

Chickamauga and Chattanooga

National Military Park
Georgia/Tennessee
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Cover: The Battle of Chickamauga, 1863, from the painting by James Walker.

Courtesy U.S. Department of Defense

On these fields and hills, Union and Confederate armies clashed during the fall of 1863 in some of the hardest fighting of the Civil War. The prize was Chattanooga, key rail center and gateway to the heart of the Confederacy. The campaign that brought the armies here began late in June 1863 when Gen. William S. Rosecrans' Army of the Cumberland, almost 60,000 strong, moved from Murfreesboro, Tenn., against Gen. Braxton Bragg's 43,000 Confederates dug in 32 kilometers (20 miles) to the southwest defending the road to Chattanooga. Six months earlier, these same armies had clashed at Stones River where, after a 3-day struggle, the Confederates had retreated. Now, once more, through a series of skillful marches, Rosecrans forced the Southerners to withdraw into Chattanooga. There Bragg dug in again, guarding the Tennessee River crossings northeast of the city, where he expected Rosecrans to attack. But early in September the Federals crossed the Tennessee well below Chattanooga and again Bragg had to withdraw southward.

Eluding his Federal pursuers, Bragg concentrated his forces at LaFayette, Ga., 42 kilometers (26 miles) south of Chattanooga. Here reinforcements from East Tennessee, Virginia, and Mississippi swelled his ranks to more

than 66,000 men. Twice he tried unsuccessfully to destroy isolated segments of Rosecrans' army. Then, on September 18, hoping to wedge his troops between the Federals and Chattanooga, Bragg posted his army on the west bank of Chickamauga Creek along a line from Reed's Bridge to just opposite Lee and Gordon's Mill.

Fighting began shortly after dawn on September 19 when Union infantry encountered Confederate cavalry at Jay's Mill. This brought on a general battle that spread south for nearly 6.5 kilometers (4 miles). The armies fought desperately all day, often hand-to-hand, and gradually the Confederates pushed the Federals back to LaFayette Road (now U.S. 27). On September 20 Bragg again tried to drive between the Union force and Chattanooga, but failed to dislodge Rosecrans' line. Then a gap opened in the Federal ranks, and Gen. James Longstreet's Confederates smashed through the hole, routing Rosecrans and half his army. Gen. George H. Thomas took command of the remaining Federals and formed a new battleline on Snodgrass Hill. Here his men held their ground against repeated assaults, earning for Thomas the nickname "Rock of Chickamauga." After dark, Thomas withdrew his men from the field.

The defeat forced the Union troops to retreat into Chattanooga. The Confederates pursued, occupying Missionary Ridge, Lookout Mountain, and Chattanooga Valley. By placing artillery on the heights overlooking the river and blocking the roads and rail lines, the Southerners prevented Federal supplies from entering the city. Unless something was done to break the Confederate stranglehold, Rosecrans' army must surrender or starve.

Aware of Rosecrans' plight, Union authorities in Washington ordered reinforcements to his relief. Gen. Joseph Hooker came from Virginia late in October with 20,000 men and Gen. William T. Sherman brought in 16,000 more from Mississippi in mid-November. Thomas replaced Rosecrans as head the Army of the Cumberland and Gen. Ulysses S. Grant assumed overall command.

Within days of Grant's arrival at Chattanooga in October, the situation began to change dramatically. On October 28 Federal troops opened a short supply route (called the "Cracker Line") from Bridgeport, Ala. On November 23 Thomas' men attacked and routed the Confederates from

Orchard Knob. On the 24th, aided by a heavy fog that enshrouded the slopes of Lookout Mountain during most of the day, Hooker's soldiers pushed the Confederates out of their defenses around the Cravens House. On November 25, with most of Bragg's army now concentrated on Missionary Ridge, Grant launched Sherman's troops against the Confederate right flank and sent Hooker's men from Lookout Mountain to attack the Confederate left. Thomas' soldiers, in the center at Orchard Knob, were held in reserve.

