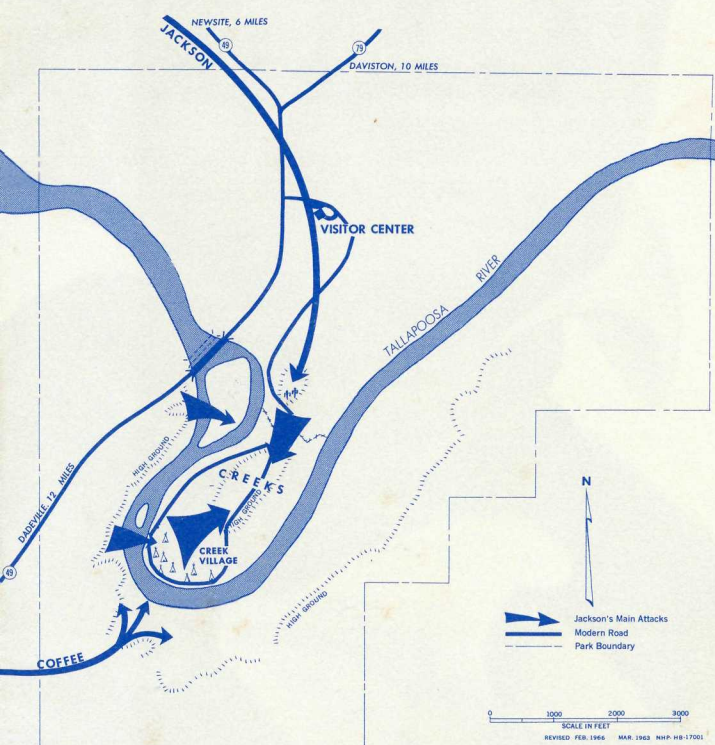


THE BATTLE OF HORSESHOE BEND



troops and 200 Cherokees drove them off in a fierce battle. Two days later an even more desperate struggle occurred as Jackson was crossing Enitachopco Creek. The Indians fell upon him from behind, fought with fury, and forced him to withdraw to Fort Strother. With some reason could they say, "We whipped Captain Jackson and ran him to the Coosa . . ." Still, Jackson had driven back two assaults and inflicted more damage than he had taken. This expedition gave the new recruits a taste of war, restored confidence in Tennessee, and dashed the hopes of the enemy. As a border captain, Jackson's star was rising. Within a month, 2,000 volunteers and a regiment of U.S. Infantry arrived in camp, giving Jackson a striking force of over 5,000 men.

On March 24, 1814, Jackson's army once more began crossing the 52 miles of wilderness between the Coosa and Tallapoosa. Their destination was Horseshoe Bend, a 100-acre peninsula formed by a great bend in the Tallapoosa. A log wall, 5 to 8 feet high and pierced with a double row of loopholes, zigzagged across the narrow neck. Within this stronghold—Tohopeka ("the fort") to the Creeks—were drawn up a thousand warriors, led by Monahhee, their principal prophet, and Menewa, "the great warrior." Three hundred women and children occupied huts at the southern end.

Late on the 26th, the army went into camp about 6 miles north of Horseshoe Bend. At 6:30 the next morning Jackson's forces—2,000 infantry, 700 cavalry, and 600 Indian allies—took up the final march to Tohopeka. Coffee was sent with the cavalry and Indians to cross the river downstream and surround the peninsula to cut off any retreat over the Tallapoosa. Jackson and the infantry reached the Red Sticks' barricade at 10:30 a.m. and were "hailed with a challenge to the combat . . ." Placing two small guns on a hill near the western end of the wall, he hurled shot at the fortification, while the infantry kept up a sporadic rifle and musket fire.

The cannonading and crackling of small arms excited the Indian allies guarding the riverbank, and some swam the river and seized the Creek canoes tied up at the peninsula's tip. Reinforcements, ferried across in the canoes, burned the Creek huts and attacked their main line from the rear. To support this unexpected foray, Coffee dispatched a small party to seize the 15-acre island west of the peninsula to prevent it from becoming a refuge for fleeing Creeks.

