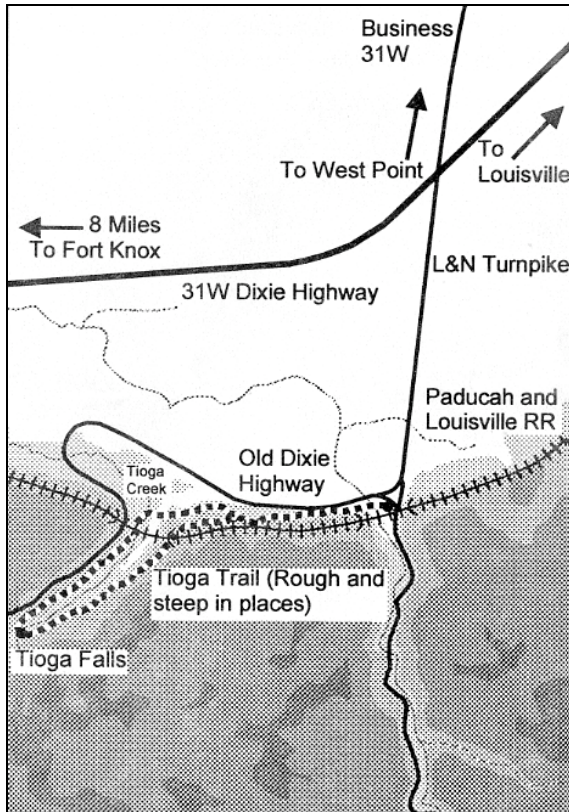


# TIOGA FALLS NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL



## A scenic and historic two-mile trail winding through Muldraugh Hill

U.S. Army Armor Center  
and Fort Knox

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the TIOGA FALLS HIKING TRAIL. This self-guided trail was developed to display an area with a unique combination of natural beauty and Nineteenth Century history. The trail lies in an area of Fort Knox used for military training and as a result is sometimes closed to hikers. The trail may also be closed to hikers during some hunting seasons. You may telephone the Fort Knox Hunt Control Office (502-624-7311/2712) to find out if the trail is open for public visitation. Visitors using the Tioga Falls Trail are required to strictly follow the regulations outlined on the back of this trail guide.

### POINTS OF INTEREST

Along the two-mile (circuit) trail are 33 points of interest that are addressed in this trail guide. The trail meanders through a natural environment that can be as peaceful as a trickling brook or as violent as the tornado that devastated parts of the trail in 1974. You are likely to see squirrels, many different species of birds, and occasionally white tailed deer. Footprints are the only evidence of the nocturnal creatures that live in the woodlands along the trail. The entire trail hike takes about two hours to complete at a leisurely pace. The trail is steep and rough in places.

1. At the parking area can be seen the 85 feet high, 578 feet long Paducah and Louisville Railroad trestle reinforced with additional steel-work in 1930-31. The railroad was originally known as the Elizabethtown and Paducah Railroad. The paved road passing beneath the trestle follows the same route as did the old Louisville-Nashville Turnpike (L&N Turnpike). The turnpike was conceived in 1829 and construction of the road to connect Louisville and Nashville was begun in 1837. The turnpike was heavily traveled in the last century. President Andrew Jackson traveled the road several times. To the west of the parking area is the old Dixie Highway (now called Railroad Trestle Road) built in 1921 to connect Camp Knox and Louisville. It was used until the present 31W was opened in 1942. About one mile north of the parking area, toward West Point, is the site of the original Fort Knox (Camp Knox).

During World War I the entire camp was located in that area. The camp was not moved until after World War I ended.

2. The Tioga Falls Trail proceeds west over the west fork of Tioga Creek. The first 2,500 feet of trail follows the route of the now extinct Muldraugh Road. Muldraugh Road ran west off the L&N Turnpike, turned south, then southwest, and continued in Garnettsville. The trail climbs a hill that is part of the Muldraugh Hill range (escarpment) that runs from the Ohio River far into the central portion of Kentucky. The escarpment is the dividing line between the Salt River valley and the Green River valley across the state. The trail winds along the north side of a hill that represents true native Kentucky forest habitat.

3. Along the left side of the trail you will see limestone rock outcroppings. Fossils shells, coral, and bryozoans commonly found in the limestone along the trail indicate this area was once covered by ancient seas. The softer, thinly-bedded, gray rock between the layers of limestone is shale.

4. The majestic Oak, which dominates the forest along the trail, is common in this area. Oak wood is outstanding for furniture, boats, and barrels. This particular tree is a Red Oak.

5. This is the site of the old Tioga Railroad Station. Before 1918 many small farms occupied the area now used for military training. Here stood a small railroad station where eight passenger trains a day stopped to load and discharge passengers and cargo. Milk and produce were loaded for transport to market. The Tioga Station was on the east side of the now extinct Muldraugh Road. Muldraugh Road ran west off the L&N Turnpike parallel to the railroad tracks, then turned south to go up the hill to the station. From the station the road continued southwest to Garnettsville. The railroad is now the Paducah and Louisville Railroad. Years ago it was known as the Newport News and Mississippi Valley Railroad and was part of the Harriman family rail empire. If you look west down the tracks you can see another trestle similar in construction to the trestle that runs over the old L&N Turnpike at the

parking area. This is the largest of the two trestle bridges. It is 130 feet high and 707 feet long. The trestle carries trains over Tioga Creek. The valley beneath the trestle was known as Fletchers Hollow in bygone days.

