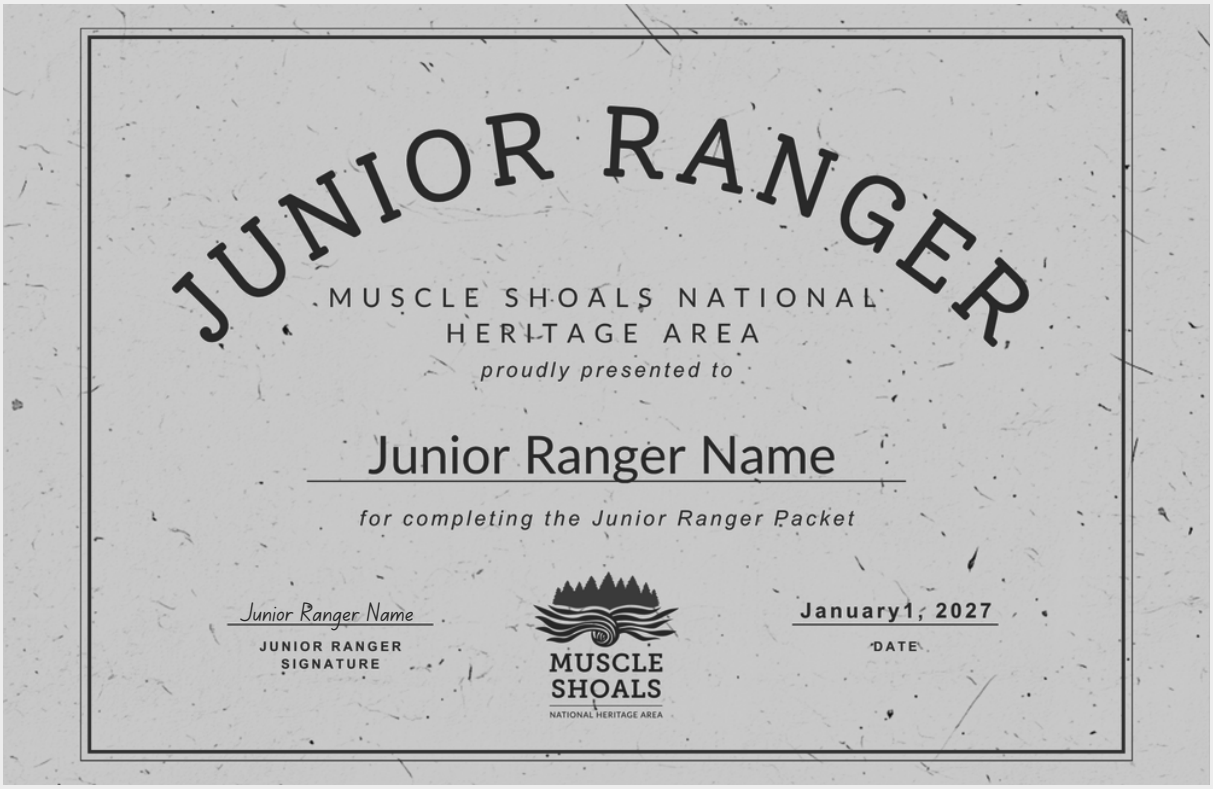
Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area



Junior Ranger Activity Pack

Welcome to the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area

Get exploring to complete your packet and to receive the items below!











How to become a MSNHA Junior Ranger

1. Read about history in Muscle Shoals NHA & complete the activities in this packet

2. Sign the pledge

3. Submit you finished activities in one of the following ways:

   - Email msnha@una.edu
   - Mail to UNA Box 5231, Florence, AL 35632
   - Stop by our office at 541 W. College St, Florence, AL 35630

Be sure to include your postal address to receive your button!

Good luck and send questions to msnha@una.edu!!