The battle now entered a critical stage. Though the

assault over the river had gained the peninsula's high ground, the allies lacked the forces to carry the breastworks. On the other side of the barricade, Jackson found the two guns had little effect on the sturdy wall. At this point, Jackson decided on a direct, frontal charge.

The stirring long roll sounded at 12:30 p.m., and the infantry surged forward against the barricade. The 39th Regiment, in the center, bore the brunt of the fighting.

Quickly overrunning the near side of the log wall, Jackson's men struggled hand-to-hand with the Creeks. After seizing the barricade, the infantry swarmed over the works and down the peninsula. The Creeks, heartened by Menewa's example, fought desperately, but as Jackson later wrote:

The event could no longer be doubtful. The enemy altho many of them fought to the last with that kind of bravery which desperation inspires, were at last entirely routed and cut to pieces. The whole margin of the river which surrounded the peninsula was strewed with the slain.

By 3:30 p.m. pitched battle was over, but fighting continued until nightfall. The waning sun that closed the battle set also on the ruin of the Creek Nation.

Scattered over the field were 557 dead or dying Creeks. Another 300 were shot down trying to escape across the river. One of the few survivors was Menewa. Badly wounded by 7 balls, the great warrior lay unconscious among the dead. Reviving after dark, he made his way to the river and escaped by canoe.

Total losses in Jackson's army were 49 killed and 154 wounded. The 39th Regiment, which spearheaded the charge, suffered 17 killed and 55 wounded, among them Sam Houston of later Texas fame, then a 21-year-old ensign.

Treaty of Fort Jackson

Though the Red Sticks had been crushed at Tohopeka, no one was sure that the war was entirely over. The remnants of the hostile towns had gathered at the Hickory Ground and seemed inclined to make another stand. But Coffee in a letter home described their plight: ". . . they cannot hold out, they are already nearly starved to death, having eat up all their provisions . . ." As Jackson moved on the Hickory Ground in mid-April, many Red Sticks fled toward Pensacola. Others flocked into his camp at the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa and surrendered unconditionally. Weatherford,

who had taken no part in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, was among them.

After turning over control of the heart of the Creek country to forces from Georgia, Jackson and his army began their march home in late April. At Huntsville, the whole village turned out to salute them. One speaker at the public dinner for Jackson said:

It is not for us adequately to reward your eminent services, your unceasing and successful exertions—that is the duty, and we trust will be the delight, of a liberal, just and grateful country.

His reward came on May 22, 1814, when Jackson was commissioned a major general in the U.S. Army. Shortly after, the Secretary of War gave him command of the 7th Military District, with headquarters in Mobile.

A first task for Jackson as the military commander for Tennessee, Louisiana, and Mississippi Territory was to negotiate a treaty with the defeated Creeks. On August 9, 1814, Jackson concluded with some second-rank chiefs the Treaty of Fort Jackson, which required the Creeks to cede an L-shaped tract of land containing about 20 million acres, over half the territory of the Creek Nation. The harsh terms opened to white settlement a vast and rich domain extending from Georgia to Mobile and removed the Creeks from the influences of Spanish Florida. Jackson's peace was as grim as his campaign.

For Andrew Jackson, the victory at Horseshoe Bend was the first step along a road that eventually led to national fame and the Presidency. If Horseshoe Bend was not a great feat of generalship, it was at least a victory of will and determination that gained him a name as a military leader and Indian fighter. Jackson's command at New Orleans 9 months later, where a brilliant success over the British made him a national hero, stems directly from Horseshoe Bend.

About your visit

The park is on Ala. 49, 12 miles north of Dadeville and 90 miles southeast of Birmingham. It is open all year. Visiting hours are from 8:30 a.m. until dark. Special services for groups are available on request to the superintendent.

A 2-mile road loops through the battlefield and has trails and markers designed to make your visit interesting and informative. Except for certain natural features, there are no identifiable remains associated with the

battle. The log barricade and Indian huts burned during and after the battle.

