

Stage 5

Starting east of Edmond to Arcadia
Cross the North Canadian to Spencer to Midwest City –
Through Oklahoma City Suburbs South on Highway 77
Cross Little River
Ending at the Sam Noble Museum in Norman

⇒ **ARCADIA**

- Leave Stone Valley Ranch and turn left/south on Midwest Boulevard.
- Pass Peavine Road and Sorghum Mills Road.
- Turn left/east on 2nd Street, Highway 66, and continue through Arcadia.

⇒ **JONES**

- Turn right/south on Hiwassee Road and pass Lake Hiwassee.
- Pass over the Turner Turnpike.
- Turn left/east on Memorial Road.
- Turn right/south on North Henney Road.
- Turn left/east on NE 122nd Street.
- Turn right/south on Clar-Mar Drive.
- Continue traveling south until you reach Hogback Road.
- At Clar-Mar Drive, you should see the plaque that was placed here to celebrate October 25, 1832, the day of the maneuver called Ringing the Wild Horse.
- Look southeast as the plaque instructs you to see the site of the maneuver.

⇒ **SPENCER**

- Continue on Hogback Road and cross the North Canadian.
- When you reach Britton Road, turn right/west. Britton Road will become Spencer Jones Road.
- Continue on Spencer Jones Road until you reach Douglas where you turn left/south.
- Continue on Douglas to Spencer. You will see mistletoe in the trees on the right/west of the road.
- Oklahoma City is a short trip west. All that is happening in 1832 could have been seen by the guardian on the dome of the Capitol.

⇒ **MIDWEST CITY**

- Continue to 23rd Street and turn right/west.
- Continue on 23rd Street past Crutchco Creek to Sooner Road and turn left/south.
- Just beyond 10th Street on Sooner Road you will again cross Crutchco Creek.
- Continue south on Sooner Road and pass Tinker Air Force Base.

⇒ **OKLAHOMA CITY**

- Sooner Road will become OK 77H.
- Turn right/south at NE 134th Street.

⇒ **MOORE**

- NE 134th Street will become NE 4th Street in Moore.
- At Bryant Avenue you will cross Little River.
- Travel north on Broadway in Moore and find the plaque for the nights of the Buffalo Hunt.
- Go back to 4th Street and enter US I 35 going south.

⇒ **NORMAN**

- Continue on I 35 to OK 9 and turn left/east.
- On OK 9 you are in Norman.
- Take a short trip to the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History. The Museum is on Chautauqua and Timberdell Road.

Enjoy!

⇒ ARCADIA

- Leave Stone Valley Ranch and turn left/south on Midwest Boulevard.
- Pass Peavine Road and Sorghum Mills Road.
- Turn left/east on 2nd Street, Highway 66, and continue through Arcadia.

Actually this spot you are leaving in the beautifully tamed Cross-Timbers may be the place that Irving camped on October 23. As you leave, drive around and look at the dwarf forests thoughtfully. As you drive away, take one last look and imagine what the yards of this lovely new neighborhood at Waterloo and Midwest Boulevard would look like to Irving. Think how the horses would appreciate it.

The Tourists and their friends awoke on October 24 with a sense of loss. The loss they were experiencing was to a great extent due to the absence of bread. Not today, would they continue the cacaphony of that long ago morning of October 15 when they arose in Bear's Glen.

The morning broke bright and clear, but the camp had nothing of its usual gayety. The concert of the farm-yard was at an end; not a cock crew, nor dog barked; nor was there either singing or laughing; everyone pursued his avocations quietly and gravely . . . Some of the young men were getting as way-worn as their horses; and most of them, unaccustomed to the hunter's life, began to repine at its privations. What they most felt was the want of bread, their rations of flour having been exhausted for several days. WI141

Not only was flour disappearing: homesickness appeared.

I have today had my thoughts turned incessantly on home, and become most melancholy in the reflection; that you and the dear children were so far away. HLE 99

Just as the flour gave out, the buffalo appeared. Irving soon gave up the chase through birch, brier, and ravines.

Beatte . . . called out and made signals . . . Some who were near me cried out that it was a party of Pawnees. . . . We heard a trampling among the brushwood. My horse looked toward the place, snorted and pricked up his ears, when presently a couple of buffalo bulls . . . came crashing through the brake, and making directly toward us. In an instant half a score of rifles cracked off; there was a universal whoop and halloo, and away went half the troop, helter-skelter in pursuit, and myself among the number. WI 142

Irving loved horses and never stopped trying to find the perfect mount. Here near Route 66 he did, parting with \$70.00 to sweeten the following exchange.

. . . I had been fortunate enough recently, by a further exchange, to get possession of the best horse in the troop; a full-blooded sorrel of excellent bottom, beautiful form, and most generous qualities. WI 142

Irving loved that horse. A sorrel is a light, bright chestnut horse. A sorrel will often have a white mane and tail. It must have been beautiful.

. . . it almost seems as if a man changes his nature with his horse. I felt quite like another being, now that I had an animal under me, spirited yet gentle, docile to a remarkable degree, and easy, elastic, and rapid in all his movements . . . he became almost as much attached to me as a dog; would follow me when I dismounted, would come to me in the morning to be noticed and caressed; and would put his muzzle between me and my book, as I sat reading at the foot of a tree. WI 142 143

Irving certainly knew the worth of things. Commissioner Ellsworth knew the cost of things. Well, he knew the worth of things too.

M Irving became dissatisfied with his little poney, who was evidently too small for a man of his size, and he made an exchange with Lieutenant Calwell for his horse and gave \$70 “to boot” He rode this new horse but a few days when he became tired of him, and exchanged again with M Clements for a fine sorrel horse by paying boot again of \$35 – With this last horse he was evidently much pleased, and it was certainly a fine animal and deserving his affections – HLE 98 99

As you pass Peavine Road, think how poetic, that a road named Peavine appears on our 21st Century Tour just as pea-vine was disappearing from Irving’s 19th Century Tour. Now even turkeys were looking good.

