

STAGE 1

West across the Grand River out of Fort Gibson
Across the Verdigris River
To Okay, Three Forks
To Tullahassee and Coweta
West and North along the east bank of the Arkansas River
Through Coweta
Ending South of Broken Arrow

⇒ FORT GIBSON

- Start at the reconstructed fort in the town of Fort Gibson.
- Go to the parking lot beside the Fort.
- Cross the railroad tracks.
- Cross the river on the iron bridge.
- Turn left/west into the park.

⇒ FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY

Short side trip

- Take Lee Street to East Maple and turn left/east. Continue to OK 80A and turn left/north. At National Cemetery Road turn right/east and continue until you reach the National Cemetery.
- Return to the fort on Lee Street and then cross the river on the iron bridge.
- Tour the Park.

⇒ OKAY

- Return to the gravel road from the park.
- Turn left/north west on County Road E0830.
- Turn right/north on County Road N4330.
- Turn left/west on Three Rivers Road and continue to OK 16.
- Three Rivers Road will make a north turn toward the highway.
- Turn left/southwest when you reach OK 16.
- Stop at the Three Rivers Monument.
- Cross the New Verdigris River Bridge.
- Turn right/west on Old Porter Road to OK 69.

⇒ TULLAHASSEE

- Cross OK 69 to OK 51B.
- Continue west toward Tullahassee.

⇒ PORTER

- Continue west on OK 51B toward Porter.
- In Porter, turn left/south on First Street.
- Travel to Livesay Orchard Road and turn right/west.

- Continue west to the orchard.
- Travel back to Porter the way you came.

⇒ **RED BIRD**

- Continue west on OK 51B toward Red Bird.

⇒ **COWETA**

- Continue west on OK 51B to Coweta.
- Turn right/south at the end of OK 51B and travel through Coweta.
- Continue beneath an underpass and turn left/north on OK 51.
- Turn left/west on 141st Street and travel west as far as you can.
- At the end of 141st Street, turn right/north.
- Turn left/west at 131st Street.

Enjoy!



⇒ FORT GIBSON

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- **Go to the parking lot beside the Fort.**
- **Cross the railroad tracks.**
- **Cross the river on the iron bridge.**
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≡ Fort Gibson | Cantonment Gibson | End of the Trails

1824 Fort Gibson was established. The 7th Infantry was assigned.

1828 Eastern Indians began to arrive.

1832 Captain Jesse Bean recruited rangers. Indian Commissioners were assigned to Fort Gibson. Washington Irving came in October and left in November.

1934 Jefferson Davis was a dragoon stationed at Fort Gibson. These mounted soldiers made an impressive sight in their uniforms.

1860 A Confederate flag flew over Fort Gibson.

1865 After the Civil War, the Fort was back under Union control.

1936 Fort Gibson was rebuilt during the Great Depression.

Fort Gibson was named for Colonel George Gibson. Colonel Matthew Arbuckle remained its ranking officer until 1841. George Catlin created art to illustrate life at the fort and journalists like Washington Irving created narratives. Soldiers saw the beautiful Cherokee and Muskogee Creek maidens and became their husbands. The reconstructed fort is much as it was when Irving left on his tour.

Fort Gibson- originally built on this site in 1824 by the United States army, Colonel Mathew Arbuckle and the 7th United States Infantry. It was rebuilt by WPA and the state of Oklahoma in 1935, the exact duplicate of the original.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of U.S.

E.W. Marland, Governor of Oklahoma

Stockade Commission- Chairman Grant Foreman, Q.B. Boydston, and G.W. Terry

Look for the last sad remnants of Osage Orange trees that remain in the open prairie in the parkland beside the fort. These trees might once have lined a wagon path down to the Grand River, a wonderful sight to imagine. Look down and see the puffy monsters that are the fruit of the Osage Orange. These trees are native to an area centered on the Arkansas and Red River valleys in Oklahoma and Texas. They were called Osage Orange because the Osage Indians used it in trade. They were called bois d'arc, French for wood of the bow, precisely because the wood made excellent bows. If you are very southern, you probably call this tree bodark. The wood is so strong and dense; it doesn't rot easily or fall



prey to termites and the fruit makes an effective bug repellent. Don't try to cut it. The knife you use will be covered with a white sticky substance that does really stick. After drying, it becomes an excellent fuel, much like coal. It also makes an effective hedge and was used just this way before barbed wire. Look down and see the puffy monsters that are the fruit of the Osage Orange. Have a picnic in the shade of this old tree.



