

Exploring the Frontier: 1540-1840

An Arkansas history
art project



**A collaboration between
Arkansas State University Museum
and the
Arkansas Discovery Network
funded by the
Donald W. Reynolds Foundation**



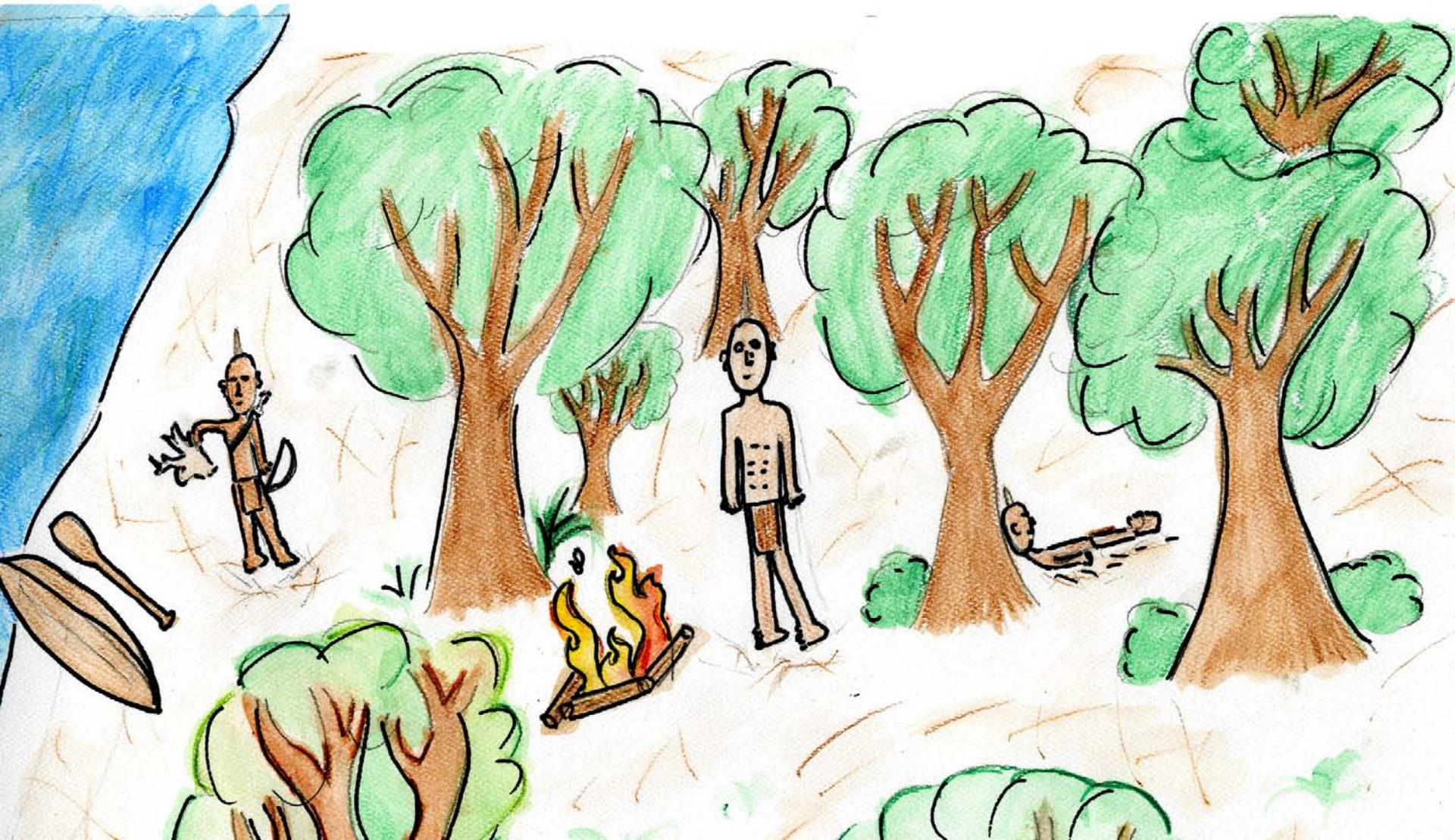
Native American culture thrived for centuries in present-day Arkansas.



Abundant game provided ample food.

Animal hides could be used for clothing and shelter.

Needles and jewelry could be made from bone and horn.



Dugout canoes allowed travel on the vast system of rivers.
Extensive trade networks existed between Native American societies.



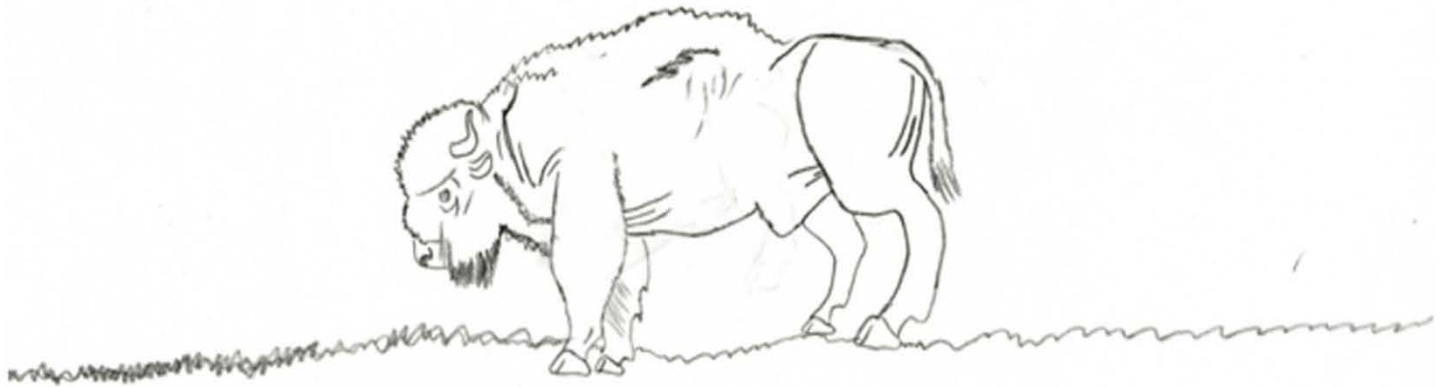
Complex social structures and formal villages were in place.



Ceremonial events, feasting, and celebrations were a part of life.

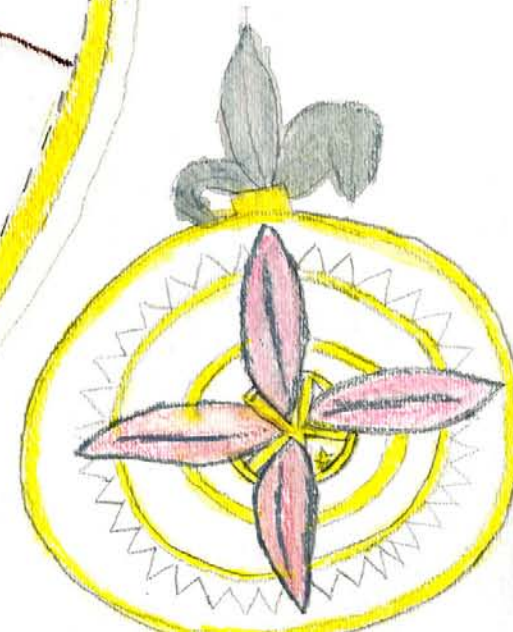
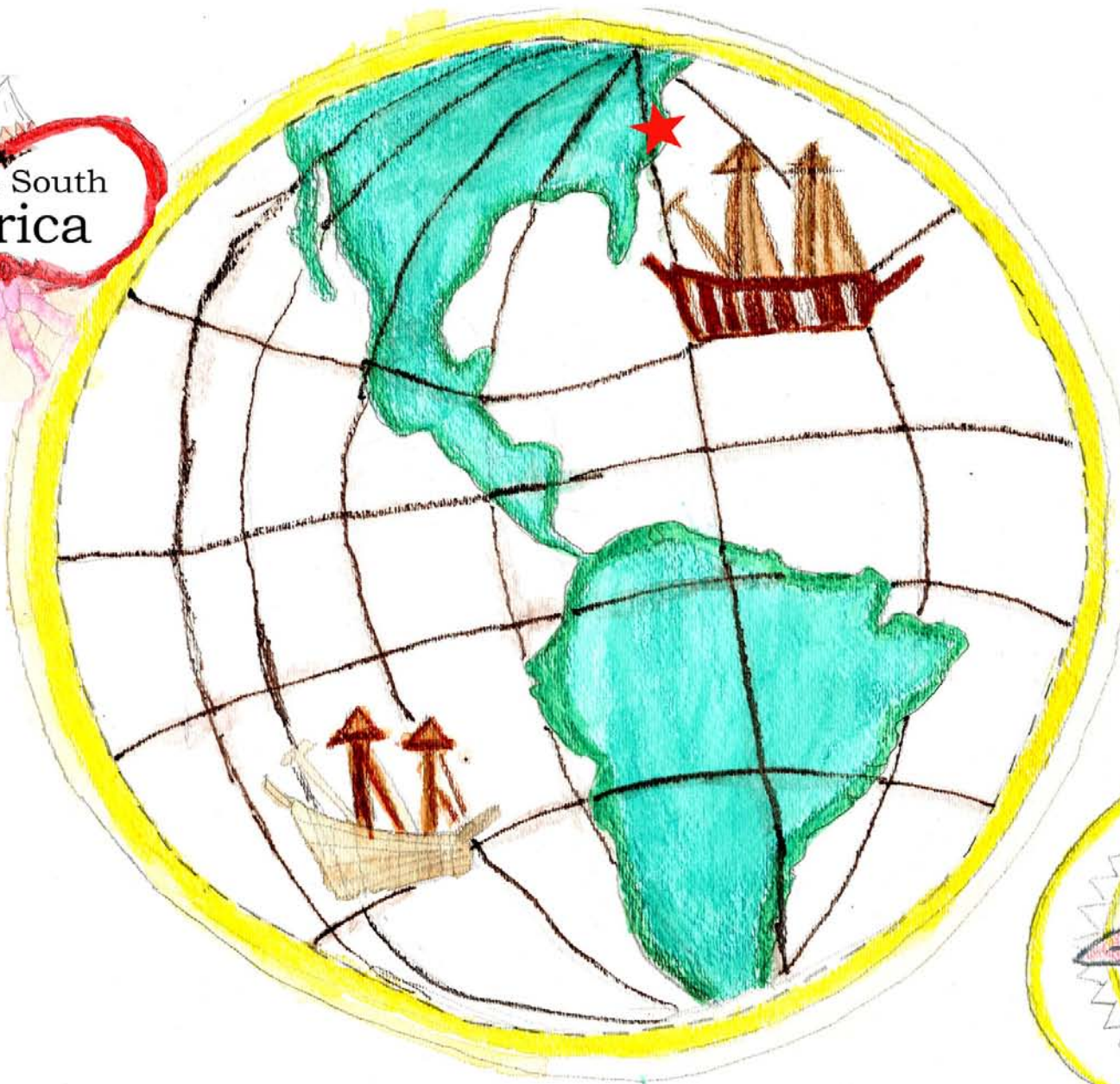


Life was about to change.