Indigenous History

Archeologists sometimes separate Indigenous history into four distinct periods: Paleo Indian, Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian. The **Paleo Indian** (10,000–8,000 BCE) people are believed to have been hunter-gatherers who sheltered in bluffs and loved in temporary camps as they followed herds. During this period, **projectile points** were made from stone and put onto spears for hunting.[1] The **Archaic** (8,000–1,000 BCE) people were also hunter-gatherers who followed herds but **mussels** from the shallow waters of the river were also a staple of their diet. During the Archaic period, small group settlements were formed and more complex tools began to be develop.[2]

The **Woodland** period (1,000 BCE–1,000 CE) is when Indigenous people began to farm and were able to create more permanent settlements. This period is also when many earthen mounds were built. Woodland people established trade networks and a new **pottery** technique spread through the eastern civilizations.[3] The **Mississippian** period (1,000–1,550 CE) is similar to the Woodland, however, the one-room wattle-and-daub huts and the rise of large, centralized chiefdoms are unique to this period. During the Mississippian period, the **Natchez Trace** was used as a trade route and linked Indigenous settlements across the southeast together. The conclusion of this period is marked by contact with European explorers.[4]

One of the first contacts with Europeans in northwest Alabama occurred in present day Tuscumbia. French settlers established Oka Kapassa with factions from the **Cherokee** and **Muscogee** (Creek). The Natchez Trace was located within **Chickasaw** territory and in 1801, they granted the U.S. government permission to update and maintain the trace which increased the number of travelers.[5] Oka Kapassa and the Natchez Trace are rare instances of peaceful interactions between established settlements and newcomers.

After the establishment of the United States of America, Euro-American settlement increased west of the Appalachian Mountains. This led to several violent interactions between Indigenous tribes and Americans—such as the Creek Wars. After the Creek War of 1813-1814, multiple land secession treaties were signed between the Indigenous tribes and the U.S. government which opened up tribal land to American settlers.[6] Despite efforts of several tribes to blend into Euro-American society, Americans still considered Indigenous people to be unequal.

Indigenous History

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 set a mass removal of people in motion. Approximately 125,000 members of Indigenous tribes were forced out of the southeast to make room for American settlement. Several routes were used to move Indigenous people west of the Mississippi River to Indian Territory—modern day Oklahoma. The **Tuscumbia, Courtland & Decatur (TC&D) Railroad** loaded people onto cattle cars in Decatur and once they arrived in Tuscumbia, the passengers were unloaded from the cars and put in steamboats. The steamboats sailed down the **Tennessee River** until they reached Memphis, Tennessee. Once the steamboats reached Memphis, the Indigenous people marched the remaining way to Indian Territory. The TC&D was used to by-pass the rocky **Muscle Shoals** section of the river that was usually too shallow to sail down.[7] The horrors that Indigenous people faced due to forced removal has been called the **Trail of Tears** by Cherokees in remembrance of all who suffered.

To learn more about Indigenous history in MSNHA check out the following sites:

- Florence Mound & Museum
  - 1028 S. Court St, Florence, AL 35630
  - (256) 760-6427
- Wichahpi Commemorative Stone Wall
  - 13890 Lauderdale County Road 8, Florence, AL 35633
  - (256) 764-3617
- Oakville Indian Mounds Education Center
  - 1219 County Road 187, Moulton AL 35650
  - (256) 905-2499
- Rhodes Ferry Park
  - 100 Market Street N.W., Decatur, AL 35601
  - (256) 341-4930

