Newsletter of the **Natchez Trace Parkway Association**

Post Rider

February 2012

EXPLORE • COMPLETE • SUPPORT • PROTECT

NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY ASSOCIATION

Tracing the Journey of Southern Discovery

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2012: An Important Year To Be An Active Association Member

Please take a moment to renew your membership or join the Association for 2012. In May, we begin the commemoration of the bicentennial of the War of 1812. Making certain that Americans would never forget the role that the Natchez Trace played in the war was one of the main reasons the national parkway was created. It took so long to complete the road from Natchez to Nashville that the reasons for creating the park were sometimes forgotten during its development. The war itself has also been largely forgotten, but it had a profound effect on the development of the U.S. The bicentennial years, 2012-2015, provide an opportunity to remind everyone of the heroic acts that took place on the Trace and to honor the soldiers who are buried in unmarked graves along the old road. The Natchez Trace Parkway is the largest War of 1812 park in the nation, and the old Natchez Trace is a War of 1812 cemetery.

In 2012, we also begin activities marking the 75th anniversary of the Parkway. Our photo history, *Building the Natchez Trace Parkway,* is expected to go on sale in June. The book should remind us of the amazing work the Association accomplished in the past and challenge us to achieve the original goals by completing the interpretive sites along the Parkway.

One of the new goals adopted during the Annual Meeting was to support the Parkway by helping the development of interactive interpretation. That goal matches one of the priorities in the National Park Service "Call to Action," a plan for the next century of national parks. Modern technology will help improve the visitor experience while the funds are being raised for the physical improvements along the Trace.

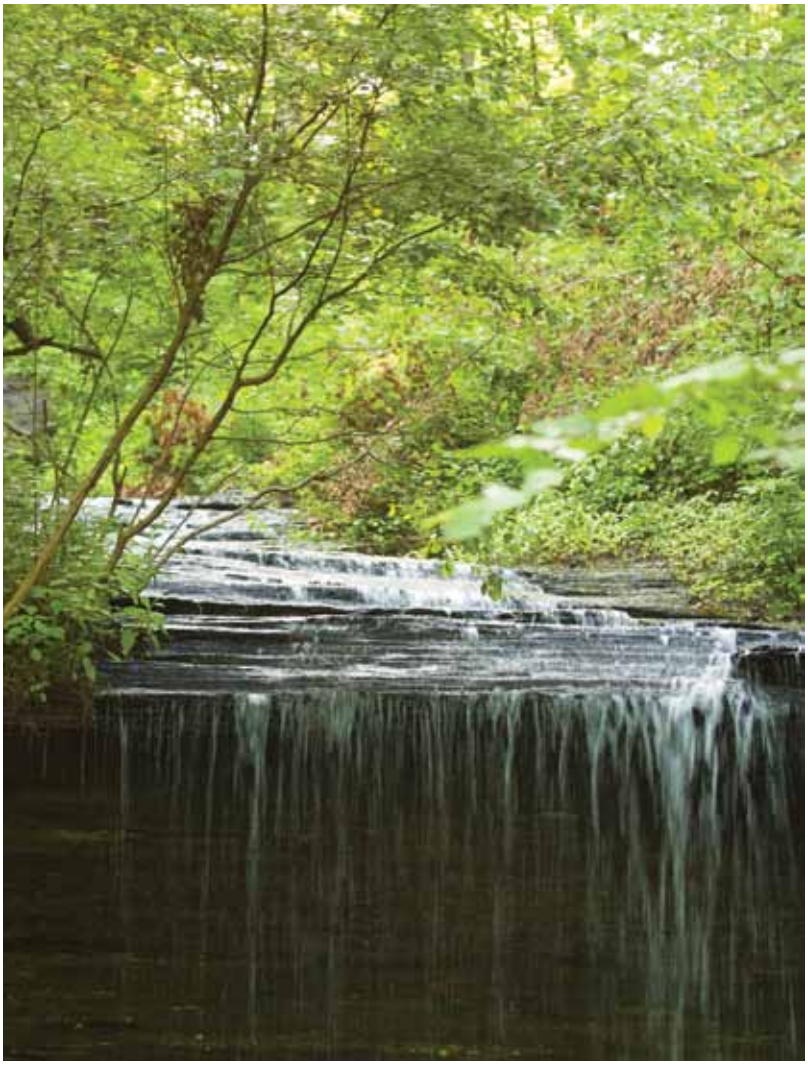
The Parkway is one of the greatest assets in our region, and it preserves a story vital to our nation's history. Our challenge in the next year is to renew the level of excitement that once helped the Association and the National Park Service accomplish what everyone thought was impossible. Plan to spend time being part of the activities, the planning and the work that will help the Parkway become one of the nation's premier national parks.

