THE CUB TRAIL

WESTSIDE
DISTRICT
BSA
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE WILD LIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION, DIVISION OF EDUCATION

“For pictures and material on snakes and poisonous plants”

THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

“Which made this book possible through use of its personnel and facilities”

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER J. L. SIGMAN, USCGR

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CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER JOHN W. HAMMACK, SR., USCG

“For research, composition, and organization”

MR. F. J. ESTOPINAL, ANTHROPOLOGIST

“For research on the Chitimacha Indians”

Chitimacha Hiking Trails

Originated and Sponsored by

Orleans Area Council
Troop 63

Westside District
Troop 202

This program was conceived as a service project by Troops 63 and 202 to provide facilities, and encourage additional interest in camping, hiking, nature study, and pioneering.

The Chitimacha Trails are over twenty miles of trails located in an isolated area, especially convenient to New Orleans, Louisiana, and is in one of the few remaining natural areas readily accessible in the immediate New Orleans area. It is laid out partially on a Government reservation and in a proposed Park area. The Trails cover an excellent nature study area, and is ideal for pioneering and truly “in the wilds” camping.

The Trails are available to any Scouting group on an appointment basis. Many of the requirements for Nature, Pioneering, Camping, and Hiking Merit Badges can be passed here. Qualified counciling is available for these merit badges.

A Trail Medal is available at cost to those who complete 21 miles hiking in one day. The medal is a combination of the Camping, Pioneering and Hiking Merit Badges. The suspension ribbon is green and white to represent the woodlands. We feel that the medal truly represents the activities for which the trail was founded and is a medal that all who earn it will be proud to wear.
ABOUT THE TRAILS

The trails consist of six different connecting trails, two camp sites, an Indian village, a pioneering area, and fishing ponds. A pirogue route of twenty miles is included in the plans for which a clasp will be awarded.

Lying close to the mouth of the Mississippi River system, the region is necessarily lower in elevation than the remainder of the Mississippi's drainage basin. Countless centuries of erosion in the great plains and the mid-west has resulted in the depositing of numerous layers of silt on the lands adjoining the lower reaches of the Mississippi. Much of the land in southeastern Louisiana and all that in the vicinity of New Orleans has been formed by these many sitting processes. Most of the land is less than 10 feet above sea level, explaining for the many levees surrounding the area. About 5 miles of the trails are laid out to cover part of the levees.

The soil is very rich, supporting a superabundant plant life. Along the trails you will see many types of semi-tropical vegetation. Generally the kinds to be found are bald cypress, tupelo gum, swamp red maple, water ash, pumpkin ash, and small shrubs such as Virginia willow and button bush. Other species are growths of ivory oak, butter pecan, green ash, willow, water oak, hawthorn, cottonwood, American sycamore, red gum, blackberry, swamp privet, waterlocust, pin oak and live oak. The average height of undergrowth is 20 to 30 feet, with many of the trees 75 feet high or more.

Many types of wild life can be found in their natural wild state along the trails. Cotton tail rabbits are abundant. The deer at one time ran in herds like cows, but due to the cruel lust of hunters chasing them with dogs and not caring whether they killed buck doe or fawn, or how many they killed, deer have become scarce. However, many deer trails can be seen and if a hiker is quiet, an occasional deer may be observed feeding. It is estimated that some two million armadillos (the only living pre-historic mamal existing on the North American continent) make their homes along the trails. In the drainage ditches and canals you will observe the Nutria, a giant fur bearing animal resembling an overgrown fat rat. In South America these animals are cultivated for their pelts to make women's coats. However in their wild state, the fur becomes too coarse for commercial use. Raccoons, possum, squirrel, red fox, ground squirrels, and field mice are abundant. Snakes are at times numerous and will be discussed in detail later. An occasional alligator may also be seen.

