

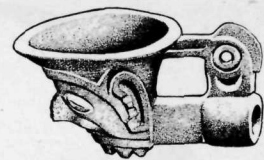
Ocmulgee

NATIONAL MONUMENT

G E O R G I A



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Major Indian village, occupied repeatedly through 10,000 years

Ocmulgee National Monument preserves the remains of an unusual concentration of Indian villages. It was the first scientifically excavated large Indian site in the South. The evidence found here did much to establish the facts of Southern prehistory. Six successive occupations by different Indian groups can be recognized here, extending over a period from possibly 8000 B. C. until A. D. 1717. The largest village flourished from about A. D. 900 to 1100 and consisted of 3 large and 4 smaller temple mounds, with a double trench encircling the many residences and ceremonial buildings. The detached Lamar area represents a concentrated village of the prehistoric Creeks who occupied Georgia at the time of its first explorations by the Spanish. It contains two mounds, the remains of a wooden palisade, and numerous houses and burials.

INDIANS OF CENTRAL GEORGIA

Wandering Hunters (Folsom Period).—

The first Indians to live here were the Wandering Hunters. These Indians hunted game with the spear and spear throwers and had no permanent homes. They entered America from Asia at the

close of the Ice Age, around 10,000 years ago. Their distinctive grooved spear points have been found all over the United States, and one was found on the Macon Plateau. They probably inhabited central Georgia for about 5,000 years.

*Shellfish Eaters (Archaic Period).—*These Indians, the next group to come to this section, were attracted to the central Georgia region by beds of mussels in the rivers. They also hunted deer and bear with the spear and spear thrower. Because they lived mainly on shellfish, they were able to camp long in some places. At first they made no pottery, but by about 500 B. C. they had learned to make crudely decorated pottery of clay mixed with grass or moss fibers. Their distinctive spear points, net sinkers, and pottery have been found scattered in small camps in the Macon area. They probably left the region by about 100 B. C.

Early Farmers (Swift Creek Period).—

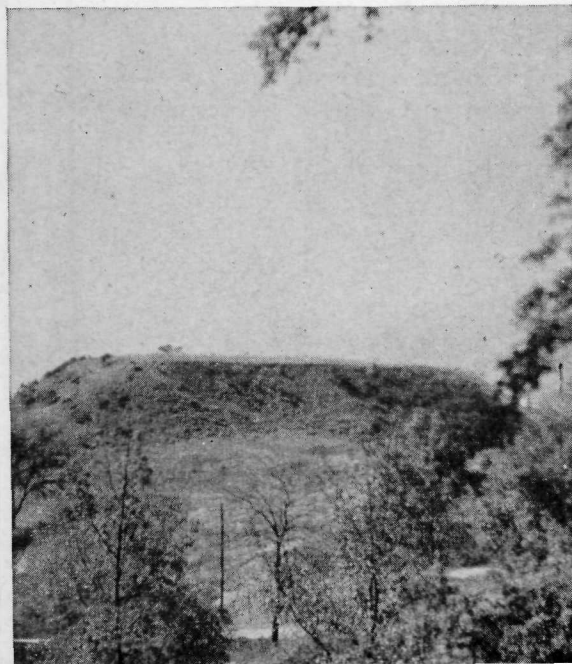
This is the third group of Indians. They lived here from about 100 B. C. until A. D. 900. Their crops were probably only beans and pumpkins. They are believed to have been farmers because the long period of time they lived in one place was possible

only for farmers. They made beautiful pottery, decorated with elaborately stamped designs. Still using the spear and spear thrower for hunting, they probably got most of their food from the forests. An assured food supply, even with their little agriculture, gave them time and energy to devote to arts and other such pursuits.

*Master Farmers (Macon Plateau Period).—*Around A. D. 900, central Georgia was invaded by this strong group of Indians from the northwest. Their original home is not known, but their close relatives settled in eastern Tennessee. These people were better farmers and raised corn, beans, pumpkins, and tobacco. Most of their food was cultivated, but they did some hunting. They spent much time and energy in building large mounds of earth on which they erected their temples.

They also built circular earth-covered temples or earthlodges. One of these has been restored over the original clay floor and now appears very much as it did about 1,000 years ago when these Master Farm-

The Great Temple Mound is 40 feet high and contains about 1,000,000 basket loads of earth.

