

OCMULGEE RIVER CORRIDOR SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY
CULTURAL AND HISTORIC CONTEXT REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cultural and Historic Context	1
Introduction	1
Background	2
History Prior to European Contact	3
Paleoindian Period (10,000–8,000 BCE)	3
Archaic Period (8000–1000 BCE)	4
Woodland Period (1000 BCE–1000 CE)	6
Mississippian Period (1000–1540 CE)	7
History After European Contact	10
European Exploration and Expansion (1500–1732 CE)	10
Cultural and Linguistic Note	12
Early Encounters between American Indians and Spanish Explorers in Ocmulgee Region	14
Trade and Resistance	15
Colonial and Revolutionary War Period (1733–1783)	19
Foundation of Georgia and Westward Expansion	19
Early Republic and American Expansion Period (1783–1821)	21
American Indian Removal, Antebellum, Civil War, Reconstruction Period (1821–1900)	23
Growth and Depression Period (1900–1941)	30
World War II to Present Period (1942–Present)	34
References	42

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CULTURAL AND HISTORIC CONTEXT

Introduction

Congress directed the National Park Service (NPS) to investigate the national significance of the Ocmulgee River corridor, an area of 50 river miles from Macon to Hawkinsville, Georgia, and encompassing portions of Bibb, Bleckley, Houston, Pulaski, and Twiggs Counties, as a potential new unit of the national park system. No additional direction was given to guide the study on a particular time or provide an east or west boundary for the river corridor. This report, therefore, presents a broad overview of the history and cultural resources within and near the 50-river-mile study area. This chapter additionally contains topics, themes, and resources identified in early consultation with representatives of American Indian tribes, land managers, activists, scholars, landowners, and other stakeholders. In addition to consultation, the study team identified cultural resources through a review of available scholarship and archeological data. As guided by the special resource study process, the NPS study team did not conduct any original research relating to resources as part of this study. Rather, the study team analyzed available reports, oral histories, and other documentation and scholarship for this broad cultural and historic context. The information presented in this document will be used as a basis for understanding the study area during its national significance evaluation through the special resource study process.

While there are no national historic landmarks in the study area, there are, however, properties that have federal protection and/or national recognition within the study area. Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park, a unit of the National Park Service, is located on the Macon Plateau, a flattened hill once part of the ancient Ocmulgee River east terrace (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014) on the bank of the Ocmulgee River, east of downtown Macon in Bibb County. The park comprises archeological features on the Macon Plateau at two sites, the Macon Plateau site (9BI1) and the Lamar site (9BI2). The park was expanded under the 2019 John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act (P.L. 116-9) to 2,800 acres, most within the Ocmulgee Old Fields Traditional Cultural Property (TCP), though land acquisition has not yet occurred (New South Associates 2020; Wheeler 2007). Portions of Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, Robins Air Force Base, Echeconnee Creek Wildlife Management Area, Ocmulgee Wildlife Management Area and Public Fishing Area, and Oaky Woods Wildlife Management Area are also included in the study area (Georgia Department of Natural Resources 2020; Robins Air Force Base 2020; Day and Klingelhofer 2019; USFWS 2018). Finally, ancestors of American Indian communities once owned Bibb, Bleckley, Houston, Pulaski, and Twiggs Counties, particularly Creek communities and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (Butler 2020).

This section briefly describes the major chronological periods along with some of these properties' histories. An evaluation of the national significance of cultural resources within the study area will be discussed in another section.

Background

The Ocmulgee River corridor has had about 17,000 years of continuous human habitation from the Paleoindian period to the modern day (NPS 2019; Day and Klingelhofer 2019; New South Associates 2018; Wheeler 2007). During the majority of this time, American Indians moved through and lived in this landscape before contact with Europeans in the 16th century (Day and Klingelhofer 2019). Contact with Europeans drastically changed American Indians' way of life, but there was also continuity among the change. This contact additionally resulted in the creation of written records and descriptions of American Indians from an outsider's perspective. The authors of these documents, as outsiders with a different worldview, would not have truly understood American Indian cultures, relationships, or worldview. The salient prejudices of these descriptions, however, still influence research and the way that precontact and postcontact American Indians are described and interpreted (Wendt 2020; Dunbar-Ortiz 2015).

Precontact Native peoples did not leave behind written records; therefore, archaeology, anthropology, ethnohistory, and other academic fields and scientific techniques are often used to understand their culture and way of life. These academic fields, however, can be limited based on preservation and methodology, technology, researcher cultural bias, and research focus. It is an archeological practice to refer to these precontact Native peoples and their associated sites by the names of the archeologically identified cultural or ceramic phases. But these archeologically derived names are arbitrary and likely bear little to no resemblance as to how Native peoples would have experienced or described their own cultures. There is also variation among scholars in identifying beginning and ending dates for the major periods of cultural and historical development, and much of this variation occurs in the precontact periods.

Precontact American Indians had other means by which they preserved their history, such as through storytelling, art, and tradition, and the ethnohistories and oral histories of descendant people capture some of these traditions that cannot be accessed through archeology. A key element of the Ocmulgee River corridor is the living connection between descendant populations of Native peoples and their ancestors. Postcontact "Creek Indians" is a term applied by English traders to an amalgamation of Native peoples (Countryman 2000) and others tribes with various languages, dialects, or tribal towns (*etvlwv*) (Lee 2014). Both the Creek Indians and their descendants maintained oral histories and traditions of their ancestors who lived in the Ocmulgee River corridor, specifically the Macon Plateau area, before European contact. Other oral history accounts link Creek peoples with the precontact peoples who built the Mississippian period mounds (Swanton 1922). The oral history accounts include a migration story in descendant Creek oral histories such as told by Phillip Deere, a Muscogee (Creek) medicine man (Phillip Deere n.d.) and excerpts from oral histories by Brian OnTheHill in Lee (2014) linking Creek peoples to the Mississippian period peoples. Archeological evidence largely supports a connection between the Mississippian period mound-building people and the postcontact Creek peoples as well (Pauketat and Alt 2015).

Oral histories from Creek descendant peoples indicate continued connections with their ancestors, possibly to mound-building ancestors of the Mississippian period. Information from these oral histories include observations on the similarity of organization and layout of

Mississippian mounds and village space to the organization and layout of descendant Creek communities (Lee 2014; Bartram 1791) as noted by Melissa Harjo, Muscogee (Creek), Quassarte #2 Tribal Town, Bird Clan (2019), Gano Perez, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, New Tulsa Tribal Ground, Tiger Clan (2019) and Emman Spain, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Thlewahlee Tribal Town, and Alligator Clan (2019) in Lee (2014). Finally, descendant Creek people have understood the importance of the Macon Plateau and the Ocmulgee River corridor as the place where their ancestors first “sat down” or confederated after migrating to the east as recounted by Raelynn Butler, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Peach Ground Tribal Town, Raccoon Clan (2019). The tribes carried this heritage with them as they were forcefully removed from their homeland along *Nene estemerku* (Road of Misery), also known as the Trail of Tears, or as they escaped removal (Odette Freeman and Brian OnTheHill in Lee 2014).

Descendant Creek communities for the Ocmulgee River corridor today include the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Kialegee Tribal Town, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, Poarch Creek Indians, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and Seminole Tribe of Florida (New South Associates 2020). Other tribes with special interest in the Ocmulgee River corridor include the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians (Hunt 2020; New South Associates 2020). Where possible, their perspectives on Native peoples who lived on the Macon Plateau and the Ocmulgee River corridor are included in this chapter. In some cases, Native tradition, European written records, and European-American scholarship intersect and support each other. In other areas they do not, due to a lack of nuance, language barriers, misunderstanding, or mischaracterization.

HISTORY PRIOR TO EUROPEAN CONTACT

Paleoindian Period (10,000–8,000 BCE¹)

The populating of North America is believed to have occurred sometime around 17,000 years ago (Wheeler 2007), either through an overland route, an ocean route, or a combination of both (Miller, Smallwood, and Tune 2017). The arrival of the people in North America initiated what we know as the Paleoindian cultural period. These people lived in small, nomadic social units and relied on hunting of megafauna and gathering of wild plants to sustain them (New South Associates 2018; Brewer and Hammerstein 1991) as they explored and colonized the new continent (Wheeler 2007). These peoples occupied a wide area of the United States (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991), including the Ocmulgee river area. The first Paleoindian Clovis spear point in the Southeast was found during the “New Deal” excavations at Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park, and it was found with good stratigraphic context, establishing a relative age for Clovis points in the region. More Paleoindian projectile points have been found since the New

1. The dates of period headings through the Mississippian period come from the 2020 Historic Resource Study by New South Associates. These dates, as they note, are arbitrary and contentious but are used by archeologists to describe the long-term cultural changes that occurred in the eastern United States. New South Associates use the designations of BCE (before Common Era) and CE (Common Era) rather than B.C. (before Christ) and AD (anno Domini). This report will also use BCE and CE.

Deal excavations, but they have not been found in situ or with good stratigraphic context (New South Associates 2020; Anderson, Smallwood, and Miller 2015).

Dates for the arrival of Paleoindian peoples in the southeastern United States vary significantly, as little archeological material of these people has survived in the Southeast (New South Associates 2020). Some scholars support earlier dates such as 13,500 BCE (Day and Klingelhofer 2019), while later dates (ca. 12,000 BCE) are favored by others, such as Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park (NPS 2019). A brief discussion of dating the arrival of Paleoindian people in the Southeast can be found in The New South Associates (2018) draft of the OCMU Historic Resources Survey and in the 2017 Southeast Archeological Conference paper, “Five Big Questions for the Paleoindian and Early Archaic Southeast” by Miller, Smallwood, and Tune (2015).

Paleoindian peoples likely used the Macon Plateau, a flattened hill once part of the ancient Ocmulgee River east terrace (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014), as a hunting ground or for temporary habitation (Wheeler 2007). In almost all of the material culture recovered at Paleoindian archeological sites on the plateau, there are stone tools, such as projectile points (including datable Clovis points), knives, burins, and scrapers, (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Fairbanks 1956). These lithic tools were made from outcroppings of high-quality chert and novaculite found in the local area (Anderson, Smallwood, and Miller 2015) and used for processing animals and harvesting of wild plants. Most of these tools, except for projectile points, remained unchanged for thousands of years (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991).

Because of Paleoindian peoples’ reliance on hunting and wild plants, they used many different landscapes (e.g., terraces, uplands, levees, wetlands) for temporary, seasonal, or semi-permanent camps (Anderson, Smallwood, and Miller 2015). Furthermore, the Ocmulgee River corridor possessed a great diversity of flora and fauna due to the variations in topography as well as the area's location at the confluence of the Piedmont and the Atlantic Coastal Plain ecoregions. The variety of resources along the Fall Line — the geologic transition between the Piedmont region and the Coastal Plain — attracted people to the area, and allowed human populations to thrive (NPS 2019; New South Associates 2018; Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Ocmulgee Old Field Boundary Study & Environmental Assessment 2014; Smith 1992). Finally, the Ocmulgee River may have also been used for transportation, though no dugout canoes or other watercraft from this period has been identified thus far (Anderson, Smallwood, and Miller 2015).

Archaic Period (8000–1000 BCE)

Around 8,000 BCE the megafauna began to go extinct as the climate became warmer and drier (NPS 2019; New South Associates 2018; Anderson, Smallwood, and Miller 2015). Despite this change to their food resources, the people at this time still largely lived as small, mobile social units (NPS 2019). People successfully adapted to the changing environment as indicated by an increase in archeological sites dated to this time (White and Anderson 2017). The archeological evidence suggests that seasonal hunting camps were located along major waterways and that there was an increase in population and in trading between populations, as indicated by non-local geological resources for lithic manufacture (NPS 2019). One specific marker for early Archaic peoples’ adaptation to the new climate and resources is a change in the form of projectile points, defined from stratified sites in Alabama, North Carolina, and Virginia

(Anderson, Smallwood, and Miller 2015; Brewer and Hammerstein 1991). Early Archaic people also used bone points, fishhooks, shell adzes, wooden canoes, and woven cloth (NPS 2019). By living near major watercourses, they subsidized their hunter-gatherer diet with shellfish, shad, and sturgeon (Wheeler 2007).

Though the division between the early and middle Archaic period is not always clear, by the Middle Archaic period (ca. 5500–3300 BCE) ground stone artifacts such as steatite (soapstone) bowls, pipes, axes, adzes, plummets, gorges, and atlatl weights were added to the material culture (New South Associates 2018; Fairbanks 1956). Several steatite (soapstone) outcroppings are located within the Piedmont region along the Fall Line. Radiocarbon dating of soot from steatite bowl fragments and from organic material found in association with these fragments from the upper Flint River and Coffee County have provided dates of use from the Middle Archaic period and into the Late Archaic period. Near Fort Benning in Chattahoochee County, Georgia, the use of steatite bowls persisted into the Early Woodland period and may show long-distance trade and cultural affinity with people living at Poverty Point, a mounded complex in Louisiana (Elliott 2006). There appears to be more generalized resource exploitation, with riverine and marine fauna and nuts, fruits, berries, and seeds becoming more prevalent in the diet. Some of the seasonal hunting camps show increased modification with storage pits, floors, and a few burials. With continued successful exploitation of resources, the population continued to grow and meet other groups, leading to the formation of trading networks (NPS 2019).

The Late Archaic period features large spring and summer hunting camps along river terraces and smaller camps in the uplands at stream headwaters during the fall and winter (New South Associates 2018). The shift to semi-sedentary migration patterns and the beginnings of early agriculture also ushered in the creation of ceramics, a major technological achievement (New South Associates 2018), especially fiber-tempered pottery known as Stallings Island in central Georgia. Stallings Island pottery appears around 2500 BCE along the Georgia coast and around 2000 BCE in central Georgia (Williams and Thompson 1999; Brewer and Hammerstein 1991; Lawson 1988). Stallings Island (9CB1), a large shell midden site located in Columbia County near the Savannah River in Georgia and therefore outside of the study area, is one of the most thoroughly investigated Late Archaic sites in Georgia and has come to define the Late Archaic period in the state (Elliott 2006; Sassaman 1999). The fiber-tempered pottery and associated carved bone from the site suggests inter- and intragroup identification by the distribution of these artifacts along trade networks (New South Associates 2018; Smith 1992). Low quantities of Stallings Island fiber-tempered pottery have been recovered near Macon (New South Associates 2020) and in some contexts the fiber-tempered pottery has accompanied steatite (soapstone) vessel sherds (Elliott 2006). Trade in pottery and associated material culture would also support political and economic relationships between different groups (New South Associates 2018). The later Archaic peoples also made use of a broad range of plants and animals (Day and Klingelhofer 2019), including experimentation with domestication and possibly agriculture (New South Associates 2018).

Woodland Period (1000 BCE–1000 CE)

While the material culture of the Paleoindian and Archaic periods is fairly consistent throughout Georgia, there is a change during the Woodland period (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991). During the Woodland period, more numerous and larger archeological sites indicate an expanding, semi-sedentary population, perhaps supported by cultivation (Day and Klingelhofer 2019) of sunflowers, gourds, and other plants (NPS 2019). There is also evidence for increasing monumentalism, which had started in the Middle Archaic period elsewhere in the Southeast (large shell mounds, pyramidal earthen mounds, and effigy mounds); sociopolitical complexity; and long-distance trade (Day and Klingelhofer 2019; New South Associates 2018; Pauketat and Alt 2015; Anderson 2004; Sassaman 1999) that included corn, beans, and squash from Mexico, which became a staple of the Woodland diet (NPS 2019). The Woodland people living in the area built small, circular house structures (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991) and mounds nearby. In addition, there was an increase in middens and refuse, including pieces of pottery (Wheeler 2007; Day and Klingelhofer 2019). Furthermore, the Fall Line seems to have acted as a cultural interactive zone between north and south Georgia, as shown at the Lamar site (9BI2) (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991).