Here we at once came to a halt, in a beautiful grove of elms, on the site of an old Osage encampment. Scarcely had we dismounted, when a universal firing of rifles took place upon a large flock of turkeys, scattered about the grove, which proved to be a favorite roosting-place for these simple birds. They flew to the trees, and sat perched upon their branches, stretching out their long necks, and gazing in stupid astonishment, until eighteen of them were shot down. WI 143

Then they really found buffalo.

. . . word was brought that there were four buffaloes in a neighboring meadow. The turkeys were now abandoned for nobler game . . . My horse, who, under his former rider, had hunted the buffalo, seemed as much excited as myself, and endeavored to force his way through the bushes . . . There was a mixture of the grand and the comic, in beholding this tremendous animal . . . The buffalo stood with his shaggy front always presented to his foe; his mouth open, his tongue parched, his eyes like coals of fire, and his tail erect with rage . . . WI 144

Latrobe mentions the Arcadians when he described the life of the Indians before 1492. Today Route 66 travels through Arcadia. What visions of America this Main Street of America evokes. You have already moved with Route 66 for a city block in Tulsa when you were traveling north toward Owen Park, the Three Nations Marker, and Gilcrease Museum. Route 66 carried hundreds of thousands of travelers. It is Interstate 40 that carries the majority of travelers now. You will stay on Route 66 from Midwest Boulevard to Hiwassee.

Route 66 | Main Street of America | The Mother Road

1832 Tourists traveled Route 66.

1889 The Unassigned Lands were opened by first Oklahoma Run.

1890 The Arcadia Post Office was opened.

1916 Congress passed the Federal Aid Road Act.

1926 Route 66 was named and its path decided. It would go just north of Oklahoma City. In 1926, Route 66 was as motley as that early group of Oklahomans: concrete, gravel, asphalt over brick, dirt, and wooden planks.

1937 The last small fraction of Route 66 was paved.

1956 The Federal Aid Highway Act spelled out the guidelines for an Interstate Highway System.

1984 The final bit of Route 66 was replaced in Oklahoma by Interstate 44, between Oklahoma City and Tulsa by the Turner Turnpike.

1990 Michael Wallis wrote *Route 66 The Mother Road*.

Arcadia is famous for its lovely barn and Irving's Buffalo Camp. The Tourists were nearly 100 miles to the west of Fort Gibson before they saw signs of buffalo. Once buffalo were everywhere around Fort Gibson. Latrobe spoke about the movement of the buffalo away from the rush of pioneers to the west.

Anciently, they were known to have roamed over the western part of the state of New York . . . sixty years ago, the rich forests and cane-brakes of Kentucky and Tennessee swarmed with them. Now there is not one to be found east of the Mississippi: as man has penetrated, year by year, hundred of miles to the westward, so the Bison has fled his presence, and yearly interposes a good hundred miles between its pathway and the nearest settlements . . . CJL 54 55

A marker states that the Buffalo Camp was just east of Arcadia.

The party had been yearning for buffalo. They had seen tracks, dung, and bones. They tasted buffalo at this camp, old and stringy, but it was buffalo.

Irving camped in a gentle valley here or near here on October 24.



After riding a few miles further, we came to a fine meadow with a broad clear stream winding through it, on the banks of which there was excellent pasturage. Here we at once came to a halt, in a beautiful grove of elms, on the site of an old Osage encampment. WI 143

The death of a buffalo at this camp was trauma for Irving. A buffalo took a number of shots, yet none proved fatal.

(the buffalo) made a slow and grand retreat into the shallow river, turning upon his assailants whenever the pressed upon him; and when in the water, took his stand there as if prepared to sustain a siege. A rifle ball, however, more fatally lodged, sent a tremor through his frame. He turned and attempted to wade across the stream, but after tottering a few paces, slowly fell upon his side and expired. It was the fall of a hero, and we felt somewhat ashamed of the butchery that had effected it; but, after the first shot or two, we had reconciled it to our feelings, by the old plea of putting the poor animal out of his misery. Two more buffaloes were killed this evening, but they were all bulls, the flesh of which is meagre and hard, at this season of the year. A fat buck yielded us more savory meat for our evening's repast. WI 145

And so to dinner and so to bed, they had no bread, but plenty of meat on October 24, 1832 at the Buffalo Camp. Time and again, our Tourists have talked about their excellent health, about a doctor being superfluous. Our Commissioner gave the straight truth about bowels and blue pills.

I took two blue pills, hoping they would regulate internal matters – I have taken but little medicine during my journey – I think travellers err on this point – For the least irregularity, they take a corrective, when the very irregularity, is an effort, of nature to relieve herself, and in nine times out of ten, will work out best her own cure -- HLE 106

⇒ JONES

- Turn right/south on Hiwassee Road and pass Lake Hiwassee.
- Pass over the Turner Turnpike.
- Turn left/east on Memorial Road.
- Turn right/south on North Henney Road.
- Turn left/east on NE 122nd Street.
- Turn right/south on Clar-Mar Drive.

- Continue traveling south until you reach Hogback Road.
- At Clar-Mar Drive, you should see the plaque that was placed here to celebrate October 25, 1832, the day of the maneuver called Ringing the Wild Horse.
- Look southeast as the plaque instructs you to see the site of the maneuver.

October 25 Turn right/south on Hiwassee Road. You are perhaps a bit too far east, but you must get past the Turner Turnpike. As you travel on Hiwassee, you pass Hiwassee Lake. At three miles you will pass over the turnpike, Highway 44. At the end of four miles from Highway 66 you will turn left/eat on Memorial Road. The Cross Timbers again appear.

We left the buffalo camp . . . and had a toilsome and harassing march . . . over ridges of hills, covered with a ragged meagre forest of scrub-oaks, and broken by deep gullies. Among the oaks I observe many of the most diminutive size; some not above a foot high, yet bearing abundance of small acorns . . . There is a pine-oak which produces an acorn pleasant to the taste, and ripening early in the season. WI 146

After some twists and turns described in the directions, you reach the meeting place of Clar-Mar Drive and Hogback Road.