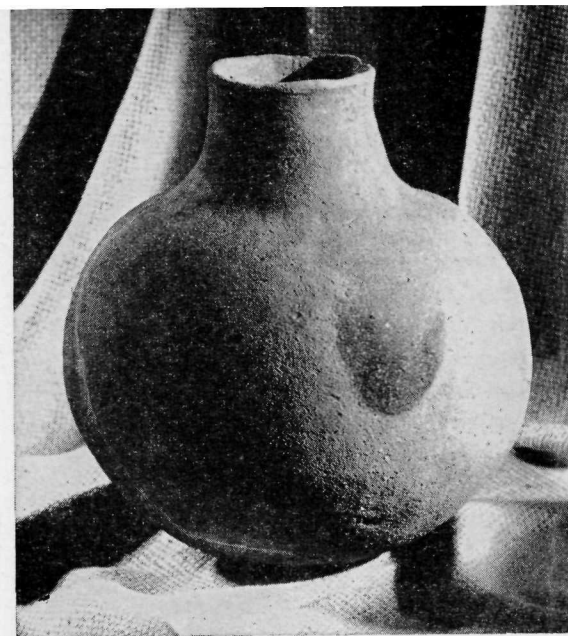
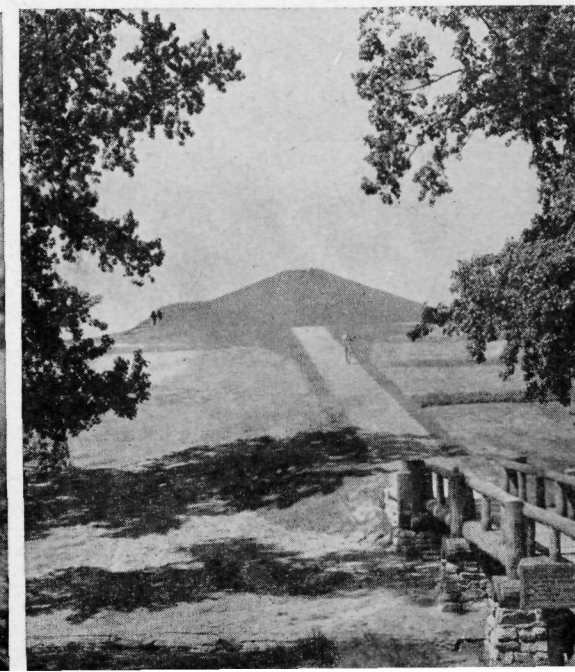


ers used it for religious ceremonies and councils of tribal government. In the center is a large sunken fire pit in which a fire was kept burning as the sacred fire of the town. Along the red clay walls a raised clay bench contains 47 seats. Opposite the door is a raised clay platform in the shape of an eagle, with 3 more seats at the back for the more important persons. Four huge oak posts support the roof of pine logs, canes, and clay. The center of the roof was left open to admit light and to serve as an escape for the smoke.

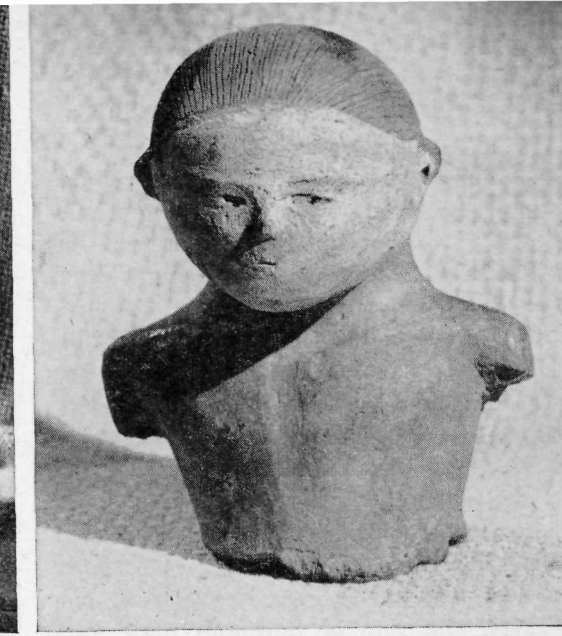
The 50 Indians who used the temple were probably the religious and political leaders of the town. There they drank the sacred cassena tea and deliberated on affairs of state. The head of the eagle platform has an eye carved in the style of the Southern Cult, examples of which have been found from Florida to Oklahoma and Missouri.

