

Chickamauga and Chattanooga

Chickamauga and Chattanooga
National Military Park
Georgia/Tennessee

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



The Battle of Chickamauga, 1863, from the painting by James Walker.
COURTESY NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE U.S. ARMY, ARMY ART COLLECTION

On these fields and hills in fall 1863, Federal and Confederate armies clashed in some of the Civil War's hardest fighting. The prize was Chattanooga, key rail center and gateway to the heart of the Confederacy. The campaign that brought the armies here began in late June 1863, when Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans moved his 70,000-strong Union Army of the Cumberland from Murfreesboro, Tenn., against Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg's 43,000-strong Army of Tennessee at Tullahoma, Tenn., defending the roads to Chattanooga. Six months earlier these same armies had clashed at Stones River, where, after a three-day struggle, the Confederates retreated. Now, through a series of skillful marches, Rosecrans forced the Confederates to withdraw again, this time into Chattanooga itself. There Bragg dug in, guarding the Tennessee River crossings northeast of the city, where he expected Rosecrans to attack. But in late August the Federals crossed below Chattanooga, forcing Bragg once again to withdraw southward, abandoning Chattanooga.

Bragg concentrated his forces at LaFayette, Ga., 26 miles south of Chattanooga. Reinforcements from Mississippi, East Tennessee, and,

finally, Virginia swelled his ranks to over 66,000 men. On September 18, after twice failing to destroy isolated parts of Rosecrans' army, Bragg attempted to wedge his troops between the Federals and Chattanooga. He sent parts of his army to the east bank of West Chickamauga Creek along a line from Reed's Bridge to just downstream of Lee and Gordon's Mill. But this, too, failed.

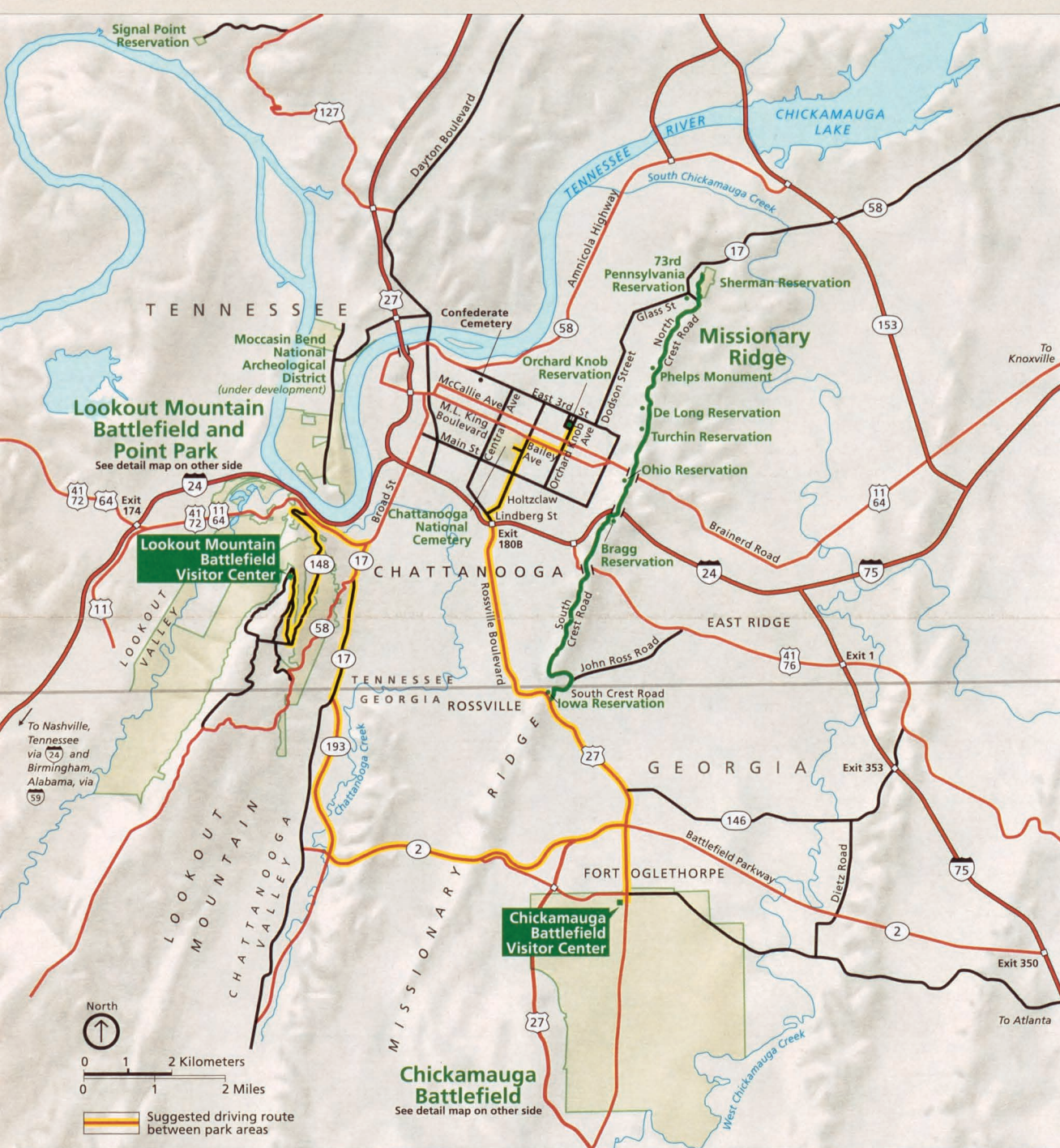
Fighting began after dawn on September 19. Federal infantry encountered Confederate cavalry at Jay's Mill, sparking a general battle that spread south nearly four miles. All day the armies fought desperately, often hand-to-hand. Gradually the Confederates pushed the Federals back to the Lafayette Road. The next morning Bragg again tried to drive between the Federal force and Chattanooga but failed to dislodge Rosecrans' line. But when Rosecrans shifted troops to meet the attacks, a gap opened in the Federal line just as Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's Confederates assaulted that point. The Confederates smashed through the gap, routing Rosecrans and half his army. Some Federals rallied to form a new battleline on Snodgrass Hill, holding off repeated assaults—and earning Maj. Gen. George H.

