DRIVING/BIKING ROUTE FOR INTERPRETED 24-MILE TOUR

OF THE ROSEMARK-KERRVILLE HERITAGE LOOP

Rural Heritage Trust of Southwest Tennessee, Inc.

Revised September 9, 2020

The Rural Heritage Trust of Southwest Tennessee (“RHT”) has developed the following 24-mile tour 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.

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| Mileage  of Leg | Cue | Description | Cumulative  Mileage |
| 2.1 | Left to begin; left at Wm. Osteen Drive | Start 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 left onto Bethuel Road. Immediately on your right will be Bethuel Cemetery, which was established shortly after 1844, when Bethuel Methodist Episcopal Church South was organized nearby. After the church burned in 1913, the congregation formed Kerrville Methodist Church. Continue on Bethuel Road past the intersection with Kerrville-Rosemark Road. After passing the intersection with Center College Road, look to your right to see Tennessee’s largest solar power farm built by a joint venture of the U.S. Navy, TVA, and Silicon Ranch at a cost of over $100 million. Also on your right is a portion of Naval Support Activity Mid-South, the U.S. Navy’s current operation at the site of a series of military operations stretching back 100 years. Park Field, a U.S. Army Air Corps pilot training facility opened in 1917. Starting in 1942, the U.S. Navy operated an aviation training facility that became Naval Air Station Memphis, with over 15,000 officers, sailors, and contract employees. During World War II, many local people worked on the naval base and volunteered in the naval hospital. In the 1980’s, NAS Memphis was phased out and the Navy Bureau of Personnel was relocated here from Washington, D.C. Turn left onto William Osteen Drive, named after William L. Osteen (1901-1998), who served as principal of Millington Central High School from 1940 through 1971 and as president of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletics Association from 1959 to 1971. Widely known and deeply respected for his fair discipline and high standards in academics and sportsmanship, he guided MCHS through wars, expansions, and racial integration with a commitment to excellence and integrity. At the southeast corner of Bethuel Road and William Osteen Drive is Millington Elementary School with two playgrounds open to the public. The school grounds and the land to the east were part of the campus for the Naval Hospital and related housing. | 2.1 |
| 0.3 | Right | Turn around at William Osteen Drive and head back north on Bethuel Road one-half mile to Center College Road. Turn right onto Center College Road. | 2.4 |
| 0.4 | Right | Take Center College Road east, through a 90 degree turn. The views along Center College Road are of agricultural fields and occasional wooded areas in every direction. The roadway is narrow but little-traveled. Center College Road got its name from Center College, also known as Central College, which was a public school built in 1907 near the intersection of Center College Road and Aycock Road. Turn right onto Gunn Road. | 2.8 |
| 1.6 | Left | On Gunn Road, cross over Casper Creek and then turn left onto Armour Road. | 4.4 |
| 0.5 | Right | At the intersection of Armour and East Kerrville-Rosemark Roads, turn right onto East Kerrville-Rosemark Road. | 4.9 |
| 0.5 | Left | Traveling east on East Kerrville-Rosemark, cross over the North Fork of Big Creek. Learn about Big Creek as a center of early settlements in Shelby County. Enter Rosemark. Travel past modest houses from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Thompson House (a National Register eligible, Craftsman-style home), two historic churches (First Presbyterian Church of Rosemark, which was originally Big Creek Presbyterian Church, organized in 1878, and Richland Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, organized in 1867), the site of the old Hamilton General Store, and the newly restored Rosemark Telephone Exchange Building (owned and operated by “HARE,” Historic Archives of Rosemark and Its Environs). On the grounds of the Rosemark Telephone Exchange Building is a West Tennessee Historical Society Marker honoring Dr. Peter J. Flippin (1873-1950), a physician whose office was in his home in Rosemark. There he provided medical care to black and white residents of the area for 50 years, including the delivery of over 1,300 babies. Continue on East Kerrville-Rosemark Road and cross Tennessee Highway 14 (Austin Peay Highway). Ride past the Rogers-McCalla House, built around 1866, and over Crooked Creek, to the eastern terminus of Kerrville-Rosemark Road at Brunswick Road. On the east side of Brunswick Road, see the site of the old Stewartville Masonic Lodge, established in 1892. The lodge disbanded in 1942 but thereafter the building served as the polling place for area residents for approximately 20 years. It was also the political base of Paul W. Barret, a member of the Shelby County Quarterly Court (now the Shelby County Commission) from 1942 through 1966 and, as described by the *Commercial Appeal* newspaper in 1966, “long the most powerful individual in county politics.” The Stewartville voting precinct, known as “Paul Barret’s box,” unfailingly turned out practically unanimous votes for the candidates endorsed by Barret during the 1950s and 1960s. The FBI investigated but concluded that there was no illegal activity. Turn left onto Brunswick Road. | 5.4 |
| 6.1 | Right | Travel north through the community of Mudville, past the site of the old Mudville General Store, to historic Pleasant Union Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which was a brush arbor church as early as 1858, and two adjacent historic cemeteries. To the left (south) of the church is Rosemark Cemetery, established in 1907 by the Richland Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. To the right (north) of the church is a cemetery established in the 1880’s and originally known as Pleasant Union Cemetery, but now called Mudville Cemetery. On the grounds of the church, in 1927, was found the body of Tommie Williams, also known as Tommie Doyle, who was shot and killed by unknown assailants for allegedly assaulting Jennie McCreight Miller in the yard of her Mudville home. Williams/Doyle was black and Miller was white. The inquest jury considered the killing of Williams/Doyle to constitute a lynching. Exit the church parking lot and go back southward on Brunswick Road to Mudville Road. Turn right onto Mudville Road, which was part of the early Randolph-LaGrange Road. | 11.5 |