**WARNING: BE CAREFUL. TRAINS USE THIS TRACK FREQUENTLY AND IRREGULARLY. DO NOT WALK DOWN THE TRACKS. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO WALK ON THE TRESTLE BRIDGE.**

6. The trail continues along a portion of old Muldraugh road past a giant Yellow-Poplar and Maple tree. Maple trees can be tapped in early spring. The sap is gathered and boiled down to make maple syrup. It takes about forty gallons of sap to make one gallon of pure maple syrup. The Maple tree is also a valuable source of lumber. Downslope from this point you can see the remnants of an old wagon road that branched off Muldraugh Road. The wagon road ran parallel to old Muldraugh Road for about 100 yards then turned west.

7. Note the huge fire-scarred Beech tree about 15 yards downslope. In front of the Beech tree the remnants of the old wagon road can be seen again. The old road leads to the site of a bygone stone crusher used in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century by Walter Fletcher and his son James in their road construction business. Extensive and impressive stonework to contain the roadbed and culverts to provide drainage, are visible along the old road. Evidence of these old wagon roads is present throughout the hills and valleys of this region. Extensive stonework to contain these roadbeds is not uncommon on the downslope side of these roads, and in many cases is extensive and impressive.

8. Off to the left can be seen the remnants of yet another old wagon road. This road ran up the hill to a farming area known as Little Prussia because the many German immigrants who once farmed this area.

9. These trees are fine examples of Shagbark Hickory. Their wood is prized for outdoor cooking fuel, tool handles, and above all, for smoking hams and bacon.

10. At this point the remnants of Muldraugh Road can be seen branching off to the left and continuing up the side of the hill. In bygone days the road continued on to Muldraugh, then Garnettsville. The hiking trail, itself an old wagon road, turns right and continues up the hill past a huge Yellow-Poplar and Blackgum tree. The trail then continues onward to the base of Tioga Falls. Yellow-Poplar trees are sometimes called Tulip trees because they have arge, showy, greenish-yellow tulip-like flowers that bloom in May.

11. Note the burls that appear on the trees to the right of the trail. These growths are highly valued by furniture and bowl makers because of the unusual grain in the wood within these burls. Just past this point, on the left side of the trail, you can see the remnants of a road that branched off and continued up the side of the hill to the Tioga Hotel, once located at the top.

12. From this point in the fall and winter, if you look carefully through the trees, you can see the trestle bridge that carries the Paducah and Louisville Railroad over Tioga Creek (Fletchers Hollow). The hills in the distance are in Indiana.

13. Downslope from the trail, at the base of many of the trees, you will see fire scars, but only on the uphill side of the trees. Hardwood trees on level ground are seldom damaged by ground fires because the bark insulated the tree from the fast moving, low heat fires. Trees on steep slopes are almost always damaged at the base on the uphill side because leaves, twigs, and branches sliding down the slope wedge there. This accumulation allows passing fires to burn longer and hotter. The burn scars may heal but more often result in a hollow tree. The scars on the relatively small trees indicate that a fire burned this spot not many years ago.

14. The old country wagon road you are walking upon was built over 150 years ago and is in remarkable condition in this area. Note the extensive stonework on the right side of the trail. The stonework was constructed on the downslope side of the road to contain the roadbed and prevent

erosion. The stonework continues for a long distance as the trail winds along the hillside. As you continue onward, look back on occasions, and note the extensive stonework.

15. Note the stone steps on the outside of the stone wall. Here passengers could alight from their carriages and walk to the creek below where a spring was located to provide a cool drink of water.

16. Numerous species of fern grow abundantly along hillsides in this area. During dam seasons many colorful fungi can be observed along the hillsides.

17. About 50 yards down the hill are the ruins of an old spring house built over 100 years ago. A cool spring filtered through the house where milk and other food could be stored to keep it cool. Many homes in this area would have a deep ice house built nearby. In the winter, ice taken from ponds or the river would be placed in the ice house between layers of sawdust that provided insulation. In this way, ice was available to the household throughout the summer.

18. Many large trees were blown down and uprooted in this area by a tornado that swept across the hillside and valley in 1974. Uprooted trees and debris were scattered in every direction by powerful circular winds of the tornado. Notice the lack of large, mature trees in the area. They were destroyed by the tornado, but a population of young trees has already replaced them as the forest renews itself.

19. This is Tioga Falls. This cascade, where the waters of Tioga Spring drop approximately 130 feet down the face of Muldraugh Hill, is especially beautiful in the spring after heavy rain. On top of the hill above the falls was the site of the Old Tioga Falls Hotel, a famous hostelry during the 1800s. Wealthy Mississippi and Louisiana planters would send their families here to spend the summer months to escape malaria which was so prevalent in the deep south. Hotels in this section of Kentucky prospered from such trade since this was as far north as the plantation owners could send their families and have

their slaves accompany them. The hotel was a long two-story building with porches all around twelve to fifteen guest rooms on the second floor. Nothing remains of this once fine hotel.