Drive up the hill to the remaining masonry buildings, including the former officers' quarters. When you get to the crest of the hill, get out of your car. Look back down across the valley to the rivers.



Fort Gibson was designated a Registered National Historic Landmark in 1963.

Go to the visitors' center and offices and see the resources available. See what the Park Officials have to say about Fort Gibson. Note that *A Tour on the Prairies* is on sale. Nearby a stone column honors the 7th Infantry for its proud history:

***1824-1936 IN HONOR OF THE MEN OF THE SEVENTH UNITED STATES INFANTRY, AND THEIR
COMMANDER GEN. MATTHEW ARBUCKLE WHO FOUNDED FORT GIBSON, APRIL 21, 1924***

⇒ FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY

Short side trip

- Take Lee Street to East Maple and turn left/east. Continue to OK 80A and turn left/north. At National Cemetery Road turn right/east and continue until you reach the National Cemetery.
- Return to the fort on Lee Street and then cross the river on the iron bridge.
- Tour the Park.

Spend some time at the Fort Gibson National Cemetery. There are over 16,000 graves. See if you can find the two Medal of Honor Winners from World War II, **Private First Class John N. Reese Jr. (Section 2, Grave 1259-E)** and **First Lieutenant Jack C. Montgomery (Section 20, Grave 963)**. One was born in Sallisaw and one in Pryor. The following web page can give you information biographies of these men. <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/mohiib1.htm>. Another name you might look for in the cemetery is that of **Talihina Rogers (Section OC, Grave 2467)**. She was the Cherokee wife of Sam Houston and was living near Fort Gibson in 1832. Also look for **Viva Thomas (Section OC Grave 2119)**. Her story is long, sad and involved. You can read more about the cemetery at <https://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/ftgibson.asp>.



At the sound of a bugle on October 10, 1832, Washington Irving and Henry Ellsworth started out toward the buffalo plains with a small group of rangers. They followed a large group of rangers two days ahead of them. The first trail of the Tour can be seen from the parking lot at the Fort. Looking west, you can see a long iron bridge. It is there that Washington Irving and party forded the Grand River. The park is full of natural beauty and it gives unimpeded scenes of the river. Looking back toward the fort, the old iron bridge is in full view. Looking down the river away from the fort, you can almost be back in 1832 and see Irving and Ellsworth, rangers and guides, horses and supplies as they ferried across the Grand at about where the bridge is now.

⇒ OKAY

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- Turn right/west on Old Porter Road to OK 69.

Enjoy scenes of rolling hills, of trees, and of vegetation that must look as they did in 1832. Sam Houston and his wife Talihina lived along this road.

--in the evening Col Arbuckle informd us that Gov Houston . . . had just arrived from Nashville, with information that Gov Stokes and M Anderson would not probably be on, under 2 or 3 weeks. HLE 4 5

Sam Houston crossed the river into Texas and destiny in December of 1832.

≡ The Three Forks | Indian agencies | Colonel A. P. Chouteau's Trading Post

1541 At some point between the Coronado Expedition and recorded history, the Texas Road began to be used, traveling though the Three Forks from the Red River to the Mississippi.

1796 Jean Pierre Chouteau established a trading post close to this site on the Saline Branch of the Grand River.

1821 The Chouteau family established a trading post here in 1821.

1824 Fort Gibson became a neighbor.

1828 Creek and Osage Agencies were established here. Emigrating Muscogee Creek Indians began to arrive in Oklahoma.

1829 Sam Houston arrived at the Three Forks.

1832 Washington Irving forded the Verdigris River on his way west and on his way east. Sam Houston left the Three Forks.

At the new Verdigris River Bridge, you will see a [monument](#) erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution:

TEXAS ROAD The most ancient and important trail through Oklahoma. **THREE FORKS** at the head of navigation of the Verdigris River the oldest trading post in Oklahoma dating from 1812. **CREEK & OSAGE** Indian agencies on the east and west banks of the river below the falls of the Verdigris in buildings acquired from Col. A. P. Chouteau in 1828. **THE FIRST PARTY** of emigrating Creek Indians were landed here in February, 1828. Between here and Fort Gibson Sam Houston resided during his stay with the Cherokee Indians, 1829-1832. **IRVING TRAIL** near this spot on October 10, 1832 Washington Irving forded the river on his 'Tour on the Prairies.'

