

# Cultural History along the Natchez Trace Parkway



## Classroom Lesson: Something Old and Something New (code MSO)

- **Grade:**  
5<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>
- **Subject Area:**  
History, Social Studies

- **Setting:**  
Classroom

- **Duration:**  
One or two class periods depending on skill of students.

- **Skills:**  
Map reading, compare, contrast

- **AL Objectives:**  
5<sup>th</sup> Geography 1,5  
7<sup>th</sup> Geography 1,7,12

- **Vocabulary:**  
Horizontal, diagonal, vertical

**Summary:** On seven maps from 1816 to the present, small groups of students will compare and contrast the areas surrounding the Natchez Trace Parkway and answer questions about the maps.



**Materials Needed:** For each group, copies of provided files:  
Natchez Trace Parkway – south section  
Clinton, MS aerial map 2009  
Clinton, MS topography map 1980  
Reconstruction Period, ca 1873  
Steamboat Days, ca 1852  
Growth of Counties, ca. 1842  
Early Statehood, ca. 1822  
Mississippi Territory 1816

Green, red and purple colored pencils. Paper and pen to write comparisons and contrasts.

### Instructional Information

**Alabama:**

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Geography:**

1. Locate on a map physical features that impacted the exploration and settlement of the Americas, including ocean currents, prevailing winds, large forests, major rivers, and significant mountain ranges.

5. Explain the early colonization of North America and reasons for settlement in the Northern, Middle, and Southern colonies, including geographic features, landforms, and differences in climate among the colonies.

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade Geography**

1. Describe the world in spatial terms using maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies.

7. Classify spatial patterns of settlement in different regions of the world, including types and sizes of settlement patterns.

12. Explain geographic contexts that influenced historical events.

**Learning Objectives:** The students will be able to: 1) Use a variety of maps to compare and contrast the development of a trade route. 2) Use maps to compare and contrast the changes in populated areas.

**Teacher Set:** The students will compare and contrast maps of varying age, detail and accuracy. They will draw on the maps to locate features. They will compare and contrast the growth of an area, using different maps. Review how to locate features on a map prior to the lesson.

**Teacher Overview:** The Natchez Trace has existed for a very long time. It is widely believed that its beginnings lay with the formation of prehistoric animal trails. Naturally, when American Indians entered the area, they found it easier to hunt and move about on established trails. As Europeans

entered the area, they utilized the trails established by the American Indians. The Natchez Trace was an important route for the return of traders who had carried their goods via river to sell in the Old Southwest capital of Natchez. Their return route was actually a network of trails that followed a general direction along a fairly centralized route. As time wore on, the soils along the trails compacted thus creating areas of “sunken trace”. The Natchez Trace became a federal postal route in 1800. After the steamboat came into popular usage in about 1820, the popularity of the Natchez Trace declined as a northward return pathway. In the early 1900s the Natchez Trace was recognized as an important historic feature of our country. The Daughters of the American Revolution pushed for public recognition and erected markers in each county of Mississippi commemorating the most important trade route of the Old Southwest. In 1934, the U.S. Congress legislated investigating the establishment of the Natchez Trace Parkway as a National Parkway. Established as a unit of the National Park Service, construction began in 1938. The roadway was completed in 2005.

**Student Instruction:**

Divide the students into groups and hand them the instruction sheet, copies of the maps and the worksheet. Be sure that they understand that the brown lines on the topography map indicate levels of elevation, the roads are in red and black (often dashes), and the red shaded areas are the city boundaries and that the small black squares indicate buildings.

**Student Task:**

1. Locate the Natchez Trace on each of your maps. Use a green colored pencil to “trace” the Natchez Trace.
2. Locate Jackson, Mississippi on the 1873 map and using a red colored pencil draw a small circle around the city of Jackson. Do the same for the 1852 map, the 1842 map, and the 1822 map. Jackson is not on the 1816 map. Using the 1822 map for comparison, look for the Pearl River and the Big Black River. Look for the 32<sup>nd</sup> parallel. Using your best judgment, draw a circle where you think Jackson should be.
3. Now look at the modern map of the Natchez Trace Parkway and locate Clinton, MS on the south west side of Jackson. Please be sure you note the compass rose so you know which direction is north.
4. Now look at the Clinton, MS topography map from 1980. Draw a rectangle on the Natchez Trace map that represents the area covered by the Clinton topography map.
5. Using the 2009 aerial photography map, compare the area growth in the Clinton area along the Natchez Trace Parkway. Using a purple colored pencil, indicate areas of new city growth in the Clinton area.
6. Answer the questions on the worksheet.