During this early Woodland period, the material culture was also in transition from fiber-tempered ceramics to grit-tempered ceramics (or a mixture of both). The earliest Woodland period marker in the ceramic material culture in central Georgia is Deptford sand and/or grit-tempered pottery (Bland et al. 2001; Williams and Thompson 1999; Steinen 1995; Lawson 1988). The term “Deptford” comes from the Deptford site (9CH2) in Chatham County (outside of the study area) that was a part of the 1930s New Deal excavations in Georgia (Williams and Thompson 1999). Deptford ceramics have also been found in Florida, dating to ca. 600 BCE. Most Woodland period pottery is plain or incised, but simple stamping and check stamping are also present (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991).

The Middle Woodland subperiod (200 BCE–300/400 CE) is marked by the phasing out of the Deptford ceramics and the introduction of Dunlap Fabric Marked (sand tempered), Mossy Oak Simple Stamped (sand and/or fine grit tempered), and some Weeden Island I ceramics (fine sand tempered). The Late Woodland period is marked by the Swift Creek cultural complex, although some Swift Creek material dates to the Middle Woodland period as well (Williams and Thompson 1999; Wood and Bowen 1995; Lawson 1988). The Swift Creek cultural complex, identified in part by its ceramics, may have originated in central Georgia (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991; Fairbanks 1956) and was widely dispersed. While investigations continue into Swift Creek origins, the cultural complex was first defined from the Swift Creek site (9BI3) near Macon during the New Deal excavations of the 1930s and 1940s (Steinen 1995). The Swift Creek site was an important mound and village for a culture that extended over most of Georgia and into several adjacent states from 0–600 CE (Williams 1993).

Mississippian Period (1000–1540 CE)

A clear change in material culture and sociopolitical complexity marks the beginning of the Mississippian period. Mississippian culture was widespread² and is found from Georgia to Texas in the south and northward up the Mississippi River into Minnesota (NPS 2019; New South Associates 2018; Pauketat and Alt 2015; Wheeler 2007; Brewer and Hammerstein 1991). While a migration of Mississippian people is still accepted among archeologists to explain the change in material culture, Bigman (2012) offers more nuance to the changes occurring on the Macon Plateau, noting that migration and displacement did not occur unilaterally. Instead of outright replacement, there was conflict between migrating and local peoples as they negotiated cultural practices such as habitation layout and location, material culture, and social status (Bigman 2012). If Bigman's theory is true, then mounds built elsewhere in the Ocmulgee River corridor on the Macon Plateau, such as the Dunlap and McDougal mounds (part of 9BI1, the grouped-together Macon Plateau sites) or elsewhere such as the mounds at Fort Hawkins (9BI21) may represent the migratory people (New South Associates 2018). The change in material culture marking the Mississippian period and the identity of the Mississippian people is a continuing area of research.

Mississippian people in the Southeast primarily populated towns along the Fall Line of rivers and developed agricultural settlements, such as those present on the Macon Plateau. The Ocmulgee Old Fields, located on the Macon Plateau, is an example of this agricultural settlement (Wheeler 2007; Hally and Williams 1994; Williams 1993). Climate change may have also influenced the migration and settlement patterns of Mississippian people as the earth grew warmer during this period and increased rainfall supported increased agriculture (Pauketat and Alt 2015). The easily tilled and drained soils in river valleys are well suited for agriculture, and the Mississippian people supported their large populations with maize, beans, squash, and other crops (NPS 2019; Wheeler 2007; Brewer and Hammerstein 1991) in addition to hunting and gathering (Wheeler 2007). The lakes and swamps supported fish and waterfowl. Within the study area, these population-sustaining food resources are concentrated at the Fall Line rather than being dispersed along the course of the river (Ocmulgee Old Field Boundary Study & Environmental Assessment 2014; Hally 1994). The abundance of resources around Macon supported the large Mississippian population and a more permanent habitation (NPS 2019; Wheeler 2007).

Abundant resources, agricultural success, and an increasing population are closely related to, if not the cause/effect of, more permanent towns and increased diversity of material culture (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991). The complex social structure (chiefdoms) characteristic of this period may have originated earlier in the Woodland period due to evidence at surrounding sites outside of the study area, such as the Leake Site (Bartow County 9BR2) and Kolomoki Mounds State Park (Early County 9EA1) and be more observable due to the agricultural advances and increasing population (Hunt 2020; Southern Research Historic Preservation Consultants and Keith 2021; Weiss and McKithan 1981; NPS News Release 1964; Hagg 1963).

2. Pauketat and Alt (2015) directly link Mississippian peoples and the period's monumental mound building to the site of Cahokia in Illinois. Pauketat and Alt claim that Cahokians or "Cahokianized" people migrated throughout North America and established the mound complex at Ocmulgee. They furthermore connect Cahokia with the Plum Bayou culture, whose center was at Toltec Mounds in Arkansas, and suggest links with native peoples living in Mexico and the American Southwest.

Early Mississippian people (900–1100/1200 CE) (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991) introduced a complex culture to the region that included new religious and ceremonial elements as well as new tools and ceramics (Day and Klingelhofer 2019). The earliest ceramics of the period show a combination of Late Woodland (Swift Creek and Napier) and Mississippian styles (Steinen 1995; Lawson 1988; Fairbanks 1956). Mississippian ceramics and their regional variations came to dominate in central Georgia and have been used by archeologists to express discrete cultural units during the Mississippian period (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991) such as Macon Plateau, Lamar, and Ocmulgee Fields (Steinen 1995; Fairbanks 1956). These discrete cultural units are being continually refined as more information comes to light, and within the last decade definitions of these cultures and of the Mississippian period itself have been questioned (Blitz 2010).

Macon Plateau ceramics (ca. 900–1200 CE) (Lawson 1988) represent the Mississippian people's arrival into central Georgia (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991). The ceramic phase is defined from several archeological sites near Macon: Macon Plateau (9BI1), Lamar (9BI2), Brown's Mount (9BI5), Scott (9BI16), Mile Track (9BI7), and Horseshoe Bend (9BI10). Macon Plateau ceramics stand out as the dominant influence in the Ocmulgee River floodplain. Ceramic subdivisions within the Macon Plateau phase include Bibb Plain, McDougal Plain, Halstead Plain, Hawkins Fabric Marked, and Macon Thick, (Lawson 1988; Williams and Thompson 1999).

The “Macon Plateau” refers to a number of overlapping landscape, cultural, and archeological features, and it is easy to become disoriented when discussing the historical context of the Ocmulgee River near Macon. The term refers first to the flattened hill along the Ocmulgee River east terrace (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014). Secondly, “Macon Plateau” is an artificial term describing a ceramic phase roughly corresponding to same geographical area and dating to 900–1100 CE (Lawson 1988). Third, the term refers to the Mississippian period occupation of the geographical area. Finally, it is used collectively as Macon Plateau site (9BI1), which refers to the cultural sites uncovered during the New Deal archeological excavations and became Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park. These include: Great Temple Mound (Mound A), Lesser Temple Mound (Mound B), the Funeral Mound (Mound C), the Cornfield Mound (Mound D), the McDougal Mound, the Southeast Mound, Dunlap Mound, Mound X, the palisade trenches and other precontact trenches, corn storage pits, the Earth Lodge, the Dunlap House, and Civil War fortifications. The term, however, does not apply to the Lamar site (9BI2), which includes Lamar Mound A and Mound B (Small Spiral Mound) and is also included within the park (New South Associates 2018; Georgia Archaeological Site Files; “OCMU & SEAC Accession Notes,” Southeast Archeological Center).

Although there were perhaps other Native peoples living in an earlier town on the Macon Plateau about 1000 CE, the Macon Plateau ceramic phase (900–1100 CE) (Lawson 1988) extends into the date range for the extensive Mississippian town site in the same area (Day and Klingelhofer 2019). This town (Macon Plateau 9BI1) is the most recognizable archeological feature on the Macon Plateau and includes earth mounds and the Earth Lodge, which were built during the Middle Mississippian period (1100/1200–1350 CE) (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991). The Mississippian people created the mounds, which served as elevated platforms for important buildings. These mounds were built in several distinct building periods, reflecting growing social stratification (New South Associates 2020; Wheeler 2007). In all, there are seven mounds

associated with the Mississippian occupation and of these, the Greater Temple Mound (Mound A) and the Lesser Temple Mound (Mound B) were used for ceremonial purposes and the Funeral Mound (Mound C) was used for burials. Also discovered with the mound complex were a periphery trench, village sites, and storage dugouts (Wheeler 2007). The town began to decline around 1100 CE (Day and Klingelhofer 2019), and the Macon Plateau appears to have been unoccupied for about 100 years (New South Associates 2020). The mound complex was still unoccupied before contact with Europeans exploration in the mid-1500s (Wheeler 2007). After approximately 100 years, Native peoples returned to the area and built a new village two miles downriver (NPS 2019).

Around 1350 CE, Late Mississippian people built a fortified village in the Ocmulgee River swamps two miles downstream from the Macon Plateau. This village is known as the Lamar site (9BI2) (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991). This site consisted of a palisaded village with two mounds (Mounds A and B). Mound B is unique for its spiral ramp, which encircles the mound. Ceramic styles include Lamar Plain, Lamar Complicated Stamped, and Lamar Bold Incised (Wheeler 2007). The Lamar culture, named for this site which serves as its type site (i.e., earliest and fullest expression), was widespread in the Southeast, and the term has come to describe all late Mississippian ceramic and cultural complexes in the Georgia Piedmont (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991). The Lamar people were similar to other late Mississippian cultural groups with regard to their village layout, which featured a stockade or palisade and a ceremonial center of one or two mounds (NPS 2019) and way of life (e.g., social organization, ceremonial practices, mound building, horticulture). Their distinct ceramic styles and downstream settlement location readily distinguish it from the mound complex and habitation on the Macon Plateau, which preceded the mound complex habitation at the Lamar site (Wheeler 2007).

As mentioned, other Lamar sites in the Southeast regularly feature at least one mound and palisades/stockades. These mound sites are believed to have functioned as political or religious centers for a large, centralized population as well as surrounding communities. The villages associated with the mound sites were probably occupied year round (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991) due to successful agricultural support. During the Late Mississippian period, Lamar villages are believed to have been encountered by Spanish explorers such as Hernando de Soto during his expedition into Georgia in 1540 (Day and Klingelhofer 2019; Pauketat and Alt 2015; Hudson 1997; NPS 1988). De Soto's was the first European expedition that encountered Mississippian people and their mound-building culture and documented what they saw. The arrival of Europeans meant the arrival of diseases to which the Mississippian people had no immunity (NPS 2019) as well as the breakdown of Native food production, trade networks, and family and social institutions. In her survey of US history, Dunbar-Ortiz is critical of the theory that disease was the primary agent in the destruction of Native ways of life, and she states "...that the colonization of America was genocidal by plan..." (Dunbar-Ortiz 2015). The combination of disease, starvation, kidnapping, enslavement, rape, prostitution, murder, warfare, the mission system, the introduction of alcohol, etc. resulted in three-fourths of the population dying after the arrival of Europeans. The lives of Native peoples of North America were forever changed (NPS 2019; Dunbar-Ortiz 2015; Holder et al. n.d.).

HISTORY AFTER EUROPEAN CONTACT

European Exploration and Expansion (1500–1732 CE)

This section takes a broad approach to a dynamic period of contact between Native peoples and Europeans and attempts to capture the complexity of interaction, migration, and cultural change in the Ocmulgee River corridor. Contact with Europeans brought dramatic changes to Native populations' way of life at all levels, and this period of contact is replete with issues of European characterization and description of Native peoples' culture and history from their outsider's perspective. This section addresses some of the uncertainty surrounding the European written records on place names, Native peoples, and their history (from an outsider's perspective). The section also includes linguistic histories and ethnohistories of Native peoples from an insider's perspective. Finally, this section discusses how some Native peoples adapted to the cultural, social, and political changes brought on by contact with the Europeans, particularly the Creek people, whose descendants maintain a connection to the Ocmulgee River corridor.

The areas of land that today make up the Southeastern United States was the economic and cultural battleground for Spain, France, and England — all major European powers of the 16th through 18th centuries (Hammack 2011; Hahn 2004). With the arrival of Europeans, material culture and subsistence patterns began to change for the Native populations. Peaches were added to existing cultigens, and hunting practices changed with the introduction of firearms and the deerskin trade (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991). The Spaniards sought cultural change of Native peoples through the mission system established in Florida, significantly changing Native peoples' religion, habitation and subsistence patterns, and sociopolitical stratification. The later-arriving English primarily wanted Native peoples as slaves (Waselkov 1994; Smith 1992; Crane 1956) and for trade and manufacture (Hammack 2008).

The ethnohistorical term, “Creek Indians” or “Creek” is a term that refers to an amalgamation of tribal towns of Muskogean-speaking peoples (as well as Yuchi and Timucuan-speaking peoples) who once lived in Alabama, Georgia, and Florida and operated as a unified political unit (Hunt 2020; Haveman 2009; Walker 2004). The term originates from the Ocmulgee River valley and was used by Europeans and Carolinian traders to describe the Native peoples who had settled along the Ocmulgee River around 1690 CE until the Yamassee War ca. 1715 CE. The Ocmulgee River at that time was known as Ochese Creek, and the people who lived there came to be called “Creek Indians” or “Creek.” These Native peoples had migrated to the Ocmulgee River valley from the Chattahoochee River valley and spoke a Muskogean language dialect known as Hitchiti (Mason 1963, 2005 reprint). Hudson uses the term Creek to describe the Lamar-period people living in the tribal town of Ichisi in the Ocmulgee River valley and having contact with the de Soto expedition in 1540 (Hudson 1997). Knight, as well, discusses the similarities and potential development of Lamar period ceramics, Ocmulgee Fields ceramics, and ceramics found in the Chattahoochee River valley before Hitchiti migration (Knight 1994). In a revised repatriation case report in 2014, the Lamar site was identified as the village of Ichisi (NPS 1988). The report also states that descendants of the Lamar period (1300–1600 CE) community on the Macon Plateau and the Hitchiti-speaking people, also associated with

Ocmulgee Fields ceramics (1685–1715 CE), are found in federally recognized Creek and Seminole Tribes (Smithsonian Institution 2020).

In the 18th century, Europeans described the Creeks as Upper and Lower communities based on their relative locations in central Alabama (Upper Creeks) and southwestern Georgia (Lower Creeks) (Walker 2004). There were also Lower Creek towns located along the northern portion of the Apalachicola River in the Florida panhandle (Office of Federal Acknowledgment 2016). The Upper and Lower designation described geographic location only, as the communities all considered themselves to be culturally Creek and did not recognize the Upper/Lower distinction. The Upper Creeks resided along the Alabama, Coosa, and Tallapoosa rivers in Alabama, while the Lower Creeks resided along the Chattahoochee River valley, with episodic movement to the Ocmulgee River, the Oconee River, and the lower Savannah River (Mason 1963, 2005 reprint; Walker 2004). The term “Creek” as used by Europeans erased the cultural, social, and political variations of the many *etwlvw* (tribal towns) in Georgia, Alabama, and northern Florida, language families, and tribal worldviews (Lee 2014; Sturtevant and Cattelino 2004).

