

Natchez Trace Parkway

Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee
National Park Service/U.S. Department of the Interior

Official Map and Guide



Sunlight filters through the trees along a section of the original trace.

This is the story of human beings on the move, of the age-old need to get from one place to another. It is a story of Natchez, Chickasaw, and Choctaw Indians following traditional lifeways, of French and Spanish settlers venturing into a new world, and of Americans building a new nation. At first the trace was probably a series of hunters' paths that slowly came to form a trail from the Mississippi over the low hills into the valley of the Tennessee. As early as 1733 the French were familiar enough with the land to make a map that showed an Indian trail running from Natchez to the northeast. By 1785 American settlers in the Ohio River Valley had established farms and in a search for markets had begun floating their crops and products down the rivers to Natchez or New Orleans. Returning home meant either riding or walking, for the flatboats, too, were sold for their lumber, and the trail from Natchez was the most direct. As the numbers of boatmen grew, the crude trail was tramped into a clearly marked path. Over the years improvements were made and by 1810 the trace was an important wilderness road, the most heavily traveled in the Old Southwest. Even as the road itself was being improved, other comforts, relatively speaking, were coming to the trace. During these

years many inns—locally called stands—were built. By 1820 more than 20 stands were in operation. Most of them provided no more than a roof over one's head and plain food, though two, the stands at Mount Locust and Red Bluff, were substantial, well-known establishments. But even with these developments the trace was not free of discomforts. Gangs of thieves added an element of danger that was only one more hazard in a catalog that included swamps, floods, disease-carrying insects, and sometimes unfriendly Indians. A new chapter in transportation dawned in January 1812 when the steamer *New Orleans* arrived in Natchez. Within a few years steamboats were calling regularly at St. Louis, Nashville, and Louisville. Travelers liked the speed and comparative safety of steamboat travel more than the slow pace of going overland. Soon the bustle of the trace had quieted to the peacefulness of a forest lane.

Since the late 1930s the National Park Service has been constructing a modern parkway that closely follows the course of the original trace. Today more than 80 percent of the parkway is completed giving present-day travelers an unhurried route from Natchez to Nashville.

Milepost Gazetteer

Mileposts are located along the east side of the parkway beginning at Natchez. The references for points of interest or visitor services are given to the nearest tenth of a mile. Every tenth milepost is marked on the map on the reverse side.



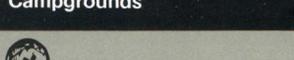
Meriwether Lewis, William Clark's co-captain on the famous journey of discovery from St. Louis to the Pacific, died at an inn near Nashville in 1809 under mysterious circumstances. The monument (top) marks his grave at milepost 385.9. Just north of Jackson at milepost 122 you will find the Cypress Swamp nature trail (bottom). For part of the distance the trail goes over the boardwalk.