**Teacher Closure:** Review the correct answers. Ask the students what they could imagine mapping and maps could be like 100 years from now.

**Student Assessment:** Correct completion of the activity.

**Suggestions for re-teaching:** Visit the Natchez Trace Parkway to see a portion of what they were mapping.

**Extension:** Have the students write to their local, state or national archives or historic society and find out if they can find additional maps that represent other periods of history.

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## Something Old and Something New

### Instructions

1. Locate the Natchez Trace on each one of your maps. Use a green colored pencil to “trace” the Natchez Trace. It may be difficult to find the Natchez Trace in some areas, use your best judgment.
2. Using the 1822 map for reference, draw on the 1816 map, the boundary between Mississippi and Alabama.
3. Locate Jackson, Mississippi on the 1873 map and using a red colored pencil draw a small circle around the city of Jackson. Do the same for the 1852 map, the 1842 map, and the 1822 map. Jackson is not on the 1816 map. Using the 1822 map for comparison, look for the Pearl River and the Big Black River. Look for the 32<sup>nd</sup> parallel. Using your best judgment, draw a circle where you think Jackson should be.
4. Now look at the modern map of the Natchez Trace Parkway and locate Clinton, MS on the southwest side of Jackson. Please be sure you note the direction on compass rose so you know which direction is north.
5. Using the 2009 aerial photography map, compare the area growth in the Clinton area along the Natchez Trace Parkway. Using a purple colored pencil, indicate areas of new city growth in the Clinton area.

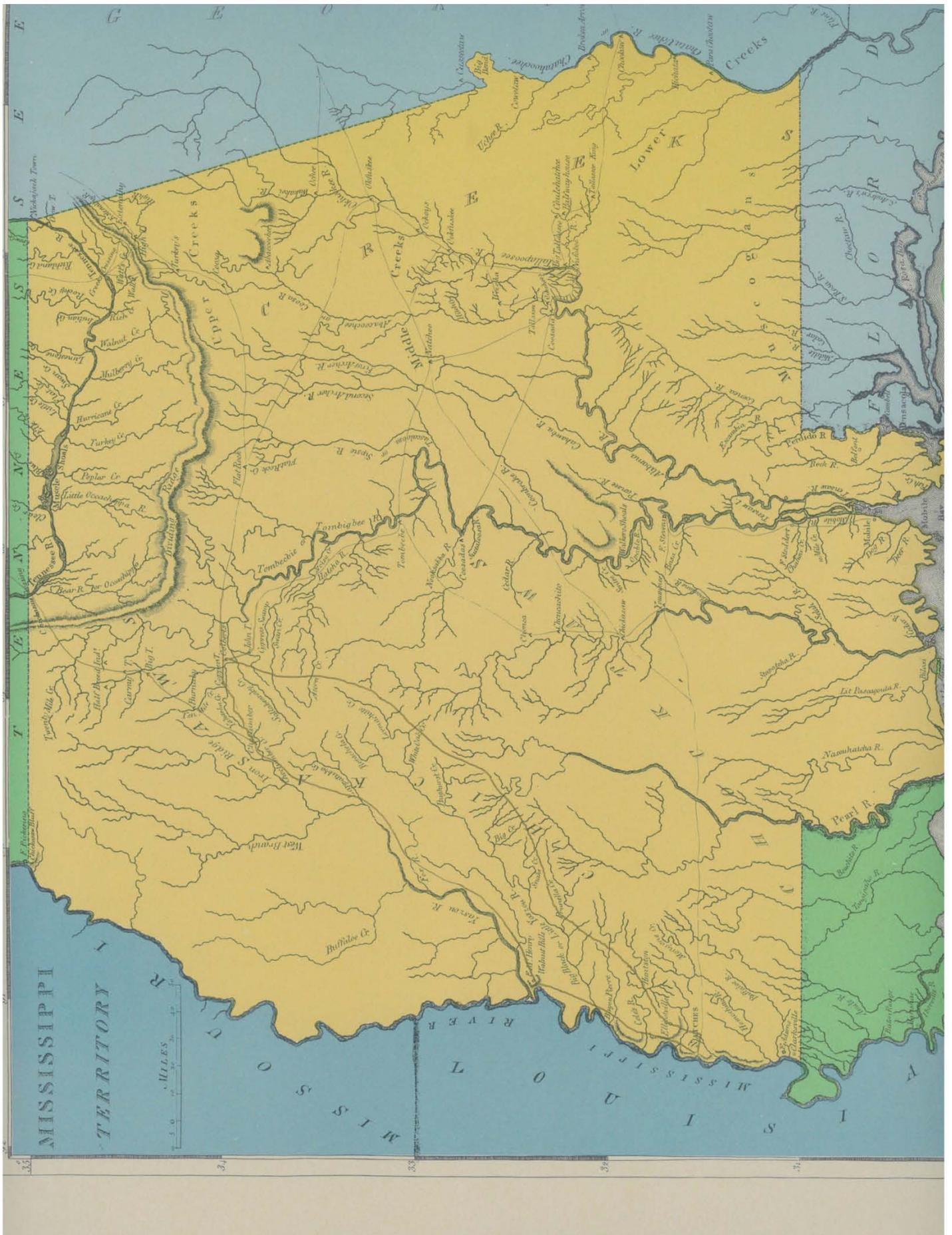
**Challenge Activity:** Look at the Clinton, MS topography map from 1980. Compare it with the Natchez Trace Parkway section map. How does the size compare, how does the direction compare? What are the helpful landmarks.

