About Your Visit
Ocmulgee National Monument is on the east edge of Macon, Ga., on U.S. 80 east. Main access is from Int. 75 to to 16 east, at the north end of Macon. Take the 1st or second exit from Int. 75 and follow the signs one mile to the park entrance.

A detached area, called Lamar, is located in the swamps 3 miles below Macon and is not generally open to the public. The park is open daily 8 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 closest camping area is 8 miles away, west of Macon.

The visitor center houses a major archaeological museum. Tours of the Earthlodge, a restored ceremonial building with an original floor 1,000 years old, leave from the museum. An array of solar collectors for a solar heating and cooling system is adjacent to the southeast corner of the visitor center.

The Temple Mound drive, a half-mile long, leads to the three largest mounds of the Macon Plateau period and the site of the British Colonial Trading Post. These features may also be approached by a walking trail which connects with the mile-long Okefora Trail, where swamp and forest ecology can be observed at the Walnut Creek Interpretive demonstrations of southeastern Indian crafts and life are held on the grounds throughout the summer season.

Administration
Ocmulgee National Monument, established in 1936, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The superintendent, whose address is 1207 Emory Highway, Macon, Ga. 31201, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the public interest. The Department provides for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation; protects our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical sites and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department conserves our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the public interest. It also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in lands formerly under U.S. administration.

National Park Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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 the country, in ruins of a capital town and settlement, as vast artificial hills, terraces, etc., etc." —The Travels of William Bartram, 1791

Today visitors can still see the "artificial hills" and other evidences 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 archaeologists, the lives of the people who built these mounds and lived in this town from about A.D. 900 to 1100 unfolding for visitors on the ground is the message 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 livelihood here, where the Ocmulgee River passes from the red clay land of the rolling plateau to the sandy flat lands of the coastal plain. This is an area where diverse habitats meet and where the environment can cause a richness of plant and animal life. Within a short distance the river has rapids, channels, and ponds. There are wooded bottoms and swamps, pine woods and deciduous upland forests. The resources here which man could use were varied and plentiful.

Palo-Indian and Archaic Periods

The first known trace of man on the Macon Plateau consists of a round stone spear point of a type dating before 10,000 B.C. This site is about 1,000 B.C. Squash and nuts and, somewhat later, corn and beans were planted in moderate amounts. Gardening was not yet practiced, although it was practiced in the same general area, although not in the same general area. Yet even a thousand years ago the Indians who

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 through the United States, what is now the eastern United States, arriving at Ocmulgee between 1000 and 900 B.C. Squash and nuts and, somewhat later, corn and beans were planted in moderate amounts. Gardening was not yet practiced, although it was practiced in the same general area, although not in the same general area. Yet even a thousand years ago the Indians who

During this time the custom of burial beneath rounded earthen mounds spread widely through the eastern United States. In some places 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 them were built by people within the present extent of Ocmulgee National Monument.

Cover: The original floor of the Matisse mansion—chapel, parlor and bedrooms—remains intact. Edward O. W. King, architect, designed the Palladian-inspired King-Matisse house in 1923, one of the earliest public buildings in North America.
Early Mississippian Period (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 intensive corn agriculture crystallized in the central Mississippi Valley. Fields replaced gardens, tree villages grew large enough to be called towns. Art 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 up the Mississippi, beyond the Ohio and into the Ohio basin, beyond the Ohio and into the Ohio basin. In early historic times, having the flat-topped appearance of the temple mounds, with a set of steps leading up the rear of this platform, and around the walls of the building is a raised clay bench with 47 more terraces, providing access to the flat tops where ceremonial buildings were erected. These temples were larger than the houses but built in much the same manner.

At several points within the village still another kind of structure was built. These were circular, heavily framed, and covered with earth. The best preserved of these earth lodges (shown in the drawing on the opposite column) has been reexcavated. It is entered through a long tunnel. Opposite the door is a raised clay platform shaped like a ceremonial hearth. There are three seats at the rear of this platform, and around the walls of the building is a raised clay bench with 47 more terraces. In the center of the building is a large sweat lodge. The 50 or so individuals who used this temple probably were the town's religious and political leaders whose decisions affected the lives of the entire community.

Although the previous inhabitants built no burial mounds at Ocmulgee, these people did construct one at the western edge of the town and buried at least some of their dead there. In design, the mound differed from the rounded shape of earlier times, having the flat-topped appearance of the temple mounds, with a set of steps leading up the side. The elaborate nature of the effigies in some of the graves indicates that those buried here were of high rank.

Late Mississippian Period (Lamar Period)

This bowl with designs incised on its upper surface depicts a human head.

Plateau Period.

From the Macon Plateau around 900 A.D. one such group moved into the region thus became an isolated outpost of the Mississippian culture. The Macon Plateau people did not expand their holdings but they began to adopt some of the ways of their predecessors. Finally their civilization entered a period of decline. The reason for this disap-pearance from the Macon Plateau around A.D. 1100 is unknown, but after that time the town and the mounds fell into disuse and ruin.

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 parts of Alabama in early historic times, and who were to play a vital role in the last pages of American history.

Historic Contact (Creek Period)

In 1540, new intruders appeared in the Creek country. The expedition of Hernando de Soto crossed parts of Georgia, giving a foretaste of what was to follow—Conquistadors 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 Indian could not escape this import. Disease, often traveling far in advance of settlement, reduced their ranks. The desire for European trade goods grew to a need as he became enmeshed in the European trade. He was isolated and he became more and more hemmed in. He was ultimately drawn into the European power struggle, both as an opponent and ally.

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 thousand Creek 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 more rebellion, but were defeated and forced to withdraw westward to the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers and into Alabama, although from time to time some of them returned to the Ocmulgee. With the birth of the United States and the expansion of its people, the Creek came under relentless pressure. Bit by bit their lands were signed away in treaties, and the remnants of the Creeks were removed to the Oklahoma Territory, where they remain today. The treaty which diverted them to their last lands at Ocmulgee was signed in 1826. Four years after the settlement of Macon marked the arrival of yet another culture at the ancient Ocmulgee Fields.

For Your Safety—Mound slopes and steep banks are dangerous. Please use the marked trails. Vehicles must be parked only in designated parking areas.

Atlanta Mound
Macon Mound
Summerfield Mound
Gorumfield Mound
Lamar Mound
Great Temple Mound
Koze Mound
P县K Mills Mound
Merrill Mound
Marion Mound
Mound Slope
This effigy bottle from the same period depicts a human head.