



Vicksburg Trails Orientation

Vicksburg Trails Commission

A Service Organization to the Youth of America

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Vicksburg Trails Commission

The Vicksburg Trails Commission would like to invite you to take a hiking/biking tour of the Vicksburg National Military Park in Vicksburg, Mississippi. We currently have four different tours available:

All these hikes/bikes are in the Vicksburg National Military Park. As you walk, you are asked questions of what you see, and you fill out an answer form for that hike. You do not have to hike the entire trail in one day. You can hike part of the trail on one day and finish the trail on another day.

1. 7-mile Trek (suitable for 2nd / 3rd graders and up) (Please note: There is no series of questions for the 7-Mile Trek.)
2. 14-Mile Hike (suitable for 4th / 5th graders and up)
3. 12-mile Scout Hike using Compass Trail (suitable for 12 / 13 year old and up)
4. 16-mile Bicycle Tour (suitable for 4th / 5th graders and up) (Please note: There is no series of questions for the Bicycle Tour.) All you must do is bicycle the ENTIRE park, North and South Loops.

There is also a 5-mile City Hike Tour (suitable for 2nd / 3rd graders and up). This hike is through historic downtown Vicksburg but is not part of the VNMP.

When you return home, you can mail in your form and get awards:

1. Patches (\$3.00)
2. Hat Pins (\$2.50)
3. Medals (\$6.00)
4. Star (to be worn with the medal if you have done the hike before) (\$2.50)

There is a single \$7.00 fee for postage on all orders.

There are also historic trading patches (\$3.00) (If a person cannot complete the Trail / Trek they are walking, a participation patch can be purchased for \$3.00).

If you would like more information on the hikes and camping around Vicksburg, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Donna Osburn
1900 Freetown Road
Vicksburg MS 39183
Cell phone: 601-831-7363
VicksburgTrails@gmail.com
www.vicksburgtrails.org

Vicksburg National Military Park

Recreational Guidelines, Rules, and Regulations

Cost of Using the Park:

The Vicksburg National Military Park is a US Fee Paid Area. The current cost per vehicle can be found on their website at

<https://www.nps.gov/vick/planyourvisit/feesandreservations.htm>

Boy Scout groups can apply to have their entrance fee waived by submitting a request for an educational fee waiver. These forms are available on the Park website and at the Visitor Center desk. The request should be submitted at least 2-3 weeks in advance for processing.

<https://www.nps.gov/vick/planyourvisit/educational-fee-waiver-information.htm>

Picnic Areas:

Eating areas are designated at the USS Cairo and Tour Stop 12 ONLY.

Tour Road User Policy:

Touring the park by motor vehicle to view the monuments, markers, and historical landscapes has long been the traditional and accepted means of visiting Vicksburg National Military Park. However, in recent years the park has experienced a significant increase in the recreational use of the tour road by walkers, hikers, joggers, and bicyclists. While these diverse activities are still legitimate uses of the park, when practiced concurrently they can create hazards unless special precautions are taken. The purpose of this pamphlet is to highlight those measures that the different park users should employ to ensure that their visit is safe. Your attention to, and cooperation with, the recommendations, and rules and regulations, contained herein will help to make your visits to Vicksburg National Military Park safer and more enjoyable.

Responsibilities of Motorists:

- Anticipate that other motorists or pedestrians will often be moving slowly or will sometimes even be stopped in the road to allow the occupants to read monument and marker inscriptions.
- Use of seat belts is required of all vehicle occupants.
- Use of helmets is required of all motorcyclists.
- Obey all posted regulations including speed limits, stop signs, etc.
- Be aware that there are many blind curves and bicyclists and pedestrians may be present anywhere along the tour route.
- Reduce speed and move to the opposite shoulder when passing bicyclists or pedestrians.
- Do not drive in marked pedestrian lanes.
- Be alert to weather conditions, which could make the tour road hazardous.

Responsibilities of Pedestrians:

- Walk, hike, jog, or run single file within the marked pedestrian lane.
- It is strongly recommended that walkers, hikers, joggers, and runners keep to the left road shoulder facing traffic where no pedestrian lane exists.
- Be aware there are many blind curves and motor vehicles and bicycles may be present anywhere along the tour route.
- Move to the edge of the tour road when motor vehicle or bicycle traffic passes.

Responsibilities of Bicyclists:

- Anticipate that other motorists or pedestrians will often be moving slowly or will sometimes even be stopped in the road to allow the occupants to read monument and marker inscriptions.
- Obey all posted regulations including speed limits, stop signs, one-way traffic, etc.
- Be advised the bicycle road races and timed trials are strictly prohibited in the park.
- Be aware that motor vehicles and pedestrians may be present anywhere along the tour route.
- Reduce speed and move away from pedestrians and motor vehicles when passing or being passed.
- Do not travel in the marked pedestrian lane.
- Boy Scout Groups are required by BSA policy to wear helmets while cycling.

