition in the last centuries of our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for preserving historic preservation and preservation of our land and water resources, preserving our fish and wildlife, protecting the environment and controlling our natural areas and parks, and protecting our natural and cultural resources.

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National Park Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Cover:

"The oldest step of the user" (modern English, popular, 1976) and "Ocmulgee Earthlodge, dates to 1976, one of the Ocmulgee National Monument's Visitor Center signs."

Early Farmers (Woodland Period)

Agriculture, and associated religious beliefs and social customs, changed all this. The impetus for this dramatic economic shift came from Mexico. Agriculture spread rapidly throughout most of what is now the eastern United States, arriving at Ocmulgee between 1000 and 500 B.C.

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During this time the custom of burial beneath rounded mounds spread widely through the eastern United States. In some phases this burial custom reached elaborate heights, with quantities of ceremonial goods placed with the dead; in this part of Georgia, however, the practice was carried on at a simpler level. Burial mounds do occur in this general area, but none of these were built by these people within the present extent of Ocmulgee National Monument.
Macon Farmers (Macon Plateau Period)

While this relatively simple village life continued over the centuries in the Ocmulgee area, a more complex way of life based on more intensive and efficient corn agriculture crystallized in the heartland of this region. The depopulation in the Macon Plateau Period, about 900 A.D. one such group moved into the Tennessee River and into the Southeast, and north as Wisconsin. Other groups spread along the coast, and villages grew large enough to be called towns.

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Arts and crafts became more specialized, society more complex, and religious ceremonialism more intricate. The population explosion in the heartland of this Mississippian culture led to expansion and colonization. One large town appeared as far north as Wisconsin. Other groups spread along the coast, and villages grew large enough to be called towns.

This effigy bottle from the Macon Plateau Period displays the head of a bird. The surrounding peoples, their way of life irrevocably altered, now assumed the dominant role in middle Georgia and beyond. Although their settlements and villages were numerous and widespread, they used the old townsite on the Macon Plateau only occasionally. One of their major centers, however, was the Lamar site, only about 3 miles away in the swamps along the Ocmulgee River. This village contained two temple mounds and was surrounded by a stockade. At least some of these people were the direct ancestors of the Creek Indians who held most of Georgia and northern Alabama at the time of European contact, and who were to play a vital role in the birth of the United States and the expansion of its westward to the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers. As early as 1690 an English trading post was operating at Ocmulgee alongside the important Lower Creek Trading Path which crossed the Ocmulgee River here. And a few years later warriors joined Col. James Moore here to launch an attack against the Spanish mission settlements of northwest Florida in 1703. A few years later the Creeks rose up in turn against the French, but were defeated and forced to withdraw westward to the Flint and Ocmulgee Rivers. Although from time to time some of them returned to the Ocmulgee, with the birth of the United States and the expansion of its coasts and began to thrust inland in what would become a struggle for mastery of the Southeast. The expedition of Hernando de Soto crossed parts of Georgia, giving a foretaste of what was to follow. Colonizers from Spain, France, and England settled on the Atlantic and gulf coasts and began to thrust inland in what would become a struggle for mastery of the Southeast. The expedition of Hernando de Soto crossed parts of Georgia, giving a foretaste of what was to follow. Colonizers from Spain, France, and England settled on the Atlantic and gulf coasts and began to thrust inland in what would become a struggle for mastery of the Southeast. The expedition of Hernando de Soto crossed parts of Georgia, giving a foretaste of what was to follow. Colonizers from Spain, France, and England settled on the Atlantic and gulf coasts and began to thrust inland in what would become a struggle for mastery of the Southeast. The expedition of Hernando de Soto crossed parts of Georgia, giving a foretaste of what was to follow. Colonizers from Spain, France, and England settled on the Atlantic and gulf coasts and began to thrust inland in what would become a struggle for mastery of the Southeast. The expedition of Hernando de Soto crossed parts of Georgia, giving a foretaste of what was to follow. Colonizers from Spain, France, and England settled on the Atlantic and gulf coasts and began to thrust inland in what would become a struggle for mastery of the Southeast.