

## Stage 6

Starting at the Sam Noble Museum in Norman.  
East on Highway 9, Cross Little River  
North and east to Tecumseh, south of Shawnee  
Pass Earlsboro and Seminole  
Cross Interstate 40 and the North Canadian River Pass Prague, Paden, Boley, and Okemah  
Cross the Deep Fork to Okmulgee  
Through Muskogee  
Cross the Arkansas River, the Verdigris River, the Grand River  
Ending at Fort Gibson

### ⇒ **LAKE THUNDERBIRD PARK**

- Leave the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History in Norman.
- Turn left/south on Chautauqua and continue to OK 9.
- Turn left/east on OK 9.
- When you reach Thunderbird Lake, turn left into the park.
- Travel back to OK 9 and turn left/east.

### ⇒ **LITTLE AXE**

- Continue east toward Little Axe on OK 9.

### ⇒ **PINK** ✓

- Continue east toward Pink on OK 9.

### ⇒ **TECUMSEH**

- Continue east on OK 9 toward Tecumseh.

### ⇒ **SHAWNEE**

- To visit Shawnee, turn left/north on OK 270.
- The Irving Plaque is at 614 East Main Street.
- Retrace your route back to OK 9.

### ⇒ **EARLSBORO**

- Continue east toward Earlsboro on OK 9.

### ⇒ **SEMINOLE**

- Continue east toward Seminole on OK 9 and OK 99.
- Turn left/north on OK 99.

⇒ **PRAGUE**

- Continue north on OK 99 toward Prague.

⇒ **PADEN**

- Turn right/east on OK 62.
- Continue east toward Paden.

⇒ **BOLEY**

- Continue east on OK 62 toward Boley.

⇒ **CASTLE**

- Continue east on OK 62 toward Castle.

⇒ **OKEMAH**

- Continue east on OK 62 toward Okemah.

⇒ **OKMULGEE**

- Turn left/north on OK 56 in Okemah.
- Continue north on OK 56.
- Cross Nuyaka Creek and the Deep Fork.
- When you reach Okmulgee turn left/east on 6<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Pass directly by the former Capitol of the Muscogee Creek Nation.
- Continue east on 6<sup>th</sup> Street and travel 1.7 miles to a jog in the road at Mission.
- Turn right/east as you reach the OSU campus.
- Continue on the Old Morris Highway which will become OK 62.

⇒ **BOYNTON**

- Continue on OK 62 past Boynton.

⇒ **TAFT**

- Continue on OK 62.
- Pass over Cane Creek.
- Continue to Highway 16 and turn right/east.
- Pass over Cloud Creek.
- Continue on OK 16/62 another 1.5 miles until you see the sign for the Jess Dunn Correctional Center.
- Turn left/north toward Taft.
- Turn right/east on Taft Road.
- Cross Pecan Creek.

⇒ **MUSKOGEE**

- Continue east on Taft Road until you are back on OK 16/62.
- Continue through the outskirts of Muskogee on OK 62.
- Turn left/north on OK 69.

⇒ **OKAY**

- Travel north on OK 69. Cross the Arkansas River.
- Turn right/east on Old Porter Road to OK 16.
- Cross the New Verdigris River Bridge.

⇒ **FORT GIBSON**

- Turn right/south on Three Rivers Road.
- Continue south on Three Rivers Road which will turn left/west for about a mile.
- Turn right/south on County Road N4340.
- Turn right/east on County Road E0830 and continue to the Grand River Bridge.
- Cross the Grand River to Fort Gibson.

*Enjoy!*

## ⇒ LAKE THUNDERBIRD PARK

- Leave the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History in Norman.
- Turn left/south on Chautauqua and continue to OK 9.
- Turn left/east on OK 9.
- When you reach Thunderbird Lake, turn left into the park.
- Travel back to OK 9 and turn left/east.

On October 31, the Tourists started out along the line of the Little River.

*. . . we accordingly started, under the guidance of Beatte, who . . . knew the direct route to the garrison . . . For some distance, we skirted the prairie . . . we saw a variety of wild animals, deer, white and black wolves, buffaloes, and wild horses.* WI 195

They followed the Little River. Your 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tour makes a left turn just beyond Norman. Private land is between you and the course of Little River. You will cross it again. The Cross Timbers again raised a brambly and tangly guise.