Word Search

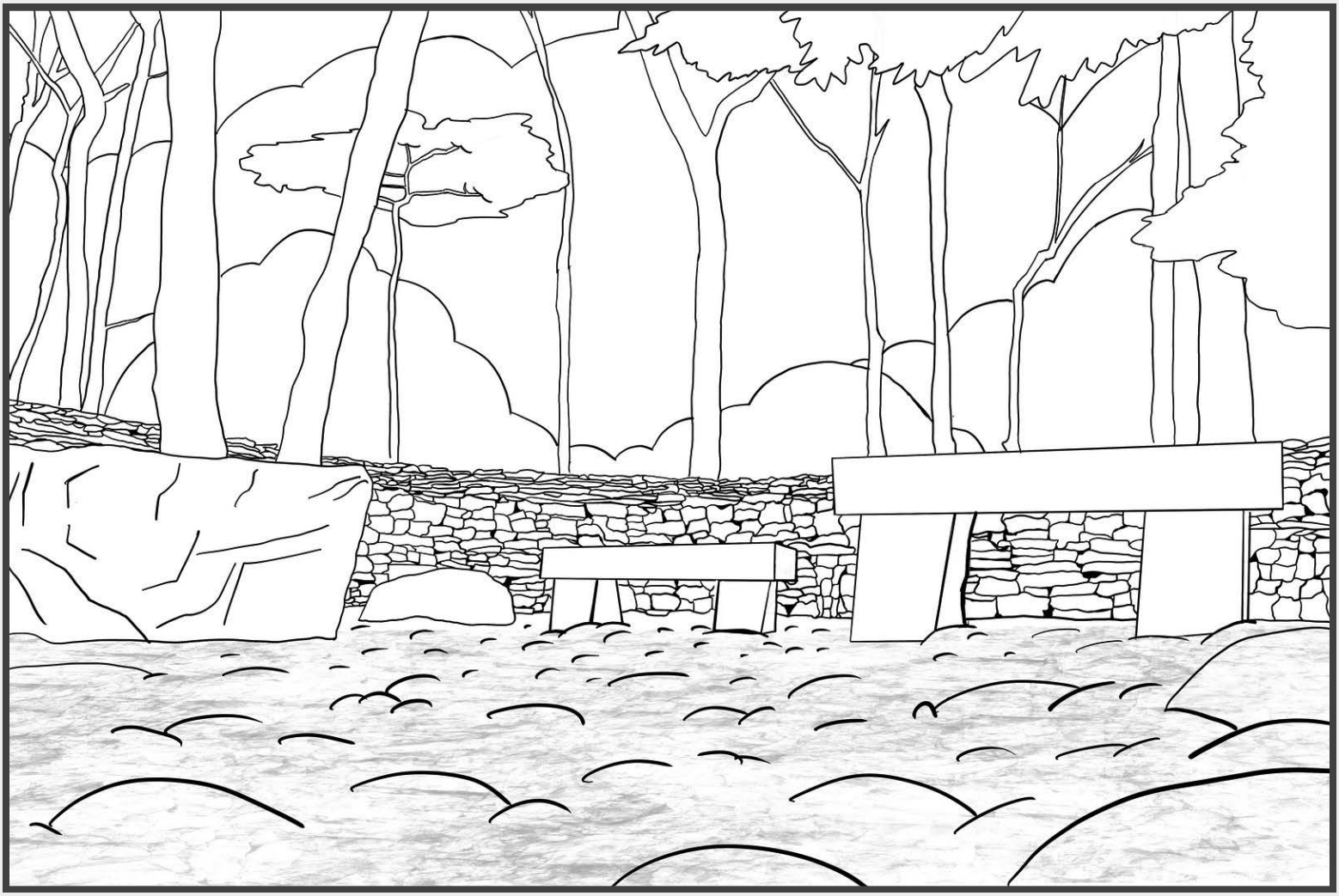


M U S S L E S A X C H E R O K E E R
K A C H I C K A S A W D N C T A U A
P K T R A I L O F T E A R S R R L I
E C K F X N A T C H E Z T R A C E L
T T E N N E S S E E R I V E R H L R
W Q K H F U G T T K H W E Q O A I O
M I S S I S S I P P I A N Z U I D A
A P M U S C L E S H O A L S M C R D
P A L E O I N D I A N R X Y B Z X Y
V F P R O J E C T I L E P O I N T Z
M M Y A W O O D L A N D Y O K O X F
F H P E A T W G J M U S C O G E E Z

Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden → and ↓ and ↘

MUSSLES
MUSCOGEE
PROJECTILE POINT
CHEROKEE
MISSISSIPPIAN
WOODLAND
PALEO INDIAN
CHICKASAW
TENNESSEE RIVER
MUSCLE SHOALS
TRAIL OF TEARS
RAILROAD
NATCHEZ TRACE
ARCHAIC

Coloring Page



Wichahpi Commemorative Stone Wall (Tom's Wall), located in Lauderdale County. Tom Hendrix spent more than 30 years building a stone wall in memory of his great-great-grandmother, a Yuchi Indian who was part of the American Indian removal to Oklahoma. The wall is the largest un-mortared stone wall in the United States.