Camping Prior to the Military Park Hike

Camp Wilkerson: Boy Scout Troop 7 has a campground which they allow Scout Groups to use for tent camping. There are new bathroom and shower facilities which includes a handicap bathroom. Troop 7 also has a cabin that can sleep 15 and a small kitchen facility. Cost for camping is \$7:50/night/person for tent camping plus an additional \$35.00/night fee if you use the cabin and kitchen facilities. Contact Johnny Nassour for more details at: (Cell) 601-618-7879. More details at www.campwilkerson.org or email Johnny Nassour at: ajlock54@ajlock.com.

Rivertown Campground: www.rivertown-campground.com

River Town Campground on the Great River Road is located on Highway 61 South, with spacious sites and peaceful surroundings. We have 108 sites with full hook-ups. We are only minutes away from historical downtown Vicksburg and the Vicksburg National Military Park.

Our pull through sites will accommodate a rig of any size without having to unhook your towing vehicle. The sites are spacious enough for you to breathe when you let your slides and your awning out. We have 20/30/50 at each site. Come enjoy a cup of coffee with us on our porch, or just sit and enjoy the beautiful sunset in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Rocky Springs: <https://www.nps.gov/natr/planyourvisit/camping.htm>

(601-445-4211 -- Natchez Office). Located about 30 miles south of Vicksburg off Highway 27 on the Natchez Trace Parkway is a National Park Service campground called Rocky Springs. (It is 11 miles SW of the Natchez Trace Entrance off Hwy 27, south of Vicksburg).

It's a Federal campground, there is no entrance or camping fee and takes no reservations. It has running water, fire pits, heated bathrooms in the Fall & Winter, and other amenities for "modern" camping. It also has developed campsites, old town site, old church and cemetery, hiking trails, etc. It is located about 30 minutes from Vicksburg. This is an excellent place to spend a weekend. During the summer there are nightly programs dealing with the history of the Natchez Trace (a road which ran from Natchez, MS to the Tennessee border).

Poverty Point Reservoir State Park:

<https://louisianastateparks.reserveamerica.com/camping/poverty-point-reservoir-state-park/r/campgroundDetails.do?contractCode=LA&parkId=240037>

This is another nice area with hiking trails available.

Poverty Point Reservoir State Park

1500 Poverty Point Parkway

Delhi LA 71232

800-474-0392

Other Things to Do

You may find that you have some extra time on your hands, especially on Sunday if you spend the night. Here are some ideas to spend your time.

Visit Vicksburg: www.visitvicksburg.com

Current listing of all events and happenings in Vicksburg

Riverfront Park: (free)

This park is built along the Mississippi River off South Washington Street. It has a picnic area, bathrooms and gym equipment. A great place for lunch before you leave town.

Biedenharn Coca-Cola Museum: (entry fee)

<http://www.biedenharncoca-colamuseum.com/about.htm>

The Biedenharn Coca-Cola Museum was a collaborative effort between the Vicksburg Foundation for Historic Preservation, and the Biedenharn family, the original bottlers of Coca-Cola.

The museum houses a wide variety of exhibits interpreting the beginnings of Coca-Cola, the history of the Biedenharn family, the process used to first bottle Coca-Cola, a reproduction of the equipment first used to bottle Coke, the history of Coca-Cola advertising, and Coca-Cola memorabilia from past to present.

The authentically-restored candy store and office area feature furnishings and displays of the 1890s and offers ice cream, fountain Cokes, Coke floats and a wide selection of Coca-Cola souvenirs.

Jesse Brent Lower Mississippi River Museum: (free) <http://www.lmrm.org/>

MUSEUM EXHIBITS - Explore life on the Mississippi River! Find out how different communities, farming families, and the US Army Corps of Engineers have all utilized the river. Choose your own adventure on the river with the Mississippi Trail Interactive. Hear what the 1927 flood was like for a family that lived through it. See some of the river's fish up close in our 1,515-gallon aquarium.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER FLOOD MODEL - The Mississippi River watershed is the third largest watershed in the world. Visit our outdoor scaled model of a section of the Mighty Mississippi River. This flood model allows visitors to see how different factors can change a river. Visitors can also become acquainted with the names of sites along the river near Vicksburg.