Tony Turnbow, Association President

Terry Wildy Named Chief of Interpretation, Education and Partnerships

Superintendent Cam Sholly announced that Terry Wildy has been named as the Chief of Interpretation, Education and Partnerships for the Natchez Trace Parkway. In announcing the new position, he said that Ms. Wildy "has been in a long-term acting assignment in this position but will now fill the role permanently. In this capacity she will oversee all Parkway interpretation operations and will also be heavily involved in our partnership portfolio, including assistance with our National Heritage Areas. This is the first position ever at this level in the history of the Natchez Trace."

It is an exciting development for the Parkway, adding an important new emphasis to education and interpretation. Ms. Wildy has contributed her extensive expertise in interpretation to assisting the Association since she has been part of the Parkway staff. We congratulate her and look forward to working with her to improve the visitor experience.



This beautiful spot along the Natchez Trace Parkway at Fall Hollow is a nice place to visit now before Spring blossoming foliage obstructs the view. Here, the picnic spot faces south and offers warmth on sunny days.
Photo Becky Jane Newbold

Natchez Trace Parkway Receives $100,000 "Connect Trails to Parks" Award

The Natchez Trace Parkway has been awarded a $100,000 grant to develop its National Scenic Trail education program. The project reflects the new National Park Service priorities such as expanding outreach, connecting to youth, enhancing urban recreation, promoting healthy lifestyles and upgrading interpretive materials as outlined in the agency's "A Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement."

"We really want people to get up, get out and enjoy the outdoors," said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. "It is vital for physical and mental well-being. These trail projects will provide additional places to recreate and improve access to existing parks and other green spaces."

One of the many distinctions the Parkway carries is that it is one of 11 National Scenic Trails. The trails system dates from 1968 legislation that created the Appalachian and Pacific Crest National Scenic Trails.

The years from 2008 to 2018 have been declared "A Decade for the National Trails," ramping up to the trails system's 50th anniversary in 2018. Many of these projects will help specific trails and their related federal facilities achieve goals associated with this commemorative decade. At the same time, the National Park Service, as an agency, is preparing to celebrate its 100th anniversary in August, 2016.

Last year, the Association became a member of the Partnership for National Trails Systems and the Association will be represented at the Partnership for the National Trails System meeting in Washington, D.C. this month.

Annual Meeting Highlights

A newspaper columnist once wrote that a sure sign of fall was that the Natchez Trace Parkway Association was meeting somewhere along the Parkway. The Association met this year in Tupelo.

The Friday evening session, hosted by BanCorpSouth, was held at the Tupelo Country Club. Authors Mike Bunn and Clay Williams spoke about the War of 1812 in the South. They noted that their address to the Association was taking place on the bicentennial of the events that initiated the Creek wars. District Ranger Daniel Kimes, who is heading up the War of 1812 commemoration on the Natchez Trace, spoke at the Saturday session about the event planned for Memorial Day weekend 2012: Muster Day on the Natchez Trace-Prelude to the War of 1812. The event at the Gordon House at mile-marker 407 will provide an impression of an 1812 muster day in which the news of the "Martha Crawley Incident" arrives and a debate ensues over whether the country should go to war. He noted that planning is underway for events in 2014 and 2015 in all three states.

Superintendent Cameron Sholly presented updates for the Association.

Photo Becky Jane Newbold

Superintendent Sholly brought the group up to date on improvements the Park Service has made along the Parkway over the past year. The meeting previewed a few minutes of a film that is under production for the visitor center. The film will temporarily replace the film that has been shown since the 1970s. The Superintendent announced that the Parkway was awarded a Scenic Byways grant to produce a new interpretive film for the visitor center.

Toni Avance, historian at Historic Jefferson College near Natchez, gave a brief history of the site, which has a rich history associated with the old Natchez Trace. Jefferson Davis attended school there. Aaron Burr was tried for treason in the town. Jackson's troops camped on the grounds during the War of 1812. Also, Mrs. Avance, who has worked with historic clothing for 30 years, gave a brief history on the clothing travelers on the Trace would have worn. As the Association supports the efforts to create living history programs on the Parkway, authenticity and accuracy will be critical in establishing a valuable program.

