



VICKSBURG TRAILS COMMISSION

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Vicksburg Trails Orientation

The VICKSBURG TRAILS COMMISSION would like to invite you to take a tour of the Vicksburg National Military Park and National Cemetery in Vicksburg, Mississippi along with the new Vicksburg City Tour. We currently have five different tours available:

1. 7 mile Trek (suitable for 2nd / 3rd graders and up)
2. 14 Mile Hike (suitable for 4th / 5th graders and up)
3. 12-mile compass trail (suitable for 12 / 13 year olds 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 have to do is bicycle the ENTIRE park, North and South Loops, and turn in a list of names with your payment.)
5. 5-mile city hike (also qualifies for the city hike requirement towards First Class Rank.
6. Port Hudson, Louisiana Military Park Trail

All of these hikes, with the exception of the City Hike and Port Gibson Hike are located in the Vicksburg National Military Park. As you walk, you are asked questions of what you see and fill out a tour form for that particular 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. When you return home, you can mail in your form and get a:

1. Patch (\$3.00) for all of the hikes
2. Hat Pin (\$2.50) for all of the hikes
3. Medal (\$6.00) for the 12 Mile compass hike and 14 mile hike
4. Star (\$2.50) to pin on medal for hiking more than once

5. Postage on small orders \$3.50. Large orders, please add \$3.50

There are also trading patches (\$3.00) and ceramic 5-color coffee cups (\$6.00) available for purchase. (If a person cannot complete the Trail / Trek they are walking, a very nice "tried-it" patch can be purchased for \$3.00). OA patches are \$3.00 each.

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

Sincerely,

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P.O. Box 820425
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note: remove the spaces between 54 and aj

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 cost is \$8.00/vehicle. A Fee Waiver Form must be processed 2 weeks before arrival. Contact the Park at 601-636-0583 for information. See form on web site also.

PICNIC AREAS -- Eating areas are designated at the USS Cairo at Tour Stop 12

TOUR ROAD USE 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

Boy Scout Camp Wilkerson - Boy Scout Troop 7 has a campground, Camp Wilkerson, which they allow Scout Groups to use for camping. The camp is about 7 miles from the Park. The fee is \$5.00/person/night. They have 4 campsites for tent camping, a cabin that sleeps 15 and a kitchen facility with electric stove, microwave, and fridge. There is a large bathroom facility connected to the cabin with 3 showers and 1 handicap bathroom with one shower. The cabin and bathrooms have central heat and air. Check out our web site at www.bsatroop7.org for photos, campsites, and map.

Southern Heritage Cultural Complex

Arrangements have been made for groups to stay at the Complex (the old St. Francis Xavier Elementary School). The cost is \$7 per person per night with a \$20 minimum. There are hot water showers available. You will have access to the gym complete with nets. There are both basketball goals and indoor soccer goals available but bring your own balls. We would suggest that the Scouts sleep in the gym and the adults sleep in the old cafeteria downstairs (bring a cot). You can prepare meals in the old kitchen. **You need to bring your own coolers and Coleman stoves.** Please contact Kelly Leo at 1-601-717-2208. Email Kelly (theoldgym@yahoo.com) following info:

- Troop Number
- Date of arrival and approximate time of arrival.
- Number of nights
- Approximate total number of people (Scouts and Leaders)
- Contact person to include NAME, MAILING ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBERS (HOME & OFFICE), along with a FAX number for a rental agreement. (The agreement requires the leader to assure there will be no destruction of property and will pay for any damages incurred, no smoking in

buildings, along with a “hold harmless” clause stating that the group will not hold the complex responsible for any injuries.)

- There are bonus points for those using e-mail because your name will be spelled correctly!

