

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **DESCRIPTION OF CHICKAMAUGA AND CHATTANOOGA NATIONAL MILITARY PARK**

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park (the “park”) preserves and commemorates the sites of Civil War battles fought September through November 1863 for control of the city of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the passage to Georgia and Alabama. Although the Confederates briefly held back the Federals after the Battle of Chickamauga (September 18-20, 1863), the ultimate victory belonged to Federal troops who overpowered Confederate forces at Missionary Ridge (November 25, 1863) leaving open the path to Georgia for Union General William T. Sherman. In 1890, veterans of both armies joined together to commemorate their actions at Chickamauga and Chattanooga by creating the first national military park in the United States.

By purchasing land and creating the park so soon after the end of the Civil War, the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park Commission had the advantage of working with veterans of the associated battles to determine the historic appearance of the battlefields and to mark lines of battle with a high degree of accuracy. Farmers who sold their land to the federal government for the park were allowed to lease it back provided they maintained the roads and buildings and preserved the outlines of fields and forests. The enabling legislation also called on the Park Commission to preserve historic structures and roads from the battle period. Firsthand veterans’ accounts provided the data necessary to restore and preserve the battlefield and these associated historic resources.

The park currently includes more than 8,000 acres of land in northwestern Georgia and southern Tennessee managed by the National Park Service (NPS). The largest tract is the Chickamauga battlefield, located south of Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and bounded on the southeast by West Chickamauga Creek. The Tennessee holdings include several small reservations along the crest of Missionary Ridge, at Orchard Knob, at Signal Point, and a large area at the northern end of Lookout Mountain including Point Park.

The park is adjacent to the city of Chattanooga and is surrounded by its suburban development, which has led to increased recreational use of park areas. A major thoroughfare from north Georgia to Chattanooga, U.S. Highway 27, bisects the Chickamauga battlefield, bringing thousands of commuter vehicles through the park each day. Farming on park land has all but ceased, with a minimal amount of hay grown and harvested each year. A self-guided auto tour route provides visitor access to the battlefield at Chickamauga. Inter-

