

ALABAMA BICENTENNIAL PARK



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ALABAMA
BICENTENNIAL

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Ancient Sea

The Basilosaurus cetoides was a 65-foot whale that lived in the shallow sea that covered much of Alabama 40 million years ago.

It was a predator (an animal who hunts and kills others for food). In 1894, the Smithsonian Institution began collecting fossil samples from Choctaw County that would later be displayed in its National Natural History Museum in Washington, D.C. The Basilosaurus cetoides is Alabama's state fossil.

ACTIVITY: Paleontologists (scientists who study the remains of ancient organisms or living things) say that the shape of its teeth shows what an ancient animal ate.

Circle the teeth of *Basilosaurus cetoides* in the picture below. What does the shape of its teeth tell you about its primary food? Did it eat meat or plants?

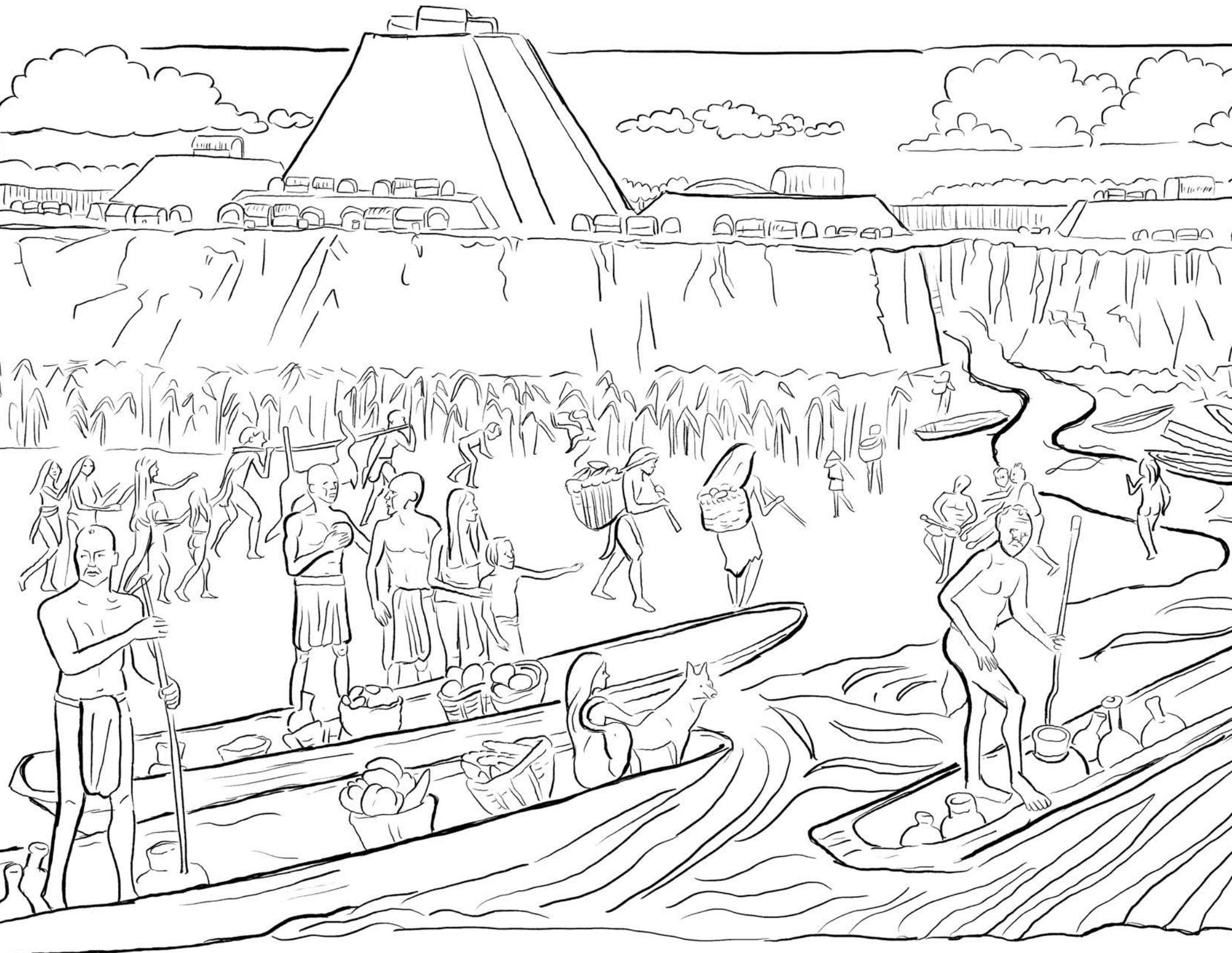
Can you identify any of the other animals in the picture?



Native American Societies

At Moundville, near Tuscaloosa, Native Americans built the second-largest mound city in North America. It influenced towns and villages for hundreds of miles in every direction. This panel shows a typical summer day in Moundville. Women worked in the cornfields, men returned from a hunt, and travelers arrived with trade items.

