

16 Mile Bike Trail
Vicksburg National Military Park
A Bike Through History



Updated October 2018

Vicksburg Trails Commission

A Service Organization to the Youth of America

Biking – Dos and Don'ts

Hiking Rules



- ❖ Bikers must maintain a high standard of conduct at all times, are expected to be good stewards of Vicksburg National Military Park, and to be courteous to other visitors while in the park.
- ❖ Group leaders are responsible for directly supervising each biker in the group. At least one adult leader is required to accompany each separate group of bikers so all receive proper supervision.
- ❖ When biking on the tour road, always stay on, or near the shoulder of the road. Inside of the white line is the designated biking lane. Vehicles have the right-of-way on the roadway.
- ❖ Cyclist – plan your route so that you face the flow of vehicular traffic.
- ❖ Carry the proper equipment, including trail guide, rain gear, adequate water, trash bags (everything packed in, *must be* packed out), first aid kit, cell phones, sunscreen, etc. **Please note** – the only restroom facilities are located at the Visitor Center on Clay Street and USS Cairo Museum halfway through the park.
- ❖ Except during medical emergencies (situations requiring immediate emergency medical care), park staff *cannot* transport private citizens in government vehicles. Assess both the bikers' physical conditions and the weather before starting! Be realistic in choosing the appropriate bike. It is advised that at least one driver stay with the vehicle(s) should there be a need to pick up and transport the scouts.
- ❖ Be aware of hazards while hiking – weather, trail conditions, fire ants, snakes, ticks, poison ivy, etc., and take the necessary precautions.
- ❖ All pets must be on a leash.

Park Regulations

- ❖ Climbing on monuments, memorials, cannon, and headstones is strictly prohibited.
- ❖ Climbing and running at the USS Cairo exhibit, USS Cairo museum, and Visitor Center are prohibited.
- ❖ Picnicking is permitted only at the areas located near the USS Cairo exhibit and at Tour Stop 12. Tables are available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- ❖ All vehicles must comply with all regulatory signs and posted speed limits.
- ❖ Littering, vandalism, fires, fireworks, weapons, and metal detectors are prohibited on Park property.
- ❖ All Park resources (i.e., plants, animals, etc.) are protected by law from molestation, injury, or damage. All historic and prehistoric artifacts discovered in the Park are property of the U.S. Government. Found artifacts should be left undisturbed and their location reported to a park ranger. **DO NOT REMOVE ANYTHING FROM PARK PROPERTY!**



Please be aware of park hours (times change on a seasonal basis). All bikers must be back at their vehicles no later than 1/2-hour prior to closing.

Greetings

The Vicksburg Trails Commission and National Park Service welcome you to one of the nation's outstanding historic resources in America – Vicksburg National Military Park. This guide will help make your visit an enjoyable and memorable experience.



Where You Are

The Vicksburg National Military Park is an area set aside and preserved as a memorial to one of the most famous sieges of all time. The North had to control the Mississippi River. The River was an important supply line and commerce route to the Gulf of Mexico. Control of the River would split the Confederacy in two, thus isolating those States west of the Mississippi. By the middle of 1862, the North controlled all of the Mississippi River except the five miles in front of the bluffs of the Gibraltar of the South, Vicksburg.

After several attempts to attack Vicksburg from the north and west, a successful plan to confuse the Confederate Army resulted in General Ulysses S. Grant surrounding Vicksburg. The Union Army made several furious charges against the Confederate works, but all failed. The only way Vicksburg could be taken was to isolate and starve the Confederate Army. With 72,000 Union soldiers surrounding 18,500 Confederate soldiers, there was no way to get food or ammunition into Vicksburg. After 47 days of fighting, Vicksburg was surrendered on July 4, 1863.

What is the Plan of the Park

The Confederate Army had fallen back to Vicksburg and occupied a strong line of fortifications that extended along the top of a ridge from the River south of Vicksburg and encircled the city to Fort Hill on the north. This line is not called Confederate Avenue. Directly across the ravine is Union Avenue. This road follows the line of the Federal forces. Numerous monuments, markers, tables, and cannons are placed in the same positions occupied by these forces over 150 years ago. As you bike and learn of the Park, remember the thousands of Americans, many the age of the bikers, who so gallantly fought and died on these grounds. Every one of them, both South and North, was fighting for a cause he felt to be right.

Awards and Fees

There is no charge for hiking the Trail. There is a fee for entry to the Vicksburg National Military Park. If your Unit would like to do two or more hours of conservation work, the entrance fee would be waived, and you would be admitted as volunteers. This must be arranged in advance of your trip with the Park Staff.

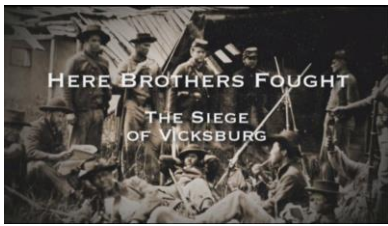
An attractive, 7-color, full embroidered patch or hat pin can be purchased for those completing the requirements of the Trail. For those who cannot fulfil the biking requirement but who watched the movie and read the information, there is a participation patch available.

To order these awards, fill in the answer sheet in this guide and complete the Award Order Form found on www.vicksburgtrails.org.

Other historical hikes in the Vicksburg National Military Park include a 7-mile Trek, a 12-mile Scout Trail and a 14-mile Hike. Information on these can be found on the Vicksburg Trails Commission website at www.vicksburgtrails.org.

General Bike Instructions

The Visitor Center



Start your bike at the Visitor Center. View the 20-minute movie, "**Here Brothers Fought,**" and the center's exhibits. All members must view the movie shown in the Visitor's Center prior to starting the bike. Purchase the booklet, "Vicksburg – A Self-Guiding Tour of the Battlefield" available at the Information Desk.

You must register your Unit at the Visitor Center before you bike. It is important at the end of your bike that you check out your Unit at the Visitor Center.

Insure that adequate provision has been made to supply water to the bikers, particularly in hot weather. It is not unusual for a biker to consume a gallon of water when biking the Trail in hot weather. Water is only available at the Visitor's Center and at the Cairo Museum, approximately half-way through the Trail.

In the event of problems, notify a park ranger or contact staff at the Visitor Center (601-636-0583) or *U.S.S. Cairo* Museum (601-636-2199).

Time to bike the Trail varies with the Unit, however, most finish in about 4 hours, not counting lunch. A picnic area is available at the Cairo Museum. Plan your time to arrive back at the Visitor's Center before dark.

You are now ready to begin the Trail to the South, or to the right as you face the Visitor's Center. As you bike the Trail and pass tour stops not listed as Required Stations, you are encouraged to stop your bikers and have one read from the booklet, "Vicksburg – A Self-Guiding Tour of the Battlefield". As many bikers as possible should be given the opportunity to read to the rest of the Unit. Pass the booklet around so that all may see the pictures.

Your comments and suggestions to improve the Trail are always welcome. If you find any problems along the trail, please tell the Park Staff when you check out.