Rocky Springs. Located about 30 miles south of Vicksburg off Highway 27 on the Natchez Trace is a National Park Service campground on the Natchez Trace called Rocky Springs. (It is 11 miles SW of the Natchez Trace Entrance off of Hwy 27, south of Vicksburg.) The "premiere" place to camp near Vicksburg. It's a Federal campground, there is no entrance or camping fee and takes no reservations. (There never seems to have been a problem getting a campsite). 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). I have never had a group be disappointed by staying there as the area is of historical interest in itself. *Note: If the campground is full, you may camp for the night at the picnic area. Friday nights are busy, but Saturday night it is less crowded.*

St. Michael's Catholic Church: Rev. Father P. J. Curley allows Scouting groups of any faith to use the Parish Hall if it is not in use. You can contact Father Curley or the secretary by calling 601-636-4545 Monday thru Friday from 9 AM. to 12 Noon to request the use of the Hall. Please give plenty of notice.

Poverty Point State Area - This is another nice area with hiking trails available. Their address is PO Box 276, Epps, LA 71237-0276. Their phone number is 318-926-5492.

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.

City Cemetery - Located on Mission 66 North off of Clay Street; there is the Confederate Cemetery section located in the Vicksburg City Cemetery. There is a sign at the entrance pointing the way to the area. This is where the Confederate Soldiers were moved to when the Federal Government made the Park Cemetery a National Cemetery. This is something frequently missed, but worth the 1/2 hour it takes to see.

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

South Fort - On South Washington Street, about .1 mile from I-20 is South Fort. You have to look for it a bit; it is near Ameristar Casino. This marks the southernmost edge of the original siege fortifications. A nice thing to see right before you go. Takes about 5 minutes to check it out.

More information If you are connected to the Internet, you can access Vicksburg Online Web Site at: <http://www.visitvicksburg.com> Copy and paste the link.

Port Hudson State Historic Site (756 West Plains-Port Hudson Rd., Zachary, LA 70791; 225-654-3775 or 1-888-677-3400) is located on US 61 in East Feliciana Parish, about 25 minutes north of Baton Rouge and 10 minutes south of historic St. Francisville. The 909-acre site encompasses the northern portion of the battlefield and features an elevated boardwalk over the breastworks in the Fort Desperate Area. Other facilities include three observation towers, six miles of trails, a museum, a picnic area and restrooms. Groups are requested to call in advance. <http://www.crt.state.la.us/crt/parks/porthud/pthudson.htm>

Vicksburg NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

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 in excess of 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.

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

ADDRESS:

Vicksburg National Military Park
3201 Clay Street
Vicksburg, MS 39180

TELEPHONE:

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

OPERATING HOURS, SEASONS -- Open daily, except Christmas. Visitor Center: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Cairo Museum: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., November to March; 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., April to October.

CLIMATE, RECOMMENDED CLOTHING -- 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.

DIRECTIONS -- Visitors traveling east-west on Interstate 20; exit at Vicksburg ramp 4B, then follow Clay Street (US-80) west, 1/4 mile to park entrance. Visitors traveling north-south on US Highway 61; follow same directions as I-20 above. US-61 joins with I-20 in its route through the city of Vicksburg.

TRANSPORTATION -- To Park: access by Interstate Highway I-20, US-61 and US-80. Closest commercial airport is Jackson, MS, 50 miles to the east. Rental cars are available at the airport. In Park: personal vehicle, bicycle, tour bus and taxicab.

FEES, COSTS, And RATES - Daily admission is \$4.00 per vehicle, and \$2.00 per non-commercial bus passenger. A Vicksburg annual park pass is \$10.00; Golden Eagle passport is \$25.00, Golden Age passport, for US citizens 62 and over, available for a

one time administrative fee of \$10.00. Golden Access passport (for disabled) available for free (upon proof). Commercial vehicles with a 1-6 passenger capacity is \$30.00. Those with a 7-25 passenger capacity is \$45.00, and those with over 25-passenger capacity is \$100.00. Donation boxes for monument restoration services are available at both park visitor centers.

FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

Visitor Center/Exhibits -- 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.

Trails, Roads -- 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.

Programs/Activities -- Guided tours of the battlefield are available with licensed park guides. Tours are provided upon request, but reservations are preferred. Costs are \$20.00 per car, \$30.00 per van and \$40.00 per bus. Availability information and reservations can be made by calling (601) 636-3827. A narrated, self-guided driving tour is available on cassette tape, for rent or sale at the park visitor centers. 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 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.

