

Shiloh

Shiloh National Military Park
Tennessee and Mississippi

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

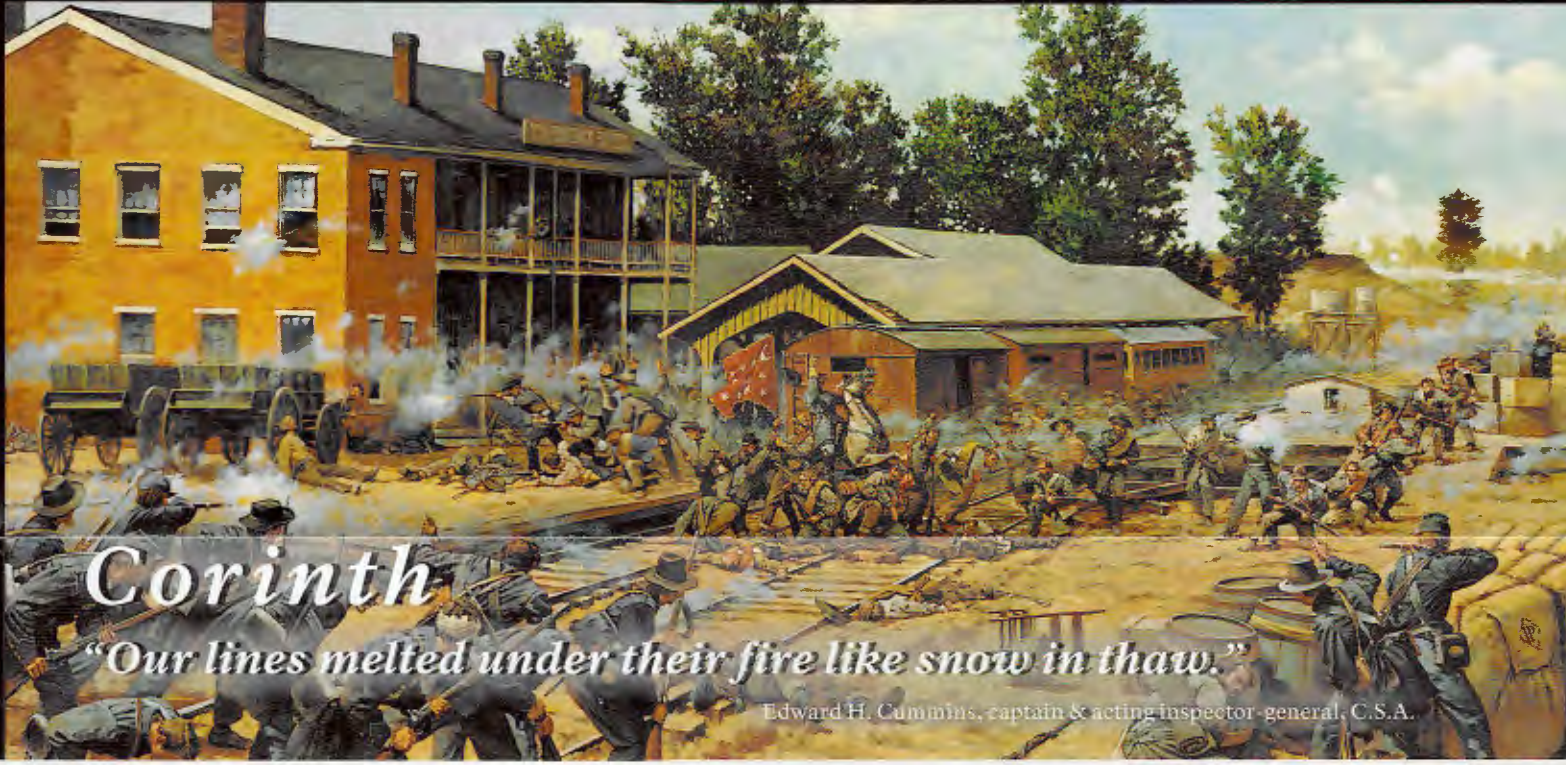


Shiloh

"The ground was strewn with the dead of the enemy and our own, mangled in every conceivable way."

Capt. Samuel Latta, 13th Tennessee Infantry, C.S.A.