The term “Creek” also came to represent European-perceived distinctions in culture between the Creeks, the Tallapoosa, and the Seminole (the latter, a tribe that coalesced when Muscogee (Creek) people and refugees settled northern Florida in the 18th century (New South Associates 2020; Spain 2019; Sturtevant and Cattelino 2004; Swanton 1922; Holder et al. n.d.). Over time, the “Upper Creeks” and “Lower Creeks” adopted a more unified identity to interact with the Europeans and Americans (Lee 2014). By the late 17th century, the Creek Confederacy, a united political unit, formed (Office of Federal Acknowledgement 2016) and continued to encompass communities with diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. The Creek Confederacy had more than 20,000 members across more than 50 towns and speaking six distinct languages (Muscogee, Hitchiti, Koasati, Yuchi, Natchez, and Shawnee) (New South Associates 2020). This ethnic diversity and political unification was the Creek Confederacy’s defining characteristic. (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Haveman 2009; Walker 2004). Finally, although the term “confederacy” has been used to preserve the internal organization of a unified Creek political unit, a more appropriate term to use may be nation, as the Lower Creek tribes who signed the 1733 Treaty of Savannah were recognized (Hunt 2020; Russell 2006; DeVorse 1970; Georgia Historical Society 1920; McCain 1917; Force 1836). There were, however, still factionalism between tribes within the confederacy, and Hahn has further suggested that the concept of a Creek Nation emerged during the period of the French and Indian War (1754–1763) in response to new European imperialist and colonist policies (Hahn 2004).

With the arrival of the Spaniards in Georgia, more documentation exists about what American Indian tribes called themselves. However, Europeans often did not correctly understand the names that Native peoples used for themselves, their towns, and the river valleys near which they lived, so there is not always a one-to-one relationship in names. In addition, there is variation the names of peoples and where they lived as a result of the phonetic differences between the European languages and the limitation of their alphabets to capture Native language and pronunciation (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014). Some of these challenges are presented in Swanton (1922), whose work attempted to trace the movement of all southeastern tribes, particularly those who had Muscogee (Creek) heritage (Swanton 1922).

Despite the changes that Europeans brought, there are continuities of Native culture not only in oral traditions but also in the archeological remains. For example, there is continuity in ceramic development from the 15th into the 18th centuries, leading some scholars, such as Fairbanks, to suggest that Lamar ceramics (from the Mississippian period) is an ancestor to later Creek pottery (Fairbanks 1958). Fairbanks draws his conclusion from the excavations on the Macon Plateau (9BI1) and Lamar site (9BI2) as well as other sites throughout Georgia and Alabama. He notes the shape and design similarities between the Lamar ceramics of the Mississippian period and the Ocmulgee Fields ceramics of the postcontact Creek tribes (Fairbanks 1958). The Ocmulgee Fields ceramic phase dates from 1685–1715/1716, roughly the same period as postcontact Creek occupation of the Macon Plateau area (New South Associates 2018). There are also, however, precursors for Ocmulgee Fields ceramics in east-central Alabama, which Brewer and Hammerstein call the heartland of the later Creek Confederacy (Brewer and Hammerstein 1991). Finally, Willey and Sears suggest that Creek pottery probably developed in the Coosa–Tallapoosa River area in Alabama and spread east into Georgia (Smith 1992; Willey and Sears 1952).

Cultural and Linguistic Note

The oral tradition of the descendant Creek peoples, such as the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Kialegee Tribal Town, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, Poarch Creek Indian, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians in Florida, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and the Seminole Nation of Florida, are deeply rooted, reaching back to the *Muskokulke* (Muscogee people) (Lee 2014) and perhaps even to the people of the Mississippian period. Creek oral tradition holds that their ancestors arrived in Georgia from the west during the Mississippian period through conquest and assimilation of other Native groups (New South Associates 2020; Spain 2019). Other Native tribes that are traditionally associated with the Ocmulgee River valley include the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians (New South Associates 2020).

Etvlvw (tribal town to *Muskokulke* or “band” to Seminole people) is the most important unit of community and political organization. *Etvlvw* are not permanent or fixed in location, number, relationship, or identity, and they can have mother-daughter or sibling relationships with other *etvlwv*. *Etvlvw* additionally encompass ideas of matrilineal tribal heritage, lineage, kinship, ceremonial grounds (such as mound sites) and, in some cases, the idea of an independent nation. The number of *etvlwv* before European contact is not known (Lee 2014; Hudson 1997; NPS 1988), but early maps reveal more than 80 towns (Butler 2020; Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014). The population of the area may have been in the thousands (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Holder et al. n.d.; Swanton 1922). Of these towns, four encountered de Soto’s expedition in 1540, and they have remained in continuous existence as political and/or ceremonial tribal towns for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (Lee 2014). Additionally, European and American records (and modern scholarship) have not captured important nuances of tribal history, identity, and organization or the continuation of these tribal towns until recently. In oral history interviews with members of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Seminole Nation, each interviewee introduced themselves with their tribal town, and as Emman Spain said, “We’re

recognized by what our tribal towns are. That's our identity. That's our heritage" (Spain 2019, in New South Associates 2020, 11).

Additionally, leadership within and among the *etvlwv* does not conform to European ideas of leadership. The use of the terms "chief," "king," or "headman" does not represent the *Mvskokulke* worldview or the political realities of Native tribes. As explained in the oral history interviews with Lee (2014) within each *etvlwv*, there are clan groups that are designated for specific functions. These functions may additionally vary by season, by the *etvlwv*'s state of peace or war, by gender, or by ground/territory. *Mekko* to *Mvskokulke* is loosely translated as "chief" or "king," but this position was not one of absolute authority. Instead, the *Mekko* had a sphere of leadership and influence generally on communal supplies and maintaining balance for the *etvlwv*. Today, there are other positions of leadership within each *etvlwv*, and these leaders operate within their own spheres and in consultation with each other, such as the *Heles-hayv*, who is a medicine maker and spiritual leader; the *Hene-ha*, the second chief, who may conditionally take superiority over the *Mekko*; and the *Etvlvw Mvskokulke*, which is the committee that makes decisions, policies, and handles any issues that effects the existence of the *etvlwv* (Lee 2014). While one should take caution in assigning similar functions of leadership from modern tribe governance into the past, one should also have caution in accepting the terms and definitions assigned to tribal leadership from the Euro-American perspective.

The earliest recorded version of Creek traditional history comes from Chigelly (Chegellie in New South Associates 2020; Chikilli in Swanton 1922), brother of Creek chief Emperor Brimms — also known as Hoboyetly or Yslachamuque — and designated by him as a Coweta "headman" for discussions with the English, in a statement to General Oglethorpe in 1735. In Chigelly's account, the Kasihta and the Coweta, both associated with the later Creek Confederacy (Hahn 2004) as well as the Chickasaws, a separate tribe with traditional connections to the Kasihta, came from the west as one group to settle in the east, though the groups later separated (Swanton 1922). Phillip Deere, a Muscogee (Creek) medicine man, furthermore supported the oral history of Chekilli by recounting that the Kasihta people settled around Ocmulgee and the Coweta settled around the Eufaula area (Phillip Deere 2016 in New South Associates 2020). One of the four founding *etvlwv* of the Muskogee (Creeks) was Cusseta Town, established on the Chattahoochee River after the Creeks' migration to the east. Later, when Cusseta and Coweta *etvlwv* had been relocated along the Ocmulgee River, they formed a confederacy that led to the Creek Confederacy and later Creek Nation (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014).

Swanton (1922), in his broad attempt to trace the history of Southeastern tribes, notes the variety of languages spoken, grouping various Native languages dialects as contributing to the northern and southern "Muskogean" branch (Swanton 1922). The surrounding peoples in Georgia may have spoken Hitchiti, and they may have called the Muskogee speakers "Ochese" or "outsiders" (Swanton 1922), a name which is recorded by the de Soto excavation in the Ocmulgee River corridor (Hammack 2008). The precise date for this movement of Muskogee speakers east is unknown (Brockington and Associates 1999), but it occurred at such an early time that separating the Hitchiti speakers and the Muskogee speakers is difficult (Swanton 1922). Fairbanks also pointed to a linguistic relationship between the Muskogee-speaking Native peoples living in central Georgia during the late Lamar period and the postcontact Creek Indians (Fairbanks 1958; Brewer and Hammerstein 1991). As discussion and research has

continued, elements of Lamar-style ceramics have been noted in Creek, Cherokee, and Yuchi ceramics. Lamar pottery was widely dispersed and may have been manufactured by Muskogee-speaking Native people in the middle Coosa–Tallapoosa area and in northwestern Georgia. The pottery may also have been manufactured by Hitchiti-speaking people along the lower Chattahoochee River and the middle Oconee and Ocmulgee Rivers (Hally 1994). Though the Macon Plateau mound complex appears to have been temporarily abandoned before the arrival of Europeans in Georgia (Wheeler 2007), the close association of the shape and design of Mississippian period ceramics, in addition to the close linguistic relationship and oral histories, indicates the continuation of culture into the period of early contact with Europeans.

Early Encounters between American Indians and Spanish Explorers in the Ocmulgee Region

Three parties of Spanish explorers traveled through parts of the southeastern United States in the 16th century: Hernando de Soto from 1539 to 1543, Tristán de Luna from 1559 to 1561, and Juan Pardo from 1566 to 1568. Of these, the expedition led by Hernando de Soto (Hudson 1994; Smith 1992) encountered people who may have been associated with the Lamar culture (Day and Klingelhofer 2019). In addition to visiting the Lamar site (9BI2) (New South Associates 2018), de Soto may have also visited the Bullard’s Landing site (9TW1) (Williams and Evans 1993) and Cowart’s Landing site (9BI14) (New South Associates 2018; Smith 1992). From oral interviews with members of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and members of Thloptholocco Tribal Town and *Ahbika* Tribal Town, de Soto encountered four *etvlwv* during his journey through Georgia, and these *etvlwv* have persisted as political and/or ceremonial tribal towns in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Oklahoma (Lee 2014).

The de Soto expedition recorded the name of a town in present-day Georgia as Ochese/Ichisi (Hammack 2008). The Ocmulgee River itself was called Rio de Uchese by Spanish explorers (Andrews, Collings; and Lee 2014). Brockington and Associates (1999) note the close linguistic relationship between “Ichisi” and “Ochese.” After departing from the first village of Ichisi, de Soto traveled up the western bank of the Ocmulgee River to a place where he and his men were taken across the river to the main town of Ichisi (likely the Lamar site (9BI2) (New South Associates 2020; NPS 2019; NPS 1988; Hudson 1994). De Soto only remained in the main town of Ichisi for one day, as he wanted to press on to Ocute, located in the Oconee River valley to the east. According to Hudson (1994), the chief of Ichisi gave de Soto a guide who spoke the language of Ocute, implying that a language difference existed between Ichisi and Ocute (Hudson 1994). The language that was spoken at Ichisi is not known, but it was most likely Muskogee or Hitchiti (Brockington and Associates 1999).

Soon after the arrival of de Soto, the Lamar population declined as a result of European-introduced diseases, starvation through the disruption of traditional food production and trade routes, kidnapping, enslavement, and the rape of Native peoples by Europeans, and warfare and conflict as Europeans sought Native resources and territory (NPS 2019; Dunbar-Ortiz 2015; Holder et al. n.d.). The remaining indigenous people left the area around 1600 (Wheeler 2007). By 1650, the people living on the Macon Plateau had relocated to the Chattahoochee River (Wheeler 2007; Brockington and Associates 1999; Studstill 1997). The population decline and

interaction with Europeans also began changing the Native sociopolitical structure (Countryman 2000; Smith 1992).

The ability of *Mvskoke etvlwv* to transform, absorb, and consolidate other tribal groups, including those with linguistic differences, is foundational to the *Muskokvlke* worldview. These different tribal groups and *etvlwv* would come under the protective role of the *Esti Mvskoke em Etehvlvtkv*, an ancient confederacy of *etvlwv* that preceded the Creek Confederacy. The *Esti Mvskoke em Etehvlvtkv* was, however, more fluid and all-encompassing of heritage, identity, and social bonds than the term “confederacy” allows. While the Ocmulgee site in Georgia may have been the political center for the later Creek Confederacy, a central authority among the *Mvskoke etvlwv* was situational and mobile rather than fixed or in a single location (Lee 2014). Thus, migrations or changes in the location of a central authority do not have the same permanency or sense of abandonment and unimportance that appears in European/American writing of the Creek peoples. As more and other Europeans arrived in Georgia, the names of the Ocmulgee River as well as Native tribes became convoluted by Spanish, French, and English explorers in the late 1600s (Hammack 2008). The English called the river Ochese Creek, and this name (or Achese Creek) was the name of the Ocmulgee River between 1686 and 1716 (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014). While this is the dominant narrative, the continued existence of the four *etvlwv* encountered by de Soto in the 1540s to at least 2013 (Lee 2014) provides a fuller picture and richer understanding of what was occurring in Georgia and elsewhere during these times.

Trade and Resistance

The Creek towns along the Chattahoochee River split into pro-Spanish and pro-English factions. Beginning in 1685, English competition lured most of the profitable trade traffic to the new colony of South Carolina (Waselkov 1994). In retaliation, in 1686 the Spaniards burned four Creek towns: Coweta, Kasita, Kolomi, and Taskigi, whose occupants would not make alliances with them (Hammack 2008; Smith 1992). The people of these towns, especially Coweta and Kasita (Freeman 2019), moved east to the Ocmulgee River, where Carolina traders were establishing a series of trading posts (Hammack 2008) to escape Spanish control (Waselkov 1994). In 1690 the Spaniards attempted to regain control of trade through the establishment of a small military post near the town of Coweta (Waselkov 1994).

The people of eight or nine other towns soon followed, including Atasi, Achito, Chiaha, Kialegee, Okmulgee, Osuchi, Sawokli, Yuchi, and a Westo/Chichimeca town (Hammack 2008). Smith lists 10 to 11 towns and notes that Achito may have been the town of Hitchiti (Smith 1992). Other towns did not move but remained along the Chattahoochee River. The people settled in two primary areas along the Ocmulgee River. One group of towns was near Macon where Walnut Creek empties into the Ocmulgee, and the other group was not far from where the Towaliga River flows into the Ocmulgee. The English grouped all of the relocated indigenous people together, calling them the “Ochese Creek Indians,” a name later shortened to the “Creek Indians” (Hammack 2008; Ramsey et al. 1995; Swanton 1922). This grouping of Native peoples by Europeans, as well as Native peoples’ own agency in maintaining or changing their *etvlwv*, cultural identities, affiliation, and confederation, has led to difficulties in Euro-American understanding of Native peoples during this dynamic period. This failure to understand and to force worldviews on tribes is a hallmark of this period’s cultural interaction and has persisted in Euro-American academic circles, scholarship, and government institutions

(Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014). However, the Creeks, no matter their earlier or later tribal affiliation or ethnic heritage, were largely farmers in the river bottomlands (O'Donnell 1975) such as the Ocmulgee Old Fields near the Ocmulgee River (Hammack 2009).