Draw a rectangle on the Natchez Trace map that represents the area covered by the Clinton topography map. (Hint: It will not be very big)

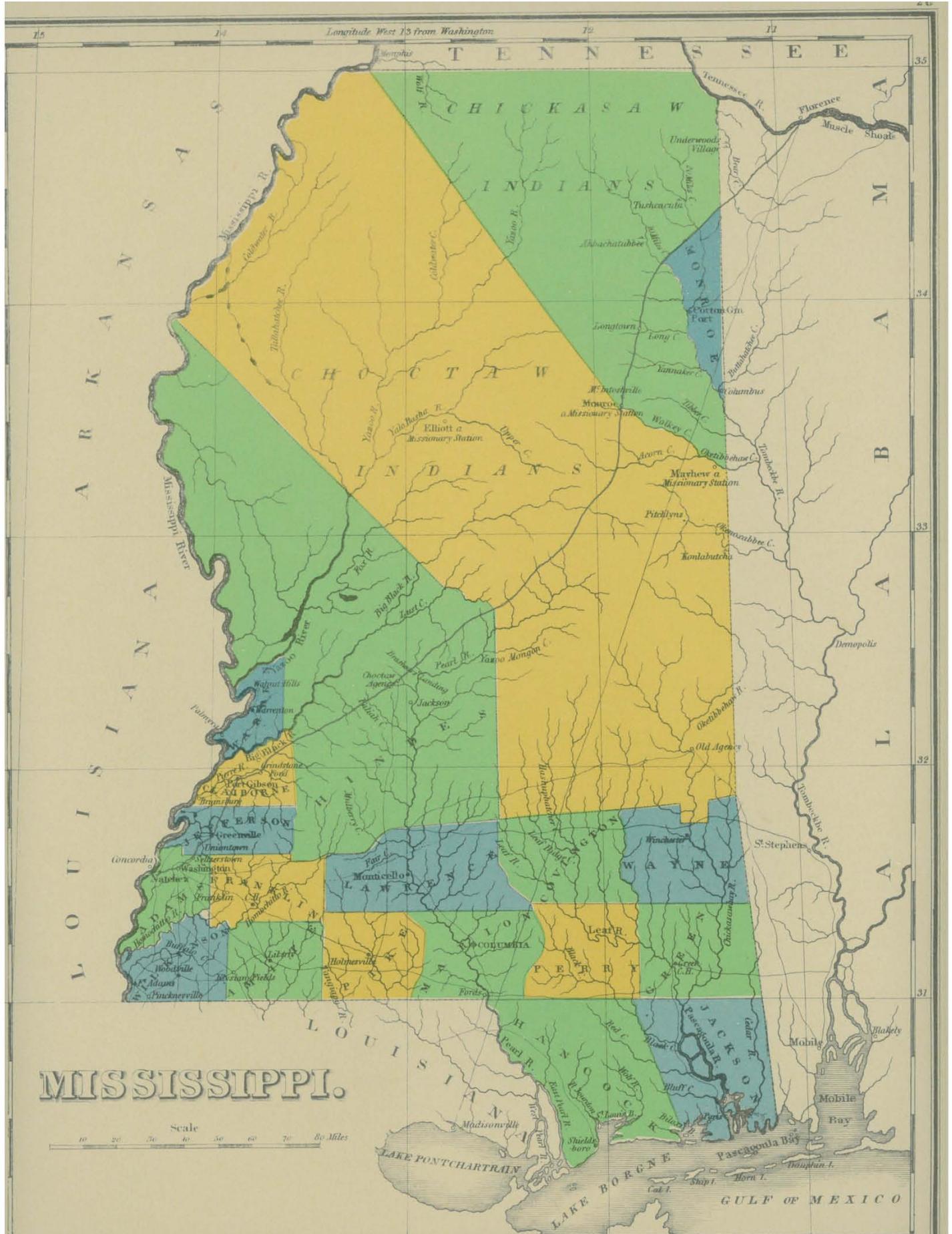
Answer the following questions:

1. Which map was easiest to read? Why?
2. Which map gave you the most useful information?
3. Was there difficulty in finding the location on any of the maps? What years? Why do you think this?
4. Were there any differences in the maps that would indicate that one or more of the maps was inaccurate? Explain.
5. When you drew the outline of the topography map onto the Natchez Trace map was your drawn rectangle vertical, horizontal or diagonal?
6. Where did the areas in Clinton grow the most?
7. How does the Natchez Trace Parkway affect the growth of Clinton?
8. What are some good things that the Natchez Trace Parkway Do you think the fact that the Natchez Trace limits areas of growth is good or bad? Why?

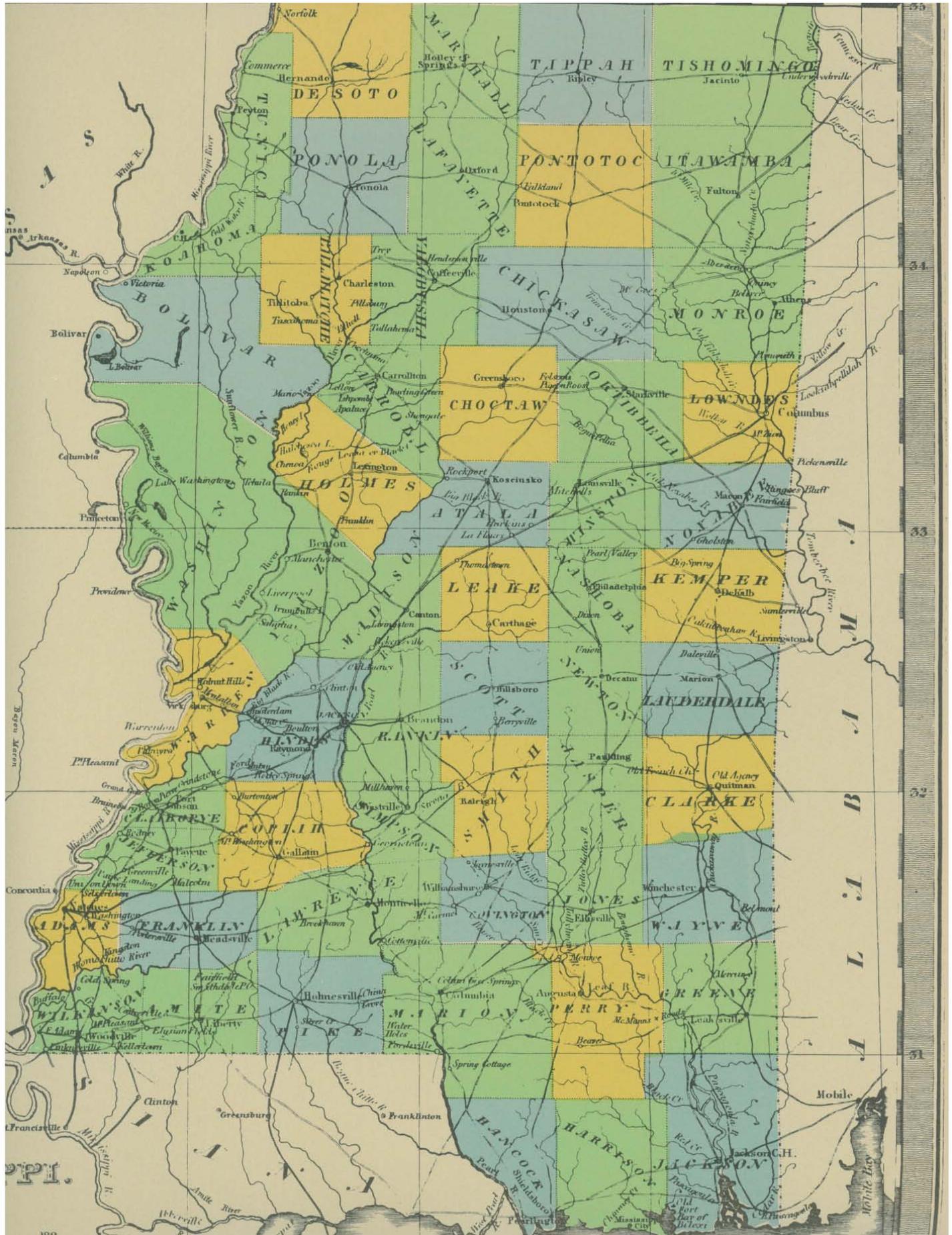
