

FINAL REPORT

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Ethnographic Overview and Assessment of Ocmulgee National Monument

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I. Introduction, by Deborah Andrews

Ocmulgee National Monument (OCMU), located in Macon, Georgia, is a multi-faceted site that plays an important role in history. The site has been in use from the Paleo-Indian period, over 12,000 years ago, through the present. Archaeological excavations provide evidence of the activities that took place on the site across time. Monumental features of the site demonstrate its importance to the indigenous occupants, and its location was an important juncture in the early historic period as the interface of Creek, English, Spanish and French territories near central Georgia. Events associated with the site influenced the future of the fledgling United States as well as the future of the Creek Confederacy. U.S. Civil War action also occurred on the site, adding an additional component of historical connection to this site. The depression-era New Deal project large-scale excavations sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution, with labor provided by the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), resulted in an unprecedented collection of over two million artifacts, demonstrating the continuing importance of the site.

This report is the Ethnographic Overview and Assessment of Ocmulgee National Monument for the National Park Service conducted pursuant to the Task Agreement between the National Park Service and the University of Florida. This report examines the extant demographic, ethnohistorical and ethnographic resources that document the associations with, and traditional uses of, resources at Ocmulgee National Monument. Additionally, this paper addresses contemporary interviews that were conducted in Oklahoma with descendants of American Indians who were once associated with the site. Accordingly, this report contains two primary components: 1) the ethnohistoric analysis of pre-existing resources, and 2) interviews

and analysis of the memories of members of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, and Seminole Nation of Oklahoma.

While there are a number of existing resources that generally contain some ethnographic accounts of American Indians in Georgia, none were located that specifically focused on Ocmulgee National Monument. Most of the most highly cited written resources are from the colonial perspective rather than the American Indian perspective, and thus this report reflects the positionality represented by the original accounts and scholarship. Unfortunately, due to the fact that many resources, especially the early colonial accounts, were written by Europeans and colonists, the point of view is seldom that of Native Americans. With this in mind, the second part of this report specifically addresses the perspectives of present-day Native Americans.

Chapter II of this report provides background and describes the history of Ocmulgee National Monument. This section provides a geographical description of the site. It also includes information on the establishment of the monument and the events that led to the establishment of the monument, the events and efforts to purchase and protect the site, as well as an overview of the depression era excavations. This section also explains the research that was conducted for this report and describes the complexities of conducting such research across a wide time span.

Chapter III of this report focuses on archaeological and historical research about the site. We first address occupation over a span of up to 12,000 years, and the chapter is subdivided by widely recognized eras. This chapter discusses the early prehistoric uses of the site and the migration patterns that emerged around it. A focus on the historic and protohistoric periods relies on early publications, reports, accounts and documents were used to describe the people affiliated with the site in a historical context. Due to the limited number of early references to the actual OCMU site, a broader, regional perspective was used, and we focused on wider events

associated with the Creek Confederacy and contact with Europeans. This section continues through the establishment of the United States, from the assignment of Indian Agents through the Removal Period. The third and final section of this chapter addresses uses of the OCMU site from the 1830s to the present day. This section describes the formation and early history of the City of Macon, the use of the site as a plantation, the incursion of railroads across the site, Civil War activities on the site, early industrial activities, including mills and mining, and the present day use of the site. The final section of this chapter provides population and census data.

Chapter IV presents a contemporary view of the Ocmulgee site and its associations based upon ethnographic consultation with members of Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, and Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. Consultants discussed their knowledge of the history and use of the site, as well as connections and parallels with post-Removal sites and contemporary practices in Oklahoma. Participants also offered suggestions for site interpretation and recommendations for potential partnerships.

Finally, Chapter V presents the conclusions and Chapter VI makes recommendations based on the results of this ethnographic survey and report.

II. Background: The History of Ocmulgee National Monument, by Deborah Andrews

A. The Geography of Place

OCMU has been a source of research interest for quite some time, and archaeologists and researchers such as Hally (1994), Fairbanks (1940, 1956), Kelly (1938a and b), Mason (2005, 1963), Wheeler (2007) and Corey (1990) have all written detailed works on various aspects of the site. Ocmulgee National Monument consists of over 600 acres, located partially within and adjacent to the city limits of Macon, Bibb County, Georgia. Ocmulgee National Monument also

includes a 45 acre parcel known as the Lamar site, which is located two miles south of the main park unit.

Ocmulgee National Monument is located to the east of the Ocmulgee River, both in and adjacent to the floodplain, along river bluffs about 35 feet above the Ocmulgee River plain.

Walnut Creek and its small tributaries wind through the site, emptying into the Ocmulgee River. The springs feeding Walnut Creek provide a fresh water source, while the Ocmulgee River provides a navigational source, as well as rich floodplains for agriculture. The Ocmulgee River cuts through the southern remainder of the Georgia Piedmont, and joins the Oconee River 90 miles downstream, which then joins the Altamaha River, which flows into the Atlantic Ocean at Darien, Georgia.

Part of the OCMU site lies on the Macon Plateau, which is a relatively flat area of the Piedmont uplands. The Macon Plateau is not a true plateau, but rather is a flattened hill area of the ancient Ocmulgee River east terrace. To the east of the Macon Plateau is the coastal plain that extends to the Atlantic Ocean. The coastal plain of Georgia extends inland until it meets the Piedmont, where the juncture of these two regions is known as the fall line, the divide between the Macon Plateau and the coastal plain.



Figure 1. Map of Ocmulgee National Monument, courtesy of the National Park Service.

B. Preservation and Recognition of Ocmulgee National Monument

1. National Monument Designation

When the National Park Service was established in 1916, archaeological sites were among the first included in national monuments and parks. The Antiquities Act of June 8, 1906, predates the establishment of the Park Service, and provided for the preservation of American antiquities. The Historic Sites Act of 1935 gave the National Park Service the responsibility for a national survey of historic and archaeological sites.

The mounds on the Ocmulgee site have long drawn the interest of local people and academics. Local citizens sought to preserve the Ocmulgee mounds, led by the efforts of General Walter A. Harris, Dr. Charles C. Harrold and Linton M. Solomon. Harris, an attorney and Creek history buff, in 1922 and again in 1929, and perhaps many times in between, wrote to the Bureau

of American Ethnology in Washington, D.C., suggesting public acquisition of the site (Hally 1994). In 1929, Smithsonian Institution Bureau Chief M.W. Stirling visited the site at the invitation of Gen. Harris, with the result that Stirling recommended excavation of the site. In 1933, Harris formed the Society of Georgia Archaeology with the goal of raising funds to purchase the site. Harris, Harrold and Solomon successfully lobbied the Macon Junior Chamber of Commerce to support the purchase of the mounds (Marsh 1986). The people of Macon rallied around Harris' vision, both spiritually and financially.

Georgia Congressman Carl Vinson sought National Park or Monument designation for the site in 1933 (Krakow 1975). The National Park Service responded to Congressman Vinson's request positively, and in February 1934, Congressman Vinson introduced a bill to Congress to establish the site as a park, seeking 2,000 acres of land for the proposed park. This bill was revised at the request of Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, making passage of the bill contingent upon donations, rather than government appropriation, and changing the designation from a park to a monument. Ocmulgee National Monument was authorized by Congress and President Roosevelt to become a National Monument on June 14, 1934.

The establishment of Ocmulgee National Monument did not actually preserve or protect the site, because no federal funds were appropriated to purchase the land. Instead, the fundraising task fell upon the residents of Macon. By May 1935, the Macon Historical Society had acquired nearly 500 acres and later raised \$8,500 for additional land purchase (Marsh 1986).

In addition to difficulties in raising private funds, two landholders refused to sell their lands. The Macon, Dublin and Savannah Company held the right-of-way to the abandoned railroad line that traverses the site. Due to general mortgage release requirements, the railroad

could not easily release this right-of-way (Marsh 1986). As a result, the United States filed condemnation proceedings to obtain the land.

Another property owner, the Bibb Manufacturing Company, a Macon textile mill, also refused to donate or sell the land, although it consented to archaeological excavations. Their land included the site of the Funeral Mound, an important feature of the site. The company wanted to retain the land for future expansion. After much negotiation, the United States once again filed condemnation proceedings, and obtained a court order allowing the condemnation along with payment to the landowner (Marsh 1986).

After these proceedings were concluded, the Presidential Proclamation dated December 23, 1936, and signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt, stated that the 678.48 acres included Old Ocmulgee Field, where Indian mounds of great historical importance are located (Hally 1994). The monumental memory of the ancient mound builders moved the newer Americans, who recognized the importance of these remnants of a great nation of predecessors.



Figure 2. Aerial photograph of Ocmulgee National Monument, Great Temple Mound from the 1930s. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

Once the United States obtained title to the land, one of the next steps was to create a plan to develop the site. Park Service personnel along with General Harris, Dr. Harrold and Congressman Vinson, created a list of needed site improvements, including roads, fencing, landscaping, restoration of archaeological features, and construction of a museum. The first acting Superintendent of OCMU was James T. Swanson. In the mid-1930s, a temporary wooden museum was built until funds for a permanent building could be procured. While construction on the permanent museum began in 1938, World War II delayed completion, which occurred in 1951. Funding was obtained through the efforts of Congressman Vinson and Senator Walter George (Marsh 1986). The Visitors Center was constructed in Art Moderne style, and has a geometric frieze Lamar Bold Incised pottery design. The approximate cost for construction of the building was \$350,000.

Marsh's administrative history of OCMU addresses some of the important events that surround the creation of monument. The museum was dedicated on November 2, 1951, attended by approximately 6,000 people. Creek Indians also attended the dedication, and exhibited a stick ball game as well as dancing, demonstrating ties to the site. The OCMU site was administratively listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1966 and has been updated on several occasions since then. During the more recent revisions to the National Register, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Seminole Tribe of Oklahoma and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians recognized historic ties to the site (Brockington and Assoc. 1999).

2. *Depression Era Excavations*

Archaeological investigation began before the establishment of the monument and ultimately resulted in the largest archaeological dig in American history. An estimated 2.4 million artifacts have been excavated from the site, most of which have not been fully analyzed

(Corey 1990). While archaeological excavations are not presently ongoing, the re-cataloging of the artifacts is providing a more accurate number since during the depression-era excavations, many artifacts were bagged together and given a single identification number. The separation of these artifacts and the assignment of individual numbers by park staff are providing a more accurate artifact count.

The establishment of Ocmulgee National Monument coincided with the Great Depression. At this site, people desperately in need of employment received on-the-job training in archaeological excavations. Prior to the establishment of the National Monument, in 1933, Congressman Carl Vinson obtained New Deal funding for archaeology. Men and women were employed to excavate and catalogue the artifacts. Thus, a millennium after the mounds were built, hundreds of Americans came to the site to disassemble and excavate what surely took hundreds of Native Americans to construct. This work, supervised by archaeologists under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution, was funded by the CWA, the CCC, and the FERA. The initial CWA project began in December 1933, but was switched to a state CWA project a few months later. In April 1934, FERA became responsible for the archaeology of the site (Marsh 1986).

The Smithsonian Institution appointed Dr. Arthur R. Kelly of Harvard University as the original supervising archaeologist, assisted by James A. Ford. Other prominent archaeologists included Jesse D. Jennings and Gordon R. Willey. One of the young archaeologists assisting Kelly was Charles H. Fairbanks, who would later become the Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Florida. Fairbanks, who wrote his dissertation on the Funeral Mound at the Ocmulgee site, married a Macon resident, and on his wedding day he was asked to give a tour of the Ocmulgee site to Margaret Mead (Hally 1994). In addition to the workers and archaeologists,

Joseph B. Coke, a local resident, photographed the excavations (Wheeler 2007). Artist James A. Jackson sketched the site during excavations (Ingmanson 1964). Across time, in the present, and into the future, the presence of the Ocmulgee site seeps into the lives and memories of many diverse people, with both ordinary and extraordinary lives.

During these excavations, the archaeologists also investigated nearby sites, including the Swift Creek site (3 Bi 8), which did not ultimately become a part of the monument. The Swift Creek site, however, is noteworthy since it was the key site used in identifying and classifying the Swift Creek culture, and also because of the staffing of this excavation. A Works Progress Administration (WPA) program began in March 1936, that employed about 40 African American women as the archaeological field crew who worked with Dr. Kelly (Marsh 1992). Thus African Americans have associations with the site in the 20th century, as well as the 19th century, discussed further in this report.

The various federal agencies providing labor during this time shifted, and in May 1937, CCC work began at the site, and employed about 200 men. During their five year employment, these men constructed roads and parking lots, constructed the levee at the Lamar site, constructed the shelter over the Funeral Mound, planted vegetation, built the Earth Lodge, and worked at the lab that housed the artifacts (Marsh 1986). In addition to men, women worked separately in cataloguing artifacts. The OCMU site was used as a CCC camp, where the workers were housed. The Mission 66 ranch house was used for staff residence. The concrete footings remain on the CCC complex (Wheeler 2007). The FERA workers conducted excavations, built fences, constructed the museum, acted as security guards, and worked in the laboratory. In 1983, a reunion of CCC workers was held at the monument to mark the 50th anniversary of the CCC (Marsh 1986).

One of the most important efforts that occurred in 1936-1937 was the restoration of the Earth Lodge, which started two days before President Roosevelt established Ocmulgee National Monument. WPA laborers reconstructed the new Earth Lodge, which served to protect the existing floor, seats and walls. The reconstructed Earth Lodge was opened to the public on November 1, 1937. Additional improvements to the Earth Lodge were constructed in the mid-1970s (Marsh 1986).

Much of the excavation was stopped in 1938, so that the artifacts could be analyzed, which occurred at the Macon Auditorium laboratory. This work included typing analysis cards, restoring pottery, producing drawings, and writing reports. Due to the large volume of pottery, a laboratory in the museum was established in 1940 (Marsh 1986). In 1941, the FERA work ceased at the site, and archaeological work almost stopped. Limited staff worked at the site during World War II.

As they excavated the mounds, archaeologists noticed that there were alternating colors and compositions of the materials constituting the mounds. The result was a dazzling display of artistic color, demonstrating an intentionality in the use of the materials, which had to be collected from across a broad landscape of soil types. This intentionality in the selection of sediments of various hues is not singular: such carefully selected, processed and placed sediments are found in other important Mississippian sites, including Cahokia (Anderson 2012). Finding that the state of color photography at the time did not capture the beauty of the alternating colors, Ocmulgee archaeologists commissioned a painter to capture the effect in a painting that now hangs in the Visitors Center. Unfortunately, despite the extensive excavation that took place on the site and the presence of interesting finds, the information collected from

Ocmulgee, at least according to some, has not significantly contributed to answering the critical questions about Southeastern Indians (Hally 1994).



During excavations in the early 1930s, the significant colors of the bisected Funeral Mound layers were revealed. Since the black and white photography of the period would not capture the colors, Dr. A.R. Kelly and his crew commissioned Mrs. Carolyn Smith Meriwether to depict the colors in this oil painting.

Figures 3 and 4. Photographs of painting and description on display at Ocmulgee National Monument. Photos by Deborah Andrews.

C. Research on and about Ocmulgee National Monument

Much of what is known about the past is based on archaeological investigations as well as ethno-historic information. The ethno-historic information includes analysis of governmental records, traveler's reports and writings, memoirs, eyewitness accounts, historical accounts, as well as academic articles, books, and governmental reports. Research emphasis was placed upon review of original writings by persons who were associated with or visited the site or region. There is limited information from the early historic era about the OCMU site, so research was conducted into regional studies in order to obtain information about the people who inhabited the region across time. One important historic figure is Benjamin Hawkins, who was an early Indian Agent for the United States, who lived in the region and visited the OCMU site often. The nearby Fort Hawkins is named for him. Another important figure is Henry Woodward, one of the early English traders in the region, who helped establish trade and political relations between the English and the American Indians. Other writers include Milfort (1956), who spent many years living with the Creek during the time of Alexander McGillivray. Oft quoted early travelers include Romans (1961 [1775]) and Adair (1930 [1775]), Europeans who also wrote extensively about their observations of American Indians. In addition, accounts of Hernando de Soto's travels as well as other Spanish documents provide information about the early contact period.

Archaeological investigation has occurred at OCMU, and both published and unpublished reports provide information about the site. Archaeological reports contain the findings and interpretations of the site's features, as well as discussion about the associated cultures. The archaeologists who worked on the site provided interpretations regarding the past occupants. Noteworthy archaeologists include Kelly (1935a and b), who supervised the depression era excavations and wrote some of the earliest and most informative reports,

Fairbanks (1954), who worked with Kelly and later wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on the Funeral Mound, and Mason (1963a, 2005) who interpreted the Carolina Trading Post for her Ph.D. dissertation. More recently, Hally (1994) edited *Ocmulgee Archaeology*, which contains various articles specifically about the archaeology of the site. Unfortunately, archaeological work has subsided, with little excavation occurring during the past 50 years, although Bigman (2012) recently conducted a ground penetrating radar survey to locate gravesites. Some of the human remains from the site are still in the possession of the Smithsonian Institution, and researchers have conducted recent analysis of the remains (Burnett and Wilczak 2012).

While there are archaeological articles and reports written about the site, there are still gaps in knowledge, with some reports identifying additional areas of future investigation. Additional investigation can lead to clarification about the significance and timing of occupations of the site, and associations with specific tribes. Notably, little radiocarbon dating has been done on the site, with only one published report located (Wilson 1964), and one unpublished report referring to another radiocarbon date (Ingmanson 1964). In addition, additional archaeological analysis of existing data and artifacts would be instructive since most interpretation occurred during the infancy of Southeastern archaeology.

In order to trace the history of the site, careful attention must be paid to the names given to the river, town and people across time, as well as the spelling of these words. While the OCMU site and the river presently share the same Ocmulgee name, such was not always the case. The earliest name for the river was Achese or Ochese. Perhaps the earliest known published reference to the site is a Soto expedition reference to “Achese” in central Georgia (Mason 2005:154). The earliest English reference to Ochese Creek is almost two hundred years later in 1702, when Colonel Moore says, “ye Cussatoes which live on Ocha-Sa Creek” (Salley

1932 quoted in Mason 2005:154). Thus the Ochese Creek name pre-dates the Ocmulgee name for the river. A 1708 letter by Nathaniel Johnson lists 11 American Indian towns on the “Ochasee River” and one on the Chattahoochee (Foster 2007). This letter is dated shortly before the Yamasee War, and demonstrates that the Ocmulgee River was the site of most of the towns at that time as compared to the Chattahoochee River. The Yamasee War, however, would change this, as described later in this report. With the presence of three European nations in the region, there were three names for this river: the English called the Ocmulgee River Ochese Creek, the Spanish called it the River of the Uchese, and the French called it the River of the Cowetas (Harris 1958:32).

Other documents use the Ochese name to describe the people or town. The Nairne Map of 1711 refers to the “Ochese” nation (Mason 2005:154). The Mitchell Map of 1755 identifies the Ochese Creek settlement, which is identified as a Hitchiti town (Swanton 1952). On the Mitchell Map, the trading path from Augusta crosses the Ocmulgee River at the site labeled “Echete Old Town” (Mason 2005:152), which apparently refers to the Hitchiti.

The first known written acknowledgement of the Ocmulgee site as a town is from an early Spanish list of towns (Mason 2005:153). Based on Spanish Bishop Calderon’s early list of towns in 1675, the word Ocmulgee was used for the town, but not the river. At the time of this Spanish list of towns, the Creek were located on the Chattahoochee River, and Mason concludes that the original use of the Ocmulgee town name was for that location, rather than at the OCMU site. If this is correct, then the relocation of the Ocmulgee town from the Chattahoochee River to the OCMU site in 1685 would appear to be a merging of towns at OCMU: the existing site, and the relocated town. Notably, at this time the river was called Ochese Creek, rather than the

Ocmulgee River. Under these facts, the re-naming of the river was directly related to the relocation of the Ocmulgee town.

Mason evaluated the historical maps, and concluded that the Ocmulgee Town name preceded the naming of the river as Ocmulgee (Mason 2005:156). Mason compared Ocmulgee to Oconee Town and River, and concluded that the towns were more important landmarks than the rivers. The Ocmulgee River was not always labeled on historic maps, which Mason argues as support for the Ocmulgee town name occurring first, with the Carolinians adopting the town name for the river, and the abandonment of the older Ochese Creek name (Mason 2005:156). Notably, in addition to maps, Ocmulgee town is listed as a signer of a treaty of alliance between Carolina and the Creek in August 1705 (Mason 2005:153).

Based on these early descriptions, it appears that a Hitchiti town called Ocmulgee was located on Ochese Creek, which was later renamed the Ocmulgee River by the English. Further supporting the contention that the Hitchiti occupied the OCMU site, Gatschet documented native tradition that the Hitchiti were the first to settle at Ocmulgee (Mason 2005:151). Mason believes that Ocmulgee was probably the mother town of a number of Hitchiti-speaking settlements (Mason 2005:151). Foster likewise agrees that the Muscogee later settled among the Hitchiti-speaking American Indians after migrating from the west (Foster 2007:10). The migration patterns that emerge will be described more thoroughly in later sections of this report.

Another confounding factor in the preparation of this report is the use of various names for the American Indians. Different writers at different times have used different conventions for representing tribal groups, a problem that is compounded by changing identities and understandings that continue today. One issue is that the names of tribes or tribal towns are often spelled differently in the historic documents. Quite often the spellings are radically different, yet

when viewed phonetically, it appears that the writers are discussing the same thing.¹ Some authors, such as Swanton (1946, 1932), have grappled with this issue, and drawn conclusions as to whether different writers were describing the same people. Swanton's work contains detailed listings and descriptions of the various documented names, and is a good source for locating information about tribes, although some conclusions are debatable. Another important confounding factor is the tendency of some early records to simply call the people "Creek," which blurs the record, and makes it difficult to obtain information specific to identifiable migration and occupation events of the different Nations and tribes.

