

Chickamauga and Chattanooga

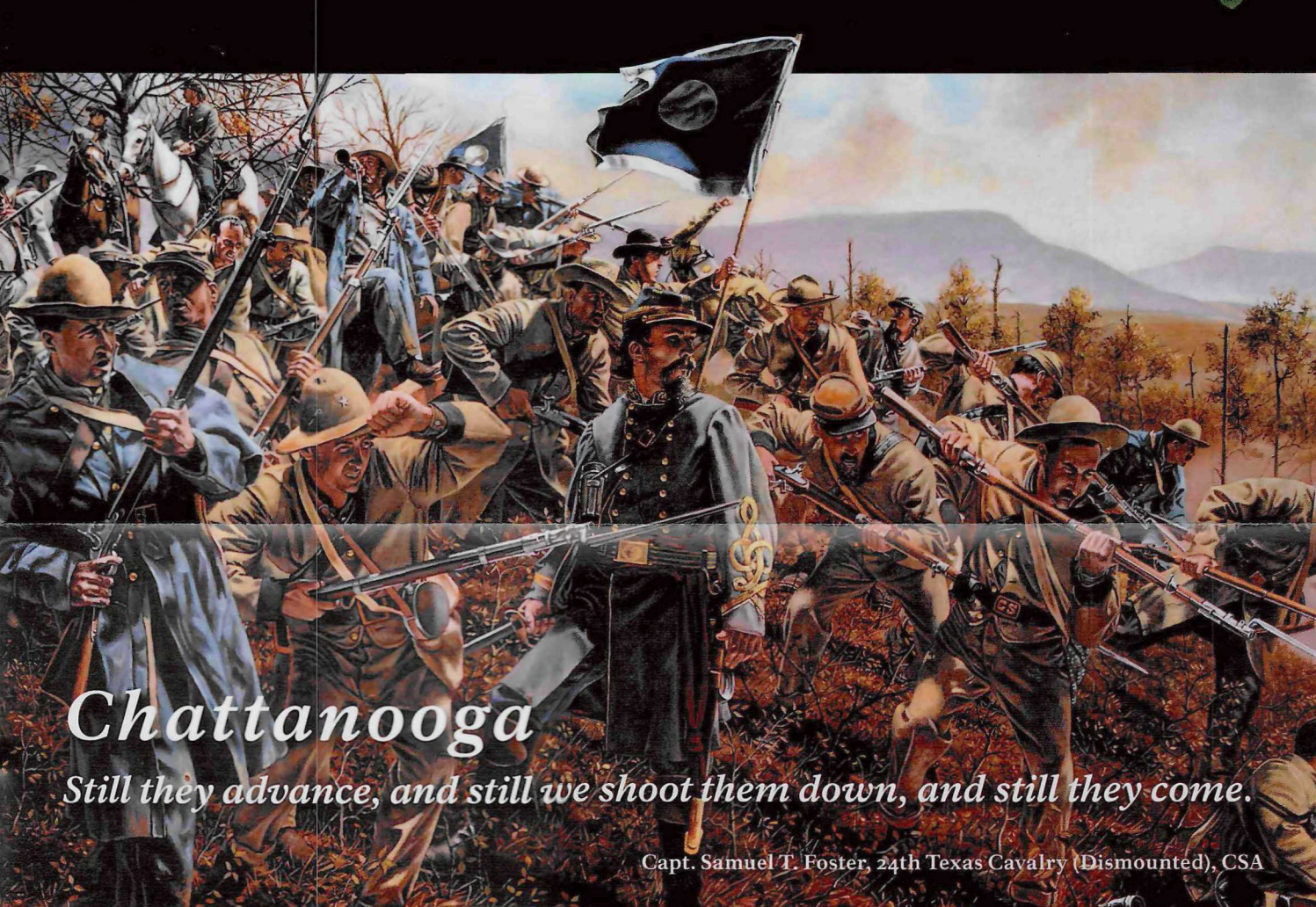


Chickamauga

It seemed as though a terrible cyclone was sweeping over the earth, driving everything before it.