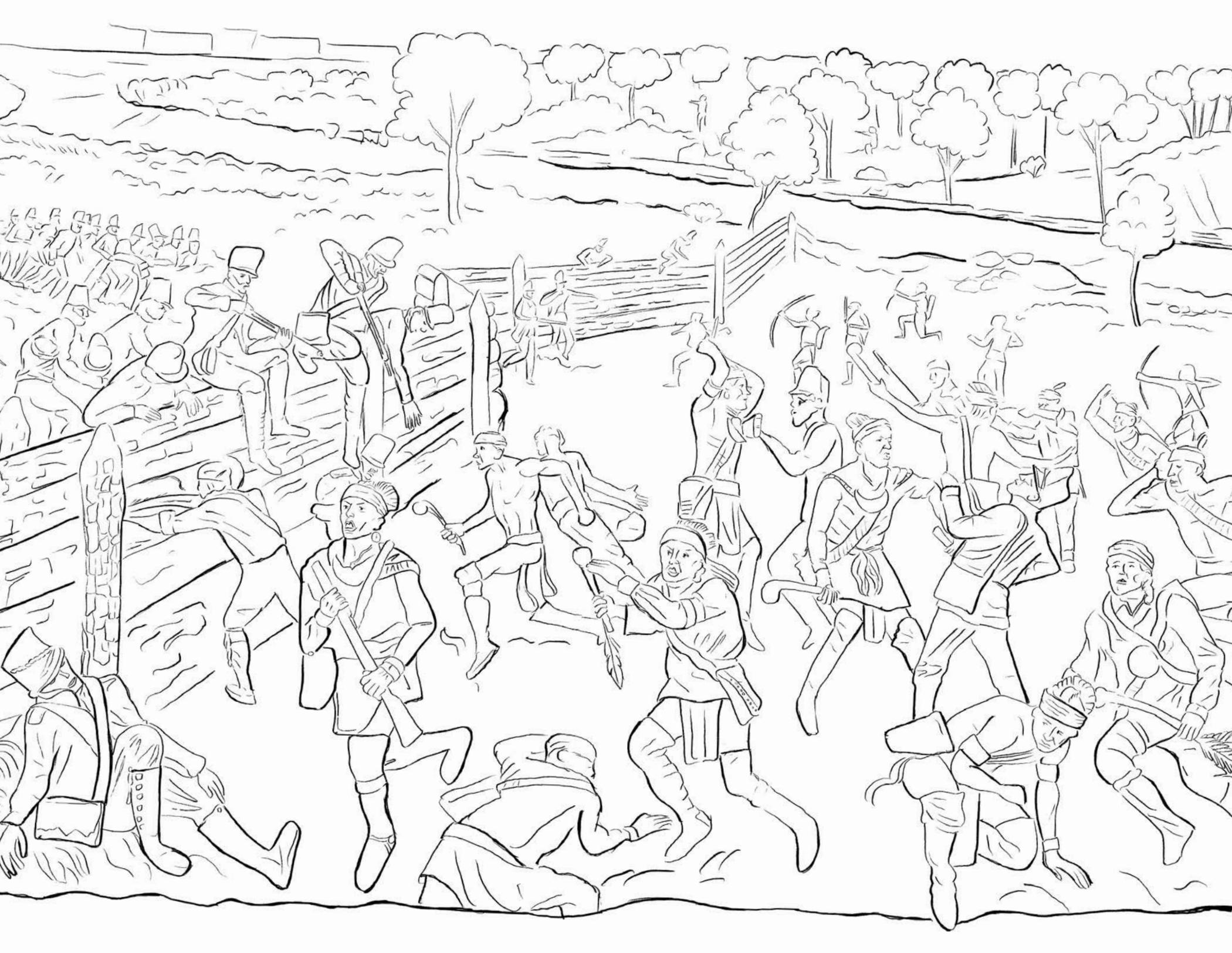
ACTIVITY: All of the people living in this society had jobs to do so that there would be enough food, clothing, and shelter for everyone. Circle all of the different kinds of work that are being performed in the picture below. Remember to look at the men, women, and children in the picture.



Creek War

*In the early 1800s, settlers were moving into Creek Indian lands, which caused conflict both in Creek families and with the settlers. The Battle of Horseshoe Bend took place on March 27, 1814, in a bend of the Tallapoosa River. The battleground was fortified by a **barricade** (a type of fence surrounding the settlement), which was made of huge pine logs. American soldiers and some Indians who supported them fought against the Red Stick Creeks. More than 800 Red Stick warriors died in the battle, which ended the Creek fight to keep their land.*

ACTIVITY: Look at the picture of the battle. Do you see the clothes and equipment being used by different fighters? Use five (5) adjectives that describe the sounds you might hear during the battle.



Path to Statehood

Alabama became a territory of the United States in 1817.

By July 1819, Alabama delegates had come together in Huntsville to draft a state constitution. While waiting for Congress to approve their work, Alabama held elections in September to select its first governor, William Wyatt Bibb, and established the first state capitol in Cahawba, located near Selma.

President James Monroe signed a resolution from Congress recognizing Alabama as the 22nd state on December 14, 1819.

ACTIVITY: Look carefully at the people that you see in this picture. The boy in the picture is announcing that the new constitution has been written and is passing out copies. What do you think that he is saying? What do you think that the women, who could not vote, thought about Alabama's new constitution?