Reference image taken by Abraham Rowe for Hidden Spaces, a project of the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area with collaboration from University of North Alabama's Public History Center and local artists.

Music History

Northwest Alabama has a deep connection to music and the arts. This area has played an important role in the history of American music production and continues to do so today. The rich culture of the region has allowed recording studios, writers, and artists to create a unique style.

Music in northwest Alabama connects to the spirituals and work songs of enslaved people who worked in plantation fields. Around this same time Scots-Irish peoples with their Celtic Folk songs began to make their homes in the pioneer Alabama. These musical traditions were kept alive by the area's agricultural economy and communal singing.[8] These traditional roots serve as the backbone of northwest Alabama's ever changing music scene, influencing musicians like **W. C. Handy** who would be known as the "Father of the Blues."[9]

By the mid-twentieth century, the Shoals housed several recording studios that rocked the world of music recording. At their prime, **FAME** and **Muscle Shoals Sound Studio** were two of the most known studios in the area and were among the top recording studios in America.[10] These two studios would become leaders in earning the Shoals the title "Hit Recording Capital of the World." Both studios produced music for musicians such as Percy Sledge, Aretha Franklin, the Rolling Stones, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Cher, and many others.

FAME and Muscle Shoals Sound Studio are still well-known landmarks in the area. Both studios continue to produce and record music, though Muscle Shoals Sound Studio's original studio now also acts as a museum with regular tours.[11] These studios have provided a place for many local musicians such as Jason Isbell, John Paul White, Alabama Shakes, the Secret Sisters, and others to continue the cultivation of Muscle Shoals' musical culture.[12] The **Alabama Music Hall of Fame** highlights several of these local musicians and their impact on music culture.

In recent years, northwest Alabama has also seen a continuation of community performance and celebration of music. Community events such as the **W.C. Handy Music Festival**, Shoals Fest, and T**ennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention** are among the many events that host musical talents. Northwest Alabama is also home to many venues that provide a place for musicians to perform. Many local restaurants regularly host artists such as **Bishop's Westside Pub & Grill** in Athens. Local theatres such as the Ritz in Sheffield and the Shoals theatre in Florence also often host events for local artists to shine.

Music History

At its core, northwest Alabama has always been a musical area. From its roots in the traditional music of African Spirituals and Celtic folk songs, the area has cultivated a unique culture that has changed the music world. From one generation to the next, the region has inspired many to follow the path of music and find their own voice.

To learn more about music in MSNHA check out the following sites:

- FAME Recording Studio
  - 603 E Avalon Avenue, Muscle Shoals, AL 35661
  - (256) 381-0801
- Alabama Music Hall of Fame
  - 617 U.S. 72 W, Tuscumbia, AL 35674
  - (256) 381-4417
- Muscle Shoals Sound Studio
  - 3614 Jackson Highway, Sheffield, AL 35660
  - (256) 978-5151
- W.C. Handy Home, Museum & Library
  - 620 W College Street, Flornce, AL 35630
  - (256) 275-3128
- Red Bay Museum
  - 108 4th Avenue SE, Red Bay, AL 35582
  - (256) 356-8759