| 0.3 | Left | At the southwest corner of Brunswick and Mudville Roads is the Sink-Hill house (*circa* 1867). Travel west on Mudville Road, crossing over Crooked Creek and through the intersection with Tennessee Highway 14. At 9148 Mudville Road, view the Smith farmhouse, built in 1906 as the centerpiece of a then fairly typical 65-acre farm that raised cotton and corn, apples and peaches, and hogs, chickens, and turkeys. Turn left onto Barret Road. | 11.8 |
| 1.5 | Left | While in Barretville, founded in 1852 by Anthony R. Barret, learn about J.H. Barret & Son Store, established as Barret & Witherington in 1856 and one of the oldest continuously operating businesses in Shelby County when it closed in the 1990s. The current store building dates to 1932. Shortly thereafter, the adjacent J.H. Barret & Son Warehouse was constructed. The store sold not only groceries, but also hardware, shoes, clothing, animal feed, fertilizer, coal, and, for a period, mortuary services. On May 10, 1931, an earlier building that housed the store and Barretville Bank was destroyed by fire during a late-night robbery. The night watchman, 23-year-old James McFerrin, was killed in the blaze. The ensuing robbery-arson-murder trial lasted 47 days and was the lengthiest and most expensive criminal trial in Shelby County history up until that time. After the fire, the structure was rebuilt to house only the store. In 1932 a brick and limestone building was completed, just to the south, for Barretville Bank. That building still stands and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. By 1943, the FDIC declared Barretville Bank to be one of the largest “R.F.D.” (*i.e.*, rural) banks in the country. By 1956 it was the eighth largest bank in West Tennessee. In October 1989, *Money* magazine named it “one of the safest banks in America” based on capital strength, liquidity, earnings, loan portfolio/diversity, and size. See the Tennessee Civil War Trails marker for “Hurst’s Raid at Barretville,” which occurred on April 8, 1863, as well as Tennessee Historical Commission markers for internationally-known blues singer Bobby Blue Bland (1930-2013), who grew up and began his singing career in Barretville, and political leader and banker Paul W. Barret (1899-1976). Paul Barret’s residence, “Squire’s Rest,” built in 1920 and located at 8993 Barret Road, is on the National Register of Historic Places. He played a supporting role in *Baker v. Carr*, the 1962 U.S. Supreme Court case that established the “one man, one vote” rule and led to reapportionment of legislative bodies throughout the country. See the Raymond-Barret-Matthews house at 8998 Barret Road, which began as a dogtrot house in the 1830’s and was modernized and enlarged in the mid- and late 20th century, and the Walter Barret residence, “The Oaks” (*circa* 1890), at 8970 Barret Road. At the Walter Barret home, turn around and head northward on Barret Road back to Mudville Road. Turn left onto Mudville Road. | 13.3 |
| 0.6 | Left | On Mudville Road, see the former private airplane taxiway and landing strip of philanthropist Paul W. Barret, Jr., who, at his death, left his sizeable fortune to Rhodes College, Christian Brothers College, Lifeblood, WKNO, and other local charities. Ride by the McDaniel horse farm, the Castles-McCalla home (*circa* 1874), and the Faires McCormick residence (*circa* 1920), which was the base of operations for the McCalla family’s Paw-Paw Block Farm; cross over a bridge for the North Fork of Big Creek; traverse through a beautiful canopy of old trees over Mudville Road, just east of the Armour Road intersection; see the Smith Plantation house (*circa* 1858); continue past the north side of Edmund Orgill Park, which was created for recreation and to reduce flooding of Casper Creek; see 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. | 13.9 |
| 5.4 | (Road is straight, then curves sharply to the left just before and just after the railroad tracks)  Left | 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. The first run on these tracks from Memphis to Covington occurred on July 4, 1873. See the site of the old Kerrville Gin, established in 1876, which was powered initially by steam and later by electricity, the Bank of Kerrville, which operated from 1919 until 1927, and the old Densford Store (built in 1910 and now occupied by Pig & Whistle Barbecue Restaurant). At the old Densford Store, turn around and head back eastwardly on North Kerrville-Rosemark Road. Cross the railroad tracks again. Immediately after you cross the railroad tracks, turn left onto Old Tipton Road. | 19.3 |
| 0.6 | 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. 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. | 19.9 |
| 1.3 | 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. | 21.2 |
| 0.8 | Left | On Mudville Road, travel only a few hundred yards to the north entrance to Edmund Orgill Park. Turn left into park. | 22.0 |
| 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. 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. | 23.1 |
| 0.4 | Right | On Kerrville-Rosemark Road, travel west to Bethuel Road. Turn right on Bethuel Road. | 23.5 |
| 0.5 | Right | Turn right into the entrance to the Edmund Orgill Golf Course parking lot, which was your beginning point. | 24.0 |
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NOTE: When traveling these routes, exercise caution and pay attention at all times. Do not drive, bike, or walk while reading or otherwise distracted.

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