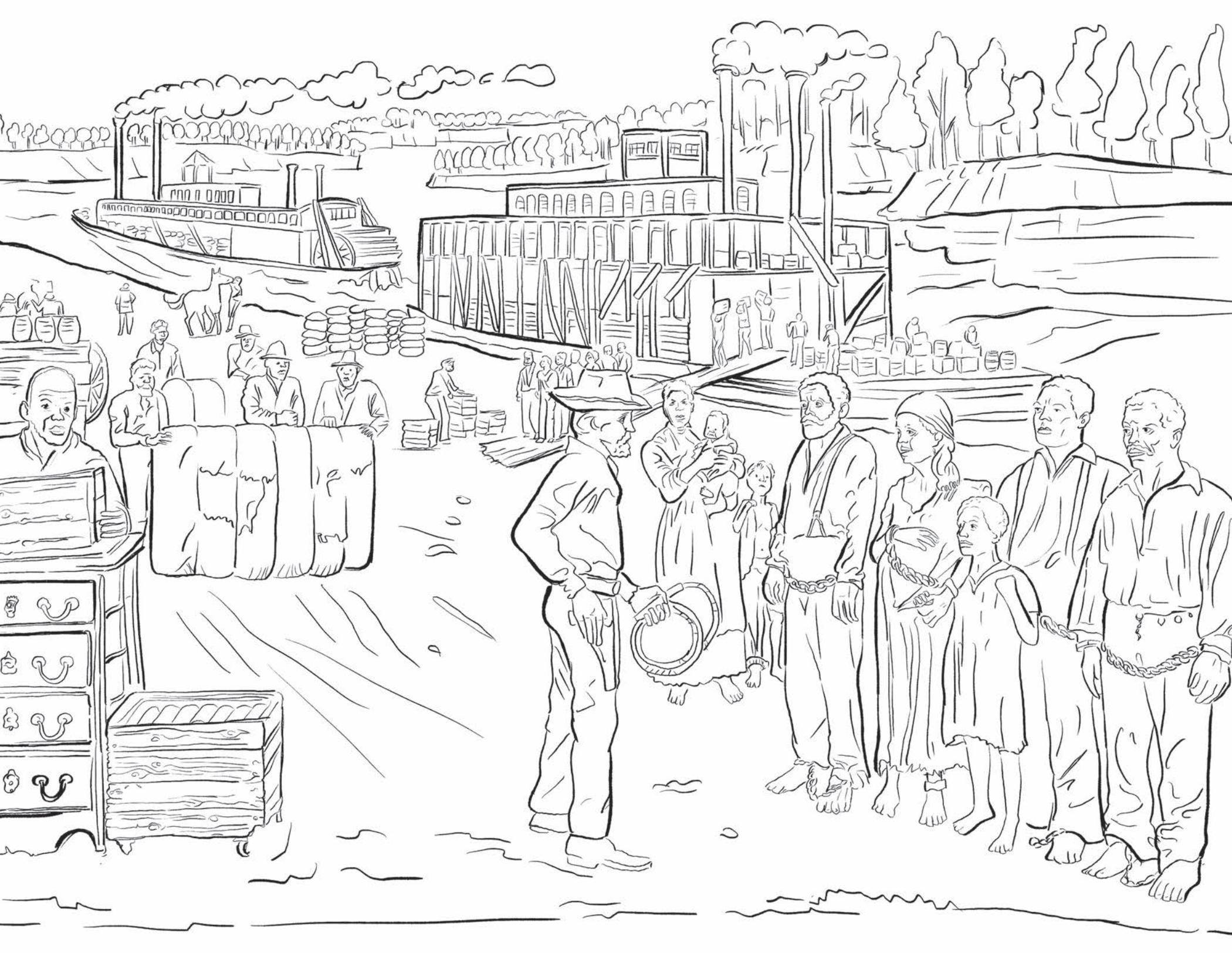
J Beardman
Printer

ALABAMA REPUBLICAN
CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF ALABAMA

Cotton State

Alabama's settlement and growth depended on the production of cotton. The United States was the largest producer of cotton in the world, and Alabama produced 23 percent of the nation's crop. Most of Alabama's cotton was grown in the rich soil of the Black Belt and the Tennessee Valley. Without enslaved people, cotton production and much of Alabama's growth could not have been accomplished.

ACTIVITY: The rivers of Alabama were the primary form of transportation for items being bought or sold. This panel shows a steamboat unloading its cargo. Find the enslaved people who are your age. What do you think that they are thinking about this new place? Do you think that they are frightened or unsure about their future? Why or why not?

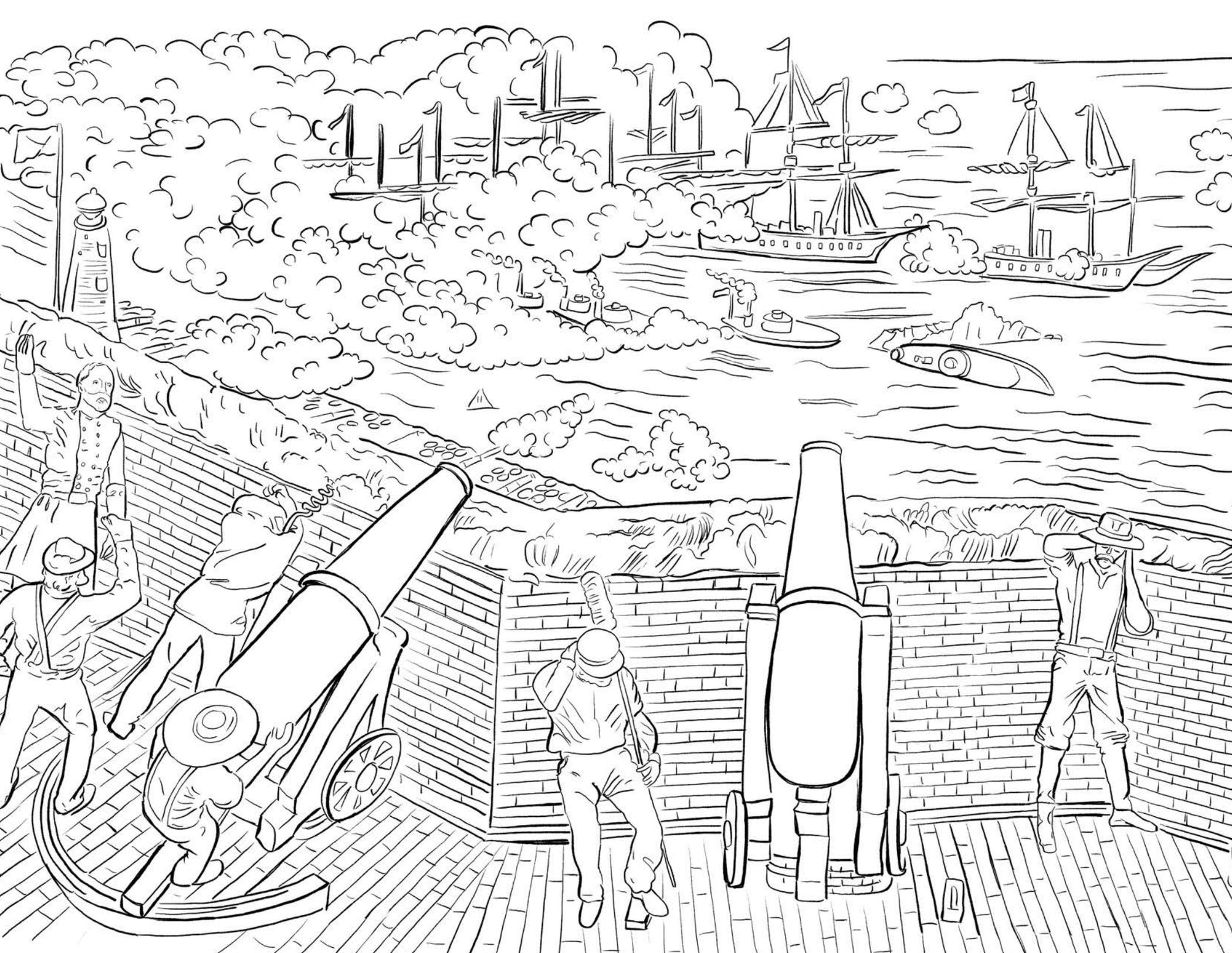


Civil War

After Abraham Lincoln's election in 1860, many people living in slave-holding states wanted their states to secede (to separate) from the United States because of fears that slaves would be freed. These people were called secessionists.

