



Chickamauga Battlefield

CHICKAMAUGA AND CHATTANOOGA NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

Georgia and Tennessee

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CHICKAMAUGA AND CHATTANOOGA *National Military Park*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

J. A. KRUG, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Newton B. Drury, *Director*



The Battle of Chickamauga—a Confederate victory during September 1863 in the struggle for control of Chattanooga, the gateway through the mountains to the heart of the Confederacy

THE GREATEST SUCCESS of the Confederate Army in the west was their victory at Chickamauga. It gave new hope to the people of the South after the defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in the summer of 1863.

The 2-day battle fought at Chickamauga was one of the fiercest single engagements of the Civil War. Although the Confederate Army won the battle, the laxity of the Confederate commander in not following up his success by a continued attack against the Union Army only served to make his victory a barren one.

The importance of Chickamauga lies not in the fierceness of the fighting nor in the casualties suffered by both sides, but in the fact that at Chickamauga the Confederate victory was nullified by their loss of the strategic city of Chattanooga. In permitting the Union Army to retreat to this city, and to hold it, the Confederate Army lost its sally port to the west, through which it could invade northern Tennessee and Kentucky. For the North, holding the city meant that the gateway to the southeastern States of the Confederacy was open. Their successful defense of the city, and later victory over the

Confederate Army at Chattanooga, established for them the supremacy over the west and opened the way to the future operations conducted by General Sherman in Georgia and South Carolina.

Strategic Position of Chattanooga

FROM CHATTANOOGA, located at a gap in the Cumberland Mountains through which flows the Tennessee River, railroad lines radiated north, east, south, and west, connecting with all parts of the South. Each side was aware of its strategic position. President Lincoln considered that to take and to hold Chattanooga, thereby cutting the railroad to Richmond, as "fully important as the taking and holding of Richmond."

The Battle of Chickamauga

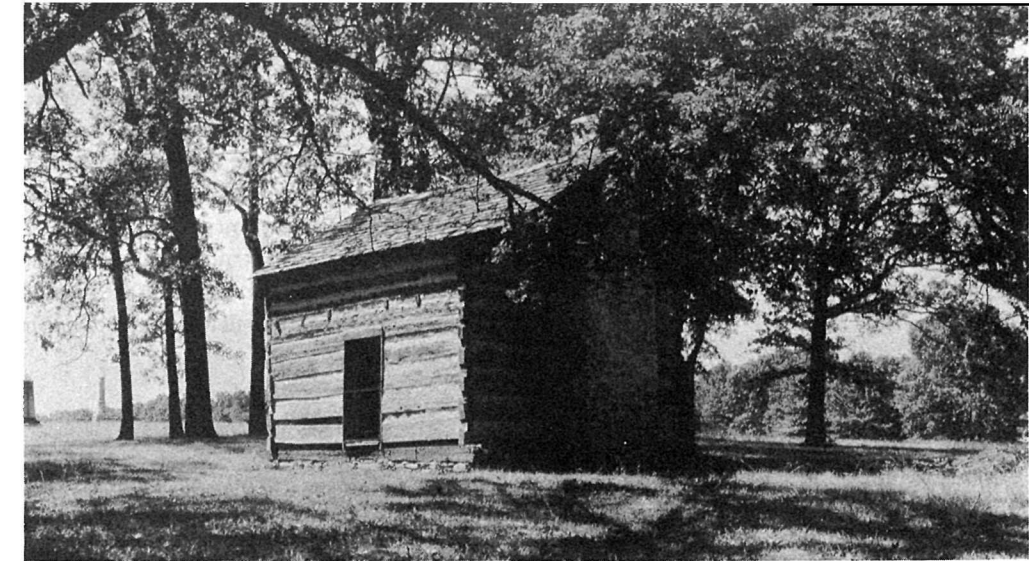
AFTER the Federal victory of Stones River, Tenn., in January 1863, Gen. William S. Rosecrans held his Federal Army at Murfreesboro,

watching his Confederate opponent, Gen. Braxton Bragg, who had retired from Stones River and had taken up an entrenched position at Shelbyville and Tullahoma, where he could protect the important Confederate center of communications at Chattanooga. Late in June, while Grant was besieging Vicksburg, Rosecrans advanced, skillfully maneuvered Bragg out of his strong positions, and forced him to retire across the Tennessee River to Chattanooga. There, Bragg again entrenched himself, guarding the river crossings to the northeast. He did not anticipate that Rosecrans would attempt to cross the mountain south of Chattanooga in order to approach the southern flank of the Confederate Army. But early in September the

Federal commander, with his army of 58,000 men, suddenly crossed the river southwest of the city and forced the Confederates to abandon Chattanooga in order to maintain rail communications southward. The Federal Army was divided into three groups in order to facilitate the crossing of Lookout Mountain and the pursuit of the Confederate forces.