Tony Turnbow reviewed the action plan that was adopted for the 2011 year and the progress that had been made. Among the items completed:

- Updated logo.
- Updated mission statement.
- Development of a newsletter.
- Creation of a web site and Facebook page.
- Development of a membership brochure and an updated brochure on the horizon.
- Beginning of support for development of a living history program.
- Two-day annual meeting.
- A new partnership with the Partnership for National Trails Systems and a feature article in their summer journal.
- New Partnerships with 12 groups affiliated with the War of 1812 bicentennial.
- Support for the Park Service plans to commemorate the War of 1812 bicentennial.
- An agreement with "Images of America" to produce a historic photo book, *Building the Natchez Trace Parkway*.
- The development of plans for an Association celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Natchez Trace Parkway at an event at Brandon Hall where the inaugural event was held in 1937.
- Agreements by sites in Leiper's Fork and Natchez to host the Association traveling exhibit during the 75th anniversary.

Northern District Ranger Daniel Kimes shares a bit of history with Parkway visitors following the October 2011 Annual Meeting in Tupelo.

Photo Becky Jane Newbold

Directors' Meeting

The Board of Directors met at the annual meeting. The following are highlights of decisions made at the Directors' meeting:

Chapters:

- Add a chapter for Jackson/Ridgeland. Efforts will focus on building chapters in Natchez, Jackson, Tupelo, Alabama and Tennessee.

Bylaw change proposals:

- To meet the requirements for 501c3, provide that if the organization is ever dissolved, all remaining assets would be given to the Natchez Trace Parkway.
- Annual meeting changed from a set date in Tupelo to be set at time and place at discretion of President.
- Directors to be elected for a term of two years.

Other actions:

- Directors will meet by conference call monthly for brief fifteen minute meetings.
- Support the cost of obtaining photos for the Historic Photo book.

Officers and Directors

Officers and directors elected for 2012 are the following:

President: Tony Turnbow, Tennessee

First Vice-President: Dr. Bryant Boswell, Mississippi

Second Vice-President: Judy Sizemore, Alabama

Third Vice-President: Dr. Eslick Daniel, Tennessee

Directors:

Alabama
L.O. Bishop
Susann Hamlin
Joy Pace Isom
Judy Sizemore

Mississippi
Dr. Bryant Boswell
Mark Burleson
Gary Carnathan
Emma Crisler
Dr. Elbert Hilliard
David Rumbarger
Dot Ward
Lester Senter Wilson

Tennessee
April Cantrell
Nancy Conway
Dr. Bridgett Jones
Dr. Eslick Daniel
Autry Gobbell
Judy Hayes
Tom Morales

- Support composition of a Natchez Trace Symphony contingent on finding sponsor.
- As donations increase once we have our 501c3 status, arrange for the part time services of a bookkeeper to manage our funds and perform the reporting required.
- Plan for events in four areas along the Trace: A dinner in honor of Harry Martin in Tupelo in March, support for the Muster Day 1812 in Tennessee, a 75th-anniversary celebration at Brandon Hall in Natchez and an event to be scheduled in Alabama.

Brashear's Stand During the War of 1812

The site of Turner Brashear's Stand northeast of Jackson and at the southern end of the Ross Barnett Reservoir is marked by the National Park Service, but its role in the War of 1812 is just coming to light.

The inn was located a few miles north of the U.S. Choctaw Agency. At some point during the War of 1812, the military cut a new road from the Natchez Trace, beginning at Brashear's and running south to Lake Pontchartrain. It would become known as "General Carroll's Road" or the "Lake Road." Troops traveled both the Lake Road and the Natchez Trace to Brashear's during the operations on the Gulf Coast.

Like all other inns on the Trace, Brashear's served as shelter for troops. On October 18, 1814, while en route to Fort Montgomery, General John Coffee detoured to Brashear's to attend the courts martial of three soldiers.

The inn also served as a hospital. By the end of the war, 300 soldiers were either injured or too sick to make a full journey back to their homes in Tennessee or Kentucky. Brashear's became a convenient stop for the sick. The first group arrived with General Carroll on April 1. Though most of the soldiers undoubtedly camped outside, six rooms were rented to physicians detailed to remain with the soldiers to care for them. Brashear's was obviously larger than the typical dogtrot cabin.