FROM THE PAINTING "THE BLOODY SIXTY" BY ROCK REEVES © ROCK REEVES



Corinth

"Our lines melted under their fire like snow in thaw."

Edward H. Cummins, captain & acting inspector-general, C.S.A.

FROM "BLOOD ON THE CROSSROADS" BY KATHY HOLLOM NPS

Highlights of the Civil War in the Western Theater, 1861–1864

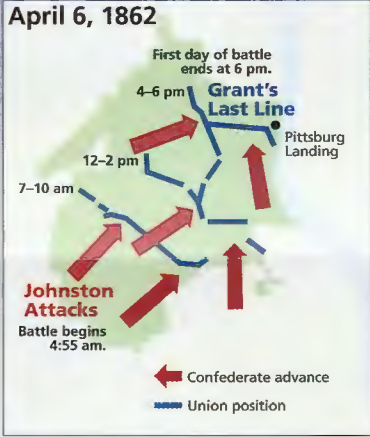
Lincoln elected, South secedes; Fort Sumter bombarded; war begins November 1860–April 1861	Confederacy controls the railroad junction at Corinth, Miss. February 1861	Union forces capture Forts Henry and Donelson, and Nashville, Tenn. February 1862	Union forces occupy Pittsburg Landing, Tenn. March 1862	Battle of Shiloh/Pittsburg Landing, Tenn. April 1862	Siege and capture of Corinth, Miss. April–May 1862	Engagement at Iuka, Miss. September 1862	Battle of Corinth, Miss., and engagement at Davis Bridge October 1862	Grant's first attempt to capture Vicksburg, Miss., fails October–December 1862	Contraband Camp for ex-slaves set up at Corinth, Miss. November 1862	Emancipation Proclamation January 1863	Campaign, siege, and surrender of Vicksburg, Miss. January–July 1863	U.S. forces abandon Corinth, Miss. January 1864
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Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's capture of Forts Henry and Donelson in February 1862 forced Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, Confederate commander in the area, to abandon Kentucky and Middle Tennessee. To prevent a Union advance into the Mississippi valley, Johnston concentrated his forces at the strategic railroad hub at Corinth, Miss. Meanwhile, in mid-March, Grant steamed up the Tennessee River, disembarking at Pittsburg Landing, 22 miles northeast of Corinth. Ordered to wait for Don Carlos Buell's Army of the Ohio marching overland from Nashville, Grant prepared to advance on Corinth.

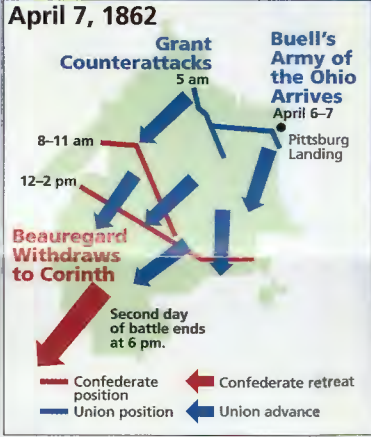
Johnston, however, seized the initiative, leading 44,000 men against Grant. At dawn, April 6, a Federal patrol discovered the Confederates and desperate fighting engulfed the Union camps in the forest and fields around a small log church called Shiloh Meeting House. Grant's 40,000 men stubbornly contested the onslaught, and unparalleled slaughter resulted. General Johnston, who was among the casualties, bled to death from a leg wound, and Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard assumed Confederate command. Grant's divisions, pressed back nearly two miles, still held the important river landing, where Buell's vanguard arrived at nightfall. Reinforced overnight with thousands of fresh troops, Grant counterattacked in the morning.

For six hours, outnumbered Confederates fiercely resisted until they could hold no longer. To save the army, Beauregard ordered a retreat to Corinth. The battered Federals did not pursue. Shiloh's 23,746 casualties forecast an increasingly bloody and protracted war, leaving in doubt the question of who would control Corinth's railroad junction.

BATTLE OF SHILOH



By the end of the day Grant's forces have been pushed back to their base at Pittsburg Landing where they are protected by gunboats and artillery.



The arrival of Buell's army allows Grant to counterattack and sweep the Confederates from the field, saving the Union army from defeat.

CONFEDERATE LEADERSHIP



UNION LEADERSHIP



Scenes of War



These 24-pounder siege guns helped to defend Grant's Last Line, April 6, 1862, until Buell's Army of the Ohio arrived. Above: Shiloh Church, drawn by an officer who took part in the battle.