Col. Benjamin Scribner, 38th Indiana Infantry, USA

Union soldiers fire from Horseshoe Ridge during the Battle of Chickamauga.



Chattanooga

Still they advance, and still we shoot them down, and still they come.

Capt. Samuel T. Foster, 24th Texas Cavalry (Dismounted), CSA

Confederate soldiers defend their position on Missionary Ridge.

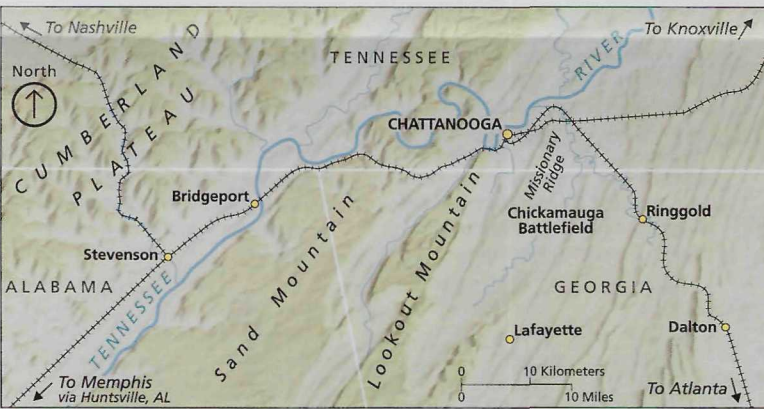
FROM THE PAINTING ON EMPTY RIFLES © RICK REEVES

The Campaign for Chattanooga: Death Knell of the Confederacy?

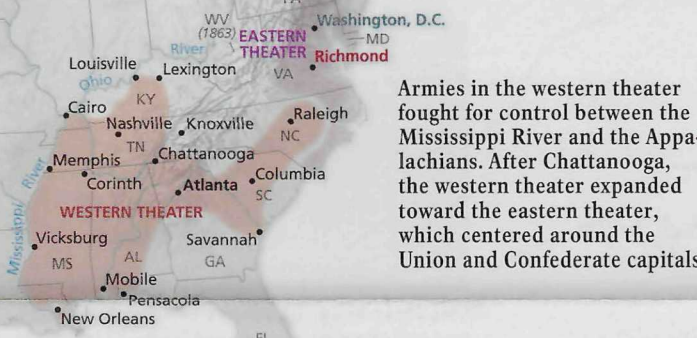
President Abraham Lincoln believed that taking Chattanooga was as important as taking Richmond. Why was a small town of 2,500 as important as the capital of the Confederacy? The small city lay on the banks of the Tennessee River where it cut through the Appalachian Mountains, allowing four major railroads to converge (see map at right). If the Union captured Chattanooga, it could cripple Confederate supply lines and strike at the industrial heart of the Confederacy.

In the summer of 1863, Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg and his Army of Tennessee controlled Chattanooga. But Union Gen. William Rosecrans skillfully moved his Army of the Cumberland south, across the Tennessee River and over Sand Mountain and Lookout Mountain, threatening the Confederates from behind. By early September, Bragg realized he had been outmaneuvered. The Confederate Army had no choice but to abandon the city and its remaining residents.

Rosecrans thought the Confederates were retreating toward Atlanta, prompting him and his army to pursue the gray-clad soldiers into Georgia. However, the Confederates had a surprise of their own. Bragg, now heavily reinforced, was not going to give up Chattanooga without a fight. At the Battle of Chickamauga, little went as planned and thousands of men lost their lives. Yet, it would be late November before the city's fate would be decided—and perhaps that of the Confederacy.



Gaining Control of the South



Armies in the western theater fought for control between the Mississippi River and the Appalachians. After Chattanooga, the western theater expanded toward the eastern theater, which centered around the Union and Confederate capitals.