When first recorded in 1675, "Ocmulgee" did not refer to the river but to a Lower Creek town on the Chattahoochee River (Andrew and Collings 2014; Walker 1994). "Ocmulgee" has been variously translated as big spring, bubbling spring/water, or boiling spring and appears to be a Hitchiti word. The word "Omulgee," however, is a Muscogee word and means "all of them" or "all of the tribal towns together" and may have a wider connotation of "homeland" or "medicine" (New South Associates 2020; Butler 2019; Lee 2014; Perez 2019). Gano Perez, in an oral history interview, notes that the association of "Ocmulgee" with water reflects the importance of water to their culture, and that the tribe has always settled along waterways. Perez also acknowledges that "Omulgee" could be associated with "Ocmulgee" and represents the different tribal towns and their heritage along waterways (Perez 2019).

Along with other Creek towns, the people living in Ocmulgee migrated to Ochese Creek, and by 1685, the name Ocmulgee became associated with the river (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Brockington and Associates 1999). European written records indicate that the "Ocmulgees" were on Ochese Creek in 1696 when the governor of South Carolina wrote of them. They were still there in 1703 when Colonel James Moore left "Ockomulgee" to raid the Apalachee Indian settlements (Walker 1994). Ocmulgee, the town along Ochese Creek, was listed as a signer of a treaty of alliance in 1705 between the Carolinians and the Creeks (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014). The Ocmulgee people and their town were still at Ochese Creek in 1710 when trader James Lucas wrote a letter from "Oakmulgas." The Ocmulgee returned, however, to the Chattahoochee River area in 1715 as a result of the Yamasee War, for James Adair reported that Carolinians destroyed the town in that year. In 1716, the Spaniards listed "Ocmulque" as an Apalachicola town on the Chattahoochee (Walker 1994), confirming this move. Based on oral accounts, maps, and Native tradition, it appears that the Ocmulgee people and town located on Ochese Creek were Hitchiti speaking. There is still some uncertainty as to when Muscogee-speaking people settled among the Hitchiti-speaking people after migrating from the west (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Hammack 2009) and how these groups interacted.

The Native peoples in Georgia had developed a vast trade network (Freeman 2019; Ramsey et al. 1995) and familiarity with European material culture as early as 1513 or possibly earlier (Smith 1992), even before the arrival of Europeans in the region. Native groups were familiar with European trade goods before English traders moved westward from Charlestown in the 1680s to compete with Spanish traders (Waselkov 1994). The arteries for trade included the Ocmulgee River and the Uchee Trading Path. This overland trail went from Charleston through Creek villages on the Oconee River, the Ocmulgee River, and the Chattahoochee River and through Alabama to Chickasaw settlements. The trail was known to Colonel Benjamin Hawkins who was the primary federal agent for Indian affairs in the South from 1796 to 1803 and the primary agent for the Creeks after 1803 (Remler 2005). In the late 18th century he described the environment along the Ocmulgee River and named the ethnic groups that inhabited the area (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014).

An extended period of low-volume, indirect trade allowed Creek people to make important adaptations before the 18th century. One was the gradual development of the Creek

Confederacy (Waselkov 1994). The confederacy was a loose organization of towns that maintained cohesiveness by extending consensus decision making beyond intratown boundaries to resolve intertown conflicts (Hahn 2004). Such a political organization may predate the arrival of de Soto (Lee 2014), but by 1670 CE Creek people were organized into a confederacy (Ramsey et al. 1995). This political organization allowed Creek people to assimilate numerous other tribes, ethnicities, and refugees into their tribal organization (NPS 2019; Wheeler 2007; Studsill 1997; Waselkov 1994). The oral traditions of the modern Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole Tribes reflect and recognize this shared heritage and this amalgamation of individual societies (New South Associates 2020; Spain 2019; Brockington and Associates 1999; Brewer and Hammerstein 1991).

The second adaptation to 18th-century Creek society was the gradual and selective adoption of European material culture (NPS 2009; Waselkov 1994). In 1685, English-allied Creek people allowed the first English trading post to be established within their territory at Coweta (Ramsey et al. 1995). By 1690, English-allied Creek culture had synthesized both traditional and European artifacts, values, and activities in a new cultural format (Waselkov 1994). The increasing trade between the Creeks and the English led to the top 1% of Creeks, made up of those of mixed Native and European ancestry, becoming wealthy (Hunt 2020). Other groups of Creek people were increasingly drawn into warfare and enslavement as they rejected the increased trade, rejected European material goods and culture, or had allied with Spanish or French traders over English traders (New South Associates 2020), although it also ushered in the decline of traditional lifeways and culture as other English trading posts were established (Ramsey 1995). The widespread similarity in Creek culture at this date can be seen in a comparison of the archeological remains from Macon and contemporaneous sites in the Coosa and Tallapoosa Valleys (Waselkov 1994).

With growing trade and contact between Europeans and Creeks, intermarriage between the groups increased, particularly between British and Scots-Irish men and Lower Creek women, most often women from the family of the *Mekko*. The previously connected worldview and ideology between the Upper and Lower Creeks continued to divide and separate, brought on in part by the new mixed-ethnicity elites of the Lower Creeks (Lee 2014). Colonel Benjamin Hawkins encouraged this division between the Upper and Lower Creeks by elevating the Lower Creek *Mekko* into positions of authority within the National Council. The National Council was formed at the end of the 18th century under pressure from Hawkins and the US government to organize the *Esti Mvskoke em Etehvlvtkv* (Lee 2014) into a state structure that more represented Euro-American government organizations (Kokomoor 2018). The United States would further expand this divide by designating the Lower Creek *Mekko* and representing the entirety of the *Mvskokvlke* (Lee 2014).

A final adaptation occurred among the Creek peoples between 1670 (the founding of Charleston) and 1763 (with the Treaty of Augusta) with the adoption of a position of neutrality between the competing European empires (Spain, France, England) in the area (Hahn 2004). As the Creek Confederacy was located centrally between the territory that each European nation desired to control (Ramsey 1995), this neutral position allowed the Creeks to fare better than other tribes into the 18th century. By the time of the Yamasee War (1713–1714), the position of

neutrality was formalized (Hahn 2004). The position of neutrality is still a key marker of Creek cultural identity (Tribal Consultation April 28, 2020).

In 1690, an English trading post (Ocmulgee Trading House) was located on the Macon Plateau. It was archeologically documented during New Deal excavations conducted in the 1930s and 1940s (NPS 2019; Wheeler 2007; Waselkov 1994). The small size and configuration of the Ocmulgee Trading Post resembles the palisaded English warehouses reported elsewhere during this era. Wheeler suggests that the trading post was constructed by English traders from Charleston (Wheeler 2007), but Waselkov suggests that Creek labor and methods were employed for the construction of the trading post though under English direction. Datable European-made objects from the trading post point consistently to the period between 1680 and 1720, which corresponds to the only documented period of large-scale, postcontact Native occupation of the Macon Plateau, roughly the Ocmulgee Fields period between 1685 and 1690 and 1715 and 1716 (New South Associates 2018; Waselkov 1994). There was continual pressure from the Spaniards in the form of raids, and the English responded with raids of their own (Waselkov 1994), possibly from the trading post (Wheeler 2007) and through the establishment and strengthening of forts. The threat of further attacks from the Spaniards was eliminated by 1704 with the devastation of the Apalachee missions of north-central Florida by Colonel James Moore's army (Hammack 2008; Waselkov 1994).

On a larger scale, the English, Spanish, and French traders were vying for control of the Southeast, and unscrupulous Carolina traders exacerbated the situation (Wheeler 2007). During this time, traders were regularly undermining the authority of colonial officials and governors (Crane 1956). As a result of this conflict over land ownership, enslavement, and trade (NPS 2019), Creek Chief Emperor Brimms — also known as Hoboyetly or Yslachamuque (Brockington and Associates 1999) — emerged as a leader among the Creeks (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014) and his allies (the Yamasee, Creeks, Choctaws, and to a lesser extent, the Cherokee (Crane 1956)) against the English and planned a revolt at Coweta Town on the Ocmulgee River (Hammack 2011, 2008; Wheeler 2007). Yamasee Indians attacked English settlements in South Carolina, and the resulting war (Yamasee War 1715–1716) nearly eradicated the Yamasee Indians (Ramsey et al. 1995) and almost destroyed the Carolina colony. It was after the Yamasee War and the English victory (Hammack 2011) that the Creek policy of neutrality between the European powers was formally stated at Coweta (Hahn 2004).

The historic and archeological evidence points to a widespread migration of the Lower Creek people, including the Uchee (Yuchi) from the Ocmulgee River to the Chattahoochee River around the time of the Yamasee War (Freeman 2019; NPS 2019). James Adair, who wrote descriptions about the southeastern tribes as well as the Ocmulgee Old Fields in the early 1700s mentions the destruction of the settlement of Ocmulgee in 1715 during the Yamasee War (Bland 2001; Adair 1775). A single date for this widespread migration is not known, though, and possible dates include 1715 (Walker 1994; Smith 1992), 1716 (National Register of Historic Places Nomination 1996 amendment), 1717 (Hammack 2009) and 1720 (Wheeler 2007). The migration to the Chattahoochee River may have resulted in a power vacuum along the Ocmulgee River (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Hammack 2011). Although there were significant social and political changes among the Lower Creeks, there is a possibility that the Upper Ocmulgee River was not completely abandoned, and some Ichisi descendants continued

to occupy the area during the Yamasee War (Hammack 2009). Future archeological work may uncover more village sites.

Colonial and Revolutionary War Period (1733–1783)

With the establishment of the Georgia colony, more Europeans arrived and began to write about the Native peoples, their customs and traditions, and the area's flora and fauna. New negotiations between English and colonial traders and Native peoples occurred. As discontentment grew among the colonists for representation in Parliament, discussions turned to independence from England. The ensuing war forced Native tribes to choose to support either the colonists or the English, while trying to maintain their landholdings and culture from the expansion pressure.

Foundation of Georgia and Westward Expansion

After the Yamasee War, Europeans, particularly the English, aggressively colonized and settled Georgia and continued to push westward along the frontier to create and dominate trade relationships with Native peoples. By 1733, the English colony of Georgia was founded, and the colonial government authorized trade and trade relationships. Under the 1733 charter, Catholics, enslaved people, and rum/spirits were banned. General James Oglethorpe was a member of the English Parliament (Hammack 2011) and the leading trustee of the colony, and he worked to develop peaceful relationships with the Native tribes and to limit the Spanish presence in the southeast (Day and Klingelhofer 2019; Countryman 2000). The first law that was passed for the administration of the colony and to accomplish these goals was “An Act for Maintaining the Peace with the Indians in the Province of Georgia” in 1733 (DeVorse 1970). Mary Musgrove, the daughter of a Creek mother and an English trader, served as Oglethorpe's translator during the establishment of Georgia (NPS 2019).

The Muscogee Creeks and the Cherokee populations during this time held and exercised political agency in negotiations with the colonial authorities (Day and Klingelhofer 2019; Countryman 2000). In the 1733 Treaty of Savannah between leaders of Lower Creek tribes led by Tomochichi, and James Oglethorpe, ancient Creek landownership rights were acknowledged in the document. The Lower Creeks were also described as a nation of allied tribes, each having their own government, but speaking the same language. This treaty established the first formal territorial limits of the colony, though no map was made at the time and further declared that the land which the tribes retained were held in common by the nation (Russell 2006; DeVorse 1970; Georgia Historical Society 1920; McCain 1917; Force 1836). Oglethorpe and the Georgia Trustees would affirm this treaty in 1736 and again in 1739 (DeVorse 1970).

In 1739, Oglethorpe and one of his rangers visited Creek towns on the Chattahoochee and Ocmulgee Rivers and wrote a short account of the Mississippian period mounds they saw on the Macon Plateau (Wheeler 2007). The mounds the ranger described were probably Mounds A, B, and C of the Macon Plateau site (9BI1) (Walker 1994). A later account of the mounds was made by James Adair (1775) and by botanist William Bartram in a journal of his travels (1791). Bartram wrote a more detailed description of the mound site and mentions that the trading road (Lower Creek Trading Path) runs (NPS 2019) through the “Oakmulge fields.” Bartram also notes that Creeks state that the Ocmulgee Fields is remarkable for being the first settlement where they

established themselves after their emigration from the west. From here, the Creeks drove off the previous inhabitants, defended themselves against enemies, and as they grew in power began taking vanquished and refugee tribes into their confederacy (Bartram 1791).

Europeans continued to push westward, and there were intermittent wars, political conflicts, and removal treaties for several years (Day and Klingelhofer 2019). The colony of Georgia had also undergone a change in governance, from being controlled by the trustees to becoming a royal colony (Doherty and Doherty 2005) in 1752. At this time, enslaved people from Africa were introduced into Georgia, and the colony grew rich on plantation agriculture of rice, indigo, tobacco, lumber, and the deerskin/fur trade (Hammack 2011). The French and Indian War (1754–1763) impacted Georgia as well since France yielded its landholdings east of the Mississippi River (except New Orleans) to England. This allowed the English royal colony to expand rapidly westward (Doherty and Doherty 2005), coming into more conflict with the Creek who lived there. The governor of Georgia and other diplomats, seeking to acquire more land from Creek tribes, were met with heavy diplomatic resistance from the Creek Confederacy (Kokomoor 2018). In 1763, a meeting was held in Augusta, Georgia, between colonial and Creek leaders, and the resulting Treaty of Augusta witnessed the loss of 2.4 million acres of Creek territory to the colony (Doherty and Doherty 2005). As with many of these land treaties, the legality was questioned. According to the established practices of the Creek Confederacy, the treaty needed the consent of all of the tribe, not just the influential headmen of the Creek towns, and the entire tribe had not consented. Despite this, the cession of lands proceeded anyway at the Augusta council (Kokomoor 2018). The treaties and loss of land would reach the Ocmulgee River corridor by 1805 (Day and Klingelhofer 2019; Hammack 2011; Joseph, Hamby, and Long 2004; Ramsey et al. 1995; Curtis 1993b; Butler 1879).

The Georgia colony continued to expand, and 10 years later in 1773, a new treaty was drawn up among the governor of Georgia, English and colonial traders, and the Creek and Cherokee tribes (O'Donnell 1975). In this treaty (called the “New Purchase”), lands that had been ceded by the Cherokee to remove their trading debts were claimed to have also belonged to the Creeks, raising a legality issue. Additionally, the Georgia authorities and traders did not consult with the entirety of the Creek Confederacy, leading to another question of legality in the land cession. As a result of these unscrupulous and questionably legal treaties, there was increasing factionalism within the Creek Confederacy that was laid bare following a Christmas Day attack on settlers along the northern frontier of Georgia. Perpetrators of the attack belonged to the small outlying village of Coweta Town (not the same as the Coweta Town on the Chattahoochee River (Kokomoor 2018)), situated on the Ocmulgee River. Creek headmen could do little except condemn the actions. Their limited ability to act, restricted by requirements of their political position, turned an isolated attack into a regional crisis and the gradual dissolution of the Creek Confederacy (Kokomoor 2018).