Alabama representatives met in January 1861 and voted to secede from the United States, also called the Union, by a vote of 61 to 39. There were people in Alabama who did not support the Confederacy, and they fought for the United States. Eight thousand enslaved men who had run away from Alabama volunteered for the Union army.

ACTIVITY: This panel shows Confederate troops at Fort Morgan who tried unsuccessfully to defend Mobile Bay from being captured by the Union forces. In the picture, do you see the ships, gunboats, and smoke from the firing canons? Write five (5) adjectives that describe the sounds and smells of the event shown in the picture.

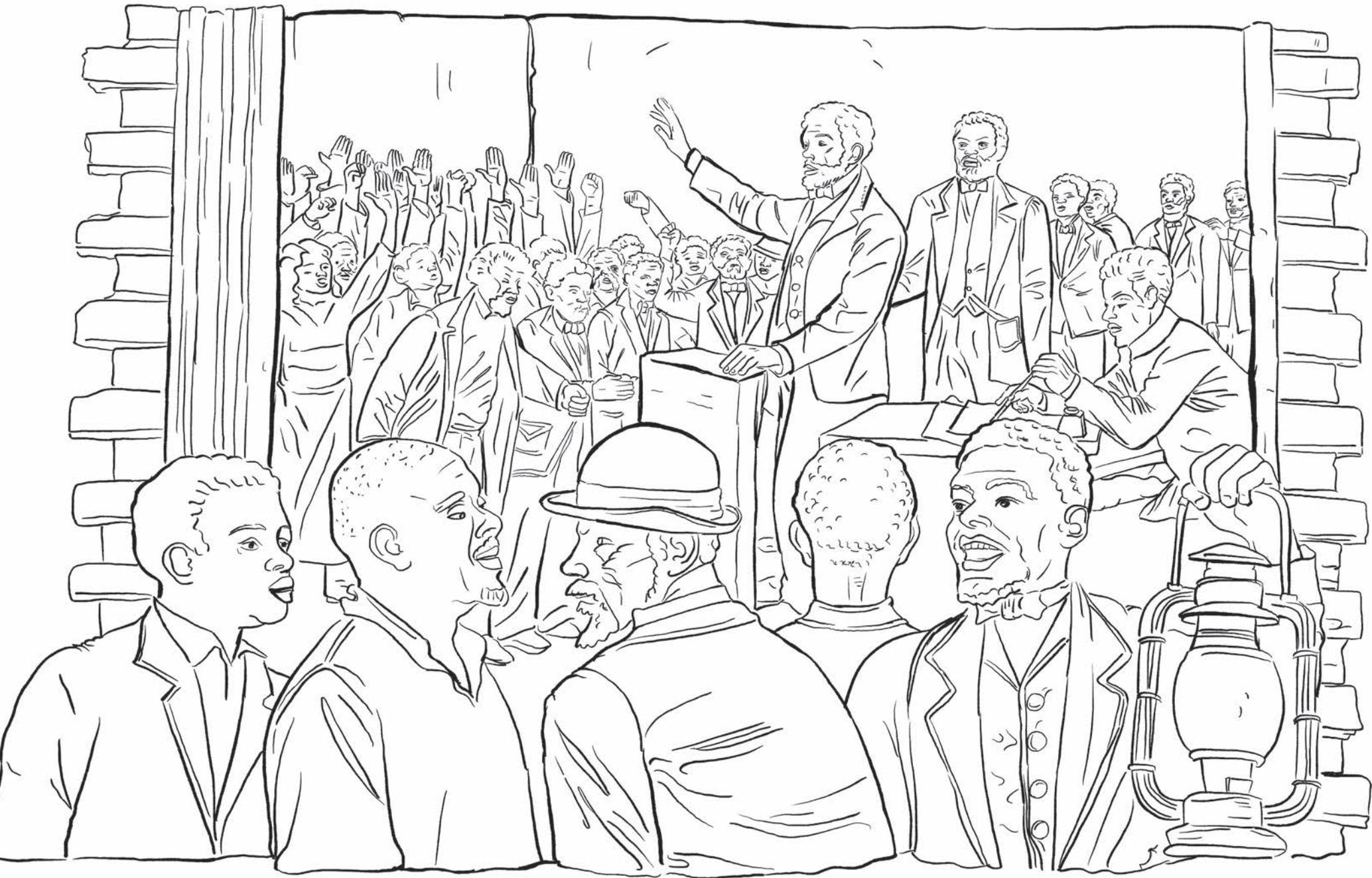


Reconstruction

The end of the Civil War in April 1865 meant the end of enslavement for approximately 400,000 black Alabamians.

Many freedmen who tried to participate as citizens by voting were threatened and harmed, but some served as officials in the new state government being formed.