The number of soldiers taxed food supplies in the wilderness, particularly after about 5,000 men had already passed through the area. On April 30, Louis LeFleur, who had opened an establishment that became known as French Camp and a trading post that would lead to the formation of the city of Jackson, supplied beef for some of the soldiers at Brashear's. By May 19, 1815, as post-war military operations were winding down, an order was issued to move the sick men. If men were unable to ride, wagons were to be used for the return trip home. According to Brashear's provisional return, the last group of sick soldiers left on May 30.

More men died on the marches than died on the battlefield at New Orleans. Any soldiers who died during the stay are likely buried near the old inn. Brashear's inn therefore bore witness to the human sacrifice paid by the soldiers in the War of 1812, and its contribution should be commemorated during the bicentennial.

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Be sure to **"Like"** *the Association's* **FACEBOOK** *page*

It is a great place to share photos, history and a link to our website with your friends

Ask how you can be a part of the continuing development of our website

www.NatchezTrace.info

NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY ASSOCIATION
Tracing the Journey of Southern Discovery

Alabama's 33 are Sweet Home to Cyclists

By Larry Gray,
Shoals Cycling Club

A scant 33 miles of the Natchez Trace Parkway's 444-mile length lie within Alabama. But for cyclists living in the northwest corner of the Yellowhammer State, this short stretch of the Trace, along with the adjoining few miles in Mississippi and Tennessee, offers some of the finest riding conditions to be found anywhere.

Even a single ride along these roads is enough to show why. The pavement quality is excellent, motor vehicle traffic is light and there's enough variety in the terrain to offer something for bicyclists of all ability levels.

Broadly speaking, northwest Alabama cyclists consider some 50 miles of the Parkway to be their home turf, from the small town of Collinwood, Tennessee on the northern end to Mississippi's Tishomingo State Park on the south. The 1.2-mile-long bridge across the Tennessee River--roughly midway between those two extremes--is usually regarded as the dividing line between two distinctly different riding experiences.

North of the bridge, the terrain is a mixture of flats and gently rolling hills that allow for fast and easy pedaling. The Alabama-Tennessee state line at Mile 341.8 is one popular turnaround point for northbound cyclists, although many take advantage of the leg-friendly terrain by continuing on to one of several picnic areas across the line in southern Tennessee. Some routinely go all the way to Collinwood, near Mile 355, where there's always a hot cup of coffee or a cold drink available at the downtown Welcome Center, just a couple city blocks off the Trace.

Heading south from the river, the flats and rollers continue as far as Buzzard Roost Spring, immediately adjacent to U.S. Highway 72 at Mile 320.3. There, things get considerably more lumpy. Buzzard Roost lies at the foot of the 2.5-mile-long climb up to Freedom Hills Overlook (317.0), the highest point of the Parkway in Alabama. Most cyclists regard the parking area at the summit as a well-earned turnaround point for their rides. But others, seeking even more of a workout, enjoy the fast descent down the back side of Freedom Hills on their way to Bear Creek (312.5), the Mississippi state line (308.9) or the entrance to Tishomingo State Park (304.5). The knowledge that they'll have to grind their way back up Freedom Hills on the return leg of their ride just adds to the challenge.

And the challenges of this stretch of the Parkway are not limited to local riders. Touring cyclists pass through regularly, many of them on their way to either

Cyclists begin the Alabama section of the Natchez Trace Parkway

Photo Dr. Bryant Boswell

Cyclists on the Natchez Trace Parkway.

Photo Dr. Bryant Boswell

Natchez or Nashville. Each July, the W. C. Handy Music Festival's annual "Three State Bike Ride" draws hundreds of participants from all over the southeast and even as far away as Minnesota, Texas and Colorado. Riders who opt for the event's longest distance option have a unique opportunity to "touch three states" on a 107-mile route that requires them to ride the entire 33-mile-long Alabama segment, from Mississippi to Tennessee, in both directions. Hosted by the Shoals Cycling Club and now in its 28th year, the 2012 edition of the Handy Ride will be held on Saturday, July 28, 2012.

