Rock Island Arsenal Visitor Guide

1. Fort Armstrong
2. Pier of the first bridge that crossed the Mississippi
3. Colonel Davenport Home
4. Arsenal Golf Course
5. Rock Island Arsenal Museum
6. Memorial Park
7. Confederate Cemetery
8. National Cemetery

*Please drive only on the highlighted routes *Walking is only approved for those who possess a Military ID Card

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1. **Fort Armstrong (located outside Arsenal security gates—parking available along roadway)**

A vital link in a chain of military forts along the Upper Mississippi Valley, Fort Armstrong was the first government presence on the Island. The Fort served as a center for the fur trade, a land office for settlers, and a military post to enforce Indian treaties. The Fort garrisoned 600 soldiers. The signing of the Black Hawk Treaty signaled the end of Indian uprisings in the area and in 1836 the fort was abandoned. There is a replica block house now standing here on the West end of the Island available for public viewing.

2. **Pier of the First Railroad Bridge across the Mississippi**

The first bridge across the Mississippi River was completed April 21, 1856. Fourteen days later, on May 6, it was struck by the steamboat Effie Afton. Abraham Lincoln was part of a legal team hired by the railroad company to defend the railroad bridge. The trial was a stalemate, and six years later it was decided that the railroad was not at fault. This case decided the future of navigation stating that all river traffic has the right of way over the railroads.

3. **Colonel Davenport's Home** ***Open May-October, Thursday - Sunday Noon-4:00 (309-786-7336)***

George Davenport arrived here on the Island with the Army working as a post sutler (supplier) and sometimes as a mediator between the U.S. Government and the Indians. Davenport built his home between 1833-1834, it was considered a mansion in its time.

4. **Arsenal Golf Course Now Open to the Public! (309-793-1604)** Play a round of golf on the scenic 18 hole course located on the banks of the Mississippi River or dine in the historic clubhouse. Facilities are also available to host a variety of events, including weddings, golf outings, reunions, meetings, holiday parties and family gatherings for groups of all sizes.

5. **Rock Island Arsenal Museum** ***Open Tuesday-Saturday Noon-4:00 (Closed Sundays, Mondays & all holidays) (309-782-5021)***

The Rock Island Arsenal Museum was established in 1905. It is the second oldest U.S. Army museum in the country. They have worked hard to preserve & display the history of the Rock Island Arsenal and small arms development. This museum is nationally recognized for a large and impressive small arms collection.

6. **Memorial Park**

At Memorial Park, there are old tanks & howitzers available for public viewing. Picnicking, playground, and restroom facilities are also available for the public.

7. **Confederate Cemetery**

From 1863 to 1865 the Island was home to 12,400 prisoners of war. A large portion of the first group of Confederates that arrived here were deathly ill with smallpox. Lacking a hospital and medicine, the healthy and sick lived side by side . Throughout the next two years over 1,900 soldiers died. Today the cemetery remains a grim reminder of the prison with more than 1,100 still buried here today.

8. **Rock Island National Cemetery (309-782-2094)**

The National Cemetery is a burial site for veterans and eligible dependents. It is one of 117 National Cemeteries in the country. There are over 25,000 grave markers here. You may walk or drive through here but no bikes or recreational activities are allowed.

Mississippi River Visitor Center / Locks and Dam 15 ***Open daily 9:00-5:00 (Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas & New Year's Day)***

At the Visitor Center you can view towboats and small recreational boats passing through the locks. An observation area, exhibits, theater, and ranger staff are all available to explain the transportation workings of the Upper Mississippi River. A gift shop is also available.

For help or more information, please call the Mississippi River Visitor Center at (309)794-5338