Just north of the earthlodge was the Cornfield Mound on which was a rectangular temple, probably used in summer

The restored earthlodge as seen from the museum building.



Master Farmer pottery was plain but gracefully shaped.



Master Farmer effigy of man with white face and red body.

ceremonies, while the earthlodge was used mainly in winter. This mound had been built in a field, perhaps a sacred seed patch. At the southern edge of the town were the Great Temple Mound and the Lesser Temple Mound. These were also platforms for temples. At the western edge of the village was the Funeral Mound, which served as the burial center for the town. Here the bones of important persons were cleaned and buried with elaborate ceremonies. Ornaments, tools, and jars of food were placed in the grave with the bones indicating a belief that they could be used in an after-life.

These Master Farmers seem to have spent so much time building mounds and holding elaborate ceremonials that they had little time for decorative arts and crafts. They fortified their town with two large ditches, indicating that some of their time was taken up with warfare.

*Reconquerors (Lamar Period).—*It is certain that some of the Early Farmers, from

whom the Master Farmers had seized central Georgia, remained in the area and after 200 years managed to defeat the latter and reconquer central Georgia.

These reconquerors spread widely into the adjacent parts of Alabama, Florida, the Carolinas, and even into the mountains of Tennessee. A number of them, at least, were Creeks. In many ways they show the blending of two traditions: that of the Early Farmers and that of the Master Farmers. Their pottery was partly stamped and partly incised. The stamping is related to that of the Early Farmers, while the incising was learned from the invaders. They also built temple mounds like the Master Farmers. They lived in small villages in the swamps, further protected from attack by a palisade of upright logs. They seem to have smoked tobacco habitually as many elaborate clay pipes are found in all their villages. The detached Lamar area is a well-preserved village of this period.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

SPANISH, ENGLISH, AND FRENCH INFLUENCE (Creek Period)

In 1540, Hernando de Soto marched through Georgia seeking gold, glory, and converts for Christianity. Within a hundred years Florida was settled, and the Creeks came under pressure from the white man. Soon, too, England settled Carolina, and France settled Louisiana. The English were the most energetic in exploring the South and were the most successful traders. By 1690, a Carolinian had established a trading post at Ocmulgee Old Fields, and the Creeks had moved back there to be near the glamorous goods the trader offered in exchange for deer skins. The copper bells, steel knives, guns, cloth, beads, mirrors, and rum of European trade soon began to replace native Indian craft, and the life of the Indian itself was changed from that of an independent farmer to a hunter dependent on the trader for many necessities. The remains of the Trading Post, with the huts of the Indians around it, have been excavated. Burials of the Indians are preserved just as they were buried over 200 years ago.

The Creeks soon became involved in the rivalries of Spain, England, and France for the possession of the New World. In 1703, Col. James Moore led 50 Carolinians and 1,000 Creek warriors from Ocmulgee to destroy the Appalachian settlements in Florida, from which the Spanish obtained much of their food. In 1715, Emperor Brim of the Creeks decided to drive the English out of Carolina and then attack the Spanish and French in turn. The resulting "Yamasee War" was unsuccessful,

and the Creeks were forced to move west. Ocmulgee Old Fields was deserted, but the Creeks claimed it until 1821, when they finally ceded it to the United States.