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- 308.4 Cave Spring.** Indians probably used this as a source of water.
- 302.8 Tishomingo State Park.** The park was named for a famous Chickasaw chief. Camping, picnicking, swimming, canoeing, and fishing.
- 296.0 Jourdan Creek picnic area.**
- 293.4 Bay Springs Lake.** This is the access for the lake and dam.
- 292.2 Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway and Jamie L. Whitten Bridge.** The waterway provides 459 miles of navigable water between the Gulf of Mexico and the Tennessee River. The waterway and the nearby visitor center are administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- 286.7 Pharr Mounds.** This 90-acre complex of eight burial mounds was built from about AD 1 to AD 200.
- 283.3 Donivan Slough.** A nature trail, which takes about 20 minutes to walk, goes through an area where occasional flooding influences the variety of plants.
- 278.4 Twentymile Bottom Overlook.** The low area along the stream is typical of the landscape through which the old trace passed.
- 275.2 Dogwood Valley.** The nature trail goes through a large stand of dogwood trees. The walk takes about 15 minutes.
- 269.4 Confederate Gravesites.** A short walk on the old trace goes to the graves of 13 unknown Confederate soldiers.
- 266.0 Tupelo Visitor Center (park headquarters).** A nature trail leads through an area of forest regrowth; walk takes 20 minutes. Restrooms, exhibits, information, and an orientation program.
- 263.9 Old Town Overlook.** Here are views of Old Town Creek and the adjacent floodplain.
- 261.8 Chickasaw Village.** The Chickasaws' daily life and early history are described in exhibits at the site of one of their villages. A nature trail features plants they used.
- 259.7 Tupelo National Battlefield.** The 1864 battle took place 1 mile east on Miss. 6.
- 251.9 Black Belt Overlook.** This remnant of a vast prairie is characterized by rich, black soil.
- 251.1 Chickasaw Council House.** This is the site of Pontotok, the capital of the Chickasaw nation during the 1820s. Picnic tables.
- 249.6 Tockshish.** This area was settled originally in 1770 by John McIntosh. Picnic tables.
- 245.6 Monroe Mission.** The Chickasaws learned various trades at the mission. Picnic tables.
- 243.3 Hernando DeSoto.** The Spanish explorer and discoverer of the Mississippi spent the winter of 1540-41 near here.
- 243.1 Davis Lake.** This is the access point to the U.S. Forest Service picnicking and summer camping area.
- 241.4 Chickasaw Agency.** From 1801 to 1825 the agency for the Chickasaws was located here. Picnic tables.
- 233.2 Witch Dance.** Picnic area and horse trail access.
- 232.4 Bynum Mounds.** Exhibits describe the life of the prehistoric peoples who built these mounds between 100 BC and AD 200.
- 221.4 Old Trace.** A portion of the original trace crosses the parkway here.
- 214.5 Dancy ranger station.**
- 213.3 Line Creek.** This was the boundary between the Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes.
- 203.5 Pigeon Roost.** Folsom's stand and trading post, operated by Nathaniel and David Folsom, once stood near here. Millions of passenger pigeons, now extinct, once roosted here.
- 201.3 Ballard Creek picnic area.**
- 198.6 Old Trace.** A portion of the original roadway leads into the woods.

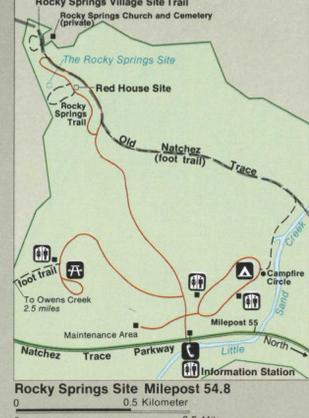
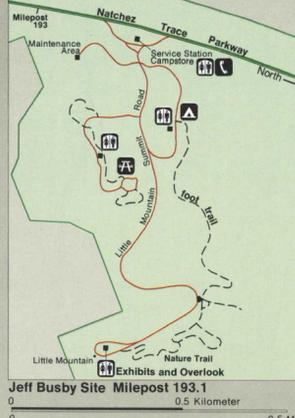
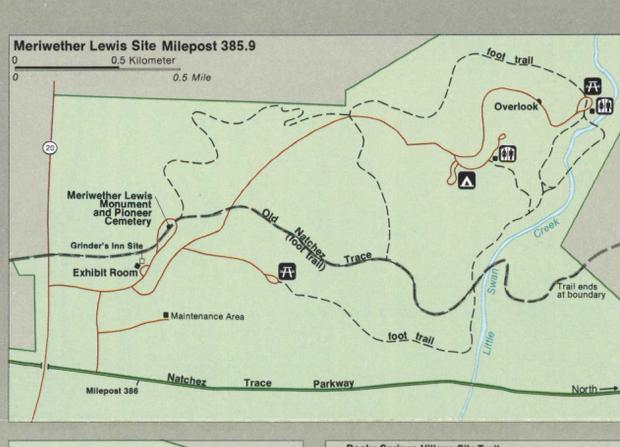
Campgrounds