Thomas the nickname "Rock of Chickamauga." After dark, Thomas withdrew. This defeat forced Federal troops to retreat into Chattanooga. The Confederates pursued, occupying Missionary Ridge, Lookout Mountain, and Chattanooga Valley. Placing artillery on heights overlooking the river and blocking the best roads and the rail lines, the Confederates prevented most Federal supplies from entering the city. Unless something was done to break the Confederate stranglehold, Rosecrans' army must either starve and surrender or abandon just-won Chattanooga.

Aware of Rosecrans' plight, Lincoln sent reinforcements. Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker came from Virginia late in October with 20,000 men. Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman brought 16,000 from Mississippi in mid-November. Thomas replaced Rosecrans as head of the Army of the Cumberland, and Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant assumed overall command. The situation began to change dramatically. On October 28 Federal troops had opened a shorter supply route—called the "Cracker Line"—from Bridgeport, Ala. Then, on November 23, Thomas' men attacked and drove the Confederates from Orchard Knob. The next

day, aided by heavy fog partially enshrouding Lookout Mountain's slopes, Hooker's men pushed the Confederates out of their defenses around the Cravens House in what came to be called the "Battle Above the Clouds." On November 25, with Bragg's army concentrated mostly on Missionary Ridge, Grant launched Sherman's troops against the Confederate right flank and sent Hooker's men to attack the Confederate left. Thomas' men, in the center at Orchard Knob, were held in reserve.

Hooker was delayed crossing Chattanooga Creek, and the Confederates blocked Sherman's attack. To take the pressure off Sherman, Grant ordered Thomas' Army of the Cumberland to assault the rifle pits at the base of Missionary Ridge. The assault went quickly. Then, without orders, Thomas' men scaled the heights in one of the war's great charges. The Confederate line collapsed, and Bragg's troops fled to the rear. That night they began their retreat into Georgia. Union armies now controlled the city and nearly all of Tennessee. The next spring, Sherman would use Chattanooga for his base as he began his march to Atlanta and the sea.



The Nation's First National Military Park

Between 1890 and 1899 Congress authorized the first four national military parks: Chickamauga and Chattanooga, Shiloh, Gettysburg, and Vicksburg. First and largest—and the model for most national military and historical parks to come—was Chickamauga and Chattanooga. Its chief advocates were Gens. H.V. Boynton and Ferdinand Van Derveer, Army of the Cumberland veterans. Visiting here in 1888 they saw the need for a national park to preserve and commemorate these battlefields.