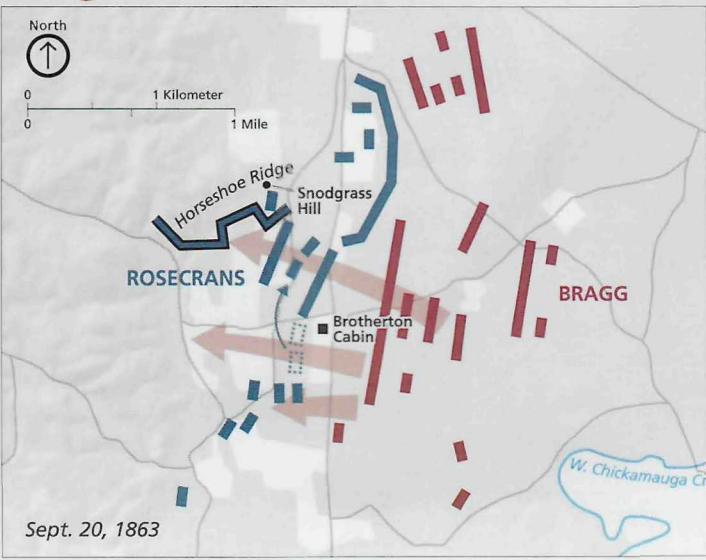
1861	1862	1863	1864	1865
Western Theater Confederates violate Kentucky's neutrality. October	Confederates move to suppress Unionists in eastern Tennessee. November	Union captures Fort Donelson and Fort Henry in Tennessee. February	Confederates rout Union at Chickamauga, GA and begin siege of Chattanooga, TN. Sept. 18–20	Union defeats Confederacy at Chattanooga, opening way to Georgia. November 23–25
Eastern Theater Confederates bombard Fort Sumter, SC; war begins. April	Confederate victory, Battle of First Manassas, VA. July	Union victory, Antietam, MD. September	Confederate victory, Chancellorsville, VA. May	Union victory, Gettysburg, PA. July
	Confederate victory, Battle of Shiloh and Stones River, TN. April, December	Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation. January	Confederate victory, Petersburg, VA. June, November	Siege of Richmond and Petersburg, VA; Lincoln re-elected. June, November
	Union captures Fort Donelson and Fort Henry in Tennessee. February	Confederate victory, Fredericksburg, VA. December	Confederate victory, Chancellorsville, VA. May	Confederate Army of Northern Virginia surrenders at Appomattox, VA; Lincoln assassinated. April

Battle of Chickamauga

For thousands of Union and Confederate soldiers, their hopes hinge on controlling Chattanooga—the “gateway” to the Confederacy. Yet, in mid-September, they meet in the peaceful farm fields of north Georgia, along a tranquil creek named Chickamauga.

September 18

Surprise, confusion, and hard fighting replace the well-laid plans of General Bragg, who hoped to block LaFayette Road and cut the Union's route to Chattanooga. As darkness falls, Bragg is still confident he can continue his plans and stop the Union Army in the morning. However, General Rosecrans moves his troops north throughout the night, a move that could turn the tide of battle.



September 19

Early in the morning, Union troops stumble into Confederates, who they presumed to be farther south. Both sides exchange fire all morning, leaving fields and woods littered with dead and wounded soldiers. The fighting spreads southwest, yet neither side has gained a clear advantage. During the night, Confederate reinforcements arrive, while Union troops fortify their positions.

September 20

Fighting begins when Confederates attack Union fortifications on the battlefield's northern end. This forces Rosecrans to shift troops, accidentally creating a gap in the center of his line. By chance, Confederates swarm through, sweeping away Rosecrans. Retreating Union soldiers make a heroic stand on Horseshoe Ridge, but only darkness saves their army.