Walk down to the river from the monument. It is very hard to see because of heavy growth, but the Verdigris is a beautiful river. Decades of trappers, traders, and cowboys have enjoyed this water. Will Rogers loved this river when he rambled along its shores upstream in space and time. Soon they would ford the Verdigris.

We descended to the bank of the river and crossed in straggling file, the horses stepping cautiously from rock to rock, and in a manner feeling about for a foothold beneath the rushing and brawling stream. W1 20

Right about here the four Tourists crossed and started out on their Tour. They have been together though at campsites since St. Louis. They like the west.

Mr. Irving declares for all to hear that he has never slept or eaten so well as he does now that he is a nomad. We never drink anything but water. Sometimes it is heated by the sun or muddied by our horses' hooves, but our thirst makes it taste delicious . . . We have deer, prairies-hen, wild turkey, squirrel, and grilled, boiled, raw, cooked, and fried corn. We pick wild grapes in groves of trees in the middle of the prairies. We have coffee and sassafras tea. Everything is seasoned with a hellish appetite. . . CP 41 42

Continue west in the Arkansas River Valley. The river will move toward you and away from you. You will though stay east of the Arkansas until you move north of Irving's Red Fork – our Cimarron River.

⇒TULLAHASSEE

- **Cross OK 69 to OK 51B.**
- **Continue west toward Tullahassee.**

This building remains of Tullahassee's downtown, once a mission, then a school for Freedmen. Washington Irving came this way and perhaps crossed right over this important historical site. In 1857, within fifteen years of the Tour, the construction of the Tullahassee Mission was authorized by the Muscogee Creeks and built by the Presbyterians. A beloved and valuable Oklahoma family was involved with the mission from the very beginning. W. S. Robertson was the principal of the school at Tullahassee and his wife Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson was the teacher. They worked ceaselessly to translate the Bible into Muscogee, the language of the Muscogee Creek Indians. Ann Eliza was the daughter of Samuel Worcester, the great missionary among the Cherokees. W. S. and Ann Eliza's daughter was Alice Robertson, teacher, school founder, entrepreneur, postmistress, and the first and only Congresswoman from Oklahoma. Tullahassee ultimately became an all-Black town when it became a school for Freedmen after the Civil War.



There were many missions among the native people in the west. Many were on the rivers Irving crossed. They did tremendous good, but not without cost to them and to the Indians they profoundly wanted to help. Many denominations were here along the watercourses, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Baptist for example.

As to the Missionaries . . . they were worthy men; rather upright than sound in their views for the civilization and moral improvement of the tribes among whom they were sent to labour . . . too weak handed and deficient in worldly wisdom, to cope effectually with the . . . community of traders, agents, and adventurers of every kind, with whom they must be associated in their intercourse with the Indians. Their work must be a work of faith and humble dependance on God, for by their own strength and wisdom they will achieve nothing . . . CJL 25

▬ Missions in Oklahoma | Near the Tour

1820 Union Mission was established by the Congregational Church.

1822 H W. Montgomery and W. C. Requa left Union Mission to create Hopefield, an agricultural settlement four miles farther above and on the opposite side of the Grand River.

1830 Dwight Mission was established beside Sallisaw Creek.

1838 Samuel Worcester came to Oklahoma with the Cherokees on their Trail of tears. He then founded Park Hill Mission.

1850 W. L. Robertson and his wife Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson, the daughter of Samuel Worcester, helped to found Tullahassee Mission.

1875 Benedictine monks founded the Sacred Heart Abbey near Konowa. The monks founded other missions throughout the area that would become Oklahoma. Their school moved to Shawnee and became the flourishing St. Gregory's College.

1880 Tullahassee Mission became a school for freedman in the Muscogee Creek Nation.

1881 Nuyaka Mission was established by Alice Robertson, daughter of W. L. Robertson and Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson, and granddaughter of Samuel Worcester. You will pass the site of Nuyaka near Okmulgee.

⇒PORTER

- **Continue west on OK 51B toward Porter.**
- **In Porter, turn left/south on First Street.**
- **Travel to Livesay Orchard Road and turn right/west.**
- **Continue west to the orchard.**
- **Travel back to Porter the way you came.**

Porter is well known for its peaches. In the 1940's its Peach Festival was a pleasant afternoon outing and it continues in July in the 21st Century. Orchards were already growing here in 1832. This was the first night on the Tour with all four Tourists together. They had not yet met up with the large party of rangers. The family was sick, so they didn't see the inside of the Berryhill home. In your imagination you might picture these orchards as great-great grandchildren of Mr. Berryhill's trees.