Hooker was delayed crossing Chattanooga Creek and the Confederates halted Sherman's attack. To relieve the pressure on Sherman, Grant ordered Thomas' Army of the Cumberland to assault the rifle pits at the base of Missionary Ridge. This was quickly accomplished. Then, without orders, Thomas' men scaled the heights in one of the great charges of the war. The Confederate line collapsed and Bragg's troops fled to the rear. During the night they retreated into Georgia. The siege and battle of Chattanooga were over and Union armies now controlled the city and nearly all of Tennessee. The next spring, Sherman used Chattanooga for his base as he started his march to Atlanta and the sea.



Between 1890 and 1899 the Congress of the United States authorized the establishment of the first four national military parks: Chickamauga and Chattanooga, Shiloh, Gettysburg, and Vicksburg. The first and largest of these, and the one upon which the establishment and development of most other national military and historical parks was based, was Chickamauga and Chattanooga. It owes its existence largely to the efforts of Gen. H. V. Boynton and Ferdinand Van Derveer, both veterans of the Army of the Cumberland, who saw the need for a national park to preserve and commemorate these battlefields during a visit to the area in 1888.

Working mainly under the auspices of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland, a veterans organization, and the Chickamauga Memorial Association, Boynton and Van Derveer spent the better part of two years gathering support for the park idea among both Union and Confederate veterans. Early in 1890 Ohio Congressman Charles H. Grosvenor introduced into the 51st Congress a bill drafted by Boynton to establish the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park. Favorable reports by both the House and Senate Military Affairs committees brought speedy Congressional passage, and President Benjamin Harrison signed the bill on August 18, 1890.

In recommending the creation of the park, both Congressional military affairs committees pointed out that there was probably no other field in the world which presented more formidable natural obstacles to large-scale military operations than the slopes of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. Since the purpose would be to maintain the park in its historic condition, they also noted that there had been scarcely any changes in the roads, fields, forests, and houses at Chickamauga since the battle, except in the growth of underbrush and timber, which could easily be removed. Taken together these fields offered unparalleled opportunities for historical and professional military study of the operations of two great armies over all types of terrain met with in actual campaigns, such as mountains, gentle and steep ridges, open fields, forests, and streams that presented military obstacles. From carefully placed observation towers on Missionary Ridge, Lookout Mountain, and Chickamauga battlefield, it would be possible for observers and students to comprehend the grand strategy of the campaign over a front that extended 241.5 kilometers (150 miles) and to follow many tactical details of the actual battles. No battlefield park of this quality and magnitude could be found in any other nation of the world.

The park was officially dedicated, with impressive ceremonies, on September 18-20, 1895. Most of the 1,400 monuments and historical markers on the battlefields were planned and placed by Boynton and other veterans of the battles, under the supervision of the War Depart-

ment (which administered all national military parks until they were transferred to the National Park Service in 1933). Today the park is still maintained as closely as possible to its 1863 appearance.

Over the years the park established a close relationship with the military. Congressional legislation in 1896 declared Chickamauga and Chattanooga (along with all other national military parks) a national field "for military maneuvers for the Regular Army of the United States and the National Guard of the States." In keeping with this ruling, the park was used as a training area in 1898 for troops destined to fight in the Spanish-American War. Camp Thomas, named for Gen. George H. Thomas, was established on the Chickamauga battlefield and became a sprawling "city" of some 45,000 soldiers. In 1902 all military activity was transferred to newly established Fort Oglethorpe. Military use of the park ceased when Fort Oglethorpe was decommissioned in 1946.

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park is composed of a number of separate areas (indicated in green on the map at left): Chickamauga Battlefield, 11 kilometers (7 miles) south of Chattanooga on U.S. 27; Point Park and Lookout Mountain battlefield; Orchard Knob; and Missionary Ridge, containing a series of small units (called reservations) along its summit. All of these areas, along with Signal Point Reservation to the north, can be reached by following the map.

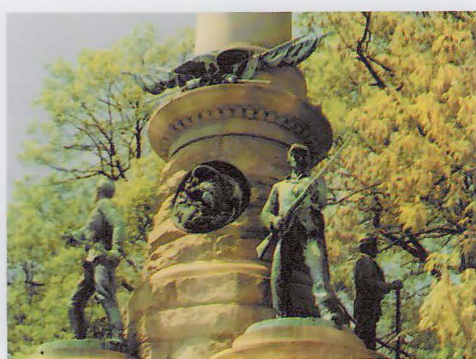
The park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is P.O. Box 2128, Fort Oglethorpe, GA 30742, is in charge.