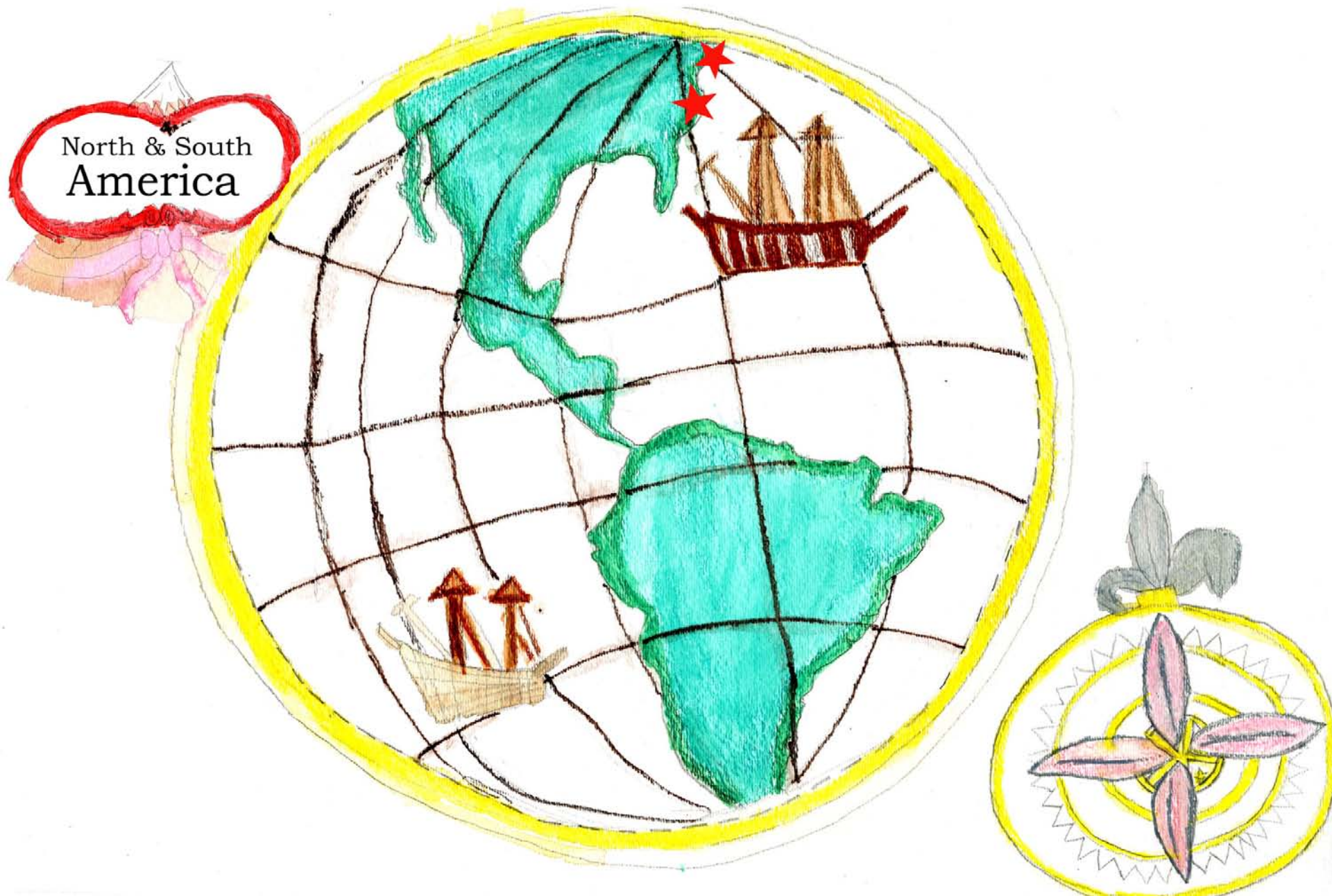


Before Jamestown in 1607...

North & South
America

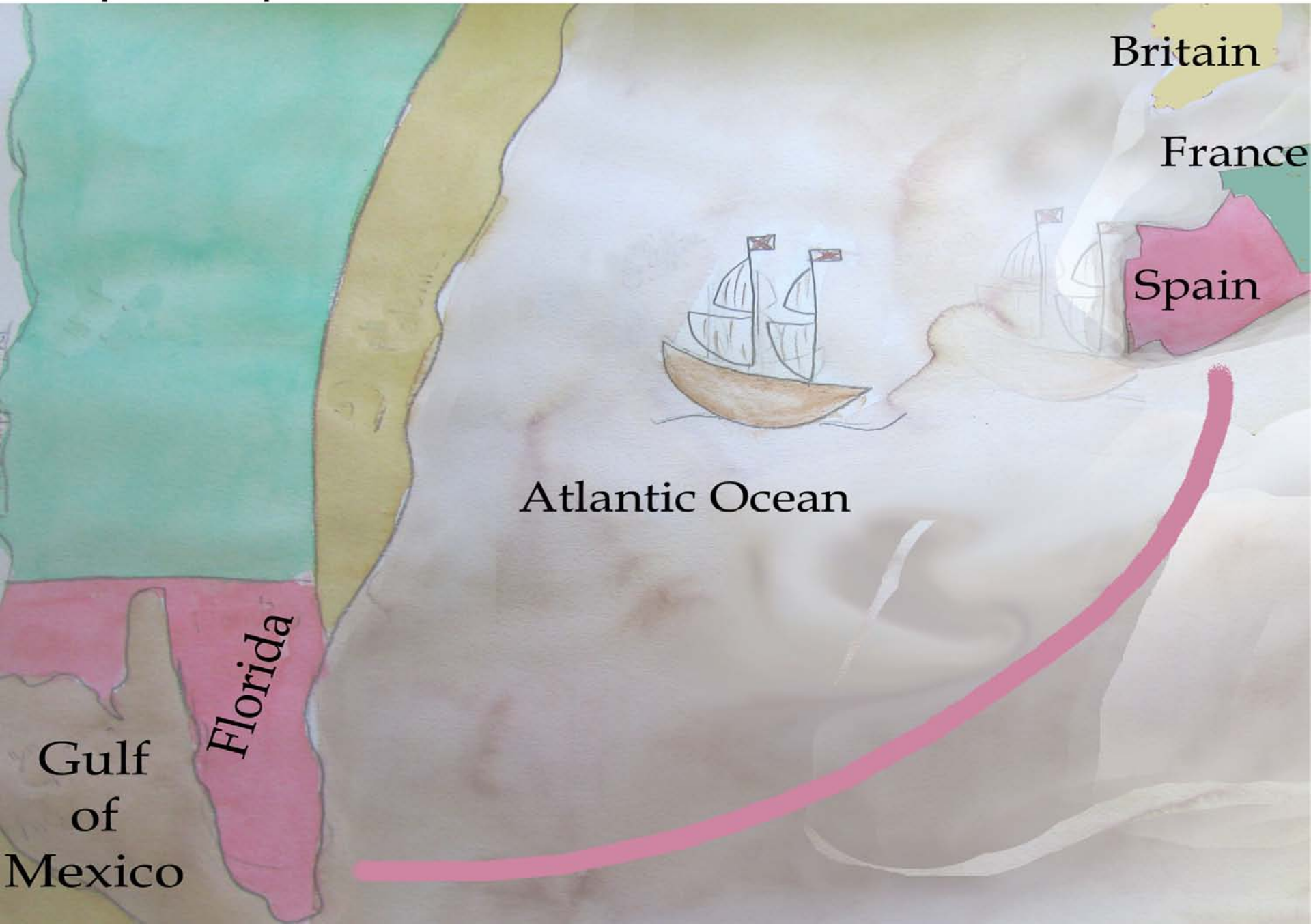


Before the landing at Plymouth Rock in 1620...



North & South
America

Spanish explorers sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean.



Hernando DeSoto sailed with men, horses, pigs, dogs, and provisions.



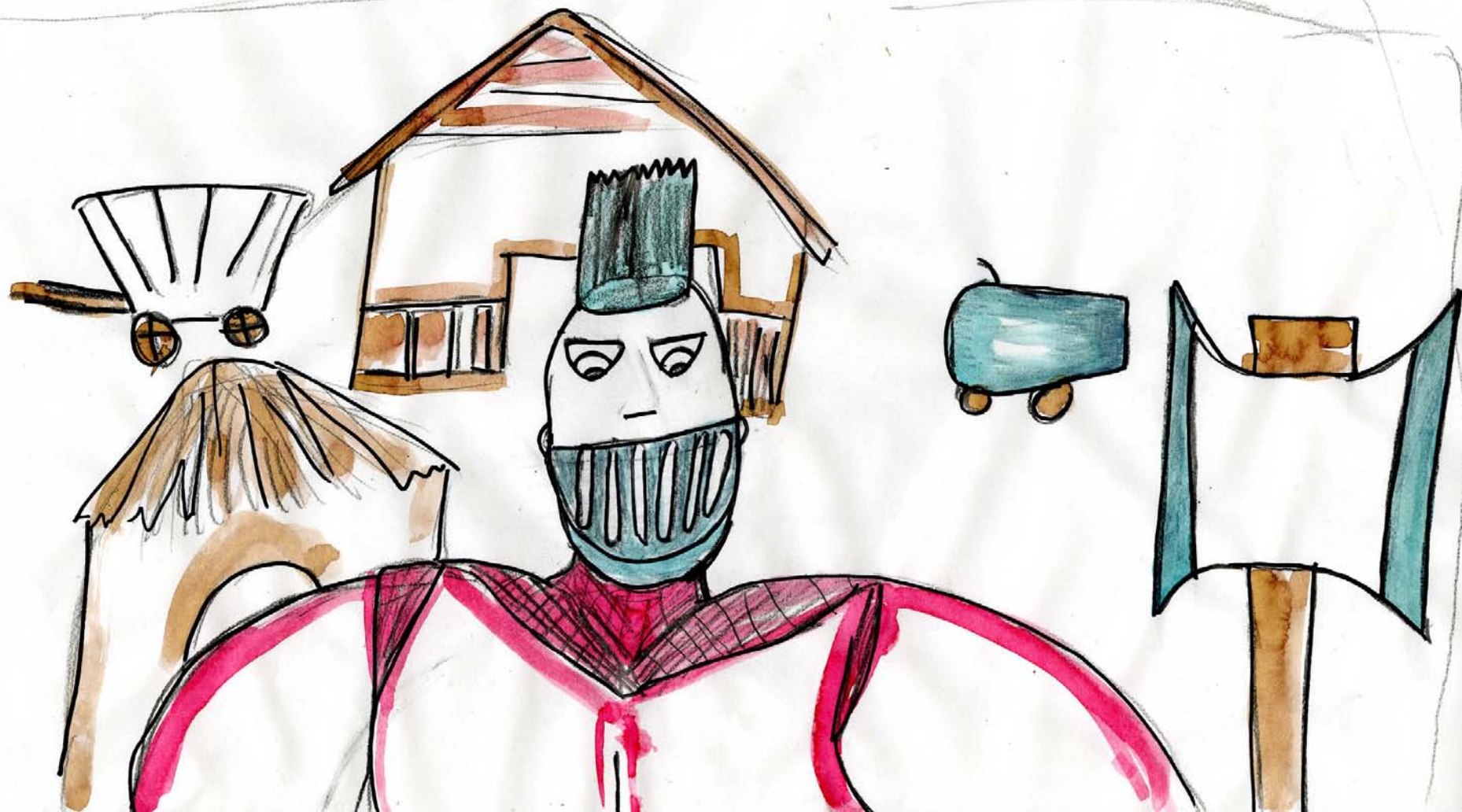
They landed in present-day Florida and marched to Arkansas
hoping to find gold and silver.