UNION AND CONFEDERATE FLAGS NPS



Left: Transports at Pittsburg Landing shortly after the battle. The boat second from the right is the *Tigress*, Grant's floating headquarters. Above: Looking northwest from Corinth along the Memphis & Charleston Railroad. Battery Robinett lies in the distance to the right.



Above right: Confederate dead at Battery Robinett after the October Battle of Corinth. Above left: Soldiers on both sides sent letters home in patriotic envelopes like these after the battles of Shiloh and Corinth.

Touring Shiloh Battlefield

The battlefield tour (see map right) starts at the visitor center, where exhibits and a 32-minute film introduce the battle and the war. The maps above highlight troop movements of the armies before and during the two-day battle. Used with the tour map, they help orient you to the ground where the action took place and make the tour stops more meaningful. The visitor center is open daily except December 25. Service animals are welcome.

More Information
Shiloh National Military Park
1055 Pittsburg Landing Road
Shiloh, TN 38376-9704
731-689-5275 | www.nps.gov/shil

- Grant's Last Line** The artillery along this ridge marks the final position of Grant's line on April 6. From this front, the Federals launched their counterattack on April 7.
- Confederate Monument** This memorial commemorates where Confederate troops encircled and captured nearly 2,100 Union defenders of the Hornet's Nest.
- Duncan Field** Union troops defended this position for seven hours on April 6, before finally giving ground. They retook it in the counterattack the next day.
- Ruggles' Battery** When infantry attacks against the Hornet's Nest failed, the Confederates concentrated 11 batteries of artillery to bombard the position, allowing their infantry to encircle and capture Gen. Benjamin Prentiss and nearly 2,100 Union soldiers.
- Shiloh Church** Here stood Shiloh Meeting House, the log Methodist church that gave the battle its name.
- Rhea Field** Exposed to converging fire from the Federal troops defending Shiloh Church, Confederate units here sustained devastating losses in repeated attacks across Shiloh Branch on April 6. The 6th Mississippi Infantry, for one, suffered 70-percent casualties.
- Fraley Field** The short trail west of this stop leads to Fraley Field where fighting commenced. The battle began here at 4:55 am, April 6, when Confederate pickets engaged a patrol from Col. Everett Peabody's brigade.
- Confederates Gain Ground** Early on April 6, Prentiss' division deployed along the low ridge in front of you to try to halt the Confederate onslaught. The Federals were soon forced back to their camps.

- Invasion of the Union Camps** Prentiss' soldiers briefly defended their camps before retreating north at 9 am. Johnston's offensive stalled when his soldiers stopped to plunder supplies.
- Hornet's Nest** Parts of three Federal divisions stubbornly defended this densely wooded area on April 6, so named by attacking Confederates because of the stinging shot and shell they faced here.
- Shiloh's Casualties** One of five known mass graves where many of the 1,728 Confederate dead were buried. Shiloh veterans considered these graves important aspects of battle history.
- Jones Field** Union forces rallied here at noon on April 6, mounting a counterattack that briefly checked the Confederate offensive. Next day, fresh Federal troops drove the Confederates from the field.
- Water Oaks Pond** The desperate assaults Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard hurled through this pond on April 7 failed to halt Grant's counteroffensive. With chances for victory gone, Beauregard withdrew his army to Corinth.
- Field Hospital** Here Federal surgeons set up one of the first tent hospitals of the Civil War. By concentrating medical services on the battlefield, patient care was greatly improved and the death rate lowered.
- Death of General Johnston** Struck by a stray bullet, Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston died in the ravine south of this monument. P.G.T. Beauregard succeeded to command of the army.
- The Peach Orchard** Sarah Bell's orchard was in full bloom when Confederate troops attacked Union forces here on April 6. The Federals eventually retreated to Pittsburg Landing, but retook the field during the counterattack the next day.
- Bloody Pond** Throughout the battle, soldiers of both sides came here to drink and bathe their wounds. Both men and horses died at the pond, their blood staining the water.
- Dill Branch Ravine** Wooden U.S. gunboats, *Lexington* and *Tyler*, anchored opposite the mouth of Dill Branch to support General Grant's defense of Pittsburg Landing.
- Grant's Left Flank** Here Union artillery hammered the flank of Confederate infantry charging across rugged Dill Branch ravine.
- Pittsburg Landing** Gen. Don Carlos Buell's Army of the Ohio arrived here on the night of April 6-7 to reinforce Grant.