The stone monument overlooking the battlefield was erected by Congress in 1918 in recognition of Jackson's victory.

Administration

HORSESHOE BEND NATIONAL MILITARY PARK, established on August 11, 1959, and covering 2,040 acres, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

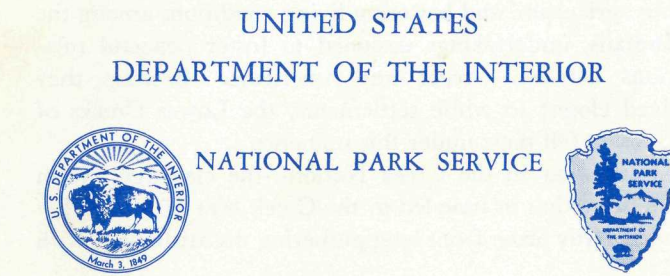
The National Park System, of which this park is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the great natural, historical, and recreational places of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of all the people.

A superintendent, whose address is Horseshoe Bend National Military Park, Box 608, Dadeville, Ala., 36853, is in immediate charge of the park.

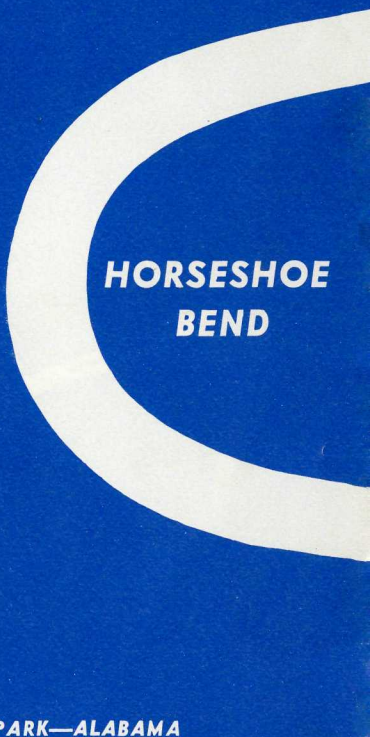
America's natural resources

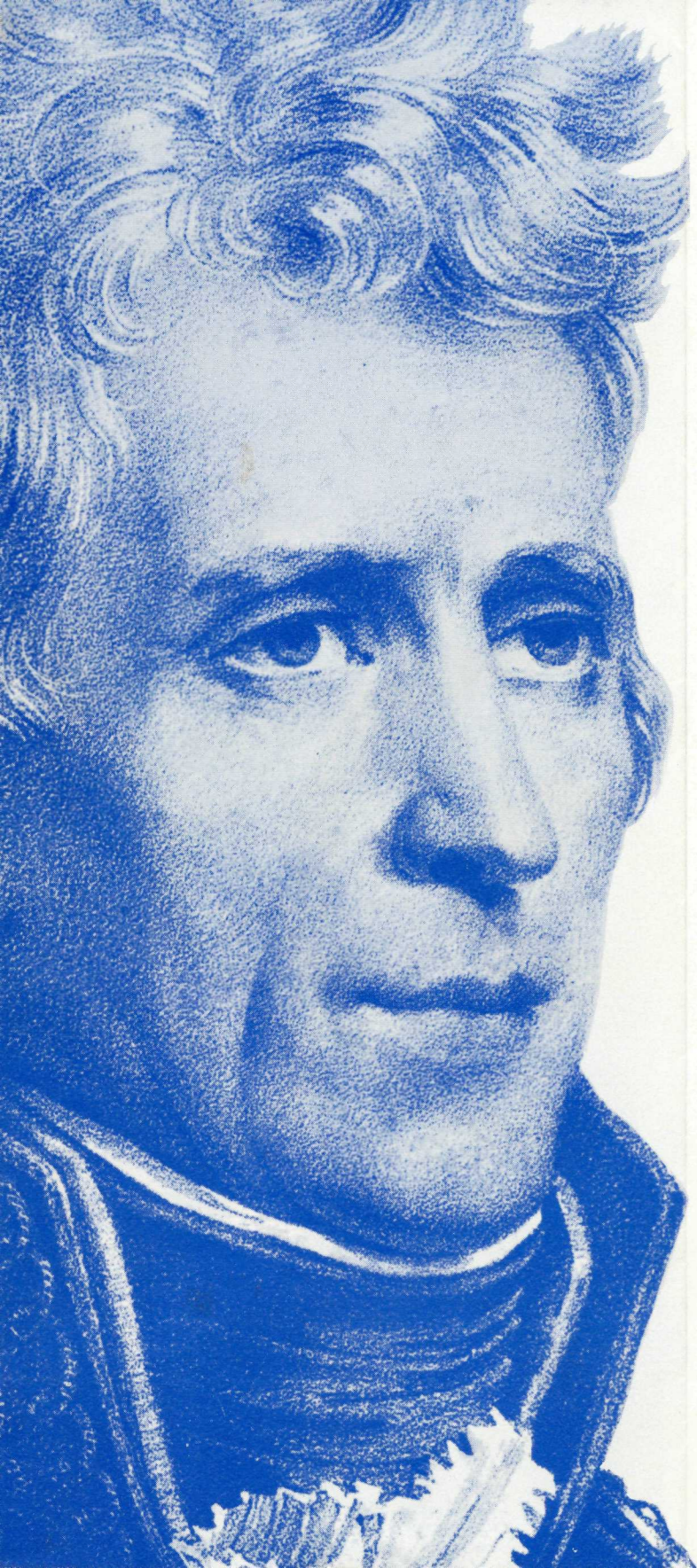
Created in 1849, the Department of the Interior—America's Department of Natural Resources—is concerned with the management, conservation, and development of the Nation's water, wildlife, mineral, forest, and park and recreational resources. It also has major responsibilities for Indian and territorial affairs.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department works to assure that nonrenewable resources are developed and used wisely, that park and recreational resources are conserved, and that renewable resources make their full contribution to the progress, prosperity, and security of the United States—now and in the future.