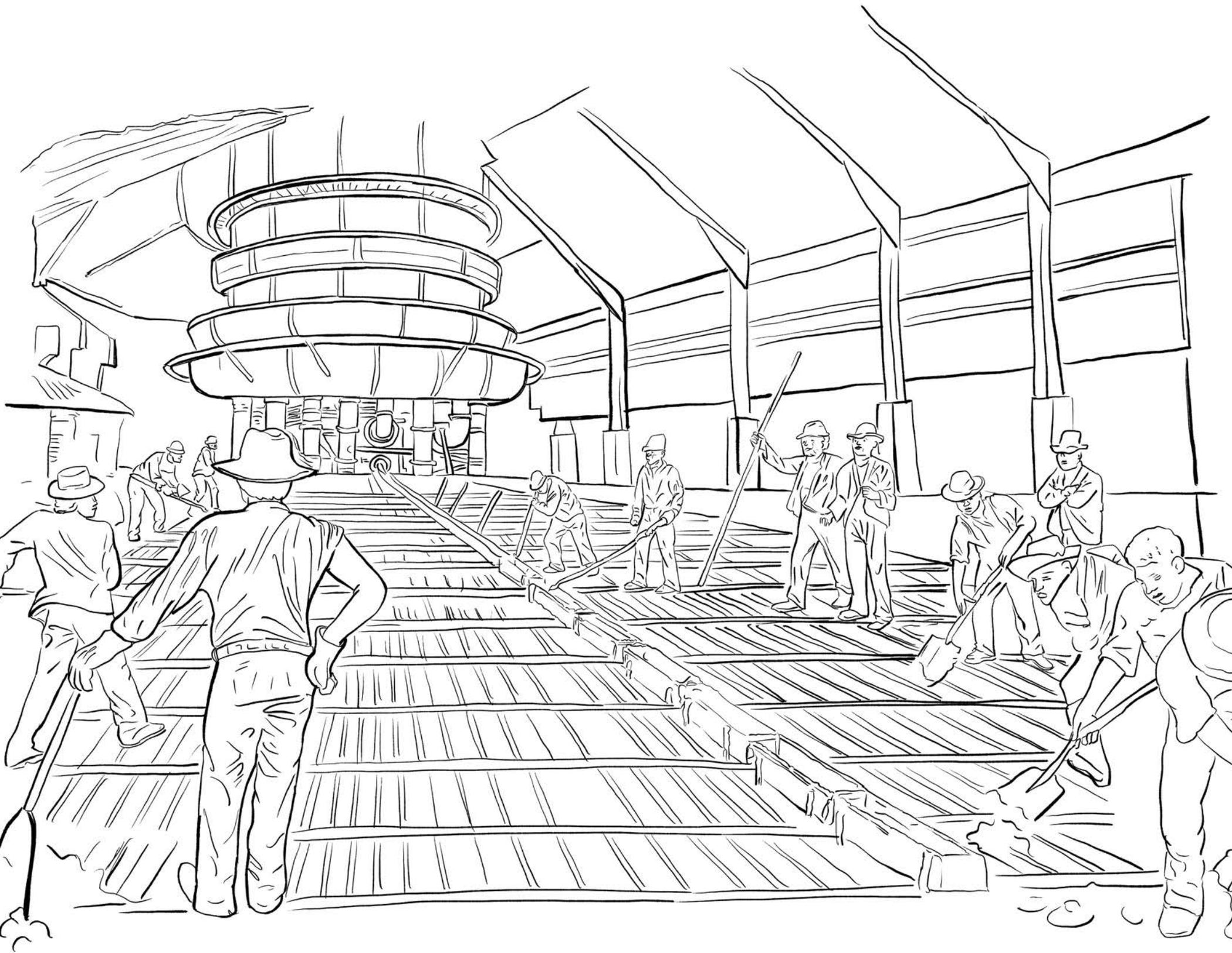
ACTIVITY: This panel shows African Americans in Florence on April 24, 1867, as they nominated John Rapier to serve as voting registrar for a statewide election. This election would include African American men for the first time. Imagine that you are a newspaper reporter who is writing a story about the nomination. Write a headline for a newspaper that you would use to announce the nomination of John Rapier.



Industrialization

In the 1870s, Alabama began producing lumber, textiles, coal, and iron. Throughout the United States, the demand for products made in Alabama increased. Many people moved from farms to cities such as Birmingham to work in the factories. Even children worked in the mines, mills, factories, and fields of Alabama.

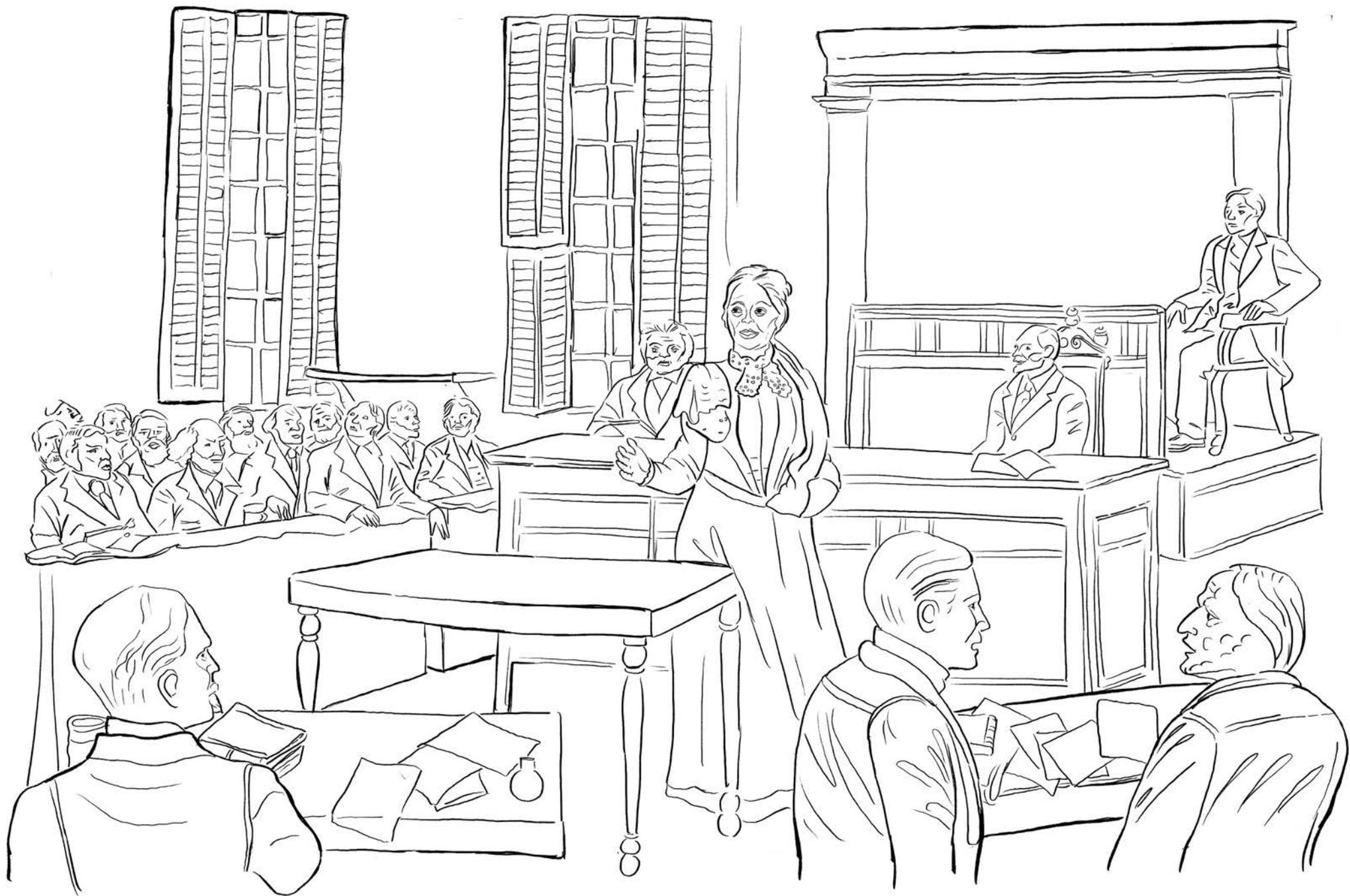
ACTIVITY: This panel shows Sloss Furnace in Birmingham on April 12, 1882, when iron from the furnace was first poured into molds. Imagine that you and your father are working in the foundry in Birmingham, but your grandparents still live on a farm in rural Alabama. Write a letter to your grandparents describing your work.