*. . . we left the prairie, and struck . . . through a ragged tract of country, overgrown with scrubbed forests and entangled thickets and intersected by deep ravines, and brisk-running streams, the sources of the Little River. About three o'clock, we encamped by some pools of water in a small valley, having come about fourteen miles.* WI 196

It was at or near Thunderbird Park that Irving camped on Halloween, October 31, 1832. Here they ate beignets, with the flour gone?

*We had brought on a supply of provisions from our last camp, and supped heartily upon stewed buffalo meat, roasted venison, beignets, or fritters of flour fried in bear's lard, and tea made of . . . goldenrod, which we had found, throughout our whole route, almost as grateful a beverage as coffee.* WI 196

Coffee was an accompaniment to every meal as long as it held out. It was appreciated, but not at every encampment.

*(Coffee) was roasted in a frying-pan, without much care, pounded in leather bag, with a round stone, and boiled in . . . the camp-kettle, in "branch' or brook was; which on the prairies, is deeply colored by the soil, of which it always hold abundant particles in a state of solution . . . we had tasted the quality of every variety of soil, and the draughts of water we had taken might vie in diversity of color, if not of flavor, with the tinctures of an apothecary's shop.* WI 197

The first daybreak of November of 1832 was beautiful and the camp was cheerful as the bugle sounded and they started the march.

## ⇒ LITTLE AXE

- Continue east toward Little Axe on OK 9.

You can stop at Little River where it crosses Highway 9, but Thunderbird Lake is the place to visit and look around. The parkland at Lake Thunderbird is perhaps not the exact spot of the October 31 encampment, but it is a good place to stop and feel 1832. You can do most of what Americans like to do outdoors. If you are at Thunderbird in autumn, the feeling of the Tour is unmistakable. Here you can see the despised Cross- Timbers up close and personal, yet without pain. The fact that the 1832 Tourists could hardly distinguish the river from

the flood, makes the lovely lake formed by Little River's waters an even more evocative spot for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tourist to rest and to see 1832.

## ⇒ PINK

- Continue east toward Pink on OK 9.

They slogged on.

*. . . gayety, however, soon died away amidst the fatigues of our march, which lay through the same kind of rough, hilly, thicketed country as that of yesterday . . . (the Little River) had overflowed its banks, and inundated a great part of the valley. The difficulty was to distinguish the stream from the broad sheets of water it had formed, and to find a place where it might be forded . . . we all crossed Little River, with water and mire to the saddle-girths . . .* WI 197 198

## ⇒ TECUMSEH

- Continue east on OK 9 toward Tecumseh.

Tecumseh may be the camp of the apple green sunset. Stop at Slick-Humphrey Park on the left/north just before you get to Tecumseh. This Tecumseh park might be where Irving camped on November 1. As they traveled on toward home, they noticed that even the ravines were of red clay. All were famished for more than meat and they gathered sloes and persimmons with eagerness. Stop at Slick Humphrey Park on the left/north just before you get to Tecumseh. This park has the needed stream. What it was like in 1832, can only be conjecture. Here is a good place to stop and imagine.

*. . . we encamped near a brook in a meadow . . . The horizon, after sunset, was of a clear apple green, rising into a delicate lake which gradually lost itself in a deep purple blue. One narrow streak of cloud, of a mahogany color, edged with amber and gold, floated in the west, and just beneath it was the evening star, shining with the pure brilliancy of a diamond . . . The night that succeeded was calm and beautiful. There was a faint light from the moon, now in its second quarter, and after it had set, a fine starlight, with shooting meteors . . . I felt this night unusually affected by the solemn magnificence of the firmament; and seemed, as I lay thus under the open vault of heaven, to inhale with the pure untainted air, an exhilarating buoyancy of spirit, and, as it were, an ecstasy of mind.* WI 201

The plaque marking the November 1 campsite was once on the highway close to Tecumseh, but is now in Shawnee. Shawnee is north of the North Canadian River Irving says that the Tour did not cross this river until November 3. If you want to see the plaque, take the trip north to Shawnee.



## ⇒ SHAWNEE

- To visit Shawnee, turn left/north on OK 270.
- The Irving Plaque is at 614 East Main Street.
- Retrace your route back to OK 9.