Reprint 1967 U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1967 O-243-607





HORSESHOE BEND . . . Scene of Andrew Jackson's decisive victory over the hostile warriors of the Creek Nation on March 27, 1814, ending Creek power in the Old Southwest.

In the pine woods of Horseshoe Bend, a tall, iron-fisted frontiersman, showing the mettle that would eventually carry him to military fame and the Presidency, crushed to earth the flower of the Creek Nation.

The battle ended the short and now little-remembered Creek War, begun only 14 months before when the Upper Creeks, an anti-American faction living mostly in Alabama, plunged the Creek Nation into first civil war and then into war against white settlements. To put down the war party, the surrounding States quickly dispatched militia. Among the five volunteer generals who took the field was Andrew Jackson, a Tennessee planter, turfman, and politician with a talent for enterprise and leadership. His determined campaign through central Alabama—climaxed at Horseshoe Bend—routed the hostile Creeks, opened up Alabama and other parts of the Old Southwest to white settlement, and established his military reputation.

The Creek Nation

In 1813 the Creeks occupied large parts of present-day Georgia and Alabama. Since 1790, when a treaty with the United States set the boundaries of the Creek Nation, they had lived in peace with American frontier settlements. For nearly two decades the Creeks had followed Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins' program for improving agriculture and bettering living conditions among the Indians, undertakings designed to foster peaceful relations between Creeks and Americans. Because they lived closest to white settlements, the Lower Creeks of Georgia fell most under this influence.

Civil war in the Creek Nation—the cleavage within the tribe that in time led to the Creek War of 1813-14—apparently arose from long-gathering dissatisfaction with

Hawkins' civilization program. The division that had always existed between Upper and Lower Creeks was intensified as the Lower Creeks were drawn into closer contact with their white neighbors. Tribal punishment for Creek attacks on white settlers deepened the break. When Tecumseh, the great Shawnee chief, came south in 1811 to unite the Choctaws and Creeks with him in a league of peace, he movingly urged the Creeks to retain both their lands and old customs. Though his appeal was essentially one of peace and humanity, a lasting result of his visit was increased influence for some of the tribe's religious leaders, or "prophets" as they were called. These malcontents, their hands strengthened with each American encroachment, gradually came to dominate one faction of the Nation. Their base was among the Upper Creeks living on the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers.