The difficulty in triangulating data due to the issue of various names and spellings perhaps explains one of the greatest mysteries surrounding Ocmulgee National Monument: the identities of the various people who occupied the site through time. Much work has been done on the site and many researchers have discussed the American Indians who have occupied Georgia, but the identification of each of the specific tribes who occupied this particular site across time has been elusive. Little ethnographic work has been done in association with this site. A review of WPA work done in the 1930s did not reveal any recorded oral histories associated with the OCMU site by the tribes located in Oklahoma. Even the work of notable anthropologist John R. Swanton does not reveal much specific new information about the OCMU site, and instead relies upon historic documents and prior publications. Notwithstanding this dearth of ethnographic data specifically related to this site, this report attempts to identify the past occupants of the OCMU

¹ For example, various spellings for the same tribe include: Chickasaws (Jones 1873), Chicasaws (Romans 1775), and Chikkasah (Adair 1775). Another example is: Muscogee (Jones 1873), Muskoge or Muskoghe (Adair 1775), Muskogees (Milford 1956), Musqua (original name of Muscogee) (Woodward 1859), and the current Mvskoke spelling used today simultaneous with Muscogee. While these references clearly refer to the same people, other references are not so clear. For example, do Cussatees (Pope 1888), Cussetuhs (Hawkins 1938), Cussetta (Woodward 1859), refer to the same people or tribal town affiliation? While these examples are differences in spelling among the English writers, Spanish writers also describe the people and places, using a different basis for pronunciation, and accordingly, spelling, which also must be filtered through the use of phonetics to compare the names.

site, merging ethno-history with archaeology, while acknowledging that these matters are debatable.

The following chapters also describe the uses of the site. Due to the fact that the most significant use of the site was during the pre-Columbian and early contact periods, much of the information is subject to further analysis and debate. The meaning of the site to people today is also included in this report, based on recent consultation with members of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, and Seminole Nation of Oklahoma.

The mounds present on the OCMU site command attention, but more importantly, serve as identification markers for the people who built them. This chapter describes the evidence of the various people who occupied the site from the Paleo-Indian period through the Indian Removal Act and beyond. The following chapters also discuss people associated with the OCMU site after the removal period and through the present.

III. Ethnohistory and Archaeology of Ocmulgee National Monument, by Deborah Andrews

A. The Occupants and Features of the Site

Across time there have been numerous uses of the site. The site was used and occupied by American Indians from the Paleo-Indian period to the historic period. The Ocmulgee site contains numerous anthropogenic features of great significance. These features include: nine mounds, a reconstructed earth lodge, remnants of eight additional earth lodges, prehistoric trenches, prehistoric pit houses, Woodland-era houses, a ridged agricultural field, a Mississippian village, Mississippian houses, a Carolina trading post, the Uchee Trading Path, a 19th century plantation house and remnants of the plantation, Civil War earthworks, railroad features, remnants of the CCC camp, graves, and an Art Moderne Visitors Center, along with maintenance buildings. Since these features signify the presence of the occupants across time, it is difficult to

discuss the people without reference to these structures. Accordingly, this report describes what we know of these structures in order to describe the story of the site and its relationship and meaning to people across time.

1. *The Uchee Trading Path*

Perhaps the oldest man-made feature on the OCMU site is the Uchee (Yuchi) Trading Path, sometimes called the Lower Creek Trading Path. The Ocmulgee site was located along this significant trail that traverses an east-west corridor, which was important for trade and travel, both to the American Indians, as well as the new-comers. This important overland route that traversed the site was in addition to the availability of fluvial transportation along the Ocmulgee River. This trail was quite lengthy, as Truett notes: “One of their paths led from Charleston overland by way of the Creek villages on the Oconee, the Ocmulgee, the Chattahoochee, and the forks of the Alabama, to the settlement of the Chickasaws” (Truett 1935:17). Thus this path went west from the Atlantic Ocean, all the way across the State of Georgia and beyond.

In the late 18th century, federal Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins referred to this important trading route when he described the environment along the Ocmulgee River:

The upland of Ocmulgee is pine forest; the swamp wide and rich; the whole is fine for stock. On its right bank, below the old Uchee path, there is some light pine barren, with saw palmetto and wiregrass (Hawkins 1938:20).

The name of the path is for the Uchee/Yuchi Indians, who inhabited the region. Notably, the path was considered “old,” with the name acknowledging its antiquity pre-dating European contact.

The presence of the Old Uchee Trading Path at the site raises the question as to the identification of early inhabitants of OCMU. According to Jones, the Uchees declared themselves to be the most ancient inhabitants in Georgia and may have been the people that Soto called the Apalachee (Jones 1999:5). The fact that the Yuchi claim to be the most ancient

inhabitants of this region of Georgia (Hudson 1976; Gatschet 1969 [1884]) may explain changes observed by archaeologists in the material culture excavated, including the burials, houses, fields and perhaps the Earth Lodge, that are distinct from and earlier than the Mississippian Macon Plateau mound builders, described in more detail in the following sections. While the evidence appears to indicate that the Hitchiti were the Macon Plateau mound builders, who arrived in a sort of “invasion,” there were prior people who inhabited and used the site across time, and the Uchee/Yuchi are a likely candidate for the earlier occupants, especially considering the naming of the most ancient man-made feature on the site --- the Uchee Trading Path. Thus the name of this ancient road, coupled with the oral history that acknowledges the Uchee/Yuchi as the earliest known inhabitants of the area, provides clues into the debate regarding the identification of people associated with the site.

In relation to the traders traversing this path, Adair describes some lore about the Ocmulgee site along the path: “Indians and traders claimed to have heard ghostly singing and dancing especially at *Okmulge*, the old waste town, belonging to the Muskohge, 150 miles S.W. of Augusta in Georgia, which the South Carolinians destroyed about the year 1715” (Adair 1974[1775]: 35). Thus the abandoned site and its adjacent path continued to connect the passersby with the mystery of the ancient mound builders. This passage also denotes the destruction of the town during the Yamasee War in 1715, which event drove the tribes westward to the Chattahoochee River, abandoning the town located at this site.

This path, which provided a key route westward into the interior of the United States, was an important landscape feature for the fledgling U.S. government, emphasizing the importance of control of infrastructure. The U.S. was trying to improve transportation and mail service to New Orleans, and investigated road options. In this regard, Federal Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins

was sought out to advise on a road through Georgia in the early 1800s, in the context of treaty negotiations with the U.S. government seeking control of lands in Georgia (Bretz 1926).

On November 14, 1805, the negotiators met in Washington and signed the treaty which stated that it had been ‘agreed, on the part of the Creek nation that the Government of the United States shall forever hereafter have a right to a horse path, through the Creek country, from the Ocmulgee to the Mobile, in such direction as shall ... be considered most convenient, and to clear out the same, and lay logs over the creeks’ (Truett 1935:62) (quoting Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties, II, 85, 7 Stat. 96).

Negotiations with the Creek confederacy and affiliated tribes occurred on many occasions, resulting in numerous treaties of varying impact. It was the intent of the United States to continue to obtain as much territory from the American Indians as possible, which occurred through a series of negotiations. While the lands were being carved up through various treaties with different tribes, it was clear to the United States that the road heading west was infrastructure that was already in place and important for continued westward migration.

After obtaining the rights to the trail through Ocmulgee, the United States improved the road from Fort Hawkins at the Ocmulgee site, heading west. In 1808 the road from Georgia through Indian territory was reported to be nearing completion (Bretz 1926). In January, 1812, the road from Fort Hawkins westward to Fort Stoddard through the Indian territory was completed (Truett 1935:65). Mail service on the road, however, was interrupted in 1813 by the War with the Creek (Bretz 1926). After the war, in 1816, \$10,000 was appropriated to repair the road from Fort Hawkins to Fort Stoddard (Bretz 1926). In 1818 regular postal service between Georgia and New Orleans resumed, however the unbridged watercourses from Milledgeville to New Orleans continued to be a problem for the postal service (Bretz 1926).

Thus the ease of migration towards Ocmulgee, Macon and westward was announced for future residents to heed. The original migration path was reversed: instead of American Indians arriving from the west, Europeans were arriving from the east.

It is unknown which was built first – the Ocmulgee site or the trail. Perhaps the trail was originally a game trail that was utilized by the human immigrants to the area. Perhaps the trail existed before the migration of the Macon Plateau people, described later in this report. The answer to this question will never be known, but the importance of such landscape features remains and is an integral part of the historic circumstances of the story of the people who traveled this road.

2. *Paleo-Indian, Archaic and Woodland Eras*

The OCMU site has been utilized by humans since the Paleo-Indian period, evidenced by artifacts found at the OCMU site. Several thousand knives, scrapers, projectiles and other flint implements were found during the 1930s excavations (Kelly 1938a and 1935a). Included in the lithic artifacts were spinner arrowheads², named by the catalogue-men who said they would spin when shot (Kelly 1935a). These flint tools, flakes and cores were found about two feet or more below the plow zone, in an area with no baked clay, pottery or structures, and below the mound-building level (Kelly 1935a). At the time, Kelly believed that these worked flints exhibit chipping, similar to middle to late Paleolithic in Europe, with advanced decomposition. The quantity of worked flints indicates an industry by Paleo-Indians, with certain areas show a heavier concentration, indicating flint-knapping areas (Kelly 1938).

In 1935, one fluted, broken Clovis point was found on the site. The worker who found the point, catalogued it, labeled Find # 103, and simply noted that it was “a little different” but did

² These are likely Kirk-Corner-Notched bifaces and related forms of the Early Archaic period (ca. 10,300 – 9500 c14 BP).

not otherwise call attention to it (Kelly 1935a:2). Kelly later found it when going over the artifacts, called it a Folsom point, but noted it was a little large compared to others in collections (Kelly 1935a). This point was found on the North Plateau, just west of the now reconstructed Earthlodge, and is now considered to be an eastern Clovis point (Walker 1989), which dates to 13,400-12,800 cal BP. With regard to this find, Waring, who frequently visited the site during excavations, said “Georgia’s first fluted point was fortunately found in good archaeological context...in a controlled excavation [and] in a pre-pottery context” (Walker 1989:11-12).

In the 1960s, during the construction of Interstate 16 nearby, a construction worker found another Clovis point. This construction also unearthed three graves and destroyed archaeological resources (Walker 1989).

The next era after the Paleo-Indian period is the Archaic. Fairbanks interprets the period from 5,000 to 500 BC to be unoccupied at OCMU due to the dearth of artifacts from this time-frame. It is unexplained, however, why there would be use of the site during the Paleo-Indian period, but not the early-to-middle Archaic period. Unfortunately there is a lack of much carbon dating on the site, especially given the large quantity of artifacts found on site. The only published report of radiocarbon dating is from a charred roof timber from the Earth Lodge, and the date is 935 ± 110 BP (Wilson 1964). It seems likely that there was continued use of the site across time due to the natural resources located there, but that the artifacts are difficult to find due to the length of time, taphonomic effects, and limited artifacts. In addition, the majority of the ceramic analysis of the site occurred during the development of ceramic types for the SE U.S., thus the archaeological literature on this site was written during this early period of ceramic typology, and may warrant further refinement of the artifacts from the site using current knowledge. Further archaeological interpretation is also confounded by the fact that the

Depression Era excavations did not screen the material or collect charcoal which could be used for radiocarbon dating.

The most comprehensive archaeological report on the site was published in 1938 by Kelly, the head archaeologist. Unfortunately, some of his findings have not been fully analyzed. In addition, the time periods in common use today were in their infancy at the time of Kelly's work. There were two profound discoveries found at the OCMU site that were below the mounds: 1) ancient agricultural fields, with an associated house, and 2) a perimeter of pit houses encircling the plateau in a design that appears to have incorporated the Earth Lodge. The era of the Earth Lodge, however, is in dispute, as discussed below.

North of Mound D, the so-called Cornfield Mound, prehistoric trenches partially surround the village site. There are two lines of trenches, which vary in width and depth, along the east side of the village. Some of the ditches are parallel and lined with clay. These prehistoric trenches were partially excavated and left unfilled (Wheeler 2007). The purpose of these trenches is unclear, but due to the clay lining, they could be drainage features or waterworks.

During the 1930s excavations, underground pit dwellings were found around the perimeter of the plateau, described as a prehistoric pit house village. These were believed to be the oldest structures on the OCMU site. Fourteen of these pit dwellings were excavated over three years, with meticulous profiling (Kelly 1935b). The pit houses completely encircle the plateau, except for the west slope where erosion is most prevalent. Construction of Mound A, the Great Temple Mound, indicates that the pit houses were already there before the mound builders, and were impacted by the mound construction.

Kelly described the pit houses as underground dwellings, with entrance via tunnels or ladders through the roof (Kelly 1935b). The underground houses have connected passages,

although some are separate. Kelly says the closest comparison of construction type and design is in the southwest United States, perhaps the Pawnees and Arikara (Kelly 1935b). The comparison of the construction design of these ancient structures to southwestern U.S. styles is consistent with oral histories of the inhabitants originating in the West.

Pottery was found in the pit houses and is described as very homogenous. This pottery has some early stamping at the lowest level of fill, associated with early agriculture and a primitive housing type (Kelly 1935b). Kelly called the pit house ceramics “fossil sherds” and noted that they include cord marked, checker stamped, Theta, Delta, Sigma, and steatite stone ware (Kelly 1937:55). The pit houses also had thick walled, footed pottery, about one inch thick. Other finds include fragile pottery made in netting that Kelly called the most primitive found, and described as “pumice-like in weight and feel, which bears the imprints of cord netting” (Kelly 1935b:3).

An interesting feature of this pit house village is the planning. Kelly believes that the houses were deliberately planned in relation to the existing topography, along the rim of the plateau and the lower contour slopes (Kelly 1935b). Based on the planning of the locations of these pit houses, Kelly believes that they were constructed with the Earth Lodge due to its location among them (Kelly 1935b). This conclusion means that the reconstructed Earth Lodge may not be from the Mississippian era and was not built by the Mississippian mound builders. Thus these features may be evidence of early occupants prior to the Mississippian mound builders.

The second important set of features that were underneath the mounds, and thus constructed prior to the Mississippian period is the ancient agricultural field and associated houses. Underneath Mound D, which is called the Corn Field Mound, was a small house mound.

Underneath that house mound, archaeologists excavated “the largest and best-preserved plot of cultivated ground belonging to prehistoric American agriculture” (Kelly 1938:10). A 50 foot by 75 foot area of cultivated field was excavated, which revealed rows of raised agricultural beds. Within this field is a small house mound with a path leading to the house. Willey excavated the house site in the middle of this field (Kelly 1965). Kelly considers Mound D, the house mound, and the agricultural field to be separate occupations (Kelly 1938).



Figure 5. Photograph of ancient agricultural field at time of excavation. Photo courtesy of National Park Service.

Due to its location underneath two mounds, this agricultural field is not likely from the Mississippian era (Kelly 1965). The rows terminated at a small log house, and even a path that wound across the field in prehistoric times was apparent (Kelly 1965). These rows were made up

of hillocks, which Kelly noted differs from the early European descriptions of agriculture (Kelly 1938). Instead, Kelly compared this field design to LeMoyne's sketches of the Florida Timucua fields with cabins in them (Kelly 1965). This comparison may provide clues into the early occupants of the site and their association with other early tribes such as the Timucua.

While the cornfield name attached to this site early on, Kelly questioned whether corn was actually grown in this field, finding the name unwarranted (Kelly 1965). There is no discussion of any findings of corncobs or burned corn at this location and Kelly suggested that pollen samples needed to be taken to determine the crop (Kelly 1965). Since Kelly's suggestion, more information is known about pre-corn agricultural development, and it is possible that this field is evidence of the Eastern Agricultural Complex, which consists primarily of an array of weedy species that bear starchy or oily seeds. An additional puzzle about this field is that it is located on the plateau, and not in the Ocmulgee River floodplain as was presumed typical of early agriculture, but which has more recently been called into question (Gremillion et al. 2008).

Another archaeological find associated with this field is the presence of storage pits (Kelly 1938:61 n. 26). The site is described as honeycombed with storage pits, and was called "the Granary" during excavations (Kelly 1965). Since it was unknown at the time how this discovery would be displayed for exhibit, the rows were re-filled with sand until such time as a permanent exhibit of this feature could be constructed (Kelly 1965). At the present, the rows are still covered and the remaining mound area continues to be called the Cornfield Mound despite the lack of evidence of corn at this location.

Kelly pondered the origin of this agricultural style and suggested a center of origin in the Mississippi basin (Kelly 1938:61). While noting that his conclusions were preliminary, he does not explain why he thinks this agricultural style originates from the Mississippi River basin,

especially given the comparison to the Timucua along the East Coast. Further investigation is warranted to determine if this site is evidence of the Eastern Agricultural Complex.

Another interesting feature of this archaeological find is the presence of houses below the agricultural field showing an even earlier occupation. This demonstrates that there was a different era of occupation prior to the construction of the ridged agricultural field. Thus this site offers a wide range of occupations across time.

The next defined period after the Archaic Period is the Woodland period. Much of the older literature on OCMU does not use the Woodland time designation. Thus, this time frame is not discussed thoroughly in relation to the site. However, due to further elaboration of ceramic types with associated date estimates, Woodland dates can be gleaned based on the classification of the ceramics found on the site. The site was used during the entire Woodland period, which is confirmed by the presence of the sequence of ceramics that include Dunlap Fabric Marked, Deptford Complicated Stamped, Deptford Bold, Deptford Linear Check Stamped, and Deptford Simple Check Stamped. In addition, Mossy Oak Simple Stamped and unnamed plain artifacts were identified. In the latter part of the Woodland period (A.D. 500-900), Napier Complicated Stamped, Swift Creek Complicated Stamped and Swift Creek Plain ceramics were found on the site (Fairbanks 1956).

At the Funeral Mound, for the entire pre-mound period, only 38 sherds (Stallings Island, Deptford, Dunlap, Mossy Oak, Macon Plateau) were identified as definitely below the Funeral Mound. Due to the limited number of these sub-mound sherds Fairbanks concluded that they indicated a short occupation at this particular location, especially since the humus is thin (as compared to other areas of the Macon Plateau) (Fairbanks 1954:90). Of course, the limited pre-mound artifacts could be due to preparation for the base of the planned mound, thereby

eliminating evidence of prior occupation. Given the other features on the site with a deep history and abundance of artifacts, it is otherwise unexplained why this particular location would not have more artifacts. In later reports on the site, early Woodland refuse pits were also found, but not discussed in detail (Mason 2005:77).

Several earth lodges were located on the site. In the 1930s, during the excavation of the trench for the margins of the adjacent Mound D, the main Earth Lodge was discovered (Kidd and Associates 1974). The workers discovered a clay floor, and upon careful excavation, they discovered a large bird effigy carved into the clay, surrounded by a circle of what appeared to be clay seats. This amazing find was the remnant of a ceremonial lodge, which was reconstructed by the National Park Service beginning in 1936. The original floor and lower wall remain intact, with the roof and remaining wall reconstructed, although different roofing material was used in the reconstruction than what was used for the original lodge, which was not originally entirely underground and did not originally have a sod roof.

The Earth Lodge consists of a circular clay wall with a clay floor in the center. The wall is 42 feet in diameter, with a passageway entrance opening to the east. A fire basin is in the center of the floor, and 47 seats are carved into the clay around the perimeter. The west wall has a clay platform in the form of a bird, with a forked eye. This carving has been interpreted as an eagle and is hypothesized as an early indicator of the so-called Southern Cult. A radiocarbon date of A.D. 1015 +/-110 was obtained from a charred roof beam (Wilson 1964). The Earth Lodge has the only completely preserved floor of a building of this type (Kidd and Associates 1974).



Figure 6. Exterior of the reconstructed earthlodge..Courtesy of the National Park Service (James Laray)



Figure 7. Interior of the reconstructed earthlodge, showing the eagle effigy in the clay floor. Courtesy of fulltimegypsies.wordpress.com

Kelly believed that the Earth Lodge is associated with the pit houses located on the site, due to the fact that the pottery under the Earth Lodge is the same as that found in the pit houses. Later, however, Fairbanks concluded, based on pottery, that the Earth Lodge was built by the mound builders. Due to the bird effigy in the floor of the Earth Lodge, Fairbanks argues that the Earth Lodge was evidence of the Southern Cult described by Waring (Fairbanks 1946). Notably, Fairbanks stated that only one piece of ceramic was found in the Earth Lodge, but that its description was not available. Otherwise Fairbanks based his argument on location of pottery types in the soils.

Kelly recognized that the date of the Earth Lodge was controversial and appeared to waiver in his conclusion. However, he pointed out evidence that contradicted its correlation with

the Mississippian mound Builders, including the presence of other lodges that are clearly contemporaneous with the mound builders. He compared the construction of this Earth Lodge to the other ones on the site, and noted their differences. One notable difference is that the entrance to the Earth Lodge faces east, away from the plateau, which is distinct from other structures on the site (Kelly 1938).

Finally, the most compelling piece of evidence is that the Earth Lodge was deliberately burned (Kelly 1938). Given the noteworthy size and design of the Earth Lodge, it was not located in a position among the other site features associated with the mound builders that would indicate importance. In fact, the discovery of the Earth Lodge was surprising, especially given its lack of prominence. When Kelly and Fairbanks wrote about the Earth Lodge, no radiocarbon dating had been done at that time, although many samples of charred timber from the roof were preserved for anticipated dendochronological analysis. In 1965, radiocarbon dating was done and a date of A.D. 1015 (935 ± 110 years) was determined (Wilson 1964). This date is 35 years after the 980 AD date Fairbanks says the Funeral Mound was built, and the range includes its burning prior to the construction of the Funeral Mound. Thus the Earth Lodge would have been burned down shortly before or after the building of the Funeral Mound. Given the lack of precision of radiocarbon dating, it is possible that the Earth Lodge was burned down by the Macon Plateau people upon arrival at the site, thereby destroying the ceremonial heart of their predecessors. Considering the date of the burning of the Earth Lodge early in the Mississippian era on the Macon Plateau, it is unexplained why this construction would occur and be destroyed in a generation. Of course the same people who built the Earth Lodge could have also burned it, although why the most elaborately constructed lodge would be destroyed by the builders raises issues of motive. Given the lack of laboratory dating associated with the ceramics upon which

Fairbanks relies, together with the highly disturbed nature of the site, his conclusion that the Earth Lodge was built by the mound builders is questionable. Nevertheless, Waring and Holder (1945) argue that the Earth Lodge is the earliest indicator of Southern Cult in the region. Given the paucity of other indicia of the so-called Southern Cult at OCMU and its apparent failure to further develop at the OCMU site, the conclusion that the Earth Lodge was built by the mound builders as part of an early expression of the Southern Cult is perhaps unwarranted. Similar to the agricultural fields, further analysis, especially laboratory analysis, is warranted to determine the dates of these features.