Here is the plaque honoring the day of Ringing the Wild Horse, October 25, 1832. Look to the southeast at the beautiful valley. This spot has been honored three times. First it was honored with the placing of a plaque on the day of the Centennial, October 25, 1932. Then it was honored in 1971 with the official naming of this spot as a National Historic Place. This is the entry from the National Park Service: "Ringing the Wild Horse" Site (added 1971 - Site -

#71001081) NW of Jones, Jones The site was honored this spring of 2007 with a rededication of the plaque on the stone column where it first was placed. The rededication was part of an official Oklahoma Centennial Project. When you look at it on your Tour, you honor Irving and his Tour again.

. . . we discovered a most beautiful smooth prairie 2 miles long, and 1 ½ miles wide – The southerly side was skirted by the cotton wood and other trees . . . running almost in a semicircle – the North West & East was bounded by small oakes – . . . On the right of us was a large herd of wild horses! On the left a small herd of buffaloe! HLE 109

This is the valley of Ringing the Wild Horse. When Irving looked at this valley he saw horses to the right and buffalo to the left. Latrobe also remembered the sight of this valley with delight and amazement. The river was the North Canadian which they would soon cross and which the 21st Century Tourist will soon cross.

. . . We saw before us a meadow of about four miles long by one in breadth, bounded towards the river by a gigantic grove of cotton-wood trees, indicating the course of the river. To the right appeared a large troop of wild horses, and to the left, toward the lower end of the prairie, were seen the huge backs of a number of Bison. CIL 64

The Tourists learned a completely new way to capture wild horses. The valley actually contained the North Fork of the Canadian. It travels very far north right about here. Irving got the name of the river wrong, but everything else right. This story might well be read before you start on your Tour or perhaps it could be read by you, the Tourists, taking turns, as you look out over the valley. You will find Irving's complete description of "Ringing the Wild Horse" on pages 146-150 in *A Tour on the Prairies*.



. . . this line of rugged hills swept down into a valley, through which flowed the north fork of the Red River. A beautiful meadow about half a mile wide, enamelled with yellow autumnal flowers, stretched for two or three miles along the foot of the hills, bordered on the opposite side by the river, whose banks were fringed with cotton-wood trees . . . we beheld a troop of wild horses, quietly grazing on a green lawn, about a mile distant to our right, while to our left, at nearly the same distance, were several buffaloes; some feeding, others reposing and ruminating among the high rich herbage, under the shade of a clump of cotton-wood trees . . . it was determined to . . . try . . . the grand hunting manoeuvre, which is called ringing the wild horse. This requires a large party of horsemen, well mounted. They extend themselves in each direction . . . and gradually form a ring . . . so as to surround the game . . . two or three ride toward the horses, who start off in an opposite direction. Whenever they approach the bounds of the ring, however, a huntsman presents himself and turns them from their course. In this way they are checked and driven back at every point; and kept galloping round and round this magic circle, until, being completely tired down, it is easy for the hunters to ride up beside them, and throw the lariat over their heads. WI 146 147

When the ring was made, nearly all the horses escaped. Only one good horse was captured. Tonish turned the scene into a debacle by jumping the gun and sending the horses off and away. Tonish, alone, brought back a beautiful cream-colored colt, about seven months old, who was just not old enough or strong enough to keep up with the others. No bad action is without its reward.

○ ⇒ **SPENCER**

Continue on Hogback Road and cross the North Canadian.

- **When you reach Britton Road, turn right/west. Britton Road will become Spencer Jones Road.**
- **Continue on Spencer Jones Road until you reach Douglas where you turn left/south.**
- **Continue on Douglas to Spencer. You will see mistletoe in the trees on the right/west of the road.**

. . . we forded the North Fork, a rapid stream, and of a purity seldom to be found in the rivers of the prairie . . . we again ascended among hills, from one of which we had an extensive view over this belt of cross timber, and a cheerless prospect it was; hill beyond hill, forest beyond forest, all of one sad russet hue . . . WI 151

Continue on Hogback Road until you reach Britton Road, where you turn right/ west. Continue when Britton Road becomes Spencer Jones Road. Keep looking up into the trees that shelter the road. When you see mistletoe, you are perhaps right where Irving camped under trees covered with mistletoe on October 25. Mistletoe is Oklahoma's official floral emblem. Mistletoe often decorated the earliest settler's graves when no other flowers were available. Also the evergreen mistletoe was with the settlers through the early winters and therefore symbolized their perseverance. In the summer is it hard to see the mistletoe, but as fall edges toward winter it becomes increasingly easy to spy it above. And the Greeks would agree mistletoe is mystical.

We encamped toward evening in a valley, beside a scanty pool, under a scattered grove of elms, the upper branches of which were fringed with tufts of the mystic mistletoe . . . the wild colt whinnied repeatedly; and about two hours before day, there was a sudden stampede . . . along the purlieu of the camp, with a snorting and neighing, and clattering of hoofs . . . As usual, the noise was at first attributed to some party of marauding Indians . . . WI 151 152

Again it was not Indians, hostile or otherwise. It was a couple of wild horses in a nearby meadow, which set the party's horses on edge. Irving and friends are now deep into the Tour. Irving has forgotten his former hatred of skunk. Game was dwindling. They had found a few buffalo, but they were bulls, old and stringy to eat. The great buffalo hunt with masses of good meat was ahead of them.

Tonish thought he would make some excellent cakes . . . some fritters by mixing flour, hot water & salt together, and fried them in the fat of a skunk – they were delicious and so excellent, as well as the stew made from the same animal, that M Irving yielded his antipathy and indulged his appetite freely – From this time no objections were made, against Pole cats and they were a frequent dish. HLE 109

⇒ MIDWEST CITY

- **Continue to 23rd Street and turn right/west.**
- **Continue on 23rd Street past Crutchco Creek to Sooner Road and turn left/south.**
- **Just beyond 10th Street on Sooner Road you will again cross Crutchco Creek.**
- **Continue south on Sooner Road and pass Tinker Air Force Base.**

It was a ruddy daybreak over the mistletoe on October 26. The party finally saw some Indians out in the West, Osages. The party was not fearful of Osages.