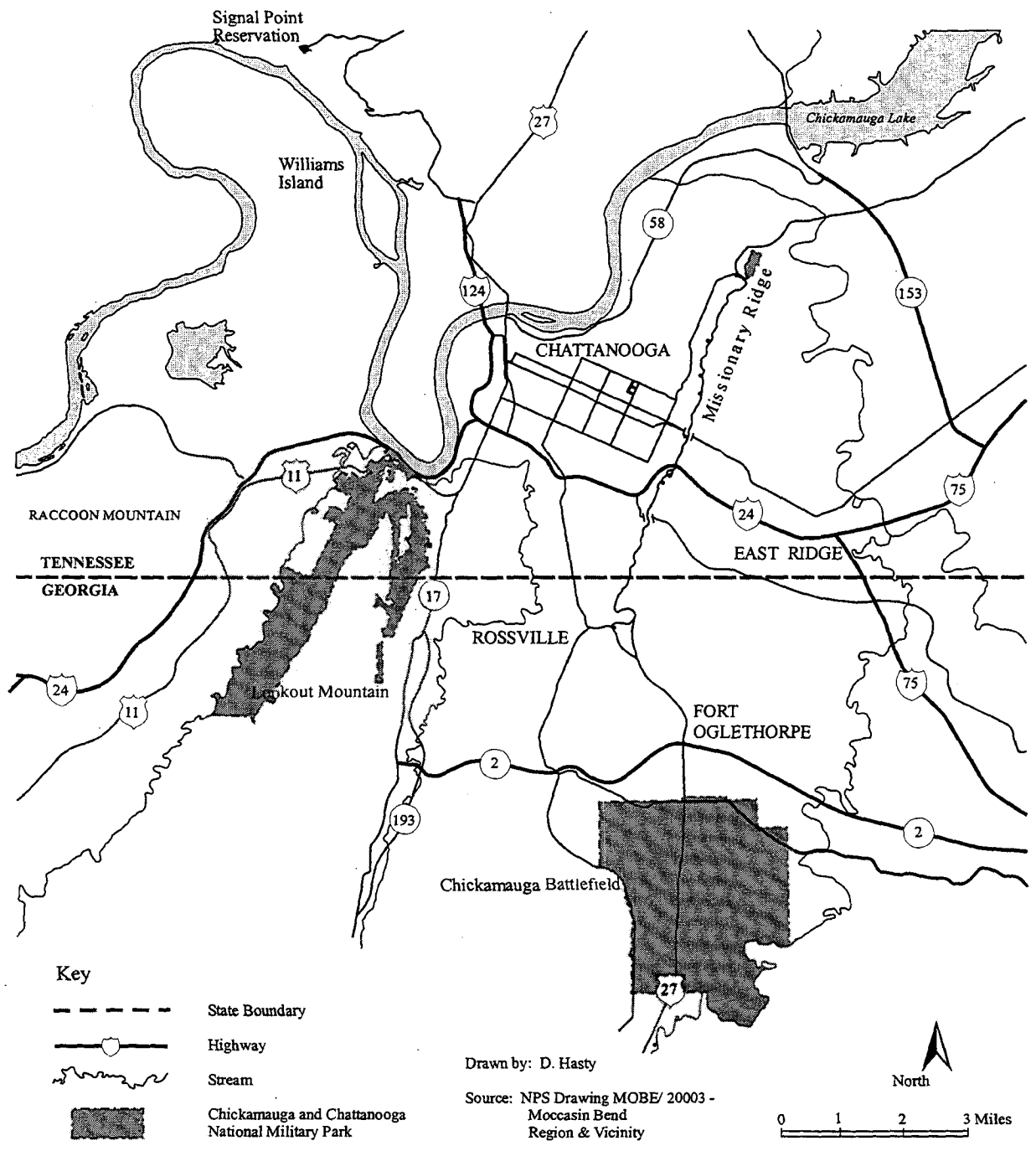


Figure 1. Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park vicinity map, 1998

pretive facilities are also provided in the visitor centers at Chickamauga and Point Park, the Cravens house, and on markers at Missionary Ridge, Lookout Mountain, Orchard Knob, Signal Point, and Chickamauga.

#### **SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY**

The Historic Resource Study (HRS) identifies and evaluates, using National Register of Historic Places criteria, the extant historic structures within the park. The study establishes and documents two historic contexts associated with the park and evaluates the extent to which the surviving historic resources represent those contexts. The completed HRS will serve as a tool for future site planning, resource management, and the continuing development of interpretive programs at the park.

The history of the battles at Chickamauga and Chattanooga has been well documented; however, the existing National Register documentation for the park provides only a limited context for the evaluation of historic resources associated with the preservation and commemoration of the ‘battlefields. The HRS seeks to correct this inadequacy by providing contexts for and identifying the significant resources associated with the battles and the long history of commemoration at the park. As the first national military park, Chickamauga and Chattanooga established several precedents for battlefield and other historic resource preservation in the country. The HRS will provide park management with the background needed to preserve and interpret the resources associated with this history.

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park is classified for National Register purposes as a discontinuous historic district comprising 8,000+ acres of land within the park boundary. For national parks, the legislated park boundary will usually serve as the National Register boundary delineating the park as a district, an individual property, or a group of multiple properties. For battlefields where action occurred in separate areas, National Register districts with discontinuous boundaries provide the best tool for evaluating associated resources. The privately owned lands surrounding the park are not included in this district nomination.

#### **SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS**

##### **Survey Methodology**

The goals of the historic resource survey of the park are to 1) update the List of Classified Structures (LCS) database for the park for use by park management; 2) prepare a Historic Resource Study for the park; 3) update the National Register of Historic Places documentation for the park. This documentation will be used in complying with Sections 106 and 110 of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act.

The survey of historic resources at Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park occurred in three separate stages. Initial survey data gathered by a team from the University of Georgia in 1992 was supplemented by additional field work conducted by a park seasonal employee in the summer of 1994 that completed the survey of the more than 600 monuments in the park. The NPS Southeast Regional Office LCS survey team and the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) survey team completed additional inventories of the roads, stone ditches and culverts, and other park development resources in 1995-1997.

Initially the survey team examined building files, maintenance records, historic research compiled by park staff, and maps located at the park headquarters. The field surveys of the park yielded information on the present condition of the historic resources. The team also reviewed historical sources at the NPS Southeast Regional Office Cultural Resources Library. Research with primary and secondary sources was conducted at the park archives and area university libraries.

### **Determination of Historic Contexts**

This study evaluates the historic & significance, integrity, and eligibility of the park's historic resources within two historic contexts. These contexts correspond to historic themes identified by the NPS in the 1994 "Revision of the National Park Service's Thematic Framework."

The following two historic contexts have been developed for the current study: 1) The Campaign for Chattanooga, June to November 1863; and 2) The Development of Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, 1890-1942.

The first context relates to the NPS theme "Shaping the Political Landscape." It briefly describes the history of the Civil War battles fought at Chickamauga and Chattanooga in 1863. Resources from the battle period include historic roads, buildings, and the park district.

The second context relates to the NPS themes "Expressing Cultural Values," and "Transforming the Environment." The context discusses the history of Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park and associated commemorative resources. Existing resources associated with commemoration include: the Cravens, Kelly, Brotherton, and Snodgrass houses that were reconstructed in the immediate post-war period; and more than six hundred stone monuments, seven hundred cast iron interpretive markers, roads, bridges, culverts, and other infrastructure constructed by the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park Commission from 1890 to 1933. Commemorative development completed by the National Park Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) between 1933 and 1942 is also covered in this context. As the first national military park, Chickamauga and Chattanooga served as a model for future preservation and commemoration, and the resources from the commemorative period achieve their significance from this association.