Waring and Holder (1945) thought that OCMU was middle Mississippian and date it after 1400 AD, however, they appear to be wrong since this estimate is inconsistent with both Fairbanks' conclusion of early Mississippian based on his work on the Funeral Mound, as well as the only published radiocarbon dating that places the destruction of the Earth Lodge in the Early Mississippian period. Thus Waring's hypothesis that the Ocmulgee site is part of what he calls the Southern Cult is not supported by this particular evidence, especially as it relates to the timing of the events, although the forked eye is clearly in the floor of the Earth Lodge.

3. The Mississippian Mound Builders

Around A.D. 900, during the transition from Late Woodland to Early Mississippian, there was a dramatic change in material culture at the site, demonstrating the migration of new people with distinct cultural artifacts, called the Macon Plateau people by archaeologists. As further discussed below, the Macon Plateau people appear to be the migration of Hitchiti into the region. This was a time of complex political organization, large scale construction activities, and intensive agriculture, preceding the arrival of Europeans.

There are no written records documenting the construction of these mounds or the people who created these masterpieces, however, the mounds made an impact on European explorers and settlers who wrote about their travels through Georgia. The mounds were already constructed well before European contact. These mounds caused some wonder among the settlers, with the question of the origin of the mounds arising. The Great Temple Mound was described in 1828 as follows:

The one most noted, called the Large Mound, is on the East side, about half a mile below the bridge.... The top of the mound is about 120 feet above the bed of the river... and not over 50 feet about the plain on the north.... Other mounds of a small size are near.... General opinion is that they are artificial.... They are undoubtedly of very remote antiquity as they exhibit in general too much labor to have been achieved by any race of modern Indians (Bartlett 1828, quoted in Hally 1994:16).

While Bartlett may have questioned the ability of American Indians to construct such a monument, the question of who built the mound was answered in 1843 when the Central Railroad of Georgia cut across the site, destroying part of a mound. During the leveling of part of a mound for the rail line, many American Indian artifacts were unearthed, including human remains, pottery, tools, utensils and burned corn cobs (Hally 1994:16).

The earliest known written reference to the mounds is from General James Oglethorpe's expedition in 1739, when it was reported that the party camped by the Ocmulgee River among the mounds (Hally 1994:15). The most famous and oft quoted description of this site is that of William Bartram, a botanist who traveled throughout the South between 1773 and 1777. In his report on his travels, Bartram described Ocmulgee as follows:

About seventy or eighty miles above the confluence of the Oakmulge and Ocone, the trading path, from Augusta to the Creek nation, crosses these fine rivers, which are there forty miles apart. On the east banks of the Oakmulge, this trading road runs nearly two miles through ancient Indian fields, which are called the Oakmulge fields. They are the rich low lands of the river. On the heights of these low grounds are yet visible monuments, or traces, of an ancient town, such as

artificial mounts or terraces, squares and banks encircling considerable areas. Their old fields and planting lands extend up and down the river, fifteen or twenty miles from this site.

If we can give credit to the account the Creeks give of themselves, this place is remarkable for being the first town or settlement where they sat down (as they term it) or established themselves, after their migration from the west, beyond the Mississippi, their original native country (Bartram 1791: 52-53 quoted in Fairbanks 1981:6).

In this two paragraph description of Ocmulgee, Bartram provides important details that can provide insight regarding the importance of this site. Bartram's description notes:

- Proximity to natural features, including the rivers
- The trading path
- The man-made monuments, mounds, squares and terraces
- The extensive ancient Indian fields in the floodplains
- The place where the Creek first "sat down" after migrating from the west.

In the 1800s, Hawkins reported that there were 10 visible mounds on the bluffs east of the Ocmulgee River. Presently only seven have been located, with the other three presumably destroyed by the developing City of Macon, prior to Monument designation (Holland 1970). Seven mounds are located within the Macon Plateau portion of OCMU.

The largest feature on the OCMU site is Mound A, known as the Great Temple Mound, which rises almost 50 feet high. Its base is 300' and the top is 160', and it is the mound closest to the Ocmulgee River. On the Macon Reserve Map, Mound A is called Halstead's Mount, named after the first proprietor of the federal trading post at Fort Hawkins (Harris 1958:37). The City of Macon can be seen from the view at the top of this mound (Wheeler 2007). Three ramps are located on the north face of the mound, and were described by Jones in 1873, but the ramps are

barely noticeable today. On top of the mound is a small terrace about one to two feet below the summit surface, that borders the summit on the north, south and east sides (Ingmanson 1964).



Figure 8. Ocmulgee National Monument, Great Temple Mound A, 2013. Photo by Deborah Andrews.

In addition to maintenance of cultural identity, the construction and analysis of mounds also includes cosmological considerations (Anderson 2012). The tetrahedral shape of pyramidal mounds has been likened to the quartering of the cosmos, especially when they are aligned in cardinal directions, which is a widespread Mississippian practice (Anderson 2012). In addition, mound building has been associated with the belief in an upper and lower world, further supported by the mortuary practices on mounds (Anderson 2012). In the Fall of 2012, the U.S. Geological Survey conducted an official survey of the fall line on the site of the Ocmulgee National Monument, and the base of the Great Temple Mound lies on the fall line (Lachine, personal communication 2013). This landscape design is surely no coincidence. In contrast to the other polyhedral mounds on the site, which are oriented in alignment with the cardinal directions, the Great Temple Mound is not quite in alignment with the cardinal directions, but instead is oriented along the fall line, as well as the Ocmulgee River. This specific orientation of the Great

Temple Mound along the fall line may well be evidence of symbolic representation of upper and lower worlds, as well as a testament to geographical intelligence.

There has been limited excavation of Mound A, due to problems with collapse of the sands. Excavation has revealed the presence of a structure, hearths and crematory pits (Ingmanson 1964). A house was found, called the sub-terrace house, which had 38 post holes, numerous artifacts, and no fire pits, formal floors, or wall outlines. This house, however, had the greatest concentration of Swift Creek pottery found on the South Plateau (Ingmanson 1964a).

In 1967, additional investigation occurred, supervised by John Walker, which revealed that the clay cap was almost impervious (Marsh 1986). The impervious clay cap of Mound A serves to preserve from the elements, the features that lie underneath.

Next to the Great Temple Mound is Mound B, known as the Lesser Temple Mound. It is presently ten feet high with a base of 75 feet. Unfortunately, it was partially (at least half) destroyed by the construction of the railroad in 1843. The construction of the railroad exposed artifacts as well as burials (Ingmanson 1964). Jones described this mound in 1873 as: “about 10 feet high, elliptical in shape, with a summit-diameter, measured in the direction of the major axis, of one hundred and twenty-eight feet” (Jones 1873:159). It appears that this mound was constructed in four phases (Ingmanson 1964). During the 1930s’ excavations, no burials were reported from Mound B. However, reports of the railroad construction that impacted Mound B in 1843 describes a “number of skeletons and human bones” being found, along with pottery, burned corn and a stone ax (Butler 1958:161). Thus it appears that Mound B was used for burials.

The most studied mound on the OCMU site is Mound C, known as the Funeral Mound. It is presently only 20 feet high, and 100’ by 200’. It was half destroyed by the second railroad cut

in 1872. Half of the remaining mound was excavated during the 1930s, leaving only one quarter of its original size. Only three of the seven recognizable levels of construction remain.

During the second major intrusion into the site by the railroad, archaeologist Charles Jones investigated the remains that were unearthed and came to an interesting conclusion. Based on the distinctions in the human remains and artifacts found at different points in the damaged mound, he concluded that the mounds were used by at least two separate groups, both historic and prehistoric (Hally 1994). Jones describes the ancient skull that was found at the base of the Funeral Mound:

Passing below these interments – which were evidently secondary in their character – and arriving at the bottom of the mound, a skull was obtained which differed essentially from those we have described as belonging to the later inhumation. It was vastly older than those of the secondary interments, and had been artificially distorted to such an extent that the cerebellum was quite obliterated, while the front portion of the skull had not only been flattened but irregularly compressed, so as to cause an undue elevation and divergence to the left....

The flattened and distorted skull belongs to the mound-building people to whose industry the erection of these tumuli is to be referred. It was in perpetuation and in honor of such primal sepulture that this mound was heaped up. In the course of time these sepulchral and temple structures, abandoned by their owners, passed into the hands of other and later red races, who buried their dead upon the superior surface and along the slopes of these ancient tumuli, having at the time, perchance no personal acquaintance with, and frequently not even a distinct tradition of, the peoples to whose exertions these evidences of early constructive skill were attributable (Jones 1873:162).

Thus early analysis of the mounds indicated that at least two separate cultural groups were affiliated with the mounds, as evidenced by human remains and artifacts. While the mound was built in prehistoric time, historic era Creek people used the mound for intrusive burials, along with European-made artifacts providing evidence of provenance. Jones concluded that “these ancient tumuli were, in turn, used by tribes who had no knowledge, the one of the other” (Jones 1873:161).



Figure 9. Ocmulgee National Monument, remnant of the Funeral Mound, 2013.
Photo by Deborah Andrews.

Other people are also affiliated with the site, with burials being excavated and also remaining in place. In 1954, a protective shelter that had been constructed during the 1930s excavations, and which housed skeletons on display, was removed (Marsh 1986). For a period of time, human remains were on display at this mound, as well as in the museum. One individual that had been on display in the museum was originally misidentified as a male American Indian, but later was determined to be an African female who had given birth, presumed to be a slave from the plantation era.

Burials were of great interest to early archaeologists who were not regulated by law as they are now by present-day Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) laws. The Funeral Mound is the most extensively studied mound, dated to 980 AD. The mound-building is classic Mississippian, and is a trait shared with other sites from the same era. The extensive excavation and analysis of the Funeral Mound was critical in determining that there were separate migration events into the site, including the migration of the Swift Creek

people, the migration of the Macon Plateau people, who were likely Hitchiti, and the later migration of the Muscogee onto the site.

[T]he Macon Plateau complex is a good example of the Early Mississippian horizon. It has temple mounds, earth lodges as auxiliary ceremonial buildings, plain grit or shell-tempered pottery of the round base Mississippian type, shell ornaments, and a variety of special traits that both link it with the Norris Basin sites and Hiwassee Island sites of eastern Tennessee. It is the earliest representative of Mississippian cultures in central Georgia and evidently Ocmulgee marks the spot where some of the earliest bearers of this complex established a fortified town. It also contains a few elements of the Southern Cult (forked eye, bilobed spud, conch cup) and other elements that may be ancestral to the Cult (Fairbanks 1956:13).

Fairbanks thinks that the funeral mound was built by the Macon Plateau people based on the nine sherds found in the sub-mound humus, which “definitely prove the arrival of the Macon Plateau people before the mound started” (Fairbanks 1954:91-92). The nine sherds found in the sub-mound humus demonstrate that the mound building started shortly after their arrival since otherwise they would have found more detritus from that period under the mounds (Fairbanks 1956:38). In other words, if the new arrivals had occupied the site for a longer period of time before building the Funeral Mound, there would have been more artifacts associated with that period. Due to the few artifacts preserved under the mound, this demonstrates a short occupancy of the Macon Plateau people prior to the building the Funeral Mound. Thus one of the first orders of business for the new Macon Plateau People was to build a funeral mound, which makes sense if carrying the dead from last home to new home, and also if burying dead from invasion battles if they occurred. As Fairbanks explains:

The first thing that happened at this particular spot was that the large sub-mound pits were dug, log tombs erected, and the burials made. This activity points to the selection of that particular spot as the location of the burial center of the newly established village. Very soon after these burials of important individuals the mound was erected over the graves. It was a flat-topped mound and seems to have had some sort of temple on its summit. Burials were made in and around the mound, and as each stage was added it continued to be used as the burial center of

the community. It is probable that the temples on each successive stage were primarily for burial rituals. The evidence of cleaning bones and elaborate interments is sufficient to postulate elaborate rituals accompanying these operations. Seven stages of the mound are known. It seems possible that these represent cyclical additions prescribed by some system. This may have been only that each new chief raised mounds over the grave of his predecessors. I suspect some calendrical arrangement which required periodic rebuilding. While the mound was in active use as a burial enter the surrounding area was part of the village. Just to the west were found the basal portions of a short section of the fortification system of the town. This consisted of one and sometimes two large ditches which encircles the Macon Plateau village (Kelly, 1939, pp. 12-14 where they are called dugouts). Thus the Funeral Mound formed an integral part of the village, although situated on the extreme western edge (Fairbanks 1954:108).

Fairbanks further postulates that Macon Plateau is a general eastward movement of Early Mississippian (Fairbanks 1954:152). “The Macon Plateau people suddenly appear without any antecedents in central Georgia archaeology and bear all the earmarks of an invasion” (Fairbanks 1956:13).

The Macon Plateau period is probably the best example in the southeast of the invasion by one group of territory previously occupied by another. There is no evidence of the development of any traits in the Macon Plateau Focus out of the earlier patterns found in central Georgia. It is a sharp break in the cultural sequence. We do not know how long it was between the end of the Swift Creek occupation of the Mound C area and the arrival of the Macon Plateau people. I suspect the newcomers actually drove out the Swift Creek inhabitants. Whether they drove them away from this particular site or from some point a few miles away does not make much difference in our understanding of what happened. We find the remains of the invading Macon Plateau people blanketing the area (Fairbanks 1954:107).

Based on the minimal number of artifacts found in the sub-mound humus, Fairbanks (1956) concluded that the pre-mound occupation by the Macon Plateau People was slight and short prior to the construction of the mounds. Based on an extensive analysis of the artifacts, including detailed identification of pottery types correlated with ceramic chronologies, Fairbanks concluded that the mounds were built by “Macon Plateau villagers” (Fairbanks 1956:38). Macon Plateau ceramic artifacts are associated with the early Mississippian complex timeframe.

Thus the Ocmulgee mound builders migrated to the Macon Plateau, displacing prior occupants, and proceeded with the construction of an early Mississippian cultural complex. Fairbanks (1956) concluded that these Macon Plateau people came from the west, possessed corn-based agriculture, had a complex politico-religious organization, with its social system expressed by its architectural features, including mound building. Based on both Swanton's and Fairbank's beliefs that the Macon Plateau People were likely Hitchiti, this migration event may correlate with the shift in material culture seen during the proto-historic period, with archaeological evidence of the arrival of the Muscogee to Ocmulgee.

It is unknown whether the site was occupied at the time of the arrival of the Macon Plateau people, but surrounding areas continued to have evidence of the presence of a culture different from the new immigrants, demonstrating that the entire region was not abandoned. Fairbanks states: "Despite the fact that Macon Plateau people drove the Swift Creek people out of central Georgia, their domination of other areas was not complete and the evolution of complicated stamped pottery went on, apparently to the north, east and south" (Fairbanks 1956:13). This would be consistent with people migrating from the west, carrying with them different cultural styles and concepts, marking a distinction with the earlier occupants of Georgia.

In pondering the tribal association of the Macon Plateau people, Fairbanks states: "Their linguistic affiliation is unknown, but I suggest, on the basis of a number of similarities with later cultures, that it may have been Muskogean, probably Hitchiti (Fairbanks 1956:57). Gatschet (1969 [1884]) reports a Hitchiti origin tale given to him by Chicote and G.W. Stidham that says the Hitchiti established a town at Ocmulgee.

Fairbanks believes that there was an abandonment of the site from about 1100-1350 AD. While Fairbanks does not completely explain how he developed dates for the site, he relied heavily on ceramic typology and its development that emerged from the Ocmulgee ceramics during the Depression Era excavations and subsequent study of the ceramic types. Due to the short period of 250 years and the uncertainty of dating accuracy, it is questionable whether this site was abandoned during that time frame. However, it is possible that there was some abandonment or limited use of the site after the initial Spanish contact period due to the devastating effect of disease, discussed further in the section on Spanish contact.

4. *The Lamar Focus and Migration*

The next time period applied to the site by archaeologists is the Lamar Focus, which is associated with the Creek Confederacy from 1540 until 1700 (Fairbanks 1954:20-21). Thus there was a shift from the Mississippian era to the Lamar Focus, which coincides with the arrival of the Spanish in Georgia, and also coincides with the arrival of another American Indian group, the Muscogee.

Notably, Ocmulgee National Monument includes two separate land masses. The features described above are located on the main site, which is also where the visitors center, museum and administrative offices are located. Nearby to the south of the Macon Plateau site on the east side of the Ocmulgee River is the 45-acre Lamar Unit, which was purchased around the same time as the rest of the monument. The site was named after the former Plantation era property owners (Wheeler 2007). The site is an island sanctuary, surrounded by river swamp, and was an erosional remnant of Eocene clay, which the river had not eroded (Jennings 1939). The Lamar Unit is subject to frequent inundation by the Ocmulgee River and a levee was constructed at the site (Jennings 1939; Wheeler 2007). The Lamar Unit is restricted access and is on a minimum

maintenance schedule (Wheeler 2007). The Youth Conservation Corps has conducted clearing projects at the site (Marsh 1986).

The transition to the Lamar culture appears to occur with an abandonment of the main OCMU site on the Macon Plateau, and the establishment of the Lamar village two and a half miles southeast in the river swamps, where the Lamar mounds are located, as well as the palisaded town (Fairbanks 1954:98). Mounds were built at the Lamar site, including the spiral mound, demonstrating that the Lamar Culture included mound building. The final phase of the Mississippian is identified by Lamar pottery (White 2002:110).

The Lamar site consists of two mounds. Lamar Mound A is a large rectangular truncated mound dated to A.D. 1350, although radiocarbon dating has not confirmed this estimate. Lamar Mound B is a distinct, round mound with a spiral ramp that ascends to the top platform, and was within a palisade. Unfortunately, the defined spirals of Mound B have eroded. Both mounds are presently covered with vegetation. The site was palisaded around two and a half acres. The palisade trench that was excavated in the 1930s was not backfilled completely.

While the dates are uncertain, the abandonment of the Macon Plateau and shift to the Lamar site, as well as elsewhere, may have occurred after early Spanish contact, and hence may be the result of an epidemic or violence, or both. The abandonment of the Macon Plateau site would make sense if an epidemic occurred after early Spanish contact. In addition, the relocation of the town to the Lamar site two and a half miles away, surrounded by a palisade, indicates that there was enough concern to have a need for the protection provided by palisades. This could occur after violent conflicts, which certainly occurred during Soto's expedition in Georgia, and coincides with the start date of 1540 for the beginning of the Lamar Focus. Thus the abandonment of the OCMU site, with the palisaded relocation several miles, may have been in

response to an epidemic, with the survivors fleeing the main town yet not abandoning the nearby extensive agricultural fields.

Although there has been some archaeological debate about the sequence of the Lamar Culture, it is believed to be associated with the proto-historic Lower Creek tribes. “Lamar represents a return to the Southeastern stamping tradition and possibly a mingling of Macon Plateau peoples with the older inhabitants” (Fairbanks 1956:15). Thus, based on changes in ceramic assemblages, there was a shift in the culture at the OCMU site, which is explained as a revival of earlier traditions. These earlier traditions would probably not be Muscogee or Hitchiti, and were perhaps associated with the Uchee/Yuchi, who may have been the original inhabitants and who continued to live in the outskirts of the Macon Plateau. Notably, the Muscogee, Hitchiti and Uchee/Yuchi were all part of the Creek Confederacy.

Other evidence of new migration into the region is the presence of pottery called Ocmulgee Fields. “Ocmulgee Fields seems a clearer archaeological example of an intrusive population in central Georgia than is the much-debated example of Macon Plateau culture.” (Knight 1992:186). Thus the development of the Ocmulgee Fields pottery style appears to be the result of additional migration patterns at the site, although this pottery type has also been found elsewhere in the region.

While the Macon Plateau People appear to be Hitchiti, the site was apparently abandoned, but later reoccupied. During the Carolina Period, it appears that the site was occupied by the Creek Confederacy, including Muscogee. Bartram said that the Creek claimed Ocmulgee as the site of their first settlement upon arrival from the west (Bartram 1955:68).

Benjamin Hawkins, who was a former U.S. Senator and was the Indian Agent for the federal government on the Ocmulgee site, spent an extensive amount of time working with the

Creek. He wrote extensive reports of his experiences in the late 1790s and described the migration story (Hawkins 1938:5).

The Creeks came from the west. They have a tradition among them, that there is, in the fork of Red river, west of the Mississippi, two mounds of earth; that at this place, the Cussetuhs, Conetuhs and Chickasaws, found themselves; that being distressed by wars with red people, they crossed the Mississippi, and directing their course eastwardly, they crossed the falls of Tal-lapoo-sa, above Took-au-bat-che, settled below the falls of Chat-to-ho-che, and spread out from thence to Ocmulgee, O-co-nee, Savannah, and down on the seacoast, towards Charleston. Here, they first saw white people, and from hence they have been compelled to retire back again, to their present settlements (Hawkins 1938:19).

This migration story addresses Chickasaws, as well as Cussetuhs and Conetuhs, with Hawkins likely using the town names to describe these people.

Milfort, who was married to the famous Creek leader Alexander McLachlan's sister-in-law and spent many years in the late 1700s and early 1800s living among the Creek, extensively describes the Muscogee migration story to the Ocmulgee site (Milfort 1956[1775]). Milfort's migration story specifically relates to the Muscogee. Milfort claims that the story he was told starts in Mexico during Montezuma's reign. After Montezuma was killed by Cortes, the confederacy of tribes that had been summoned to Mexico to assist in resisting the Spanish conquerors dissolved. The Muscogee thereafter traveled to and along the Red River. They came across some caverns, and took up residence. They planted some corn that they brought with them from Mexico, and lived in the vicinity for several years until they were discovered by the Alibamus. They engaged in hostilities with the Alibamus, and started migrating again, going to the Missouri River. The fighting with the Alibamus continued throughout the flight that crossed the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, traveling into Kentucky. They crossed the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers and traveled along the Coosa River. When they were in Georgia, the Alibamus did not continue to follow them, and since the land was pleasant, the Muscogee decided to settle

there (Milfort 1956[1775]). “The Muskogees, finding no more enemies to fight, calmly took possession of the land they had just conquered. They settled on the Coosa, Tallapoosa, Chattahoochee, Flint, Ocmulgee, Big and Little Oconee, and Ogeechee Rivers down as far as the Savannah in Georgia where the town of Augusta is now built” (Milfort 1956[1775]:181-182). This reference to the fact that the Muscogee found no enemies when they arrived in Georgia, is consistent with the decimation of native people along the East Coast in early contact with the Spanish. The archaeological evidence indicates an abandonment of the Ocmulgee site, despite its environmental advantages along the river and presence of cleared agricultural fields. The timing of the arrival of Muscogee after the fall of Montezuma would be consistent with the wide-scale epidemic caused by early Spanish contact during Montezuma’s reign. Gatschet (1969[1884]) similarly retells this migration story that appears to have also been obtained from Milfort. Gatschet (1969[1884]) adds that the Muscogee abhorred slavery, and would rather leave their territory than be enslaved by the Spaniards, perhaps referring to the motivation to move east, away from the Spaniards who conquered Mexico. While I have not found any other migration story specifically linked to Montezuma, there is curiously a town in western Georgia along the Flint River named Montezuma that is reportedly named after the great Aztec leader (Krakow 1975).