They met Native Americans.



DeSoto and his men did some terrible things to the Native Americans.
They justified this violence by saying that the Indians were savages.

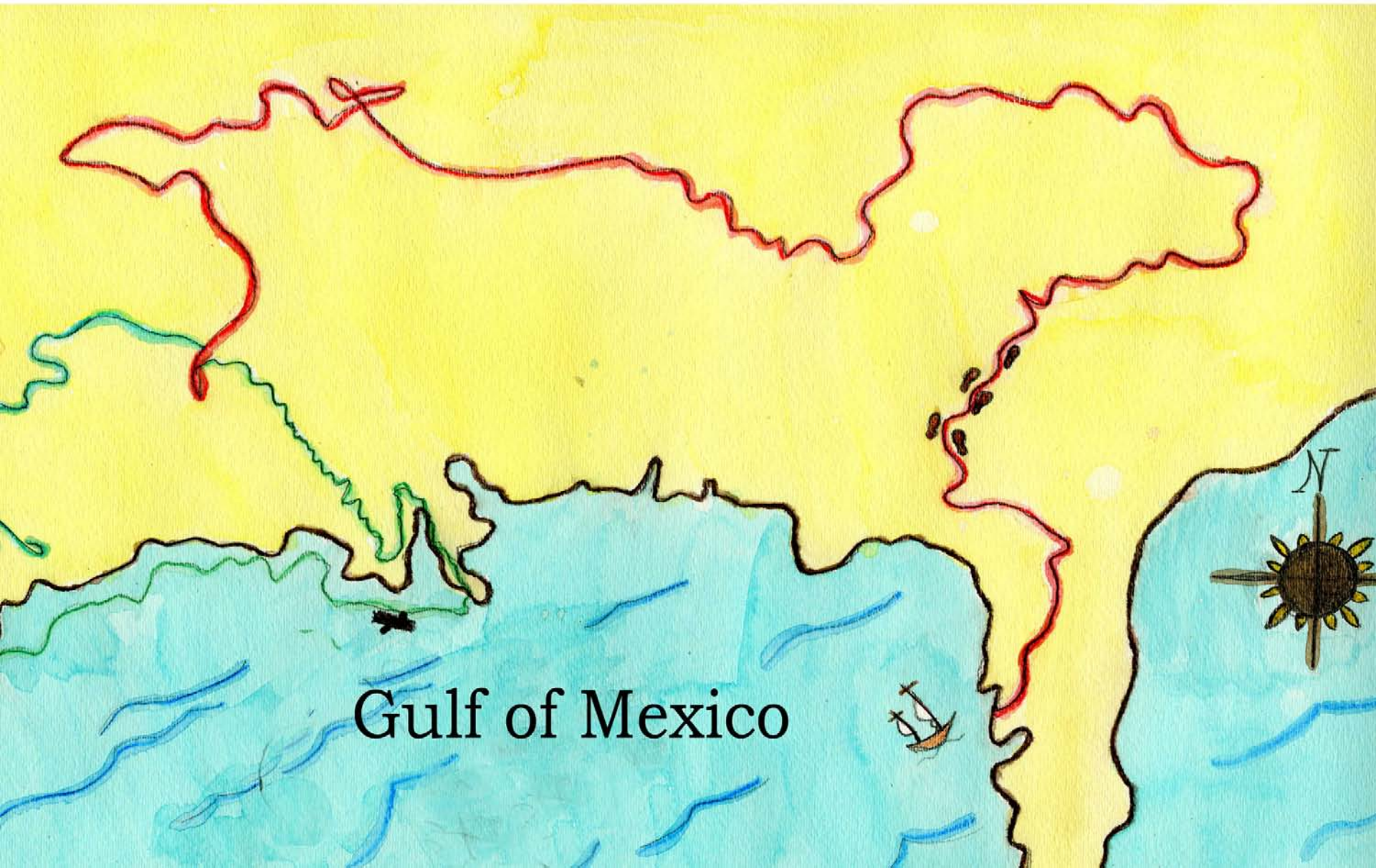


DeSoto misjudged the size of this continent because Spain was so small in comparison to the New World. His army could have walked all the way across Spain in approximately one month.

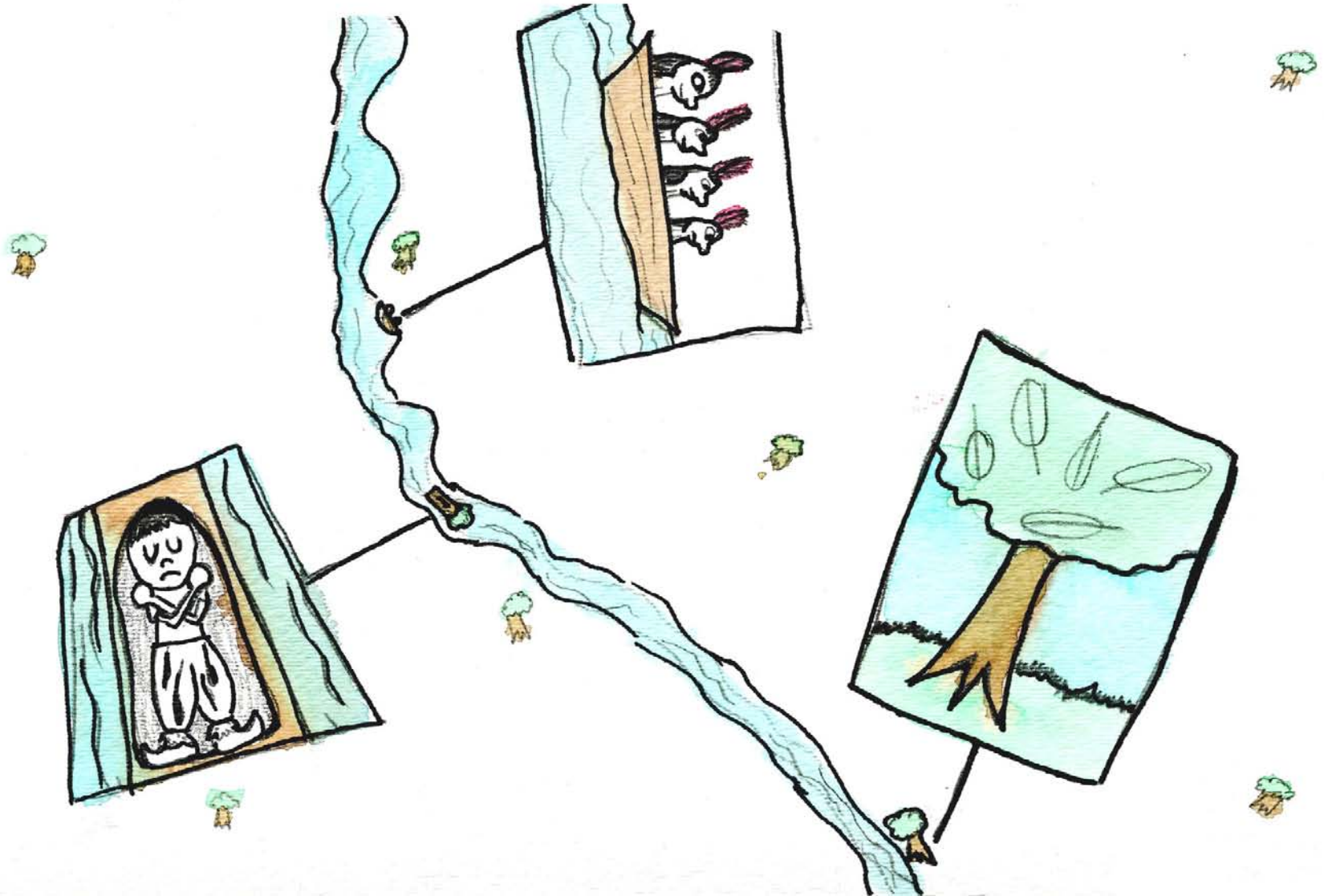
The New World was a lot larger.



DeSoto and his men traveled for four years through the Southeast region.
They arrived in Arkansas in 1541.



DeSoto died in Arkansas in 1542. His men wanted the Native Americans to continue to think that he was a god, so they hid his dead body in a tree trunk and floated it down the Mississippi River.



The Europeans carried diseases such as smallpox, influenza, and bubonic plague.

Without any immunity against this onslaught, huge numbers of Native Americans died.

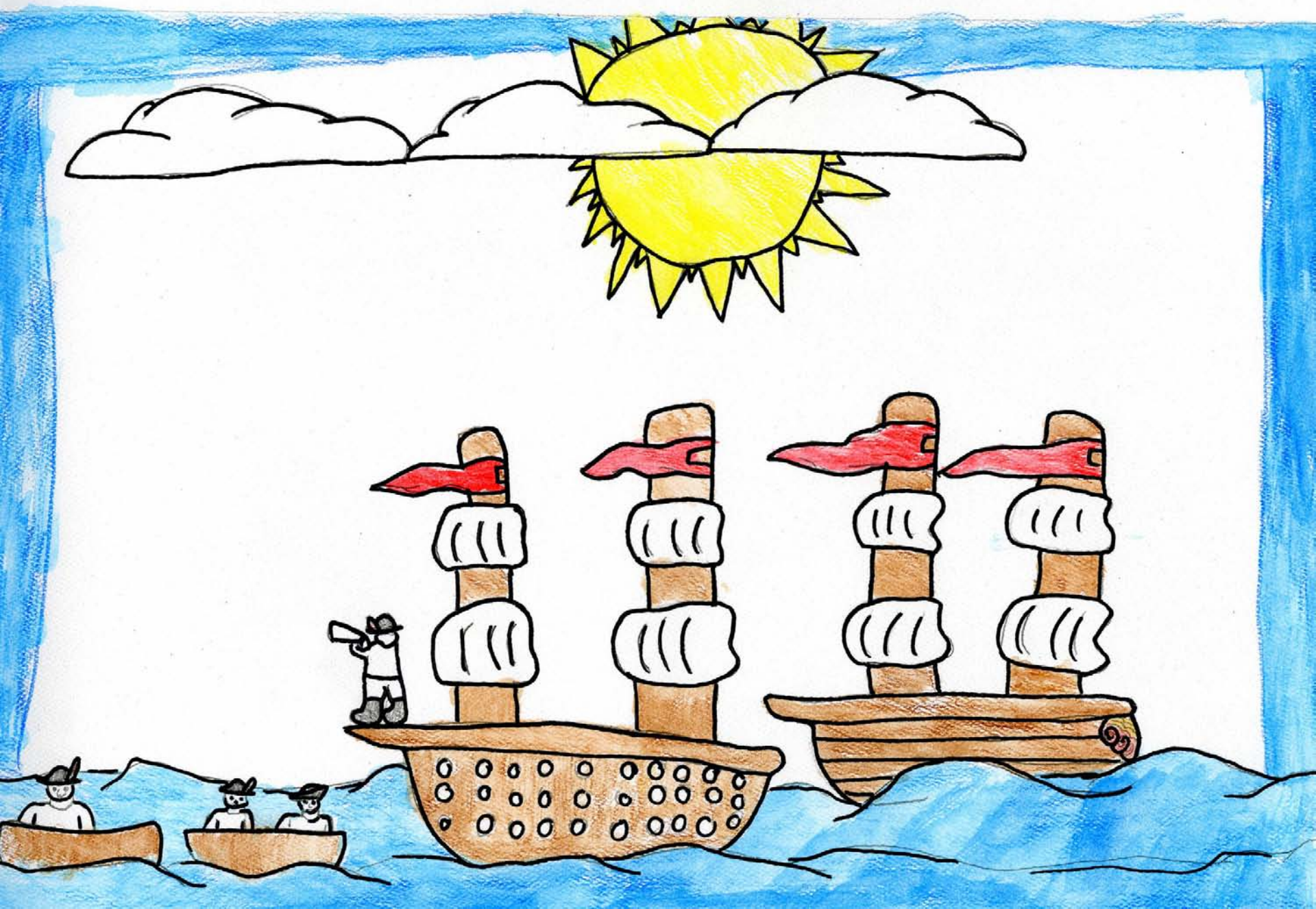


In Europe, the Spanish depicted Native Americans as savages.

