DRIVING/BIKING ROUTE FOR INTERPRETED 5.8-MILE TOUR

OF THE WESTERN PORTION OF THE ROSEMARK-KERRVILLE HERITAGE LOOP

Rural Heritage Trust of Southwest Tennessee, Inc.

Revised July 15, 2020

The Rural Heritage Trust of Southwest Tennessee (“RHT”) has developed the following 5.8-mile tour of the western portion of the Rosemark-Kerrville Heritage Loop. The RHT plans to develop multiple interpreted tours of this route centered on themes such as agriculture, the Civil War, African-American history, transportation, education/culture, commerce/politics, etc. Thus, the narrative below is an introduction to the rich history of the area that will be developed more fully and in a more focused way for each themed tour.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mileage  of Leg | Cue | Description | Cumulative  Mileage |
| 0.3 | Left | Begin at Edmund Orgill Golf Course parking lot, 9080 Bethuel Road, Kerrville/Millington. Restrooms and hot and cold snacks and beverages are available in the clubhouse, which is county-owned and open to the public. Explore the adjacent park and 62-acre Casper Lake now or when you complete the route. To begin, exit the golf course parking lot by turning right onto Bethuel Road. Head north on Bethuel to Mudville Road and turn left. Mudville Road was part of the original Randolph-LaGrange Road. | 0.3 |
| 0.8 | Left | Travel west on Mudville Road, past historic Kerrville Presbyterian Church Cemetery, established around 1880, and continue to the western terminus of Mudville Road. You are now in the main part of Kerrville, an unincorporated community named for the Reverend Andrew Hart Kerr (1812-1883), a prominent local resident and moderator of the 1866 Southern Presbyterian Church General Assembly. To attract the railroad to this area, he donated 44 acres of land, 100,000 bricks for a depot, and $3,500 in cash in the 1870’s. As a result of the donation of bricks, for many years the Kerrville Depot was the only brick depot between Memphis and Chicago. Turn left onto North Kerrville-Rosemark Road. | 1.1 |
| 0.6 |  | On the left, see historic Kerrville Presbyterian Church, originally called Delta Presbyterian Church, founded in 1857 by Reverend Kerr. The original one-room log church burned, and the second structure was destroyed by a tornado in 1917. Seven years later, the current church building was erected. (Note the Tennessee Historical Commission marker on the church grounds). Nearby is the former writing studio of George Halsey Gillham, who drew on Kerrville area history in writing his book for young people, *The Adventures of William Tucker in a Shantyboat on the Mississippi*, published in 1927. Immediately ahead on the right is Kerrville Methodist Church, built around 1914. In the area between the church and present-day U.S. Highway 51 was the Kerrville Hotel and the Kerrville Fairgrounds, site of the Shelby-Tipton Fair from 1869 to 1894, when the buildings burned. Six black men who were suspects in setting that fire were lynched on September 1, 1894, while they were under arrest and being transported from Kerrville to the Shelby County Jail in Memphis. After viewing the Methodist Church, turn around and head back the way you came on North Kerrville-Rosemark Road. (North Kerrville-Rosemark Road is a dead-end road and does not connect with the other portions of Kerrville-Rosemark Road referenced in the other tours.) Go past the intersection with Mudville Road and continue on North Kerrville-Rosemark as it curves left. Cross the railroad tracks. Learn about the various railroad companies that have owned and used these tracks, including the Paducah & Memphis Railroad, the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad, the Newport News & Mississippi Valley Railroad, the Illinois Central Railroad, and now the Canadian Pacific Railroad. See the site of the old Kerrville Gin, established in 1876 and powered initially by steam and later by electricity, the Bank of Kerrville, which operated from 1919 until 1927, and the old Densford Store, which was built in 1910 and is now occupied by Pig & Whistle Barbecue Restaurant. At the old Densford Store, turn around and head back towards the east on North Kerrville-Rosemark Road. Cross the railroad tracks again. Immediately after you cross the railroad tracks, turn left onto Old Tipton Road. | 1.7 |
| 1.3 | Right | While on Old Tipton Road, which runs adjacent to the railroad tracks for about one-half mile, look to your left to see the former site of the depot. The first run on these tracks from Memphis to Covington occurred on July 4, 1873. By 1920, a passenger could ride from Kerrville to Memphis and back every day for a month for a total of $4.75. Stay on Old Tipton Road as it curves to the right through a long canopy of trees overhanging the road. At the intersection of Old Tipton Road and Merrill Road, turn right onto Merrill. | 3.0 |
| 0.7 | Right | Head south on Merrill Road through another canopy of trees over the road. At Mudville Road, turn right but look immediately to your left for the north entrance to Edmund Orgill Park. | 3.7 |
| 0.1 | Left | On Mudville Road, travel only a few hundred yards to the north entrance to Edmund Orgill Park. Turn left into park. | 3.8 |
| 1.1 | Right | Stay straight on the main park road as it meanders left, then angles sharply first to the right and then to the left. Explore the park and its 62-acre Casper Lake, which was established for recreation and to alleviate flooding of Casper Creek. Learn about Edmund Orgill (1899-1983), who served as mayor of Memphis and as an officer of Orgill Brothers Hardware, one of the largest hardware wholesalers in the United States. As mayor, Orgill helped ease segregation. At the terminus of the park road, turn right onto Kerrville-Rosemark Road. | 4.9 |
| 0.4 | Right | On Kerrville-Rosemark Road, travel west to Bethuel Road. Turn right on Bethuel Road. | 5.3 |
| 0.5 | Right | Turn right into the entrance to the Edmund Orgill Golf Course parking lot, which was your beginning point. | 5.8 |
|  |  |  |  |

All rights reserved, 2020, by the Rural Heritage Trust of Southwest Tennessee, Inc., a Tennessee nonprofit corporation, which gratefully acknowledges information from *An Illustrated History of the People and Towns of Northeast Shelby County and South-Central Tipton County*, published 2010 by Historic Archives of Rosemark and Environs, Inc.

NOTE: When traveling these routes, exercise caution and pay attention at all times. Do not drive, bike, or walk while reading or otherwise distracted.