(We traveled). . . thridding lofty forests, and entangled thickets, and passing by Indian wigwams and negro huts, until toward dusk we arrived at a frontier farm- house, owned by a settler of the name of Berryhill. . . . It was situated on a hill, below which the rangers had encamped in a circular grove, on the margin of a stream. WI 17

To find out what it was really like to prepare for an evening's encampment, refer to H. L. Ellsworth. He tells what it is like, in utmost detail, night after night. Thankfully the work was the task of rangers and guides, not Tourists. A mess it might have been when the party left each morning, but the mess the Commissioner refers to is a group who regularly take their meals together.

. . . each mess, chooses his quarters. . . The horses, are immediately unladed and hobbled, which is tying their fore legs together with a cord, so that they cannot move except by jumping with both fore legs together . . . the next thing, is, to make a fire . . . After a fire is made, a pole is cut about 6 feet long, & stuck into the ground . . . from the end of this, a wooden hood is suspended by a string or vine to hold the kettle for heating water or boiling coffee . . . different kinds of meat are then spitted . . . in the fat is boiled some fritters . . . I need not say, that appetite waits impatiently to devour the repast . . . After supper, a watch is set, . . . to protect us from enemies & thieves, and our attention is then turned toward our repose . . . HLE 27

As you know, Irving, Ellsworth, Latrobe and Pourtales and their guides comprised a mess. Throughout the Tour they traveled together.

. . . our trio with the Commissioner and our several attendants, formed a separate mess, having but little connection with the others, but such as friendly courtesy and our association as fellow-adventurers dictated. From the moment the signal for encampment was given, to the bugle-call that gave token of our morning departure, we were in fact as much chez nous, as though we had inhabited separate houses. We were dependant upon our own arrangements for comfort, and . . . for our supplies of provisions, beyond those few necessaries, or luxuries, if you will, that we contrived to carry with us. The Captain and his officers, formed also a mess . . . and ordinarily pitched their carp-fire a dozen yards or so from our own. The men were divided according to friendship or fancy, into ten or a dozen parties . . . CJL 45

Mess, a group traveling and eating together, and chez nous, our house, tells the story well. To Ellsworth, Beatte is Billet. Bullets are referred to as balls.

M. Pourteles was full of fun & frolic . . . M Irving is quick in his feelings, and easily excited by anything the

least disre(s)pectful, and several times had a complete blow up with Tonish & Billet . . . So eager was M Pourtales to prepare in the best manner for game by getting linnen patches, for his balls . . . that he cut up his finest linnen collars for that purpose – But he is heir apparent to a large estate in Switzerland & Bohemia!! HLE 47-48

Livesay's Orchard, might be the place of the first encampment. You can stop here at the orchard to look around and to purchase some apples, peaches, or pumpkins depending on the season. Irving camped near Porter and the Livesay Orchard on October 10. Retrace your steps back to Porter. Continue west.

⇒ RED BIRD

- Continue west on OK 51B toward Red Bird.



Red Bird is one of the historic black towns on the Tour, settled by Freedmen of the Muscogee Creek Nation and State Negroes. They constructed businesses, governmental and educational institutions, and churches. Literary evidence establishes the framework from which the inception of all-Black towns emerged. Racial discrimination and violence primarily lead Black leaders to seek a solution to the race problem by building their own settlements and resolving to govern themselves. It is interesting that the only Black American you will know by name during

Irving's Tour will offer hospitality and delicious food to the Tourists and that they will reciprocate with complete thankfulness. Mostly it was Osages and Muscogee Creeks that the travelers met and described. The next morning October 11, they saw a party of Creeks returning from a ball game. The sumac is as it should be, but not as brilliant. When the berries are full in autumn, they are deep, deep red.

Some were on foot, some on horseback . . . with gayly dressed females behind them . . . One had a scarlet handkerchief bound round his head . . . with a turf of black feathers like a cock's tail. Another had a white handkerchief, with red feathers; while a third, for want of a plume, had stuck in his turban a brilliant bunch of sumach. WI 30

Later, a young Osage appeared with a horse. He charmed everyone. You have been introduced to him and saw the Senate art work of Mr. Manhattan and the Count.