You might also want to see what has become of the Sacred Heart Abbey that Benedictine Monks founded. It has become the beautiful and flourishing St. Gregory's University. Irving was now seven days from Fort Gibson. Tecumseh is named for a Shawnee chief, one of the most charismatic and appealing of American Indians. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tecumseh is within a few miles of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century city of Shawnee.

## ⇒ EARLSBORO

- Continue east toward Earlsboro on OK 9.

Irving and his friends woke and it was November 2 and they were six days from a marvelous feast and seven days from Fort Gibson.

*The country . . . this morning, was less rugged, and of more agreeable aspect . . . we came out upon an extensive prairie, and about six miles to our left beheld a long line of green forest, marking the course of the north fork of the Arkansas . . . Commissioner Ellsworth gave a graphic, but masked view of the signs and hieroglyphics they saw on the trees at the noon camp.*

*. . . The Creek Indians have a very indecent manner of making pictures on the trees. The wood is first cut off, and with paints they represent the warrior in such attitudes of amorous feeling in going or returning as may be indicative of their true sensations, but very abhorrent to every principle of modesty or virtue—I forbear giving details—* HLE 136

Irving only goes so far as to call them rude.

*. . . in a spacious grove of noble trees which overshadowed a small brook, were the traces of an old Creek hunting camp. On the bark of the trees were rude delineations of hunters and squaws, scrawled with charcoal; together with various signs and hieroglyphics . . . we made our mid-day halt.* W1 202 203

Incredible stories are told about the heyday of Oklahoma Oil Boomtowns. Tecumseh, Earlsboro, and Seminole drew people from everywhere when oil was discovered. They were muddy places, nearly enough mud to match the oil coming from the ground. Producing oil wells have been all the Tour as you travel out and back from Fort Gibson.

## Earlsboro, Seminole, Tecumseh Oil Boomtowns

**1832** Irving and friends were in rapid retreat from the West.

**1857?** Seminole Nation received lands separate from the Muscogee Creek Nation.

**1867** Pottawatomie and Absentee Shawnee received land in Oklahoma.

**1871** Act of Congress secured the major part of Pottawatomie County for Pottawatomies and Absentee Shawnees.

**1891** Pottawatomie and Absentee Shawnee Lands were opened for settlement. Tecumseh's US Post Office opened.

**1895** The Earlsboro Post Office opened.

**1902** US Post Office opened in Tidmore.

**1907** US Post Office name changed from Tidmore to Seminole.

**1926** The first of the Greater Seminole oil pools was discovered.

**1927** The Earlsboro, Searight, Bowlegs, and Little River Pools were discovered. 20,000 oil field workers flooded the area turning all the pools into boomtowns.

## ⇒ SEMINOLE

- Continue east toward Seminole on OK 9 and OK 99.
- Turn left/north on OK 99.

Irving continued over better territory. He misspoke about the river he saw. It was actually the North Canadian, a river the party had crossed going south. Irving and friends left the Creek campground after lunch. Irving camped near the North Canadian River on November 2.

*We resumed our march about one o'clock, keeping easterly, and approaching the north fork obliquely; it was late before we found a good camping-place; the beds of the streams were dry, the prairies too, had been burnt in various places . . . At length we found water in a small alluvial bottom, where there was tolerable pasturage.* W1 203

## ⇒ PRAGUE

- **Continue north on OK 99 toward Prague.**

In Prague, you might like to take a side trip to Bohemian Hall, a site on the National Register of Historical Places. Remember, the young Count owned vast lands in Bohemia. Prague was named for Prague, capital of the Czech Republic. Bohemia is an area in the former joint Czech Republic and Slovakia, once Czechoslovakia.

*. . . he is heir . . . to a large estate in Switzerland & Bohemia!!* HLE 48

## ⇒ PADEN

- **Turn right/east on OK 62.**
- **Continue east toward Paden.**

The party was pushing hard for home. Now they were hungry and cold. Lightning, and low, rumbling thunder announced November 3.

## ⇒ BOLEY

- **Continue east on OK 62 toward Boley.**

On November 3, Irving and friends crossed the North Canadian at about 9:00 and made camp at about one. They needed time to hunt. They were hungry. This campsite was not described, but Boley Creek looks promising. The night was stormy. Fires roared. Geese soared. Latrobe, the Virtuoso, described the crossing of the North Canadian. At the crossing of this stream, there were still many weary days to Fort Gibson.