North

0 0.1 0.5 Kilometer 1

0 0.1 0.5 Mile 1

1 Tour stop (see description at left)

Tour route

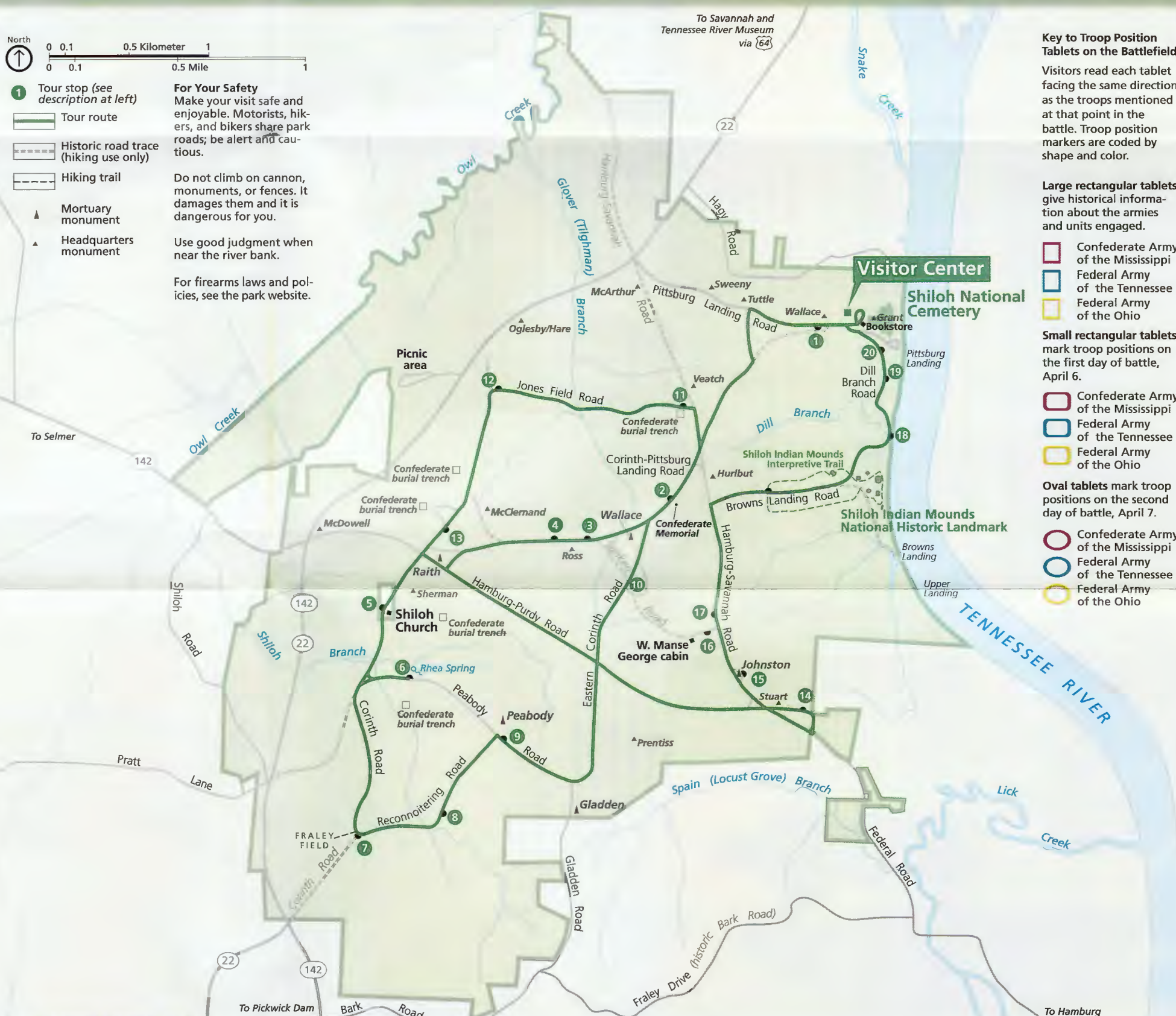
Historic road trace (hiking use only)

Hiking trail

Mortuary monument

Headquarters monument

For Your Safety
Make your visit safe and enjoyable. Motorists, hikers, and bikers share park roads; be alert and cautious.
Do not climb on cannon, monuments, or fences. It damages them and it is dangerous for you.
Use good judgment when near the river bank.
For firearms laws and policies, see the park website.