He was about nineteen or twenty years of age, but well grown, with the fine Roman countenance common to his tribe, and he rode with his blanket wrapped around his loins, . . . His naked bust would have furnished a model for statuary. WI 32

Pourtalès knew that he had found a soul mate and that they would travel the Tour together, friends forever. He even gave the young Osage a name, Mr. Manhattan.

I am enchanted with . . . Mr. Manhattan, who, in spite of his statement that he would not accompany us . . . has let himself be persuaded and now follows us on a little pony with no saddle and only a buffalo-hide strap for a bridle. He is the handsomest male Indian that I have ever seen, and, although he is only seventeen years old, his body, his size, and his proud bearing make him look twenty-five. CP 44

Later at a fork in the trail, the Count, Mr. Manhattan, and Mr. Latrobe took one fork and the rest of the party took the other.

. . . the young Count and his companion . . . prepared to take leave of us. . . Nothing . . . could restrain the romantic ardor of the Count for a campaign of buffalo hunting with the Osages. . . His travelling companion, of discreeter age and calmer temperament, was convinced of the rashness of the enterprise; but he could not control the impetuous zeal of his youthful friend, and he was too loyal to leave him to pursue his hazardous scheme alone. W136

⇒COWETA

- **Continue west on OK 51B to Coweta.**
- **Turn right/south at the end of OK 51B and travel through Coweta.**
- **Continue beneath an underpass and turn left/north on OK 51.**
- **Turn left/west on 141st Street and travel west as far as you can.**
- **At the end of 141st Street, turn right/north.**
- **Turn left/west at 131st Street.**

So the Count, the Virtuoso, and Mr. Manhattan were gone. Irving and Ellsworth now headed toward the Arkansas River. You will now head toward the river where you will look across at what Irving called “beautiful champaign country,” not champagne, “champaign,” which means an expanse of level open country. The road you are traveling is rough and rocky, but quiet and you can stop for lovely views across the river.

. . . we came within sight of the Arkansas . . . a broad and rapid stream, bordered by a beach of fine sand, overgrown with willows and cottonwood trees. Beyond the river . . . a beautiful champaign country, of flowery plains and sloping uplands, diversified by groves and clumps of trees, and long screens of woodland . . . W136

From your vantage point here on the east of the Arkansas River it does look like beautiful champagne country, even a land of milk and honey. Look for a stream. Irving camped near a stream and continued to view the beauty of the country to the west. You will become sensitive to the abundance of streams, large and small scattered over the Oklahoma landscape. Irving camped by a stream on the Arkansas River on October 11.

. . . we came to a recent camping place of the company of rangers; the brands of one of their fires were still smoking . . . they could not have passed on above a day previously. As there was a fine stream of water close by, and plenty of pea- vines for the horses, we encamped here for the night. W137

The Count, the Virtuoso, and Mr. Manhattan came back before nightfall.

. . . we heard a halloo from a distance, and beheld the young Count and his party . . . A short experiment had convinced them of the toil and difficulty of inexperienced travellers like themselves making their way through the wilderness . . . W137

They were gone less than a day and only in daylight. This would not be the last time that the young Count would leave the party. At least this time he didn't get into trouble.

This is the land of the huge towering trees, the trees that made Irving think of cathedrals. It is perhaps somewhere along here that Irving passed an Osage village, still here even though the land was no longer theirs. Coweta is a Muscogee word. Perhaps there was a Creek settlement here once; perhaps Osage earlier. In fact the Tourists came this way, passing Creek villages and farmhouses. The Tourists stopped for a coffee break at 10:30 on October 12.

. . . we made a halt in the forest, where there was abundance of pea-vine. . . . we turned the horses loose to graze. A fire was made, water procured from an adjacent spring, and in a short time . . . Tonish, had a pot of coffee prepared for our refreshment. W140

Notice that the modern city of Tulsa is announcing its presence. When you reach 131st, Tulsa becomes even more evident. Obviously Coweta is a suburb of a grand Muskogee Creek City. That city is named Tulsa from the old Creek town Tulsee or perhaps from Tallahassee. It is a city that contains at its center an ancient Council Oak. At this Oak, the Muskogee men in the area met to decide matters of importance to everyone in the community. The Tour is well begun. More and better adventures will follow.

[Go to Stage 2 of the Tour](#) ⇨