Constitutional Convention of 1901

*In 1901, people who wanted more control over the election process called for a convention to write a new constitution. The most important change in the new constitution was that most African Americans and many poor whites lost their right to vote because of a **literacy test** (a test that proved that a person could read and write) and a **poll tax** (a fee that had to be paid to vote). These laws were called “Jim Crow” laws.*

ACTIVITY: During this time period, men had the right to vote, but women did not. This panel shows the 1901 constitutional convention in Montgomery where Frances Griffin argued that women should also have the right to vote. The delegates did not recognize her request. Do you see any women, other than Frances Griffin, in this picture? Why or why not? Do you think that there are African Americans at this constitutional convention? Why or why not?



Agricultural Economy

*When the boll weevil infested Alabama cotton crops in the 1910s, many farmers were affected. George Washington Carver was among those who encouraged farmers to choose other crops to grow. This is called **crop diversification**. When World War I began in 1914, most Alabamians still lived on farms. Many worked on land that belonged to others and paid rent or gave shares of their crop to landowners in exchange for a place to live and farm. This is called **sharecropping**.*

ACTIVITY: In southeast Alabama, the peanut became the most important crop. This panel shows Mr. H. M. Sessions, a banker, and Mr. C. W. Baston, a farmer, inspecting Coffee County's first peanut crop. Peanuts are still a very important crop for Alabama. Circle all of the items on the list below that you think are made from peanuts. Explain the reason for your choices.

Peanut Butter

Bird Feed

Lip Gloss

Kitty Litter

Mulch



Electrification

The Great Depression placed many families of Alabama in deep poverty. Businesses, factories, and banks closed, leaving many people unemployed, homeless, and starving. In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed the New Deal, which created jobs for people to build roads, buildings, and parks, and helped those who could not work. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) brought jobs and electricity to the people of north Alabama by building dams and huge electrical generators.

ACTIVITY: This panel shows linemen in 1939 bringing electricity to a rural Marshall County school after construction of the Guntersville Dam and its hydroelectric plant. What are the differences that you see between your school and the one in the picture? What do you think that the students were saying to each other about the electricity that would be coming to their school?



World War II

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, many people of Alabama volunteered to serve in the military. Those who could not serve bought war bonds, volunteered at the Red Cross, participated in rationing, and trained for civil defense at home. Mobile became a crowded port city where ships were built for the war effort. The SS Tule Canyon, a tanker ship built in Mobile, launched on May 31, 1944. It was constructed by an all-African American crew in 79 days, breaking all previous records for production in the shipyard.

ACTIVITY: During World War II, children saved their coins to buy war bonds to support American troops. Write a slogan or design a poster that would encourage others to save their coins so that they could buy a war bond.



Civil Rights Movement

After World War II, African American soldiers returned to Alabama to find that many things had not changed while they were serving their country. Separate schools, buses, and separate seating areas in movie theaters were still the law, and African Americans were still denied their civil and voting rights. African Americans and white supporters challenged the laws that kept them separated and unable to vote by organizing and participating in nonviolent demonstrations, lawsuits, and boycotts.