Crossword Puzzle

Word Bank

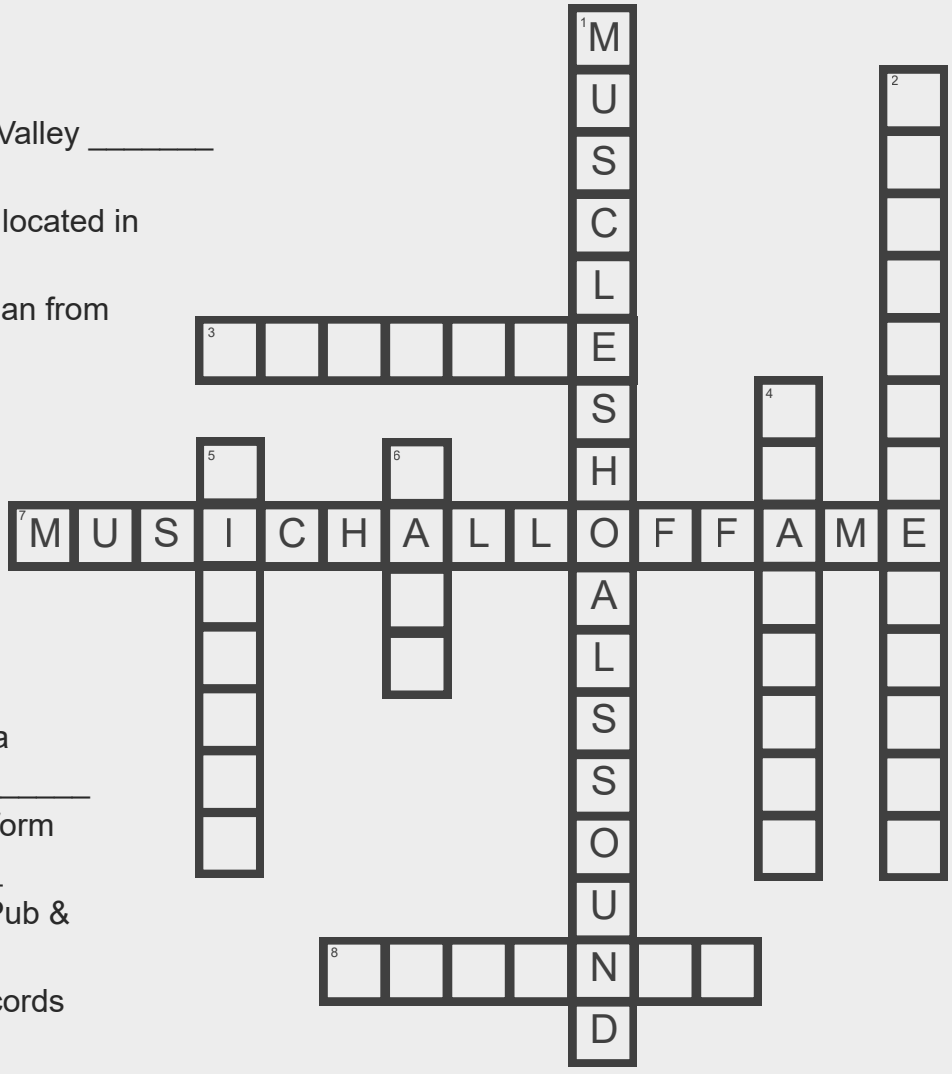
FAME Handy Festival ~~Music Hall of Fame~~ Bishops
W.C. Handy Old Time ~~Muscle Shoals Sound~~

Across

3. Athens hosts the Tennessee Valley _____ Fiddlers Convention
7. The Alabama _____ is located in Tuscumbia
8. _____ is a famous musician from Florence with his own festival

Down

1. This recording studio is now a museum and is known as: _____
2. One event where people perform music is the W.C. _____
4. Athens is home to _____ Pub & Grill which often has live music
5. ____ recording studio still records music in Muscle Shoals today

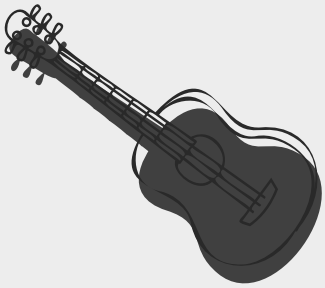


Know the Music

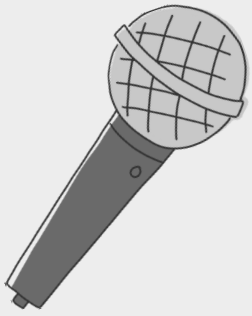
Match the picture of the musical instrument to its definition



Guitar: A stringed instrument popular in many different genres of music.