As a result, Europeans were not aware of the complex trade networks, agricultural advances, social systems, or spiritual beliefs already established by Native Americans on this continent long before the arrival of Europeans.



The French crossed the Atlantic Ocean to Canada and the Great Lakes.



The French were interested in trading for furs because in Europe most of the fur-bearing animals were hunted out.

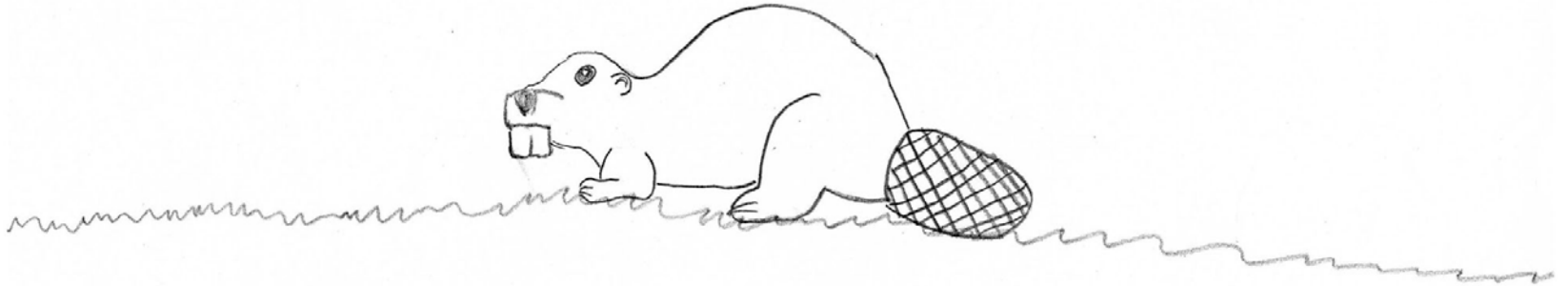
People needed fur to keep warm.

They also wanted to be fashionable--just like we do today.



The height of fashion was a beaver felt hat.

Everyone from cavaliers to pilgrims wore hats and beaver hats were strong, waterproof, and expensive.



Eventually, other items shipped back to Europe were buffalo and bear.

One very popular product was salted buffalo tongue
which was a delicacy in Europe.

Another was bear oil,
which was used the way
that we use butter today.



European explorers relied on Native Americans as guides.



Marquette and Joliet were led by Native American guides in their trip down the Mississippi River in 1673.

They described the day that they arrived in present-day Arkansas.

A canoe with ten Indians went first, then a second canoe with Marquette and Joliet.

They were met by two canoes of Arkansas Native Americans--their leader held up a calumet, or peace pipe.



Marquette and Joliet were brought to a large pavillion and a feast was presented in large wooden bowls.



During their peaceful visit, they were told that hostile tribes lived further down the Mississippi River, so they turned back toward the Great Lakes.



In 1686, Henri DeTonti, part of LaSalle's expedition, founded Arkansas Post, the first European settlement west of the Mississippi River. This was before St. Louis or New Orleans were established.



Arkansas Post was abandoned in 1690 and reestablished in 1721 when it became increasingly important regionally for trade and governance.





July 4, 1776

“When in the course of human events...”

With these words, the young nation declared its independence from Britain.

Most of the Revolutionary War was fought in the Thirteen Colonies.

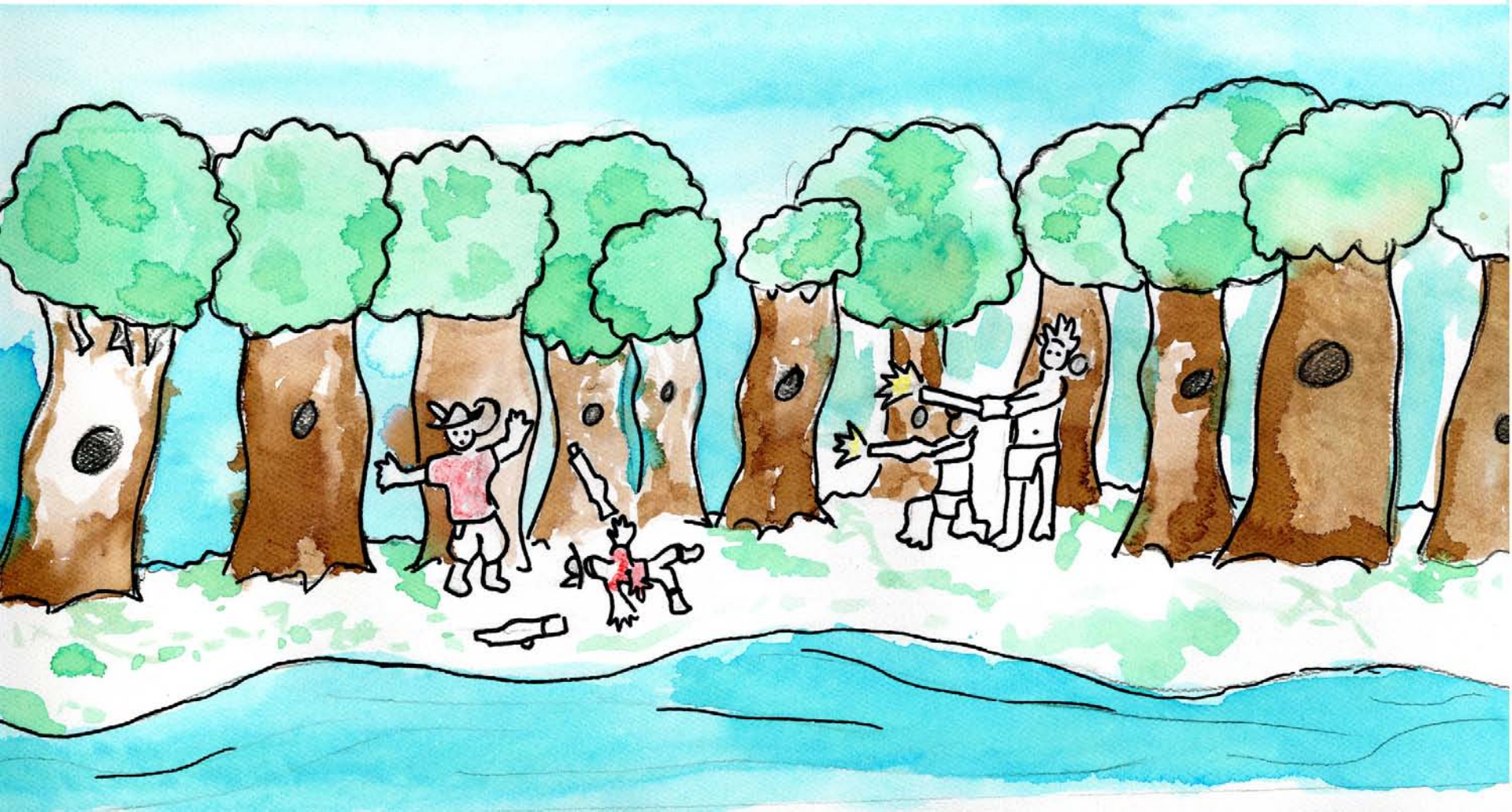
One skirmish occurred west of the Mississippi River--here in Arkansas.

The Spanish, allies of the colonists, held Arkansas Post.

British Colonel Colbert allied with the Chickasaw and attacked the Post, hoping to gain control of the Mississippi River.



During *Colbert's Raid*, the British thought that they had the upper hand after their nighttime attack. When they asked the Spanish to surrender they refused. The Spanish won their counter-attack by hiding in the woods, and "yell[ing] as the Indians do when they attack."



The British ran off yelling, "Let's go. Let's go. The Indians are upon us."





**Men dreamed of making their
fortune in the new
United States of America.**

The young United States of America offered resources and opportunity.



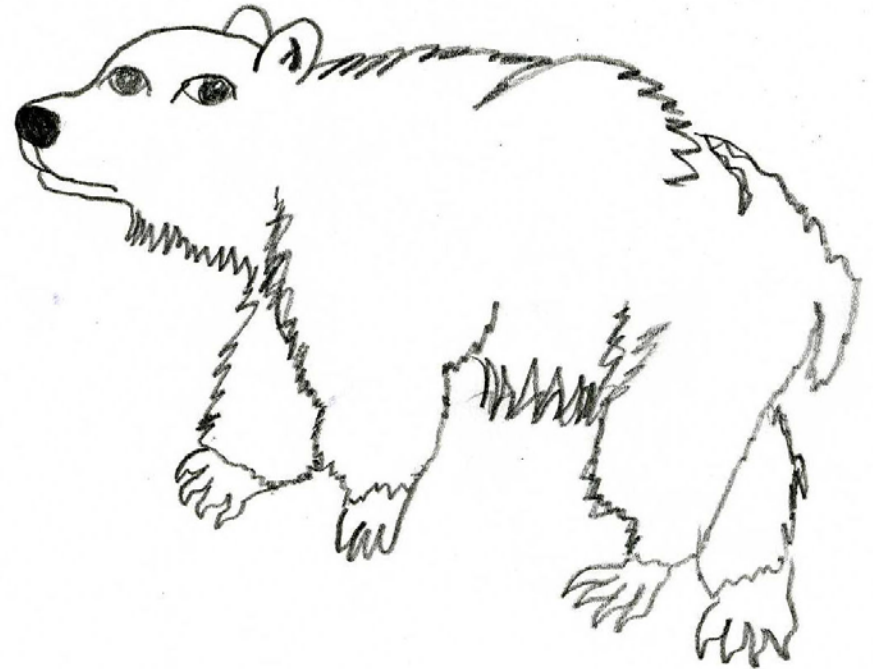
The Louisiana Purchase, in 1803, doubled the size of the United States.



In 1804-1805, William Dunbar and Dr. George Hunter explored the part of the Louisiana Purchase that included the Ouachita River and “the hot springs” in present-day Arkansas and Louisiana.

Their journals provided President Thomas Jefferson with good descriptions of the region.

