

# Fort Donelson National Battlefield

## Natural Resources – Basic Cloud Types



Clouds are formed from tiny water or ice particles in the atmosphere, and are typically named in Latin for their height in the sky, attributes, and/or their overall vertical growth. Here at Fort Donelson, visitors can see many cloud types throughout the year. Many types of clouds can be visible just within a few hours. Below you will find descriptions of a few cloud types. **Check** the box next to the picture if you see any of these cloud types during your visit.

**High Level** clouds typically begin with the word “cirro” or “cirrus”. These include cirrus clouds, cirrostratus, and cirrocumulus. (normally seen around 18,000 to 20,000 feet or above)

**Cirrus** – often a wispy type cloud



**Cirrostratus** – often appear like sheets



**Cirrocumulus** – cotton like



**Middle Level** clouds have “alto” in their names. Altostratus and altocumulus are shown below. (visible at 6,500 to around 20,000 feet)

**Altostratus** – sheet-like and often grayish



**Altocumulus** – cotton like and often grayish



**Low Level** clouds include both the stratus, cumulus, and stratocumulus formations. (at or below 6,500 feet)

**Stratus** – often forms a fairly continuous layer



**Cumulus** – generally puffy



**Stratocumulus** – cumulus flattening



**Vertical Growth** clouds can vary, but the one you should always look out for is the cumulonimbus. This type of cloud formation often indicates a developing or developed thunderstorm that can generate high winds, contain lightning, bring heavy rain, hail, and even tornadoes.

**Cumulonimbus** – towering cloud, often anvil-shaped, and can have an overshooting top as the one pictured here

