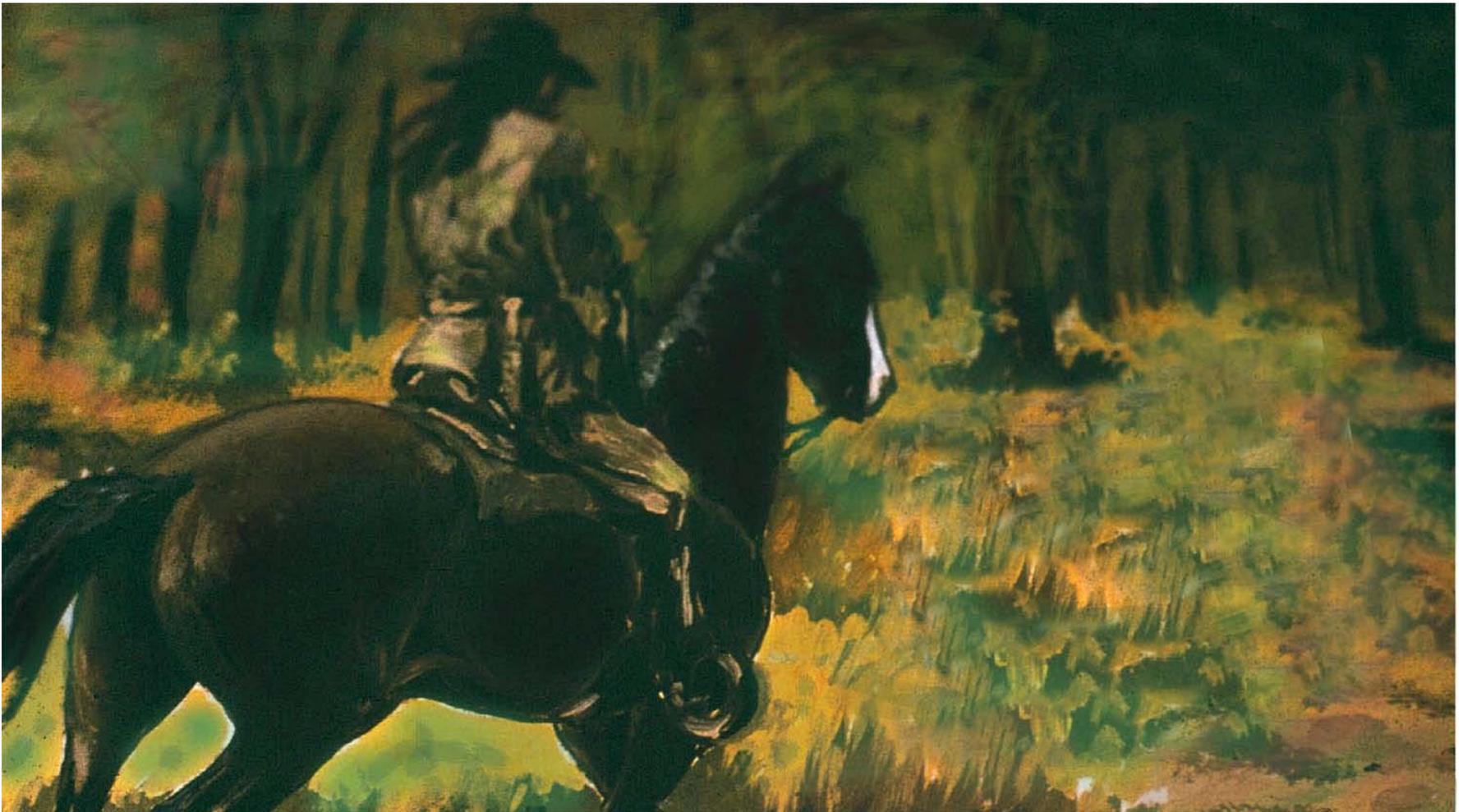


# How the Natchez Trace Came to Be





# **How the Natchez Trace Came to Be**

**Written by Natchez Trace Park Rangers**

**Photography and Illustrations courtesy of Natchez Trace Parkway.**

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**A long time ago many animals lived in  
a forest or grassland right where you are sitting.**