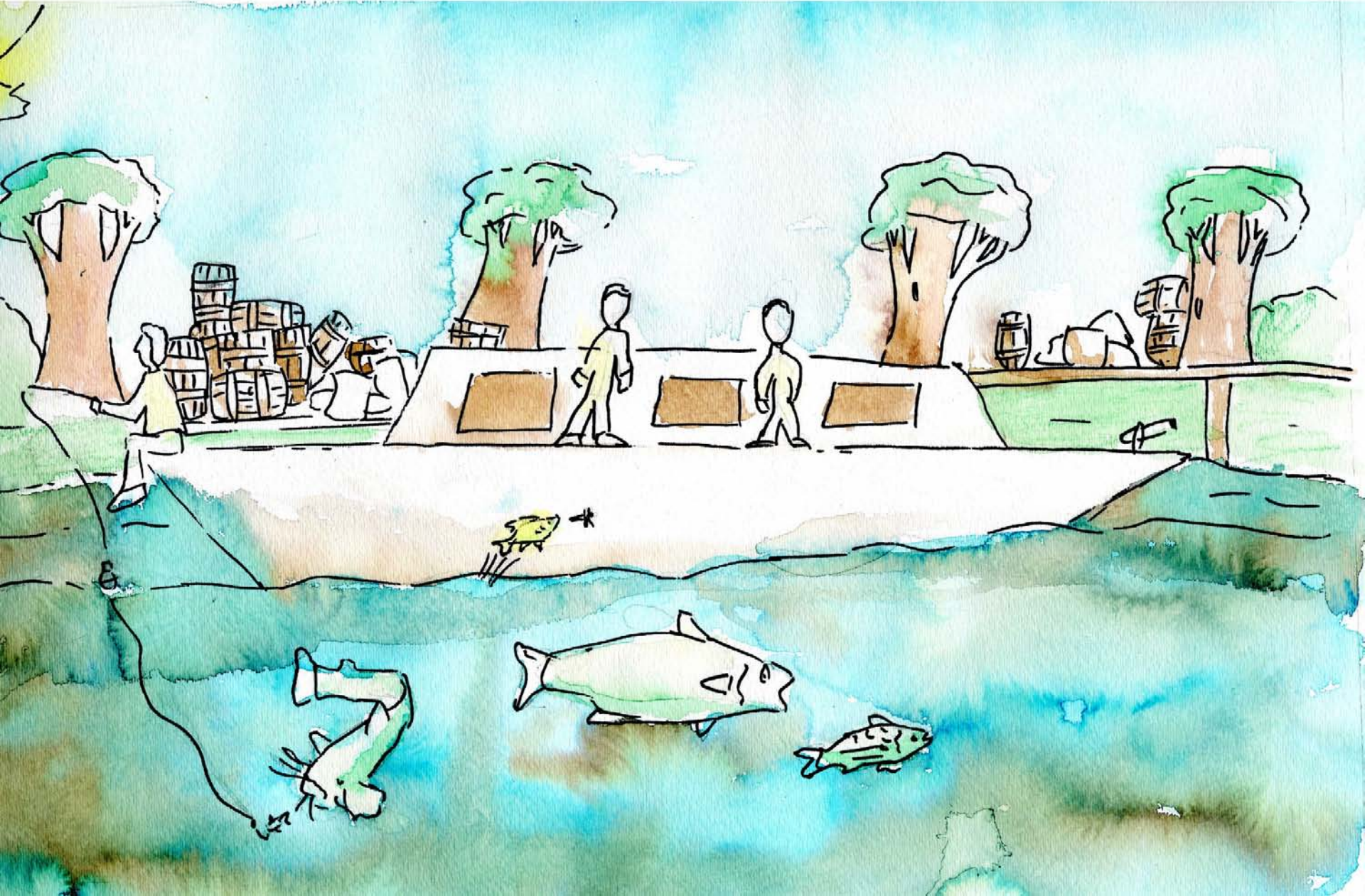
Stephen Long traveled through Arkansas in 1819-1820 seeking the source of the Arkansas River.



Fur trappers, traders, and settlers pushed into the Mississippi River valley.



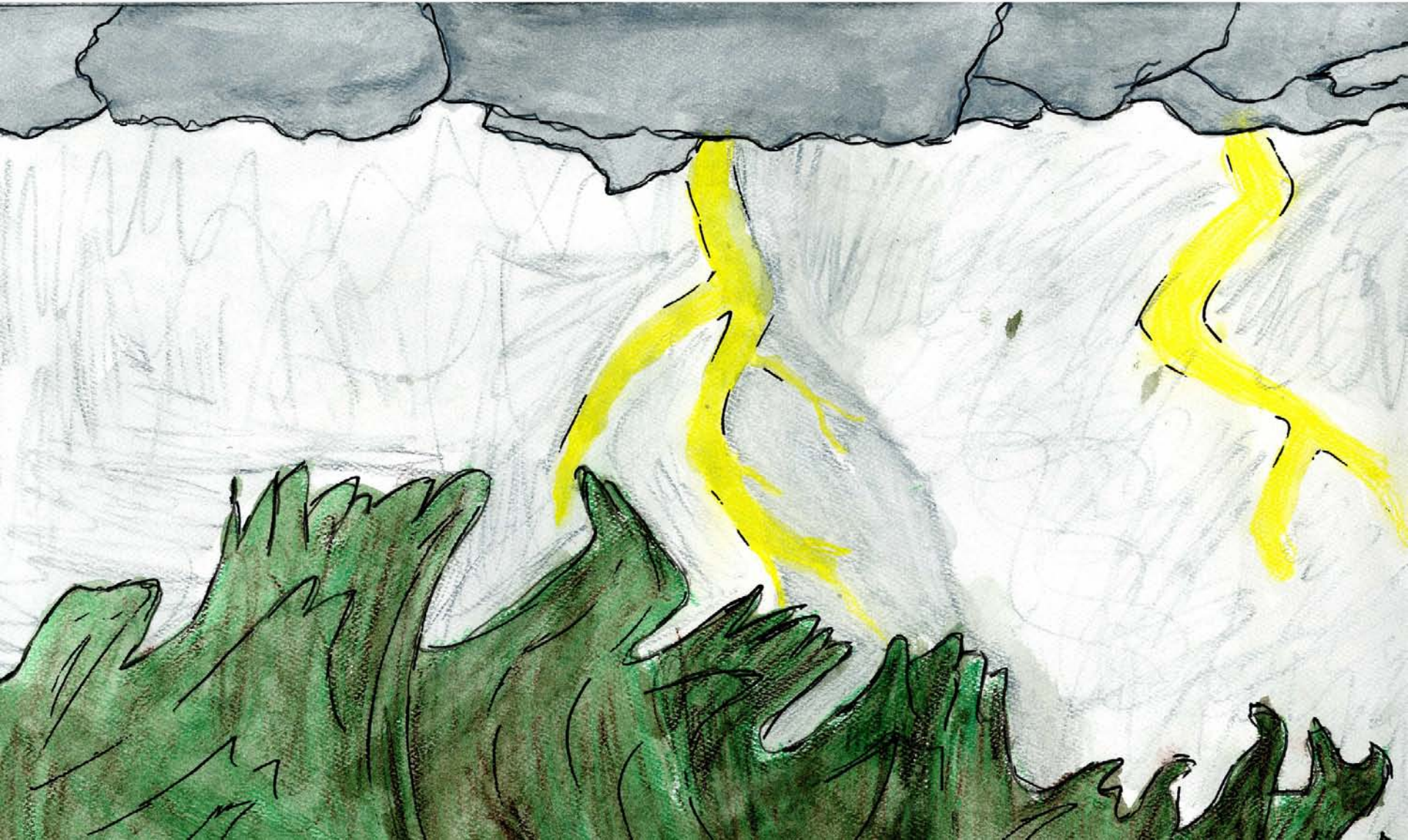
Keelboats brought supplies in and carried resources out.



In 1811, the first steamboat on the Mississippi River was cruising downstream.



The New Madrid Earthquake of 1811-1812 struck the region. It was the largest earthquake in U.S. history. The Mississippi River ran backwards when the bank thrust upward blocking the flow of the river and forcing it upstream.



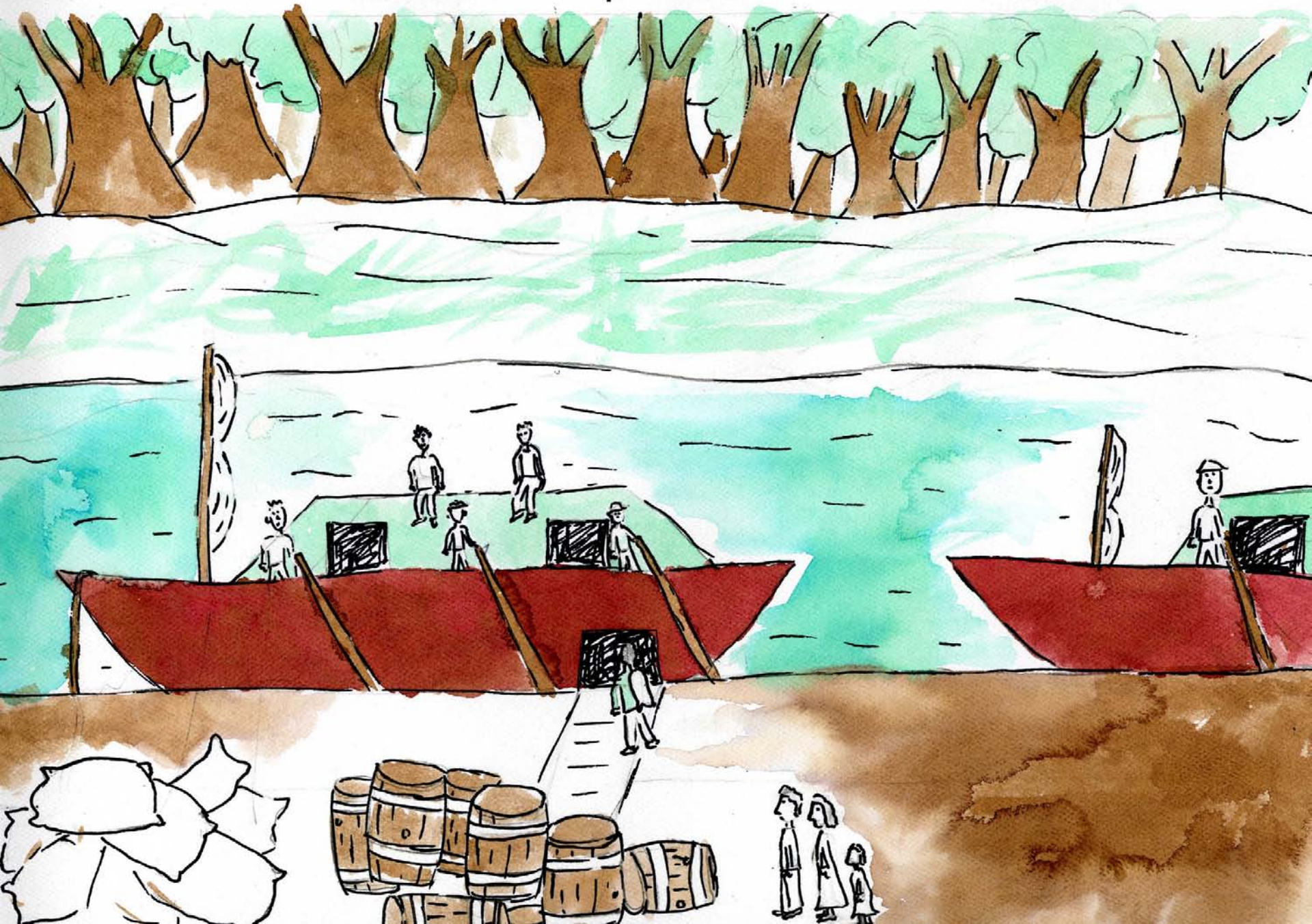
Buildings burned, chaos was everywhere.



The steamboat, *New Orleans*, survived!