In addition to those already mentioned, several other points of interest are located along these 50 miles of Parkway: Cave Spring (308.4), Bear Creek Mound (308.8), Rock Ferry (330.2), Sunken Trace (350.5) and McGlamery Stand (352.9). At Colbert Ferry, just south of the Tennessee River at Mile 327.3, there is an information center that operates seasonally, restrooms that are open year-round and even a bicycle-only campground.

The most famous attraction in

A stop at the Mississippi state line makes for a great photo opportunity.

Photo Dr. Bryant Boswell

the area, however, is not on the Parkway itself but on private property nearby.

A few miles south of the Alabama-Tennessee state line, Tom Hendrix has spent more than 30 years building a massive stone wall in memory of his great-great-grandmother, Te-lah-nay, a Yuchi Indian whose tribe lived along the Tennessee River in the 1800s. Mr Hendrix's wall commemorates the journey of Te-lah-nay and her people to the Indian Territory of Oklahoma as part of the forced relocation of Native Americans from the southeast. After only one winter in Oklahoma, Te-lah-nay was so homesick that she decided to make the perilous journey, all alone, back to her homeland on the banks of the Tennessee.

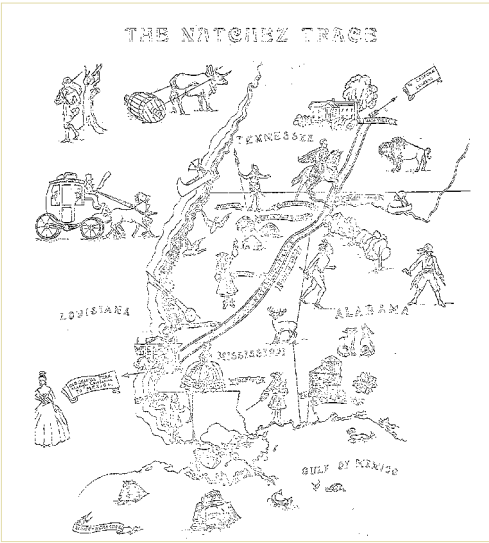
After a young Tom Hendrix learned these stories from his grandmother (Teh-lah-nay's granddaughter), he was moved to spend much of his adult life building his stone wall as a memorial to his ancestor. The impressive structure is located near Mile 338, where Lauderdale County Road 8 crosses the Parkway. Because Mr Hendrix regards the wall not as his own but as belonging to all people, he invites everyone who passes by to stop and experience it.

If The Legends Fade by Tom Hendrix tells the story of his ancestor's journey. Photo Becky Jane Newbold

So if you're a cyclist, make it a point to ride Alabama's 33 miles of the Parkway. And if you happen to encounter other cyclists with big grins on their faces, it's probably some local riders who are lucky enough to ride these roads all the time.

First Promotional Piece

Mark Twain said that it is impossible to know where you are going unless you know where you've been. The 75th anniversary of the Parkway is a good time to reflect on the Association's original vision for the Parkway and look at what remains to be done to complete that vision.



Full-Sized Image, Back Cover

The first promotional piece completed by the Association in 1937 before construction began, highlights historic sites from Andrew Jackson's Hermitage to Natchez historic homes. The Chickasaw and Choctaw nations were to become major focal points. The historic sites were to be connected by a scenic road along the old Trace. The drawing, used to gain support for construction, summarized the experience: "Along the Ancient Natchez Trace is Written the History of the Southwest."

The vision remains relevant 75 years later.

Upcoming Meetings & Events

- **February** - Natchez Chapter Meeting--Details to be announced
- **February 23, Noon** - Alabama Chapter Meeting--Details to be announced
- **May 3** - Jackson Chapter Meeting-Mississippi Crafts Center
- **May 26-27** - Muster Day on the Natchez Trace-Prelude to the War of 1812, Gordon House
- **June 4** - *Building the Natchez Trace Parkway* goes on sale
- **September 8** - Alabama Chapter Meeting and Oka Kapassa Festival, Tuscumbia
- **October 6-7** - Benton Town 1812, Leiper's Fork
- **November** - Annual Meeting and 75th Anniversary of the Natchez Trace Parkway Association Commemoration at Brandon Hall, Date to Be Announced
- **May 18, 2013** - 75th Anniversary of the Natchez Trace Parkway Ceremony, Tupelo

JOIN THE ASSOCIATION

If you are not already a member or if you have not renewed your membership, please complete the form below and mail it to the Treasurer. As you can see, we have a lot of work in progress, and we need your help. Together we can help the Park Service make the Natchez Trace Parkway the destination park that was envisioned in the 1930s when work began. This is the last stage of development as the visitor amenities are completed.