Mississippi Territory 1916



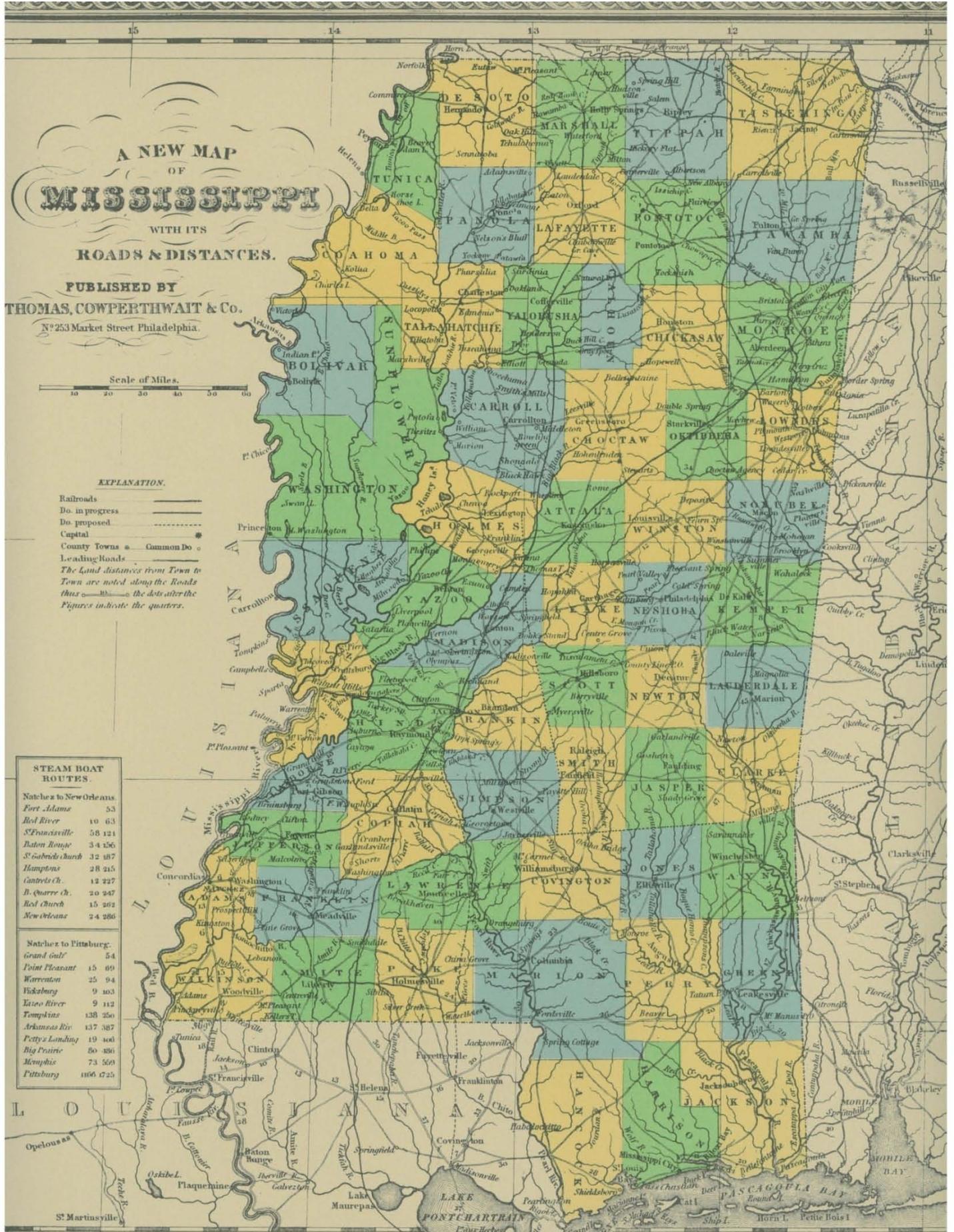
Early Statehood 1822



Growth of Mississippi Counties 1842

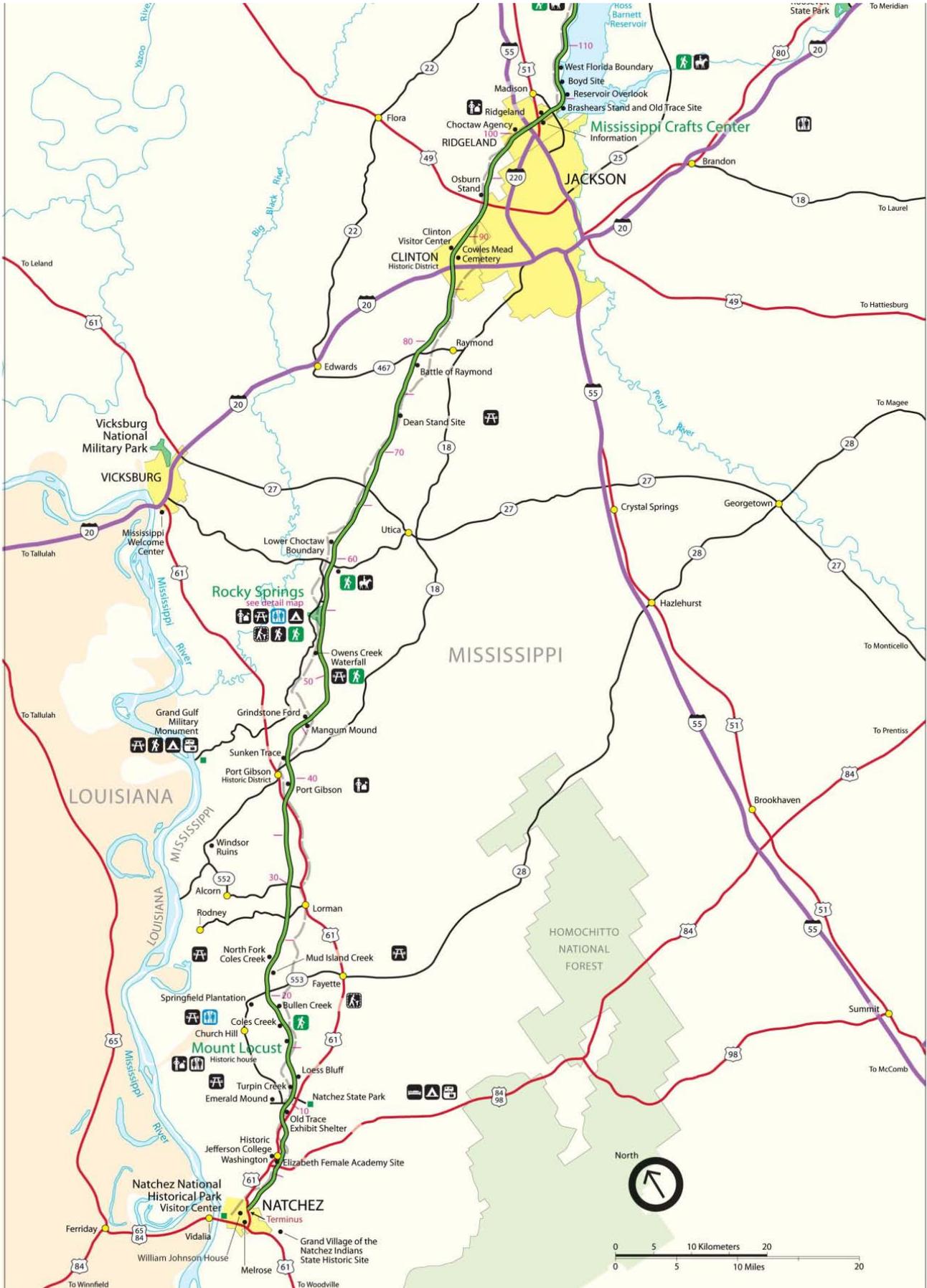


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# Natchez Trace Parkway map – south section



Clinton Mississippi Topography map 1980



“Answer” to Challenge Activity - See box