Key to Troop Position Tablets on the Battlefield
Visitors read each tablet facing the same direction as the troops mentioned at that point in the battle. Troop position markers are coded by shape and color.

Large rectangular tablets give historical information about the armies and units engaged.

Small rectangular tablets mark troop positions on the first day of battle, April 6.

Oval tablets mark troop positions on the second day of battle, April 7.

Key to Large Rectangular Tablets
Confederate Army of the Mississippi
Confederate Army of the Tennessee
Confederate Army of the Ohio
Federal Army of the Mississippi
Federal Army of the Tennessee
Federal Army of the Ohio

“If defeated here we lose the Mississippi Valley, and probably our cause.”

After the Battle of Shiloh, Confederate Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard cabled this haunting prediction to his superiors in Richmond. A month later, with Union forces moving to besiege the critical railroad junction at Corinth, his adversary, Northern commander Gen. Henry W. Halleck, shared similar sentiments with Union Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton: “Richmond and Corinth are now the great strategic points of war, and our success at these points should be insured at all hazards.”

Two of the most important railroads in the Confederacy passed through Corinth. The Memphis & Charleston linked the Mississippi River to the Atlantic seaboard by way of Chattanooga. This line was so vital to the Southern war effort that former Confederate Secretary of War Leroy Pope Walker called it the “vertebrae of the Confederacy.” The second line, the north-south Mobile & Ohio, connected Columbus, Ky., with Mobile, Ala. Their intersection made Corinth the most strategic transportation hub in the western Confederacy. Its loss would play havoc with lateral communication between Richmond and the crucial western theater for the rest of the war.

When the Civil War began, Corinth boasted over a thousand residents, many businesses, five churches, three hotels, and Corona College, a school for young women. Though most people in the area had opposed secession, Corinth became a mobilization center for Mississippi volunteers in 1861, and tens of thousands of soldiers passed through the town. In early 1862,

as simultaneous Union offensives penetrated the upper South, driving Confederate forces southward, Gen. Albert S. Johnston chose Corinth to assemble western Confederate forces and mount a counter-offensive.

Roughly 22 miles northeast of Corinth, the small settlement of Pittsburg Landing, Tenn., lay on the west side of the Tennessee River. Area residents subsisted off small farms carved from old-growth forest, and worshiped at a local Methodist meetinghouse called Shiloh. The undeveloped country roads linking the Pittsburg steamboat landing to the Corinth rail junction were the primary routes over which river commerce arrived or departed by wagon. Also, the landing was the southernmost river point serviceable to steamboats at both low and high water. In March 1862, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant came up the Tennessee with a Union army to sever the western Confederate railroads and move into the Mississippi valley. Pittsburg Landing, on the northern tip of a high plateau well-suited for camping tens of thousands of soldiers, provided the logical base of operations for the planned Federal offensive against Corinth.

With Johnston concentrating Confederate forces at Corinth to resist invading Union armies and Grant selecting nearby Pittsburg Landing as his base for mounting a decisive operation against western Confederate railroads, the stage was set for a titanic battle somewhere between these two communities.



