

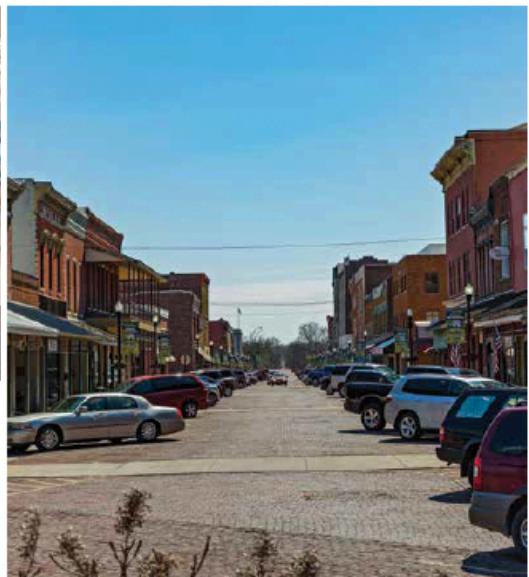


# FRONTIER MILITARY

historic byway







**F**ollowing the Frontier Military Historic Byway, which loosely trails former military supply lines from Fort Leavenworth to Baxter Springs to points south. It's easy to imagine what the frontier looked like when the supply road was built between 1838 and 1844. The eastern wood hills region border this stretch of highway, and while the distance between forts is merely an hour and change by modern transportation, for troops traveling by horse-drawn wagons, it was a dangerous journey along Indian Territory lines.

The byway was more than just ease of transport for supplies. It also acted as the dividing line between Missouri and Kansas and their pro- and anti-slavery factions. A walk through the Fort Leavenworth Frontier Army Museum gives insight to the level of military technology available at the time, coming shortly after the exploration of the territory by Lewis and Clark. The byway was also the permanent eastern boundary of the Indian Frontier.

Now, the Frontier Military Historic Byway offers a blend of history, nature, and industry. Explore one of the first National Cemeteries, which was ordered by President Lincoln at Fort Leavenworth. Stop for apple cider and donuts at the Louisburg Cider Mill or enjoy a glass of red at Somerset Ridge Winery. Stroll among the barracks of Fort Scott State Historic Site restored to its former glory.

A plate of crispy fried chicken at one of Pittsburg's warring chicken houses (Chicken Mary's or Chicken Annie's—you decide!) gives a taste of farm-bred goodness. Depending on the season, you may find land management techniques that hark back to frontier days—



#### GETTING THERE

Located along the eastern edge of Kansas, the Frontier Military Byway runs north to south from Leavenworth to Baxter Springs mostly along Highway 69. Access communities include Merriam, Louisburg, Pleasonton, Fort Scott, Pittsburg and Baxter Springs.

#### LENGTH

168 miles

#### TIME TO TRAVEL

3 hours without stops

#### ROADWAY

U.S. Highway 69, north and south, and Kansas Highway 5

#### WHEN TO SEE

All seasons

#### RESOURCES

Freedom's Frontier  
National Heritage Area  
**(785) 856-5300**  
[freedomfrontier.org](http://freedomfrontier.org)

Leavenworth Convention & Visitors Bureau  
**(913) 758-2948**  
[visitleavenworthks.com](http://visitleavenworthks.com)

Visit Atchison  
**(800) 234-1854**  
[visitatchison.com](http://visitatchison.com)

burning undergrowth to introduce higher carbon levels to the soil. No matter what, the byway will take you back in time as you head south or north to the next stop on the road.

#### Curiosities

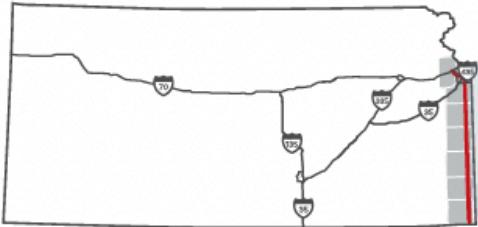
While the name implies a focus on military history, there's a bit more quirk to the byway than one might think. Stop at the C.W. Parker Carousel Museum in Leavenworth for a ride on one of the many carousels, some dating back to 1913.

Go a bit further south to the Johnson County Museum where you'll find not only state of the art exhibits about the development of Johnson County but also a full-scale replica of an all-electric home from the 1950s. For those with kiddos, the museum also offers a scaled-down version of Johnson County for kids, which can be a welcome relief on a long car ride.

The Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Area and the adjacent Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge are an excellent place for a walk. Bring binoculars and see if you can spot some of the area's 321 bird species. For history lovers, the Marais des Cygnes Massacre State Historic Site is close by as well. The drive-through tour includes signage that explains the tensions leading up to one of the Bleeding Kansas conflicts, a precursor to the Civil War.

Beyond military history, this byway offers a glimpse into Kansas' rich mining industry. A visit to Big Brutus, the world's largest existing electric shovel in West Mineral gives travelers a sense of the scale of mining investment. The shovel is 16 stories tall and now hosts a museum explaining the mining history of the area. Big Brutus was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2018. ☰

—By Rachel Murphy Leimkuehler



## about the amenities

see

**FORT LEAVENWORTH NATIONAL CEMETERY\***  
Fort Leavenworth  
(913) 727-1376  
[Cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/ftleavenworth.asp](http://Cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/ftleavenworth.asp)

**FRONTIER ARMY MUSEUM\***  
Fort Leavenworth  
(913) 684-3191

**C.W. PARKER CAROUSEL MUSEUM\***  
Leavenworth  
(913) 682-1331  
[FirstCityMuseums.org/carousel/](http://FirstCityMuseums.org/carousel/)

**JOHNSON COUNTY MUSEUM\***  
Overland Park  
(913) 715-2550  
[JoCoGov.org/dept/museum/home](http://JoCoGov.org/dept/museum/home)

**MARAIS DES CYGNES WILDLIFE AREA**  
Pleasanton  
913-352-8941  
[ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com)

**MARAIS DES CYGNES NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**  
Pleasanton  
(913) 352-8956  
[FWS.gov/refuge/marais\\_des\\_cygnes](http://FWS.gov/refuge/marais_des_cygnes)

**MINE CREEK BATTLEFIELD STATE HISTORIC SITE**  
Pleasanton  
(913) 352-8890  
[kshs.org/p/mine-creek-civil-war-battlefield/19567](http://kshs.org/p/mine-creek-civil-war-battlefield/19567)

**FORT SCOTT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**  
Fort Scott  
(620) 223-0310  
[NPS.gov/fosc/index.htm](http://NPS.gov/fosc/index.htm)

stay

**UNION PARK GUEST HOUSE**  
Leavenworth  
(913) 651-3991  
[UnionParkGH.com](http://UnionParkGH.com)

**TIMBER HILLS LAKE RANCH**  
Mapleton  
(620) 743-4114  
[TimberHillsLake.com](http://TimberHillsLake.com)

**LYONS TWIN MANSIONS**  
Fort Scott  
(620) 223-3644  
[LyonsTwinMansions.com](http://LyonsTwinMansions.com)

**ROSE COTTAGE**  
Baxter Springs  
(620) 856-2524  
[RoseCottageKansas.com](http://RoseCottageKansas.com)

**MAMA MIA'S**  
Leavenworth  
(913) 682-2131

**NU-GRILLE**  
Fort Scott  
(620) 223-9949

**CHICKEN ANNIE'S ORIGINAL\***  
Pittsburg  
(620) 231-9460  
[ChickenAnniesOriginal.com](http://ChickenAnniesOriginal.com)

**CHICKEN MARY'S\***  
Pittsburg  
(620) 231-9510

**VAN'S STEAKHOUSE**  
Baxter Springs  
(620) 856-5506

**PICKET FENCES AND PETALS**  
Leavenworth  
(913) 651-4142

**SHUT UP & FLY**  
Merriam  
(913) 972-1341

**NEW LANCASTER GENERAL STORE & WINERY**  
Paola  
(913) 377-4689

**THE LAVENDER PATCH AGRITOURISM LAVENDER FARM AND GIFT SHOP**  
Fort Scott  
(620) 223-1364  
[TheLavenderPatchFarm.com](http://TheLavenderPatchFarm.com)

**STRAWBERRY MOON BOUTIQUE**  
Pittsburg  
(620) 232-1155



shop

\*MENTIONED IN THIS GUIDE

**COMPLETE LISTINGS** The above listings are only a portion of the attractions along this byway. For a complete and regularly updated listings of amenities, including destination sites, lodgings, places to eat, shops and events along the Frontier Military Historic Byway, go online at: [travelks.com/ksbyways/frontier-military/points-of-interest-amenities](http://travelks.com/ksbyways/frontier-military/points-of-interest-amenities)