Another source of reconstructing past history is through analysis of archaeological material. Material culture, especially ceramic styles, demonstrates that while there were changes associated with the arrival of newcomers, that older styles persevered and re-emerged at different sites, consistent with the continuation of older cultures that were somewhat subsumed by the newer culture. Foster, who has analyzed distinctions in Muscogee and Hitchiti ceramic styles, believes that the Muscogee-speaking people probably settled into the area around the

Chattahoochee by the mid-1600s and perhaps earlier (Foster 2007:10). A correlation of the distinctions in ceramic styles identified by Foster (2007) with the ceramics at the OCMU site may yield information on the ethnicity of the migrants, as well as timing of the migrations.

The migration story that pre-dates the existence of the mounds to the arrival of the people present at Ocmulgee during contact is consistent with Jones' conclusion about the distinctly different burials and people associated with the burials. Indeed, Jones' ethnographic research confirms this point.

The Creeks did not claim these tumuli were erected by them. They declared that they were here when their ancestors first possessed themselves of the region. Who these flat-headed mound-builders were, is a matter of conjecture. It may be that they were a colony of the Natchez, journeying hither from their old habitat on the banks of the Mississippi. Certain it is, that these tumuli antedate the traditions of the Creeks who were native here at the period of the English colonization (Jones 1873:162).

Thus, based on the skull deformities found in the lower portions of the mound, Jones speculates that the mound builders were perhaps Natchez, although the extent of practice of skull deformity was likely unknown to Jones at the time of his statement. Thus, while Jones uses this evidence to hypothesize that the occupants were related to the Natchez, this practice was also in use by other people beyond the Natchez. In fact, deformed skulls were found that were associated with the contact period, demonstrating that the practice continued across time.

Notably, the Cherokee also state that the mounds were present when they arrived in the region and that they did not build them (Schwartz 1923:19). Not only did the mounds predate the arrival of the Muscogee, but the petroglyphs present in the region also predated them (White 2002).

In the pre-Columbian period the Town of Okmulgee had probably been the capital. Its deserted site on the Ocmulgee River was enshrined in the legend as the place of original settlement after the Muscogees had arrived from the west. It was

said that the Nation began here when Cusseta and Coweta agreed to form a confederacy at some point in the distant past (Green 1973:19).

This reference to Cusseta and Coweta as separate entities that formed a confederacy is consistent with Hawkins' reports that refer to Cussetuhs and Conetuhs, rather than the Muscogee name.

During historic times, the OCMU site was affiliated with the Creek Confederacy. Swanton believes that some early form of the political organization known as the Creek Confederacy was likely established around the time of Spanish contact and Soto's exploration (Swanton 1952). The term "Creek" was used by English settlers, likely due to the abundance of creeks in the region.

According to Romans, the Creek Nation included "*Cawitttas, Talepoosas, Coosas, Apalachias, Conshacs or Coosades, Oakmulgis, Oconis, Okchoys, Alibamons, Natchez, Weetumkus, Pakanas, Taënsas, Chacihoomas, and Abékas*" (Romans 1775:62). The English settlers divided the Creek Nation into north and south based on geography, not necessarily political affiliation. According to Swanton, the Lower Creek consisted of the Apalachicola, Hitchiti, Okmulgee, Sawokli, Chiaha, Osochi and Yuchi and were located along the Ocmulgee and Chattahoochee Rivers (Swanton 1952). Swanton also states that "Hitchiti among the Creek was considered the head or 'mother' of a group of Lower Creek towns which spoke closely related languages distinct from Muskogee. This group included the Sawokli, Okmulgee, Oconee, Apalachicola, and probably the Chiaha" (1932:172). Due to its location, OCMU is part of the Lower Creek sites.

Within the Creek Confederacy and part of the Lower Creek was the Muscogee Nation, which was a union of several tribes. Based on ethnographic work and legends, Kelly believes that the Muscogee Creek migration to Ocmulgee National Monument likely occurred just before Soto's journey through central Georgia in 1540 (Kelly 1938:51 n.15). Today, the federally

recognized Muscogee Nation, which is now located in Oklahoma, describes itself as the “Muscogee (Creek) Nation”, demonstrating that tribe as the dominant political group in the confederacy, and preferring the use of the Muscogee name, rather than the English term Creek. Muscogee are also presently located in Florida.

One specific tribe or town of the Muscogee Nation is the “*Oakmulgis*” (Romans 1775:62). Swanton identifies the Okmulgee tribe in his treatise on *The Indian Tribes of North America* (1952). Swanton’s spelling of the Okmulgee tribe is the spelling currently used for the Muscogee town in Oklahoma. Swanton states that the Okmulgee were likely separate from the Hitchiti or one of their towns when these towns were located on the Ocmulgee River but they later settled further west, ultimately losing their separate identity (Swanton 1952).

In addition to the Okmulgee tribe, the Hitchiti tribe was also directly affiliated with the Ocmulgee site. Swanton describes the Hitchiti as residing along the Ocmulgee River, also called Ocheese Creek (Swanton 1952). In the Hitchiti language, Ocmulgee means “where water boils up,” which may be a reference to spring sites (perhaps Indian Springs at Coweta) in the river, rather than the entire river (Swanton 1952:112). The present interpretation of the term Ocmulgee is discussed in Chapter II of this report.

Swanton notes that the early English Mitchell map of 1755 marks the Hitchiti (*Echetee*) town on the site of present-day Macon, one of the earliest references to the occupants of Ocmulgee (Fairbanks 1956:16; Swanton 1952:111;). Thus early use of Hitchiti words to name Ocheese Creek, the earlier name of the Ocmulgee River, provides evidence that the Hitchiti presence at the OCMU site predated the Muscogee, and also indicating that perhaps the Macon Plateau dwellers were likely Hitchiti.

In 1715, after the Yamassee War, described further in this report, the Hitchiti relocated westward to the Chattahoochee River, where there was a town called Okmulgee (Swanton 1952). The Hitchiti population estimate in 1832 was 381, when they were removed to Oklahoma (Swanton 1952). Based on the description of the language distinctions between the Hitchiti and other tribes in the region, it appears that the Hitchiti were more widespread than the Okmulgee tribe, which seems to be mentioned only in affiliation with the Ocmulgee and Chattahoochee River sites, and perhaps is a reference to the town residents, rather than the larger Hitchiti tribe. Fairbanks (1956) also believed that the Hitchiti were the historic occupants of the Ocmulgee site.

In addition to the Hitchiti and Okmulgee tribes, Swanton states that members of the Yuchi tribe were present along the Ocmulgee River, along with the Creek Confederacy, and moved with them to the Chattahoochee in 1715 (Swanton 1952). The presence of the Yuchi along the Ocmulgee River provides evidence that Yuchi were present in the region, in addition to the Hitchiti and Muscogee, and thus are also likely candidates for the original occupants of the OCMU site prior to the occupation by the Macon Plateau people. Further analysis of the older ceramic types prior to the migration into the Macon Plateau by the newcomers may provide clues as to whether the Yuchi were the early occupants, later supplanted by Hitchiti, with perhaps a resurrection of the Yuchi culture during the Lamar period. The Lamar culture later evolved into historic Creek culture, which was a conglomeration of tribes dominated by the more recent Muscogee migrants. In 1733, Oglethorpe, who founded Georgia, mentions the Lower and Upper Creek and Uchees as the three most powerful nations in Georgia (Jones 1873:5). Thus the Creek Confederacy was in place at the founding of the Georgia colony, with the Uchees/Yuchi also acknowledged as a concurrent tribe of note.

Thus, at least during the contact period, a number of political and social groups were affiliated with the Ocmulgee site. On the larger scale, the Creek Confederacy was present on the site. More specifically, the Lower Creek claimed the site as part of their territory.

Simultaneously, and across time and landscape, the Muscogee, Okmulgee, Hitchiti and Yuchi tribes are specifically affiliated with the Ocmulgee site.

5. *Proto-Historic Creek and Spanish Contact*

The location of OCMU has a unique place in early American history due to its proximity to the territory claimed by Spain, France and England. From the south, OCMU was approached by the Spanish from their Apalachee missions on the Florida panhandle via the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers, and across land to the Ocmulgee River. To the east and north, the English established their southern stronghold at Charleston, South Carolina, and later Savannah, Georgia. To the west, the French were in present day Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Thus OCMU was flanked on the north and east by the English, the south by the Spanish, and the west by the French. The Creek confederacy had to negotiate relations with all three of these European nations due to these geographic fronts and competing interests of each of these nations.

Shortly after Columbus' arrival in the Caribbean islands in 1492, there were several Spanish excursions that led to contact with American Indians in this region. In 1512, Ponce de Leon arrived in North America at an unknown location on the southeast Atlantic coast and named the region La Florida, which initially included much of Georgia. The first known European presence along the Georgia coast was the expedition of Lucas Vazquez de Ayllon in 1526 (White 2002:93). Ayllon explored the east coast of Georgia, coming into contact with the native tribes. The Ocmulgee River flows into the Altamaha River, which flows into the Atlantic Ocean north of Brunswick, Georgia, providing a means of transit by boat into the interior of

Georgia. In 1528, the ill-fated Panfilo de Narvaez expedition had contact with the region on the Gulf Coast side. The Ayllon and Narvaez expeditions surely introduced devastating disease into the native population in Georgia, which likely spread from the coastline through the interior along waterways such as the Ocmulgee, Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers. It is possible that an epidemic is the cause of the shift in material culture and possible abandonment at the OCMU site noted by archaeologists.

In 1539, the Soto expedition started, and traveled overland throughout much of Georgia, although it is unconfirmed as to whether they visited the OCMU site. Soto's expedition was significant since it also brought disease to Georgia (White 2002:93-94), although it is likely that Soto witnessed the disruption of Native American culture wrought by European diseases from earlier contacts, such as the Ayllon and Narvaez expeditions.

The Soto expedition chroniclers describe the first known Christian baptism in North America. This baptism took place in March 1540, perhaps on the banks of the Ocmulgee River, when priests accompanying Soto baptized an American Indian called Peter (Butler 1879:18). While Soto marched along the western bank of the Ocmulgee, Butler claims that this baptism was held "at the feet of those memorable relics of antiquity, the Indian mounds that majestically overlook the present city of Macon" (Butler 1879:18). While it will never be known where this event took place, it adds to the mysterious lore of Ocmulgee National Monument.

Several Spanish and French expeditions occurred in the Southeast region after the Soto expedition, including those led by Luna, Ribault, Laudonniere, and Menendez (Bolton 1925; Gatschet 1891). The first known written acknowledgement of the Ocmulgee site using that specific name is from 1675 when Spanish Bishop Calderon lists Ocmulgee Town in his list of American Indian towns (Mason 2005:153). Evidence of Spanish contact has been found at

Ocmulgee National Monument. Fairbanks originally identified one sherd of untyped Spanish Majolica that was found at the trading post site, concluding that “There is evidently some Spanish influence in this period in native ceramics,” although he does not explain further what the influence resulted in with regard to native ceramics (Fairbanks 1956:49). Later, Fairbanks asked Goggin to analyze 16 majolica sherds from Ocmulgee National Monument. These sherds were identified as: San Luis Polychrome, Puebla Polychrome, Abo Polychrome, Castillo Polychrome, unclassified blue on white, and unclassified white. These majolica sherds were classified as being from the late 17th century, which corresponds with the date of the Carolina trading post (Goggin 1968), further described later in this report. Four of the majolica sherd types, San Luis Polychrome, Puebla Polychrome, Abo Polychrome, Castillo Polychrome, were likely manufactured in Mexico (Goggin 1968). Thus there was Spanish contact of some sort that resulted in trade goods appearing at Ocmulgee National Monument that originated in Mexico, perhaps shedding light on the multi-national nature of the trade at this site, despite it being called the Carolina Trading Post, which denotes an English perspective, rather than the multi-cultural reality of the landscape during this period in history. One of the reasons for the Carolina Trading post was not only to exchange trade goods with the American Indians, but also to establish social ties and alliances between the Creek and the English and to inhibit Spanish and French influence at this critical juncture.

Additional evidence of Spanish contact, which consisted of a group of olive jar and majolica sherds, was also found on the Macon Plateau near the Funeral Mound (Mason 2005:87). Two small blue glass pendants, which appear to be of Spanish origin, were likewise found (Mason 2005:99-100). The olive jars were dated between 1685 and 1716, and later in his career, Fairbanks concluded that the Spanish artifacts are the result of trade with the Spanish (Fairbanks

1973:142-143). Alternatively, these Spanish jars have been interpreted to be either from trade with the Spanish while the Creek Indians were located on the Chattahoochee River, or perhaps looted items taken as a result of the destruction of the Apalachee Mission in West Florida in 1703 (Goggin 1968:78-79).

A Spanish coin dated to the rein of Philip II (1556-1598) was also found at Ocmulgee (Mason 2005:93). If this coin was lost around the time of its mint, then it would indicate Spanish contact about 100 years earlier than the dates of the ceramics, but well after Spanish exploration into Georgia. The coin also could have been brought to the site by American Indian migrants, who had prior contact with the Spanish. Other than this coin, this research found no other evidence or records regarding Ocmulgee from the time of the Soto expedition in 1540, through 1670, the estimated date of the establishment of the Carolina Trading Post, leaving a silence of 130 years. Other scholars, including Swanton and Crane, were unable to locate records of the Lower Creek prior to 1680 (Bolton 1925). Additional information may be contained in Spanish documents and archives since this was the period of Spanish occupation and Georgia was considered to be a part of La Florida during the time period.

6. *Carolina Trading Post and English Contact*

While Spanish explorers were the first to arrive in Georgia from Europe, they were soon followed by English and French explorers and traders. In 1663 Charles II founded the English settlement of Carolina, located in Charles Town (Mason 2005:5). In 1663, Hilton, and soon thereafter in 1666, Sandford, explored and described Carolina (Crane 1929). Traders began traveling throughout the region, seeking to establish trade and opportunities with the American Indians. Shortly after the founding of the Carolina Colony, in 1666, Henry Woodward arrived in Charles Town and spent many years exploring the region. He was later sent into the interior of

Georgia to establish trade relations with the American Indians (Bolton 1925). Woodward was likely the first Englishman to see Old Ocmulgee fields, although there is no known written record of this; nor have written records been located documenting the Carolina trading post that was uncovered at OCMU (Harris 1958:31).

Early English contact linked to Ocmulgee was between 1670 and 1685, after Carolina was founded and the deerskin and fur trade developed (Mason 2005:3). These new trade relations influenced the future of this region for both the Native Americans and the Europeans.

Set within the larger matrix of European political intrigue and power politics, the English trade in Carolina was of crucial significance in controlling the Indians of the back country and insuring English dominance of Lower Creek culture, the trading house was also important as a direct instrument of acculturation and the precursor of certain kinds of social change (Mason 2005:4).

Due to his early presence in Georgia during the infancy of English trade, Woodward was instrumental in establishing English trade in Georgia, which was of grave concern to the Spanish, who claimed much of Georgia as La Florida. Around the time that Woodward was traveling throughout the southeast, the Spanish were also moving into western Georgia. In 1679, Spanish friars traveled up the Chattahoochee River and set up a cross at the American Indian town of Sabacola (Bolton 1925). The Indians took it down since “the Gran Cacique, or Emperor, of the Cavetas (Cowetas), head tribe of the Confederacy, had not been consulted” (Bolton 1925:46-47). In the meantime, the Yamassees held a revolt against the Spanish in St. Augustine in 1680 (Bolton 1925). Around 1685, Woodward traveled to the Chattahoochee River further establishing trade relations with the Creek, including the war town of Coweta and peace town of Kasihta (Crane 1929). The Spanish heard about the presence of the English in this region, and sent Antonio Matheos, Lieutenant of Apalachee, to lead a force up the Chattahoochee River in an

effort to capture Woodward, who fled. Woodward, however, left a message behind for the Spaniards:

‘I am very sorry that I came with so small a following that I cannot await your arrival. Be informed that I came to get acquainted with the country, its mountains, the seacoast, and Apalache. I trust in God that I shall meet you gentlemen later when I have a larger following. September 2, 1685. Vale ‘” (Crane 1929:35).

The Creek returned to the site shortly thereafter.

Matheos reinforced the Apalachee fort. Later that year, in December 1685, Matheos once again searched for the English traders, and burned their blockhouse at Coweta, seizing the trade goods (Crane 1929). While Matheos was able to subdue eight Indian towns, he burned Coweta, Kasihta, Tuskegee, and Kolomi, since they did not cooperate with the Spaniards (Crane 1929). Due to this incursion of violence by the well-armed Spanish, the Creek deserted their towns along the Chattahoochee River, and moved back to Ocmulgee to be closer to the English until the Yamassee War of 1715 (Harris 1958:32).

The American Indians who had lived along the Chattahoochee River retreated east to the Ocmulgee River, establishing their towns along the river and resuming trade with the English. At the time the Ocmulgee River was called Ochese Creek, and the English started calling these Native Americans, Creek Indians, thus generalizing the tribal and town names for the occupants of this region. The trade with the Creek followed the Lower Creek Path that crossed the Ocmulgee River among the settlements of the Hitchiti, as described by Crane:

The Ochese country soon became a base for the further extension of trade. From the Ocmulgee were sent out many of those slave-taking expeditions against Florida, and, later, against Louisiana, which provided an outlet for the warlike energies of the Indians, enriched the traders, and served to weaken the defenses of the rival colonial establishments in the South (Crane 1929:37).

Thus prior to the discovery of the Carolina Trading Post during the Great Depression, Crane had already determined the site of the Carolina Trade at Ocmulgee based on his extensive review of Spanish, French and English documents.

With the Native Americans retreating to Ocmulgee, the Spaniards built a fort on the Chattahoochee River at the town of Apalachicola in 1689. According to Bolton, who presented the position of the Spaniards in his treatise, through the writings of Spaniard Antonio de Arredondo, this alienated additional Indians, and they abandoned their homes on the Chattahoochee and “moved eastward to join the Uchis on the Ocmulgee. Thither the English promptly followed them. The Ocmulgee now became known to the English as Ocheese (Uchis) Creek, and the Indians as the Creeks. In Spanish circles, in a similar way, the Apalachicolas gradually became known as Uchis” (Bolton 1925:54). Thus the residents of Apalachicola joined the four towns that had relocated to the Ocmulgee River four years before them.

By 1696, the Spaniards expressed concern with the raids conducted by the Oakmulgees in towns that Spain exerted dominion over (Crane 1929). Unfortunately Crane does not define who he meant by the term Oakmuglees, such as whether they were a specific tribe, a specific town, or the conglomeration of the towns who had retreated to the Ocmulgee River. English traders ventured as far as the town of Apalachicola and were considered by the Spanish to be inciting the Native Americans to violence (Crane 1929). It appears from this sequence of events that the Indians were seeking to regain their towns and territory that had been invaded by the Spaniards. Due to these raids as well as the increasing presence of the English in the region the Spaniards later burned their fort at Apalachicola so that the English could not capture and use it (Bolton 1925). The competing interests of the Creek, Spanish and English soon came to a head.

The conflicts that occurred between the Spanish, English and Creek at this critical time resulted in events that significantly affected the course of American history. The Creek had incurred the wrath of the Spaniards, having their towns on the Chattahoochee burned, and other towns invaded. The Creek re-grouped at Ocmulgee and were led by Brim, sometimes referred to as Emperor Brim. Together with the English traders, they were conducting westerly raids that affected not only the Spaniards, but also the French. The French expressed concern with the territorial expansion of the English, and sought to take action to drive the English northward, away from both the Mississippi and St. Augustine (Crane 1929). An alliance between Spain and France never materialized, however, the Governor of Carolina, James Moore, was aware of this threat to the westerly expansion of English trade.

Moore was a trader of slaves and entered the region after having been unsuccessful in his quest to seek gold in North Carolina. While he had once been banned from trade with the Indians, he later became Governor of Carolina. Aware of the threatening behavior of the Spanish, and the political maneuvering of the French, in 1702, Moore led an unsuccessful siege of St. Augustine, but had to retreat when Spanish ships arrived in defense (Crane 1929). Still intent on expanding trade, Moore petitioned the Carolina assembly for funds to conduct a raid on the Apalachee. The assembly refused to approve funds, especially after the failed raid on St. Augustine. Instead, the campaign was to be funded by the slaves and plunder taken by Moore during the raid (Crane 1929). In December 1703, James Moore and 50 men under his leadership left Charleston for Ocmulgee, where he met up with Brim and his warriors (Harris 1958:34). The purpose of this trip was to invade the Spaniards and their Apalachee allies. This expedition started at Ocmulgee Old Fields. The 1828 Macon Reserve Map shows "Moore's Old Road" along the Ocmulgee River, a reference to the invasion that Moore later described (Harris 1958).

As a result of this invasion that appears to have originated from OCMU, the Spanish Missions in West Florida, as well as the Apalachee Indians, were destroyed and the Spanish retreated to St Augustine.

This battle was instrumental in the English controlling and colonizing Georgia. Thus when Oglethorpe arrived to establish the Georgia Colony for England in 1730, the western front of Georgia had been secured (Harris 1958:35). While Moore returned home after the raid on the Spanish missions, the Creek continued on under the leadership of Brim, and fought the French and Choctaw, who were aligned with the French (Harris 1958:35), demonstrating Brim's strong leadership in securing the region occupied by the Creek. The defeat of the Spanish and Brim's efforts against the French allowed the English trade and the trading post located on OCMU to thrive.