Massacre at Fort Mims

An incident in February 1813 sharpened the split among the Creeks and aroused the frontier. A party of hostile Creeks, returning from a visit to the Shawnees, was told that war had broken out between the Creeks and the United States. On this false report, some Creeks wiped out seven frontier families.

The Indians responsible for this atrocity were tried by a Creek tribal council and executed. The anti-American party, mainly the Upper Creeks under Chief Hopoie, Menewa, and various prophets, now set for themselves the tasks of killing everyone connected with the recent Indian executions and of eliminating from the tribe all evidences of Hawkins' hated civilization. By midsummer they had killed nine of the executioners, burned several villages friendly to Hawkins, and slaughtered all the tribal livestock they could find.

At Burnt Corn Creek on July 27, 1813, occurred the first battle between frontiersmen and rebelling Creeks. As a party of Red Sticks—the popular name of the war Creeks—was returning from Pensacola in Spanish Florida with war supplies, it was waylaid by Creek half-bloods and white militia. The attack was repulsed, and nearby settlers, fearing retaliation, fled to Fort Mims for protection.

Located on Tensaw Lake 20 miles north of Mobile, this fort was little more than a rude stockade manned by a few territorial militia. Despite the danger of Indian attack, defensive measures were neglected. On August 30 a thousand warriors under Hopoie, Peter McQueen, and several prophets fell upon Fort Mims and quickly overcame the defenders. In the attack more than 500 men, women, and children were slain. The conflict had now enlarged from a civil war to a war against the United States.

Jackson marches against the Creeks

The massacre appalled and aroused the frontier bordering the Creek country. Militia from Georgia and Mississippi Territory mounted drives against the hostiles, but it was Andrew Jackson with Tennessee volunteers, supported by Creek and Cherokee allies and a regiment of U.S. Infantry, who sustained the all-out conclusive campaign against the Red Sticks.

In September Gov. Willie Blount of Tennessee called for 2,000 volunteers, giving command of the force to his friend Jackson. By early October, Jackson was ready to move his army, "designed to avenge the blood of their countrymen." His plan of campaign was as elemental and direct as the man himself. From a supply base in Creek territory, he would strike directly at the heartland

of the Red Sticks between the Coosa and the Tallapoosa, destroying hostile villages along his route. Jackson expected to dictate peace at the Hickory Ground, a sacred meeting place of the Creeks at the junction of the two rivers.

Marching southward from Fayetteville, Tenn., Jackson approached Huntsville on October 10 and the next day united his forces with Gen. John Coffee, at the head of 900 cavalry, across the Tennessee River. Late in the month he laid out Fort Deposit at the southernmost point of the Tennessee. This supply base stood on the edge of a wilderness that sheltered several thousand hostile Creeks.

On November 3 Jackson sent Coffee to assault the assembled Creeks at Tallushatchee. The village was destroyed and the hostiles annihilated with little loss to Coffee. Several days later Jackson moved against the Creek settlement at Talladega and with 1,200 infantry and 800 cavalry scored another victory. The successes of "Old Mad Jackson," as the Red Sticks called him, gave this drive the character of a war of vengeance for Fort Mims.

The weeks following the victory at Talladega were ones of inactivity and frustration for General Jackson. Supply delays and the departure of troops from Fort Strother, newly built on the Coosa, caused Jackson to abandon farther advance and return to that fort. Starvation and mutiny harried him the rest of 1813.

The Fight at the Horseshoe

Jackson began his second campaign in January 1814, soon after new troops arrived on the Coosa. Marching toward the Tallapoosa, he was challenged on January 22 at Emuckfaw Creek by 500 Red Sticks. Jackson's 900



Gen. Andrew Jackson, from a lithograph by Langlumé.
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Menewa, the great Creek warrior.
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