. . . we beheld seven Osage warriors approaching . . . One of the Indians took the lead of his companions, and advanced toward us with head erect, chest thrown forward, and a free and noble mien. He was a fine-looking fellow, dressed in scarlet frock and fringed leggings of deer skin. His head was decorated with a white tuft, and he stepped forward with something of a martial air, swaying his bow and arrows in one hand . . . he and his comrades had set out on a war party, to waylay and hover about some Pawnee camp, in hopes of carrying of scalps of horses. WI 153

Commissioner Ellsworth became a peacemaker. He told the braves that the father in Washington wanted peace among all his children. The Osages listened with courtesy and decorum.

I urged the Indians to a pacific course; after being introduced to the as a big man come from their father the President – I told them I came to establish peace . . . and wished that the Osages and Pawnees, might bury the hatchet . . . they replied all very good – HLE 114

A few Osage words were spoken and the warriors went on off across the prairie. Irving asked Beatte about what had just taken place.

Fancying that I saw a lurking smile in the countenance of our interpreter, Beatte, I privately inquired what the Indians had said to each other after hearing the speech. The leader, he said, had observed to his companions, that, as their great father intended so soon to put an end to all warfare, it behooved them to make the most of the little time that was left them. So they had departed, with redoubled zeal, to pursue their project of horse stealing. WI 154

All the Tourists tried to talk the Osages into continuing with their party.

The reasons they gave for preferring to go back to their tribe, rather than repairing with us to hunt the Bison on the Big Prairie, and get presents of tobacco, blankets, and vermilion, were sensible enough. They said if they did not return to their comrades, they would be forthwith supposed dead; their relations would then shave their

heads; their squaws would remarry, the Chiefs take possession of their gear, and all that would have a great misfortune. CJL 65 66

Irving chased buffalo that day. The chase led him far from the party and it took him a while to regain the trail and find camp. Irving may have camped on Crutchco Creek for three nights during foul weather, October 26, 27, 28.

On overtaking the troop, I found it encamping in a rich bottom of woodland, traversed by a small stream . . . a drizzling rain ushered in the autumnal storm that had been brewing. Preparations were immediately made to weather it; our tent was pitched, and our saddles, saddle-bags, packages of coffee, sugar, salt, and every thing else that could be damaged by the rain, were gathered under its shelter . . . The rain set in sullenly and steadily . . . The brook which flowed peaceably on our arrival, swelled into a turbid and boiling torrent, and the forest became little better than a mere swamp . . . Our poor, way-worn horses, reduced by weary travel and scanty pasturage, lost all remaining spirit, and stood, with drooping heads, flagging ears, and half closed eyes, dozing and steaming in the rain . . . WI 157

The rain went on and on. Stories were told. Poor Tonish was in a state.

The change of weather had taken sharp hold of our little Frenchman. His meagre frame, composed of bones and whipcord, was racked with rheumatic pains and twinges. He had the toothache—the earache—his face was tied up— he had shooting pains in every limb . . . he was in an incessant fidget about the fire, roasting, and stewing, and groaning, and scolding, and swearing. WI 158

Irving actually had conversations with Beatte. Beatte was depressed and Irving seemed to feel a certain amount of compassion for a man he didn't like on sight way back at Fort Gibson.

. . . I did not like his looks when he was first presented to me. WI 25

Because the inactivity caused by the rain gave him lots of time to think, Beatte was feeling sorry for himself, but he couldn't stay that way long.

"I am all broke to pieces and good for nothing," said he; "I no care now what happened to me any more." "However," added he, after a moment's pause, "for all that, it would take a pretty strong man to put me down, anyhow." WI 163

At a break in the weather on October 28 Beatte, Tonish and other hunters left the camp. That evening they returned.

The lagging gait and reeking flanks of their horses gave evidence of hard riding; and, on nearer approach, we found them hung round with meat like a butcher's shambles. In fact, they had been scouring an immense prairie that extended beyond the forest, and which was covered with buffalo . . . WI 168

Now all that was left was to get rid of the rain. It was beyond serious. The Commissioner was as vocal about this foul weather as Irving was.

The mud around our tent was over shoe – I got some grape vines, & bushes to lay down before our door, to save mud from our parlour bed room drawing room & dining hall all together . . . M Pourteles & Brailey have nothing but mocassins and their feet are wet every moment . . . We go to rest tonight in a wet tent – and wet every thing . . . HLE 119

After three nights, the weather was almost too much to be endured.

. . . by this time the low jungle, in which the party had been lying, soaked with rain for the last forty hours, had become a perfect Slough of Despond, and not a blade of grass was left. CL 69

On the third morning it was still cloudy, but they marched. There was exultation in the camp because tonight they would be cracking buffalo bones. It was certain.

Irving described the animals he saw in detail. He recorded the stories he heard about the native animals. You will find them all through the Tour. The descriptions were used as the bronzes came into view in Tulsa. They were used in the Tour in Irving's real time and real places. Use these descriptions if you take a side trip to the Oklahoma City Zoo. The Tourists traveled right over Midwest City and Tinker Air Force Base. They hunted buffalo back and forth across Highway 77 and Interstate 35. From Edmond to Noble the Tourists rode on October 29, 1832 and the Pioneers rode on April 22, 1889.

⇒ OKLAHOMA CITY

- **Oklahoma City is a short trip west. All that was happening from October 26-31, 832 could have been seen by the guardian on the dome of the Capitol.**

Oklahoma City | Capitol

- 1832** A party of Rangers and Tourists got a good look at the land that would become metropolitan Oklahoma City.
- 1879** A group of boomers from Kansas came to the land. They were convinced it belonged to nobody.
- 1880** David L. Payne, a Boomer, began to make forays into the Oklahoma lands. He attracted followers, fought in the courts, lobbied Congress, and made many invasions into Oklahoma until he died and William L. Couch took up the cause.
- 1887** The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad built tracks through Guthrie, Edmond, Oklahoma City, Moore, Norman, and Purcell.
- 1889** On April 22, 1889 Oklahoma City was settled. A tent city was the immediate result.
- 1890** The Organic Act formed Oklahoma Territory with Guthrie as capital.
- 1913** Oklahoma City took the symbols of power from Guthrie and became the Capital of Oklahoma.
- 1995** Oklahoma City was both devastated and uplifted.