Working through the Society of the Army of the Cumberland, a veterans organization, and the Chickamauga Memorial Association, Boynton and Van Derveer promoted the park idea with Union and Confederate veterans. Early in 1890 Ohio Congressman Charles H. Grosvenor introduced the park bill that Boynton had drafted, and President Benjamin Harrison signed the bill on August 19, 1890.

In their report to Congress supporting the creation of the park, both the House and Senate military affairs committees noted that probably no field in the world presented more formida-

ble natural obstacles to large scale military operations than the slopes of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. They also pointed out how little changed were the roads, fields, forests, and houses at Chickamauga since the battle.

Together these fields were unparalleled for the historical and professional military study of two great armies' operations over all types of terrain met with in actual campaigns. Here were mountains, gentle and steep ridges, open fields, forests, and streams as military obstacles. No battlefield park of this quality and magnitude was known to exist anywhere else in the world.

The park was dedicated on September 18–20, 1895. Most of the battlefields' 1,400 monuments and historical markers were planned and placed by Boynton and other veterans of the battles. The War Department supervised the work and administered all of the national military parks before they were transferred to the National Park Service in 1933.

Related Park Areas

The National Park Service maintains several areas important to the battles for Chattanooga, in addition to those listed on the back of this brochure:

Orchard Knob Reservation marks the site of Grant's headquarters, from which he directed Thomas' Army of the Cumberland as it advanced against Missionary Ridge on November 25, 1863. **Missionary Ridge**, a steep ridgeline east of Chattanooga, is

about 20 miles long and 400 feet above the city. Fortified by the Confederates, the ridge was almost impregnable but fell to the hard-charging veterans of the Army of the Cumberland. The ridge is reached by car via Crest Road.

Along the road are several small park areas, the most significant being Bragg, Ohio, De Long, and Sherman reservations. **Bragg Reservation** marks the site of Bragg's headquarters

for the siege. The monument here honors Illinois troops who fought in the battle. **Ohio Reservation** honors Ohio troops who took part in the Chattanooga Campaign. **De Long Reservation** has a monument to the 2nd Minnesota Regiment, which fought gallantly on Missionary Ridge. **Sherman Reservation** marks where Sherman's troops tried in vain to break through Confederate defenses. North of Lookout Mountain, **Signal Point Reservation** is one

of many sites the U.S. Signal Corps used in the Civil War. Exhibits are along the terrace.

Chattanooga National Cemetery, maintained by the Veterans Administration, holds Union dead from the battles. James J. Andrews and seven of his "raiders," tried and executed by the Confederacy for their part in what would be known as "The Great Locomotive Chase" of 1862, are also buried here.



U.S. ARMY MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE BLUE ACORN PRESS CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Men Who Led the Armies

William S. Rosecrans conducted a masterful campaign in maneuvering Bragg's Confederate Army of Tennessee out of Chattanooga but suffered a nearly disastrous defeat at Chickamauga. He was replaced after letting his army get bottled up in Chattanooga.

Braxton Bragg was the controversial Confederate commander who clashed with some of his senior officers over his failing to follow up the victory at Chickamauga. Bragg resigned after his army's defeat at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge.

Ulysses S. Grant became the Union's man of the hour after his aggressive strategy ended the siege of Chattanooga. In March 1864, President Abraham Lincoln rewarded Grant's achievements by making him general-in-chief of all Union armies.

Have a Safe and Enjoyable Visit

For Your Safety The National Park Service maintains the park as close to its 1863 appearance as possible. We want you to have a safe and enjoyable visit, so please be cautious on steps, hiking mountain trails, or climbing. Service animals are welcome.

Climbing on monuments and cannon is prohibited.

Please obey all signs and speed limits.

Protect Park Resources The Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) imposes criminal penalties for digging, removing, or damaging the battlefield's historic resources. Help us protect the park by reporting metal detecting, digging, or any other suspicious activity to a park ranger.

For laws and policies regarding firearms see the park website.

Emergencies: dial 911.

More Information Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park P.O. Box 2128 Fort Oglethorpe GA 30742 706-866-9241 www.nps.gov/chch

This park is one of over 390 in the National Park System. To learn more about parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities visit www.nps.gov.

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