Clip, complete and return with payment to:
Natchez Trace Parkway Association Treasurer
P. O. Box 156
Franklin, TN 37096-0156

Name: _____

Company (if applicable): _____

Mailing Address: _____

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Email Address: _____

Contact Telephone Number: _____

Please select one:

_____ $25 Individual

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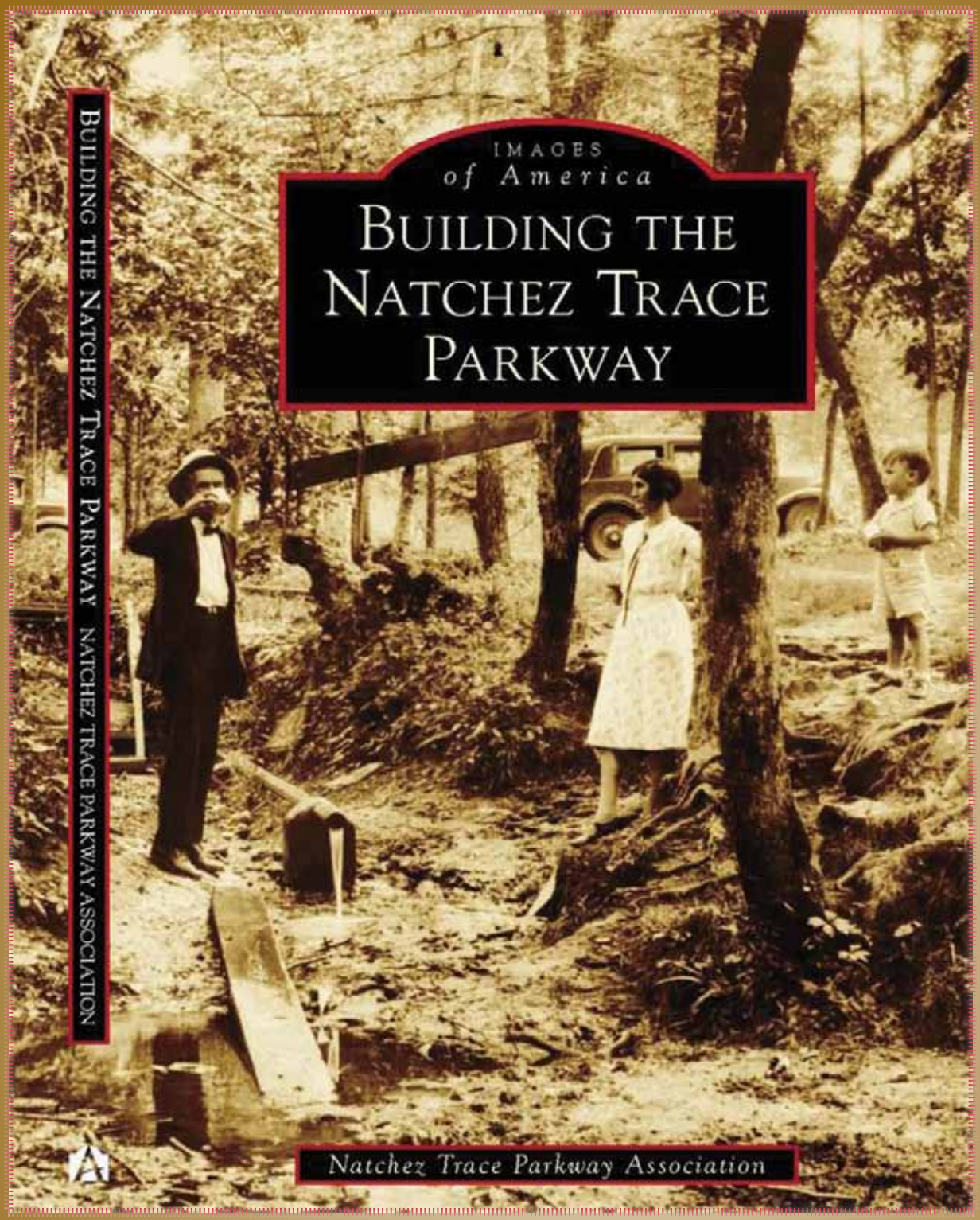
Thank you for your support of the Natchez Trace Parkway!