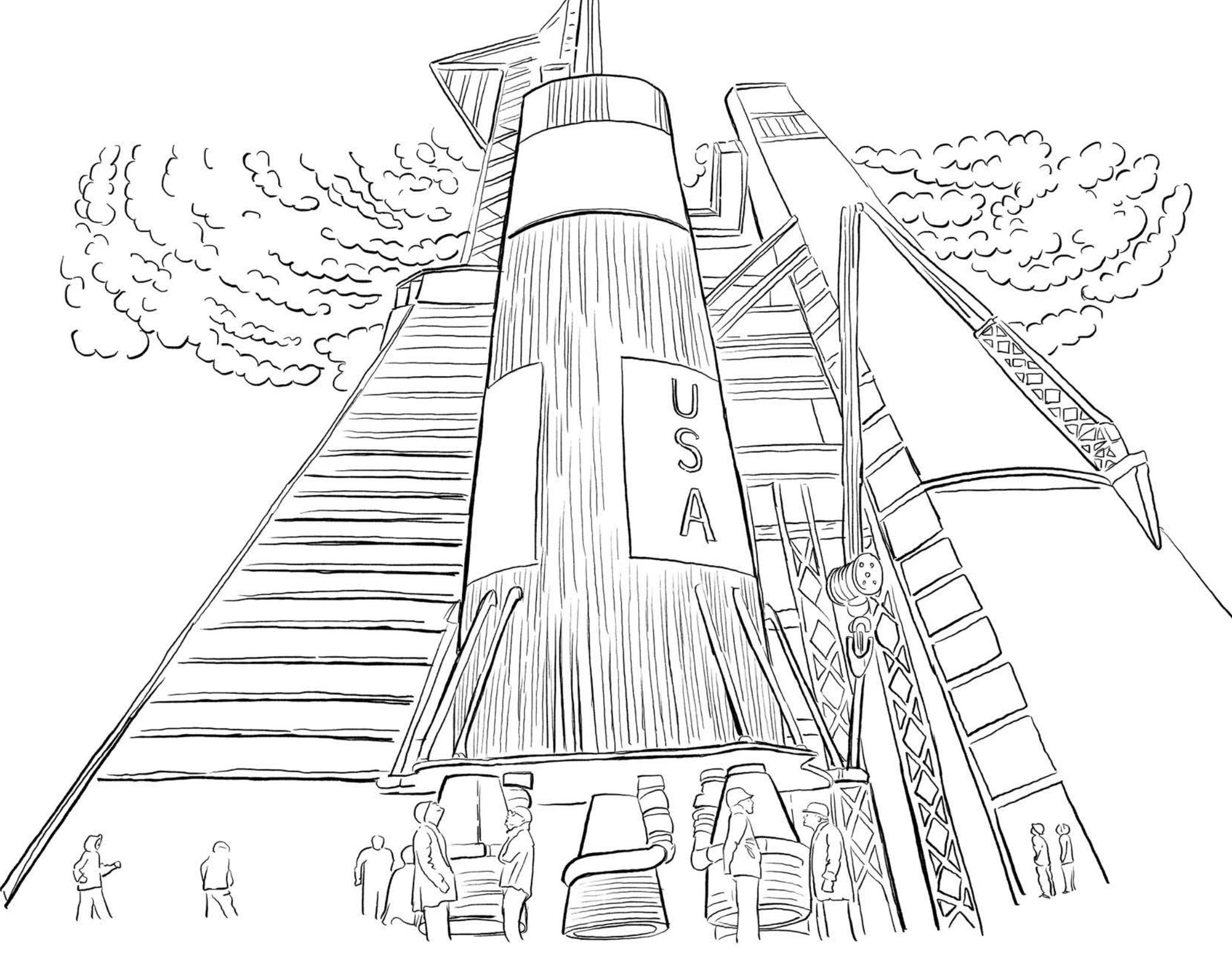
ACTIVITY: On March 7, 1965, local and national groups began a march from Selma to Montgomery to protest police violence against voting-rights activists. At the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, state and local law enforcement brutally attacked the unarmed marchers. Many people, both adults and children, took part in the march from Selma to Montgomery. Imagine that you are a part of the march. Describe the sights, sounds, and smells of “Bloody Sunday.”



Space Race

During the 1950s, the United States turned to Huntsville to develop spaceflight technology. At Marshall Space Flight Center, engineers led by German-born Wernher von Braun created rockets to carry satellites and humans into space. The team's greatest success was the Saturn V rocket, which launched the Apollo 11 mission into space on July 16, 1969, for man's first trip to the surface of the moon.

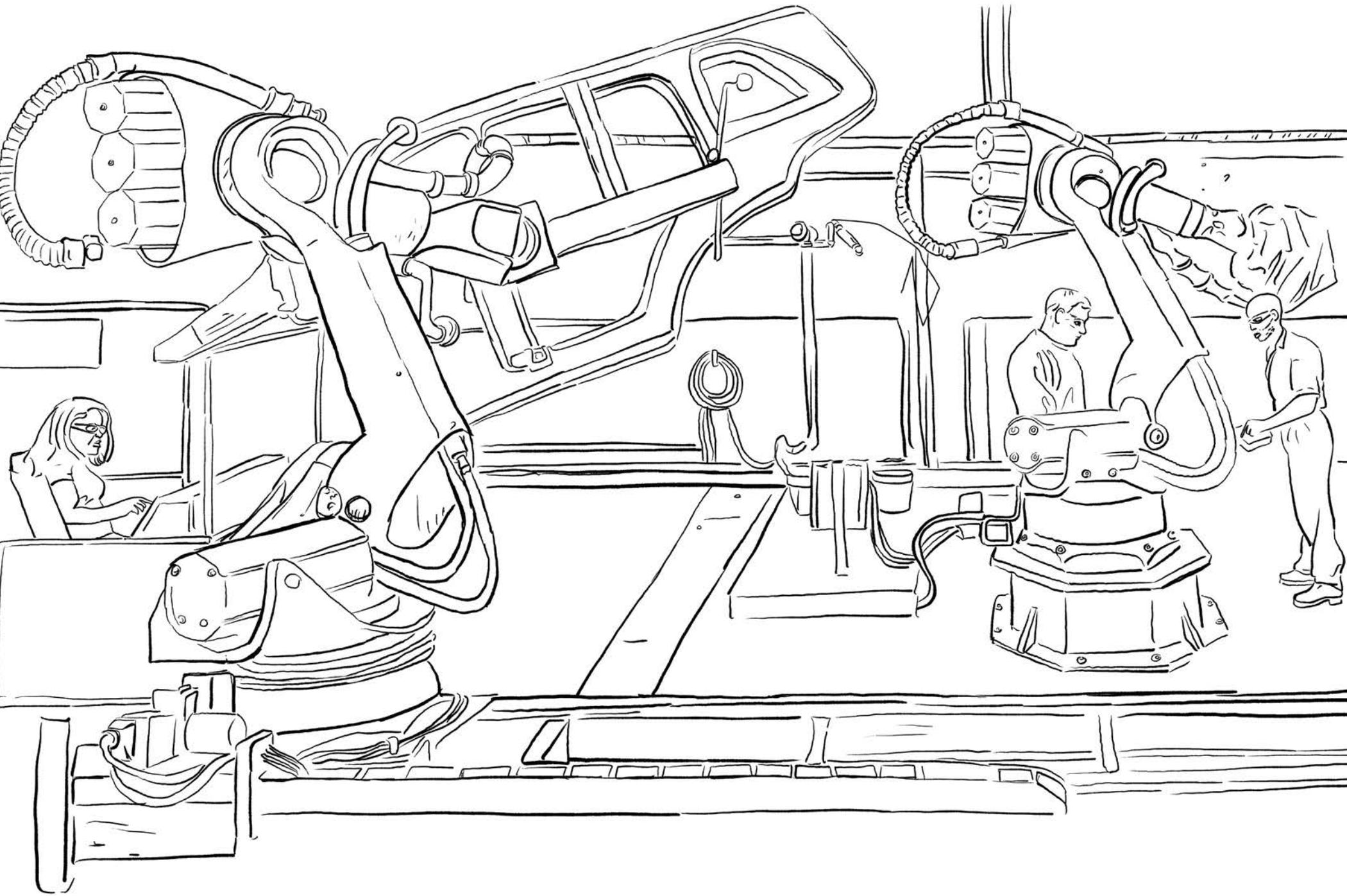
ACTIVITY: This panel shows the first test firing of the first stage of the Saturn V rocket, which took place on April 16, 1965. Imagine that you are applying for a job at the Marshall Space Flight Center. What are 5 (five) talents or abilities that you think would be important for an engineer or a scientist to have?