Siege of the City Begins

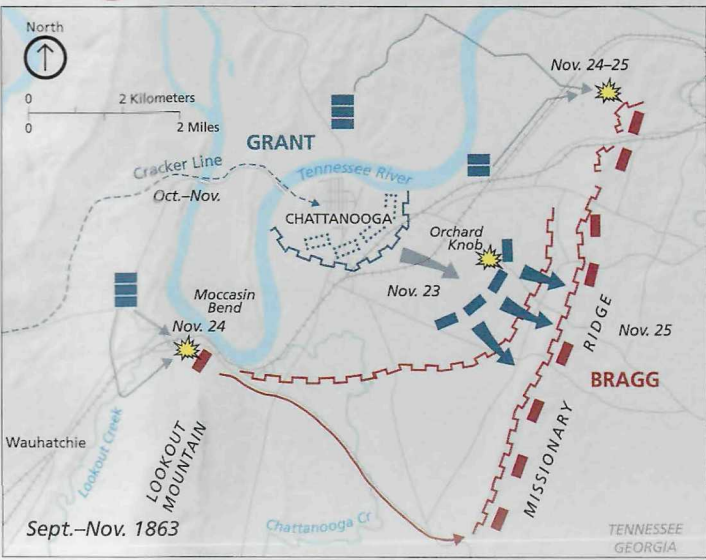
Rosecrans's army withdraws into Chattanooga while Confederates occupy key ground surrounding the city, including Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. The stage is set to starve the Union Army into submission. They and the remaining residents endure a hungry month before General Ulysses S. Grant and reinforcements arrive to help open a supply line into the city.

Battles for Chattanooga

In late October, the Union uses darkness to silently float past Confederates on Lookout Mountain. Then, in a rare night battle near Wauhatchie, they win control of Lookout Valley and secure their new supply route, the “Cracker Line.” Chattanooga is still up for grabs.

November 23

Thousands of Union soldiers march out of Chattanooga. Like a great blue wave, they crash around Confederate-held Orchard Knob, a small hill between the city and Missionary Ridge. The Southerners flee, providing General Grant a strategic view of his next goal, the ridge. During the night, Bragg reinforces his line on Missionary Ridge.



November 24

The Union intends to take Missionary Ridge but mistakenly assaults a hill to the north. They discover their mistake too late to attack the ridge that day. Their diversionary tactic—attacking fog-enshrouded Lookout Mountain—becomes the famous “Battle Above the Clouds” that sweeps the Confederates off the mountain and toward Missionary Ridge.

November 25

Confederates successfully defend both ends of Missionary Ridge. Grant orders an attack against entrenchments centered at the base of the ridge. Finding little resistance there, and without orders, the recently defeated Army of the Cumberland continues charging up the rocky slopes and forces Bragg's army from the summit. Confederate troops retreat south into Georgia.

The War Continues

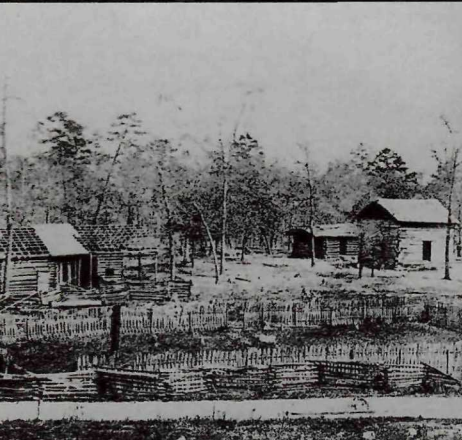
The rivers, rails, and roads of Chattanooga are firmly in Union hands. The city is transformed into a supply and communications base for Gen. William T. Sherman's 1864 Atlanta Campaign, which will begin in the spring. Disheartened Confederates wonder: Is the fall of Chattanooga truly “the death knell of the Confederacy”?

The Soldiers

Young men opposing one another across the battle lines fought for different reasons. Many from the North fought to preserve the Union or abolish slavery, while those from the South struggled to retain slavery or defend their homes and families. These convictions brought these soldiers here, where confusion and chaos reigned in the mountains and forests surrounding the battlefields. Often, soldiers reacted to the sights and sounds unfolding around them rather than following orders. When veterans later “suitably marked” the battle-grounds, they decided not to place monuments to generals. Instead, they honored the soldiers, whose actions decided the battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga.