M/V MISSISSIPPI IV - Visit the M/V Mississippi IV and experience life aboard the vessel. See what made her unique among USACE vessels as a workboat and a flagship for the Mississippi River Commission. Nearly all of the vessel has been staged and can be explored. Take a self-guided themed tour using the Tour Cards available aboard the vessel.

Old Courthouse Museum: (entry fee) <https://oldcourthouse.org/>

Confederate flags, including one that was never surrendered, the tie worn by Jefferson Davis at his inauguration as Confederate President, fine portraits, china and silver, exquisite antique furniture, the trophy antlers won by the steamboat Robert E Lee in an 1870 race, antebellum clothing, toys, Indian and pioneer implements, and an original Teddy Bear given to a local child by Theodore Roosevelt are just a few of the thousands of artifacts which are housed in the Old Warren County Court House Museum- Eva W. Davis Memorial. The Old Warren County Court House, built in 1858, stands today as Vicksburg's most historic structure and has hosted such guests and speakers as Jefferson Davis, Ulysses S. Grant, Booker T. Washington, Teddy Roosevelt, and William McKinley.

Old Depot Transportation Museum: (entry fee)

<http://www.vicksburgbattlefieldmuseum.net/>

Begin your visit to The Old Depot Museum with the 'best souvenir shop' in Vicksburg. Our gift shop has a wide variety of Civil War reproduction and Vicksburg history items. THE Vicksburg T-shirt store! We are an official outlet for the famous Vicksburg Riverfront Mural art products!

After an enjoyable shopping experience, enter the magical museum experience of historic transportation and Olde Town Vicksburg. Railroad trains move throughout the building among hundreds of scale models of vessels, boats and ships dating from the Vikings to the present.

Vicksburg in Miniature features architecture of the area's historic buildings, some long-gone. The Siege of Vicksburg is covered in a visual presentation in our auditorium and the only diorama of the battlefield as it was in 1863.

Southern Heritage Air Foundation: (entry fee) <http://www.southernheritageair.org>

The Southern Heritage Air Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating people about the history of aviation and its impact on society, with a primary focus on the local region. Our Museum offers the public a portal into the world of aviation through the preservation and exhibition of aircraft and other artifacts which exemplify the contributions of individuals and organizations to aviation in its many aspects. We are also dedicated to supporting the brave men and women who have served our country through our sister Foundation the Warrior Bonfire Project. The Southern Heritage Air Museum, which continues to grow and expand its outreach to the public by collecting, preserving and exhibiting various artifacts related to aviation, and through the stories told by those who have served our country in war. The museum has over 11,000 sq. ft. of display area.

The Riverfront Murals: (free) <http://www.riverfrontmurals.com>

The panels of the Vicksburg floodwall are the canvas capturing the City of Vicksburg's crucial past, present and future roles in American history, commerce, culture, religion, and technology.

Grant's Canal: (free) <https://www.nps.gov/vick/learn/historyculture/grants-canal.htm>

In the summer of 1862, as ships of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron under Flag Officer David Glasgow Farragut bombarded the Vicksburg river defenses, a 3,000-man infantry brigade commanded by Brig. Gen. Thomas Williams, began work on this canal. The purpose was to create a navigation channel that would bypass the Confederate batteries at Vicksburg, and would be kept open by the scouring effect of the Mississippi River's current. It was even believed by some that the man-made channel would possibly catch enough of the current's force to cause the river to change course, leaving the city high and dry, making Vicksburg militarily worthless without firing a shot.

Grant's Canal has national significance as part of Vicksburg National Military Park and because its construction comprised military activity that had an observable influence on the direction and conduct of the Vicksburg campaign. Although the efforts to construct the canal ended in failure, they are associated with early Federal campaign plans to eliminate the Confederate presence at Vicksburg.

Much of Williams' Canal/Grant's Canal has been obliterated by agricultural operations since the Civil War. This is the only segment that retains its original width and much of its depth. The 2.5-acre (10,000 m²) tract was donated to the National Park Service by local landowners working in conjunction with The Conservation Fund and became part of Vicksburg National Military Park in 1990. Thus, the National Park Service currently protects and interprets the resources.

Vicksburg National Military Park History

Vicksburg National Military Park was established on February 21, 1899, to commemorate one of the most decisive battles of the Civil War, the campaign, siege and defense of Vicksburg.



The Vicksburg campaign was waged from March 29 to July 4, 1863. It included battles in west-central Mississippi at: Port Gibson, Raymond, Jackson, Champion Hill, Big Black River and 47 days of Union siege operations against the city of Vicksburg. Located high on the bluffs, Vicksburg was a fortress guarding the Mississippi River. It was known as "The Gibraltar of the Confederacy." Its surrender on July 4, 1863, coupled with the fall of Port Hudson, Louisiana, divided the South, and gave the North undisputed control of the Mississippi River.

