MISSISSIPPI CHAUTAUQUA TRAIL

MEMORIAL PARK
CRYSTAL SPRINGS, MISSISSIPPI
TRAIL OPEN ALL YEAR EXCEPT SUNDAY
SPONSORED BY
TROOP 156
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
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Crystal Springs, Mississippi
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EARLY HISTORY

Early in the 1800's Choctaw Indians lived one mile northwest of what is now Crystal Springs, having settled there because of the many bubbling springs of crystal clear water. In the beautiful primeval setting they cultivated their maize with primitive methods, killed the abundant wild-life, fished the clear streams for meat, and drank the cold and delicious spring water.

In the year 1819 the first white man arrived. He was the Reverend Elisha Lott, Methodist minister and missionary to the Indians. Having won the friendship of the Indians, he brought his family and several other families to settle in the area. They built homes, a school, a church, and a mill.

This settlement is now known as Old Crystal Springs as the present town is a mile southeast, having moved to the railroad in 1862.

CHURCHES

Having been founded by a missionary, it is particularly appropriate that Crystal Springs should be a city of churches. Denominations represented are Baptist, Catholic, Episcopal, Methodist, Pentecostal, and Presbyterian.

In 1872 the Hennington Camp Ground was established when a group of Methodist men bought a beautiful rolling section of land a mile north of town for the purpose of spiritual blessing. From 1872 to 1892 many hundreds of people camped and visited at this beautiful spot and enjoyed hearing some of the greatest preachers in the nation.

EDUCATION

Crystal Springs has always placed great emphasis upon education. The private schools of Miss Eliza Blanchard and Professor Luke Kethley were outstanding in early days. A chartered school called Newton Institute, established in 1861.
lawyer of Tulsa, Oklahoma; Oscar Newton, banker of Atlanta; Frank A. Liddell, distinguished attorney of Houston, Texas; Walter Scott former mayor of Jackson; and Mrs. Lyon W. Childress, former Democratic National Committeewoman for Tennessee and prominent leader of Nashville. All these, and others, have been highly successful in various arts of living.

ALLEGIANCIE TO COUNTRY

Crystal Springs has had numerous men and women to serve in the Armed Forces of the nation. Some have given their lives for their country and are honored as brave heroes by the citizenry of the city.

The 627th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, the only installation of its kind in Mississippi, is located in Crystal Springs. The squadron maintains surveillance over the southern approaches to the United States, and presence of the installation is a matter of patriotic pride to Crystal Springs.

MISSISSIPPI CHAUTAUQUA TRAIL

START

1. THE TABERNACLE. The Mississippi Chautauqua Trail begins at the tabernacle. The tabernacle with its natural sloping floor of earth covered by sawdust has been preserved as it was in its earliest days. Here the best-known orators, statesmen, philosophers, poets, humorists, and musicians of the land gave of their talent to thousands of people.

The word “Chautauqua” is an Indian word for a child who leads a blind person; Chautauqua was partly for pleasure, but also it led the intellectually blind into the great light of knowledge.

Before the Chautauqua days the tabernacle was used for camp meetings sponsored by the Hennigton Camp Ground Association and attended by thousands of people. Some of the greatest preachers of the day were heard here, and there were many conversions under the sprawling old roof.

At the doorway to the tabernacle is the old iron triangle which, when struck, called the people together with its strange music.

The lake in its cup down the hill once boasted large boat-houses and bath-houses; and “The Dixie,” a gasoline launch, took people for rides. Also, there was an enclosed swimming pool for children with a wooden bottom.

2. THE “ROUNDHOUSE.” The first building to your left is an open-air pavilion, commonly called the “Round House.” Here once a restaurant seating one hundred and fifty people was operated by the Mississippi Chautauqua Assembly. Once there was a very large hotel nearby and several smaller ones. Also, there were numerous “tents” or small cottages and a store. Many people from near and far came here during the Chautauqua season and camped.

3. THE SPRING HOUSE. The Spring House is a lovely place for a small picnic or a brief rest. Just below it is a bubbling spring.

At one time from the springs and a deep well, water ran to an elevated tank which held 10,290 gallons, and a system of
pipes carried this pure water to all parts of the encampment.
Once, too, there was a light plant which carried three hundred lights.

4. ENTRANCE TO MEMORIAL PARK. The entrance to Memorial Park is located one mile north of Crystal Springs. Here may be read a marker telling of settlement at Old Crystal Springs and of the subsequent move a mile east to the railroad.

5. THE PAT HARRISON DRIVE. Immediately opposite the entrance to Memorial Park is the beginning of the north end of the Pat Harrison Drive, so called because the birthplace of this most distinguished of Crystal Springs' citizens is on the drive. Pat Harrison in his day was the most influential friend of the President of the United States and was Senior United States Senator; yet he began his career selling newspapers on the streets of what was the very small village of Crystal Springs.