Imagine the Tourists' reactions to this impressive air base. Imagine Pourtalès' reaction to the Osage General Clarence Tinker that the base is named for. He was after all the lover of all things Osage. October 27, it again looked like a foul day.

Another day under cover would yield some more stories, but no charging buffalo.

The morning opened gloomy and lowering; but toward eight o'clock the sun struggled forth and lighted up the forest . . . Now began a scene of bustle, and clamor, and gayety. . . stripping the poles of the wet blankets . . . loading the baggage horses . . . I always felt disposed to linger . . . that I might behold the wilderness relapsing into silence and solitude . . . the deserted scene of our late bustling encampment had a forlorn and desolate appearance. The surrounding forest . . . trampled into a quagmire. Trees felled and partly hewn in pieces, and scattered in huge fragments; tent-poles stripped of their covering; smouldering fires, with great morsels of roasted venison and buffalo meat, standing in wooden spits

before them hacked and slashed by the knives of hungry hunters . . . the hides, the horns, the antlers, and bones of buffaloes and deer . . . turkey- buzzards, or vultures, were already on the wing, wheeling their magnificent flight high in the air, and preparing for a descent upon the camp as soon as it should be abandoned. WI 170

The turkey-buzzards, vultures, would clean up after them, since obviously the party did not clean up after themselves. This party did not lie lightly on the land. The Indians of the plains, including the Pawnees would never have left a hunting campsite with so much bounty behind.

Midwest City, Oklahoma | Tinker Air Force Base

1832 Washington Irving spent three soggy nights here.

1889 Metropolitan Oklahoma City was open to settlers.

1941 Midwest City was founded and named after the Midwest Air Depot.

1943 Midwest City had its first US Post Office. Midwest Air Depot became Tinker Air Force Base in honor of General Clarence Tinker, an Osage Indian and American hero.

1950 Midwest City was named America's Model City.

Continue on Sooner Road past Tinker Air Force Base. Irving and party probably walked right across the runways. Drive around the base for a while before you turn back south on Sooner Road. Imagine what it must have been like in 1832.

⇒ OKLAHOMA CITY

- Sooner Road will become OK 77H.
- Turn right/south at NE 134th Street.

The Guardian on the dome could have watched the drama of the buffalo hunt which took place on October 29, 1832.

⇒ MOORE

- NE 134th Street will become NE 4th Street in Moore.
- At Bryant Avenue you will cross Little River.
- Travel north on Broadway in Moore and find the plaque for the nights of the Buffalo Hunt.
- Go back to 4th Street and enter US I 35 going south.

After a short march south, Irving saw the prairie and was directed to the evening's campsite.

After proceeding about two hours in a southerly direction, we emerged toward mid-day from the dreary belt of the Cross Timber, and to our infinite delight beheld "the great Prairie" stretching to the right and left before us. . . . There is always an expansion of feeling in looking upon these boundless and fertile wastes; but I was doubly conscious of it after emerging from our "close dungeon of innumerable boughs."
WI 171

Nobody enjoyed the Cross Timbers.

The Captain determined to shape his course to a woody bottom about a mile distant, and to encamp

there for a day or two, by way of having a regular buffalo hunt, and getting a supply of provisions. WI 171

This buffalo hunt ranged all over, from Midwest City to as far south as Noble, across Highway 77 and Interstate 35. On this hunt Beatte would be the leader, the guide, and the teacher. The young Count and Irving were together as the hunt began.

Portalès buoyant and youthful, in purple leather with bright embroidery, would experience much today, tonight, and tomorrow. October 29 was the high point of the Tour. Remember that a buffalo's tongue was the important trophy and that all too often the only thing brought back to camp was that tongue, that delicacy. The tongue and the hump were prized. It was a very long tongue and a very big hump. One place left in Oklahoma as near an 1832 prairie as is possible is the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve. Buffalo have been reintroduced.

. . . the buffaloes stuck foot-long tongues out of their odd-shaped mouths, occasionally turned their immense, deformed heads, on which their hair stood up as straight as a lion's mane. CP 69

Let the hunt begin!

. . . we perceived two buffalo bulls descending a slope . . . The Count . . . fired, but it missed. The bulls . . . galloped down hill . . . As they ran in different directions, we each singled one and separated. I was provided with a brace of veteran brass-barrelled pistols . . . Pistols are very effective in buffalo hunting, as the hunter can ride up close to the animal, and fire at it while at full speed . . . I was well mounted on a horse of excellent speed and bottom, that seemed eager for the chase, and soon overtook the game . . . a buffalo, when close pressed by the hunter, has an aspect most diabolical. His two short black horns, curve out of a huge frontlet of shaggy hair; his eyes glow like coals; his mouth is open, his tongue parched and drawn up into a half crescent; his tail is erect, and tufted and whisking about in the air, he is a perfect picture of mingled rage and terror . . . I urged my horse sufficiently near, when, taking aim, to my chagrin, both pistols missed fire . . . I was close upon the buffalo, when, in his despair, he turned round with a sudden snort and rushed upon me. My horse wheeled . . . made a convulsive spring, and . . . I came near being thrown at the feet of the buffalo . . . I again spurred in pursuit of the buffalo . . . he again set off in full tilt . . . WI 173

The vast grass covered prairies were not the smooth surface they seem from afar. There are hills and dales, deep rifts and ravines sculpted by the weather, holes burrowed by small animals principally the prairie dog, buffalo grass and after a rain sheets of water. When you travel south on Highway 77 or Interstate 35, imagine that buffalo are galloping back and forth across the lanes of traffic, followed by an excellent writer and a young nobleman in purple leather. Think that a backwoodsman and a stern Commissioner are also on the hunt. Think back to how it would feel to be alone in the vastness of the landscape you can see about you, a vastness without highway signs, cars, and trucks that make their own winds. If you are following his tracks in the 21st Century, alone, you would not be. And of course in 1932 there cedars would not disrupt the wide expanse.