Microphone: Device used to pick up sound from singers or instruments.



Trumpet: A brass instrument very popular in Jazz and marching bands also used by W.C. Handy.



Piano: A large instrument with keys and pedals used in many different genres of music.

Tennessee River

The Tennessee River is 652 miles long and has a **watershed** that covers roughly 41,000 square miles in seven states. It flows southwest out of Knoxville, Tennessee, and crosses into eastern Alabama to travel west before turning north across the Mississippi state line and emptying into the Ohio River in Kentucky.[13] MSNHA encompasses the 80-mile stretch of river from Brown's Ferry in Limestone County to Waterloo in Lauderdale County. These 80 miles are known as the **Muscle Shoals** region for the shallow water, or **shoals**, that are rich in mussels and other shellfish.[14]

The Tennessee River is the largest feature of the MSNHA landscape. The area surrounding the river is known as **karst topography** because of the sink holes, caves, and underground streams surrounding the river due to the limestone and chert bedrock found throughout the area.[15] The Tennessee River is one of the most **biodiverse** river systems in North America and is home to more threatened and endangered species, such as the Alabama cavefish and the pink mucket, than any other large river basin on the continent.[16]

The resources of the Tennessee River made it a prime location for early Indigenous settlement starting in the Paleo Indian period (10,000–8,000 BCE).[17] Europeans recognized the importance of the river, which caused Euro-American settlement starting in the 1700s. During the 1800s, people attempted many times to control the river's rapids and make its shoals navigable. Success finally came in the late 1800s when Captain George Washington Goethals took over the task of creating the **Muscle Shoals Canal** along the Tennessee.[18] This canal was the longest steamboat canal in the world at the time. While the new canal made travel easier, the river was still difficult to navigate and prone to flooding. Later, as **hydro-electric power** systems developed, many looked to the Tennessee River as a source of energy. The National Defense Act of 1916 allowed the construction of the first dam along the river in Alabama. Wilson Dam was built between Lauderdale and Colbert counties.[19] In 1933, during the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the creation of the **Tennessee Valley Authority** (TVA) to build and maintain nine dams and various canals along the river. This resulted in an additional dam, Wheeler Dam, and three lakes, Pickwick, Wilson, and Wheeler, that are now within the MSNHA.[20] The TVA dams made the river more accessible, generated power, and fueled industry. These changes to the river modernize the Tennessee River Valley which was one of the poorest regions in the United States during the Great Depression.

Tennessee River

While the Tennessee River still supplies power to the region, it also creates opportunities for other industries and activities, including water-based recreation. The increase in river traffic after the creation of TVA propelled the Tennessee River and its local waterways onto the list of world-famous fishing and boating destinations. Numerous festivals held year-round along the water's banks also bring many visitors to communities within the Muscle Shoals region. Despite decline along the west side of the river, industry is alive and well on the east side with twelve Fortune 500 companies operating facilities in Decatur. Notable manufacturers producing and shipping goods along the river include General Electric, 3M, United Launch Alliance, Ascend Performance Materials, and Meow Mix.[21]

To learn more about the Tennessee River in MSNHA check out the following sites:

- Tennessee Valley Authority Reservation
  - 1010 Reservation Road, Muscle Shoals, AL 35661
  - (256) 386-7708
- Joe Wheeler State Park
  - 4401 McLean Drive, Rogersville, AL 35652
  - (256) 247-5466
- Swan Creek Waterfowl Management Area
  - 18936 Harrist Station Road, Tanner, AL 35671
  - (256) 353-2634
- Wheeler Wildlife Refuge
  - 2700 Refuge Headquarters Road, Decatur, AL 35603
  - (256) 350-6639

Discover the River

Use the information from the section above and the picture to answer the following questions!