The Ocmulgee Trading Post is significant since it was the most westward English trading post, venturing towards French territory (Mason 2005:10).

Ocmulgee Town has provided the only known archaeological record of the physical plant of these once numerous trading houses in Georgia although more are undoubtedly present in the old fields of other Lower Creek towns along the Oconee and Ocmulgee Rivers (Mason 2005:194).

The remains of this trading post are located on the Middle Plateau on the site. The trading post site was the location of CCC exhibit shelters over Creek burials that were once on display (Wheeler 2007). In the historic period, the main concentration of artifacts is around the trading post, with some historic burials on the slope of the Funeral Mound (Fairbanks 1954:99). Thus the trading post was inhabited by Creek as well as English traders during this time period.

7. *The Yamasee War*

While the English originally had to compete with the Spanish for the trade favors of the American Indians, unwelcome incursions along the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers led to

Spanish demise in West Florida. This event removed the threat of Spanish competition with the English traders, at least at the time. This led to somewhat of a monopoly on European trade with the Creek. Trade between the Creek and English flourished, with both licit and illicit traders entering the region.

Despite government regulations on who was an authorized trader, as well as regulations restricting the sale of alcohol, these regulations were rarely enforced and wayward British traders engaged in unsavory trade practices. In addition to problematic trade practices, there were issues with American Indians being captured for the Caribbean slave trade, as well as abuses and murder of American Indian women. Colonial documents recorded the complaints by the Yamasee and other tribes made to the colonial government seeking redress of their grievances, which apparently were not rectified. This lack of law enforcement on the part of the colonial government led to a plan designed by the Yamasee to rebel against the renegade English traders.

One colonial report documents the Yamasee's plan:

April 12, 1715 – Complaints by the Creeks against the traders
A Yamasee Indian told the wife of Wm. Bray 'that the Creek Indians had a design to Cut off the Traders first and then to fall on the settlemt. And that itt was very neare but that he had a great love for her & her two sisters & when itt was very near he would come agains & when he came next they must goe immediately to their Town' (Salley 1026:86).

As Mrs. Bray was warned, the Yamasees and their allies attacked English traders in 1715 (Mason 2005:11). The Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1755 later described this event.

The great Massacre committed by the Yamasee Indians in So. Carolina in 1715 was owing to the continued Oppressions and ill Usage they received from a publick Agent; of which they often Complained in vain; being such that their King told a Person from whom I had it, they could bear them no longer. But they were so unwilling to come to that Extremity, and there was little Treachery in their Execution of it, that they declared beforehand not only their Intention, but named the very day, which was treated with Slight, till it was too late (Jacobs 1954:39).

Thus the Yamasee and their Creek confederates sought justice from the colonial government, but were ignored, leading to the clear warning of the repercussions of the lack of colonial justice, which were likewise ignored, resulting in war.

The Ocmulgee trading post operated until the Yamasee War, when the traders were likely killed (Holland 1970). Mason, who based her dissertation on the OCMU Carolina Trading Post, concludes:

The traders and trading houses in the Ocheese Creek settlements were among the primary targets of the uprising, and it is likely that the trader or traders at the Ocmulgee National Monument site shared the fate of the “Ninety Men” destroyed in the first few days of the war (Mason 2005:22).

Between 1715 and 1717, after the Yamasee War, Carolina trade was shut off, and the Creek resumed trade with the French and Spanish (Mason 2005:3). The Yamasee War was an important turning point in the history of American Indian occupation of OCMU. The Creek, and the affiliated tribes, left the Ocmulgee River town sites after the Yamasee War, and re-established their towns, which the Spanish had previously burned, along the Chattahoochee River to the west. Stability returned with the peace agreement with the Creek in 1717 (White 2002:102). However, the Creek never again established a town on the OCMU site. The abandonment of OCMU as a town site was acknowledged at NAGPRA meetings in 1997 (Paredes 1997:156). However, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Seminole Tribe of Oklahoma, and the Poarch Creek Band of Creek Indians continue to recognize and claim historic ties to OCMU (Brockington and Assoc. 1999). While the site was never again a Creek town, it has continuously been claimed by the Creek as an important place.

8. *Georgia Colony, Treaties, and Fort Hawkins*

In 1733, Oglethorpe founded Savannah, which had previously been the site of an English trading post (Bolton 1925). Thus the Colony of Georgia was established, and English migration

south of Charles Town and into regions claimed by Spain as part of La Florida solidified. During this time, the British colonists re-established trade relations with the Creek. Traders traveled the region establishing relationships with the Creek. Some of these traders became what Frank (2005) calls “Indian countrymen,” that is, men who chose to live among the American Indians, marrying American Indians wives, and establishing families. Some of the traders, many of whom were of Scottish descent, had Creek families who would rise to leadership positions in the Creek Confederacy. Due to the matrilineal clan system, the children of the traders were members of their mother’s clan, and their European father did not appear to be an obstacle to holding full membership and rights among the Creek, although the same could not be said for their acceptance by the Europeans (Frank 2005). Many of these children learned to speak both Muscogee and English, giving them an advantage in communicating with both nations.

While British traders were traveling throughout Georgia, England and Spain were still challenging their respective rights to the region. Forty years after Oglethorpe established Georgia, the Treaty of Paris was executed in 1773, which ceded Florida to England. England was eager to obtain land in Georgia to strengthen its colony. This led to the need for negotiations with the Creeks, who also claimed this land. Trade also strengthened between the Creek and British, establishing a basis for the relationship between the Creek and England prior to the Revolutionary War.

The Revolutionary War also had a major impact on the future of the Creek Nation and the OCMU site. The establishment of the United States government and the ousting of England had an impact on the relationship with Native Americans. Previously England had been a trade partner with the Creek, but after the Revolutionary War, this trade and the relations were disrupted.

After the Revolutionary War, under the Second Treaty of Paris, England ceded Florida back to Spain in 1783, thus depriving the United States from the benefit of the prior treaty between England and Spain over European dominion of Florida. For a short time England occupied St. Augustine, but turned the city and Florida back over to Spain pursuant to the treaty. The result of the Revolutionary War coupled with the Second Treaty of Paris was that the English trade relationship with the Creek was severed. While Spain had not been a solid trade partner with the Creek in the past, there was a void left by England in the trade relationship. The Creek had adopted many European trade goods, including guns and ammunition, as well as cloth and iron tools. These major political events therefore had an impact on trade and political alliances of the Creek.

After the Revolutionary War, the United States government had been attempting to negotiate treaties with the Creek regarding the land lying in Georgia. Alexander McGillivray, also known as Hoboi-Hili-Miko, represented the Creeks in many of these negotiations during this time. McGillivray was the son of a Scotsman father and Creek mother, and was able to speak, read, and write English. Many of his letters have survived to document his perspective of the time. During the treaty negotiations, McGillivray was a strong leader and advocate for the Creek and rejected many of the terms offered to them. He denounced the Treaty of Augusta and Treaty of Galphinton, however, he signed the Treaty of New York in 1790 (Caughey 1938). The Treaty of New York was disputed by other Creek leaders and there were issues related to the delineation of the territory addressed in this treaty. Thus, the treaty negotiations were revisited.

During this period of political flux, McGillivray had entered into negotiations with Spain and sought protection against the United States government. Spain granted the Creek protection, but only to the extent of the territorial limits of Spain, which included Florida and Louisiana at

that time. McGillivray was instrumental in retaining a former English trade partner from St. Augustine named Panton. Spain allowed Panton to establish a trading post at St. Marks, which was negotiated through the power and position of McGillivray. While Spain was concerned with its future relations with the United States, it traded guns and ammunition with the Creek, purportedly for hunting purposes so as to not raise the ire of the U.S. government (Caughey 1938). Thus the Creeks had a new alliance with Spain, in the defense of its territory in Georgia, coveted by the new settlers.

In 1789, McGillivray was involved in treaty negotiations with the United States, and in failing to come to a just agreement, he went back to Ocmulgee, where further negotiations were sought from him (Caughey 1938:253). A year later, however, he approved and signed the Treaty of New York. Three years later, McGillivray died in 1793, leaving a void in a somewhat unified Creek leadership. The Creek, Spain and the United States struggled to find a successor with whom they could reliably negotiate relations.

Despite the loss of leadership through the death of McGillivray, the treaty negotiations later continued. A leadership role was filled by the appearance of Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins, who lived and worked with the Creek for many years. In 1795, Congress passed legislation authorizing posts for trade with the American Indians. Several trading posts were established in Georgia by the U.S. government.

Treaty negotiations continued between the United States and Creek. The treaty negotiations of 1802 at Fort Wilkinson was described by Henry Dearborn, Secretary of War:

“May 25th, 1802. The Chiefs sent to inform the commissioners that on the next day they wished to receive them, according to the ancient customs of their country, at the public square; and they requested the commissioners to be ready to move from their encampment early in the morning, and as soon as the runners arrived, to inform them that everything was ready for their reception.

May 24th. The Commissioners went to the square, and were seated, with all their attendants. The Chiefs of the upper and lower towns, having met at some distance from them, moved on in a body; two men in front, dancing the eagle tail dance, to music, accompanied by the voices of all the men and women. As soon as they arrived at the square, the commissioners moved to a place prepared for them, when they were touched by the wings in the hands of the dancers; behind General Wilkinson was a small pit, and a white staff standing by it; they brought a bow and arrows, painted red, showed them to the commissioners, then broke them, put them into the pit, covered them with earth, and with a white deer skin; these great Chiefs, representing the upper and lower towns, wiped the faces of the commissioners with white deer skin, spread the skins on a log, and then sat them down. With the other skins they covered the commissioners, and, after the embrace of friendship, addressed them:

Efau Haujo – for the Upper Creeks – ‘We, this day, a fine one for the occasion, a clear sun and sky, meet our friends, brothers and fathers to take them by the hand, according to the custom of our fore-fathers, as old as time itself. We have, at the foot of the General, buried the sharp weapons of war, which were in use in old times, and such as we have; our white deer skins are placed on the seat af [sic] our friends, and cover them with the same; we add one more emblem, a pipe’” (Butler 1958[1879]:58-59).

In 1805, under the Treaty of Washington, all lands between the Oconee and Ocmulgee Rivers were ceded to the federal government, consisting of about two million acres. Notably, this treaty excluded an area five miles long and three miles wide on the east side of the Ocmulgee River where the city of Macon is now located, known as Ocmulgee Old Fields, and states the exception to the land in the treaty:

Beginning on the eastern shore of the Ocmulgee river, at a point three miles on a straight line above the mouth of a creek called Oakchoncoolgau, which empties into the Ocmulgee, near the lower part of what is called the old Ocmulgee fields: thence running three miles eastwardly, on a course at right angles with the general course of the river for five miles below the point of beginning; thence from the end of the three miles, to run five miles parallel with the said course of the river; thence westwardly at right angles with the last mentioned line to the river; thence by the river to the first mentioned bounds. (Harris 1958:25-26).

This area, which includes the OCMU site, was specifically retained by the Creek, demonstrating the importance of this site to the Creek.

Pursuant to the Treaty of Washington, the federal government was allowed to establish a fort and trading post, as well as a horse path, through the Ocmulgee Old Fields. Benjamin Hawkins, federal Indian Agent for the Creek, selected the site of Fort Hawkins, which was named after him. The site was 100 acres, with four acres surrounded by a stockade (Butler 1958[1879]). Within the stockyard were two block houses about 28 square feet each. These blockhouses were two stories high and had basements, and watchtowers. There were four houses for soldiers, and officers' quarters (Holland 1970). Fort Hawkins was built on an American Indian mound. Fort Hawkins is located near the entrance to OCMU, but is not officially a part of the monument. The history of OCMU is intertwined with Fort Hawkins since the establishment of the Fort was associated with the relationship with the American Indians in the area, and was included in treaties related to the OCMU land.

A U.S. trading post was present near OCMU as early as 1797 (Mattison undated). OCMU staff prepared a book called *Letters of the Creek Trading House, Letter Book, 1795-1816* from microfilmed documents located at the National Archives. This book describes in detail the operation of the trading post, the goods and prices, and the issues that occurred in the trade relations during that time. While deer skins appear to have been the dominant trade item brought in by the Creek, other items included beaver, wolf, raccoon, fox, panther, and bobcat. In addition, the Creek were also raising and trading cattle and cotton. Some smaller trade items were also brought to the trading post by the Creek. The manager of the trading post made the following observation in 1797:

We have been much perplexed with the small trade for ground nuts, chestnuts &c but thought it right to accommodate the poor women for these little matters of consequence to them and not of any material amount (Mattison undated:102-103)(reproduction of letter dated December 4, 1797).

Thus while the Creek towns moved back to the Chattahoochee River, the region still had Creek inhabitants living upon and utilizing the landscape.

Fort Hawkins provided many services for the fledgling U.S. government in the region. In addition to being a fort and trading post, by 1811, it also served as a post office, when the federal road from Fort Hawkins to Fort Stoddert was completed (Holland 1970). Fort Hawkins served as a trading post as well as a supply post for troops in the field.

The presence of the nearby mounds resulted in the OCMU mounds being occasionally used by other people for burials, including both the Creek and the settlers. Captain McDougal, who was in command of Fort Hawkins in 1809 when he died, was buried in a nearby mound at his request, as was his brother at a later time, explaining the name attributed to the mound (Ingmanson 1964b). According to Butler, who grew up in Macon and wrote about its history, “Their graves were neatly enclosed for many years” (Butler 1958[1879]: 51-52). This mound is now known as the McDougal Mound and is located at the end of a path near the northwestern corner of OCMU. This mound is located about 1300 feet from the outer edge of the enclosed village, and is presently about 15 feet high and 100’ by 40’, but was partially destroyed for use as fill during nearby road construction in the early 1900s (Ingmanson 1964b). In 1854 it was reported to be 30 feet high (Brockington and Assoc. 1999). The McDougal Mound was excavated in the 1930s, and shows a two-stage construction process. Interpretation of the artifacts indicates that this mound was constructed later in the Mississippian period, further supported by its location outside of the perimeter trenches. Burials were found in the mound, but due to poor condition of the bones, as well as the prior damage to the mound, interpretation is difficult. The remains of a child were found in the mound and have been interpreted to be intrusive in nature. While the Creek had moved their towns to the Chattahoochee River, the

OCMU site continued to have an important role in trade relations with the increasing migration by the settlers. The use of the ancient burial mound by Captain McDougal and his brother exemplifies merging traditions in the landscape.

The series of treaties that established the colonial presence in Georgia were controversial and disputed, including a dispute into the authority of the signatories to the treaties to execute the documents. As a result of this western encroachment of the colonists, in 1811 Tecumseh urged the American Indian Nations to drive out the settlers, and formed a group known as the Red Sticks, revolting against Creek leaders who were sympathetic to the newcomers, leading to the Creek war in 1813-14, wherein 3,000 Creek were killed. Some Creek fled to Florida, joining Hitchiti and Creek already in North Florida (Martin and Mauldin 2000:xv). The Creek War resulted in the westward and southward movement of the Creek Indians, even though the Treaty of Washington had reserved Ocmulgee Old Fields for the Creek.

In addition to the Creek War, the United States was fighting the War of 1812 against the British. The demand for deer skins was in Europe, and this disruption in trade at Fort Hawkins led to declining values for skins (Butler 1956 [1879]). By 1816, Fort Hawkins started to fall into disrepair and the fort was moved west to Fort Mitchell, 87 miles away, with Fort Hawkins remaining as a depot. The Creek were not happy with the move and believed it to be a violation of their treaty, causing a great inconvenience to the American Indians remaining in the area (Holland 1970).

When the trading post was moved, Captain Hook was the officer in charge of Fort Hawkins and apparently allowed settlers to occupy and use the Ocmulgee Old Fields, despite the treaty reserving it to the Creek Indians. A Mr. Jarrison or Jerrison, was allowed to open a public house on Ocmulgee Old Fields for travelers, apparently taking economic advantage of the federal

road established by the Treaty of Washington. A tavern and store were located on Ocmulgee Old Fields near Fort Hawkins operated by Jarrison, who later sold his interest and 30 acres on Walnut Creek to Mr. Bullock for \$1,200. This activity was not appreciated by the trading house management who deemed it a violation of the treaty and not respectful to the Creek (Holland 1970). Thus there was a dispute between the colonists and the federal representatives running the official trading house at Fort Hawkins.

While Fort Hawkins was reduced to a depot at this time, it also served as a federal supply post during the Seminole War during 1817-1818 (Holland 1970). Afterwards, Fort Hawkins was closed in 1818. Prior to this, however, the post office at Fort Hawkins processed mail for Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia. While Fort Hawkins closed after the Seminole War, it continued to function as a post office, and in November 1818, the Fort Hawkins post office became a local post office with the distribution center moving to Coweta and St. Stephens. Six years later, the post office was closed with the Macon post office taking over the duties (Holland 1970).

In 1818, Roger McCall, Eleazar McCall and Harrison Smith settled on Swift Creek, near OCMU. The McCalls and Smith built boats for the navigation of the Ocmulgee river. While the trading post was closed, the void was filled by newcomers. Mr. Lyman built a house and store outside Fort Hawkins to continue trade with the Creek. Settlers also continued to arrive and lease land around Fort Hawkins. Butler states that at this time, all but about fifty to one hundred Creek were removed to the West from this locale (1956 [1879]).

The sovereignty of the land in Georgia continued to be disputed, with the western push of settlers. In a treaty dated January 8, 1821, the U.S. government took control of all Creek land between the Ocmulgee and Flint Rivers. In return the Creek were to receive \$200,000 as well as

debt payment of up to \$250,000 in claims by the State of Georgia (Holland 1970). Thus, the OCMU site was no longer reserved to the Creek and was available for private sale.

Additional Creek land in western Georgia was lost due to the Treaty of Indian Springs in 1825. This treaty eliminated all Creek lands in Georgia and adjacent areas, causing the migration of many Creek Indians to Oklahoma or Florida. Creek leader William McIntosh, the son of a Scottish trader and Creek mother, led 3,000 Lower Creek to Oklahoma. In 1836-1837, the US forced the remaining Creek to follow. Sixteen thousand survived the Trail of Tears, and 3,500 died. (Martin and McKane 2000:xv). Some Lower Creek, including Hitchiti, Seminole and Muscogee fled to Florida to avoid removal, joining others who preceded them. As of at least October 1831, however, some Indians were still kept as slaves (Butler 1956 [1879]).

After removal and implementation of the Treaty of Indian Springs, the State of Georgia took charge of the Fort Hawkins site and the trading post. At the OCMU site the State found an illegal ferry operation across the Ocmulgee River and a vagrant camp along the federal road on the west bank of the Ocmulgee River. This area was called Newtown and the Governor of Georgia, in 1821, signed an act appointing a permanent agent to manage the Fort Hawkins site. In 1823, the Governor of Georgia granted four acres of the Ocmulgee Reserve to Macon as a cemetery (Holland 1970). In 1828 Fort Hawkins was sold along with its 100 acres, subdivided and New Town was established. Macon was established in 1823 (Lane 1921). Thus Fort Hawkins fell into private hands.

After the last treaty ceding Ocmulgee to the US, the land was sold at public auction, and the Macon Telegraph of November 1, 1828, printed the following:

The sale of the Reserve Lands adjoining Macon, closed on Monday last, as contemplated. The whole amount of the Sale was about \$73,719 dollars; which added to the sum obtained by previous sales at this place, viz \$78,550 makes the gross amount of \$152,269. On the last day of sale, the lots containing the Ancient

Mounds, near Macon were disposed of. These tumuli of which a number are observed about Macon, and on both sides of the river, have long been objects of curiosity to visitors and travelers, and furnished pleasant excursions to our village fashionables. *****

To return to the subject of the mounds near Macon, the land having become private property, we may expect shortly to see the springing up in these romantic retreats, handsome country seats, gardens, orchards, etc. etc. The shadows of superstition which overhung these scenes on the first settlement of the country, concealing beneath their dark mantle the spectral forms of another age, are in a manner dispersed. The goblins and spectres that were supposed to haunt the place some years back are all fled. Of late, we do not hear of unearthly phantoms, nor of unearthly voices.

Though fairies continue to visit the mounds, they are now a days decently attired in flesh and blood. Witches may be seen there also, and though they sometimes commit terrible depredations among hearts and flowers, we believe they are objects of desire rather than fear (Harris 1958:37-38).

In 1828, Thomas Woolfolk purchased parcel No. 53 of the Macon Reserve, which included the Fort Hawkins site. The building deteriorated with one blockhouse blown over by wind in 1870. The other blockhouse was sold to Henry Jones, who moved it to his lot on Main Street in East Macon, where it eventually burned down. A public school was erected on a portion of the grounds (Holland 1970).

The Nathaniel Macon Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) bought the Fort Hawkins site of the southeast blockhouse in 1929 and planned to replicate it. Construction was disrupted when the bank used by DAR failed. The WPA, however, resumed work on the reconstruction in 1938, and the blockhouse replica was completed. The DAR later donated the site to the City of Macon (Holland 1970). Fort Hawkins is still a landmark to this day and is an important part of the history of OCMU despite the fact that it was not included in the boundaries of the national monument.

B. Historic Connections, Features and Uses of the Site

1. The City of Macon

The City of Macon and its people are an important part of the history of Ocmulgee National Monument and a portion of the monument lies within the city limits of Macon. Prior to the treaty of Indian Springs, the area was intermittently occupied by European explorers and traders. In 1821, when the treaty of Indian Springs was signed, a settlement community grew around Fort Hawkins and was known as “Newtown” for a short period of time. In 1822, the Georgia General Assembly created Bibb County, which laid out the plan to establish Macon as a town. Macon was named for Nathaniel Macon, a North Carolina statesman who was born near the Ocmulgee River (Middle Georgia Historical Society 1972). In 1823, surveyor James Webb laid out a formal town plan for Macon, and the town was formally incorporated by the Georgia legislature on December 10, 1823, which encompassed Newtown, as well as the old Ocmulgee fields.

The establishment of Macon further encouraged settlement, and there were about 1,140 inhabitants and 100 houses during Macon’s early period (Sherwood 1827:72). Prior to Macon being surveyed in 1823, the McCall brothers operated a boat-building business at Ocmulgee Old Fields, and built three cotton barges that year (Middle Georgia Historical Society 1972). This was the era of King Cotton, which was an important export item in the local economy. Two ferries were being operated along the banks of the Ocmulgee River within the monument site, one of which was considered to be illegally operated. One ferry was shut down, with the remaining ferry being replaced by the bridge at Fifth Street by 1826 (Middle Georgia Historical Society 1972). In 1829, the first steamboat arrived at Macon along the Ocmulgee River, travelling from the Cape Fear River.

