

National Park Service

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Natchez Trace

Parkway



NEWS

NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY COMPLETION CELEBRATION

Date

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Contact

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On Saturday, May 21, 2005, the National Park Service, Federal Highway Administration, and numerous federal, state, and local officials celebrate the completion of construction of the Natchez Trace Parkway. This 444-mile National Scenic Byway and All-American road travels from Natchez, Mississippi, through the northwest corner of Alabama, to Nashville, Tennessee. The last two segments to be finished, Sections 3P and 3X, are located in the Jackson and Natchez, MS, areas, respectively.

The day's events begin with a 9:30 a.m. ceremony, hosted by the City of Clinton, MS, celebrating the opening of its new visitor center located adjacent to the Parkway at 1300 Pinehaven Road. Parking is available at the Clinton High School on Pinehaven Road.

At approximately 11 a.m., the dignitaries, guests, and the public move to the Parkway to observe the removal of barricades signaling the opening of the 13.5 mile segment of the Parkway between I-20 and I-55 in the Jackson area. This section, bisecting the most urban area along the Parkway, contains three interpretive sites: Cowles Mead Cemetery, Choctaw Agency, and Osburn Stand.

After the barricades are removed, a caravan of approximately 100 vehicles, including a number of classic vehicles symbolizing the years the Parkway was under construction (1938-2005), travels down the Parkway from Section 3P to the Completion Ceremony site in Natchez, MS. At approximately 1:00 p.m., after the caravan has left the area, Section 3P is open for travel by the general public.

The 2:00 p.m. Parkway Completion Ceremony, to be held near the intersection of the Parkway and Liberty Road, celebrates the opening of Section 3X and the completion of the Natchez Trace Parkway. This 8-mile segment, the Parkway's southern terminus, contains the Elizabeth Female Academy interpretive site. Senator Thad Cochran and Senator Trent Lott are the event's keynote speakers.

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The ceremony includes an unveiling of the oil painting commissioned by the National Park Service to commemorate the completion of the Parkway. It was painted by nationally known Mississippi artist, P. Sanders McNeal. A CD of music popular during the Natchez Trace era is also highlighted. This CD was created by another nationally known Mississippi artist, mezzo-soprano Dr. Lester Senter.

The ceremony concludes with the dedication of a Daughters of the American Revolution marker, "DAR and the Natchez Trace," and a ribbon-cutting signaling the completion of the Parkway.

After the ceremony, a public reception is held from 4:30-5:30 p.m. at Melrose (1 Melrose Montebello Parkway) in Historic Natchez. Light refreshments are served and entertainment provided by Eddie and Frank Thomas. The Federal Highway Administration presents an audio-visual program highlighting the history of the Parkway's construction. Some of the antique cars that traveled in the caravan are parked at Melrose for viewing by the public.

In case of rain, the events in Clinton, MS, will not be moved but the Completion Ceremony in Natchez will be relocated to the Natchez City Auditorium (207 Jefferson Street) and the public reception at Melrose will be moved to the Natchez Convention Center (211 Main Street).

The public is invited to attend all of these events celebrating the Parkway's completion.

Special Note: Traffic delays will occur as a result of the Completion Ceremony activities occurring on May 21, 2005. During the activities associated with the opening of Parkway Section 3P in Clinton, MS, a local road, Pinehaven Road, will be closed from Williamson Road to Northside Drive. Additionally, the Parkway entrance ramp on I-20 will be closed from 11:00-12:00 p.m. to allow for the caravan to proceed south from Clinton to Natchez, MS. Parkway intersections from Clinton, MS (near milepost 67) to Natchez, MS (milepost 9) will be closed for short periods of time between 11:30-1:30 p.m. to allow the caravan to pass through each intersection unimpeded.

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*"Cemetary" is misspelled.
It should be spelled
"Cemetery."*

COWLES MEAD CEMETERY

Like many of his generation, Mead came from the east seeking opportunity in the Mississippi Territory. He owned a tavern on the Old Trace near Natchez and held several political offices, including acting governor in 1806. During this time, he ordered the arrest of Aaron Burr for treason but the former Vice President was acquitted. Mead followed the growth of the state and moved to the Jackson area. He built his beautifully landscaped home, "Greenwood" on this site. Little remains today of his grand estate that burned after his death, during the Civil War, except the family cemetery along the the walkway to your right.

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