

The Battlefield Dispatch

As One Centennial Ends, Another Begins at Chickamauga Battlefield

By Park Ranger Chris Barr

In 2016, the National Park Service celebrated the centennial of the Organic Act of 1916, which formally established the NPS. Throughout the year, park sites around the country hosted events and programs celebrating this special anniversary. However, the centennial commemorations are only just beginning here at Chickamauga.

Throughout the spring of 1917, tensions between the United States and Germany escalated to the breaking point. In January, Americans learned that Germany had attempted to persuade Mexico to join the “Great War,” and offered to return much of the American southwest to Mexico. Then, in February, Germany announced it was resuming unrestricted submarine warfare, a move that reignited a national debate about America’s declared neutrality. Finally, in April, the United States declared war on Germany. A new generation of Americans was about to march off to war.

In 1917, Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park was still under the management of the United States War Department. The Army, just as it did during the Spanish American War, utilized the national military parks as training depots for thousands of soldiers preparing to fight in the trenches of Western Europe. At Chickamauga Battlefield, the War Department established three camps – Camp Warden McLean, Camp Greenleaf, and Camp Forrest. Camp Forrest was the

smallest of the three, and served primarily as a training hub for engineers. Camp Warden McLean was a Reserve Officer Training Center, and its barracks were located in the field that today is home to the Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center. Camp Greenleaf was by far the largest of the World War I encampments at Chickamauga. Located in a sprawling complex throughout both north and south Dyer Fields, Camp Greenleaf was home to the Army’s medical training operations. Doctors, medics, nurses, ambulance teams, and even entire field hospital staffs trained among the monuments at Chickamauga. Just north of the park, in Fort Oglethorpe, were hundreds more buildings, including a prisoner of war camp for captured Germans and American civilian internees suspected of disloyalty under the Espionage Act of 1917. All totaled, more than 1,500 buildings dotted the landscape in and around the park, and 60,000 American servicemen passed through Chickamauga Battlefield on their way to Europe, approximately the size of the US Army that fought at Chickamauga in 1863.



Soldiers from Camp Warden McLean conduct weapons training near the present-day Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center. National Archives Photo

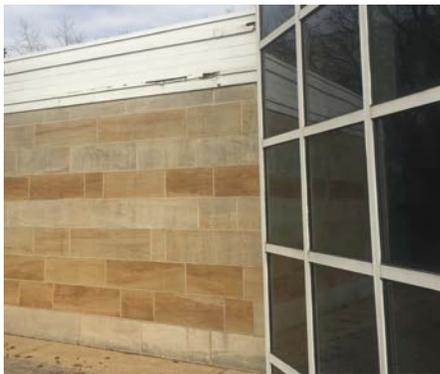
After the war ended, the Army took down most of the buildings on the battlefield, and began to fill in the trenches that crisscrossed the fields around Horseshoe Ridge and Snodgrass Hill. In the early 1930s, President Franklin Roosevelt transferred Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park from the War Department to the National Park Service – an agency committed to preserving the landscape to commemorate the wars of our past, as opposed to preparing for the wars of the present. Today, little remains of the World War I camps on Chickamauga Battlefield. Some of the park’s hiking trails follow the routes of old Army roads and an observant visitor might occasionally see traces of building foundations poking up through the grass. This summer, on June 10 & 11, the park will hold a series of special programs commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the World War I operations at Chickamauga Battlefield. Be sure to visit the park website or follow the park’s social media accounts for details on these programs.

Your Fee Dollars at Work!

Have you ever wondered what your entrance fees pay for? When you enter Point Park, on Lookout Mountain, part of Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, you pay a \$5 entrance fee. The park actually keeps 100% of the fees received. These fees help us improve the park and cut down on deferred maintenance. In the coming months, you will see your fee dollars at work as we improve the Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center. Among the improvements you will see are:

- Repairing the exterior stucco
- Replacing the wood trim fascia
- Restoring the flagstone sidewalk with limestone from area quarries
- Replacing air-conditioning units

Without the support of visitors like you, many of these projects would go unfunded. Please pardon our construction, and thanks to you, future generations of park visitors will be able to see and experience Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park.