The Pat Harrison Drive makes a wide, irregular U through the city, intersecting Highway 51 again at approximately the same distance south of the city.

6. OLD STAGECOACH STOP. Today it is the home of J. E. Purvis. Robbers often lurched in the woods north of the stage stop to prey on the early travelers.

7. THE OLD HUBER HOUSE. Back on the Pat Harrison Drive, one may see the old Huber House on his right. It was one of the finest houses in Crystal Springs and was owned for many years by Mr. C. M. Huber, one of the pioneers of the trucking industry.

8. THE SITE OF THE OLD CITY SCHOOL. She site of the present community center and swimming pool was once the site of Crystal Springs' old city school. Here all the children in the city studied before the large consolidated school was built.

9. ILLINOIS CENTRAL MARKER. On the front campus of the Crystal Springs Consolidated School is a marker commemorating a century of service to Mid-America by the Illinois Central Railroad. The first train ran through Crystal Springs in 1858, and the railroad has meant much to the city since that time.

The marker is an Indiana limestone boulder and weighs fifteen hundred pounds.

10. CRYSTAL SPRINGS CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL. This building houses the students from first through twelfth grade under one roof. Built in 1928 at a cost of $250,000, it occupies the same site once occupied by famous old Newton Institute.

Since its construction many changes and additions have been made, including an up-to-date science laboratory, a modern cafeteria, a band room, and a visual-aid room. On the campus, also, is a fine new gymnasium with rooms for the study of agriculture; Myers-Graves Stadium is on the South of the gymnasium.

The campus is composed of twenty-five acres, and the main body of the building is three hundred and twenty-five by one hundred and sixty feet in dimension.

11. THE TRAXLER GRAVEL COMPANY. One of the largest gravel companies in the world, the Traxler Gravel Company is a great asset to Crystal Springs. From three to four hundred people are regularly employed by that company and from fifty to three hundred trucks are used by them daily.

12. THE RADAR PLANT. The 627th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron is a very important installation to Crystal Springs and to the United States. The purpose of this plant is to guard the southern approaches to our country.

The average man employed is in his early twenties and is skilled in the use of the IBM machines which are the brains of the SAGE radar system.

This installation is an important unit in the defense of our country.
18. HEAD HOUSE. Built in 1838, just before the railroad came through, the "Head House" was the first called a "Lodging House", and one could get room and board for 75c a day.

During the Civil War this house was used as a hospital for soldiers wounded in the siege of Vicksburg. Today it is the first brick building known as the Old Wolfe House. This building, a hotel now, is located on the line of the old road from Vicksburg to Clinton.

19. A LOYTHORPE HOME. Once a magnificent and imposing structure, this house was the home of the Lohots, native of Germany, who was a citizen of Crystal Springs from early youth. At one time Mr. Lohotsesattained the prominence of being the largest shipper of tomatoes in the United States.

This house is now the home of Miss Ethel Lohots. A daughter of Mr. A. Lohots and well known as a local artist. Miss Lohots helped to organize the Southern States Art League, and she has many paintings on exhibit. She is the daughter of Mr. A. Lohots, who lived here.

20. THE CONDELETTA MOUND. In the city cemetery of Newton, an old mound was located. Its top was a little above the ground, and it was used as a burial place for early settlers. It was later moved to the top of the hill, and is now a monument to these men.

21. HOME OF BYRON PATTON HARRISON. Crystal Springs, the beautiful antebellum home of the Harrison family, was one of the most distinguished homes in Newton. It has been restored in recent years and is a private home.

22. OLD CRYSTAL SPRINGS CEMETARY. Many of Crystal Springs' early citizens are buried here. This is the present town of Crystal Springs, moved to the railroad.

23. OLD PEABODY SCHOOL. This fine old building, now a private residence, was once Peabody School, one of the earliest educational institutions in this vicinity. The stairway of the building is of particular native timber to be found in this area.
Mississippi Chautauqua Trail

Added Side Trip: free of charge  Scouts are invited to see it.

CHERRY GROVE PLANTATION. Turning left at the intersection of another road immediately after the winding curve of the Pat Harrison Drive beyond the railroad bridge, one eventually comes to Cherry Grove Plantation. Built in 1837 by William Didlake, an architect from Virginia, this beautiful old home is well worth seeing. There is a fan-shaped window over the front door whose partitions are hand-carved, and inside there is a fine hand-carved cherry circular stairway. Beneath the house is a dungeon which was used by Mr. Didlake for punishing his erring slaves. Much opposed to whipping his slaves, he imprisoned them for different lengths of time when they were not obedient. Cherry Grove once had fifty cabins for slaves, and the plantation grew from eight hundred to thirty-six hundred acres, extending into what is known today as Copiah, Hinds, and Simpson counties. Mr. Didlake, the original owner of the place, is buried behind the house between two trees which he planted.