**20.** Across the stream are the remnants of an old dam that created a swimming pond for guests of the Tioga Hotel. The dam was also the base of a road that crossed the creek and continued north along the side of the hill. As you continued hiking down the trail, look across the creek to the hillside. You can once again see some impressive stonework that helped contain the roadbed of yet another old wagon road.

**21.** This is the bottom-most section of Tioga Falls and it cascades down the face of Muldraugh Hill. From here the creek turns northeast and continues down a gentle slope along the base of the hill. Once outside the valley, one quarter mile downstream, the creek turns sharply to the northwest and gently flows four miles into the Ohio River.

**22.** The trail follows the banks of Tioga Creek to the old stone spring house noted previously. The spring is gone now, but the stone walls of the house remain. Across the trail from the spring house, about 1/3 the way up the hill, you can once again see the remnants of an old wagon road going up the side of the hill. A short distance down the trail, if you look off to the left you will see extensive stonework used to contain the roadbed of this bygone wagon road.

**23.** An exceptionally large Tulip tree (Yellow Poplar) stands to the right of the trail. The trees with whitish bark are Sycamores and are common in this area.

**24.** Note the felled and damaged trees that litter the ground. This area has recently (spring 1991) experienced a "windthrow". A windthrow is caused by a powerful wind that originates from a storm but is greatly intensified by the topography of a valley. The extensive, but localized damage was caused by a windthrow and not a tornado. All the felled trees and limbs point in the direction the wind was blowing down the valley. This indicates a windthrow. The circular winds of a tornado would have scattered

trees and limbs in all directions. In a few more years the forest will renew itself and this damage will no longer be apparent.

**25.** Underground streams which feed surface springs are common in Kentucky. Cool, moist air around these springs create an ecological balance favorable to moisture-loving plants like ferns and moss.

**26.** The trail passes beneath the high trestle of the Paducah and Louisville Railroad. The trestle is 130 feet high, and 707 feet long. The trestle was built over 100 years ago. The extensive, vertical, cement wall on the west end of the trestle is where the old Dixie Highway (now Railroad Trestle road) passes under the trestle. The road has been closed to the public since 1942 when the present Dixie Highway (U.S. 31W) was completed.

**27.** Along the west bank of the creek lies the stonework remnants of the Withers Tannery. In the 1820's this tannery was operated by Matthew Keene Withers. Withers contracted to construct a section of the nearby L&N Turnpike. He built the northern-most of the three stone bridges that carry the turnpike over the east branch of Tioga Creek. He lost a great deal of money on the contract. When his tannery business failed he took his family and possessions to Texas where he rebuilt his fortune.

**28.** Out in the moist bottomland to the left of the trail are Sycamore and Cottonwood trees that are racing each other upward for sunlight. Both tree species grow extremely fast. The Cottonwood grows a little faster but does not live as long as the Sycamore.

**29.** The moss-covered rocks here indicate the coolness of the north-facing slope. Look back through the trees and note the picturesque trestle bridge you just passed beneath.

**30.** Hollow trees provide shelter for many types of animals. The large grape vine has climbed the tree where its leaves are now competing with the Sycamore tree for life-giving sunlight.

**31.** The Wild Hydrangea is frequent on moist slopes across the state. A hybrid variety of this species is widely cultivated and used as an ornamental shrub. At the base of the hill is Railroad Trestle Road with a large earth berm constructed across the road to prevent vehicle entry into Fort Knox training areas.

**32.** The building on the left was built in the 1930's as a relay station for the Southern Bell Telephone Company. It is now a private residence. Be sure to respect this private property. Do not trespass.

**33.** The trail has now looped back upon itself. Here again can be seen the stonework constructed on the downslope side of the road to contain the roadbed. You are now near station #3. Continue down the trail to its beginning and the parking area. We hope you have enjoyed the Tioga Falls Hiking Trail.

The U.S. Army Armor Center and Fort Knox would like to thank Richard A. Briggs of West Point, Kentucky, for providing historical information for this brochure.

#### **REGULATIONS FOR VISITORS TO THE TIOGA FALLS HIKING TRAIL**

- a. Training missions may require the site to be closed to the public. To inquire if the site is open for visitation you can telephone the Fort Knox Hunt Control Office at 502-624-3629.
- b. Excavation and/or removal of archaeological or historical items is prohibited.
- c. Motorized vehicles, bicycles, skateboards, horses, etc., are not permitted on the trail.
- d. Vegetation is not to be disturbed. The picking of flowers, shrubs, or the uprooting of any vegetation is prohibited.
- e. Children under the age of 16 years must be under the supervision of a person 21 years of age or older.
- f. No alcohol, illegal narcotics, firearms, metal detectors, fireworks, glass bottles or containers are permitted on the trail.
- g. Visitors must not walk on the railroad tracks. Trains use the tracks frequently and irregularly.