The rivers served as a vast transportation network on the new frontier.



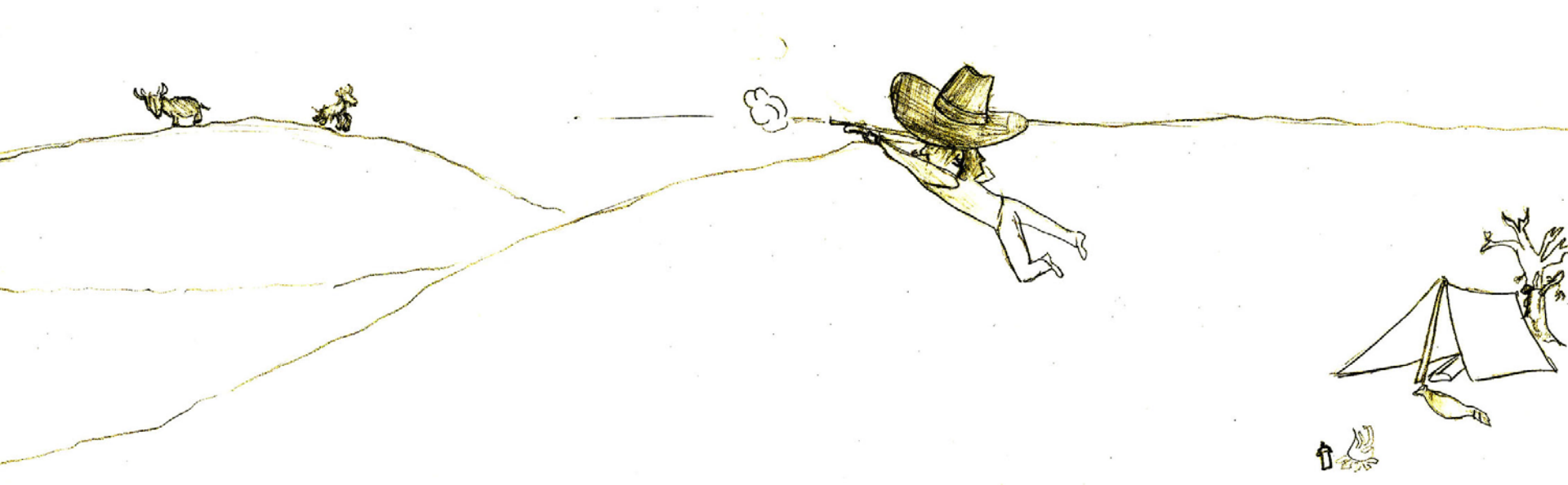
Arkansas became a territory in 1819.

In 1836, Arkansas achieved statehood--as a slave holding state.

The westward expansion of the United States came at a cost.

Native Americans lost lives, land, and their way of life.

**Slavery would not be legally resolved for 27 years,
with a bitter legacy lasting far longer.**



Moving from the Atlantic seaboard, Native Americans were shoved westward by land hungry Americans. For a time, the land west of the Mississippi River (including present-day Arkansas) was a fairly peaceful home to numerous tribes.

Eventually all of the tribes--those indigenous to Arkansas, and those relocated--were moved to Indian Territory, or present-day Oklahoma.

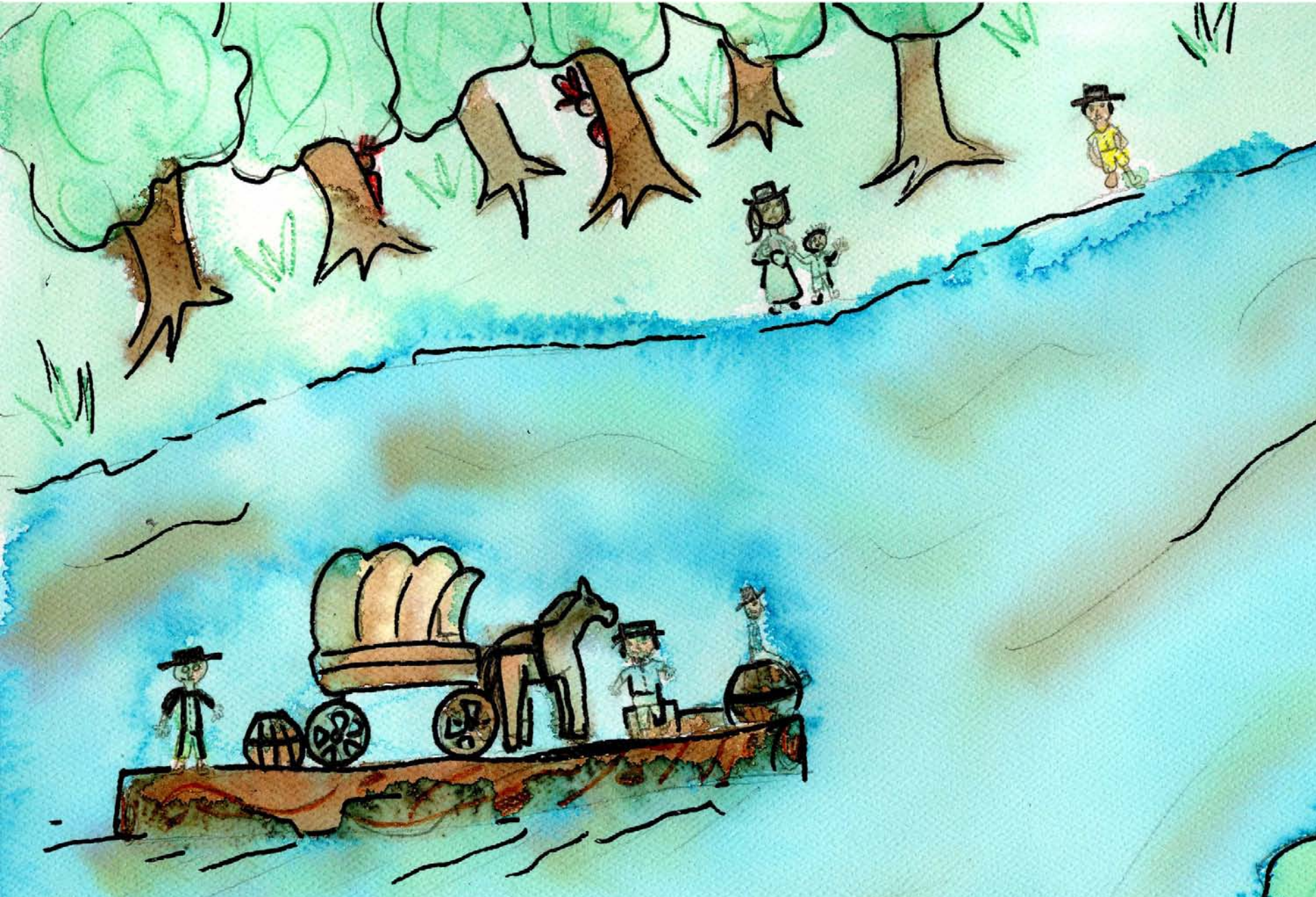
In addition, many of the eastern tribes passed through Arkansas on the *Trail of Tears* on the way to reservations in Indian Territory.

The *Trail of Tears* receives its name from the suffering and death the Native Americans underwent during the relocations of 1831-1839.

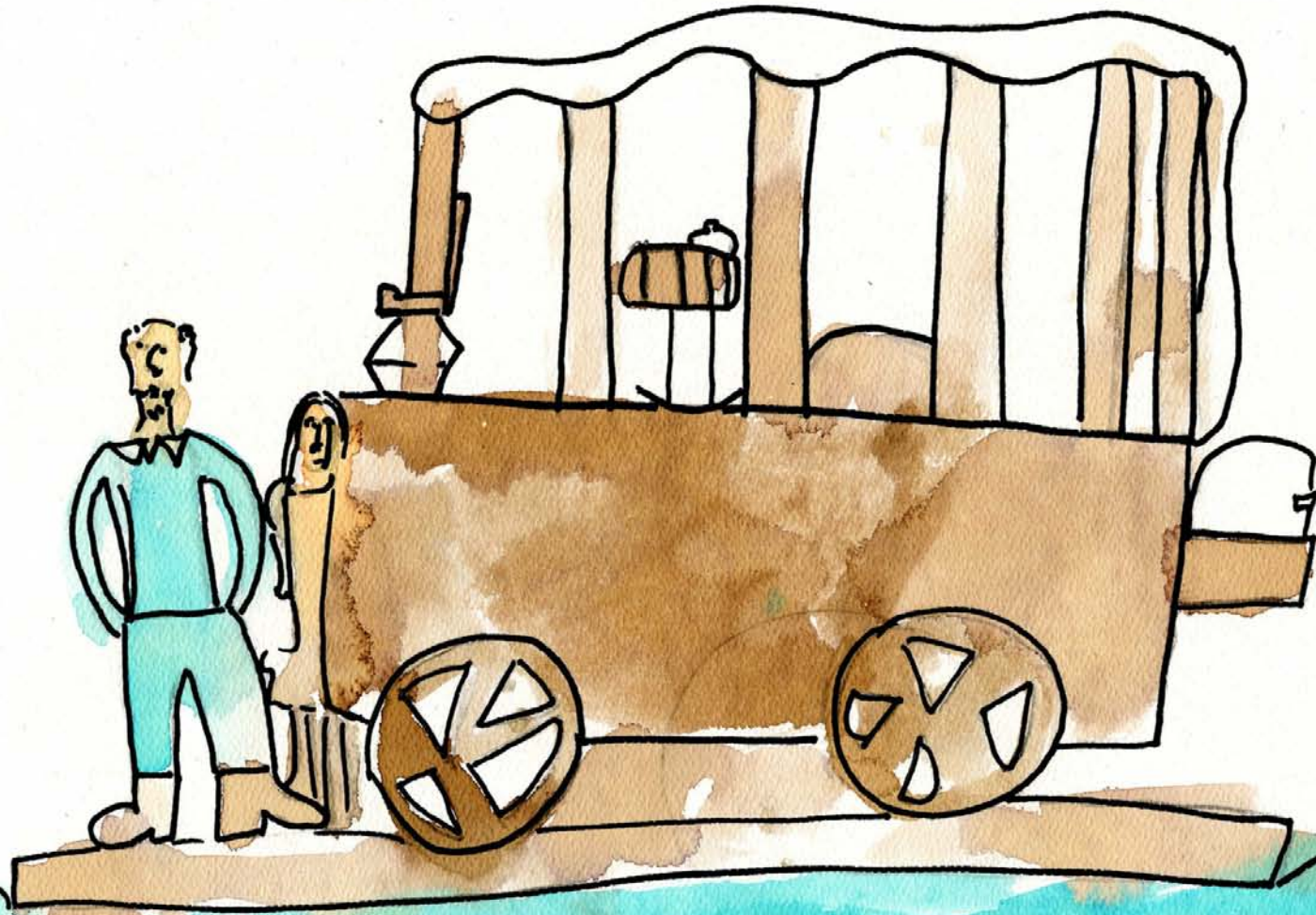
As Native Americans were removed, settlers poured into the region.



Settlers came by boat, wagon, and sometimes both.