Rocky Springs Site (milepost 54.8) Camping and picnicking supplies are available at either Port Gibson or Utica, both about 15 miles away. Settlers in the 1790s were attracted to the area by the rich soil and numerous springs. Land was cleared, homes built, and in 1837 an impressive brick church was constructed. By 1860, Rocky Springs was a prosperous rural community of 2,616 people, several owning property valued at \$50,000 to \$100,000. The community had a Methodist church, post office, Masonic lodge, and several stores. The area was devastated between 1860 and 1920 by the Civil War, yellow fever, the boll weevil, and land erosion. Today only the church and cemetery, two rusting safes, and several abandoned cisterns mark the site of the town. The area includes a 22-site campground, picnic tables, interpretive trails through the townsite and to the spring, and a hiking trail on the old trace.

Jeff Busby Site (milepost 193.1) A concessioner operates the service station and campstore. The campground is named for Thomas Jefferson Busby, the U.S. Congressman from Mississippi who introduced a bill that resulted in the act approved May 21, 1934, authorizing a survey of the Old Natchez Trace. Four years later, May 18, 1938, the Natchez Trace Parkway was authorized as a unit of the National Park System. Little Mountain is one of the highest points (elevation: 603 feet) on the parkway in Mississippi. The area includes an 18-site campground, picnic tables, exhibit shelter and overlook atop Little Mountain, and trails.

Meriwether Lewis Site (milepost 385.9) Camping and picnicking supplies and gasoline are available 2 miles west of the Parkway on U.S. 412 toward Hohenwald. This is the site of Grinder's Inn where Meriwether Lewis, the noted member of the Lewis and Clark expedition and onetime governor of Louisiana Territory, died of gunshot wounds in 1809. A monument designed as a broken shaft marks his grave. Also located at this site are a 32-site campground, pioneer cemetery, exhibit room, picnic tables, and hiking trails.



193.1 Jeff Busby. Facilities include picnic area, campground, service station, store, and restrooms. The overlook is on one of the highest points (603 feet) in Mississippi. A 20-minute nature trail identifies native plants and describes their use by pioneers.

184.8 Yowani picnic area (Closed in winter).

180.7 French Camp. Louis LeFleur established a stand here in 1812. It became a school in 1822 and has remained one to this day. Sorghum is made here in the fall.

176.3 Bethel Mission. One of 13 Choctaw missions was one-half mile to the northwest. Picnic tables.

175.6 Cole Creek. The nature trail, a 5-minute walk, leads through a tupelo/bald cypress swamp.

164.3 Hurricane Creek. The nature trail identifies plants found in different soil conditions. The walk takes 15 minutes.

159.9 Welcome Center. Travel information is provided for the parkway and the Kosciusko area by local chamber of commerce volunteers.

159.7 Kosciusko ranger station.

154.3 Holly Hill picnic area.

145.1 Beaver Dam. The nature trail, a 5- to 10-minute walk, tells the beavers' story.

140.0 Red Dog Road. Named for a Choctaw chief, the road was opened in 1834.

135.5 Robinson Road. This road, dating from 1821, connected Jackson and Columbus, Miss. Picnic tables.

130.9 Yockanookany picnic area.

128.4 The Upper Choctaw Boundary. A line of trees marks this dividing line. Southern pines are featured on the nature trail, which takes 5 to 10 minutes to walk.

122.0 Cypress Swamp. The nature trail takes you through a water tupelo/bald cypress swamp. The walk takes about 20 minutes.

107.9 West Florida Boundary. This old boundary, which ran from the junction of the Yazoo and Mississippi rivers east to the Chattanooga, crosses here.