Today, the battlefield at Vicksburg is in an excellent state of preservation. It includes over 1,300 monuments and markers, reconstructed trenches and earthworks, one antebellum structure, over 125 emplaced cannon, restored Union gunboat, USS Cairo, and the Vicksburg National Cemetery.

Like most Civil War areas, Vicksburg National Military Park exists as a lasting memorial to the soldiers and civilians that suffered through the widespread tragedy and conflict of the Civil War. It is a vivid legacy of America's past, a place where students can learn, and individuals reflect upon the dramatic events that shaped a young and developing nation.

Orientation to the park begins at the park visitor center with an 18-minute film. Visitors can then drive the historic 16-mile tour road through Union and Confederate siege lines.

Halfway through the park, visitors get a close-up view of the Union gunboat, the USS Cairo. The 175-foot long ironclad was sunk on December 12, 1862, by underwater Confederate mines just North of Vicksburg in the Yazoo River. Raised in 1964, the restored city class gunboat offers visitors a unique opportunity to view original cannons, cannon carriages, engines, boilers and pilothouse, via a reconstructed gundeck. The nearby USS Cairo Museum houses a variety of military and personal artifacts, which were recovered with the Cairo during its salvage operation.

Adjacent to the USS Cairo is the Vicksburg National Cemetery. Established in 1866, it contains more than 18,000 graves, of which over 13,000 are unknown. Soldiers from the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II and the Korean War are interred here.

Highest visitation occurs during the months of April through July; lowest from December through February.

Vicksburg National Military Park
3201 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39180

Visitor Center, (601) 636-0583
Cairo Museum, (601) 636-2199

Operating Hours:

Visitor Center: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Cairo Museum: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The fee schedule can be found at:

<https://www.nps.gov/vick/planyourvisit/feesandreservations.htm>

Climate: Sunny, with humid rainy periods throughout the year. Sudden and severe thunderstorms are common. Mild winters. Summers hot and humid. Wear comfortable sportswear in season, with walking or hiking shoes recommended.

More information is available at: <https://www.nps.gov/vick/index.htm>

Facilities and Opportunities:



The main visitor center at the Clay Street entrance, offers public information, artifact exhibit area, bookstore, pay telephone, rest room facilities (handicapped and baby changing area), and a city (county) information booth, operated by the staff of the Vicksburg Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The USS Cairo complex includes a museum and restored Union ironclad gunboat. It is located at milepost 7.8 of the park tour road, or is accessible from downtown Vicksburg, via Cherry Street to Fort Hill Drive and Connecting Avenue. It offers public information, artifact exhibit area, bookstore, pay telephone, rest room facilities (handicapped and baby changing area) and picnic tables. On display at the museum are Civil War period naval artifacts recovered from the Union vessel. Sailors' personal possessions, cookware and weaponry, are among items on exhibit. A six-minute video explains how the CAIRO was sunk by a Confederate underwater mine, how it was located, and actions taken during its salvage efforts.

Three exterior park areas include the riverfront batteries. The Union had a position at Navy Circle, and Confederate batteries existed at South Fort and Louisiana Circle. Traveling east-west on I-20, take exit 1 and go north on Washington Street.

Located across the Mississippi River in the town of Delta, Louisiana, visitors can view one of the last remaining sections of Grants Canal. In 1863 Union forces unsuccessfully attempted to bypass Vicksburg by digging an 8-12-foot-deep channel through Desoto Point. The hope was to divert waters of the Mississippi River, and bypass the formidable batteries of Vicksburg. Follow US Highway 80 west from Navy Circle and follow signs.

Take first left turn, right on old US-80, as you pass under interstate bridge, park area is on left. No facilities, as the area is under development.

A sixteen-mile tour road parallels Union and Confederate siege lines, with three interconnecting roadways, fifteen tour stops and short spur trails to points of interest. There is also one twelve-mile scout hiking trail.

Guided tours of the battlefield are available with licensed park guides. Tours are provided upon request, but reservations are preferred. A narrated, self-guided driving tour is available via a free app on a smart phone or a rent/purchase CD. Park rangers at the visitor center and USS Cairo Museum provide scheduled talks, in season. There are living history black powder demonstrations at the visitor center, mid-June to mid-August. Check with visitor center and Cairo staff for day and time of programs.