Bragg, however, was preparing a shrewd counterstroke. He had retired to La Fayette, Ga., where reinforcements were arriving from Virginia and Mississippi. After some unsuccessful attempts to destroy the Federal Army while it was divided, he moved to Chickamauga Creek with the object of turning the left of the Federal Army and seizing the roads to Chattanooga, thereby cutting off its line of supplies and communications. By the morning of September 19, most of the Confederates had crossed Chickamauga Creek, when shortly after daylight they were attacked by Federal troops. Throughout the day the fighting was desperate, as the Confederates gradually pushed the Federal Army back to the La Fayette Road. But Rosecrans succeeded in holding his position. On the morning of the 20th, Confederate troops broke the Federal line and swept the entire right wing and part of the center from the field. The

The Battle Line Road



The Brotherton House—Site of the break in the Federal line on September 20, 1863

Federal troops on the left, with fragments of the other formations, all under the command of Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, took up a new position on Snodgrass Hill. This they held until nearly dusk against terrific assaults by the Confederates, and, having successfully covered the retreat of the army, they withdrew in good order toward Chattanooga. Through this firm stand Thomas earned the name "Rock of Chickamauga."

The Confederates had won a victory, but they had won it dearly. The losses of Bragg's army, in killed, wounded, and missing, were approximately 18,000 out of the 66,000 engaged. Losses of the Federal Army totaled 16,000.

After Chickamauga, the Confederates surrounded the Federal forces in Chattanooga by occupying Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, and a line between them. Cut off from most of their supplies, the Federal troops faced starvation. But reinforcements saved them, and an effective supply route was opened. In November, with the help of additional reinforcements, they attacked the Confederate positions on Orchard Knob, Lookout Mountain, and Missionary Ridge. The Confederates were driven from Chattanooga and the Federal Army secured complete control of the city.

The Battlefield

CHICKAMAUGA and Chattanooga National Military Park is the oldest and largest of the national military parks in the United States. The battlefield of Chickamauga was a part of the national military park established by an act of Congress on August 19, 1890, in order to preserve the field of battle and as a memorial to the men of both the North and South who fought so heroically in this area.

Chickamauga Battlefield is only one of several areas which form the national military park. They include Point Park on Lookout Mountain; the reservations on Missionary Ridge; Signal Point on Signal Mountain; and Orchard Knob in Chattanooga. The park contains approximately 8,150 acres of federally owned land.

The commission which marked the battlefield left a highly detailed system of battle-line tablets, stone regimental markers, and memorial and headquarters monuments, which total 1,892 in number. The woods and fields in the area are being kept in approximately their wartime condition and a number of old buildings lend atmosphere to the scene. The field also contains many historical tablets and artillery pieces, which locate the positions occupied by the troops of both armies.

How to Reach the Battlefield

CHICKAMAUGA BATTLEFIELD is located on United States Highway No. 27, 9 miles south of Chattanooga. A paved road also connects the battlefield with United States Highway No. 41, at Ringgold, Ga. Busses from Chattanooga run on schedule to the battlefield throughout the week.

Services to the Public

THE PARK MUSEUM and headquarters building is situated at the north entrance to Chickamauga Battlefield on United States Highway No. 27. The museum, which has no admission fee, is the focal point for visitors. It is open daily from 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. By starting at the museum the visitor can obtain free information concerning self-guided tours through the park. It is also possible to obtain both free folders and a 10-cent booklet describing the park at the headquarters