*We forded the north fork of the Canadian and encamped . . . that our hunters might have time to beat up the neighborhood for game; for a serious scarcity began to prevail in the camp. Most of the rangers were young, heedless, and inexperienced . . . On leaving an encampment, they would leave quantities of meat lying about, trust to Providence and their rifles for a future supply . . . any temporary scarcity of game, or ill luck in hunting, produced almost a famine . . . In the present instance, they had left loads of buffalo meat at the camp on the great prairie . . . they were now destitute of supplies, and pinched with hunger . . . The rangers began to think turkeys and even prairie hens deserving of attention . . . The night was cold and windy, with occasional sprinklings of rain; but we had roaring fires to keep us comfortable. In the night, a flight of wild geese passed over the camp, making a great cackling in the air; symptoms of approaching winter.* W1 204

Read the Historical Marker beside Highway 62 on the way into Boley. The Boley business district is a National Historic Landmark. Boley Creek would make a good campsite. The trip out of Boley matches the description of morning of November 4. Champaign country is just what you see as you leave Boley on Highway 62.

*We set forward at an early hour the next morning, in a northeast course . . . We entered upon a fine champaign country. From a rising ground we had a noble prospect, over extensive prairies, finely diversified by groves and tracts of woodland, and bounded by long lines of distant hills, all clothed with the rich mellow tints of autumn.* W1 204

## ⇒ OKEMAH

- **Continue on OK 62 toward Okemah.**

Drive into the middle of Okemah to the park next to the Crystal Theater, a remnant of the boom days. As you leave town, look around at the champaign country.

*A fine buck sprang up . . . and dashed off at full speed; but a young ranger . . . discharged a ball that broke the neck of the bounding deer, and sent him tumbling head over heels forward.* WI 204 205

## ⇒ OKMULGEE

- **Turn left/north on OK 56 in Okemah.**
- **Continue north on OK 56.**
- **Cross Nuyaka Creek and the Deep Fork.**
- **When you reach Okmulgee turn left/east on 6th Street.**
- **Pass directly by the former Capitol of the Muscogee Creek Nation.**
- **Continue east on 6th Street and travel 1.7 miles to a jog in the road at Mission.**
- **Turn right/east as you reach the OSU campus.**
- **Continue on the Old Morris Highway which will become OK 62.**

Stop and enjoy the beauty of Nuyaka Creek. Irving's camp site was perhaps on Nuyaka Creek on November 4. Irving was just too tired that night to write about stars, champaign country, or even his lovely horse. Maybe one paragraph could be written, that was all. Maybe a paragraph about the horses could be written before sleep.



*About three o'clock we encamped in a grove after a forced march of twenty-five miles . . . the rest kept straggling in, two and three at a time . . . In the night there was a heavy rain, and the morning dawned cloudy and dismal. The camp resounded, however, with something of its former gayety. The rangers had supped well, and were renovated in spirits . . .* WI 205

You might take a side trip to see the remains of the old Nuyaka Mission. It was listed on the Mission Time Line when you passed Tullahassee the first day of the Tour.

Stop at Okmulgee Lake Park and Dripping Springs Park. Stop when you reach the Deep Fork of the Canadian. Irving perhaps camped on November 5 on the west side of the Deep Fork. You will see the dam for the lake and glimpses of the lake itself from Highway 56. Both parks are on Dripping Springs Road. Turn off highway 56 to your right/south where the signs direct you. These parks, coming just before you reach the Deep Fork, are beautiful and give a glimpse of a state of nature on an Arkansas tributary. As they approached the Deep Fork on November 5, Irving and the Commissioner and their friends continued to suffer.

*We . . . had a day of weary and harassing travel; part of the time over rough hills, and part over rolling prairies. The rain had rendered the soil slippery and plashy . . . the rangers dismounted, their horses having no longer strength to bear them . . . Our troop presented a forlorn appearance straggling slowly along, in a broken and scattered line, that extended over hill and dale, for three miles and upward, in groups of three and four, widely apart; some on horseback, some on foot, with a few laggards far in the rear.* WI 205 206

Another way to see 1832 in an even more natural state is to turn off Highway 56 to the Deep Fork National

Wildlife Refuge which covers 8,696 acres. About 85% is bottomland hardwood forest, an ecosystem that is fast disappearing. It also contains remnants of the Cross-Timbers. It is tricky to get to, but you can get there. Look toward the left/north and you will see a water plant. Turn there at the old highway. Go past the water plant and continue to the Refuge.