Birds are so numerous, it is difficult to name all of the species to be found. To mention a few, there are eagles, sparrows, black raven, red wing, cardinal, mocking bird, crow, raven, hawk, American vulture, wild canary, humming bird, finch, owl, quail, dove, white crane, blue heron crane, mud hen, grouse, and in the winter season mallard duck, Canadian blue goose, and many more.

SNakes

As stated previously, and to be expected where tropical plant life and climate exists, many types of snakes are to be found. Some of them, such as chicken snake, black snake, and grass snake are more or less harmless; that is to say they are harmless if left alone. Any snake bite is dangerous whether poisonous or not, due to danger of infection from their teeth, as in other animal bites.

There are about 114 different species of snakes in the continental States of this country, of these, at least 36 are residents of Louisiana. Those missing roll call in this State prefer the drylands and desert areas. The few dryland snake inhabitants are confined to the three upland sections of Louisiana, and consist of the pine snake, coach whip, bull snake and the poisonous coral snake.

The majority of some 24 kinds of water loving snakes will be found in this area. They may be found in almost any location, all of them will take a swim, and climb a tree to sun themselves on a branch, or rest entwined in roots of a fallen tree or on a log in the water.

There are a total of six poisonous species in Louisiana: the DIAMOND RATTLE L is extremely rare; the CANE RATTLEL, most widely distributed large rattler, is a variety of the Timber Rattle, and is an inhabitant of the canebrakes and palmetto thickets of damp woodlands; the PIGMY or GROUND RATTLEL is widely distributed and has a tendency to climb in canes and bushes, regardless of the stories about them its bite is not fatal, and there have been few if any fatalities from its bite; the WATER MOCCASIN, and the COPPERHEAD are members of the moccasin family and are related to the rattlesnake. The most deadly animal in the United States is the CORAL SNAKE. The probable reason for its deadliness is the effect of its venom and its method of biting. It does not strike and let go as the pit viper, but bites like a dog and holds with a rocking, chewing motion, injecting its venom by means of two fixed teeth in the upper jaw. The CORAL SNAKE can be recognized by BROAD BLACK BANDS COMPLETELY ENCIRLING THE BODY. These broad black bands distinguish it from the Scarlet King and Scarlet snakes, which it closely resembles.

FOR SAFETY SAKE, BE CAREFUL AND DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE ANY SNAKES you might see. Very few snakes are seen in the winter months. Your trail boss will be equipped with a snake bite kit as an added safety factor.

The following information will be helpful in identifying snakes if they are seen. Poisonous snakes are classified into viperine and colubrine snakes. To the viperine family belong the rattler, copperhead, moccasin and viper. The cobra and coral snake belong to the colubrine family.
In poisonous snakes the teeth are arranged in two rows, with a fang on each side; the fangs are outside the teeth and near the point of the jaw. Non-poisonous snakes have four rows of teeth without fangs. The imprint of the wound often will tell whether a person has been bitten by a poisonous or non-poisonous snake.

The venom of different poisonous snakes differs in its action. The poisonous constituents are nerotoxin, a nerve poison, and hemmorhagin, which injures the lining of the blood vessels so that there is an escape of blood into the surrounding tissues; a third constituent is hemolysin, which destroys red blood cells. The venom of colubrine snakes is made up principally of neutrotoxin, and that of vipers is made up of hemmorhagin. In colubrine poisoning the local symptoms are not marked, though there are at times severe pain and some tenderness, swelling, and discoloration at the bite. In 1½ to 2½ hours the patient begins to feel tired and drowsy, there often begins some nausea and vomiting, and paralysis sets in, generally affecting the extremities first and then becoming more generalized. This paralysis finally ceases, convulsion may also be present.

In vipers, poisoning there is pain at the seat of the bite, which soon becomes excruciating with rapid swelling and discoloration; there is at the same time a feeling of nausea, faintness, and a sense of depression; the pulse becomes rapid and feeble and breathing is labored.

In fatal snake bite cases, death may occur in 24 to 48 hours. The severity of the symptoms and final outcome depends upon the amount of venom injected and absorbed into the general circulation, which in a large measure depends on the size of the snake.