As the American Revolution (1775–1783) was underway, the colonial government of Georgia, briefly an independent nation until incorporated into the United States under the 1781 the Articles of Confederation (Hammack 2011), continued in its negotiations with the Creeks and the Cherokees. As part of the frontier during the American Revolution, Georgia's colonists were divided politically over the English and American causes (O'Donnell 1975). The colonists were also divided about the growing factionalism between the Creeks and the Cherokees, who were

negotiating their positions and land ownership in this new landscape, and the Choctaws, who maintained a long-held feud with the Creeks. By 1778, the English had invaded Georgia and shortly thereafter resumed control of the colony. The deaths of Indian agents as well as tribal leaders continued to change the political landscape and the ability to negotiate. Finally, in 1782, Alexander McGillivray, an Indian agent with a Scottish and Creek heritage, assumed leadership of the Upper Creek towns. He described himself as “principal chief of all of the Creeks” (O’Donnell 1975, 10), however, and acted as the spokesperson for Upper and Lower Creeks. McGillivray resisted continued expansion into Georgia, although not all of the tribal headmen took the same position as him (O’Donnell 1975).

Early Republic and American Expansion Period (1783–1821)

The independence of the former English colonies (including Georgia) was recognized in 1783 (Hammack 2011). The American Revolution, however, was a disaster for Native populations, who were excluded from the new country and its laws of governance and were pressured to give up more land and their cultural practices through assimilation. Native populations did not view the revolution as a new outcome but rather as one of a series of conflicts (Ramsey et al. 1995). However, Native populations would adapt rapidly to the changing circumstances in the years that followed (Countryman 2000).

By 1783, 15 Creek leaders again met with Georgia officials in Augusta and negotiated the Treaty of Augusta. In this treaty, the leaders agreed to cede their lands between the upper Savannah and the Upper Oconee Rivers. McGillivray was not present at this negotiation, and as a result, the American and Creek Confederacy groups in the negotiation considered McGillivray’s group as having accepted the treaty by default (this was not his intention). Furthermore, McGillivray refused to sign any treaty for the next seven years (O’Donnell 1975), though other treaties were drawn up and signed between the United States and the Creek Nation (Ramsey et al. 1995). However, warfare was muted in Georgia, but it was commonplace elsewhere along the western frontier. In addition, diplomacy and acculturation were the main conduits for interactions between American and tribal authorities. One of the major proponents of this acculturation was Colonel Benjamin Hawkins (Smith 1992), the primary federal agent for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the South from 1796–1803 (Remler 2005) and who lived in the Ocmulgee region.

Events near Savannah in 1792 had rippling effects across Georgia and the Ocmulgee River valley. Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, and his invention increased the productivity of one worker up to 50 times. Increased productivity, decreasing cotton prices (Burns 2007), and the proliferation of enslaved labor to use in cotton production (New South Associates 2018) allowed cotton to become the primary cash crop of the South. In order to capitalize on the demand for cotton and turpentine, town and manufacturing development increased near rivers (Hammack 2008). Macon, Hawkinsville, and the Ocmulgee River would join in the new industrialization of the time (Burns 2007). Eventually, protection of slavery and a plantation-based economy would lead to the Civil War (New South Associates 2018).

At the beginning of 19th century, the Creek Nation consisted of dozens of communities bound together by a centralized political entity — the National Council (Kokomoor 2018). The Creek Nation, which was an adaptation to the crises affecting the Creek people during the preceding century, was distributed through present-day Georgia, Alabama, and the Florida panhandle.

The National Council, brought about by the crises of the 1770s where the headmen could not exercise authority, both created and enforced regional laws. The National Council was based on Euro-American political organization and would come to administer the Creek state (Kokomoor 2018), taking away tradition and authority from the *Esti Mvskoke em Etehvlvtkv* (Lee 2014).

By 1806, numerous treaties eventually designated the Georgia boundary at the Ocmulgee River (Day and Klingelhofer 2019; Hammack 2011; Joseph, Hamby, and Long 2004; Ramsey et al. 1995; Curtis 1993b; Butler 1879). In the Treaty of 1805, the Creeks ceded all of their lands east of the Ocmulgee except for a 15-square-mile tract called the Ocmulgee Old Field, which included both the Macon Plateau and Lamar archeological sites (Wheeler 2007; Walker 1994). In this treaty, the Creeks granted the United States the right to establish and maintain a military and a trading house within the 15-square-mile tract (Curtis 1993b; Butler 1879). Although the Creeks retained title to the land, they allowed the building of Fort Hawkins (9BI21) in 1806 (Elliot, Matthews, and O'Steen 2013; Joseph, Hamby, and Long 2004; Walker 1994), establishing the first permanent American settlement along the Ocmulgee River (Hammack 2011).

The Uchee Trading Path also became an important feature during the 1805 Treaty as a way for the United States government to control infrastructure and improve transportation from the eastern coast to the interior. The US government improved the road from Fort Hawkins westward, and by 1812 the road connected Fort Hawkins to Fort Stoddart north of Mobile Bay (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Elliot, Matthews, and O'Steen 2013). Pulaski County, which had once been the capital of the Creek Nation, and Twiggs County were established in 1808 and 1809, respectively (City of Hawkinsville and Pulaski County 2020; Twiggs County 2019).

Colonel Benjamin Hawkins picked out the land for Fort Hawkins at a strategic spot overlooking the river (Butler 1879). Fort Hawkins was garrisoned in 1807, although it never saw military action (Curtis 1993b). Rather, it served as a center of commerce and diplomacy between the tribal and American authorities (Day and Klingelhofer 2019) for 18 years (Elliot, Matthews, and O'Steen 2013). During the War of 1812 and through the subsequent Creek War of 1813–1814, Fort Hawkins was a point for the deployment of troops (Hammack 2011), and some of these troops were American Indian (Creek and Yuchi). Soldiers from Fort Hawkins were vital to General Andrew Jackson's victory in the Battle of New Orleans in 1815 (War of 1812) (Elliot, Matthew, and O'Steen 2013). During the Creek War, brief skirmishes occurred approximately two miles away, and a battle was fought on the opposite side of the river. Additional forts were constructed under order of General Blackshear along the Ocmulgee River as a result of ongoing tensions between Creek factions and the United States (Butler 1879). Additional fragmentation of tribal towns occurred after the Creek War with some people moving to Florida, which was still under Spanish control (Spain 2019).

In 1817, the western frontier of the United States had moved on to Fort Smith, Arkansas (Elliot, Matthews, and O'Steen 2013). By 1818, white settlers had leased land surrounding Fort Hawkins for settlements (now part of the Fort Hill Historic District and East Macon Historic District) (Curtis 1993a, Curtis 1993b). From 1819 to 1824 soldiers and equipment for war were slowly moved and the fort was decommissioned (Elliot, Matthews, and O'Steen 2013).

American Indian Removal, Antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction Period (1821–1900)

As the frontier of the United States continued to push west, more conflict arrived in the Ocmulgee River corridor. By the mid-19th century, the removal of Native tribes to Indian Territory allowed for the expansion of plantation-based agriculture, which relied on enslaved labor. The expansion of plantation-based agriculture brought new economic opportunity and increased overland transportation of raw goods to industrialized centers. The cumulative effects of this period enriched the Euro-American towns in the Ocmulgee River corridor in the early and mid-19th century, but by the end of the Civil War, the towns and communities struggled. While the period of Reconstruction brought positive changes that improved the lives of formerly enslaved African Americans, white resistance to change brought racial terror to these newly freed people.

Indian Treaties and the Establishment of Counties within the Ocmulgee River Corridor

In 1821, the First Treaty of Indian Springs between the United States and 26 Creek headmen ceded land between the Flint and Ocmulgee Rivers and the land upon which Fort Hawkins stood (Hammack 2011; Wheeler 2007; Butler 1879). Anger over this treaty led the Creek National Council to resolve never to cede more ancestral land (Maloney 2011). As a result of the treaty, the state of Georgia created new counties including Houston County, which was settled via land lottery with preference going toward military veterans (Hammack 2011). A farm community called York, now known as Warner Robins, sprang up soon after the establishment of Houston County (Head 2005). A year later in 1822, Houston County was further divided, Bibb County was legislated (Hammack 2011), and authority was granted to construct public buildings and to lay out the city of Macon (Butler 1879).

In 1823, James Webb conducted the survey and layout of Macon. Land parcels in Macon sold quickly and houses were soon built. In 1824, Macon became an incorporated town (Butler 1879). In the same year, Fort Hawkins became a civilian facility (Elliot, Matthews, and O'Steen 2013). The town continued to grow and began to look toward cotton and enslaved labor for commerce. The first railroad survey in the state was for a railroad between Macon and Milledgeville in 1825, though no action toward laying track was taken at this time (Butler 1879). In the 1820s, commerce and trade continued to rely primarily on the Ocmulgee River via log rafts under the direction of pole-handling crews of enslaved people. Landings connected the settlements along the river all the way to towns such as Darien on the East Coast, where the raw agricultural goods or timber were processed (Hulett 2004). By 1829, steamboats on the Ocmulgee River were servicing Macon (Hammack 2011) along with the barges, flats, and other traffic transporting cotton, and the combination of river and later rail transportation supported further industrialization in the area (New South Associates 2018; Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Burns 2007).

In 1825, Creek leader William McIntosh, the son of a Scottish trader and a Creek mother, and other headmen signed away the remaining Creek land in Georgia for territory in present-day Oklahoma. The transaction occurred via the Second Treaty of Indian Springs without approval of the Creek National Council and with opposition from the majority of Creek chiefs (NPS 2019; Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Haveman 2009; Green 1982; Armistad 1957). After a

long debate, the Creek National Council appointed a group of over 100 warriors from the ceded land to execute McIntosh, two of his sons-in-law, and Etomme Tustunnuggee, the second chief of Coweta who had signed the treaty for the illegal sale of land. The leader of this group was Menawa, a war chief from the Creek village of Okfuskee, who had previously led the Red Stick forces against Major General Andrew Jackson's forces at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. At this battle, McIntosh had mustered Creek forces at Fort Hawkins, allied with the Americans, and fought against Menawa and the Red Stick forces. (NPS 2019, 2017; Elliot, Matthew, and O'Steen 2013; Maloney 2011; Green 1982, Armistad 1957; Butler 1879). A delegation from the Creek Nation was able to nullify the illegal treaty in 1826 and sign the Treaty of Washington. This treaty restored the land that was lost in Alabama but not the land that was ceded in Georgia. (Haveman 2017, 2009; Green 1982). For the next decade, many Lower Creek people suffered and starved as Euro-Americans continued to move into Creek territory and force them off of their land (Haveman 2009). By 1828, Fort Hawkins, the surrounding land, the mounds nearby and on the Macon Plateau, and the former Creek reservation of the Ocmulgee Old Fields were sold. The origins of the mounds had been lost to the new Euro-American population, but the origins were not lost to the Creek peoples (Hunt 2020; Pauketat and Alt 2015; Wheeler 2007; Walker 1994; Butler 1879).

A few years later, the Georgia General Assembly granted a portion of Houston County to Pulaski County. This land is now the City of Hawkinsville, incorporated in 1830 (City of Hawkinsville and Pulaski County 2020; Hammack 2011) and named after Colonel Benjamin Hawkins. When the city was incorporated, its economy relied on corn agriculture and timber. However, soon the town grew into an important river port and trade center that transported cotton and other supplies along the Ocmulgee and Altamaha Rivers to Darien on the East Coast. The destruction of railroad lines during the Civil War allowed Hawkinsville to expand further, and by the end of the 1800s, Hawkinsville was the upriver terminus for most steamboats traveling along the Ocmulgee River (Remler 2005).

Indian Removal and the Nene Estemerkv (Road of Misery) or Trail of Tears

The 1830s bore witness to the Seminole Wars and the political rise of Andrew Jackson, who visited Macon and Fort Hawkins in his military campaign against Native populations in Florida (Elliot, Matthews, and O'Steen 2013; Hammack 2011). President Andrew Jackson would sign the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which was an extension of the previous treaty process and was carried out under formal diplomacy between the United States and Native populations. The act gave the president power to grant unsettled lands west of the Mississippi in exchange for Indian lands within state borders (Drexler 2019). The true goal of this act, however, was to provide legal validation for the ongoing westward encroachment of Euro-Americans and the US federal government and the total and complete loss American Indian land (Haveman 2009; Countryman 2000). Despite the veneer of legitimacy that this act has taken on, it may more accurately be understood as one of many examples of institutionalized violence against Native populations. Dunbar-Ortiz notes that violence and institutional violence is used in settler-colonial societies to force people to relinquish land, resources, family, culture, and more. (Dunbar-Ortiz 2015). Within the long tradition of Euro-American scholarship on American Indian removal in the West, the full horror of the theft of Native land (Wendt 2020) and removal is regularly sanitized, and Dunbar-Ortiz notes that this is a continuation of the genocidal tendencies than

accompanied European arrival and Euro-American expansion (Dunbar-Ortiz 2015). The Indian Removal Act ultimately allowed for the ethnic cleansing of Native peoples in the Southeast for Euro-American expansion (Hunt 2020).

The 1832 Treaty of Cusseta (Third Treaty of Washington) would result in the final loss of the Creek Nation's land in Alabama and east of Mississippi River (Day and Klingelhofer 2019; Maloney 2017; Ramsey et al. 1995). Although treaty provisions granted Creeks the right to remain on individual farmsteads for five years (Haveman 2009; Ramsey et al. 1995; Smith 1992), white squatters and settlers continued to intrude onto their lands, move west, and prosecute the Creeks under state and local laws (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Ramsey et al. 1995). These consistent pressures eventually pushed Creek populations into Indian Territory in Oklahoma (Day and Klingelhofer 2019). The Creeks were forced out of Georgia in 1833 (Hammack 2008); by 1838, the removal was considered complete (Smith 1992).

In conjunction with the 1832 Treaty of Cusseta, a census of the Creek Nation listed 82 tribal towns, some of which shared the same name and some of which were "related," having sprung from an original town (a mother town). Before being forced from their homeland, however, the *Mvskokulke* ceremonial leaders gathered embers before they extinguished sacred fires in each *etvlwv*. This created a living connection between the *Mvskoke* homeland, society, and religion in the Southeast that survived *Nene estemerkv* (Road of Misery), also known as the Trail of Tears. These connections are maintained by the *etvlwv* in the West through today, such as through the layout of town plans, town names, ceremonial places (Harjo 2019; Perez 2019; Lee 2014), ceremonial practices, and important plants (New South Associates 2020; Freeman 2019). The Creeks encountered numerous hardships during their journey west, including federal government neglect and attack from hostile tribes. Some federal officials noted and complained to the secretary of war about the destruction of the Creek nation and way of life. Enclaves of Creeks, who had taken refuge among Cherokee people, were able to escape the removal by going to Florida, though they still struggled (Ramsey et al. 1995). Once the survivors of *Nene estemerkv* (Road of Misery), also known as the Trail of Tears, arrived in Indian Territory, there was still much suffering, illness, and death as they struggled to reestablish their tribal towns and way of life. As Melissa Harjo recounts, these trials include federal boarding schools where she and others were taught English, even though elder family members either did not speak English or refused to speak it. As has come down through oral histories, tribal elders encouraged their children and younger members to remember where they came from and honor their heritage (Harjo 2019).