. . . there is something inexpressibly lonely in the solitude of a prairie. The loneliness of a forest seems nothing to it. There the view is shut in by trees, and the imagination is left free to picture some livelier

scene beyond. But here we have an immense extent of landscape without a sign of human existence . . . As the delirium of the chase had passed away, I was peculiarly sensible to these circumstances. WI 175 176

Other stratagems were tried to get a buffalo, to make everything work. Pistols misfired. Horses tired. Irving was particularly sensitive to the buffalo's character.

There is a mixture of the awful and the comic in the look of these huge animals . . . WI 177

Irving then got another buffalo in his sight, killed it, and wasn't sure he was completely happy or proud. And what follows could possibly have been seen by the Guardian looking down from the dome of the Oklahoma Capitol

. . . I singled out a buffalo, and by a fortunate shot brought it down on the spot . . . it could not move . . . but lay there struggling in mortal agony, while the rest of the herd kept on their headlong career across the prairie . . . Now that the excitement was over, I could not but look with commiseration upon the poor animal that lay struggling and bleeding at my feet . . . I had inflicted pain in proportion to the bulk of my victim . . . the poor animal lingered in his agony . . . the wolves . . . were skulking and howling . . . the ravens . . . flapping about, croaking dismally . . . I primed one of the pistols . . . To inflict a wound thus in cool blood, I found a totally different thing from firing in the heat of the chase . . . my pistol for once proved true . . . the animal gave one convulsive throe and expired. WI 179

The stern Commissioner also hunted buffalo that day.

. . . I must yet kill a buffaloe . . . I . . . felt somewhat as a little girl does when she goes to have a tooth pulled, for I was afraid of an accident – Billet told me to be careful of the wallowing holes, then full of water . . . I never went half so fast before or mean to again . . . I came along side of the animal I had selected – He appeared a monster . . . I fired . . . the animal now began to throw blood from his mouth & nose which satisfied me I had reached his heart – he stopped – I fired again . . . He now came towards me with his tongue extended and his round full eye darting vengeance – my horse parryed his movements, and I fired my rifle pistol and then seized the remaining one – at this moment the Buffaloe fell, exhausted with the loss of blood – and stretching out his legs died . . . HLE 122 123

Ellsworth stayed with Beatte who found a buffalo for the Commissioner that had to be truly reckoned with. He got his tongue. Mr. Latrobe also brought in a tongue. Now there was another development. The bold and graceful rider Pourtalès was lost and it was getting on toward night. Should Irving and Latrobe pursue him?

After rejoining Mr. Irving, whom I found standing sentinel over his spoil, we did not immediately recollect the early twilight of a dull autumnal day drawing on, and that we had still to find our way to the Camp . . . where was Pourtales? . . . We waited and waited . . . we began to move slowly northward; pausing often to scan the horizon . . . to look out for . . . our Camp and our young friend. We did not find the former without very considerable difficulty . . . Here we found the Commissioner safe and sound; but . . . Pourtales was absent, and had neither been heard nor seen by any of the hunting parties. CHL 75

Young Alexandre Pourtalès' friend and mentor Charles Joseph Latrobe was one who without doubt would not leave the night's camp until the lost was found. He was a responsible and serious young man and he began to notice something was wrong as he finished his day of hunting. Hunting was over for Irving and Ellsworth and Latrobe for the day. Where was camp? They only had a hint of its location. They had been so engrossed with the hunt, camp was far from their minds.

It must be recollected that none of us had been at the Camp, and we had but a general idea of the

position and course of the creek upon which it was in all probability to be found. CJL 73 74

Irving himself felt lost as the twilight thickened upon the landscape. He and Latrobe had no idea where the camp was.

At length night closed in. We hoped to see the distant glare of camp-fires; we listened to catch the sound of the bells about the necks of the grazing horses . . . Nothing was to be heard but a monotonous concert of insects, with now and then the dismal how of wolves mingling with the night breeze. We began to think of halting for the night . . . We had implements to strike a light: there was plenty of firewood at hand, and the tongues of our buffaloes would furnish us with a repast . . . as we were preparing to dismount, we heard the report of a rifle, and shortly after, the notes of the bugle, calling up the night guard . . . the camp-fires soon broke on our sight, gleaming at a distance from among the thick groves of an alluvial bottom. WI 181

Irving hunted buffalo back and forth across OK 177 and I 35 on October 29. He camped on the Little River on October 29 and 30. When Irving entered the camp, everyone was dining on buffalo humps and buffalo tongue. The food was good and the celebrating intense. The Count wasn't with them.

. . . fires were blazing on every side; all hands were feasting upon roasted joints, broiled marrow-bones, and the juicy hump . . . Right glad were we to dismount and partake of the sturdy cheer . . . WI 181

The other Tourists were accounted for, but the young nobleman did not return. It was too dark now to send anyone in search of the young Count. Guns, however, were fired, and the bugles sounded . . . to guide him to the camp . . . but the night advanced without his making his appearance. There was not a star visible to guide him, and we concluded that . . . he would give up wandering . . . and bivouac until daybreak. WI 182 183

There was terrible waste of meat and even more complications the night of October 29. An encampment of tipis with Dakota or Pawnee or Cheyenne would leave virtually nothing of the buffalo behind. The Plains Indians' tipis are covered with buffalo skin, which is sewed together with buffalo sinew using a needle of buffalo bone. Buffalo dung is used for fuel in this tree starved country and buffalo meat is the greatest portion of the diet. Buffalo sinews are used for bowstrings, saddle cinches, and even a kind of glue. Buffalo bones are everywhere with the Indians' camps as shovels, knives, and supports for their saddles. Buffalo skin with its fur intact became robes and blankets. The hair of the coat and the tail could be seen as whips and fly brushes. The raw hide of the buffalo was used virtually in every way conceivable in the tipi, on the horse, and on the body as clothing. Even the buffalo's bladder became a pouch to be used for utility or for a medicine bag.