Records of snake bites in this Country reveal the death of a 48 years old man in 15 minutes from a Rattlesnake bite. A 3 year old girl, bitten on the forehead by a large Rattlesnake died within 10 minutes. A 7 year old boy, bitten on the cheek by a Rattlesnake died before an eye witness could reach him.

In the United States 1,500 to 2,000 persons are bitten annually by poisonous snakes, 5% of these die. All but about 2% of the bites occur below the knees or on the hand or forearm. 5 species, the water moccasin and four rattlers, cause 95% of the deaths from snake bites.

The effective striking distance of a snake is less than its total length. Even newly born Crotaline snakes have been proven to possess the ability to inflict poisonous bites. Following death a snake retains a high degree of reactivity and has the ability to strike through reflex action if picked up.
POISONOUS PLANTS

POISON IVY—Ordinarily a vine which climbs by means of aerial rootlets. The stem varies from 1/4 to 3 or 4 inches in diameter and often fifty feet in length. Flowers are yellowish and berries greenish, blooms from early March into the fall. May grow into a small, bushy, herbaceous plant.

POISON OAK—A woody shrub from 6 to 30 inches tall, dark green leaves, cortaceous, and usually evergreen; inconspicuous flowers with yellow-green fruit from March to December.

POISON SUMAC—Woody shrub, stems 1 to 3 inches in diameter and up to 25 feet tall. It has gray bark, seven to thirteen leaflets which are light green above, paler green below. Rachis of the compound leaf is purple red. It has greenish flowers and its white fruit is shed by July.
Indian Lore

The Chitimacha Indians

Wilderness trails having been common to the American Indians, it was felt that our trails should have the name of an Indian tribe which at one time inhabited this area.

It was found through research, that while many tribes inhabited the Mississippi Delta region, only one small tribe was located in the immediate area of New Orleans, the Chitimachas.

Not too much is known about the Chitimachas, because they were not known as a fighting group. Because of the many wars this group banded together to live in peace away from warring tribes. It is a fact that they lived in this area and that is why the name Chitimacha was selected for our trails.

The earliest evidence of the Chitimachas is found in the area around Barataria Bay. An anthropologist expedition in search of Indian remains uncovered evidence of an unknown Indian tribe. Investigation and research revealed that this was the Chitimacha Tribe. Explorations in the area are disclosing more information all the time. As stated before, the Chitimachas were not warriors, instead they were content to live off the land until nothing was left and then move on to a new location. They would build a crude village of thatched roof pole houses. For example, a family of six would live under a 5 x 7 thatched roof pole hut without walls for protection.

Their main vocation was basket weaving and shell fishing. They were expert at basket weaving, but weaving did not extend to making of clothing. They wore little if any clothing. The women wore moss for covering, while the men and children wore nothing.

Their movement from the Barataria Bay region has been traced to the Plaquemines Parish area, and they were last known to live as a tribe in the Belle Chasse area. Perhaps you may find traces of where they lived along our trails.

Not much is known at this time about what happened to the Chitimachas, except that when the white man settled here the Chitimachas mingled with them, and as far as we know their descendants are still in the area living our modern ways. Older maps of Louisiana show a Chitimacha Reservation in an area just a little southwest of Morgan City.

The Southeast Woodland Indians

The trails making up the Chitimacha Trails are named after tribes of the Southeast Woodland Indians. This region once included all of the present states south of Virginia and Kentucky, westward through Louisiana, Arkansas, and eastern Oklahoma and Texas.

This area provides a mixture of Indian lore from a majority of the various tribe groups throughout the continental United States. This area was not affected by the California, Northwest, Great Basin-Plateau of Southwest Indians.

It is presumed that the Indian race was derived from Asian stock. These people migrated from Asia across the Bering Straits to Alaska and across the American Continents. Various forms of worship, games, food, ceremonies, and clothing are related throughout the Indian race.