THE MONUMENT

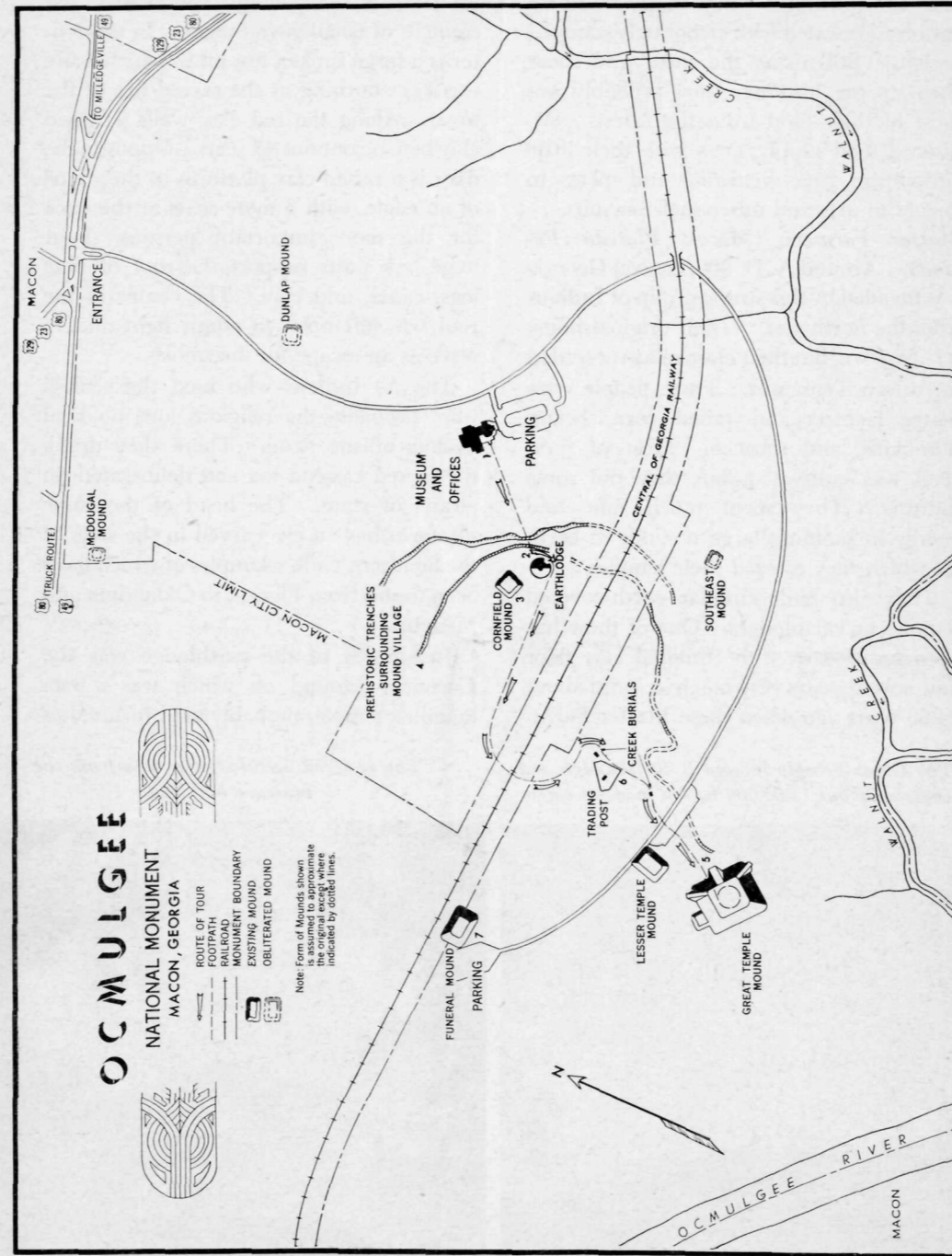
Ocmulgee National Monument, established in 1936, is located on the eastern edge of Macon, Ga., on U. S. 80 and 129. It consists of 638.48 acres in the Macon Plateau area and 45 acres in the detached Lamar area in the river swamps, 3 miles below Macon. A paved road leads from the monument entrance to the museum and administration building and to the Mounds and the Trading Post areas. The detached Lamar area is not open to the public at present.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

You may visit the monument from 8:30 a. m. to 5 p. m. daily. The 25-cent admission fee to the museum and earthlodge is waived for children under 12 years of age and groups of school children 18 years of age or under when accompanied by adults assuming responsibility for their safety and orderly conduct. The museum contains exhibits which help to explain the archeological features of the monument. Organized groups are given special service if advance arrangements are made with the superintendent. Neither picnic nor camping facilities are available.

ADMINISTRATION

Ocmulgee National Monument is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Macon, Ga., is in immediate charge.



Reprint 1956

Cover: Interior of restored earthlodge.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fred A. Seaton, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, Conrad L. Wirth, *Director*