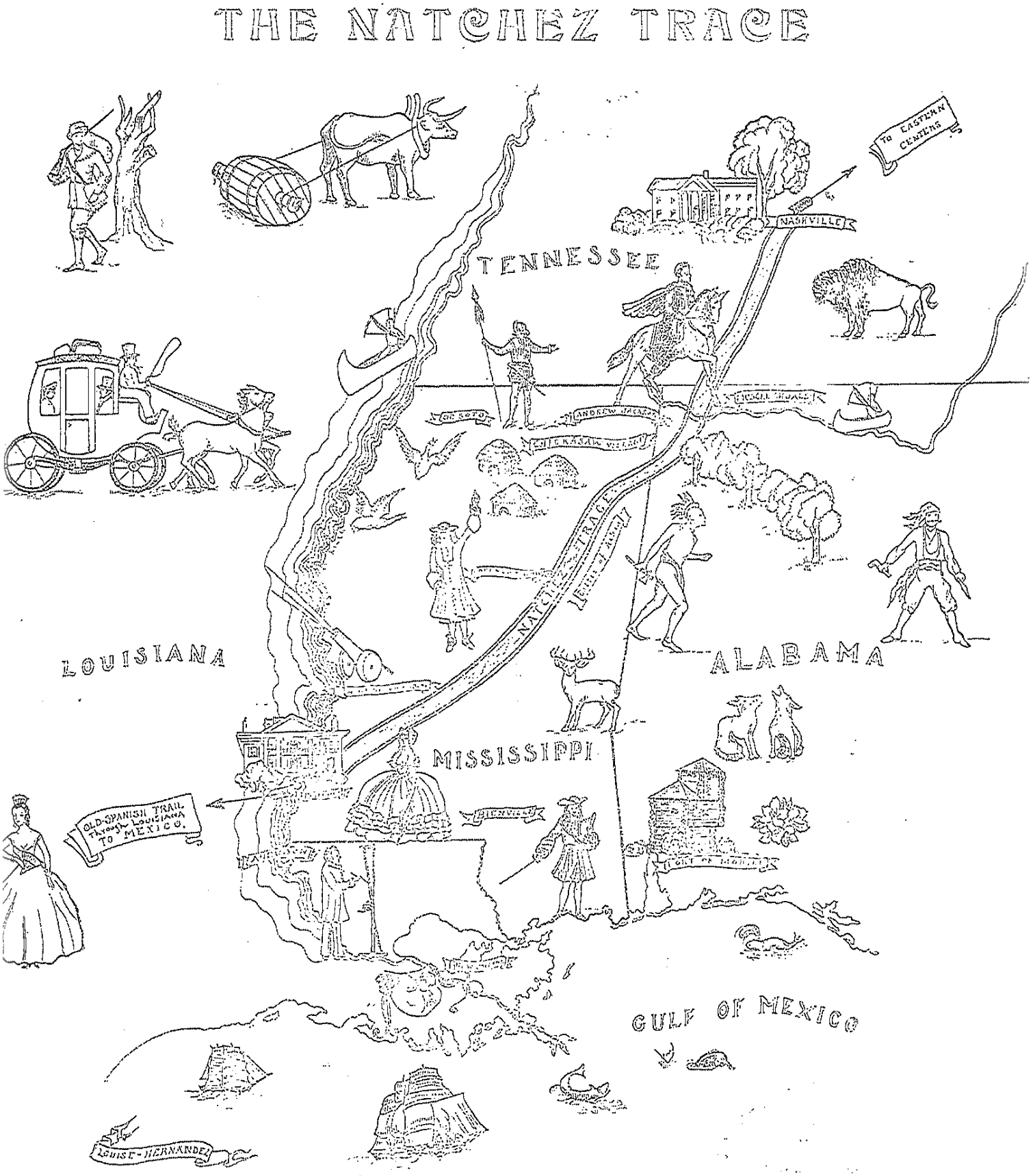
The Natchez Trace Parkway Association is a non-profit organization chartered in Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee dedicated to supporting the Natchez Trace Parkway.

You have received this newsletter as a member of the Association or as a friend of the Association. Newsletters will be sent as news warrants. To be removed from the email list or for information about NTPA, please contact info@natcheztrace.info.



Building the Natchez Trace Parkway

In Bookstores June 4



1937 Parkway Association Concept