106.9 Boyd Mounds. These earthen mound burials were built from AD 500 to AD 900.

105.6 Reservoir Overlook. Ross Barnett Reservoir, on the Pearl River, parallels the parkway for 8 miles.

104.5 Brashear's Stand. This inn was advertised as "a house of entertainment in the wilderness" to travelers in 1806. A portion of the original trace is nearby.

102.4 Ridgeland Crafts Center. Sales and demonstrations of Mississippi crafts are featured. Exhibits, information, and restrooms.

The parkway is uncompleted from milepost 101.5 to 87.0. Use I-55, I-220, and I-20 as connecting routes.

78.3 Battle of Vicksburg. This Civil War battle, a part of the Raymond Campaign in 1863, was fought nearby.

73.5 Dean's Stand. Many farmers ran stands such as this one to supplement their meager income. Picnic tables.

61.0 Lower-Choctaw Boundary. This was the north-south dividing line between the earliest settled part of old townsite and the Choctaws' land.

54.8 Rocky Springs. The old townsite can be reached by a short trail from the upper parking area. Camping, picnicking, ranger station, restrooms, and a section of the old trace.

52.4 Owens Creek Waterfall. Picnic tables.

45.7 Grindstone Ford/Mangum Mound. Artifacts found here have revealed much about the prehistoric people who once lived in this area. Early-day travelers heading north considered themselves in wild country once they crossed the ford on Bayou Pierre.

41.5 Sunken Trace. A trail, which takes five minutes to walk, follows a deeply eroded section of the original trace.

39.2 Port Gibson ranger station.

18.4 Bullen Creek. A nature trail, leads through a mixed hardwood-pine forest. The walk takes 15 minutes.

17.5 Mules Locust. This restored historic house that was one of the first stands in Mississippi has interpretive programs February through November. Restrooms, exhibits, and a ranger station.

12.4 Bloss Swamp. A deposit of topsoil (loess) was blown here during the Ice Age.

12.1 Turpin Creek picnic area.

10.3 Emerald Mound. Ancestors of the Natchez built this ceremonial mound about AD 1400. The second largest of its type in the nation, the mound covers nearly 8 acres. A trail leads to the top.

8.7 Old Trace. A section of the original trace can be seen here.

8.1 Temporary Terminus. The junction with U.S. 61 serves as the temporary southern terminus of the parkway.



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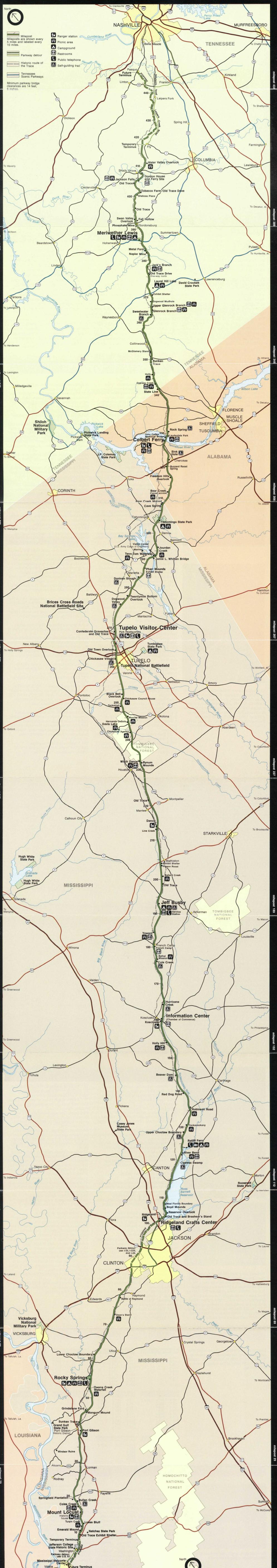
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Natchez Trace Parkway



milepost 434
 milepost 388
 milepost 342
 milepost 296
 milepost 250
 milepost 204
 milepost 158
 milepost 112
 milepost 66
 milepost 20

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 milepost 388
 milepost 342
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