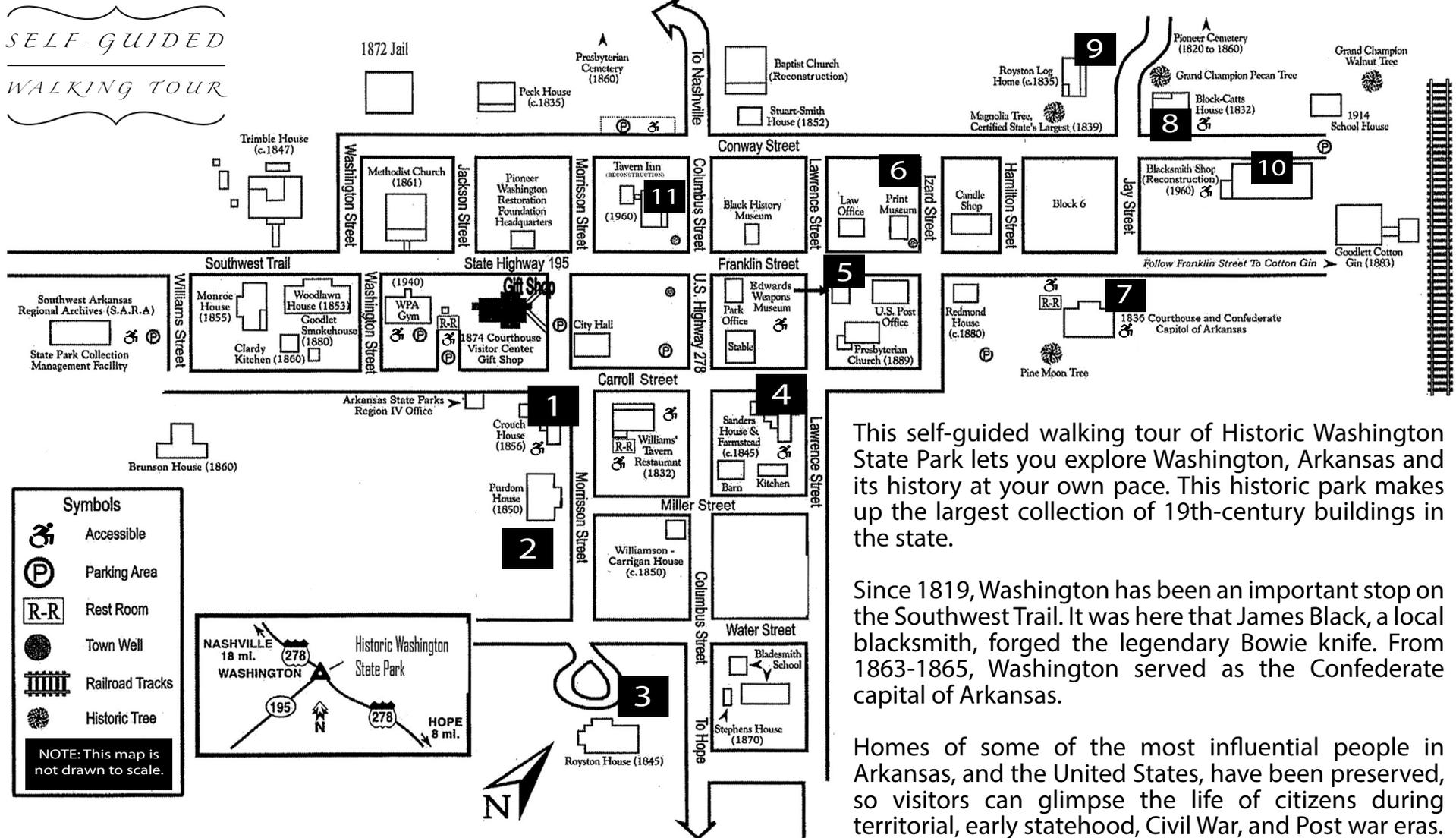


Historic Washington State Park

Self-Guided Walking Tour



Walk on the same ground and see the same sights as people in 19th-century Washington, Arkansas.