ADJACENT VISITOR ATTRACTIONS -- Museums, Antebellum homes, casinos, restaurants, antique shops, shopping and outlet malls, city/county library, and US Waterways Experiment Station.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Write -- Vicksburg National Military Park, 3201 Clay Street, Vicksburg, MS 39180, or call (601) 636-0583; or Eastern National Parks and Monument Association, 3201 Clay Street, Vicksburg, MS 39180, or call (601) 638-4583; or Vicksburg Convention and Visitors Bureau, Clay Street and Old Highway 27, Vicksburg, MS 39180, or call (601) 636-9421.

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, nearing its 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. The next level up is a tape-guided tour, becoming more popular each year. But tapes don't answer specific questions. Vicksburg licensed park tour guides do. They're the optimum choice for those desiring a much more personal touch.

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.

VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR SCOUT GROUPS

- HIKERS MUST MAINTAIN A HIGH STANDARD OF CONDUCT AT ALL TIMES AND ARE EXPECTED TO BE GOOD STEWARDS OF THE PARK.
- GROUP LEADERS ARE CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR DIRECTLY SUPERVISING EACH HIKER IN THEIR GROUP.
- HIKERS ON TOUR ROAD ARE TO USE THE WHITE STRIPED SECTION. HIKERS SHOULD STAY TO THE RIGHT EDGE OF THE ROADWAY WHEN **NO** WHITE STRIPE EXISTS.
- HIKE SINGLE FILE. SAFELY CROSS ROADWAYS AS A GROUP.
- AT LEAST ONE ADULT LEADER IS REQUIRED TO ACCOMPANY EACH SEPARATE GROUP OF HIKERS SO ALL RECEIVE PROPER SUPERVISION.
- CLIMBING ON MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS, CANNONS, AND TOMBSTONES IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.
- CLIMBING & RUNNING IN THE USS CAIRO, CAIRO MUSEUM, AND VISITOR CENTER ARE EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED.
- ALL WILDLIFE & PLANTS IN THE PARK ARE PROTECTED BY LAW FROM MOLESTATION, INJURY, OR DAMAGE.
- ALL HISTORIC & PREHISTORIC ARTIFACTS DISCOVERED IN THE PARK ARE PROPERTY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. FOUND ARTIFACTS SHOULD BE LEFT UNDISTURBED & THERE LOCATION REPORTED.

- HIKERS ARE EXPECTED TO BE COURTEOUS TO OTHER VISITORS THEY COME IN CONTACT WHILE ON PARK PROPERTY.
- LITTERING, VANDALISM, FIRES, FIREWORKS, AXES, SHEATH KNIFES, FIREARMS, AND METAL DETECTORS ARE PROHIBITED ON PARK PROPERTY.
- PICNICKING IS PERMITTED ONLY AT THE PICNIC TABLES LOCATED AT THE CAIRO MUSEUM & TOUR STOP #12. FIRST COME FIRST SERVED.
- ALL VEHICLES ASSOCIATED WITH HIKING GROUPS ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH ALL VEHICLE REGULATORY SIGNS AND SPEED LIMITS POSTED IN THE PARK.
- PARK POLICY IS TO NOT TRANSPORT A PRIVATE CITIZEN IN A GOVERNMENT VEHICLE EXCEPT DURING MEDICAL EMERGENCIES. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES ARE DEFINED AS "REQUIRING IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT." BE REALISTIC IN CHOOSING THE APPROPRIATE HIKE. TAKE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF HIKERS & ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS INTO ACCOUNT BEFORE YOU HIKE!

**VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK
RULES AND REGULATIONS
FOR
SCOUT GROUPS**

RULES/REGULATION SHEET CERTIFICATION

I certify that I, _____ have read and reviewed the Vicksburg National Military Park Rules and Regulation sheet for Scout Groups.

I certify that I fully understand the rules and regulations and will take all steps necessary to have my scout group comply with each and every rule and regulation.

NAME	
DATE	SCOUT GROUP
ADDRESS	
PHONE NUMBER	
EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME	
EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER	
NUMBER IN THE GROUP	
TIME OF DEPARTURE ON THE TRAIL	