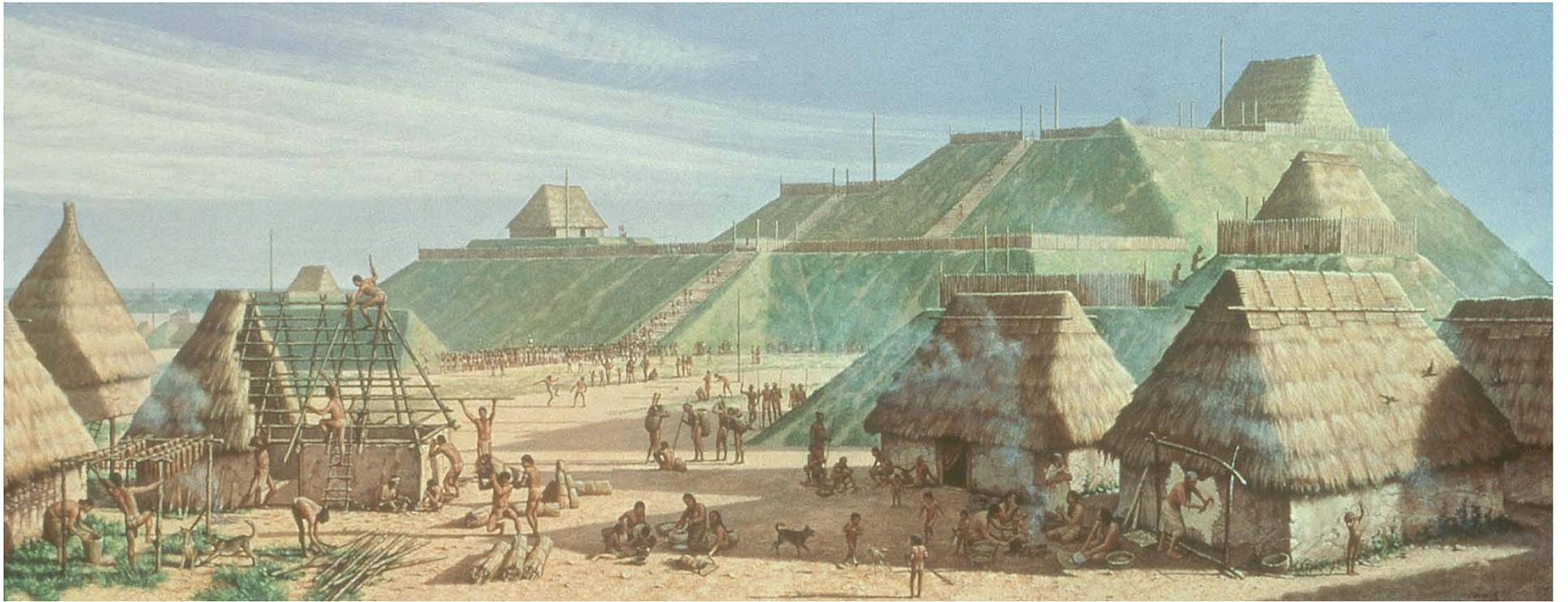


Some of the animals were **VERY** big.  
They munched on plants as they walked on the trail.  
They walked and munched so much that they made pathways  
through the forest.

(photo courtesy of the US Fish and Wildlife service)



**When the American Indians came, they followed the paths that the animals made. It was easier to follow the animal paths than to make pathways of their own. They built their homes near the pathways.**



**When people from across the ocean found this area, they followed the paths made by the American Indians. Some of these people were friends of the Indians, some were not.**



After a long time, people made a city by the Mississippi River called Natchez. It was far away from other big cities.



People from far away wanted to go to Natchez because they could sell the food they grew and animal skins they hunted. They floated boats down rivers to the city of Natchez.



**Their boats did not have motors so they could not float home. They had to walk home hundreds of miles. These people were called Kaintucks. The Kaintucks walked on the trails that the American Indians made. This trail was called a trace.**