Historic resources associated with these contexts represent two periods of significance. The first period covers the time of the battles for Chattanooga from September to November 1863. The second period of significance, 1890 to 1942, covers the broader period of park creation and development completed by the Park Commission, under the authority of the U.S. War Department, and by the National Park Service.

Preservation and commemoration at this park should be viewed as a continuing process extending over a period exceeding one hundred years. This study represents an attempt to unravel the complicated history of development under three entities (Park Commission, War Department, and National Park Service) as it bears on the physical appearance of the park. Some questions are not answered definitively by this study. For example, it has not been possible, and may never be possible, to precisely date every feature (culverts, ditches, etc.) of the road system at the Chickamauga battlefield. Where road features

and road alignments are known to be more than fifty years old, are consistent with the development plan for the park laid out by the Park Commission and continued by the War Department and the NPS, and possess sufficient integrity, they will be nominated under the park development context. Much remains to be learned about the physical evolution of the park over the past century. This will require extensive research in War Department and National Park Service record groups at the National Archives, which was not possible in the preparation of the current HRS. The scope of this study also did not permit an evaluation of the archeological resources at the park. Additional research and surveys may need to be completed in order to adequately evaluate the park's archeological resources. The National Register evaluations contained in this HRS are based on the current level of knowledge. More detailed studies of the development of the park should be undertaken in future and published as addenda to the HRS or as separate special history studies.

### **THE SETTING**

The park lies near the southern end of the Appalachian Mountains in the states of Tennessee and Georgia. The Chickamauga battlefield sits in a valley between Missionary Ridge and Peavine Ridge adjacent to West Chickamauga Creek in the state of Georgia. The Missionary Ridge, Orchard Knob, Lookout Mountain, and Signal Point units of the park are on elevated points around the city of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Prior to the battles in 1863, the land that today comprises the national military park was dotted with small farms and settlements scattered among a wooded landscape. Following the War of 1812, the population of the Georgia-Tennessee region expanded as farmers settled in the Tennessee River valley to grow crops such as corn and raise livestock. The growth of Chattanooga as a major railroad transportation hub further influenced settlement in the vicinity. The Lafayette Road (with origins as a Native American trade route and now known as U.S. Highway 27) became the chief north to south route connecting the smaller farms in north Georgia with markets and transportation in Chattanooga. The farms in the area were connected to Lafayette Road through a series of smaller roads with fords at Chickamauga Creek to the east of Lafayette Road. Flanked by Missionary Ridge on the west and Chickamauga Creek on the east, this main north-south route became a major prize in the fighting between Federals and Confederates in September 1863. Heavily wooded patches of land between the farms limited troop movement, forcing an additional reliance on secondary roads. Farms provided headquarters buildings and landmarks for the contending armies.

Following the war, farmers returned to the area, rebuilding their homes, planting crops, and building roads. When the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park Commission purchased the battlefields more than twenty years later, they sought to restore the landscape to the battle era while simultaneously commemorating the actions that took place. In order to preserve the fields for future military and historical study, structures such as roads and buildings that did not exist at the time of the battles were removed and battle-era structures were restored (and improved in the case of most roads). Monuments and detailed markers placed with the help of battle veterans identified the locations of troop movements, headquarters, and other landmarks.

Over the years, the battlefields have been altered by continued military use from the Spanish-American War through World War II and by park development. However, many historic resources closely associated with the battles remain largely intact through preservation and restoration efforts. This is particularly true at the Chickamauga battlefield, where roads present at the time of the battle generally retain their historic alignment although some, such as the Lafayette Road, continue to be used as major transportation routes in the region. The Brotherton, Kelly, Snodgrass, and Cravens houses represent landmark structures from the battle era. The wooded landscape conveys a sense of the natural obstacles that made fighting so difficult. Structures such as monuments and markers, although not consistent with the battle-era scene, represent the earliest attempts to commemorate the historic battlefields. The current appearance of the park represents the accumulated commemorative development and other uses of the battlefield over more than 100 years. At Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, historic resources from both the battle era and the subsequent period of commemoration coexist; the significance of both categories of resource is recognized by this study.

#### **HISTORICAL BASE MAP DISCUSSION**

The Historical Base Map (HBM) depicts the existing historic and nonhistoric resources of the park including roads, buildings, and other structures on ten separate maps, one for each unit of the park having contributing historic resources. The maps graphically distinguish contributing historic structures based on the evaluations of National Register eligibility contained in this study. Sources for the maps include maps compiled by Park Engineer Edward E. Betts in 1896 of the 1863 battlefields showing troop locations, roads, farms, and natural features, as well as current and historic NPS maps. The majority of the more than 600 monuments in the park are not depicted on the historical base maps. The locations of the monuments may be found on the United States Geological Survey map entitled, "Chickamauga Battlefield Location Map for Monuments, Markers, and Plaques," as surveyed in 1934.

#### **NOTES**

1. The park originally operated under the direction of a Park Commission appointed by the Secretary of War. In 1922, the duties of the Commission transferred to the War Department following a Congressional directive that had been approved in 1912. The National Park Service assumed responsibility for the park in 1933.