It was a raw, overcast night. The carcasses of the buffaloes . . . had drawn . . . wolves . . . What rendered the gloom and wildness of the night . . . more dreary to us, was the idea of the lonely and exposed situation of our young and inexperienced comrade. WI 183

Where was Pourtalès? Was he safe?

The bugle was sounded . . . guns fired . . . larger fires than ordinary kept up, all without success . . . meat had been brought into camp, sufficient, indeed, to last the whole company for a month if properly cured and stored, and upon the Prairie lay remaining masses over which the wolves were holding their stormy jubilee . . . the absence of my companion hung heavy on me, and prevented much sleep, and as Beatte and I sat over the fire in the dead of the night . . . that melancholy concert sounded dolefully in my ears.

CJL 76

Latrobe worried over what caused his friend to be lost. Perhaps he paid no attention in the excitement of the hunt. Perhaps he was gored by a buffalo. Perhaps a roving band of Indians took him. If Osages, it would be all right; if Pawnees not all right. Irving awoke on October 30 worrying about the Count. The next morning's search party was led by Irving and the young Count's mentor, Charles Joseph Latrobe, Mr. L.

A dozen of the rangers . . . were soon ready to start . . . Beatte and Antoine also . . . Mr. L. and myself taking the lead, to show the way to the scene of our little hunt, where we had parted company with the Count, we all set out across the prairie . . . I conducted Beatte and Antoine to the spot whence the young Count had continued the chase alone . . . They immediately distinguished the track of his horse amidst the tramlings of the buffaloes . . . following with the eye in nearly a straight course . . . they came to where the herd had divided, and run hither and thither about a meadow. Here the track of the horse's hoofs wandered and doubled and often crossed each other . . . While we were at halt, waiting until they could unravel the maze, Beatte suddenly gave a short Indian whoop, or rather yelp, and pointed to a distant hill . . . "It is the Count!" WI 185

Immediately another man appeared behind the first that Beatte saw. The search party was in an uproar. Only Count Pourtalès was missing from the camp the night before. "Were these men on the prairie Pawnees?" They were thankfully two Rangers, out early that morning. However they suggested some Pawnees might be over a nearby hill. That was more danger for the Count, so the search began again.

Beatte . . . would keep forward on an easy trot; his eyes fixed on the ground . . . would pull up and walk his horse slowly, regarding the ground intensely . . . Beatte . . . shook his head despondingly . . . a small herd of deer . . . came bounding by us, Beatte . . . levelled his rifle, and wounded one . . . The report of the rifle was almost immediately followed by a long halloo . . . Another long halloo was heard, and at length a horseman was descried . . . A single glance showed him to be the young Count; there was a universal shout and scamper . . . much anxiety had been felt by us all on account of his youth and inexperience, and . . . with all his love of adventure, he seemed right glad to be once more among his friends. WI 187

And the assembled friends were right glad to have him back and hear his story.

. . . he had completely mistaken his course . . . and had wandered about until dark, when he thought of bivouacking. The night was cold, yet he feared to make a fire, lest it might betray him to some lurking party of Indians. Hobbling his horse . . . he clambered into a tree, fixed his saddle in the fork of the branches, and . . . prepared to pass a dreary and anxious night, regaled occasionally with the howlings of the wolves . . . The fatigue of the day soon brought on a sound sleep . . . nor did he wake until it was broad daylight. He then descended from his roosting-place . . . and rode to . . . a hill, whence he beheld a trackless wilderness around him, but at no great distance, the Grand Canadian . . . The sight of this river consoled him . . . he might follow the course of the stream, which could not fail to conduct him to some frontier post, or Indian hamlet. So closed the events of our hap-hazard buffalo hunt. WI 187 188

Henry Leavitt Ellsworth told this story in his own way. He after all was the one the most agitated because of the young Count's overwhelming interest in young ladies. Commissioner Ellsworth was an estimable man, loved by many, but he seemed to make even the loss of another all about him.

. . . the hunters were all in, but Irving Latrobe & Pourteles – we felt anxious for them & blew the bugle – M. Irving & Latrobe soon came proudly in with their trophies, each had a buffalo tongue – But where was Pourteles? we had not seen him! not seen him! where is he? – we now enquired where he was seen last? -- pursuing buffalo 6 miles from camp – the bugle sounded – guns were fired . . . no tidings were

heard of him! – He was lost! night set in and darkness rendered further search in vain untill morning – The wolves were around in hundreds and howling all night . . . Around every dead Buffaloe, were a crowd like dogs fighting for a bone – and for Pourteles! their howl for him! He might be devoured by them or bears before morning, if then alive – He had nothing to protect him at night, but a surtout – We arose early in the morning to look for Pourteles . . . I would cheerfully have gone myself, but my face was much swollen . . the tooth still gave me pain – my great apprehension for Pourteles was . . . that he might push himself to some great extreemity, or become deranged, for it is surprising now soon a lost man becomes a maniac & wild . . . I was out hunting turkeys one evening and lost my way . . . the idea that I might not reach camp that night, exposed to Bears wolves &&& -- and pawnees . . . created such strong feeling of sorrow, that . . . when I heard one of the Rangers horse’s bells, the happies(t) of my life . . . here let me ask if it so dreadful to be lost for time, what is it to be lost for eternity! . . . lo! At 4 we saw out friends returning – The Young Swiss with them! HLE 124 125 126

The young Count had been with Irving as they started to hunt. Like Irving, Pourtalès chose a buffalo and went in pursuit on his own. Now let the young Count tell you the story of his hunt and then his night alone on the prairie in his own words. He after all thought he said hola, while Irving was certain he said halloo. Remember, the buffalo tongue is the premier piece of meat. Also remember, meat of the buffalo bull was tough and it was stringy. The young Count told his family about the hunt.