Other businesses opened during that timeframe, including hotels, stores, warehouses, academies, doctor's offices, and a bank. The hotels accommodated the stage coach passengers that came through regularly on the Federal Road. Local courts were established and a bar association was formed by local lawyers. Homes and churches were built to accommodate the growing population. By the early 1830s Macon had a local theatre. In 1836, Wesleyan College opened, one of the first colleges to offer degrees to women (Middle Georgia Historical Society 1972). Thus Macon developed into a thriving town with many businesses and establishments.

Prior to the Civil War, Macon was known as a farmer's market town and was the center of a rich farming region. In 1860, Bibb County had about 10 plantations, maintained by slave labor (WPA 1939:21). The OCMU site contained at least two of these plantations; the Dunlap Plantation and the Lamar Plantation. Plantation crops included cotton, peanuts (after the Civil War), pecans, peaches, corn, tomatoes, beans, watermelons (WPA 1939).

By the 1930s, Macon industry included textile mills, brick kilns, furniture factories, and ironworks. The Bibb Mill was located on part of what was to later become OCMU. Wesleyan, a women's college was located in Macon, as was Mercer University, Beda Etta College, Ballard Normal School and Georgia Baptist College (WPA 1939). The city also had convention facilities and was a central transportation hub, especially for railroad traffic.

2. The Dunlap Plantation

The OCMU site was used as a farm from the time the site was auctioned after the last treaty in the early 1800s through the time of purchase in the 1930s. The main site was the location of the Dunlap Plantation. The Lamar site was the home of the Lamar Plantation. In addition, portions of the site were used as a dairy farm near the McDougal Mound (Marsh 1986).

Samuel Dunlap owned a plantation at Ocmulgee Old Fields during the mid-1800s, and constructed a house there (Wheeler 2007). Dunlap House is a one-story, six-room, framed weatherboard farmhouse on a brick foundation, and was built in 1856. In the 1930s the house served as an office for Park Service and ERA staff. The house was renovated in 1952-1953 (Marsh 1986). The Dunlap House is a prominent feature upon entering the park, and from 1940 until 2006, it housed the Park Superintendent (Wheeler 2007). The Dunlap mound was named for the prior plantation owner and is located by the historic Dunlap House. The Dunlap Mound is the smallest of the mounds, rising five feet, and is the furthest mound from the main Macon Plateau village area, but is on the highest elevation on the site. When the 1930s excavations started, it was not initially recognized as a mound; however, John Thomas' survey notes provided the location. Before excavation the mound was about six feet high, 100 feet wide, and roundish (Ingmanson 1964b).

The mound construction was similar to the other mounds on the site. It had a rectangular building that capped the first phase of the construction. Another layer of construction was on top of the former building. The pre-mound soil was not excavated. The majority of the ceramics are Macon Plateau Complex, and since the mound fill included Macon Plateau Complex ceramics, it was not constructed at the beginning of that period. There is a paucity of post-Macon Plateau ceramics, consistent with other areas of the site (Ingmanson 1964b).

Buildings on the historic Dunlap farm destroyed some of the archaeological features. The mound had been partially destroyed by the plantation overseer's residence, which was on top of the mound. A chicken house, garden and orchard were also located with this residence on top of the mound (Ingmanson 1964b). The mound has also been partially destroyed by years of crop

cultivation, and is presently maintained by mowing coordinated with the Dunlap House lawn maintenance (Wheeler 2007).

The Dunlap Plantation utilized slave labor and remnants of this historic era remain on the site. African American remains associated with the plantation period have been excavated. Initially, some remains of these former slaves were mistaken for American Indian remains, and were once on display at the OCMU museum as such until corrected by information obtained from a visiting medical examiner who was touring the site. Thus, African Americans, as well as American Indians and European Americans have connections with the site and are a part of its history.

3. The Civil War

Civil War activity occurred on and around the OCMU site. In 1862 during the Civil War, the Confederate Government moved its arsenal from Savannah to Macon (Middle Georgia Historical Society 1972). The machinist shop that built the Ocmulgee locomotive was commandeered and turned into a weapons manufacturing facility. City Hall was converted to a hospital.

The Dunlap House was used as a command post during the Civil War by both Macon Reserves and Federal troops. In 1864, there were two attacks that occurred on the Dunlap Farm, and Macon was successfully defended (Middle Georgia Historical Society 1972). In July 1864, Union General George F. Stoneman used the Dunlap House as temporary headquarters. During the Battle of Dunlap Hill, Gen. Stoneman was captured and his troops were sent to the Andersonville prison camp. The Battle of Walnut Creek also occurred at the OCMU site in November 1864, and was associated with a diversion to Sherman's March to the Sea through Georgia (Wheeler 2007).

A feature called the Civil War Fortification is located on the OCMU site and was found during depression era archaeological excavations. The Civil War Fortification is an earthen embankment located 800 feet southeast of the Dunlap House. It is four to five feet high and 20 feet thick. It is three-sided, measuring 150' by 120' by 75'. The only known Civil War action around Macon took place at this site. This earthwork was built after the Battle of Dunlap Hill to protect the Walnut Creek railroad trestle from future attacks (Wheeler 2007). Thus the OCMU site also has historical ties to the War Between the States. Re-enactments of the Civil War battles take place at the park.

4. Railroads

Railroads are an important part of the Macon landscape, including the Ocmulgee National Monument site. Even today, as the train whistle is heard daily, there is an omnipresent soundscape reminding all of the continued presence and impact of the railroad on the hallowed grounds of Ocmulgee National Monument. In 1836, the Railroad Convention was held in Macon, and developed plans for a network of routes through Georgia, with Macon as the center. The first locomotive for the Monroe Railroad was named "Ocmulgee" (Middle Georgia Historical Society 1972). The Monroe Railroad made its first run in 1838, from Macon to Forsyth (Butler 1958). In 1843, the first train from Savannah arrived in Macon (Middle Georgia Historical Society 1972).

The OCMU site has been heavily impacted by railroad construction, and in 1843, the Central of Georgia Railroad constructed its line on the Ocmulgee site, which cut through mound areas (Butler 1958). Evidence of the prior civilization was revealed by the railroad construction, including the discovery of human remains:

In September and October, while Messrs. Collins and Alexander were cutting through the edge of the mounds near the city, for the road track, a number of Indian relics were exhumed, consisting of a large earthen pot, capable of holding eight gallons, in which was contained a considerable quantity of burnt corn which

appeared to have been reduced to charcoal; also, a number of skeletons and human bones; a variety of spoons; a singular formed stone, translucent, and resembling amber, and a stone ax; also, five feet below the surface, a brass spoon in a bowl of Indian earthenware. At about thirty to forty feet below the surface was discerned the trunk of a tree, supposed to have been poplar, twelve inches in diameter. It was encrusted with stone two inches thick, beneath which the wood appeared to be converted into hard coal, and was black and heavy. What was very singular, pieces of pine bark were found in the same locality that were sound and bore the distinct marks of an axe (Butler 1958:161).

This description provides evidence that Mound B contained burials, and also contains interesting descriptions that have not been further interpreted.

On or about 1873, the Central of Georgia Railroad relocated its line to the north, to its present location. In addition, a railroad roundhouse was constructed near the Funeral Mound to the southwest, and a brick overpass was constructed over the farm road (Wheeler 2007). This second railroad cut destroyed the northern half of the Funeral Mound. Jones similarly described the impact of second round of railroad construction on the Ocmulgee site.

Upon the acclivity east of the central mound are the manifest remains of an aboriginal settlement. Here, in excavating for the new track of the Central Railway, the workmen a short time since unearthed, a few feet below the surface, several skeletons, in connection with which were found beads of shell and porcelain, a part of a discoidal stone, several arrow and spear points, two stone celts, a clay pipe, an earthen pot, and other matters of a primitive character fashioned for use or ornament.

This excavation for the line of the railroad necessitated the removal of a considerable portion of the northern side of the central mound. In the conduct of this work, the laborers, while cutting through the slope of the mound, and at a depth of perhaps three feet below the superior surface, exhumed several skulls, regular in outline and possessing the ordinary characteristics of American crania. Associated with these skeletons were stone implements – the handiwork of the red race – and Venetian beads and copper hawkbells acquired through commercial intercourse with the early traders and voyagers. The fact was patent that at least some of these inhumations had occurred subsequent to the period of primal contact between the European and the Indian (Jones 1999:159-160).

The Macon Plateau was thus cut into three sections by the two railroad cuts made by the Central of Georgia railroad (Kelly 1935b). These divisions of the plateau were used as location

identification descriptors of the excavations that occurred on the site. The railroad roundhouse foundation was removed in the 1960s during the “bulldozer days” of Superintendent Dillahunty (Marsh 1986). Thus early railroad activity has heavily impacted the site, with the existing railroad continuing service today.



●
Figure 10. Ocmulgee National Monument, railroad bridge, 2014. Photo by Deborah Andrews.

5. Industry and Clay Mining

The Ocmulgee site was also used for mining and industry. The Anderson Brick Company, a clay mining and brick manufacturing facility, was located on the site (Ingmanson 1964). East of the Great Temple Mound, clay was mined from the wetlands of Walnut Creek, and this former clay mine is now a pond area in these wetlands. South of the Great Temple

Mound, a clay kiln and brickyard was also located on the site, for the manufacture of bricks used in the construction of buildings in Macon. A railroad spur was also constructed in this vicinity for local transport of the clay and bricks. Activities from this brick industry destroyed some archaeological features, including portions of earth lodges 4, 4a, 5 and 6, between Mounds A and B (Ingmanson 1964). The brick kiln was removed in the 1960s (Marsh 1986).

In addition to clay mining, other industry occurred on the site. The Cherokee Fertilizer factory was once located on the site, on the middle plateau near the railroad cut (Marsh 1986). The Bibb Mill also was located on a portion of the site. The mill site included a baseball field for the workers. It also included a caretaker's house.

6. Interstate 16

Even after national monument designation, OCMU was not safe from destruction. Interstate 16 was proposed to be built through the site, and there was much public debate about the location of this road. Unfortunately, there was not much public or political support for protecting the park, despite the opposition of the proposed highway through OCMU by NPS staff. Thus the desire of Macon residents in the 1930s to protect the mounds and create a National Monument changed course when the plan to construct Interstate 16 offered competing interests.

In 1961, a decision was made to construct Interstate 16 through the monument, cutting it off from the Ocmulgee River. As a result, archaeological excavation occurred in 1961-1962, referred to as the "Big Dig II" (Marsh 1986). After excavations ended there was an effort to continue the research unit at OCMU, which resulted in the establishment of the Southeast Archaeological Center (SEAC) in 1966, located in the basement of the OCMU museum (Marsh 1986). SEAC was responsible for the supervision of archaeological research in the Southeastern

Region of the National Park Service. In 1972, SEAC moved to Tallahassee, Florida, along with staff positions, documents, artifacts and human remains from OCMU.

7. Recreation & Education

The Ocmulgee site is used for recreational purposes. Prior to the establishment as a national monument, one pastime was hill climbing of the mounds by motorcyclists in the 1920s (Marsh 1986). This was one of the reasons that prominent Macon residents urgently sought the preservation of the mounds before they were further destroyed by this activity.

The scenic vista from the top of the Great Temple Mound was a popular place for picnicking by the nearby Macon residents. In 1953, staff archaeologists cut down the trees growing on top of this mound (Marsh 1986). Today there are hiking trails throughout the site, and visitors, as well as dedicated runners, traverse the site.

Since OCMU was established, it has served as a tourist destination and educational center. Festivals have also been held on the site and are now an annual event. In 1952, a two-day American Indian Festival was held, consisting of a parade, craft demonstrations, a concert, and a stick ball game between Creek and Cherokees. The game was quite zealous, and three stick ball players were treated at a local hospital for lacerations (Marsh 1986). Fifty Creek Indians came from Oklahoma for the event.

In 1972, there were efforts to establish a living history program, and Creek Indians from Oklahoma were invited to participate in projects at the monument. Several Creek were hired to work at the site in temporary interpretive and maintenance positions (Marsh 1986). Local organizations supported the relocation of Creek to Macon, offering jobs and scholarships. The Bureau of Indian Affairs provided travel funds as well as funding for the operation of an American Indian gift shop at the monument. These efforts did not meet with much success, and

struggled financially. The young Creek who came to Macon also had difficulty adjusting, and most returned home to Oklahoma (Marsh 1986).

In 1984, the monument held a Keep America Beautiful project, and the first Public Lands Day was held on September 8, 1984. In 1985 the event was attended by 2,000 people (Marsh 1986).

The Discovery Lab was established at OCMU. Bibb County public school teachers could obtain certification credits for their work as volunteers (Marsh 1986). This lab, located in the basement of the OCMU museum, hosts local school field trips to learn about the site.

In June, 2012, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, held an event called Ocmulgee to Okmulgee, to commemorate the Trail of Tears. A Trail of Tears bike tour started at OCMU in Georgia, and ended in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. Members of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, including tribal elders, as well as the multi-Nation Honor Guard, traveled from Oklahoma to OCMU for the ceremony, many visiting the site for the first time.



Figure 11. Muscogee (Creek) National Honor Guard at Ocmulgee National Monument, June 2012. Photograph by Deborah Andrews.



Figure 12. Muscogee (Creek) Nation representatives at Ocmulgee National Monument, June 2012. Photograph by Deborah Andrews.

C. Population

The OCMU site is partially located in the City of Macon, in Bibb County, Georgia. Political boundaries, however, have changed since census figures have been gathered for this region. In addition, methods for calculating populations have changed. Thus the computation of population data associated with the OCMU site is complex. Nonetheless, described below is population information associated with OCMU.

In 1782, Thomas Jefferson took a census of American Indians, based upon prior separate estimates by Croghan, Bouquet, and Hutchins, which he set forth in a table. For the region that includes OCMU, these estimates categorized the data by five specific nations, in addition to the Upper Creek and Lower Creek. The relevant portions of the table are presented below.

Table 1. Population Estimates Compiled by Thomas Jefferson

Tribe	Croghan 1759	Bouquet 1764	Hutchins 1768	Location
Caouitas		700		East of the Alibamous
Chickasaws		750	500	Western parts of Georgia
Chacktaws	2000	4500	6000	Western parts of Georgia
Upper Creeks			3000	Western parts of Georgia (plus the Chacktaws?)
Lower Creeks		1180		Western parts of Georgia
Natchez		150		Western parts of Georgia
Alibamons		600		Alibama River, in the western parts of Georgia

Notably, Georgia originally extended through present day Mississippi and Alabama, but via a convention in 1802, Georgia was limited to east of the Chattahoochee River (Schwartz 1923:186). Thus while this table designates “Western Georgia,” at the time of this description, Georgia included what is presently Alabama and Mississippi.

The population size of the Creek Confederacy is open to debate, with some competing estimates of population during the early years. One of the issues was how to calculate the census considering the fact that the American Indians, Europeans and Africans had inter-bred somewhat, and some estimates distinguished “mixed bloods” from “full bloods” (Truett 1935:7). Another issue was that some calculations focused on male warriors, rather than the entire population. Truett, relying on Hodge, compared additional population estimates by Knox, Bartram, and Hawkins:

‘In the last quarter of the 18th Century, the Creek population may have been about 20,000, occupying from 40 to 60 towns. Knox in 1789 estimated them at 6,000 warriors, or a total of 24,000 inhabitants in 100 towns; but these evidently included the Seminole of Florida. Bartram, about 1775, credits the whole confederation, exclusive of the Seminole, with 11,000 in 55 towns. Hawkins, in 1785, gave them 5,400 men, representing a total of about 19,000’ (Truett 1935:7) (quoting Hodge).

Thus the population count of the Creek confederacy ranged from about 11,000 to 24,000, spread between 40 to 100 towns. This estimate is for the Creek, exemplifying the issue of varying categories for comparative purposes. While one estimate appeared to include the Seminoles, the estimates tabulated by Jefferson do not mention the Seminoles.

Another problem with identifying the American Indian population is the failure to include American Indians in the census.

Indians are not identified in the 1790-1840 censuses. In 1860, Indians living in the general population are identified for the first time. Nearly all of the 1890 census schedules were destroyed as a result of the fire at the Department of Commerce in 1921. (Census website)

Thus the official US census for this critical period prior to removal does not include American Indians, which is why the calculations by other people such as Bartram, a botanist, and Hawkins, the U.S. Indian Agent for the region, are relied upon.

While American Indians were not included in the U.S. census during this period, the federal censuses of 1810, 1820, and 1830 refer to the presence of American Indians delaying the settlement of western Georgia. The implementation of the Indian Removal Act altered this course. Removal took place between 1825 and 1846 (Foster 2007). The 1840 Report states:

From Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw Indians, who, at the time of the previous census, occupied large areas in these states, and formed a very serious obstacle to settlement, have been removed to the Indian territory, and their country has been opened up to settlement. Within the two or three years which have elapsed since the removal of these Indians the lands relinquished by them have been entirely taken up, and the country has been covered with a comparatively dense settlement. (Walker and Gannett undated: XVII).

Thus the census report refers to the presence of the American Indians in the region, but nevertheless did not include them in the population count.

During the Removal Period, in 1834, Congress created Oklahoma as part of the “unorganized Indian country” (Schwartz 1923:220). This territory was carved out of the Louisiana Purchase from France in 1803 (Schwartz 1923:221). The route of removal is displayed at the OCMU museum and is set forth in Figure 13.

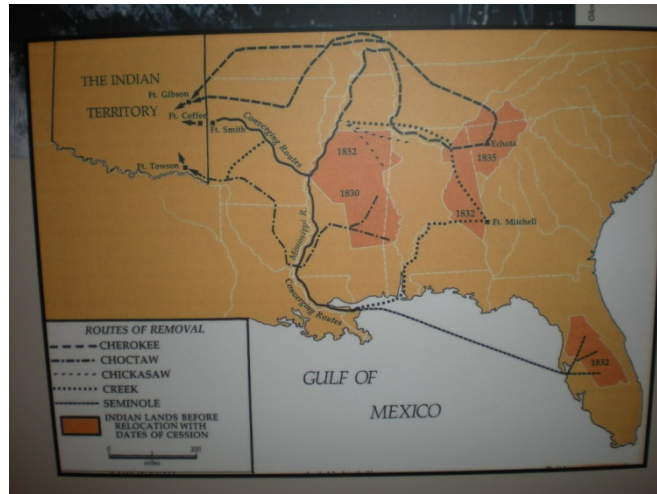


Figure 13. Ocmulgee National Monument Visitors Center, Map of Route of Removal, 2013. Photo by Deborah Andrews.

The conditions of the Creek who still lived in Georgia during the Removal Period was observed in 1836, by a lawyer who traveled 4,200 miles across the South during the Indian Removal period, and made observations in Columbus and Macon, Georgia. While in Macon, along the Ocmulgee River, he made no observations of American Indians or anything else noteworthy and did not mention the mounds. While in Columbus, however, he saw American Indians who had not yet removed to the Indian Territory. Notably, the town of Columbus, which is located along the Chattahoochee River, was where the remaining people moved after the Yamasee War in 1715, including a town called Ocmulgee. The lawyer made the following observation during this brutal period of Indian Removal:

Columbus, Ga. Decr 3 I reached this place at 3 o clock this morning, having travelled all night and slept none. Yesterday I passed through the Creek Nation,

the late scene of Indian depredations. This Country is now ceded by treaty to the Government, and is fast filling up with the Whites. Most of these Indians have been removed. About 3500 yet remain in the nation, about 1500 of whom are now in Florida fighting their red brethren for the White Man. The remainder of those remaining are woman and children and old men. When those warriors who are now shedding their blood in Florida return, they will be without home and Country. They together with their wives and children must seek a new house beyond the Mississippi. I have always felt for the wrongs of the Indian, but never have I felt more than whilst passing th[r]ough their Country just wrested from them, on account of its soil and fertility, by the White man who is now settling down upon it. Occasionally as we rambled along we met these Indians. They looked like disappointed spirits, wandering through their old hunting grounds. I bought yesterday from some young squaws two pair of Indian Mocasins for my little boys, ornamented with beads. They are very skilful in this kind of work. I saw some Indian shot pouches which were really beautiful (Kellar 1935:371-372).

This description provides a glimpse into the lives of the American Indians, as well as showing the private compassion of a white man who did not agree with what the government did to the people.

In an effort to capture past population the Report of the 1890 Census made population estimates. The estimated past American Indian populations was as follows:

Table 2. Past Census Estimates in 1890 Census Report

Year	Location	Population
1825	Creeks - Georgia and Alabama	20,000
1853	Creeks - In Indian Territory	20,000
1833	Creeks – In Alabama	100
1860	Georgia (no tribe designation)	38 “Civilized Indians”
1860	Georgia	377 “Tribal Indians”
1870	Georgia	40
1880	Georgia	124
1890	Georgia	68

(United States Census 1894).

This table shows a dramatic decline in American Indian population after the Removal Period.

For the most recent census, the population of Bibb County in 2010 was 155,547. The Bibb County 2010 population is broken down by race as follows:

Table 3. Bibb County, Georgia 2010 Census

Population Category	Population Percentage
White, alone	43.5%
Black, alone	53%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.3%
Asia alone	1.8%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%
Two or more races	1.3%
Hispanic or Latino	3.2%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	41.2%

Bibb County is dominated by the City of Macon, and the 2010 City of Macon population was 91,351. The City of Macon 2010 population is composed of the following races:

Table 4. City of Macon, Georgia 2010 Census

Population Category	Population Percentage
White, alone	28.6%
Black, alone	67.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.2%
Asia alone	0.8%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%
Two or more races	1.4%
Hispanic or Latino	2.5%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	27.7%

Thus, since the implementation of the Indian Removal Act, very few American Indians have lived in Georgia. Less than one percent of the population of Bibb County and the City of Macon are American Indian, with the present population of this locale being predominantly African American. Thus, what was originally an area of intense native population has changed dramatically.