Exterior of Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center in need of repair. NPS Photo



Preservation in the Park

By Preservationist Kiel Rommel

The cherry tree story is one of the most well-known legends of George Washington. Legend says that when George Washington was 6 years old, he chopped his father's prized cherry tree with a hatchet. When Washington's father confronted him, George bravely stated that he in fact was responsible for damaging the tree. George's father was so impressed with his honesty that he cited it as the greatest gift, one far more valuable than any 1,000 cherry trees he could own.

If such a hatchet were to exist today, its value to the American experience would be immeasurable. Any local hardware store has hatchets available in droves, so why would one tool in the history of the world have so much meaning and gravitas? Each individual can answer that question and come to his or her own conclusion.

The National Park Service's mission is to preserve these unique items, as they are irreplaceable. Going back to George Washington's hatchet; if such an item were in the park's possession, the stewards would be tasked with ensuring that this item would not be lost to time. Humidity, light, and temperature are all factors that contribute to the ultimate deterioration of the wood handle and of the metal blade. A simple solution would be to replace the handle after it decomposed. Eventually, the blade would rust over and be replaced as well. So, we have George Washington's original hatchet – not exactly.

As you tour the museum at Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, you will see artifacts relevant to the Civil War and the battle in 1863. Please be aware that while these items help tell the story of the Northwest Georgia campaign prior to and during the battle, the grounds of the battlefield help tell the story of those brave men and women after the fires died and the smoke cleared. By maintaining the natural terrain, structures, fence lines, plaques, and monuments in a cautious manner, the assets

will continue to tell the story to ages yet unborn.

So enjoy the natural environment, study the plaques and waysides, and ponder as you view the bronze reliefs found on the monuments throughout the battlefield.



Historic Landscape Reclamation: For years the area of Bloody Pond was inundated by invasive plants and saplings. The park is now moving in the direction of reclaiming this well-known battlefield feature. NPS Photo



Visitor Interference: Example of vandalism at one of the six shell pyramids and illegal relic theft, a felony, where Union and Confederate brigade commanders were killed or mortally wounded. NPS Photo

Alternative Spring Break

By Park Ranger Will Wilson

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park is extremely grateful to have such a robust volunteer program in place. All manner of volunteer opportunities are available for any age or physical ability. There are many ways you can help care for your national parks, from one-time to reoccurring volunteer opportunities for youth, families, groups and individuals.

One such recurring volunteer opportunity the park is proud to have happen again is the Alternative Spartan Break. Students and staff from Michigan State University will be at Chickamauga Battlefield for a weeklong cleanup the week of March 6 – March 10. ASB was founded in 1991 when a group of Spartans came together to provide assistance in Florida after Hurricane Andrew made landfall. Since then, the program has strived to give its members a

blend of direct service and distinct exposure to different communities across the United States. Their mission is to engage students in quality alternative breaks so that they become active and educated members of society. Their goal is not simply to organize short-term trips, but to develop students to become informed, active, and engaged citizens, while meeting critical community needs.

The park is also excited to have students and staff from Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina, volunteer their time during an Alternative Spring Break. This group will be helping with a project on Moccasin Bend, restoring mulch to the Brown's Ferry Federal Road. This project is in conjunction with their Native American studies. Following the project the group will learn the importance of Moccasin Bend National Archeological District and the role

it has played throughout the history of the American Indian.

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park is pleased to work in conjunction with these groups as they provide needed support throughout the park.



Students from Michigan State University help repair the Glen Falls Trail on Lookout Mountain during their Alternative Spring Break in 2016. NPS Photo

Civil War Trust Park Day - 2017



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

In 1863, Union and Confederate forces fought for control of Chattanooga, known as the "Gateway to the Deep South." Confederates were victorious at nearby Chickamauga in September. Renewed fighting in Chattanooga that November provided Union troops with victory and control of the city.