For Your Safety We have made every effort to make your visit a safe one, but there are still hazards that require your vigilance. Be cautious and use common sense while hiking, climbing, and going up and down steps.

The assault on Lookout Mountain was one of the key engagements in the battle for Chattanooga. This walking tour (keyed by number to the map below) will direct you to the most important spots in the Point Park area. From the upper level to the Ochs Museum and Overlook (tour stop 4) is a descent of 152 meters (500 feet). There are several tiers of steps along the trail, so your physical condition will be tested. The visitor center, located across the road from the Entrance Gate (tour stop 1), contains an information area, an 8-minute slide orientation program, and a wide assortment of sales publications. From June through August, park rangers present a variety of daily tours, historical talks, and demonstrations in the park. Check at the visitor center for schedules of special events and activities.



Detail from Point Park Entrance Gate.



Illinois Monument. Missionary Ridge.

2 The three gun batteries inside the park mark a very small segment of the siege lines that once encircled Chattanooga. The first consists of two *Parrott Rifles*, so-named for their inventor, Robert Parrott of New York. These guns each weigh 793 kilograms (1,750 pounds) and their barrels are grooved (rifled) to increase firing accuracy. Their maximum range was 3 kilometers (2 miles) at a 5° elevation. They are easily recognized by the heavy metal placed on the breech for reinforcement against cracking from extreme heat.

The third, *Corput's Battery*, is near the western overlook from which Sunset Rock may be seen. Gen. James Longstreet used this rock as an observation point while watching a nighttime attack in Wauhatchie Valley.

3 The large monument in the center of the park is the *New York Peace Memorial*. On top of the shaft, Union and Confederate soldiers shake hands under one flag signifying peace and brotherly love. The monument is 29 meters (95 feet) high, 15 meters (50 feet) in diameter at the base, and constructed of Tennessee marble and pink Massachusetts granite.

4 The *Ochs Museum and Overlook*, high above the winding Tennessee River, was dedicated November 12, 1940. The museum was named in honor of Adolph S. Ochs, onetime Chattanooga resident and owner-publisher of the New York *Times*. The exhibits and pictures inside the museum depict the story of the battle for Chattanooga and its importance in determining the outcome of the Civil War. Umbrella Rock, to the front and left of the museum, is unsafe to climb.

5 At the *Cravens House* the fiercest fighting on the mountain took place. Confederate officers used the building for headquarters, and Union gunfire badly damaged it.

6 The *Bluff Trail*, the main hiking trail in the park, is reached by way of metal steps to the left of the museum. At this exact spot, Kentucky Volunteers climbed the mountain to reach the point and plant their flag. Many trails lead away from the main one, and all are well-marked.

Related Areas The Park Service maintains several other areas that played a part in the battle for Chattanooga. *Orchard Knob Reservation* marks the site of Grant's headquarters, from which he directed the Army of the Cumberland as it advanced against Missionary Ridge on November 25, 1863. *Missionary Ridge*, a low-lying mountain barrier east of Chattanooga, is approximately 32 kilometers (20 miles) long and about 122 meters (400 feet) above the city. Fortified by the Confederates, the ridge was almost impenetrable but it fell to the hard-charging veterans of the Army of the Cumberland. The ridge is accessible by auto via Crest Road. Along the road are several small park areas, the most significant of which are Bragg, Ohio, De Long, and Sherman Reservations. *Bragg Reservation* marks the site of Bragg's headquarters during the siege. The monument here honors Illinois troops who fought in the battle. *Ohio Reservation* honors Ohio troops who participated in the Chattanooga Campaign. *De Long Reservation* contains a large monument to the 2d Minnesota Regiment, which fought gallantly at the Battle of Chickamauga and was among the first to reach the crest of Missionary Ridge. *Sherman Reservation* marks the area where Sherman's troops tried in vain to break through Confederate defenses. North and directly opposite Lookout Mountain is *Signal Point Reservation*, one of the many sites used by the U.S. Signal Corps during the Civil War. Exhibits are displayed along the terrace,

Begin your tour at the visitor center where exhibits and audio-visual programs explain the battle and its place in the Civil War. Also in the visitor center is the Claude E. and Zenada O. Fuller Collection of American Military Arms. Among the 355 weapons on display are several rare or unique items. The collection was given by the Fullers to the National Park Service in 1954. Outside is an artillery display, illustrating the various cannon used by the light field artillery during the war. The major points of interest on the battlefield can be reached by following the 11-kilometer (7-mile) automobile tour, marked by arrows on the map below. Tourstop numbers 1 through 8 on the map identify key points on the battlefield and correspond to the following numbered descriptions of each stop.