Macon Before the Civil War

Meanwhile, during the 1830s, the town of Macon continued to grow, seemingly overnight thanks to (1) its prominence on the river for trading cotton to the East Coast, (2) the construction of the first commercial steamboat in 1832 (Bland et al. 2001), (3) the first Darien-to-Macon steamboat that ran in 1833, and (4) the arrival of steamboat companies in the town in 1835 (Hulett 2004). The river and surrounding wetlands also supported freshwater fisheries (Bland et al. 2001). A limited railroad was laid in the 1830s (Butler 1879), which competed with the Ocmulgee River for overland trade in cotton and other goods (Burns 2007). In 1836, a railroad convention was held in Macon with designs for it to be a central rail hub, and two years later, the Monroe Railroad made its first run from Macon to Forsyth (Andrews, Collings, and

Lee 2014). Other businesses opened and operated in Macon during this time, including the Georgia Female College (later known as Wesleyan College), which was established in 1836. The Georgia Female College was one of the first colleges in the United States to grant degrees to women (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Huff 2006; Anderson 2003). Additional colleges and schools were founded in the 1850s and after the Civil War, and in 1871 the town won the bid to move Mercer University to Macon (Anderson 2003).

In the early 1840s, more resources were diverted toward railroad construction than the maintenance of trade resources and channels along the Ocmulgee River (Hulett 2004). The movement of resources toward the railroad brought the Central Georgia Railroad, constructed in 1843. The installation of this railroad, which supported the growth of central Georgia's agricultural system (Day and Klingelhofer 2019) and overland transportation (Burns 2007), damaged the Mississippian mound complex on the Macon Plateau (New South Associates 2018; Jones 2005). By 1847–1848, river transportation of cotton had nearly ceased (Hulett 2004), and Macon served as a central hub for railroad traffic (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014).

The Civil War in the Ocmulgee River Corridor

From the 1830s through 1860s, the United States grew exponentially in land holdings to the west and in economic strength. During this time of rapid change, there was increasing debate surrounding slavery and whether it should extend into the new western territories. Abolitionists wanted the new regions to be free, and Southerners were against prohibition of slavery (National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings Volume 1960). By the 1850s, however, the Southern slavery-based plantation economic system had slumped, and in 1860 Southerners felt that the US government, headed by newly elected President Abraham Lincoln (Hammack 2011), was hostile toward slavery and, by extension, their way of life. South Carolina became the first state to secede from the United States in 1860, and in 1861, Georgia joined South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama to establish a separate nation and leave the United States over the issue of slavery (New South Associates 2018; Confederate States of America 1860, 1861). The Civil War started in 1861, with 13 states making up the Confederate States of America (New South Associates 2018; Hammack 2011). The Civil War had various impacts on the Creek Nation and Creek peoples living in Indian Territory in the West. Some factions supported the Union, others supported the Confederate States, and yet other factions wished to remain uninvolved. These attitudes were partially based on which factions had resisted removal, which factions were more open to assimilation, and which factions took a position of neutrality. There was lingering hostility among these factions (Bales 1998; Scott 1996; White and White 1996). One faction of the Creek Nation made an alliance with the Confederate States of America, believing that should they win, the Confederate States of America would restore rights to their former lands (Ramsey et al. 1995). Major battles were fought in Georgia, and Macon thrived due to war industries located there and due to its railroad, which supported the Confederate army (New South Associates 2018; Hammack 2011).

Macon's success would also make it a target of Union forces as part of Sherman's "March to the Sea" in 1864. Union Major General George Stoneman led a column of Union cavalrymen south along the Ocmulgee River to join other Union forces. Stoneman continued south, though, hoping to capture Macon and liberate Union soldiers held at Camp Oglethorpe (Ocmulgee National Monument 2004, 2015), just south of Macon (New South Associates 2018) and

Andersonville before joining with Sherman. The Samuel Dunlap house, built on the Ocmulgee Old Fields in 1856, served as Stoneman's headquarters during his attack on Macon and destruction of the rail lines (New South Associates 2018; Wheeler 2007; Ritchie 1973). The Confederate troops in Macon had advance warning of Stoneman's approach, however, and the ensuing battle is known as both "The Battle of Dunlap Hill" and "The Stoneman Raid" (Ocmulgee National Monument 2004, 2015).

Another skirmish occurred at Griswoldville, approximately 10 miles east of Macon as part of Stoneman's Raid. Stoneman's forces rode from Macon to Griswoldville attacking the rail lines. One of his forces uncoupled cars with supplies, set them on fire, and sent the cars down the rail toward Griswoldville. Meanwhile, the engine was stoked and sent, unmanned, toward Macon, where it crashed with a passenger train (New South Associates 2020). Several features associated with the small skirmish at Griswoldville and the defense of Macon contribute to the national register listing for Ocmulgee National Monument in 1966 (Robins Air Force Base 2016; Hawke 2010; Butler 1879).

Stoneman and his men were captured and imprisoned at Camp Oglethorpe and Andersonville (New South Associates 2018).

Later in 1864, another skirmish, "The Battle of Walnut Creek," took place on the Dunlap Plantation when Union forces, led by Brigadier General Judson Kilpatrick, attempted to burn down the Georgia Central Railroad trestle and repelled a Confederate attack. This skirmish was executed primarily to divert Confederate forces from blocking Sherman's movement through Georgia (New South Associates 2020; Wheeler 2007; Ocmulgee National Monument 2004, 2015). The fighting on the Dunlap property was the only Civil War battle to take place near Macon (Wheeler 2007; Ocmulgee National Monument 2004; Ritchie 1973), and the Battle of Walnut Creek was the last (New South Associates 2020). Macon temporarily served as the capital of Georgia for one month in early 1865 (Ocmulgee National Monument 2004, 2015). Macon and the surrounding area surrendered to Union forces 11 days after Robert E. Lee's surrender to Ulysses S. Grant (Wheeler 2007; Ocmulgee National Monument 2004, 2015; Butler 1879). Not long thereafter, Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his family were captured and sent as prisoners to Macon (Hammack 2011).

Reconstruction in the Ocmulgee River Corridor

After the Civil War, military troops occupied the former Confederate states until 1871 (Day and Klingelhofer 2019), which brought support for newly freed African Americans and concern among white Southerners (Manis 2004). The end of enslavement and the Reconstruction period (1861–1900) allowed African Americans to build communities by finding lost family members, building churches, and founding businesses, social organizations, and political groups. During Reconstruction, the state governments in the South, dominated by Republicans, created public education systems, expanded tenant's rights, funded improvements to public health concerns and infrastructure, and in some areas, passed laws forbidding racial discrimination in public accommodations (Downs and Masur 2017). Southerners who fought for the Confederacy were deprived of their right to vote, hold public office, or sit on juries, and others were imprisoned or executed as traitors (Hammack 2011). After the Civil War, many plantation owners and farmers lost their land for failing to pay taxes (Hammack 2011), and agricultural production was halted,

causing a ripple effect throughout the supporting industries. Disease, especially among poor and African American communities, ran rampant. Racial anxieties rose with race riots and white supremacy violence increased with terrorism and lynching (Manis 2004).

African Americans voted for the first time in Georgia in 1867 and elected African American representatives to the state senate and house. In 1868, under a new state constitution (Manis 2004) Henry McNeal Turner, who was born free and served as chaplain for the US Colored Troops during the Civil War (Downs and Masur 2017), was elected to the state legislature to represent Macon. By September 1868, however, the white members of the legislature voted to remove the African American members, including Turner, thus showing the tenuousness of African American political power in Georgia. This enfranchisement would continue to be challenged and eventually taken away as white, conservative Democrats regained control of the state government (Manis 2004).

During the 1868 presidential election, the Ku Klux Klan intimidated African Americans in Macon to prevent them from voting (Manis 2004). Republican candidate Ulysses S. Grant won the presidency, and Republican senators sought to amend the US Constitution to secure voting rights for African American men. Complex racial politics entered into debates on each amendment draft. The 15th Amendment, ratified by Congress on February 3, 1870, prohibited restrictions to vote based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude, but literacy tests, gender discrimination, religious affiliation, and property ownership remained legal as a means of denying access to voting (Downs and Masur 2017).

In Georgia, literacy tests, grandfather clauses, a cumulative poll tax adopted in the 1877 state constitution, and the institution of white-only primary voting (political parties did not fall under the jurisdiction of the 15th Amendment) were all deployed to limit African American men's access to voting. In Macon, the white-only Democratic primary was adopted in 1901, and only about 6% of African American men voted in the 1904 election. Statewide, the number of African American voters dropped from 53% in 1876 to 8% by 1900 (Manis 2004). Coupled with this disenfranchisement, there was a rise in political populism and the stoking of fear that African Americans would control Georgia. Interracial alliances quickly broke down in the face of the virulent racial stereotyping and propaganda, and white supremacist ideology eventually dominated in the South (Downs and Masur 2017).

From the beginning of the Civil War, as enslaved people and their families fled north, the United States was concerned with replacing the slaveholding labor system. Formerly enslaved people hoped to own and farm land, but plantation owners resisted this, wanting to grow cash crops, like cotton, on large tracts of land and maintain their economic strength. Near the end of the Civil War, large numbers of formerly enslaved people in Georgia and elsewhere were able to acquire small plots of land through Major General William Sherman's Field Order No. 15. Many, however, resumed work for white landowners (Downs and Masur 2017), and cotton agriculture and industry eventually resumed (Wheeler 2007) under a system of sharecropping by both African American and white tenants (Hammack 2011). Lumber was also in high demand immediately after the Civil War, and the longleaf pine that grew in the Ocmulgee River basin, especially around Hawkinsville, was sent down the river to mills (Hulett 2004).

After the Civil War, railroad companies expanded and, in 1873, the Central Georgia Railroad relocated a track of the Macon, Dublin & Savannah Railroad to its present location, damaging the Funeral Mound located on the Macon Plateau and unearthing burials and artifacts (Wheeler 2007; Butler 1879). The Georgia Southern and Florida Railroad also planned an expansion to connect Macon to Perry via a train station at the farm community of York, later renamed to Wellston. Wellston continued to be supported by the cultivation of pecans, peaches, corn and by dairy products. Wellston would later become the site of Robins Air Force Base, which had enormous impacts on the local economy (Head 2005).

The rail expansion encouraged further industrial development. Cotton-processing textile mills such as the Bibb Manufacturing Company, established in 1876 (US Tariff Commission 1971), expanded the cotton economy. Expansion of the textile industry further prompted demand for bricks (Moffson and Johnston 2002), and Macon benefitted, as it was located in an area with clay deposits suitable for brick manufacture (Brockington and Associates 1999). In 1859, Macon devoted 10 acres of public land at “Camp Oglethorpe” for continued brick yard purposes as had been the land’s use (Moffson and Johnston 2002; Bland 2001) before using it to imprison Union officers in 1864 (New South Associates 2018).

In 1877, the Cherokee Brick and Tile Company (in operation today) purchased land to mine clay deposits in Macon. The clay deposits were near railroad lines, allowing the company to ship its products efficiently. By the 1890s, Bibb County was known for having the best clay deposits in the state, and the area attracted geological survey and more clay industries to the area (Moffson and Johnston 2002). Some of the mined clay deposits are located in the southeast portion of Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park, covered by the Walnut Creek wetlands (Wheeler 2007), and others are located to the west of the Ocmulgee River within the Ocmulgee Old Fields Traditional Cultural Property (Brockington and Associates 1999). Fertilizer (guano) was an additional resource that supported the Macon economy, and the Ocmulgee Old Fields Traditional Cultural Property area was used for brick and fertilizer factories and as a dairy farm. These industries impacted the archeological sites on the Macon Plateau and along the Ocmulgee River (Wheeler 2007).

In Macon and Hawkinsville, an important trade center and river port since the 1830s, supplies, raw materials, and processed goods were traded to the East Coast via boats and barges (Bland et al. 2001) on the Ocmulgee and Altamaha rivers. The arrival of the Macon and Brunswick Railroad in 1868 further bolstered Hawkinsville as a regional trade center, with the city now being able to access new interior markets for cotton and supporting the manufacturing of textiles, cotton seed oil, lumber, and fertilizer. By the 1870s, there were wooden warehouses and cotton sheds lining the riverfront as a result of the prosperous river-borne trade, but a fire in 1879 destroyed many of these buildings. Merchants rebuilt using brick in the 1880s, and many of these brick buildings survive today (Moffson and Ciucevich 2004). By the end of the century, though largely a port town, Hawkinsville also began to support equestrian demonstrations such as harness racing (Remler 2005).

Growth and Depression Period (1900–1941)

Georgia saw an expansion of manufacturing industries during this period, which brought more people to urban areas. The growth in population led to the creation of new counties, as well as new building projects for the towns along the Ocmulgee River to house the increasing industrial businesses, civic institutions, and growing population. The Great Depression had widespread impacts in the South, and New Deal programs, resisted by the Georgia state government, brought jobs to many of those who were out of work. The New Deal archeological investigations on the Macon Plateau led to the creation of Ocmulgee National Monument and dramatically improved the understanding of the precontact Southeast, which is still being studied today. The entrance of the United States into World War II brought new jobs to the area in support of military operations. Throughout these variations in economic prosperity, African American citizens and white citizens lived in separate worlds due to legal segregation and Jim Crow laws.

Growth

Cotton continued to be the backbone of the Southern agricultural economy during Reconstruction, including in towns located along the Fall Line such as Macon and Hawkinsville. The Ocmulgee River corridor saw growth and expansion of textile mills such as the Henry Cotton (later Hawkinsville Cotton) Mill in 1904 and supporting industries. New industries were supported by the expansion of the railroad through the 1890s and early 1900s (Hammack 2011; Moffson and Ciucevich 2004). By 1909, due to the prevalence of railroad commerce, steamboat traffic to Macon ceased (Hulett 2004). Commercial traffic and trade on the Ocmulgee River, primarily for shipping pine timber, continued to decline until it ended in 1944, as large timber companies depleted the pine forests (Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission 2011; Hulett 2004). At the same time, the municipal government acknowledged the importance of the Ocmulgee River and its natural resources, and there was concern about increased pollution from the growing population and businesses (Hulett 2004; Lamar 1944). By 1913, Bibb County passed legislation limiting discharge of sewage into the river (Hulett 2004).

Macon's economic growth, spurred by the railroad, included efforts to annex east Macon, now the Fort Hill Historic District, into city limits (Curtis 1993b). In Hawkinsville, the prosperity of the town is reflected in the construction of multistory commercial and civic buildings downtown (Moffson and Ciucevich 2004). The Southern economy, despite this growth, still relied on low-wage workers (Downs and Masur 2017). Cotton prices declined globally throughout the early 20th century (Downs and Masur 2017), and cotton production plummeted in the 1920s due to devastation caused by the boll weevil. Cotton never recovered its economic dominance following the Great Depression (New South Associates 2018; Burns 2007; Joseph, Hamby, and Long 2004; Moffson and Ciucevich 2004).

The clay resources along the Ocmulgee River that provided raw materials for brick making also supported the growth of a concrete industry. Forested areas around Macon supported timber harvesting, lumber milling, turpentine, and rosin and gum industries from the late 1880s to the 1920s (Hammack 2011; Hulett 2004). The population and economic growth that resulted from these industries also led the state of Georgia to look at the Ocmulgee River for generating

electric power and supplying water for homes and businesses. The Lloyd Shoals Dam built in 1920 in Butts County, upriver from Macon (Hulett 2004), provided both.