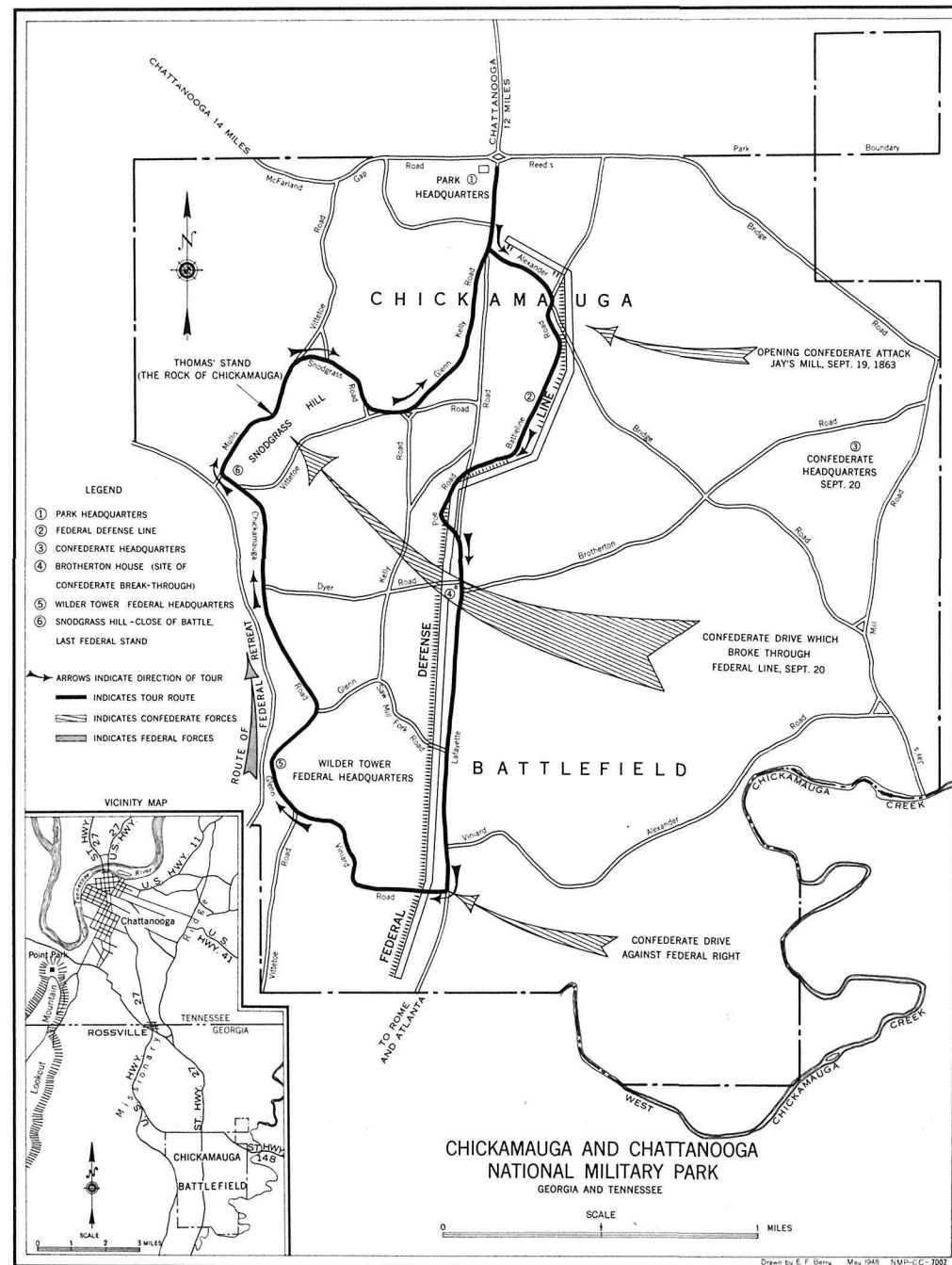
Snodgrass Hill—Scene of last Federal stand on September 20, 1863, by General Thomas, the "Rock of Chickamauga"



building. At the same time the visitor can take advantage of the interpretive and historical activities of the park through contact with the trained historians who are on duty at the headquarters. Organizations and groups are given special service if arrangements are made in advance with the superintendent. There are no recreational, housing, or restaurant facilities in the park, but they are available in the towns in the surrounding area.

Administration

CHICKAMAUGA and Chattanooga National Military Park is a part of the National Park System owned by the people of the United States and administered for them by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. All communications should be addressed to the Superintendent, Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, Fort Oglethorpe, Ga.



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COVER: "The First Gun at Chickamauga," a sketch by A. R. Waud, the famous Civil War artist



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