Chickamauga Visitor Center



Brotherton Cabin, Chickamauga Battlefield.

1 Battle of Chickamauga Unlike many other Civil War battles which were fought on open fields, Chickamauga was fought in dense woods and thick underbrush. Generals had trouble keeping track of their troops, much less directing them. The monuments and markers along the tour road mark the locations of units and batteries engaged in the battle. Metal tablets—blue for Union, red for Confederate—are positioned so that visitors view the field much like soldiers positioned here in 1863 would have viewed it.

2 The Battleline The final day of the battle opened near this spot and spread along the tour route you will drive. About 9:30 a.m. Confederates under Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk attacked Thomas' corps lined up behind log barricades. The pressures created by these attacks caused Rosecrans to shift troops to Thomas' aid. This weakened the Federal right flank and set the scene for Longstreet's breakthrough.

3 Mix-Up in the Union Command Shortly before 11 a.m. on September 20, Rosecrans received an erroneous report that Brig. Gen. John M. Brannan's division was out of position, creating what was believed to be a gap in the Federal line. It was while Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Wood's division was shifting to fill Brannan's spot that Longstreet's troops struck. A part of Brannan's line is marked by monuments, tablets, and cannon. The figures near the base of the Georgia

Monument across the road represent the three arms of the military: infantry, artillery, and cavalry.

4 Confederate Breakthrough Just as the last elements of Wood's division pulled out of line and before Maj. Gen. Jefferson C. Davis' division could fill the gap thus created, Longstreet's troops charged from the woods behind you, past the Brotherton Cabin, and across the field to the Federal line in the trees. The attack drove the divisions of Davis and Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan and a part of Wood's from the field. The Brotherton Cabin stands today as it did in 1863.

5 The Cost of Chickamauga Chickamauga was one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. Confederate losses totaled more than 18,000 out of some 66,000 engaged; Federal losses were 16,000 out of 58,000. On one day the 22d Alabama Regiment lost 55 per cent of its soldiers and almost half of its officers; 17 of 23 officers of the 20th Georgia fell in action. "We advanced under a perfect shower of bullets," recalled Lt. Col. James L. Abernathy of the 8th Kansas Infantry "sometimes driving the enemy and in turn being driven by them, until we had fought over the ground over and over again, and almost half of our number lay dead and wounded." Confederate Gen. William Bates surveying the carnage, called Chickamauga a sluggish "River of Death." The monuments across the road mark troop positions on September 19.

Wilders Tower This imposing 26-meter (86-foot) monument honors Col. John Wilder and his brigade of mounted infantry who occupied this part of the battlefield when Longstreet's troops broke through the Union line on September 20. Armed with the 7-shot Spencer repeating carbine, Wilder's 2,000-man brigade poured a deadly fire into Longstreet's veterans but were unable to stop them. The monument stands on the ground where Rosecrans maintained his headquarters on September 19 and early on the morning of the 20th. A platform at the top affords an excellent view of the battlefield and surrounding area.

7 Retreat of the Union Right Many Federal units moving through this area were surprised by Longstreet's attack and driven off the field, including Rosecrans and two of his corps commanders. Beyond the woods to your right is the Brotherton cabin, point of the Confederate breakthrough. To your left, on the knoll beyond the field, a monument marks the site of Rosecrans' headquarters at that time.

8 Snodgrass Hill It was here that Gen. George H. Thomas became the "Rock of Chickamauga." When Longstreet's attack struck the Union center, the Federal troops there fell back to this hill, where Thomas organized them into a determined defending force. The log cabin here marks the site of the 1863 home of the Snodgrass family.