Rural Southern Farms



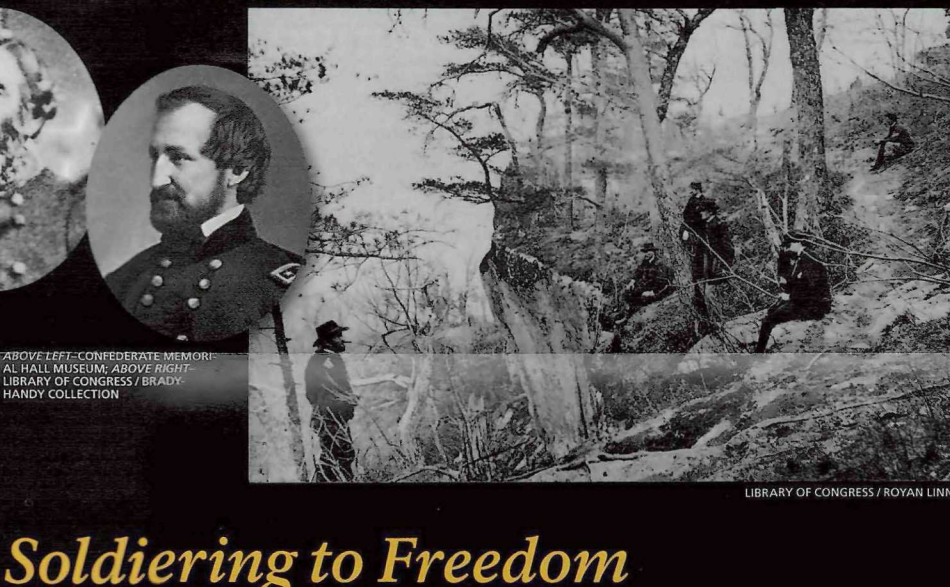
Taken from the Cherokee Nation in 1838, the rich lands alongside Chickamauga Creek became home to 24 families. They cleared the woods to grow crops of corn or wheat and planted rows of fruit trees. As battle loomed, the families fled before their farm fields became killing fields. Once the fighting subsided, they returned to trampled crops and fields littered with dead. Some repaired the damage and resumed farming, while others were forced to abandon their homes. Several of the families—Brotherton, Kelly, and Snodgrass—are immortalized today on the battlefield.

Change in Chattanooga

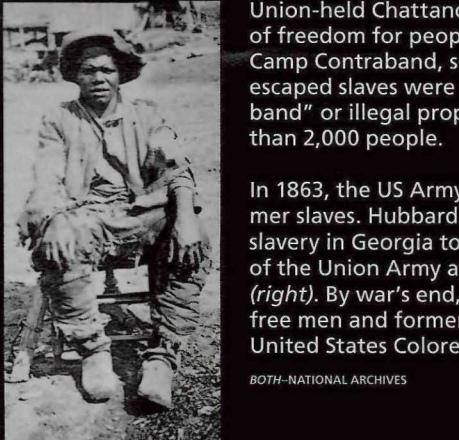


The Generals

The campaign resulted in the fall of two commanders and the rise of another. Although Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg (near right) won at Chickamauga, he lost Chattanooga and had to resign. After abandoning his troops at Chickamauga, Union Gen. William Rosecrans (center) was removed from command. When Gen. Ulysses S. Grant arrived in Chattanooga, he took command of Union forces and replaced Rosecrans with Gen. George Thomas, whose men had gallantly held Horseshoe Ridge at Chickamauga. Grant is shown facing his staff on Roper's Rock atop Lookout Mountain (far right) shortly after the battles for Chattanooga.



Soldiering to Freedom



Union-held Chattanooga became a beacon of freedom for people escaping slavery. Camp Contraband, so named because escaped slaves were considered “contraband” or illegal property, protected more than 2,000 people.



Exploring Chickamauga and Chattanooga



Point Park is across from the visitor center; fee. **1 Point Park Gate** was built by the US Army Corps of Engineers and is a replica of the Corps insignia. **2 Artillery** marks a small part of the Confederate battery during the siege. **3 New York Peace Monument** symbolizes reunification and reconciliation. Even its materials, Tennessee marble and Massachusetts pink granite, carry the theme. **4 From Garrity's Battery**, Confederates tried to stop Union troops from crossing Moccasin Bend. **5** During the Battle of Lookout Mountain, **Van Den Corput's Battery** attempted to fire on Union soldiers advancing on the slopes below. From here, you can walk down to Ochs Memorial Observatory via tiers of steps. **6** Visit the observatory's museum to learn more about the Civil War and American Indians. Enjoy spectacular views of the Chattanooga area from the terrace. You can continue on trails to other scenic views on Lookout Mountain.

