

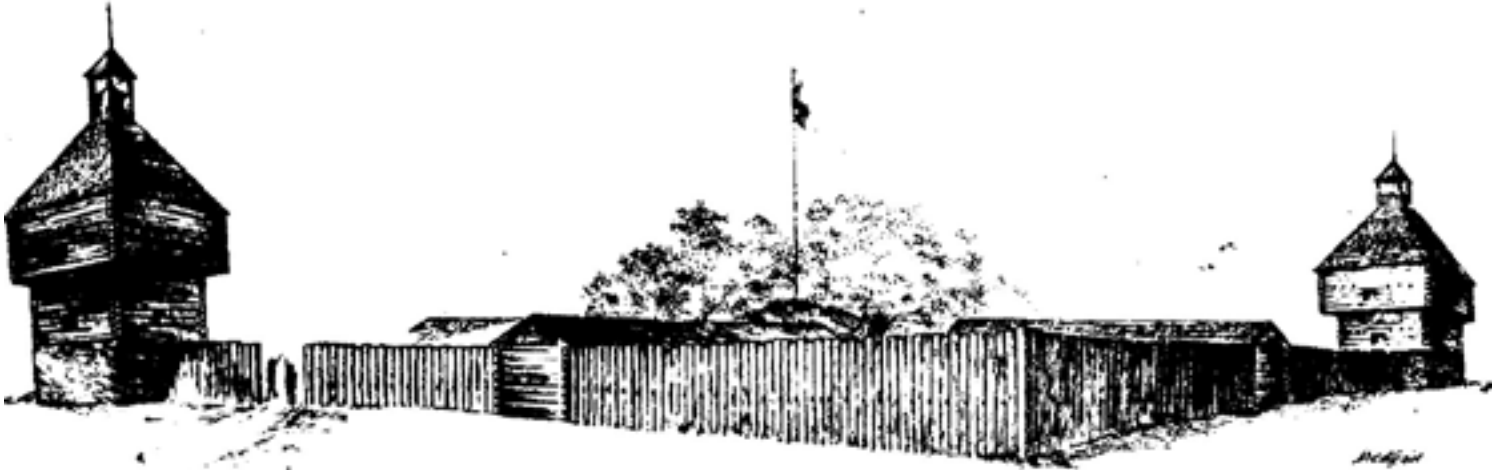
# Ocmulgee Mounds

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of Interior

Ocmulgee Mounds NHP



## Fort Hawkins U.S. Military Outpost



### FORT ESTABLISHED

Fort Hawkins was built in 1806 overlooking the ancient Indian Mounds at what was then known as the Ocmulgee Old Fields (today Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park). The land that the fort was constructed on belonged to the Muscogee (Creek) Confederacy, but the 1805 Treaty of Washington granted the United States the authorization to construct the fort as well as a horse trail to Mobile, Alabama across the Creeks land.

The fort was named for Benjamin Hawkins. During the Revolutionary War, Hawkins had served as an interpreter for General Washington and in 1789 he served as a North Carolina Senator for one term. He was held in high esteem by President George Washington who appointed Hawkins to negotiate the Treaty of Colerain with the Creek Indians in 1795. Later he accepted an offer to be the principal agent of Indian Affairs South of the Ohio River, and was active in arranging treaties and handling other matters incident to the territorial expansion of the United States.



(BENJAMIN HAWKINS)

### THE FORT'S CONSTRUCTION

The fort consisted of two large blockhouses connected by a strong stockade made of hewn timbers, with portholes for muskets at each alternate post. The stockade enclosed an area of 4 acres. The blockhouses were located at the Southeast and Northwest corners of the rectangular stockade. Both blockhouses were built with an above-ground basement of stone blocks, surmounted by two stories of hewn logs and topped with a watchtower. Inside the stockade were four long houses, made of logs, one in the

center of each sidewall with their walls forming part of the stockade. The buildings were used for soldiers' quarters, storage of provisions, as well as to store goods and hides of the Indian trade. The officers' quarters stood in the center of the fort surrounded by oak trees, for shade. The remainder of the fort's interior, and over 90 acres outside the stockade wall were cleared of undergrowth and large trees, to prevent surprise attacks and for clear observation.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FORT

After the First Treaty of Washington was signed in 1805, between the United States and the Creek Indians, the Ocmulgee River became the southwestern boundary of the United States. During the war of 1812 with Great Britain and the Creek Indian War of 1813 - 1814, Fort Hawkins was used for the rendezvous and disposition of troops. In October of 1814, over 2,500 militiamen were organized and equipped at the fort to join General Andrew Jackson at Mobile in Alabama. Some of the soldiers saw duty in the Seminole uprisings in South Georgia.

Fort Hawkins at this time was the principal depository for army supplies and rations for troops involved in the War of 1812 and the Indian Wars (Creeks and Seminoles). In February of 1818, General Jackson with 1,000 Tennessee volunteers arrived at Fort Hawkins to await the arrival of 900 Georgia militiamen and a number of friendly Creek Indians on their way to fight the Seminoles in the First Seminole War.

The last great assembly of Indians at the fort occurred in 1817, when 1,400 Creeks

THE  
IMPORTANCE  
OF THE FORT  
(CONTINUED)

gathered to receive annuities from the government. Each U.S. treaty provided payment of such annuities in return for ceding the ownership of Indian land. By 1818, Anglo-Americans began settling on the lands around the fort. A ferry was built across the river. Within three years, the settlement name was changed from Fort Hawkins to "Newtown". In 1821, the Creeks signed a treaty giving up their lands between the Ocmulgee and Flint Rivers, and shortly afterwards the city of Macon was laid out on the west side of the Ocmulgee River. In 1826, the Ocmulgee Old Fields, the land on which Fort Hawkins sat, was also ceded along with all remaining Creek land within the boundaries of Georgia.



(CREEK INDIANS LEAVING FORT HAWKINS)

DEACTIVATION  
AND FALLING  
INTO DISREPAIR

At the end of 1818, General Edmund Gaines used the fort as headquarters for the Eastern Section of the U.S. Army's Division of the South. During his stay Gaines closed several frontier forts including Fort Hawkins. After 1819, the fort was not garrisoned.

Local developers acquired the land embracing the fort in 1828. Gradually the buildings fell into disrepair and by 1879 only the southeast blockhouse remained, and it was later sold to Henry Jones who relocated it to Main Street to use as a barn until it burned down.

BLOCKHOUSE  
REPLICA

In 1938, through the efforts of the Nathaniel Macon Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and with the Works Progress Administration, a replica of Fort Hawkins' southeastern blockhouse was reconstructed on the exact location of the original, using some of the original stones in the basement section. The upper floors are made of concrete formed to simulate

the original wood timbers. During the reconstruction, archaeology conducted at the site revealed the location and extent of the stockade walls and corner blockhouses. The excavations uncovered many everyday items used by the fort's inhabitants. The City of Macon currently maintains the structure and it is occasionally opened to the public.



(BLOCKHOUSE IN 1879)



(BLOCKHOUSE IN 2020)