Bookstores located at both park visitor centers are operated by the Eastern National Parks and Monument Association. Coordination of license park guide services and city/county accommodations are provided by Vicksburg Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

Lodging and Camping Facilities: None in the park. A variety of hotels, motels and recreational vehicle camping sites are available in the immediate Vicksburg area. Picnic tables are provided at Cairo Museum and tour stop 12 only. No fires or cooking allowed.

Food/Supplies: Available in Vicksburg at local restaurants, groceries and specialty stores.

Accessibility: The main park visitor center and Cairo Museum are wheelchair accessible, with a least one wheelchair available upon request.

Special Needs: Parking areas at each visitor center are available for buses. Visitor parking is available at each site.

Recommended Activities/Park Use: Driving tour of battlefield, via tour road; observing historic markers, tablets, plaques and monuments along tour route; walking, hiking, biking; photography; and birdwatching, twelve-mile scout trail of moderate difficulty.

Additional Historic Background on The Vicksburg Campaign

At the time of the Civil War, the Mississippi River was the single most important economic feature of the continent; the very lifeblood of America. Upon the secession of the southern states, the river was closed to unfettered navigation, which threatened to strangle northern commercial interests. President Abraham Lincoln told his civil and military leaders, "See what a lot of land these fellows hold, of which Vicksburg is the key. The war can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket.... We can take all the northern ports of the Confederacy, and they can defy us from Vicksburg." Lincoln assured his listeners that "I am acquainted with that region and know what I am talking about, and as valuable as New Orleans will be to us, Vicksburg will be more so."

It was imperative for the administration in Washington to regain control of the lower Mississippi River, thereby re-opening that important avenue of commerce, enabling the rich agricultural produce of the Northwest to reach world markets. It would also split the Confederacy in two, sever that vital supply route, achieve a major objective of the Anaconda Plan, and effectively seal the doom of Richmond and the Confederacy. Vicksburg was the connecting link between the eastern and western parts of the Confederate States. The city sat astride a major Confederate supply route, over which the armies of Braxton Bragg and Robert E. Lee received much needed food, clothing, medicine and ammunition, as well as fresh troops.

The Vicksburg National Military Park is a somber place in winter, and a visit takes on a special feel. But just as Union generals spent a lot of time plotting their approach to Vicksburg, smart visitors will contemplate their best approach to touring the hallowed area.

The park, having reached 100th birthday, is among the nation's largest reservations of its type. Details of the 47-day siege, which led to the city's fall in 1863, are recorded in near-infinite detail. Also, markers, monuments and memorials in place along the park's miles and miles of tour road are each worthy of study for both their artistic and historic significance. So, the big question is how detailed a tour is desired. For many guests, a stop in the visitor Center is enough. Others may wish to follow that first stop with a self-guided tour using the park's brochure and stop at points of interest they choose. An app on your phone will provide information about all strategic stops along the way.

Of course, any tour should include a stop at the USS Cairo museum and restoration site. There's nothing else like it - or the Vicksburg Park as a whole - anywhere else in the world. Tourism wasn't big business in 1895, but that was the year an aging Vicksburg resident informally suggested that some of the more important sites from the Siege of Vicksburg be marked for posterity. Tom Lewis was the gentleman's name. He'd been young during the 1863 fighting and had been serving as something of a tour guide during the balance of the century. Old soldiers would visit and consult with him about where they were stationed during the 47 days it took for Vicksburg to fall once

Union forces dug in.

The idea for markers snowballed and Congress, which had approved military parks at Shiloh and Gettysburg passed a bill preserving for posterity, initially, 1,200 acres in Vicksburg. The year was 1899 and in 1903 the first memorial to soldiers from Massachusetts was in place. Since then, all states which were represented in the struggle have provided monuments and markers detailing troop positions and activities have been put in place and maintained. In fact, Tom Lewis's idea turned into one of the best-documented battlefields in the world. What that means is that the serious student of history can make a career of learning the tactics employed at what is now the Vicksburg National Military Park.

And the rest of us? We can appreciate the park for its beauty and its serenity. We can also be grateful that Lewis's proposal took root.

Hiking – Dos and Don'ts

Hiking Rules



- ❖ Hikers 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 hiker in the group. At least one adult leader is required to accompany each separate group of hikers so all receive proper supervision.
- ❖ When hiking on the tour road, use the white striped walking lane. Stay to the right edge of the roadway when no white stripe exists. Hike single file and safely cross roadways as a group.
- ❖ 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 hikers' physical conditions and the weather before starting! Be realistic in choosing the appropriate hike. 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. Although the wooded hiking trail has been widened where possible, there are still areas where passage *must be* single-file. Be **extremely** careful when the trail is wet – the slopes are very slippery!

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 hikers must be back at their vehicles no later than ½-hour prior to closing.