Planning Your Visit

In 1890, the US Congress authorized Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, the first such park in the United States. It was dedicated in 1895 and has since served as a model for most national military and historical parks.

The park has two visitor centers open daily except December 25 and January 1.

Chickamauga Battlefield
Explore events of September 1863 at this visitor center. View exhibits and a film about the battles; see a large collection of military weapons. Take the self-guiding auto tour described below.

Lookout Mountain
Atop this mountain, discover details about the siege of Chattanooga and the battles for control of the city. View exhibits and the historic 13- by 30-foot James Walker painting, *The Battle of Lookout Mountain*. Point Park (described at far left) has battery positions, monuments, exhibits, trails, and views.

Accessibility We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information go to a visitor center, ask a ranger, call, or check the park website.

Safety and Regulations Do not climb cannons and monuments. • Federal laws protect all cultural and natural features. • Do not dig or use metal detectors. • Do not collect any objects. • Report suspicious activity to a park ranger. • See the park website for other regulations.

Emergencies call 911

More Information
Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park
PO Box 2128
Fort Oglethorpe, GA 30742
706-866-9241
www.nps.gov/chch

For GPS or mapping programs, use this address: 3370 LaFayette Road, Fort Oglethorpe, GA 30742. Do not send mail here.

This is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities, visit www.nps.gov.

Orchard Knob

At the time of the Civil War, Orchard Knob was outside city limits. It offers clear views of Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, and Chattanooga—exactly what Union General Grant needed to guide his troops during the battles for Chattanooga.

Moccasin Bend

Seen here from Lookout Mountain, Moccasin Bend tells stories spanning over 12,000 years. During the siege of Chattanooga, Union troops opened a supply route across the bend, out of reach of Confederate artillery on Lookout Mountain.

Some Union and Confederate leaders were here in 1838 when the US Army forced the area's Cherokees to move to Indian Territory (Oklahoma). At least two groups of Cherokees traversed the bend and crossed the river at Brown's Ferry, leaving almost everything behind on their Trail of Tears. This removal was the final blow to tribes who first encountered the Spanish here three centuries before.

Today Moccasin Bend is a National Archeological District. It has a three-mile loop trail; other visitor services are planned.

Missionary Ridge

This steep ridge stretches from Chattanooga to Chickamauga. North and South Crest roads follow the ridge to seven military reservations (parcels of land set aside to commemorate the battle) and the Phelps Monument. Highlights include:

Bragg Reservation
The Illinois Monument (above) honors Union troops from that state who participated in the Battle of Missionary Ridge. From his headquarters, located here, Confederate General Bragg attempted to rally his demoralized troops. Instead, they fled the ridge and retreated to Georgia.

Sherman Reservation
This reservation marks the site where Confederate Gen. Patrick Cleburne successfully halted Union Gen. William T. Sherman's assaults on Missionary Ridge. This action forced Union officers to send troops toward the Confederate entrenchments at the center and base of the ridge.

Touring Chickamauga Battlefield

Throughout the tour, you will see monuments and memorials honoring those who fought here. You may also notice tablets, blue for Union and red for Confederate, that describe the soldiers' actions; they date from around 1890. You can reach the major points of interest on the seven-mile auto tour. Hear more details on your cell phone, 585-672-2619, or chch.tourssphere.com; follow the prompts. Most stops follow the battle's final day, September 20.

1 Breckinridge's Assault
Confederates commanded by former US Vice President John C. Breckinridge assaulted and briefly penetrated the Union line in this area before turning their attack southward.

2 The Battle Line The line of Union monuments extending the length of Battleground Road mark where Union troops constructed crude breastworks during the early morning hours. Secure in their positions, they successfully halted repeated Confederate assaults.

3 Mix-up in Union Command
As officers called for troops to strengthen the left end of the Union line, Rosecrans ordered a division to shift out of its position. Unknowingly, his command created a fatal gap in the line.