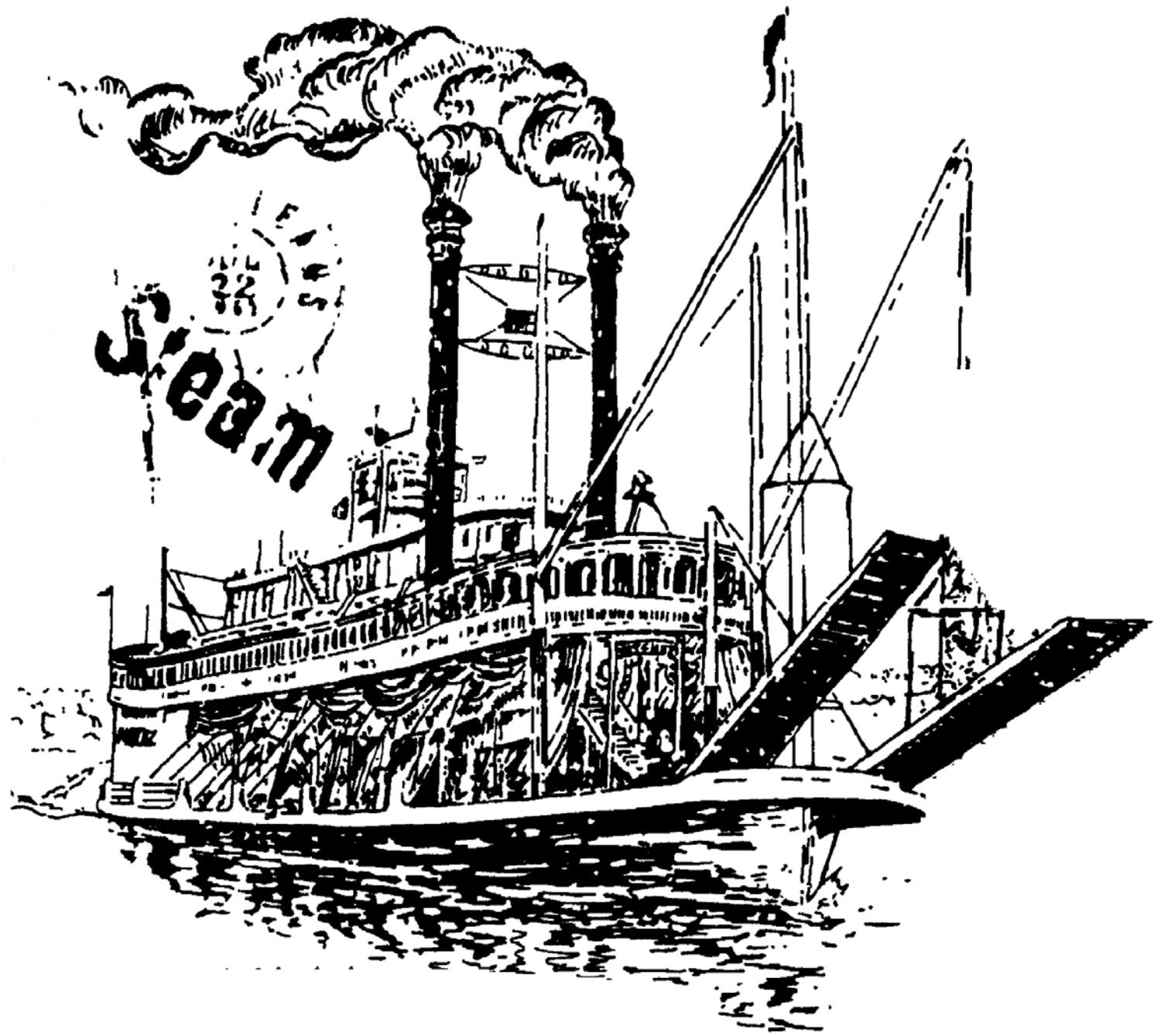
The Kaintucks were very brave people because it was a very long walk home. It might take them one whole month to get back to their homes. It was a hard walk too, with robbers, wild animals and stormy weather.



A lot of people started living along the Trace and it even became a famous post office trail so people could get mail. People worked hard to make the road bigger.



**Finally the steamboat was invented and the Kaintucks did not have to walk home. They could ride up the river on a powerful steamboat.**



People started to forget about the long road called the Trace. That was sad because it was an important trail. It was an important trail that helped build the Mississippi area. It was very important to the beginning of our country.



**Some very special people told our government that it was a good idea for us to always remember the people who lived along and walked on the Trace trail from Natchez, Mississippi to Nashville, Tennessee.**



**A special part of our government called the National Park Service takes care of the important places we do not want to forget.**



**The National Park Service built a road so people could still follow the Natchez Trace. It helps us all to remember the American Indians and the brave Kaintucks who helped to make the Mississippi area a better place for people to live. It is a very beautiful roadway.**



**Today, most people drive on the road. Other people may stop and take a walk where they see the symbol of National Scenic Trails. Some places on these trails are very deep. The soil was pushed down first by the feet of big animals, then by American Indians, then by Kaintucks and Post Riders and now even YOU can walk on the trail and leave your footprints on the Old Natchez Trace!**