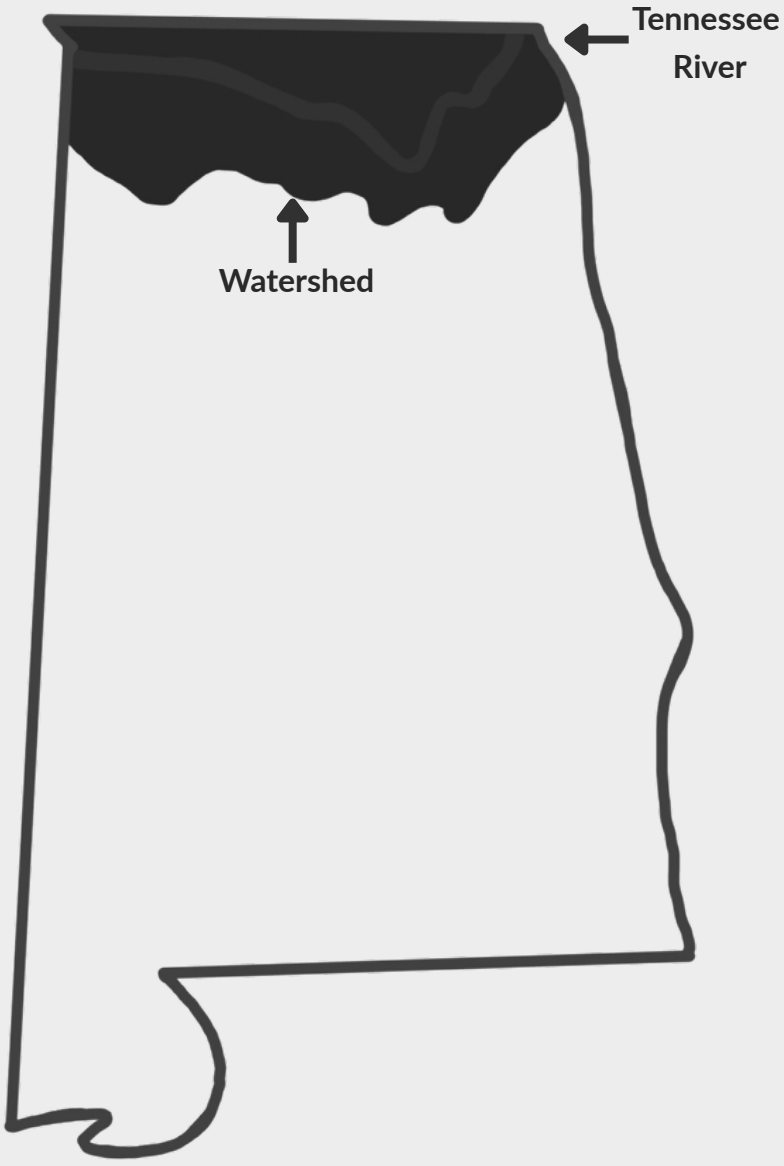
1. What was the name of shallow water in this part of the Tennessee River?