4 Confederate Breakthrough
Before troops could fill the gap in the Union line, the yells of thousands of Confederates pierced the air as they poured across LaFayette Road and through the gap. The breakthrough split the Union Army.

5 Viniard Field Step back one day to September 19. Thousands of soldiers, one division at a time, fought back and forth across this field trying to gain control of LaFayette Road. When sunset came, neither side held the road, yet thousands had paid the ultimate sacrifice.

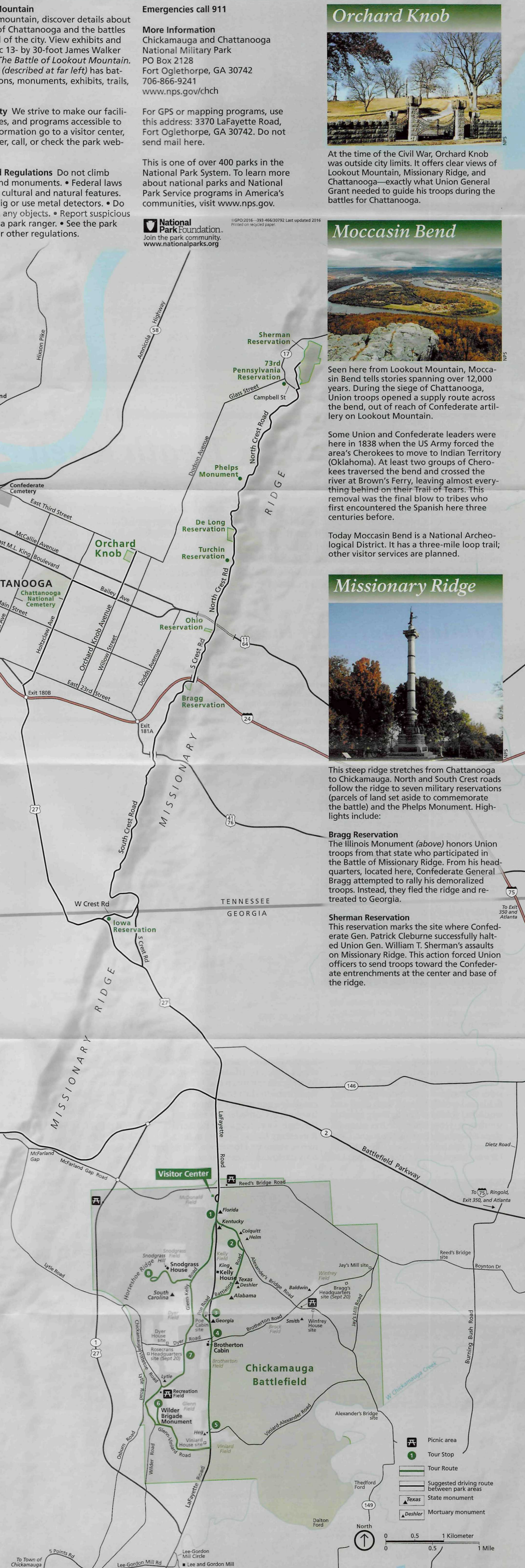
6 Lightning Strikes Union Col. John T. Wilder's brigade of mounted infantry, armed with Spencer repeating rifles, halted a portion of the attacking

Confederates. The "Lightning Brigade" had the only Union success on this part of the field.

7 Rout of the Union Right
Confederate soldiers swept out of the woods and into the fields in what one commander called "a scene of unsurpassed grandeur." This attack collapsed the Union right, forcing the defenders, including Rosecrans, to flee.

8 Horseshoe Ridge and Snodgrass Hill Union soldiers held the ridge throughout the afternoon, repulsing repeated Confederate assaults. As darkness fell, one final assault revealed the remaining Union troops had slipped away to Chattanooga. After three days of fighting, the Confederate Army of Tennessee was victorious.

Follow these signs for the Chickamauga Battlefield Tour



Climb the Wilder Brigade Monument (above right, open seasonally) for a view of the battlefield. The 8th Wisconsin Battery Monument stands next to it. Confederates swarmed past the Brotherton cabin (below) as they broke through Union defenses.