In Hawkinsville, the importance of timber and lumber was established by 1926 with three lumber companies operating out of the town (Moffson and Ciucevich 2004). That same year, Hawkinsville was chosen as a winter training venue for equestrian harness racing (Remler 2005). Changes in the economic base along the Ocmulgee River and elsewhere in Georgia resulted in a population shift toward urban areas and an increase in industry and manufacturing (Joseph, Hamby, and Long 2004). The population shift additionally increased racial tensions and violence in urban areas (Manis 2004). These racial tensions were exacerbated with the late 19th-early 20th-century creation and consolidation of the Lost Cause mythology and ideology in literature, film (e.g., *Birth of a Nation* in 1915), monuments (Anderson and Nail 2003), anniversaries, and festivals. Lost Cause mythology developed out of the dramatic changes that occurred during the Reconstruction period, which venerated the Old South even though it accepted the United States' victory over the Confederacy. In this mythology, Lost Cause proponents praised the honor of the Old South but held that the Confederacy was doomed and loss to the United States inevitable. Proponents portrayed Reconstruction as corrupt. In addition, Lost Cause proponents created a false narrative of mild slave owners, downplayed the horrors of slavery, and praised Confederate soldiers' actions while obscuring the cause and nature of the Civil War. By the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, the Lost Cause mythology had reached a national consciousness, and by the 100-year anniversary the mythology appeared in many public venues, including the National Park Service (Downs and Masur 2017).

As racial segregation was law and custom in the South, the African American entertainment industry emerged and was directed toward a white audience, and African American playhouses and theatres increased during the 1910s and 1920s. One African American-owned theater was the New Douglass Theatre, established in Macon in 1921 by Charles H. Douglass. Douglass also owned and operated the Ocmulgee Park Theater from 1904 to 1906 (Ellerbe 2004). The first Douglass Theatre, opened in 1912, operated out of the Colonial Hotel, the only hotel for African American guests in Macon. The New Douglass Theatre opened adjacent to the Colonial Hotel in 1921 and operated until 1973; the city of Macon purchased it in 1978. The Douglass Theatre featured acts such as blues singers "Ma" Rainey and Bessie Smith, jazz performers Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington, comedians such as Butterbeans and Susie (Ellerbe 2004), and later, rhythm and blues singer Ray Charles (Emerson 1993).

In 1912, the Georgia General Assembly established Bleckley County (Bleckley County, Georgia 2020) and the county seat was established in Cochran, (formerly called Dykesboro) in the 1830s. "Cochran" was selected to honor Judge Arthur E. Cochran, a former president of the Macon and Brunswick Railroad (Anderson and Nail 2003), which ran through nearby Hawkinsville (Moffson and Ciucevich 2004).

When the United States entered World War I (1914–1918) in 1917, Georgia was a major manufacturing supplier for the war effort as well as the location of military installations (Joseph, Hamby, and Long 2004). The postwar period brought new social changes for African Americans and other minority veterans fighting for democracy and equality at home and subsequent white supremacist responses of increased racial violence and lynching (Manis 2004).

Racial segregation, despite the achievements gained by African Americans during Reconstruction, remained both law and custom in Georgia and the southern United States. The Supreme Court case, *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896) legally affirmed racial segregation at the federal level in public education (Salvatore et al. 2000). The southern United States, furthermore, remained behind other regions in terms of spending on social welfare programs and education, leading to low literacy rates (Downs and Masur 2017). In Georgia, remnants of segregation and segregated public spaces in the late 19th and early 20th centuries can be found in Cochran (Anderson and Nail 2003), Hawkinsville (Moffson and Ciucevich 2004), and east Macon. Segregation of public spaces structured the East Macon Historic District and Fort Hill Historic District that preserve residential, commercial, and community buildings dating from about 1870 to 1941. The southern part of this district, historically occupied by white citizens, features Fort Hawkins School, built in 1920, which was used to educate white students. The area also featured a 1930s reconstruction by the Daughters of the American Revolution of the blockhouse of Fort Hawkins, an auditorium built by the Bibb Manufacturing Company for textile mill workers' use, and white churches. The north side of the Fort Hill district was occupied by African American citizens and features the M.M. Burdell School, built in 1936, and historic African American churches (Curtis 1993a; Curtis 1993b).

Depression

The Great Depression began with the crash of the US stock market in 1929, bringing unemployment, poverty, and suffering to the entire nation. In the South, farms were again lost (New South Associates), and the price of cotton plummeted (Mazzari 2004). People migrated to urban areas, seeking manufacturing jobs. To ease suffering and restore economic stability, state and national recovery plans were enacted (New South Associates 2018; Hammack 2011). One such plan, the Agricultural Adjustment Act, sought to limit farmland planted in cotton in order to drive up prices. For a period, this was successful, (Mazzari 2004), but agriculture and industry had to make adjustments during this difficult time (Moffson and Johnston 2002). In Hawkinsville, for example, the major timber and lumber companies operating in the town went out of business by the 1930s. Other businesses had to diversify their operations to survive, and as a result, peanut and pecan agriculture and industry came to dominate the local economy through the 1950s (Moffson and Ciucevich 2004).

In 1933, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt announced his New Deal economic policy. The federal government established programs to alleviate economic depression and strengthen the economy by creating jobs for federal work projects and through other means (New South Associates 2018). These programs touched nearly all economic sectors and facets of American life and sought to improve living conditions for rural populations. The New Deal programs supported labor unions, a higher living wage, and African American workers, which threatened low-wage private business practices (Mazzari 2004) and Jim Crow (Zainaldin 2016).

President Roosevelt's programs met resistance from politicians such as Georgia Governor Eugene Talmadge, factory and mill owners (Zainaldin 2016), and local communities where segregation and racial discrimination were entrenched. During Talmadge's two terms as governor, the state of Georgia tried to subvert the New Deal programs. Talmadge's increasingly hostile rhetoric included labeling the programs as communist and vetoing Georgia's participation in the new Social Security Administration. Former House Speaker E.D. Rivers

succeeded Talmadge as governor in 1936 and supported the New Deal programs. However, by the end of the decade, Georgia was once again moving away from the programs (Mazzari 2004).

The New Deal and Archeology

Interest in preserving the Macon Plateau Mounds began during the 1920s when Macon Attorney General Walter A. Harris wrote to the Smithsonian Institution and the Bureau of American Ethnology about archeological resources in the region. In 1933, Harris, Dr. Charles C. Harrold, and Linton Solomon persuaded the Macon Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Society for Georgia Archaeology, and the Macon Historical Society to acquire the site. They also sought labor and funds from President Roosevelt's New Deal programs (Wheeler 2007; Marsh 1986a, 1986b). Large-scale professional archeological efforts at Ocmulgee began during the Great Depression in 1933 and continued until 1941 under the direction of the National Park Service (Day and Klingelhofer 2019). These New Deal excavations "blew open the doors to understanding the Mississippian past" (Pauketat and Alt 2015, 1).

Funding came from New Deal programs, and the newly hired men and women received on-the-job training in excavation and artifact identification and cataloging. Professional archeologists, such as Dr. Arthur R. Kelly of the Smithsonian Institution, as well as James A. Ford, Jesse D. Jennings, Gordon R. Willey, and Charles H. Fairbanks, trained and supervised the men and women employed (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Marsh 1986a, 1986b). The sustained archeological effort changed the way the field of archeology was practiced (Day and Klingelhofer 2019) and launched the careers of Ford, Jennings, Willey, and Fairbanks, who became prominent archeologists (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014). The history of the archeological research at Ocmulgee itself is of significance (Day and Klingelhofer 2019), as the efforts provided one of the first examples of the use of archeology as an independent window into the American past (Waselkov 1994).

More than 800 individuals from the Civil Works Administration, Works Progress Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration) excavated at the Ocmulgee site (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014). The excavations resulted in the largest archeological excavation in American history, recovering more than 2 million artifacts during the entire endeavor, which spanned the years 1933–1941 (Day and Klingelhofer 2019). These early archeologists examined additional sites along the Ocmulgee River valley in 1935–1938; however, there were no comprehensive reports produced (Hammack 2008). Excavations also took place across Georgia (Southeast Archeological Center 2020; Halchin 2015; Walker 1971), at Fort Hawkins (9BI21), and Brown's Mount (9BI5) (Wheeler 2007).

The excavations documented many of the precontact-type sites and ceramic typologies for the southeastern United States, such as the Swift Creek site, the type site for the Swift Creek culture. The Swift Creek site was excavated by an all-female African American field crew from the Works Progress Administration (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Marsh 1998) as was the Irene Mound (9CH1) (Roller and Moyer 2020; Marsh 1998; Claassen 1993). The inclusion of African Americans in the New Deal excavations is significant, especially since Georgia Governor Eugene Talmadge (1932–1937 and 1941–1943) opposed New Deal programs and stoked fears about

African American workers earning more than white workers, communism, and the overreach of federal control onto states (New South Associates 2018).

With time, the federal and state agencies involved shifted, as did the focus of their work, from excavation to laboratory work and to a new emphasis on visitor facilities, as the public donated land to the federal government and lobbied for the creation of a national park (Day and Klingelhofer 2019; Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Lyons 1996; Marsh 1986a, 1986b; Lyon 1982). Ocmulgee National Monument was authorized by Congress on June 14, 1934, and established by presidential proclamation on December 23, 1936 (Day and Klingelhofer 2019; Wheeler 2007; Marsh 1986a, 1986b; Lyon 1982). Following the establishment of the park, the federal and state agencies built roads, the visitor center, and museum, reconstructed the Earth Lodge, planted vegetation, constructed fences, built shelters and footbridges, and continued to perform laboratory work on the artifacts (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; NPS 2014; Wheeler 2007; Lyon 1982). With the outbreak of the World War II, additional construction and improvements at the monument were delayed (Wheeler 2007).

The work of Kelly and his colleagues at Macon did much to dispel the notion that historic-period tribes were less than legitimate subject for archeological study (Waselkov 1994). They were also able to dispel some myths about the mounds, such as that they were built by the “lost colony” of Roanoke (Marsh 1986b). The archeologists digging at Macon took a long view of history and attempted to understand the entire continuum of human occupation (Waselkov 1994). In fact, one of the enduring goals for Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park and the Ocmulgee River valley is identifying the various peoples who lived in the area (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014). This period of cultural resources inquiry and conservation extended to natural resources along the Ocmulgee River, and the Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1939, protecting the upland pine forests and the habitat of various species (Hulett 2004).

After the New Deal excavations ceased in 1941, there were no other further large-scale excavations of the Macon Plateau and surrounding area. Excavations in subsequent years have been driven predominantly by federal compliance associated with construction projects. These projects, however, continue to attest to the importance of archeological deposits in the area (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014).

World War II to Present Period (1942–Present)

The military industry that arrived in the Ocmulgee River corridor as a result of World War II brought an additional increase in population and support industries. The river corridor experienced economic growth and vast cultural changes with the modern civil rights and Native rights movement groups, and individuals lobbied for constitutional equality (Camarillo et al. 2000; National Museum of the American Indian 2009), many as a result of their military experience. Infrastructure projects supported continued economic and population growth as well as increasing tourism to the river corridor, and these infrastructure projects also resulted in the discovery of new archeological sites. The Ocmulgee River corridor has experienced vast changes in the use of its resources and in the life and culture of the humans who occupy and visit it.

Growth During and After World War II

World War II accelerated economic, political, and social change in the United States (Camarillo et al. 2000). In Georgia, the Macon Chamber of Commerce and the mayor, with the support of US Congressman Carl Vinson, sought to bring the defense industry to the area. In 1941, the US War Department announced it would build an aviation depot, Robins Field (Robins Air Service) near the train station of Wellston, which was renamed Warner Robins in 1942 (Head 2005). Warner Robins and the surrounding area boomed from the federal resource influx at Robins Air Service as the United States entered World War II (1939–1945) in 1941 (Joseph, Hamby, and Long 2004). The installation was renamed Robins Air Force Base in 1947 (Hammack 2009; Head 2005).

Macon began to recover throughout World War II, and Warner Robins continued to expand alongside Robins Air Force Base. The military installation brought additional manufacturing jobs, increased the population, and boosted the local and state economy (Joseph, Hamby, and Long 2004) as a more racially, ethnically, and gender-diverse workforce, supported the war effort (Camarillo et al. 2000). The subsequent military threats and wars continued to create jobs in Warner Robins and attract technology and aerospace companies such as Boeing. Today, Robins Air Force Base is the largest industrial complex in Georgia (Head 2005).

By the 1950s, the per capita income had increased, and more people were employed in manufacturing than agriculture (Joseph, Hamby, and Long 2004). Manufacturing accelerated the use of traditional local resources, including lumber, pulp, and clay, specifically kaolin (Anderson 2003), which also has cultural value to the Seminole Tribe of Florida (Brockington and Associates 1999). Agriculture, which no longer relied on sharecropping, included tobacco, poultry, soybeans, and the continued increased production of peanuts and pecans (Anderson 2003).

Regional development continued through the 1950s and the 1960s, and archeological investigations took place as a result of compliance projects (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014) as Macon sought highways to connect it to other areas. Plans for Interstate 16 (I-16) to intersect with Interstate 75 (I-75) (Anderson 2003) were drawn up in the late 1950s, and originally the road was going to slice through Ocmulgee National Monument. In 1966, as a result of the compliance, mitigation, and excavation efforts associated with the installation of I-16, the National Park Service's research center known as the Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC) was established (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014). By the time the interstate was constructed in the late 1960s, the road ran parallel to the park boundary, separating the park from the Ocmulgee River (Wheeler 2007). During the construction of I-16, construction workers encountered archeological deposits such as burials and unearthed additional evidence for Paleoindian occupation of the area (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Burns 2007). The archeological center was later moved to Tallahassee, Florida, in 1972 (Wheeler 2007). Local citizens of Macon protested the move of SEAC and the artifacts from the New Deal excavations (Marsh 1986a).

The Civil Rights Movement

In Macon and elsewhere in Georgia during the 1950s, racial segregation was institutionalized. Segregation began to be dismantled through demonstrations, such as the bus boycott in

Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955, and legal victories, such as *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which desegregated public schools. There was also violence and intimidation as white people resisted integration (Camarillo et al. 2000). In Macon, white resistance to integration was moderate as compared (Crawley et al. n.d.) to elsewhere in the country, though the Ku Klux Klan operated in the area and violence did occur (Manis 2004; Brayan et al. n.d.). The changes in population brought about by World War II and the economic boom supporting Robins Air Force Base allowed Macon to end *de jure* segregation more easily than elsewhere in the South (Anderson 2003).

Desegregation also impacted entertainment in Macon, with youths breaking racial barriers to attend concerts. As a result, Macon found itself situated at the crossroads of soul and rock and roll music (Anderson 2003; Emerson 1993). The Douglass Theatre, having been in operation since the 1920s, was in competition with other African American theaters in Macon such as the Macon City Auditorium, built in 1925 (McKay 1971b), and the Roxy in the 1940s. Attendance at the Douglass Theatre began to drop in the 1950s (Ellerbee 2004).

In 1958, a local African American disc jockey named Hamp Swain introduced a live program and talent show called “The Teenage Party” on local radio station WIBB (WMAZ 2018; Ellerbee 2004). This helped launch the careers of Macon artists such as Little Richard, discovered first by Sister Rosetta Tharpe in 1947 at the Macon City Auditorium (Ruggieri 2020b); Johnnie Jenkins; Otis Redding, who moved to Macon as a child; and James Brown, who recorded in Macon in 1955 (*The Augusta Chronicle* 2011; Ellerbee 2004). The widespread popularity of these artists allowed for cultural crossover and supported desegregation and the growing music scene (Anderson 2003).