IV. Contemporary Views on the Ocmulgee National Monument Site, by Dayna Bowker Lee

A. Consultation

Sixteen American Indian people were invited to participate in consultation for the OCMU Ethnographic Overview and Assessment (EOA). Of those contacted, nine individuals agreed to participate:

- Emman Spain, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN);
- Odette Freeman, Assistant Manager, Cultural Preservation Department, MCN;
- Ryan Logan, Office Manager, Tourism and Recreation Department, MCN;
- Brian OnTheHill, Project Specialist, Tourism and Recreation Department, MCN;
- Theodore Isham, former MCN THPO, *Mvskoke* language teacher at Oklahoma State University, *Mvskoke* scholar and lecturer;
- Charles Coleman, THPO, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town;
- Arnold Taylor, *Opunayv* (speaker), *Ahbika* Tribal Town;³
- Lewis Taylor Jr., *Heles-hayv* (medicine maker), *Ahbika* Tribal Town;
- Janet Taylor, participant at *Ahbika* Tribal Town and wife of Lewis Taylor Jr.

Eight of those participating in consultation had visited the site within the past decade. All but two are enrolled members of Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the exceptions being Emman Spain, MCN THPO and member of Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and Charles Coleman, THPO and enrolled member of Thlopthlocco Tribal Town. The cultural histories of Seminole Nation of

³Ahbika, Coosa, Coweta, and Tukabahchee were considered the four Mother Towns. Ahbika is the only one that remains a living *etvlwv* in 2013.

Oklahoma and Thlopthlocco Tribal Town are deeply rooted and intertwined with that of the *Mvskokvlke*, or *Mvskoke* people.⁴

Consultation took place in Oklahoma in June 2013. Topics discussed included:

- participant knowledge of the Ocmulgee site and *etvlwv* in Georgia;
- the post-Removal Okmulgee Tribal Town and people in Oklahoma;
- parallels between contemporary tribal towns and the Ocmulgee National Monument site;
- site interpretation and recommendations;
- potential partnerships between Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Ocmulgee National Monument unit of the National Park Service.

B. *Etvlwv*: The Tribal Town

The *etvlwv* is considered by *Mvskokvlke* to be “the most important unit of community and political organization” in *Mvskoke* worldview. *Etvlwv* is most often used in reference to one’s matrilineally⁵ determined tribal town and/or associated ceremonial ground, but is also used in some cases to indicate “nation.” Among the related Seminole, *etvlwv* is generally translated as “band” (Martin and Mauldin 2000:41). The term is also applied to mounds and mound sites like Ocmulgee that are connected to the *Mvskokvlke*. The number of *etvlwv* at European contact is not known, but at least four *etvlwv* encountered by the *entrada* of Hernando de Soto in the 1540s have remained in continuous existence and persist as political and/or ceremonial tribal towns in Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Oklahoma, in 2013 (Emman Spain, June 5, 2013; Briggs-Cloud and Isham 2013:181; Moore 1988:164).

⁴Muscogee-language orthography adapted from Martin and Mauldin (2000). *Mvskoke* is also written as *Maskoke*, with either being correct; however, *Mvskoke* is more common in Muscogee (Creek) Nation usage and is used herein.

⁵Matrilineal descent is reckoned through the mother’s family line instead of the father’s.

The location, number, relationship, and even the identity of *etvlwv* were neither rigid nor necessarily permanent, but their organization and existence was grounded in *Mvskoke* concepts of lineage and kinship that insured the perpetuation of the *etvlwv*.

The lineage pattern that these grounds belong to, generally we all say we spring from four Mother Towns, ... so each of those original four towns have daughter towns and daughter towns [have] granddaughter towns, so ... one lineage will have a series of related towns and they consider themselves siblings, or brothers and sisters to each other. In essence, they view themselves as the same, [from] the same fire, so they help each other out, they stay close. So when one goes down, they reabsorb into the mother town or their sibling towns and after a period of [time], all vestige of the old town is gone, because now they become part of a larger group, so it's these groupings that are salient to us.... And what I heard some of the people say is they would move the fire back into the mother town and people would automatically identify with the new town and after a generation or two, [their old town affiliation] is gone [Theodore Isham, June 6, 2013].

The 1832 Creek Nation census, prepared in association with the 24 March 1832 Treaty of Cusseta in which Creek Nation was forced to cede all lands east of the Mississippi River, counted 82 separate tribal towns, some of which were daughter or sibling towns and shared the same name, i.e., Eufaula 1 and Eufaula 2. Although Ocmulgee is not denoted in the 1832 census, Swanton suggests that Ocmulgee people made up one of the two Osochi towns (Parsons and Abbot 1832; Swanton 1922:179).

Etvlwv were either White towns, generally identified as Peace towns, or Red towns, i.e. War towns. Of the four Mother Towns, two were white and two were red. Peace and war are complementary components of government, and the functions of the Red and White towns were in balance. White towns were associated with the internal issues and affairs of the *Mvskokvlke* as well as the adoption of outsiders, which was considered an act of peace. Red towns stood at the forefront of war, diplomacy, and interactions with foreign nations including Europeans and Americans (Debo 1941:7-14). These same divisions extended to leadership roles, and are still observed in contemporary *etvlwv*.

The ultimate belief among the Creeks ... is that we are people of peace; we strive for the White Path, and we have two feathers that we venerate: the eagle feather and the white crane feather. The eagle feather is, of course, the symbol of war, and the white crane is the symbol of peace, and the crane feather is the more venerated feather because it has more power, more essence of who we are. We only go into war after there is no other recourse, but it's always at the ready to go into; and so everything is geared towards this idea of being in the peaceful manner, being in unison or harmony with our Creator, ... with creation, with nature; and only until we have no other recourse [do] we jump into this other aspect.... There is this mechanism that operates our general life, the idea of this peace path, but also there's this other mechanism that's equally important but it's held in reserve, so to speak—that's this idea of war. We see that during ... the ceremonial season.... In the spring and summer and fall, the *Mekko* is the preeminent, but when we close our grounds down, then the second chief is the preeminent. And generally, the second chief is the one that's charged with being able to do war and things associated with the Red Path [external issues]. He brings together projects and other things and our *Mekko* does the things that pertain to the grounds during that time, and he never speaks outside of his ground, in the outside world [Theodore Isham, June 6, 2013].

Members of *Mvskoke etvlwv* are organized into exogamous,⁶ matrilineal clans, with designated principal clans from which the *Mekko* and other headmen are chosen. A moiety⁷ of clans among the *Mvskokvlke* may have formed or been influenced by the post-contact consolidation of formerly independent groups like the Hichiti and Alabama who came under the protection of the *Esti Mvskoke em Etehvlvtkv*, the ancient confederacy of *etvlwv* (see below). Clans were categorized as *Hathagalgi*, White Clans, or *Tchilokogalgi*, People of a Different Speech (Debo 1941:14; Hassig 1974:252; Swanton 1928:156-157; Waselkov 2006:90; Wesson 2008:25).

While there is organizational variance between *etvlwv*, some generalities can be discussed. Each clan has representatives within the *etvlwv* who perform specific functions or tasks, with the *Mekko* and *Heles-hayv* each drawn from a designated clan (not usually the same

⁶Marriage between members of the same clan is prohibited.

⁷A moiety is a form of unilineal descent in which two groups, in this case two sets of clans, have complementary functions and positions of leadership, etc.

clan). *Mekko* is generally translated as “chief” or “king” (Martin and Mauldin 2000:75), but these definitions reflect European concepts of leadership and do not conform to how *Mvskokvlke* view the position. The role of the *Mekko* was formerly connected to his control of production and distribution of communal food supplies and other goods, as well as his ability to maintain harmony and balance for the *etvlwv*. In contemporary *etvlwv*, the *Mekko* works with the *Heles-hayv*, who functions as a medicine maker and spiritual leader, and in consultation with the *Mekko-vpoktv*, Second Chief, and the *Etvwv Mvskokvlke*, the committee that serves as the “thinker” for the grounds, i.e., functions to make decisions, form policies, and handle issues that affect the *etvlwv*, to maintain harmony and insure the perpetuation of the *etvlwv*. Training of the *Mekko* and *Heles-hayv* generally takes place over the course of a lifetime. Each *etvlwv* has other offices or roles, including women’s roles, some of which are unique to particular grounds (Theodore Isham, June 6, 2013; Arnold Taylor, June 7, 2013; Janet Taylor, June 7, 2013; Lewis Taylor Jr., June 7, 2013; Lewis and Jordan 2002:143-144; Moore 1988:166-167).

Although they function independently, *etvlwv* can occasionally band together to invoke the *Esti Mvskoke em Etehvlvtkv*, the ancient confederacy that preceded the later Creek Confederacy. The *Etehvlvtkv* was once so powerful that the *etvlwv* could quickly mobilize the approximately 80,000 *Mvskoke* into one temporary unit. As late as World War I, the individual *etvlwv* allied under the ancient *Etehvlvtkv* to oppose military service for *Mvskoke* men and call for peace with Germany, bringing them into direct conflict with the federal government (Moore 1988:165, 170). In the late 1980s and to 1990s, an attempt was made to reify the *Etehvlvtkv* to serve as a unified political and social voice; however, this attempt failed due to several factors, primary among them, the person spearheading the movement was a non-*Mvskoke* academic and at least half of the *etvlwv* would not participate.

The Ocmulgee site in present Georgia is thought to have served as a political center of the later manifestation of the *Esti Mvskoke em Etehvlvtkv*, the Creek Confederacy (Theodore Isham, June 6, 2013; Emman Spain, June 5, 2013). Centrality of authority among the *Mvskoke etvlwv*, however, was fluid and situational.

Historians have latched onto the concept of rigidity, I guess, or permanence, and these things are not [necessarily permanent]. In the late historic time, I think the tribal town capitals rotated around, and I think that was a design ... where they just moved them around every few years, or whatever the cycle would be. [The *Etehvlvtkv*] was a common bonding, a common set of aspects like the sun worship, the mound building, and the sacred spaces that we set up, ... and the belief like we have today of the White Path and the Red Path—that was the underlying glue to this whole group, and so even the idea of the confederacy is close but it's not quite there because it has this underpinning that it was this organized group that dominated or conquered....

This modern form of government that we have at the tribe is not how we, in our hearts, treat ourselves or operate ourselves, especially on the ceremonial or traditional side of it. That is not how we do it, ... and so we keep a very separate knowledge and reality of that, like “This is the way it is and this is the way *they* do it,” like it's foreign, and it *is* foreign.... And the basic premise behind what we call the traditional form of government and our modern government [that is based in the] Western world is this idea of central government. That was never part of who we are, and that's why I think those capitals moved around, to even it out [Theodore Isham, June 6, 2013].

C. The Upper and Lower Creek

The original division of *etvlwv* was likely more geographical than political in nature. *Etvlwv* located in the Coosa and Tallapoosa River basins in present Alabama came to be identified by the British as the Upper Creek, and those near Savannah and in the Apalachicola and Ocmulgee River basins in present Georgia were called the Lower Creek. These epithets suggest a level of political and social cohesion that had no basis in reality, but was based, instead, entirely on British expediency and constructs. In time, the various *etvlwv* were forced by circumstance to adopt a more unified identity when dealing with Anglo-Europeans and later Americans, and the separation of the upper and lower divisions grew more ideological in nature.

Intermarriage between eighteenth-century British and Scots-Irish traders and women from the Lower Creek, most often women from the family of the *Mekko*, formed the beginnings of a segment of mixed-blood elites who would come to dominate the Lower Creek division, and ironically became the political faction designated by the United States government to represent the interests of the *Mvskokvlke*. U.S. Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins exacerbated the growing ideological separation between the divisions by elevating the Lower Creek *Mekko* into positions of authority in the newly formed National Council that was engineered to neutralize the ancient *Esti Mvskoke em Etehlvltkv* (Moore 1988:170-175; Swanton 1922:103-108; Waselkov 2006:6, 88-91).

D. Moving the Fires: The *Etlwv* in Indian Territory Oklahoma

When the *Mvskokvlke* were forced to abandon their aboriginal homelands in the Southeast and remove to Indian Territory (later Oklahoma), ceremonial leaders gathered up embers before they extinguished the sacred fires in each *etlww*. These living connections to the *Mvskoke* homeland, society, and religion were carefully transported on the Trail of Tears to Indian Territory. In this way, the *etlww* were ideologically maintained uninterrupted to be relocated in the West. By the time Speck published his 1907 essay on Taskigi town that included a map of *etlww* in Oklahoma (Figure 14), 48 “Creek Towns” with antecedents east of the Mississippi River were represented, including three Yuchi towns and one Alabama town. The number of vital *etlww* was reduced to about 20 by 1988 (Moore 1988:167). In 2013, only 14 *etlww*, including those of the Yuchi, Seminole, and Alabama, still exist as political



Figure 14. Creek Towns and Neighboring Tribes, by John B. Torbert (Speck 1907).

and ceremonial centers whose members adhere to native beliefs and practices.⁸ As previously mentioned, only one of the four Mother Towns, *Ahbika*, remains viable (Theodore Isham, June 6, 2013; Emman Spain, June 5, 2013; Arnold Taylor, June 7, 2013; Lewis Taylor Jr., June 7, 2013).

While there is some variation of space within each *etvlwv*, the general arrangement consists of a ceremonial ground with central fire, surrounded by three to four arbors placed at the cardinal directions. The *Mekko* sits in the west arbor and the remaining arbors are designated to other ceremonial officers based on position, moiety, and clan. Family camp houses surround the ceremonial ground. An area is set aside for the pole game—a men’s and women’s ballgame in which a score is made when the ball hits an effigy atop a tall pole—and in many grounds, a large playing field is placed nearby for the annual stickball game. This arrangement parallels the “Creek town plan” documented by William Bartram in 1789 (Figure 15).

Threats to the vitality of the *etvlwv* have historically come from the acceptance of Christianity to the exclusion or abandonment of native *Mvskoke* traditional religious practices. Some *Mvskokvlke* can reconcile the two perspectives and continue to participate in both native ceremonial practices and *Mvskoke* Christian churches.⁹ Those who participate in both, however, are in the minority and participation in one or the other is generally exclusive. Other problems that imperil the *etvlwv* are loss of language, relocation that prevents obligatory attendance at ceremonial occasions, and loss of land where *etvlwv* are located. Whether individuals born to a particular *etvlwv* continue to practice native religion or not, however, one’s *etvlwv*, along with one’s clan, remain the primary identifiers of individual *Mvskokvlke* (Odette Freeman, June 5,

⁸Three Yuchi grounds also remain functional; but while the Yuchi are under the political administration of Muscogee (Creek) Nation and often support activities at the Muscogee *etvlwv*, they are not *Mvskokvlke*.

⁹*Mvskoke* Christian churches and grounds have similar physical arrangements to the *etvlwv*.

2013; Theodore Isham, June 6, 2013; Ryan Logan, June 5, 2013; Brian OnTheHill, June 5, 2013; Emman Spain, June 5, 2013; Arnold Taylor, June 7, 2013; Lewis Taylor Jr., June 7, 2013).

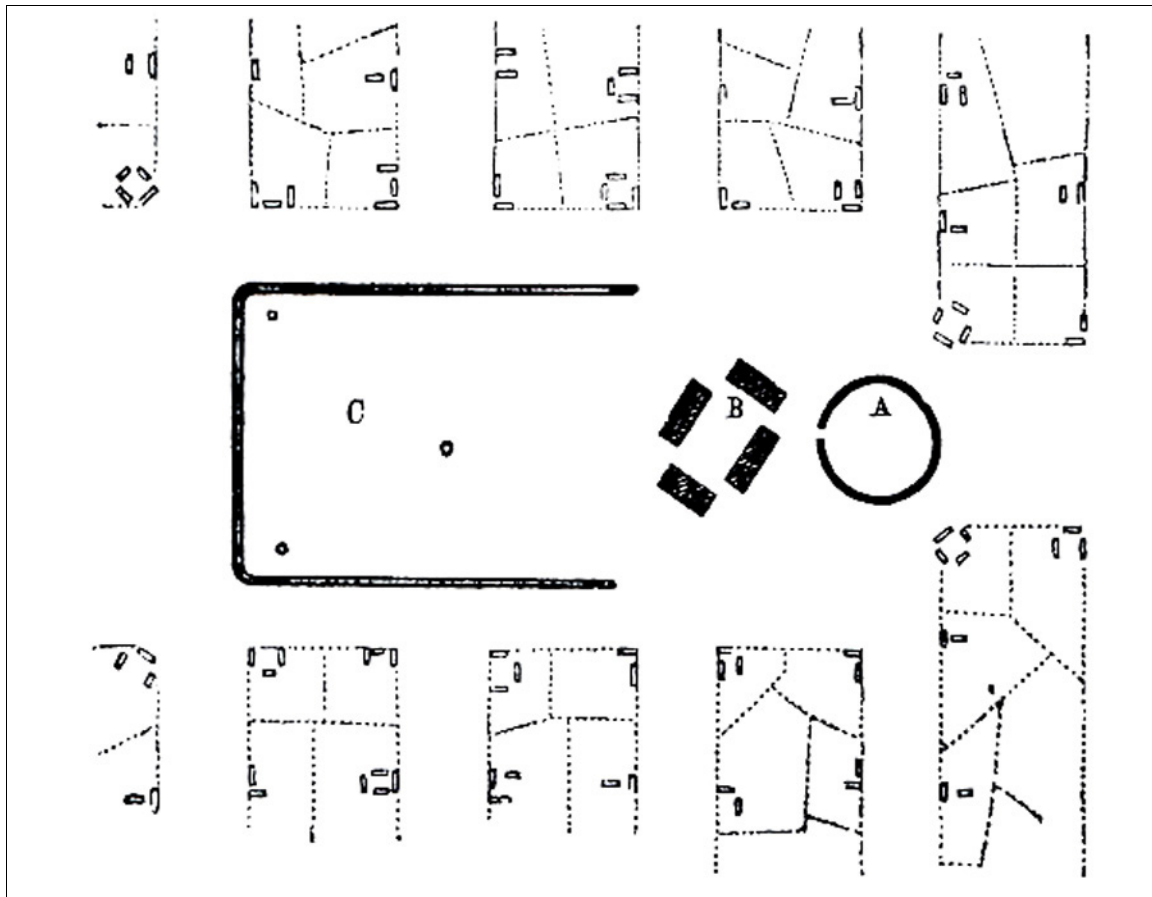


Figure 15. Creek town plan, 1789 (Bartram 1853:55)

My tribal town is Coweta, and that's one of the things that's very important, that our parents passed down to the children, is their clan and their tribal towns, so all I heard [growing up] was Coweta and there was not any mention other than that, other than the fact that it's important that you know this [Odette Freeman, June 5, 2013].

With their reduction in number, there is more interaction and mutual support between tribal towns in 2013 than there was even 30 to 40 years ago.

Like in my town, we didn't have association with all these other towns.... Growing up, all I knew was my town, my dad's town, and some of the neighboring people around there. I didn't know anybody from the northern part of Seminole Nation. We're all Seminole they say, but I didn't know any of those

guys, I didn't have any kind of association with them [Emman Spain, June 5, 2013].

Mounds like those at OCMU are remembered and incorporated into contemporary ceremonial practices. *Etvlvv* are renewed annually; and at proscribed times, willow is replaced on arbors and the ceremonial grounds are swept. Earth that is swept from the ceremonial ground is added to the *tadjo*, a mounded ridge that surrounds the sacred space of the *etvlv* (Figure 16).



Figure 16. Tukabahchee Square Ground from the west entrance (Swanton 1922:opp.213), showing *tadjo* (mounded ridge sloping up on either side of the entrance).

A miniature version of a mound is built in a proscribed fashion within the ceremonial fire. In addition, many *Mvskokvlke* continue to build small houses over the graves of the recently deceased (Figure 17). These houses are allowed to decay naturally, forming small mounds over the burials (Theodore Isham, June 6, 2013; Emman Spain, June 7, 2013). These and other practices form the links to the ancient Southeastern mound building culture in the twenty-first century. Maintaining the *etvlv* is a commitment that grows increasingly difficult to fulfill, but *Mvskokvlke* who practice the old ways consider the *etvlv* vital to cultural continuity and strive to keep traditions alive.

Some grounds may have a large plaza area where they play stickball, ... but some grounds are so small anymore due to loss of land, encroachment by farmers and things, they don't have room for that; they may have to have their ballgame at a different place. So there are a lot of the factors to take to the way our ceremonies are today.... Back in that day, we understand that a lot of the Green Corn ceremonies went on for a week or so or more. Today we've had to adapt it to the weekends because everybody has to work for a living and things like that. So overall, we've had to adapt our culture to today's society, but we still try to adhere to as much as we possibly can [Emman Spain, June 5, 2013].



Figure 17. Grave houses (Swanton 1922:opp.190).

E. Okmulgee in the West

In 1881-1882, J.N.B. Hewitt worked with John Wesley Powell of the newly formed Bureau of American Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution to collect information on the Muscogee (Creek) in Indian Territory (Hewitt 1939). Less than five decades after Removal, the researchers worked closely with Legus F. Perryman and General Pleasant Porter, former principal chiefs of Creek Nation. Both men were born to Okmulgee *etvlwv* and provided information about the Tribal Towns in general, and specifically Okmulgee, or Big Springs. Thirty years later, John R. Swanton worked with Legus Perryman and Judge James R. Gregory,

also born to Okmulgee *etvlwv*, while compiling his history of the tribe (Swanton 1922, 1928). Testimony from these three men may be the only extant, firsthand knowledge of Muskogee *etvlwv* in the West. A review of the Indian Pioneer Papers and the Doris Duke Oral History Collection¹⁰ housed at the Western History Collections at the University of Oklahoma has revealed no additional information about Okmulgee *etvlwv*.

Okmulgee has been defined variously as Big Springs (Hewitt 1939:126), bubbling spring (Swanton 1922:178), or boiling spring (Lewis Taylor Jr., June 7, 2013), a reference to water which is thought to be Hichiti in origin (Emman Spain, June 5, 2013). An alternative definition, “for all of us,” is reflective of Ocmulgee in the East as a gathering place later connected to the Creek Confederacy (Odette Freeman, June 5, 2013). Okmulgee *etvlwv* is identified as a White town, although Harris (1935:288-290) suggests Ocmulgee in the East may have been a White town when occupied by the Hichiti and a Red town when occupied by the Coweta.