*About four o'clock, we halted for the night in a spacious forest, beside a deep narrow river, called the Little North Fork, or Deep Creek . . . As this stream was too deep to be forded, we waited until the next day to devise means to cross it . . . the stream was evidently swelling. The night was cold and unruly; the wind sounding hoarsely through the forest . . . We made long fires of great trunks of trees, which diffused something of consolation if not cheerfulness . . . The rich woody bottom in which we were encamped abounded with wild turkeys, of which a considerable number were killed . . . preparations were made for crossing the river, which had risen several feet during the night; and it was determined to fell trees . . . to serve as bridges. The Captain . . . singled out a couple of the largest size . . . The axe was then vigorously applied to their roots, in such a way as to insure their falling directly across the stream. As they did not reach to the opposite bank, it was necessary for some of the men to swim across and fell trees on the other side to meet them. They at length succeeded in making a precarious footway across the deep and rapid current . . . it was necessary to grope our way step by step . . . we were to our waists in water.* WI 206 207

Latrobe also found this river difficult to maneuver.

*– the North Fork, and the Deep Creek, which seems to identify itself with the Little North Fork of the Canadian . . . its great depth and swiftness precluded all idea of fording . . . a temporary bridge contrived by felling two tall gigantic trees on either side, in such a manner, that when they fell across the stream their top branches interlocked upon and below the surface; so that you might . . . scramble along the trunk, and from the boughs of the one into the other.* CIL 82 83

Commissioner Ellsworth told the story from the immediate crossing.

*I entered the water, oh! How cold! . . . I was forced to walk slow and circumspectly as my foundation was a teetering log 3 ½ feet under the water . . .* HLE 140

Everyone headed on in the direction of Fort Gibson. It was serious. Hunger and weariness stalked everyone. The horses gave out. Irving wrote nothing and camped with little pleasure on November 6. Still they camped somewhere. Perhaps the campsite was on the very grounds of the old Muscogee Creek Capital. More likely the campsite was farther along toward the fort.

## Okmulgee | Capital of the Muscogee Creek Nation

**1828** Muscogee Creek Indians began to arrive in the West.

**1832** Washington Irving was hungry and tired and getting cold.

**1836** US Troops forced the remaining Muscogee Creeks to Oklahoma.

**1868** The Muscogee Creeks lost half of their land after the Civil War.

**1869** The Muscogee people adopted a written constitution. A new capital was established on the Deep Fork of the Canadian in Okmulgee.

**1878** The native stone Council House was built and remains in the center of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Okmulgee.

**1898** The Curtis Act called for the dismantling of tribal governments and the allotment of excess Indian lands.

**1971** The Muscogee people elected a Principal Chief without Presidential approval.

None of the journalists wrote anything at all about the night of November 6.

*It was a little after one o'clock when we again resumed our weary wayfaring. The residue of that day and the whole of the next were spent in toilsome travel . . . Our poor horses were so feeble, that it was with difficulty we could get them across the deep ravines and turbulent streams. In traversing the miry plains, they slipped and staggered at every step, and most of us were obliged to dismount and walk for the greater part of the way. Hunger prevailed . . .* WI 208

About this time Beatte climbed a tree at the crest of a hill and looked ahead. He saw forest stretching across the county. He knew it was the Arkansas River. They were maybe forty miles away.

*. . . we soon saw smoke rising from a woody glen at a distance . . . joyfully hailed as a harbinger of man . . . our hungry rangers trudged forward with reviving spirit, regaling themselves with savory anticipations of farm-house luxuries . . . their mouths fairly watered at the shadowy feasts thus conjured up.* WI 209

## ⇒ **BOYNTON**

- **Continue on OK 62 past Boynton.**

It is perhaps near Boynton and one of the many creeks in the area that Irving camped on November 7. Cloud Creek is a possibility for the miserable hunger camp. Irving slept cold and awakened to deep frost and frozen water. Irving saw the results of a hurricane in the campsite, though narrow columns of damage would indicate a tornado. There would be no warnings out on the prairies for many, many decades.