As Manis (2004) notes, African American citizens of Macon negotiated with the white elected officials for equality and were often successful, leading to fewer demonstrations as opposed to elsewhere in the South. Sometimes, however, demonstrations were necessary. Civil rights victories occurred in Macon as civil rights activists employed tactics that had proven successful elsewhere in the South. One such example was the Macon bus boycott in 1962 which sought an end to segregation on city buses, like its predecessor in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955. Inspired by contemporaneous national action without national civil rights organizations’ support (besides a local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)), local African American citizens secured victories for civil rights in Macon such as integrated lunch counters, schools, universities, public parks, and recreation spaces, and improved salaries and living conditions (Manis 2004; Crawley et al. n.d.). While *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregated schools *de jure* in 1954, which desegregated public schools (Camarillo et al. 2000), Macon did not integrate its public schools until 1964 (Honaker 2017). In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was passed, and it prohibited tactics designed to limit voting, guaranteed racial and religious minorities equal access to public accommodations, and outlawed job discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (Camarillo et al. 2000).

One civil rights loss in Macon, however, was Baconsfield Park, which had been left to the city of Macon in 1914 by segregationist Senator Augustus Octavius Bacon. As discussion on integration of the park grew, the debate led to court battles — even a Supreme Court case (*Evans v. Abney* (1970)). The court ruled in favor of Abney, and the park was returned to Bacon’s heirs, making it

private property and not subject to integration. Despite additional challenges to save the park, the park was lost to development in 1972 (Barron et al. n.d.).

By the late 1960s, desegregation and the Civil Rights Movement again impacted the music scene in Macon as Phil Walden, former manager of Otis Redding, built a powerful rhythm and blues booking agency in 1967 and the Capricorn record label (Capricorn Sound Studio) in 1969. Walden's company represented Percy Sledge, Sam and Dave, and Joe Tex and recorded Marshall Tucker, Wet Willie, and the Allman Brothers at the Capricorn Studio (Emerson 1993). Members of the Allman Brothers band rented a home in Macon from 1969–1973, which today serves as a museum, and they are considered founders of the “southern rock” genre (The Big House 2020) for which, in the 1970s, the Capricorn Sound Studios was known (Ruggieri 2020a). Capricorn Sound Studios still stands in Macon, and there is work underway with Mercer University to restore the historic recording studio, create rehearsal rooms, and record new performances (Ruggieri 2020a).

Economic Changes

Though only about 50 river miles apart, the economies of Hawkinsville and Macon began to diverge through the 1960s into the 21st century. During the 1960s and 1970s, Hawkinsville's economy was still mainly supported by agriculture and industry of peanuts, pecans, and cotton (Moffson and Ciucevich 2004), as well as paper. Harness racing, established in Hawkinsville at the turn of the century, continued to grow in importance, and in 1977 the Lawrence L. Bennett Harness Horse Training Facility opened. The exhibition races in Hawkinsville mark the beginning of the harness-racing season across the country (Remler 2005). By 1980, however, several businesses closed and Hawkinsville lost 17% of its population (Moffson and Ciucevich 2004).

Macon, meanwhile, saw a dramatic population increase by annexing part of its suburbs into the city in 1960. Its economy began to shift from agriculture and industry toward retail, with the opening of a shopping mall in 1975; healthcare and engineering, due in part to Robins Air Force Base; finances; insurance; and tourism. The 1960s also saw the foundation of new colleges in Macon, such as Central Georgia Technical College and Macon State College, which impacted the local economy, population composition, and cultural practices (Anderson 2003).

During these dramatic cultural and economic changes, Ocmulgee National Monument continued to receive support for improvements and sought to create stronger bonds with the local community. Funds for the completion of the museum and an administrative building were acquired in 1950, and the project was completed in 1951. American Indians and the local community were invited to a ceremony and festivities in a dedication program for the museum and administrative building (Marsh 1986a). In 1952, a two-day American Indian Festival was held at Ocmulgee National Monument, and 50 Creek Indians came from Oklahoma for the event, which included a stickball game between members of the Creek and Cherokee tribes, a concert, a parade, and craft demonstrations. Attendance at both the dedication ceremony and festival was high and both events were considered a success (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014; Marsh 1986a).

Decades later, in 1972, a Creek Indian Week festival at the national monument celebrated the heritage of Macon. There was a parade, displays, demonstrations, and performances (Wheeler

2007). There was also an attempt in that same year to support the relocation of Creek Indians to Macon and the creation of a living history program at the national monument (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014). The Macon Chamber of Commerce encouraged local business to provide jobs for Creek Indians, and Mercer University offered 10 full-time scholarships for study at their school. The US Bureau of Indian Affairs also provided transportation funds and grant money for a Creek-operated gift shop at the park. A few Creek Indians from Oklahoma temporarily moved to Macon, but the relocation program ultimately failed (Marsh 1986a).

In the 1970s and 1980s, archeologists with the University of Georgia, whose anthropology program was created as a result of the New Deal excavations, focused on cultural resource management. In the 1980s and 1990s, professional archeologists not affiliated with the University of Georgia pushed for the creation of a statewide archeology program to protect, manage, and research the terrestrial and underwater archeological resources in Georgia (Burns 2007). There was also an effort to recognize the architectural history of Bibb, Bleckley, Houston, Pulaski, and Twiggs Counties, with 57 nominations of historic districts and individual buildings to the National Register of Historic Places from 1970 to 1980. From 1981 to 2000, only 19 districts or properties were listed in the national register. Restoration also began on properties such as the Douglass Theatre (Ellerbe 2004; Anderson 2003).

In the 1980s and 1990s conservationists engaged in more activism to create greenways along the Ocmulgee River by linking protected wildlife areas and cultural sites from Jackson to Warner Robins. Other conservation projects included protecting the Ocmulgee tributaries and the hardwood and tupelo gum swamps (Hulett 2004). In 1989, the Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge was established to protect the ecosystem of the Ocmulgee River floodplain, a mixture of habitat types used by Paleoindian peoples up to the modern day (USFWS 2018). The refuge opened for public recreational uses in 2000 (USFWS 2002). For properties managed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Ocmulgee Wildlife Management Area was acquired in four separate transactions (deeded and purchased), beginning in 1989 and most recently occurring in 2006 (Bond et al. 2010). The Oaky Woods Wildlife Management Area was established in 1966 and has been managed by a variety of forest product corporations. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources acquired portions of Oaky Woods in five separate transactions beginning in 1995 and ending most recently in 2010 (Bond et al. 2014). The Echeconnee Creek Wildlife Management Area was formed in 1996 and subsequent land swaps in 2006 and 2018 have led to its current size (Bond, pers. comm., 2020).

In 1997, the Federal Highway Administration submitted a determination of national register of Historic Places eligibility to the Georgia State historic preservation officer for the Ocmulgee Fields Traditional Cultural Property as part of the Eisenhower Parkway Extension project (Studstill 1997). The proposed boundaries for the property were based on a combination of Muscogee (Creek) oral tradition (expressed in Tribal Resolution 95-10 and other documents), early historic accounts by Bartram and Hawkins, the Macon Reserve East/Treaty of 1805, and archeological data. The Creek consider the Ocmulgee Fields Traditional Cultural Property to be their place of origin and the site of their first permanent settlement — the “cradle of Creek Confederacy” (Bowen 1997). The keeper of the national register (keeper) agreed with the north and south boundaries of the Ocmulgee Fields Traditional Cultural Property, but requested additional information concerning the east and west boundaries (Andrews 1997). In 1999,

additional information was submitted to the keeper (Brockington and Associates 1999; Dreihaup 1999), and the boundaries and eligibility were formally established. A request for determination of eligibility was signed by the keeper of the national register that same year. The reviewer's comments in the determination of eligibility notes that the area between the Central City Park and the Rocky/Tobesofkee Creek drainage lack integrity due to modern development. The Muscogee (Creek) and Alabama-Coushatta tribes have indicated that the loss of integrity is only temporary and that the integrity would return once industrial activities cease (Harper 1999).

The Ocmulgee Fields Traditional Cultural Property was not ultimately listed in the national register, as additional information was needed about other cultural resources within the boundary that overlapped, coexisted with, or could have caused the boundary to potentially expand. Other cultural resources include the Central City Park, the Rocky/Tobesofkee Creek drainage, the undeveloped clay reserves of Cherokee Brick and Tile, and the buildings of the Burns Brick Company. Upland areas in Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge were also identified as providing possible evidence for the use of chert outcroppings and lithic manufacture (Shull 2000). Significant archeological sites were likely present within the Ocmulgee Old Fields Traditional Cultural Property and more information was needed to determine if it was eligible as an archeological district (Harper 1999).

In the course of site visits, tribal consultation, and review of cultural resource reports, the keeper identified areas and themes for additional consideration with the Ocmulgee Fields Traditional Cultural Property and the Ocmulgee River valley at large. These themes include the foundation of Macon, the history of railroads, the Civil War, "Art Moderne" architecture, clay mining, and brick making. Specific areas identified in Macon include the Central City Park (1) as the location of important fish runs and of the last great Muscogee (Creek) assembly (1817) before their removal to the West, (2) as important to the foundation of Macon (Shull 2000), and (3) as a historically popular venue for public entertainment (McKay 1971a). The park also contains portions of the One Mile Track (9BI7) and Deer Park (9BI8) archeological sites, which warrant further study, and a bandstand (Shull 2000) listed in the national register in 1972 for its architecture and historical association with ex-Confederate President Jefferson Davis and President William H. Taft (McKay 1971a).

Tribal consultation identified the Rocky/Tobesofkee Creek drainage area as a location once containing traditional towns of the Muscogee (Creek) people and a significant settlement location for ancestral groups (Brockington and Associates 1999). Other documentation submitted to the keeper indicated that the area was remembered in Creek oral histories, and the excerpts of Colonel Benjamin Hawkins's diary identified it as "old fields" (Hawkins 1916; Shull 2000). The archeological site of Screeching Hawk (9BI64) is also in this area, and artifacts continue to be recovered in the drainage (Shull 2000). It may be the case that branch towns or isolated Creek farmsteads were located in the area (Brockington and Associates 1999).

Clay resources have been mined in Georgia for centuries; as of 2000, the Cherokee Brick and Tile Company, established in 1877, produced 170 million bricks per year that contributed to numerous buildings in Macon (Moffson and Johnston 2002). An archeological compliance investigation in 1999 on land owned by the company identified nine precontact sites with cultural components dating from the Early Archaic to the late Mississippian periods. The sites

include the Adele Mound (9BI128), which is a Lamar-period mound complex. Seven of the nine sites were identified as eligible or potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, including the Adele Mound (Keith 2004; Bland et al. 2001). Thus, the clay reserves at Cherokee Brick and Tile, its associated buildings, and the precontact elements present on the company's property all speak to the rich history of Macon and the Ocmulgee River corridor.

Interest in the history and heritage of Macon has been growing over the last 20 years. The Ocmulgee Archaeological Society was established in 2003 to organize archeological and educational events in Macon and the surrounding area. Volunteers from local communities, historic societies, and members of the Society for Georgia Archaeology promote and run these events. Though not much archeological work has been conducted beyond compliance projects, the Ocmulgee Archaeological Society instituted the Ocmulgee River Basin Archaeological Project, the first regional investigation in the Upper Ocmulgee River valley since the New Deal archeological research. As of 2008, the project had been able to identify artifacts in local private collections and identified more than 30 sites previously unrecorded that range in date from the Paleoindian to the postcontact periods (Hammack 2008).

The continued expansion of highways and roads in the area has also led to discoveries of forgotten cemeteries, such as the discovery of an African American cemetery in 2008 along the Sardis Church Road. Known as the Avondale Burial Place (9BI164), it served an African American community of possibly enslaved and free individuals and their descendants. The human remains and associated mortuary material were relocated to the Bethel A.M.E. Church cemetery in Byron, Georgia (Matternes et al. 2012). Additionally, Lee (2014) notes that there are African American graves from the plantation that was situated on Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park and notes that this is not widely known, nor are the Works Progress Administration-era excavations of the Swift Creek site (9BI3), which were excavated by an all-female African American Works Progress Administration crew. Additional areas of research for the park would include emphasis on the lives of enslaved African Americans and their descendants who may still live in the surrounding community (Lee 2014).

As of spring 2018, there were 13 American Indian tribes traditionally associated with Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park: Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Kialegee Tribal Town, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, Poarch Creek Indians, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and Seminole Nation of Florida (New South Associates 2020). Recent park documents and oral histories captured during the Ethnographic Overview and Assessment (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014) and the draft historic resource study (New South Associates 2020) have sought tribal perspectives and input to better understand the history of this part of Georgia and improve interpretation and education at the park. Some tribal members, in turn, are becoming more open to sharing their history in the Southeast and connecting their youth to their ancestors and heritage for the continuation of the tribes (Perez 2019). One of the reasons that tribal members have not visited or regularly engaged, as stated in oral history interviews, is that their elders had told them to not go back to Macon. The reasons for this range from the sacredness of the Ocmulgee Mounds to

feeling the continued pain from the tribe's removal along *Nene estemerkv* (Road of Misery), also known as the Trail of Tears (Butler 2019; Freeman 2019; Harjo 2019). The Macon Plateau continues to be a sacred site for these tribes, and representatives have said that they want to change the perception that Native peoples are gone (New South Associates 2020; Lee 2014).

In 2019, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (PL 116-9) renamed Ocmulgee National Monument as Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park and adjusted the boundary to include approximately 2,100 acres of land, connecting the Macon Plateau (9BI1) to the Lamar site (9BI2). Also, in 2019, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation purchased a portion of the Brown's Mount site (9BI5). This purchase represents the first return of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to the Georgia landscape since their removal from the land (Watson 2020) and further demonstrates their desire to protect the archeological resources and cultural landscapes that encompass more territory than had previously been documented and recorded (Perez 2019). Land was central to Creek identity early on, as attested by US records in the late 1700s, and continues to be a core identity element today (Harjo 2019; Brockington and Associates 1999). Although in the West the total number of *etvlwv* have decreased in the subsequent centuries, the *etvlwv* of the homeland in the Southeast are remembered and included in contemporary ceremonial practices. When tribal members visit Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park, they can see cultural similarities between their contemporary practices and traditions in the West with the archeological material and landscape features at the park (Lee 2014). As Harjo reiterates, though, the embers were removed from the *etvlwv* in the East and reestablished in the West, and the tribal towns will not return to the Ocmulgee area (Harjo 2019).

Although the archeological investigations and subsequent books, articles, and reports have taught much about the ancient people living in the Ocmulgee area, there are still considerable knowledge gaps and areas for future research (Andrews, Collings, and Lee 2014). Some of these underexplored research opportunities include plantations and the lives of enslaved individuals; Reconstruction-era farms, tenancy, and sharecropping; manufacturing in wood, tar and charcoal, clay, minerals, and iron; brick making and industry; transportation; military fortifications, installations, and supporting industries and settlements; cemeteries; and areas of cultural interaction to better understand the rich mosaic of cultural and ethnic identities (Hammack 2011; Joseph et al. 2004; Shull 2000).

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