Okmulgee in the West was established near the Chiaha *etvlwv*¹¹ in present Rogers County, but Swanton noted it as “among the first [*etvlwv*] to give up their old square ground and to adopt white manners and customs. Probably in consequence of this progress they furnished three chiefs to the Creek Nation—Joe Perryman, Legus Perryman, and Pleasant Porter—and a number of leading men besides” (Swanton 1922:179). This early association of national leadership with the *etvlwv* likely resulted in the adoption of Okmulgee as the name for the capital of Muskogee (Creek) Nation. The capital town relocated several times before 1868 when the present location was chosen as the site at which to establish the central Creek Council House as part of the post-Civil War rebuilding of the nation (Bamburg 2007).

¹⁰The Indian Pioneer Papers are made up of oral histories collected in Oklahoma by Works Progress Administration documentarians in the 1930s. The Doris Duke oral histories were collected primarily in the 1960s.

¹¹Chiaha *etvlwv* was later moved to Seminole County, Oklahoma (Emman Spain, 5 June 2013).

The Creeks had a capital ... east of [Okmulgee, OK], Council Hill. They had several different places but that was one of them, and they wanted to build a new council house in a central area, central to everybody, to all the grounds, and so they found this spot.... They wanted to have a name for it and this was in their memory, an important place in their memory and so they said, "Let's name it Okmulgee because it used to be a capital and it was an important place." So they built their council house here and the town grew up around it [Emman Spain, June 5, 2013].

Contemporary *Mvskoke* have only a vague recollection of Okmulgee as a tribal town in the West, and none of those who participated in consultation on the EOA had personal knowledge of living *Mvskoke* who claim Okmulgee as their *etvlwv*. When Okmulgee *etvlwv* made the decision to put away its fire, members who chose to maintain the old ways would have gravitated to a daughter or sibling *etvlwv* of Okmulgee and were thereafter associated with that *etvlwv*, as are their matrilineal descendants in 2013 (Odette Freeman, June 5, 2013; Theodore Isham, June 6, 2013; Arnold Taylor, June 7, 2013).

Based on information from Perryman and Porter gathered ca. 1881, Hewitt depicted the probable Okmulgee *etvlwv* square ground (Figure 18). The dance ground is surrounded by four arbors, with the west arbor being that of the *Mekko*. The round circle to the northwest represents the town house or round house, while the large oval to the northeast depicts the stickball ground (not to scale). The dashed lines indicate the *tadjo*, sweepings from the ceremonial ground that form a mounded embankment that demarcates the sacred space (Hewitt 1939:131-132).

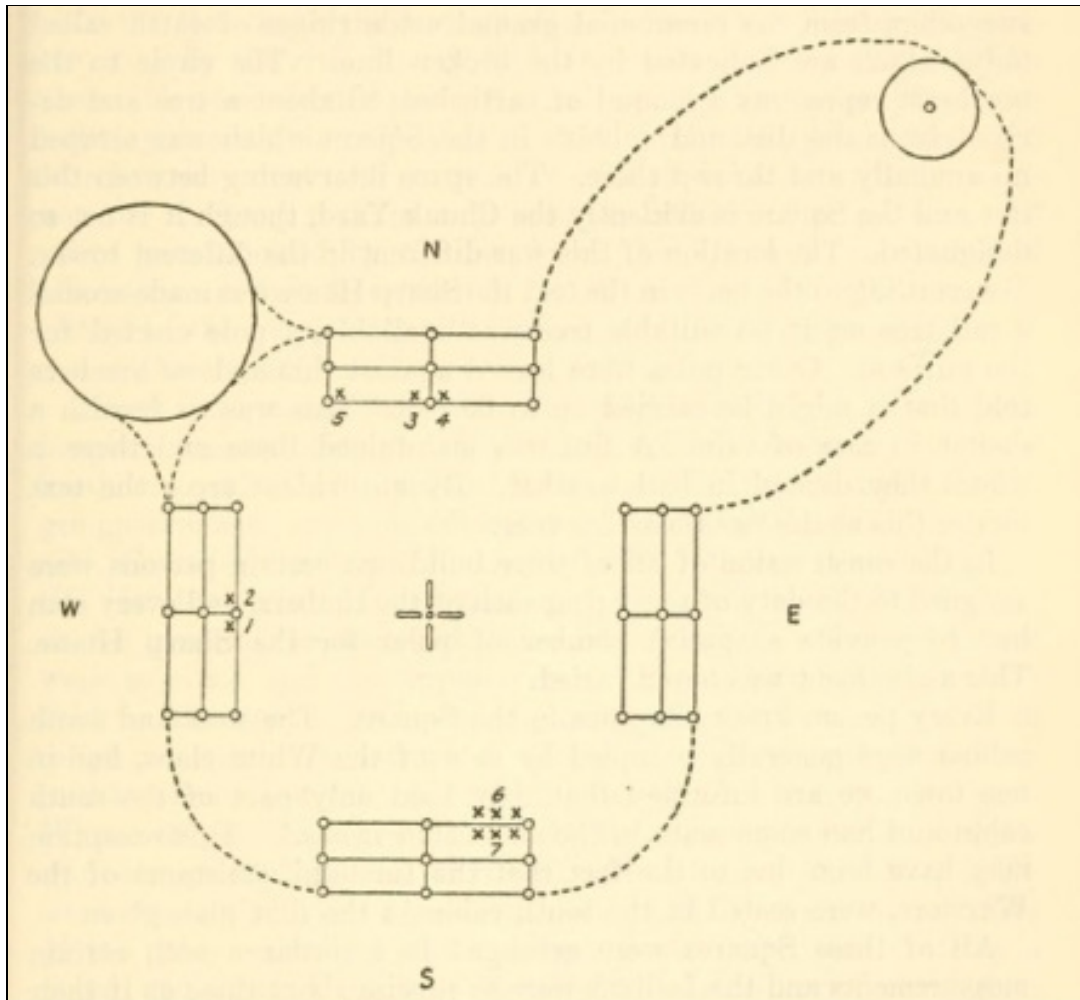


Figure 18. Plan of presumed Okmulgee Square Ground (Hewitt 1939:131).

F. Reflections of Ocmulgee in Eastern Oklahoma

Mvskokvlke who visit the Ocmulgee National Monument site see parallels in the cultural and sacred landscape of contemporary Muscogee (Creek) Nation, but also point to problems inherent in trying to fix the past on the present. “The Mississippians were our ancestors, so we’re not the same people they were back then” (Brian OnTheHill, June 5, 2013). Nevertheless, consultants do see reflections of Ocmulgee in Oklahoma. Following are some thoughts and observations by those who participated in consultation.

There’s such a loss of knowledge between there and here and a lot of it is because the events were so horrific. Our grandparents didn’t want us to talk about it; they

didn't want us to go back there ... I think, because they didn't want what happened to their grandparents' parents to happen to us.... They didn't talk about it because it was still too traumatic, too fresh, and so they didn't pass it on. There's a lot of things that got passed down about the Trail of Tears, but it was just really sad, heartbreaking, and so there's a lot that was lost; but ... the ceremonies we have now are the same ones we did back then. They came and reestablished the tribal towns here and carried on. But as far as what was back there, we don't have [the firsthand knowledge] to go in there and explain for sure, because we don't know [Odette Freeman, June 5, 2013].

A lot of Creek see the Ocmulgee earthen lodge as a forerunner of Creek Confederacy. You can tell because of the seats all around it. They had a lot of their meetings there, and probably even touched medicine there because of the little tray-like things in the seats. I think there was a piece of pottery there that had some residue of the Black Drink, and they usually did that when they were having important meetings and those kinds of things.... A lot of people consider [the temple mound] a sacred place—I guess it was just in their memories that it was a sacred place—and also the funerary mound [Emman Spain, June 5, 2013].¹²

In Ocmulgee in the earth lodge, there was a bird effigy that is part of the central area there and, of course, the vomitorium was around it. We still do that—the bird effigy at the earth lodge. New Tulsa [*etvlwv*] still builds a bird as their mound [Theodore Isham, June 6, 2013].

The earth lodge at Ocmulgee reminds us of the grounds council today, where the men come together in the east arbor to make decisions. When we looked at that place, we thought of all the *Mvskoke* people that had been there, walked over it, danced there [Lewis Taylor Jr., June 7, 2013].

G. Recommendations

Mvskoke participants in consultation on the Ethnographic Overview and Assessment saw many areas where partnerships and close consultation between Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the National Park Service could improve site interpretation and link the Ocmulgee National Monument to contemporary *Mvskoke* traditions.

[When] we approach any partnership, we want to make sure it's known that we're not trying to control it, but they should consult us before saying, "This is what it was." We want to be consulted to make sure that [the information presented] is accurate, because it's going to do no ... good whatsoever if they put something out there and we know it's wrong and they later find out that it's wrong.... [The partnership demonstrates] that the tribe ... put the seal on there; it shows that

¹² It is not clear if the ceramic sherd was associated with the Ocmulgee site or another Southeastern mound site.

there was a partnership, that not only the tribe but the living [*Mvskoke*] people say this is correct, [and] the Park Service says this is correct, so it shows that ... it went through the proper channels [Ryan Logan, June 5, 2013].

All consultants felt the most important information for a visitor to take away from OCMU is that *Mvskoke* people, culture, and history did not end with or disappear after Removal. MCN includes over 70,000 enrolled *Mvskoke* and it is important that the living population is represented along with the past.

[One way] to better interpret the site is ... getting away from that purely archaeological aspect of it. Of course, that's what was the saving grace to that site, the archaeology and the WPA projects and things like that, but they need to move on to the next level, especially now that we ... will be in the bicentennial year of the Creek War. It would be a good moment ... to show how the people are still here and show that connection [Theodore Isham, June 6, 2013].

Acknowledging that neither NPS nor MCN have the budget to support the development and implementation of elaborate exhibitry, consultants offered many viable suggestions for enhancement of site interpretation.

1. Waysides

Signage at waysides could incorporate *Mvskoke* language, identifiers, and concepts about points on the landscape, as well as contemporary parallels to specific places like the earth lodge. For example, as the Ocmulgee site is considered one of the centers for the Creek Confederacy and Creek government, an image of the Mound Building on the MCN campus where National Council Meetings are held could be placed at the earth lodge with information on MCN government. Audio of *Mvskoke* language by *Mvskoke* speakers could be accessed by cellphone (Ryan Logan, Brian OnTheHill, June 5, 2013).

2. Interpretive Materials

Handouts with information about contemporary MCN, the *etvhwv* and traditional practices, *Mvskoke* churches, as well as images of *Mvskoke* places and people in Oklahoma could

be made available to visitors. MCN has many resources including a Cultural Department, Tourism and Recreation Department, *Mvskoke* Media, and a well-developed website that can provide information and even furnish audio and video recordings of stomp dance, stickball, foodways, etc., that could be presented in the OCMU museum.

3. Education

Consultants discussed potential educational opportunities afforded by OCMU, both for *Mvskoke* students in Oklahoma as well as students local to the site. The College of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, offers several associate's degrees, but students do not always know the career path they wish to take. A partnership with OCMU/NPS that would offer summer internships to *Mvskoke* students could provide benefit to both OCMU and MCN. Interns could assist in interpretation and educational projects at the site while enhancing their own academic experiences (Emman Spain, June 5, 2013).

Mr. Charles Coleman, THPO of Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, is a former educator who provided great insights into ways to engage local students visiting the site. Mr. Coleman suggested the development of a curriculum guide that could be distributed to teachers prior to a site visit. The guide would help teachers make the visit both enjoyable and educational for the students and help them achieve educational benchmarks, as well as possibly providing teachers with continuing education points, the idea being to "Take culture out of the shed and into the head" (Charles Coleman, June 7, 2013).

The curriculum guide could include:

- things to look for at the site;
- associative games and activities designed to heighten the students' experience and make what they are seeing relevant to history, language, social studies, etc.;

- follow-up activities that key in on what was observed at the site and what the student retained;
- parallels to the past in the present, i.e. wireless communication: from smoke signals to cell phones;
- *Mvskoke* forms of government and parallels in present MCN and the U.S.;
- ways to see society and life “through our eyes instead of their eyes”;
- explanation of the tribal towns as communities, and community relations, past and present
- information about military traditions and how the military is still important to *Mvskoke* people today; highlight participation of *Mvskoke* people in U.S. wars and military service; for example, one in four *Mvskoke* men participated in the Vietnam War; use of *Mvskoke* and other native languages in coded messages in WW2 (code talkers);
- explanation that Muscogee culture did not end with Removal.

Mr. Coleman declares that the last thing students should see upon exiting the site are images and/or media showing *Mvskoke* people in the present, carrying on the types of traditions that were practiced at the site. “These sites have never lost meaning for *Mvskoke* people. Only distance separates us from our past in the Southeast” (Charles Coleman, June 7, 2013).

4. The Ocmulgee National Monument Powwow

The annual powwow was pointed out by all consultants as problematic, misrepresentative, and in complete opposition to traditional practices in the past and present. It was suggested that NPS work with MCN and possibly with outside funding sources to present

Mvskoke and other Southeastern dances, artisans, and craftspeople instead of powwow traditions that represent Plains and pantribal practices and have no connection to the native Southeast.

H. Summary

Consultants expressed great appreciation for the efforts of the National Park Service and the work of personnel at the Ocmulgee National Monument to maintain the site and provide information and interpretation of *Mvskoke* history. Partnerships between OCMU and MCN can enhance and improve interpretation and offer visitors to the site a fuller experience and greater knowledge by including information and representation of contemporary *Mvskoke* people, institutions, and traditions. Several years ago, *Mvskoke* traditionalists, George Bunny and Ted Isham, stood before the earth lodge and thought about their ancestors who had departed this place and traveled the long path to Oklahoma. “Standing behind us were other visitors, [including] a young boy who asked his mother, ‘What happened to all the Indians?’ She told him they were all gone now. We want to change that perception” (Theodore Isham, June 6, 2013).

V. Conclusion

People are often associated with territory and space, laying claim to lands. While space is determined, people are not so static and move across the landscape for many reasons. Notions of territory, ownership, control and power are tied up in human relations with land. While the mounds seem fixed in time and space, the people affiliated with the mounds evolve and change, in the fluid migration of humanity.

People have been associated with the OCMU site for at least the past 12,000 years. Across time there have been migrations of different people including the Stallings Island people, the Macon Plateau people, the Swift Creek people, Yuchi, Hitchiti, Muscogee, Ocmulgee, and Creek people. Beyond Native American migration, Spanish, English and African American

people are also associated with the site. Today the site is located in a predominantly African American community. The site is used for tourism and educational programs with local schools. OCMU also holds an annual Native American Festival, and other special programs affiliated with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

OCMU has had important roles in history, including the thwarting of Spanish control over Georgia, the establishment of English trade with the American Indians, the establishment of Fort Hawkins which ultimately led to federal control of the region, and was part of the process of Indian Removal by the federal government. After colonization of the site and transition to private ownership, the site was a plantation and location of two Civil War battles. Due to concerns about the destruction of the archaeological features of the site, it was purchased and donated to the federal government and established as a National Monument. The site served as employment opportunity for hundreds of workers during the 1930s and 1940s, as well as site staff today. OCMU also serves as a cemetery for the American Indians across time, African American slaves who resided on the plantation, as well as other people associated with the site.

The complete story is yet to be discovered, pondered, told and retold. Like the collapsed civilizations of Greece, Rome, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Peru and Mexico, the Ocmulgee mound builders too experienced the collapse of their society. Given enough time, funding and graduate students, perhaps we will learn more about who they were and where they originally came from. Perhaps we will find out how many waves of population expansion and contraction occurred across this landscape. While the people may be gone, and for now urban sprawl has been kept at bay, the mounds remain and provide a tangible connection with the peoples of the past and present. The memories and imagination and connection to these people has stirred in Native Americans, explorers, botanists, settlers, government agents, depression-era workers,

archaeologists, anthropologists, graduate students and professors who read about this wonderful place.

In closing, Harris remarked about George Washington's lack of knowledge of much of Georgia:

Had he left the main highway and fared into the forests, the lofty pines might have whispered to him that they had looked down while his own destiny was being determined in their shadow. Had he followed the old trading path to the Ocmulgee its 'boiling water' might have sung to him a saga of forgotten heroes fighting to fix the fate of the nation over which he ruled.

But he passed on, hearing only the plaudits of the dwellers in the towns, and the story of the woods and rivers of Georgia never reached his ears.

That story is yet untold.

From any tall building in Macon, Georgia, one can look from the eastern windows and see rising above the hill along the river's bank a great tetragonal mound. If one looks more carefully, one may distinguish several smaller mounds. For most people they have no message. To only a few are they mute reminders that once the fate of America was decided among the mounds on the banks of the Ocmulgee (Harris 1935: 6-7).



Figure 19. Turtles lined up on a log guarding Ocmulgee National Monument as they have done for millennia. Photo by Deborah Andrews.

VI. Recommendations

Based on the research conducted on the OCMU site, a number of recommendations have been developed in consultation with the park staff. The recommendations resulting from the

consultation are contained in Part IV of this report. One of the main issues that arose in researching this project is the fact that the documents and collections are not located on site. While OCMU has a small library and an extensive collection of artifacts, as well as museum displays, other documents and artifacts are located elsewhere. Some of the artifacts and many of the original documents are housed at SEAC, located in Tallahassee, Florida. While SEAC was originally created and housed at OCMU, it moved to Tallahassee. The result is that it makes it difficult and more burdensome for researchers to access the collection. While many artifacts are located at OCMU, the field notes and many reports are located in Tallahassee. In addition, the Smithsonian Museum also has artifacts and human remains that have not been repatriated.

While OCMU does not presently have the space to house all of the documents and artifacts at SEAC, there is space nearby the park boundaries that may be available. Ideally, all artifacts from the site and their associated documents should be located together. This would allow staff and researchers easier access, and would also allow affiliated parties such as the Muscogee (Creek) Nation convenient access considering the fact that the nation is located in Oklahoma. It is recommended that the artifacts and documents be returned to Macon.

Another recommendation relates to the on-site library resources at OCMU. Not all reports that have been generated about the site are located in the OCMU library. It is recommended that all reports that have been issued or sponsored by the National Park Service be available in the OCMU library. We were unable to find an existing comprehensive bibliography of resources that are specifically about the OCMU site. It is recommended that such a comprehensive bibliography be completed and made available to the public.

In addition to the documents and reports noted above, the historic photographs of the site also are not all housed on site. While some organization of the photographs on site has occurred,

the system utilized is not very practical and contains errors. The photographs have been organized in labelled file folders, however, the photographs and negatives easily slip out of the manila folders. The photographs are not indexed or numbered, so there is little data specifically linked to the photograph. Some file folders have generic descriptions, while others have incorrect information and misidentify the location of the photographs. In this collection, however, are photographs mounted on large index cards, which contain information about the individual photographs. These index cards state that they are from the Castillo de San Marco National Monument, and represent a superior system of organization than the system in existence at OCMU. The photographs at SEAC were not reviewed, so there is no recommendation about that resource, other than the recommendation that the collections be consolidated.

The library resources at OCMU are in need of updating. While the collection contains a good array of older publications, newer scholarship needs to be included in the library. In addition, there are very few academic articles in the library, with the exception of old Bureau of Ethnology volumes. Some of the digital articles located during this project have been transmitted to park staff. A system is needed to place these articles in the library so that they are accessible to researchers and future staff.

An important overall recommendation with regard to these documentary and photographic resources is that they need to be digitized and made available to the public. In order to research this project, some of the documents were scanned and made available to the researchers. While OCMU has a website, it is lacking in digitized information. It is recommended that the NPS-sponsored, unpublished reports be scanned and made available on the OCMU website. This would make this information available to the general public and scholars, as well as all interested parties, such as the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, taking into

consideration that some of the material may be inappropriate for wide dissemination due to the sensitive nature of the information.

Most of the scholarship about OCMU is quite dated. There has been little ethnographic work done associated with this site, as this report has discussed. The archaeological aspects of the site have been reviewed, but the archaeological reports are dated and somewhat flawed. Since the main excavations took place during the 1930s, the reports that emanated from this work were primarily written during the early phase of Southeastern archaeology. Since that time, methods and theory have advanced, making much of the reports outdated, inaccurate and misleading. For example, the classification and identification of lithics and ceramics has advanced, with much of the early identification needing updating. Another example is that the temper of the ceramics was not originally identified and recorded, although some identification has occurred in the last few years. The temper of the ceramics is an important factor in interpreting the ceramics and people associated with the ceramics, and thus the assemblage needs additional analysis. It also appears that newer methods have not been used in the analysis of this assemblage, such as residue and chemical analysis. Additional research on the artifacts may lead to a better understanding of the history of the people who occupied the site.

Finally, the information that has been generated about this site needs to be shared with the people who are culturally and historically associated with the park. This contract specifically identified the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as being affiliated with the site, and this report has documented their affiliations. The result of this report, as well as those of past reports, should be formally shared with the affiliated people, including the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. A conference report was presented to the American Anthropology Association in November 2013 about the site, and another presentation was made at the Society for Applied Anthropology's annual

conference in March 2014. These presentations could be adapted and shared with affiliated people, such as the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, as well as the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, the Alabama Quassarte Tribal Town, and the Kialegee Tribal Town. All four of these entities should receive a copy of this final report. It is also recommended that their contemporary perspectives be taken into consideration and that OCMU incorporate the recommendations that came out of this consultation.

This research has also revealed African American connections with OCMU that may not be widely known. The presence of African American graves on the site dating from the plantation era is worth noting. In addition, the work done by Dr. Kelly during the 1930s expanded onto nearby private land, although paid for by the funds allocated to the work on OCMU. This included work done on the Swift Creek site (3 Bi 8), which has since been destroyed and is part of a local Sheriff's Department firing range, with the bulldozed mounds serving as a back-stop for the firing range. What is noteworthy about the Swift Creek site is that the archaeology was supervised by Dr. Kelly, but the work was conducted by an all-female African American WPA staff, an important event in history. It is recommended that there be outreach to the local Macon community, which is a majority African American based on the most recent census. Further exploration of the African American affiliations with OCMU, beginning with the enslaved population on the site through the contemporary descendant community, is warranted.

Ocmulgee National Monument is an important site that has more potential to tell the story of the original people who lived in Georgia, as well as the story of the people whose lives have intersected with the site across time. Continuing work on the site is recommended, with an

emphasis on publishing this valuable information so that it is available for the park-associated groups, as well as the general public.

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