*A hungry night, however, closed in upon a toilsome day. We encamped on the border of one of the tributary streams of the Arkansas, amidst the ruins of a stately grove that had been riven by a hurricane. The blast had torn its way through the forest in a narrow column, and its course was marked by enormous trees shivered and splintered, and upturned, with their roots in the air . . . Here was fuel in abundance . . . we had soon immense fires blazing and sparkling in the frost air, and lighting up the whole forest; but alas! We had no meat to cook at them. The scarcity in the camp almost amounted to famine . . . we were more lucky at our mess than our neighbors; one of our men having shot a turkey. We had no bread to eat with it, nor salt to season it . . . we were fain to rub each morsel of the turkey on the empty salt-bag, in hopes some saline particle might remain . . . The night was biting cold; the brilliant moonlight sparkled on the frosty crystals which covered every object around us. The water froze . . . and in the morning I found the blanket in which I was wrapped covered with a hoar frost; yet I had never slept more comfortably.* WI 209 210

The Commissioner wasn't at all happy that night in the Hunger Camp.

*Our evening was unpleasant – the ground & trees were wet – it was very late before we got a fire – of course our supper was late – it was so simple it did not take long to cook it – a piece of boiled turkey – without coffee flour or salt – but we were hungry and relished it . . .* HLE 141 142

And as light dawned, circumstances did not get better.

*After a shadow of a breakfast, consisting of turkey bones and a cup of coffee without sugar, we decamped at an early hour; for hunger is a sharp quickener on a journey. The prairies were all gemmed with frost, that covered the tall weeds and glistened in the sun . . . Every step became a labor; every now and then a miserable horse would give out and lie down . . .* WI 210

## ⇒ TAFT

- Continue on OK 62.
- Pass over Cane Creek.
- Continue to Highway 16 and turn right/east.
- Pass over Cloud Creek.
- Continue on OK 16/62 another 1.5 miles until you see the sign for the Jess Dunn Correctional Center.
- Turn left/north toward Taft.
- Turn right/east on Taft Road.
- Cross Pecan Creek.

Taft is a historic black community. It is poetic and gratifying that Irving's savior on the morning of November 8 was a black farmer's wife. The party left Cloud Creek and passed a Creek Indian settlement of a few log houses. The rangers searched ahead for food. Irving followed after them. Then they arrived at or near Taft. Then they met Madam Bradleys.

*. . . my once fleet and generous steed faltered under me, and was just able to drag one foot after the other, yet I was too weary to spare him . . . on turning a thick clump of trees, a frontier farm-house suddenly presented itself to view . . . overshadowed by great forest trees . . . a stable and barn, and granaries teeming with abundance, while legions of grunting swine, gobbling turkeys, cackling hens and strutting roosters swarmed . . . There sat the Captain of the rangers and his officers, round a three-legged table, crowned by a broad and smoking dish of boiled beef and turnips . . . the mistress of the house . . . lugged from the fire a huge iron pot . . . Placing a brown earthen dish on the floor, she inclined the corpulent caldron on one side, and out leaped sundry morsels of beef, with a regiment of turnips tumbling after them, and a rich cascade of broth overflowing the whole. This she handed me . . . apologizing for our humble fare, and the humble style in which it was served up. Humble fare! Humble style! To think of apologizing for such a treat to a half-starved man from the prairies; and then such magnificent slices of bread and butter! W1 213*

Not only did the Tourists eat in full, the horses raided the corncribs. Henry Leavitt Ellsworth was ecstatic. His meal was somehow pork, not beef, but both remembered the turnips. Irving doesn't mention payment, just gratitude. The Commissioner mentions gratitude, also payment.

*We determined now to stop at the first place where there was anything to eat for man or beast – and we found such a place . . . Capt Beans & three others had got in before us and were seated at a table eating – if it is wicked to covet, I committed the sin – I asked for a plate and got some boiled turnips potatoes pork and Corn bread & butter – I never eat faster or more to my satisfaction – I cannot describe my pleasure at eating – for all, I paid one bit 12 ½ cents – this was done most cheerfully . . . HLE 143*

## ⇒ MUSKOGEE

- Continue east on Taft Road until you are back on OK 16/62.
- Continue through the outskirts of Muskogee on OK 62.
- Turn left/north on OK 69.

On November 8, Irving crossed the Arkansas River for the second time.