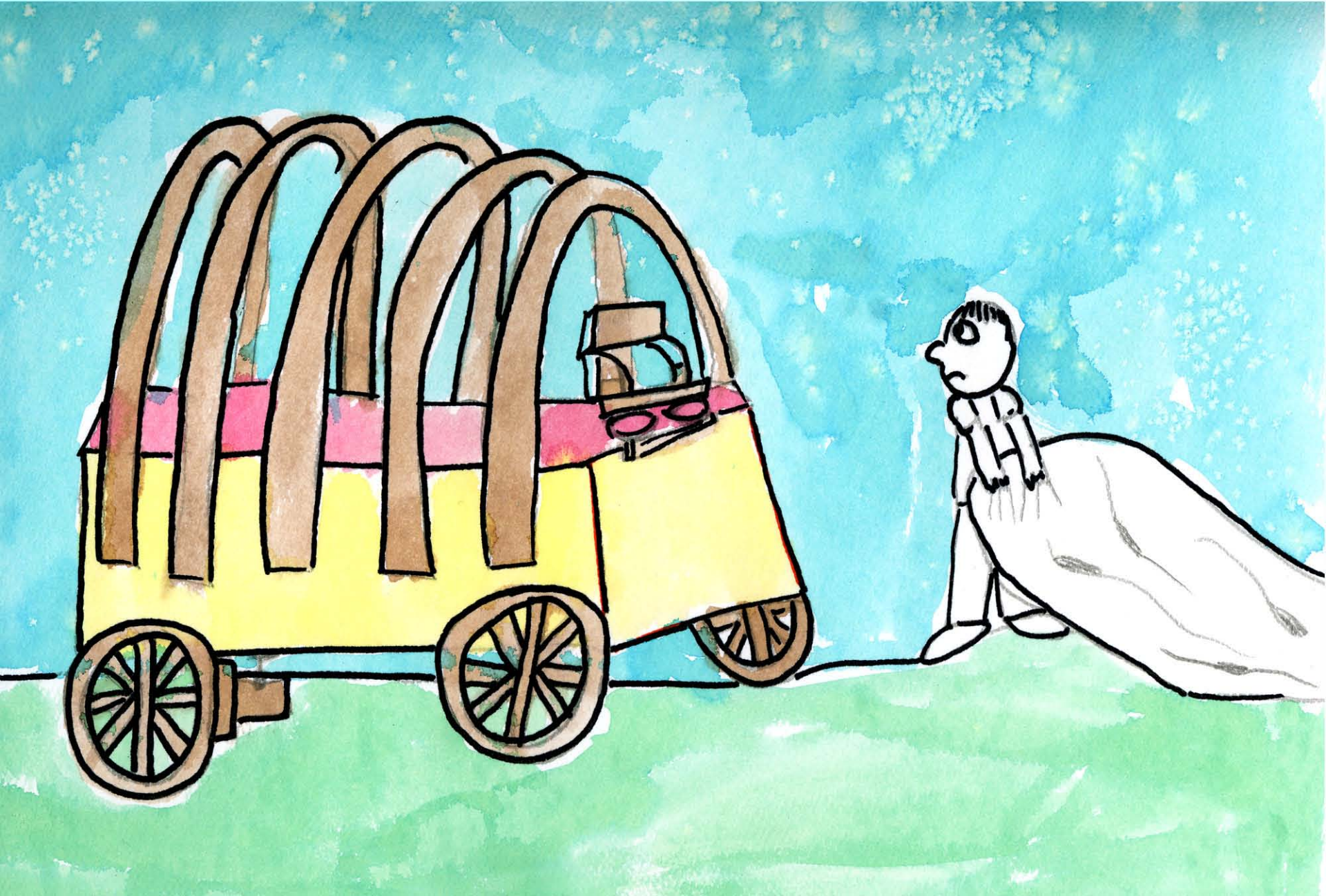
Some loaded everything they owned on rafts.



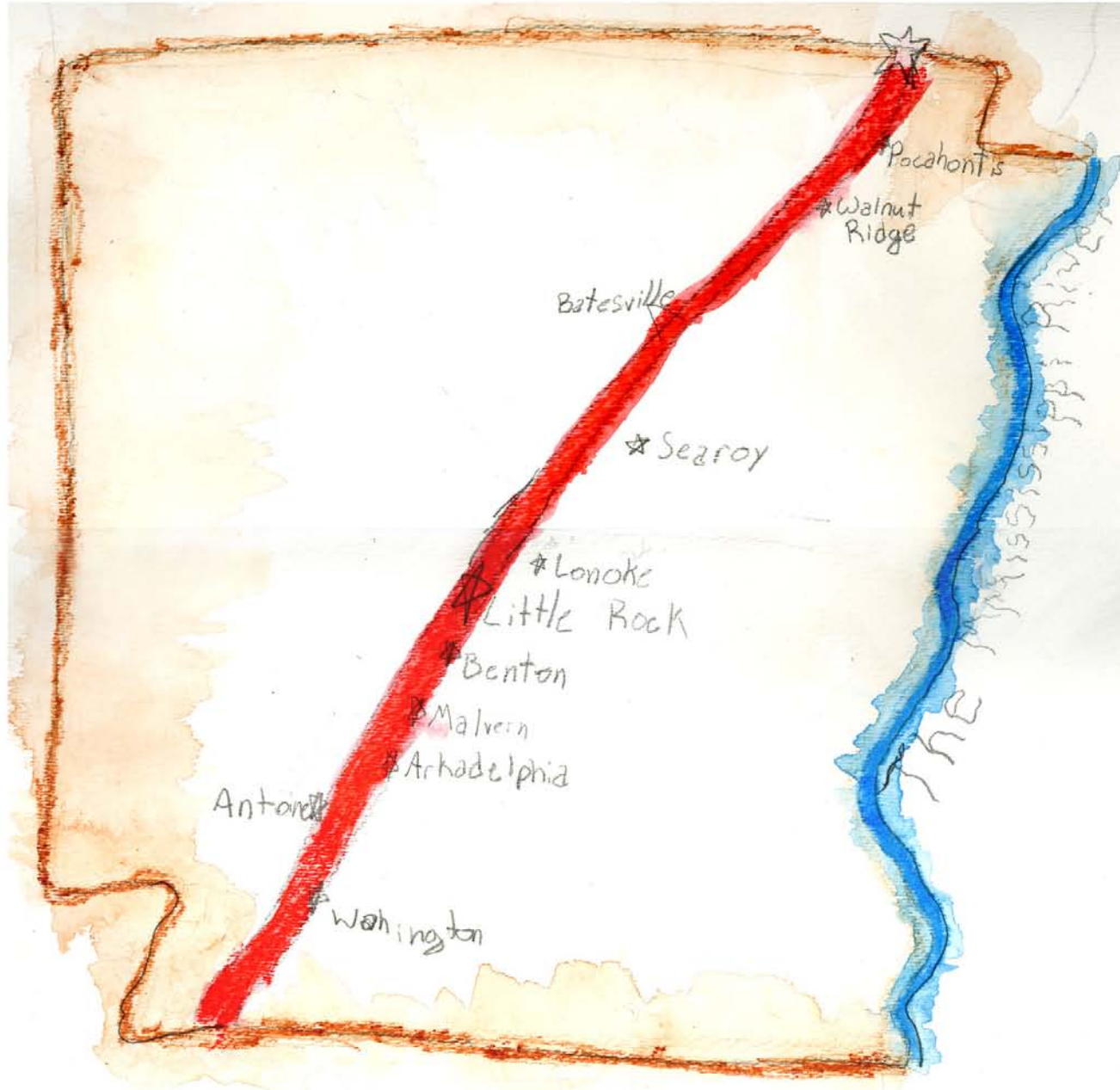
Some built a wagon and set out with their families.



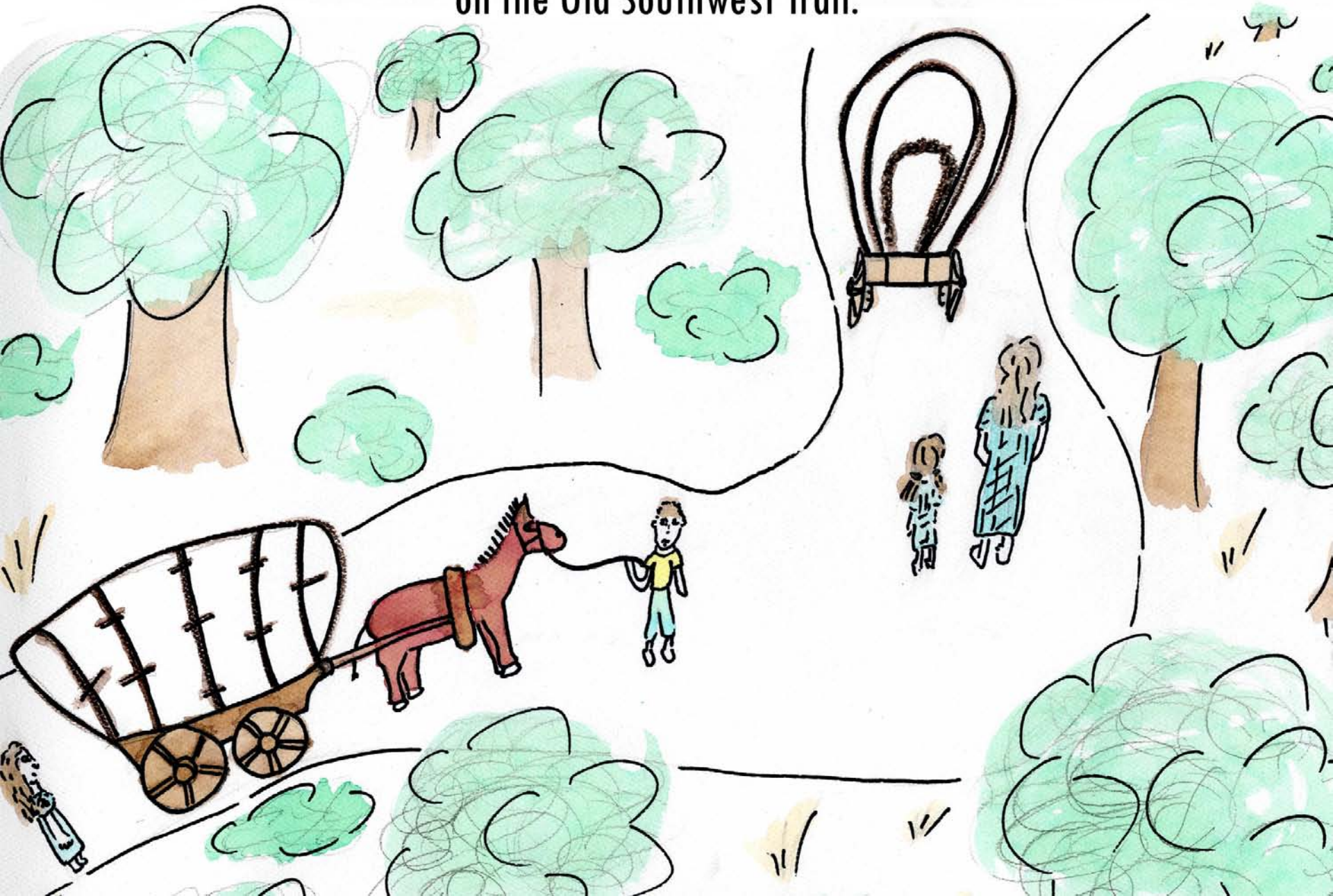
How do you get the cover on the wagon?



The Southwest, or Old Indian Trail, was a main road between St. Louis and Texas.