This self-guided walking tour of Historic Washington State Park lets you explore Washington, Arkansas and its history at your own pace. This historic park makes up the largest collection of 19th-century buildings in the state.

Since 1819, Washington has been an important stop on the Southwest Trail. It was here that James Black, a local blacksmith, forged the legendary Bowie knife. From 1863-1865, Washington served as the Confederate capital of Arkansas.

Homes of some of the most influential people in Arkansas, and the United States, have been preserved, so visitors can glimpse the life of citizens during territorial, early statehood, Civil War, and Post war eras.



1. Crouch House This Greek Revival home was constructed by Augustus Crouch on the southwestern edge of Washington. It was moved to its present location by the Pioneer Washington Restoration Foundation in 1980 and stands on the site of a similar house, which burned in 1903. Exhibits in this circa 1857 home interpret 19th-century building and construction methods then available in Washington.

2. Purdom House Dr. James A. L. Purdom practiced medicine in Washington from 1845 until his death in 1866. His 1850 home was restored by the state park in 1978. It includes an herb garden and exhibits on the practice of medicine during the 19th century in southwest Arkansas.

3. Royston Townhouse John Brooks built this Greek Revival house for Grandison D. Royston and family in 1845. A lawyer and planter, Royston served in the 1836 and 1874 Arkansas Constitutional Conventions and was a member of the Confederate House of Representatives during the Civil War. This beautiful home is one of the most popular on tour.

4. Sanders Farmstead Simon T. Sanders was county clerk from 1839-1869. He lived here with his family until the late 1870s. Sander's position as county clerk placed him at the center of Washington's social and political life. This classic Greek Revival home built in 1845, interprets the lifestyle of the 1850s through an interior restoration conducted in 1991. Recent additions to the Sanders House site, based on archeological and photographic evidence, include a detached kitchen, barn, garden area, and multiple outbuildings, which makes the Sanders House one of Washington's premier living history sites.

5. B.W. Edwards Weapons Museum This former bank houses a large weapons exhibit, which includes matchlocks, flintlocks, muskets, rifles, shotguns, revolvers, and Bowie knives. The majority of the items were collected by the late B.W. Edwards, a building contractor in Hope, Arkansas. Edwards donated his lifetime collection of over 600 weapons so others could enjoy them on exhibit.

6. Print Museum This museum interprets the printing techniques and equipment from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Printing presses and linotype machines can be viewed as you learn the history of printing in the United States.

7. 1836 Hempstead County Courthouse The funds issued in 1929 to restore this courthouse were the first state appropriations to be used for historical restoration in all of Arkansas. During the Civil War, Arkansas Governor Harris Flanagan chose this county courthouse as the Confederate Capitol of Arkansas following the capture of Little Rock in September 1863. The reconstructed clerk's office serves as restroom facilities.

8. Block House Built by Abraham Block in 1832, this house is one of the few Federal-style structures remaining in southwest Arkansas. Block, who settled here in the 1820s, was the first documented Jewish settler in Arkansas. He started a prosperous mercantile business in the region. In 1959, this house was the first restoration project undertaken by the Pioneer Washington Restoration Foundation. The exterior was later returned to its original design in 1987.

9. Royston Log House This saddlebag log cabin, built in 1835, was originally located on Grandison Royston's plantation northeast of Washington. In 1986, the cabin was moved here for restoration by the Pioneer Washington Restoration Foundation. Today, it is used to interpret early housing and life in southwest Arkansas.

10. Blacksmith Shop Built by the Pioneer Washington Restoration Foundation in 1960, the blacksmith shop is an interpretive center with two working forges. Washington's most famous blacksmith, James Black, is credited with forging one of the original Bowie knives for James "Jim" Bowie in the early 1830s.

11. Morrison Tavern Inn This reconstruction of an 1830s inn was built by the Pioneer Washington Restoration Foundation in 1960 with a donation from William and Lucille Hart King. Its design was based on an original 19th-century building that once stood at this location.