ILLUSTRATIONS: NPS / MARTIN PATE

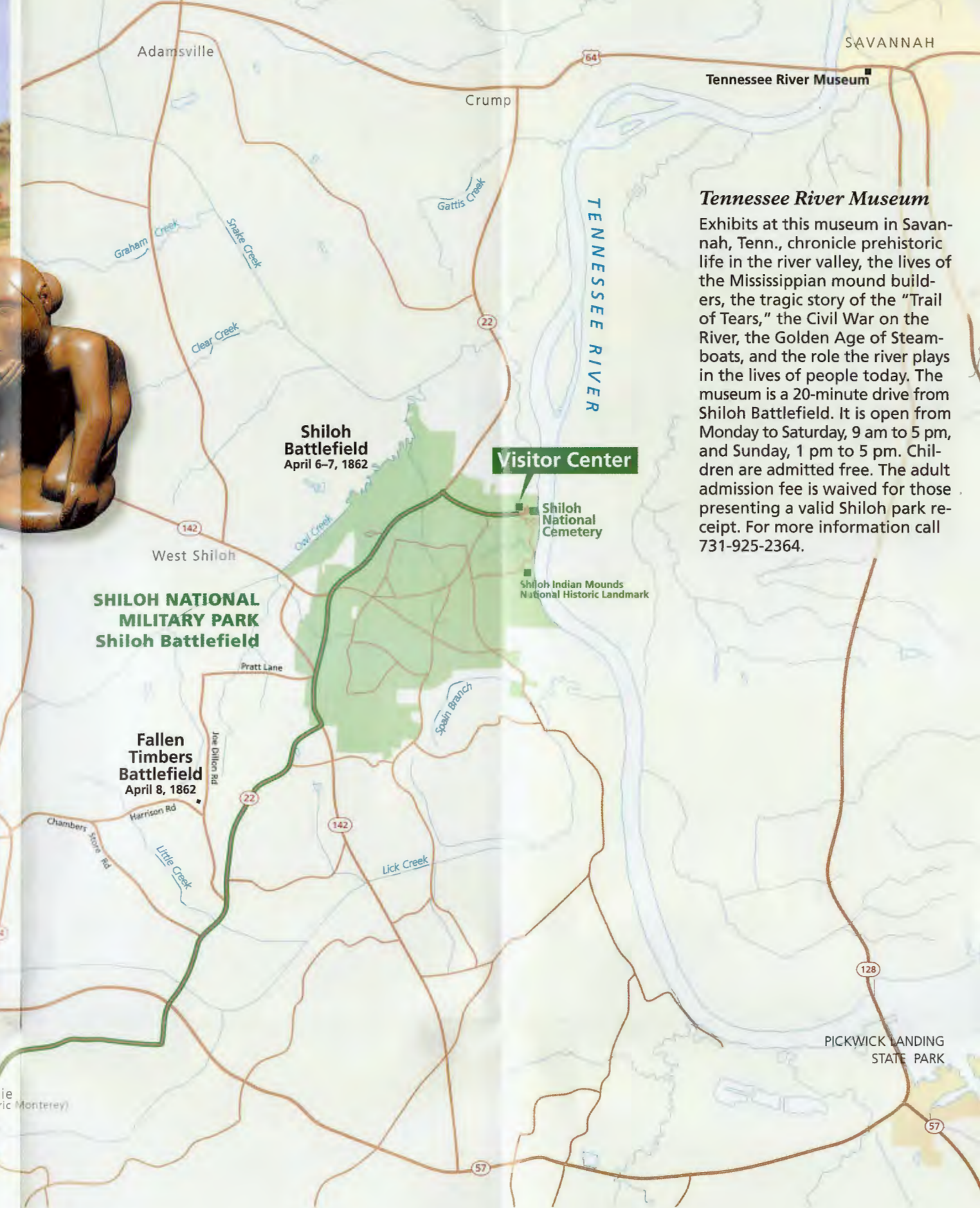
Shiloh Indian Mounds National Historic Landmark

About 800 years ago, a town occupied the high river bluff at the eastern edge of the Shiloh plateau. Between two steep ravines, a wooden palisade protected large earthen mounds and dozens of house sites. Six flat-topped mounds around a plaza probably served as platforms for important structures like a chief's house or a religious building. A dome-shaped burial mound south of the plaza held remains of important residents. The Missouri flint clay effigy pipe (right), found here in 1899, is on display at the Tennessee River Museum in Savannah, Tenn.

Shiloh is one of the few places in the eastern United States where the surface remains of prehistoric houses are still visible. This pre-historic town was the center of a society that occupied a 20-mile stretch of the Tennessee River valley. Because these people left no written record, many questions

about the Shiloh site remain unanswered. Archeological evidence indicates the town was abandoned for some unknown reason several hundred years before the arrival of the first European settlers. What became of the mound builders who once lived here remains a mystery.

In addition to this village site, the Shiloh chiefdom included six smaller towns, each with one or two mounds, and isolated farmsteads on higher ground along the river valley. Downstream, on the river's eastern bank, Savannah, Tenn., is the site of another palisaded settlement with multiple mounds. Many of the Savannah mounds were built much earlier, about 2,000 years ago, but the site was reoccupied at roughly the same period as the Shiloh village. Modern development has obliterated most of Savannah's prehistoric town.