*A ride of about a mile brought me to . . . the banks of the Arkansas . . . A number of Creek Indians in their brightly colored dresses . . . were busy aiding our men . . . we embarked in the canoe, and swam our horses across the river. I was fearful, lest in their enfeebled state, they should not be able to stem the current; but in their banquet of Indian corn had already infused fresh life and spirit into them . . . W1 213 214*

## ⇒ OKAY

- **Travel north on OK 69. Cross the Arkansas River.**
- **Turn right/east on Old Porter Road to OK 16.**
- **Cross the New Verdigris River Bridge.**

The horses were quick to take off when they crossed the Arkansas River. The most persistent thought now for man and horse was, “Let’s get this to an end!”

*. . . no sooner had we landed . . . than they set off on a hard-gallop, and continued so for a great part of seven miles . . .* WI 214

The travelers were now back to the site of the first day of the Tour. This is the place that Irving connected with the young Count and his companion. This is the mercantile establishment of Colonel Auguste Pierre Chouteau. Irving will not actually spend the night in the Agency, but, Irving slept inside on the night of November 8.

*. . . we arrived at the Agency . . . Here we passed the night comfortable . . . yet . . . the confinement of a chamber was in some respects, irksome. The atmosphere seemed close, and destitute of freshness; and when I woke in the night and gazed about me upon complete darkness, I missed the glorious companionship of the stars.* WI 214

When they arrived at Colonel Chouteau’s trading post, he offered them something they have not tasted for nearly a month. Ever the moralist, Ellsworth anticipated the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Prohibition.

*We were cordially greeted, by our kind friends her and soon joined them in a supper where much more was provided than left – we were offered some cordials which we tasted. And let me add on(e) word in favor of the temperance cause – our army were certainly exposed to many hardships – but not a drop of liquor was taken with us, nor a drop craved to my knowledge – Had our men got access to liquor, when they were wet & fatigued & a little ailing, I have no doubt many would never have returned alive –* HLE 144

The days since October 31 had been a long, hard march. Hunger and sickness plagued men and horses. At the Three Forks, the worst was over. Only a few miles until Irving and Ellsworth reached Fort Gibson. Mr. Latrobe described the weary and worn Tourists as they arrived at Colonel Chouteau’s. A surtout is a long overcoat.

*. . . though we all enjoyed excellent health, our wardrobe had reached the lowest degree of poverty . . . The Commissioner’s dignity was completely shrouded in a common soldier’s great-coat and pantaloons. Mr. Irving was clad in a suit of shirt armour, or to speak plainly, wore a strong holland shirt over his surtout; and one tail of the latter had been left in the embraces of the Cross Timbers. Certain of Poutalès’ integument fluttered in the wind; and as to myself, though cased in buck-skin from head to foot, there were too many signs of wear and tear in my vestments to allow me any degree of self-congratulation over my fellows.* CJL 84

*We were welcomed to the luxuries of maize-bread, sugar, salt, and log-huts . . .* CJL 85

## ⇒ FORT GIBSON

- **Turn right/south on Three Rivers Road.**
- **Continue south on Three Rivers Road which will turn left/west for about a mile.**
- **Turn right/south on County Road N4340.**
- **Turn right/east on County Road E0830 and continue to the Grand River Bridge.**
- **Cross the Grand River to Fort Gibson.**

Irving returned to Fort Gibson on November 9 after his Tour. This is the sight you see today as you prepare to cross the Grand River and return to the Fort.

This long ago Tour indeed shaped the lives of the Tourists. Irving's journal of the Tour enhanced his already splendid reputation. The rangers surely told stories about this Tour to their children, their grandchildren, their great-grandchildren. The guides also must have told their tales. We know Tonish did. The young Count and his friend Latrobe stayed at the Three Forks for a while after Irving and Ellsworth left for Fort Gibson.



*I have left my pony and my horse with Colonel Chouteau . . . until next year . . . (the Osages) have adopted me as a brother, so that next year I shall be at home among them. This ceremony consists of smoking a calumet together . . . the one who adopts you as his brother takes your hand, holds it for a long time, and shakes it warmly. He makes a long speech, in which the word "nisonga," my brother, comes up time and time again. CP 76*

He ordered new costumes from an amiable Creek family with two charming girls with whom "I almost fell in love." His letter home explains all.

*. . . I am sending a Creek summer costume. It consists of a print shirt of elegant cut . . . a pair of trousers made by Miss Polly, a very likeable Creek girl, a game bag embroidered with glass beads . . . a pair of moccasins made by your son. Next year, without fail, I shall send a deerskin hunting costume. CP 80*

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