I pulled the trigger—Oh, fury! Only the firing cap went off! . . . At that humiliating point, I thought of another difficulty which had not occurred to me before. Where were my companions? Where were the riflemen camped? . . . since morning I had made so many detours, had run about so much, and had especially in the last hour, wandered around . . . until I was unable to recognize a single reference point . . . And the sun was sinking. Until it set, I wandered about in all directions, shouting occasionally and then listening in vain for a human sound. . . . in my ignorance of the terrain each step could take me farther from the others, I made a wise decision. I tied my horse’s legs to keep him from going off too far; then I climbed an elm that had thick branches. I made a good easy-chair of my saddle, and thanks to my fatigue I soon fell asleep. Although the nights were cold, I did not light a fire for two reasons. First of all, I did not have the necessary materials; the, even if I had had, it was safer not to light one since there was no way of knowing if there were Pawnees nearby. . . . I was awakened once or twice by a concert of wolves, who howled in the thicket about twenty paces from me. . . . At daybreak I saddled my horse and went up and down the countryside, always keeping in sight of the tree where I had spent the night and to which my tracks might lead those who would be sent to find me. . . . I returned to my tree at noon.

. . . Suddenly I heard a rifle shot. Nimble as a squirrel, I climbed to the top of my elm in a flash. With the aid of my glass, I made out two horsemen heading toward my tree. I immediately shouted the most powerful “hola” that had ever come from the lungs of your youngest son. To my great joy, my shout was heard. Soon I saw other riders. Then panting with joy, I climbed down from the tree, got on my horse, and galloped off to meet them. CP 71 72 74

. . . Capt enjoined upon each ones mess to jerk buffaloe meat, to guard against want . . . few have complied with the requisition . . . HLE 128

That afternoon, everyone was happy. Prairie dogs were close to camp.

. . . I determined to pay a visit . . . The prairie dog is . . . about the size of a rabbit. He is of a sprightly

mercurial nature; quick, sensitive, and somewhat petulant . . . living in large communities . . . continually full of sport, business, and public affairs . . . on gossiping visits to each other's houses, or congregating in the cool of the evening . . . they pass half the night in revelry, barking or yelping . . . however, should there be the least alarm, they all vanish . . . In case they are hard pressed by their pursuers . . . they will assume a pugnacious air, and a most whimsical look of important wrath and defiance . . . Owls and rattlesnakes . . . take up their abodes with them . . . As to the rattlesnake, nothing satisfactory has been ascertained of the part he plays in this most interesting household . . . he is now and then detected with one of the younger members of the family in his maw. WI 191

Irving visited the village which had far too many visitors that day and were on guard. Imagine all those little fellows doing somersets (somersaults) for the entertainment of their Touring audience.

At sight of us, the picket guards scampered in a gave the alarm; whereupon every inhabitant gave a short yelp, or bark, and dived into his hole, his heels twinkling in the air as if he had thrown a somerset . . . not a whisker of an inhabitant was to be seen. . . . Moving quietly to a little distance, we lay down upon the ground and watched for a long time, silent and motionless. By and by, a cautious old burgher would slowly put forth the end of his nose, but instantly draw it in again. Another, at a greater distance, would emerge entirely; but catching a glance of use, would throw a somerset, and plunge back into his hole. At length, some . . . taking courage from the continued stillness, would steal forth, and hurry off to a distant hole, the residence possibly of some family connection, or gossiping friend . . . Others, still more bold, assembled in little knots, in the streets and public places, as if to discuss the recent outrages offered to the commonwealth . . . WI 191 192

J. C. Latrobe was also fascinated with the prairie dogs and shared the same stories Irving did. His initial comments are purely his, using his scientific view of the world as he traveled.

. . . nothing diverted us more than a part of the smooth prairies near our camp, where, for the space of many acres, the surface was marked by the mounds raised by a strange little animal, vulgarly and absurdly called the prairie-dog. CJL 89

After a successful day that included bringing home the lost Count and seeing the home of the dog republicans, Latrobe reveled in a mellow and happy evening.

Our camp was that night once more a scene of good humour, contentment and joyous pastime. Tonish had crowned the success of the day, capturing another foal; and, in the best humour with himself, put forth all his cunning in the preparation of sundry delicacies, to the enjoyment of which no one had as good a right as Pourtalès, after the preceding day's fast and redundant exercise. Though the barking, howling, and yelping, of the wolves seemed to be yet greater on this second night of their feast than the preceding, not one complained of being disturbed by it. CJL 81

⇒ NORMAN

- Continue on I 35 to OK 9 and turn left/east.
- On OK 9 you are in Norman.
- Take a short trip to the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History. The Museum is on Chautauqua and Timberdell Road

On the morning of October 31, Halloween, it was decided that it was time to head to Fort Gibson as quickly and as easily as was possible. A good day's journey for the horses was fifteen miles. It was more than a week therefore before they would even see Fort Gibson.

The want of bread had been felt severely . . . wearied with constant travel . . . It was determined . . . to give up all further progress, and . . . to make the best of our way back to Fort Gibson. WI 194

You can take a side trip to the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History to see more about 832 Oklahoma. Turn right/north on Lindsey Street. Turn left/west on Chautauqua Avenue. The Museum is on Chautauqua and Timberdell Road.

Norman, Oklahoma | Sam Noble, Oklahoma Museum of Natural History

1832 The prairies from Midwest City to Noble were the setting for an exhilarating, frightening, and successful buffalo hunt.

1887 The Norman switch and Camp Norman were established on the railroad tracks through the Unassigned Lands.

1889 When Norman was opened for settlement, some jumped the gun and were called Sooners.

1890 The University of Oklahoma was chartered. Its football song will begin "Boomer Sooner!"

1931 University of Oklahoma Professor, Dr. J. Willis Stovall, found the skeleton of a brontosaurus and brought it back to his small museum.

1987 The Stovall Museum, not even big enough for the mammoth skeleton to stand erect, became the Oklahoma Museum of Natural History.

2000 Due to an important gift from an excellent Oklahoma family, the museum is now the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History. The museum's collection when not on exhibit is in the J. Willis Stovall Heritage Preservation Center.

Hungry days were ahead for all the Tourists, all the rangers, and all the guides. It was more than a week before they were back where they began, Fort Gibson.

[Go to Stage 6 of the Tour](#) ⇨