2. How many miles of the river are in MSNHA?

3. Who built the Muscle Shoals Canal?

4. Which agency built Wheeler Dam?

5. Who authorized the creation of TVA?

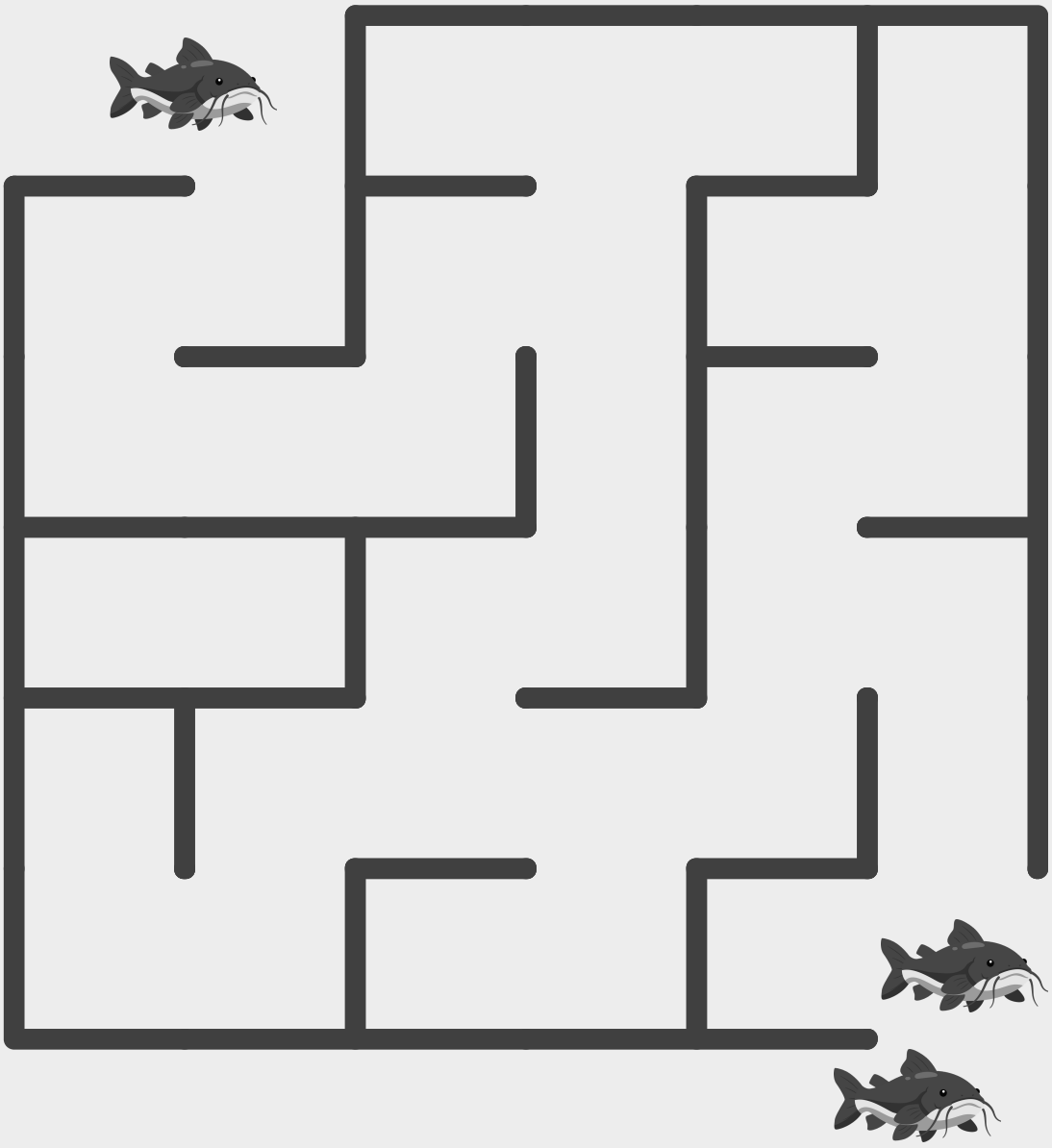


Answer Bank

George Washington Goethals
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
Franklin D. Roosevelt
80
Muscle Shoals

River Maze

Help the catfish get back to his school!



Junior Ranger Pledge

I pledge to:

- [ ] Share what I learned with friends and family
- [ ] Encourage others to listen and learn
- [ ] Explore the world around me
- [ ] Be a champion of the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area



Congrats!!

You are officially a
Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area Junior Ranger!

All About the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area

How many counties?

Six—Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone & Morgan!

What does MSNHA do?

Share history, encourage outdoor recreation, and build community relationships.

What are MSNHA's three themes?

Indigenous history, the Tennessee River, and music history.

When was MSNHA designated?

In 2009! But the process began in the 1990s.

How can I contact MSNHA?

Our phone number is 256-765-5028, email us at msnha@una.edu, send a letter to UNA Box 5231, Florence, AL 35632, or stop by our office at 541 W. College St, Florence, AL 35630!

MUSCLE SHOALS
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

JUNIOR RANGER
EXPLORE • LEARN • PROTECT

(256) 765-5028

msnha@una.edu

@muscleshoalsnha

UNA Box 5231, Florence, AL 35632

541 W. College St, Florence, AL 35630

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

A MEMBER OF THE
National Heritage Area System

Citations

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