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

By Park Ranger Will Wilson

On Saturday, April 1, 2017, Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park will host volunteers for the Civil War Trust's Park Day. Since 1996, the Civil War Trust has sponsored Park Day, an annual hands-on preservation event to help Civil War, Revolutionary War, and War of 1812 battlefields and historic sites take on maintenance projects large and small. Activities are chosen by each participating site to meet its own particular needs, and can range from hauling trash to trail building and sign painting.

Park Day is an excellent opportunity to bring history enthusiasts together to help keep our nation's heritage preserved and pristine. It is also a great way to harness volunteer assistance to improve the quality of a historic site and prepare it for the busy tourism season. This year's activities include trash pick-up, trail

maintenance, and building a fence around the McDonald Field to recreate the historic fence that was present at the time of the battle.

Volunteers are to meet at the Lower Parking Lot of the Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center at 8 am to sign up. School groups, scouts, clubs, or corporate organizations are also encouraged to participate in this year's events. For more information please contact Will Wilson, Volunteer Coordinator, at will_wilson@nps.gov or 423-752-5213 ext. 137.



Park Day Logo. Civil War Trust Photo

Chickamauga and the First Medal of Honor

By Park Historian Jim Ogden

The next time you're out studying the Battle of Chickamauga, *on the ground where it happened*, spend some time along the line of the Union left, Tour Stop 2 on the driving tour. The monuments and tablets that run southward with Battleline Road scribe the front of the Union line; text on those commemorative features describes the action.

As you walk the line on either side of the monument to the 33rd Ohio, you walk within yards of where the very first service member in our nation to be awarded a Medal of Honor, Jacob Wilson Parrott, fought that late summer day in 1863. A member of the 33rd and of the Andrews' Raid, or Great Locomotive Chase, in April 1862, Parrott, along with all the other members of that party, were captured by the Confederates and imprisoned. While not tried and executed like eight other of the raiders, Parrott was held for nearly a year before being exchanged. In Washington as part of the War



Jacob W. Parrott. Photo Courtesy of the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History

Department's investigation of the Confederates' treatment of the raiders, Parrott and five other exchanged raiders were introduced to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who had just taken receipt

of the first medals produced for the recently authorized Medal of Honor. Stanton decided to award the six men medals and presented the first one to Parrott. The date was March 25, 1863, (known today as National Medal of Honor Day). Stanton also asked the governor of Ohio to promote Parrott and the other five to lieutenant and the governor did. Parrott returned to the 33rd, struggling initially in going from private to lieutenant, but served with the regiment the rest of the war, including here at Chickamauga, September 19 and 20, 1863.

There is a lot to be learned by the study of the events commemorated by this national military park. The next time you are out studying the actions on the Union left on September 20, 1863, know that as you walk along the line of monuments within say 50 yards on either side of the 33rd Ohio, that you are walking the ground where, on that day, fought the first recipient of the Medal of Honor.

The Battlefield Dispatch is a quarterly publication of Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park.

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Hiking Safety for Families

By Safety Officer Donny Campbell

A family hiking trek can bring people closer together, promote physical fitness, and encourage children to enjoy nature. Different members of a family will have different physical abilities when it comes to hiking long distances. The distance, environment, terrain, elevation, and weather are a few factors that should be tolerable for the group as a whole. Additionally, children are more sensitive than adults and tend to get bored or distracted more easily, so there are specific guidelines that will keep them safe. These young and inexperienced hikers will have greater problems with fatigue or dehydration, so a hiking group may have to stop an excursion entirely instead of struggle to finish it.

After the Hike

Hiking can take a physical toll on hikers, who come from all fitness backgrounds and experience levels. Hikers should pay attention to negative body signs so they do not go beyond their limits. Even though conditioning will make hikers last longer on the trails, resting is just as important for the experienced hiker as it is for the beginner hiker. Hikers who have become injured should not take their pain lightly and should obtain proper medical help. Those who are just sore should take the time to relax or massage areas in pain. In addition to monitoring health, monitoring progress is a task that involves writing updates about hiking goals, health, and experiences. Hikers should also review important hiking tips like the Hiker Responsibility Code on a routine basis.