The Southeast Woodland Indians' life is generally classified as follows: The males wore breechcloths, ankle-high skin moccasins for traveling. In winter leggings and poncho-like buckskin shirts were the style. Tattooing was practiced, and later in history Seminole type patchwork shirts were worn.

The women wore fibre skirts of twine and later wore skirts of cloth. In winter they wore skin shawls and ankle-high moccasins. When cloth was available they wore Seminole style patchwork skirts and cloth cape blouses.

Their food consisted of flour, flint corn, beans, sunflower, wild plants, berries, nuts, all of which they cultivated, and deer, fish, turtle, fowl, and shellfish.

Housing was varied from the Creek and Seminole style to the plains type. There were semi-subterranean, mud daubed walled, and some were pole thatched roof without walls. They had temple mounds, and sweat lodges for the men which were oven shaped and made of stone or clay.

They participated in many games that the other Indians played such as archery, dice, handball, footraces, lacrosse, moccasin game, kickball, and a special game of the Alabama's, parcheesi.

The Indian Tribes from the Southeast Woodlands recognized by our trails are the Karakawa and Tonkawana from Southeastern Texas, the Tunica and Atakapa from Southeastern Louisiana, the Calusa from the Western Coast of Florida, and the Yuchi from Southeastern Georgia.

The Seminoles are recognized by an Indian village, and because the Sioux Nation so influenced Indian lore and the conception of the Indian held by most people in this country, they are also recognized by an Indian village.
ON THE TRAIL

The entrance to the trails begins at the camp site in the west central area of the former U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot, New Orleans, Louisiana. The magazines in the camp area were used to store projectiles for the big guns of the Navy. South and along the west edge of the camp area is a series of ponds in which there is good fishing.

The trail runs in a northerly direction to the Planters Canal and then along its southern bank in a westerly direction until the canal cuts southwestward. The trail crosses the canal into the original Troop 63 camping area. The bridge consists of antenna poles. The trail then runs along the edge of the original U.S. Coast Guard Radio Station property. The permanent location for the Radio Station is in the eastern half of the trail.

The trail then follows the original property line running in an easterly direction to the Mississippi River levee; entering the U.S. Coast Guard property after approximately two and a half miles. The trail turns south to a series of magazines and turns west to circle through the area. These magazines were for high explosives and warhead storage. After leaving the magazines the trail follows the levee to the trail entrance to camp Wawatanka.

Camp Wawatanka is an excellent camping area used by Troops 63 and 202. It includes a pond which is excellent for fishing. This is a hike-in camp for pioneering rough camping.

After leaving the camping area the trail follows the Donner Canal. Upon reaching the Donner Canal there is an area for Indian camping and includes an Indian Village. The trail runs along the Donner Canal in a northwesterly direction until it again intercepts the north boundary road. It then turns to the west boundary of the Coast Guard property and along the property line southward to the railroad tracks and passes the Pathfinders' council area.

The trail turns west over the railroad tracks. In planning the trails it was felt that all boys have a desire to hike along tracks, so this provision was made, and provides approximately 3½ mile of tracks. The trail turns south at the first road and proceeds again to the Mississippi River levee, and follows the levee about a half mile, then turns northward. Just prior to the railroad tracks the trail turns eastward to wind around behind several bunkers which were used to store powder, small arms, and inert storage. The trail then intercepts the road back to camp.
UNIT _______________________  

ADDRESS _______________________

DATE AND TIME DESIRED _______________________

UNIT WILL DESIRE TO CAMP  
IN ADDITION TO HIKING ________________.

ALTERNATE DATE IF ABOVE  
IS NOT OPEN. _______________________

NUMBER OF BOYS  
TO HIKE THE TRAIL _______________________

NUMBER OF ADULTS  
ACCOMPANYING _______________________

UNIT COVERED BY INSURANCE _______________________

NAME OF UNIT LEADER/S _______________________

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DESIRED _______________________

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