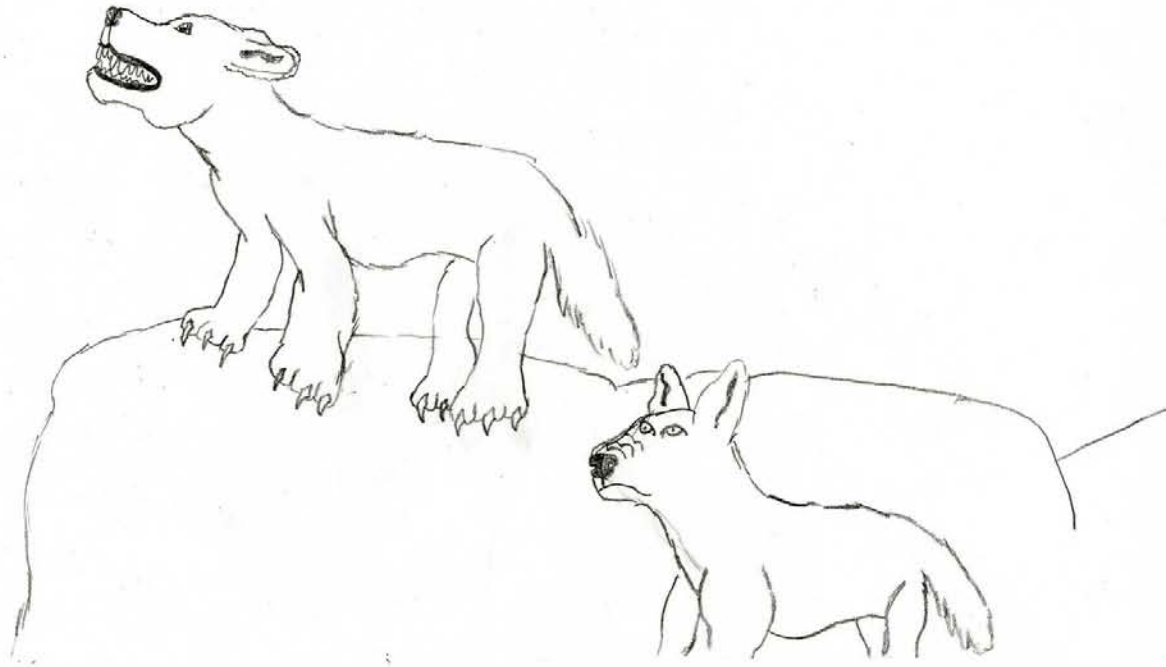


Settlers spent a lot of time walking. They generally made about ten miles a day on the Old Southwest Trail.

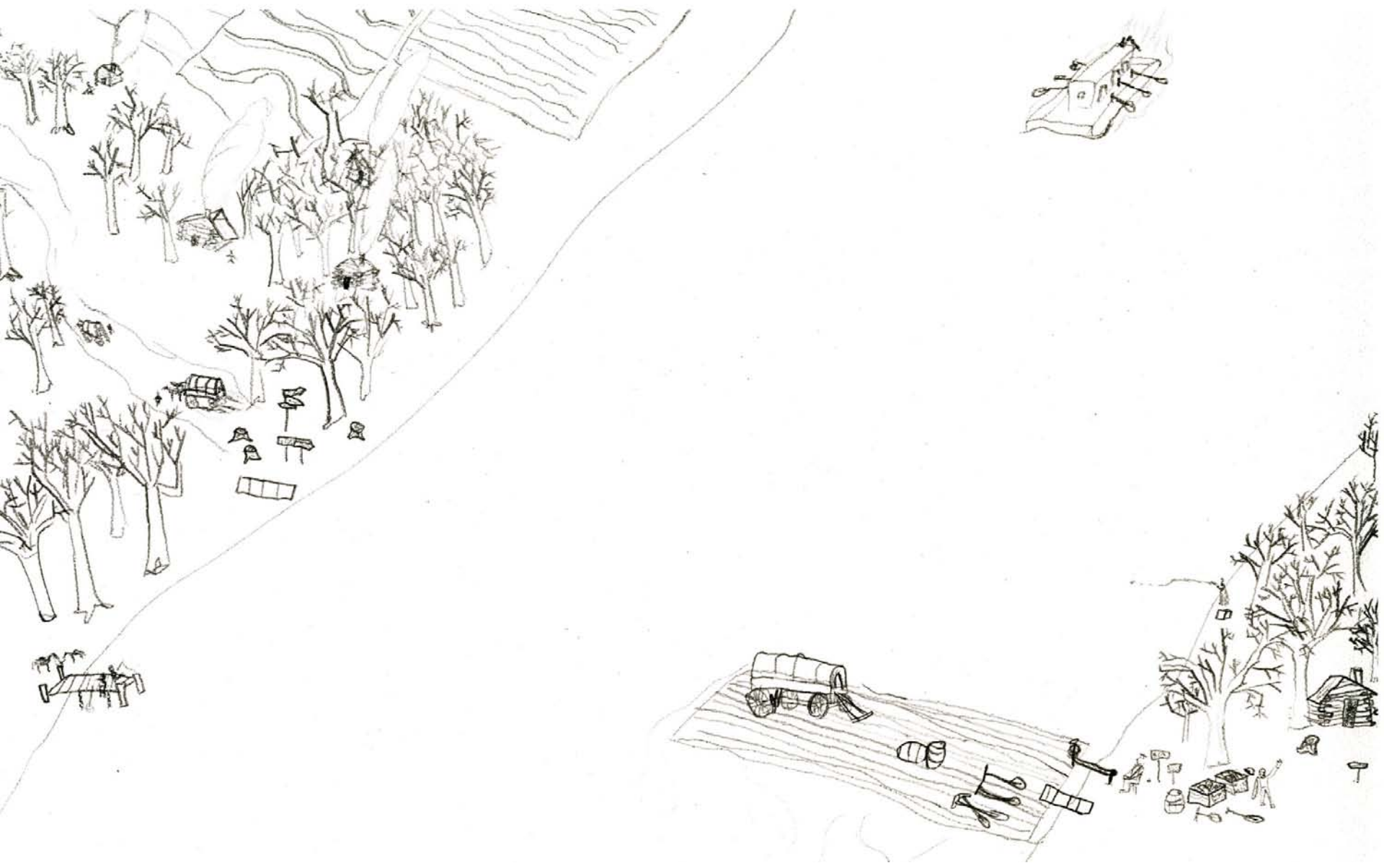


Some settlers passed through Arkansas.

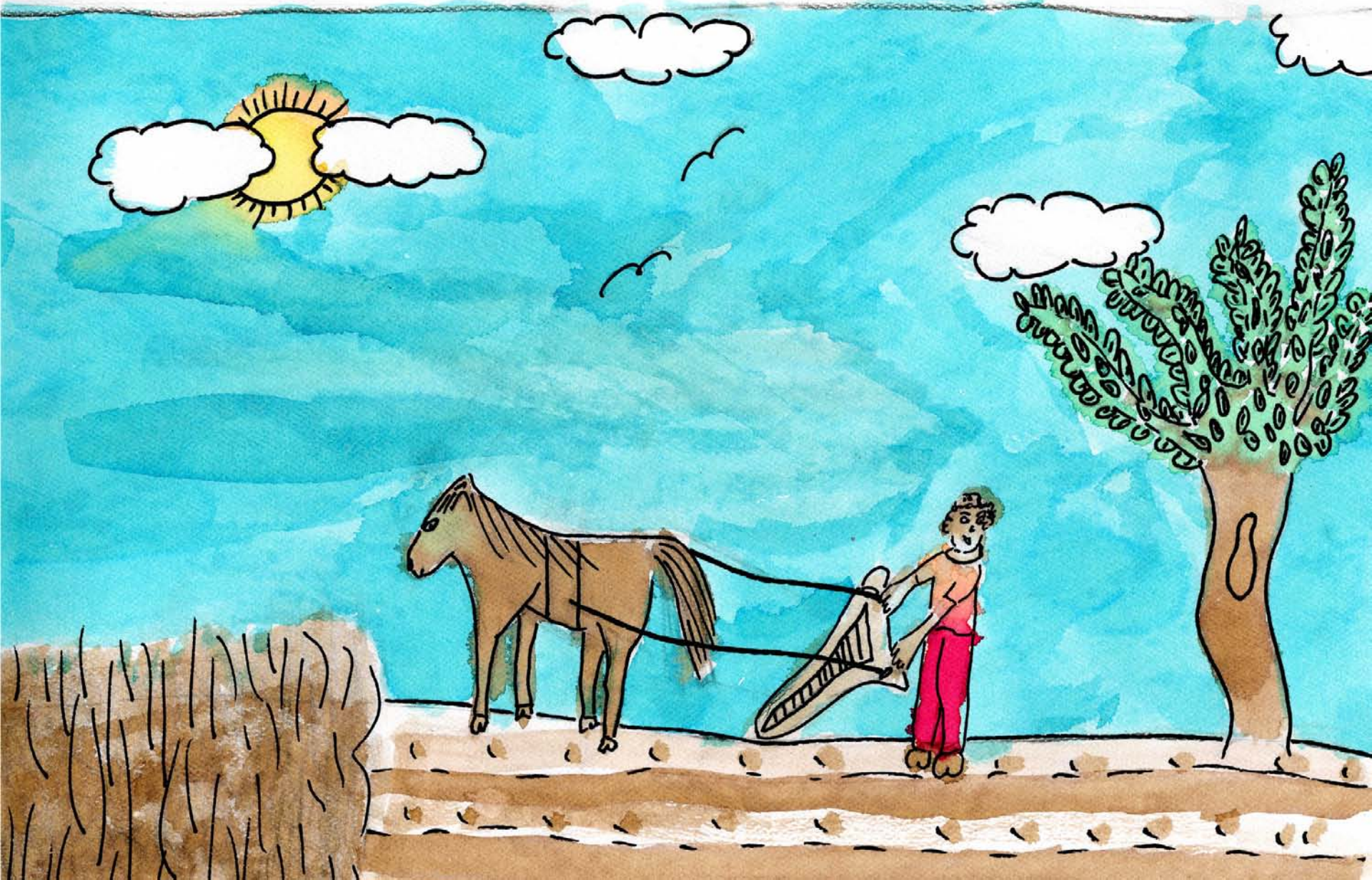
Some chose to try their luck here.



A steady flow of settlers came into Arkansas drawn by free or cheap land, plentiful game and resources, and the promise of a new life.



First, they had to clear some land and get a crop in the ground. Settlers might live in their covered wagon for awhile before they could find the time to build a cabin.



Most frontier cabins were nothing like this dream home.
Dirt floors, few or no windows, and of course no indoor plumbing were the norm.



Farms became more permanent.



When you see an old cabin or jonquils in a line across the front of an empty lot where a house once stood, think about the folks who explored the frontier.



The artists:

Riley Adams

Alei Bruno

McKenzie Griffin

Ethan Johns

John Henry Jones

Taylor Kinsey

Mary Katherine Kline

Madison McKinley

Emma Raulston

Heath Shatzer

London Shields

Esbian Williams



...me to
as State University Museum



**Producer
Lenore Shoults**


**Art teachers
Mandie Carrington
Amber Heard**



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Alex Brown**

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Old Davidsonville State Park
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Dr. Joseph Patrick Key



Spanish translation of
Arkansas History: Through a Child's Eyes
by Melany Bowman,
Heritage Studies PhD candidate



Special thanks for this great opportunity...



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