Tennessee River Museum

Exhibits at this museum in Savannah, Tenn., chronicle prehistoric life in the river valley, the lives of the Mississippian mound builders, the tragic story of the “Trail of Tears,” the Civil War on the River, the Golden Age of Steamboats, and the role the river plays in the lives of people today. The museum is a 20-minute drive from Shiloh Battlefield. It is open from Monday to Saturday, 9 am to 5 pm, and Sunday, 1 pm to 5 pm. Children are admitted free. The adult admission fee is waived for those presenting a valid Shiloh park receipt. For more information call 731-925-2364.

Corinth Siege and Battle

Shiloh National Military Park's Corinth Unit contains 14 historic sites associated with the siege, battle, and occupations of Corinth, Miss., during the Civil War. Throughout the war, Confederate and Union troops built miles of earthworks to guard the approaches to Corinth from the north, south, east, and west. Several miles of rifle-pits, trenches, and artillery positions still exist. Other points of interest include the 20-acre Corinth National Cemetery, the final resting place for nearly 6,000 Union soldiers who fought at and around Corinth. Several historic homes, like Hamilton Mask's “Verandah House,” which served as headquarters for Confederate and Union generals, are located in town. All of these sites, plus Davis Bridge Battlefield 18 miles northwest of Corinth near Pocahontas, Tenn., are accessible by automobile.



Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center

The Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center is near the site of Battery Robinett, scene of some of the heaviest fighting in the October 1862 battle. Center exhibits include interactive displays and multimedia presentations on the Battle of Shiloh and the Siege and Battle of Corinth, and “Crossroads,” a feature film depicting the impact of the war on local civilians.

The culminating interpretive feature is a commemorative courtyard where stone and flowing water chronicle the birth and growth of the United States, the accompanying rise of sectionalism, key events leading to the Civil War, and a symbolic representation of four years of war. At the base of

the courtyard, a reflecting pool offers a chance to contemplate the war's meaning and significance. The Center also contains a research library and bookstore.

The Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center is open from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm every day except December 25. There is no admission fee. For more information, contact the staff at 662-287-9273.

NPS



Corinth Contraband Camp

The security offered by United States forces occupying Corinth after May 1862 attracted enslaved African Americans who fled plantations and farms seeking freedom. The migration of these people (first called “contraband of war”) into occupied Corinth increased dramatically following President Abraham Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Issued in September 1862, it authorized, as of January 1, 1863, freedom for all slaves in areas then still in rebellion against the United States.

To accommodate these refugees, Union Gen. Grenville M. Dodge established a camp northeast of town. What began as a tent city in late 1862, by mid-1863 had blossomed into a thriving community of homes, a school, church, hospital, and a progressive cooperative farm program. Northern white men and women from abolitionist and benevolent organizations came to Corinth to provide the freedmen with religious, academic, and vocational instruction.

The camp, considered a model of its kind, served as a temporary home for 6,000 ex-slaves during its operation. After implementation of the Emancipation Proclamation, African American men in the camp were enlisted in the Union Army. This led to the formation of the 1st Alabama Infantry Regiment of African Descent (later re-designated the 55th United States Colored Infantry). Nearly 2,000 African American men who passed through the camp enlisted in the Union Army. The contraband facility was closed in December 1863, one

month before Union forces abandoned Corinth, and moved to Memphis, where the freedmen resided in a more traditional refugee facility for the remainder of the war.

The contraband camp was the first step on the road to freedom and the struggle for equality for thousands of former slaves. The park preserves a small portion of the historic Corinth Contraband Camp site, which is open daily 8 am to 5 pm. For more information about the camp, contact the Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center at 662-287-9273.

The Corinth Contraband Camp is interpreted through life-size bronze sculptures depicting daily life in the camp—a laundress (near right), a farmer, a teacher, a student, the camp superintendent, a young boy, and a soldier of the United States Colored Troops (far right). USCTs, like those shown in the photograph below, proved a valuable addition to the Union Army.

Left: These contrabands were among the thousands of formerly enslaved African Americans who flocked to Corinth following Union occupation of the town.

NPS / MELINDA SCHMITT



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