21st-Century Economy

By the early 2000s, the automotive industry opened job opportunities in Tuscaloosa and Montgomery. In north Alabama, the manufacture of commercial satellites, computer operating systems, and biotechnical research facilities changed education, training, and employment. Mobile has become a center for aviation and warship construction, while Birmingham leads in healthcare and medical research.

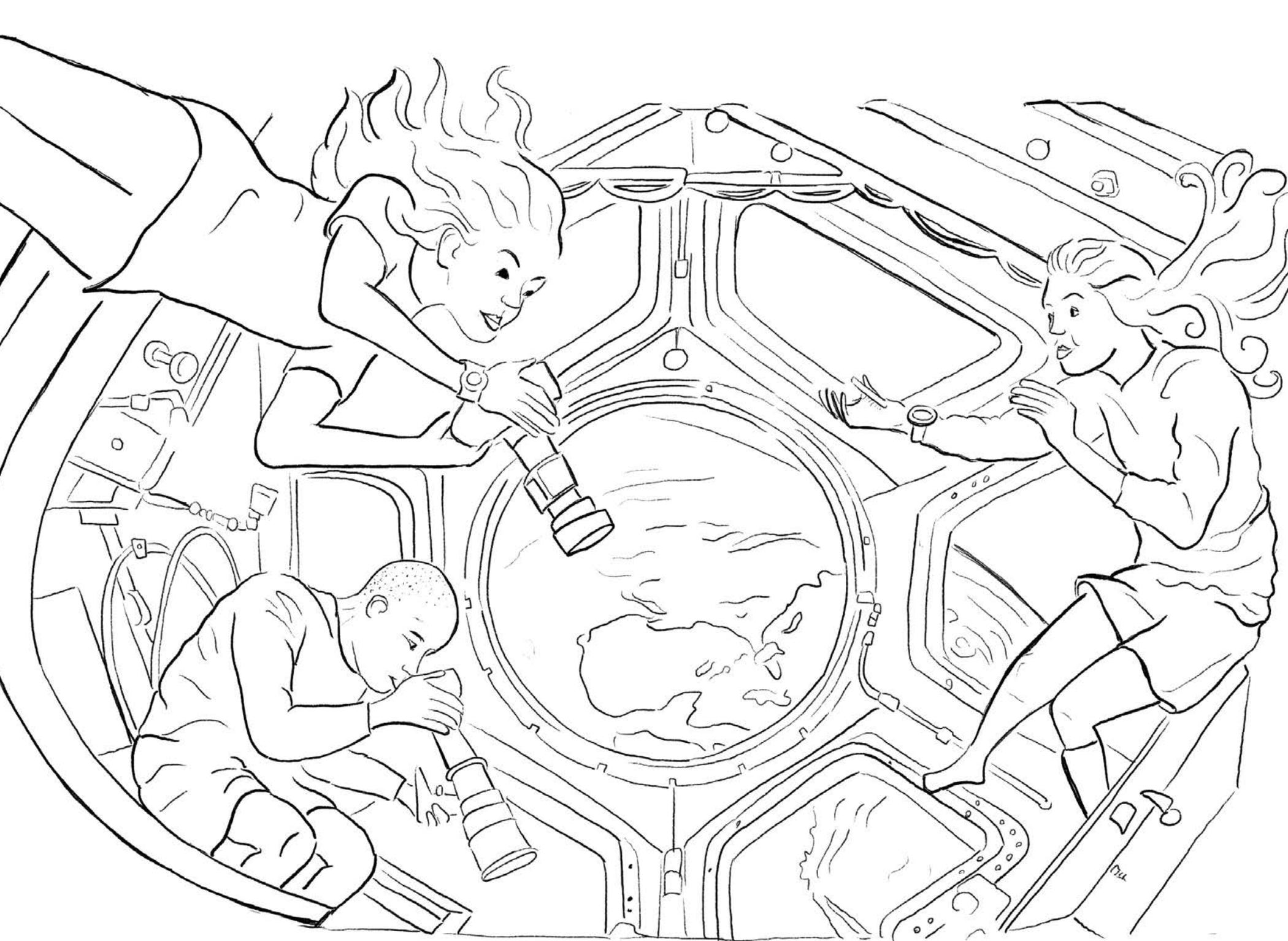
ACTIVITY: This panel shows that automation has rapidly changed the way Alabamians work in manufacturing. People monitor and repair robots that do the lifting, assembly, and welding formerly done by humans. If you could create a robot to work for you, what chore would you like for it to do?



Alabama's Third Century

Our history, natural resources, opportunities, and challenges offer so much for the future of Alabama. You are a part of this future! Alabamians built portions of the International Space Station in Huntsville, and they coordinate the station's scientific research.

ACTIVITY: Maybe you will travel to the International Space Station, shown in this panel. Draw one thing that you would want to take with you to remind you of home if you were an astronaut. Remember that room on the Space Station is limited.



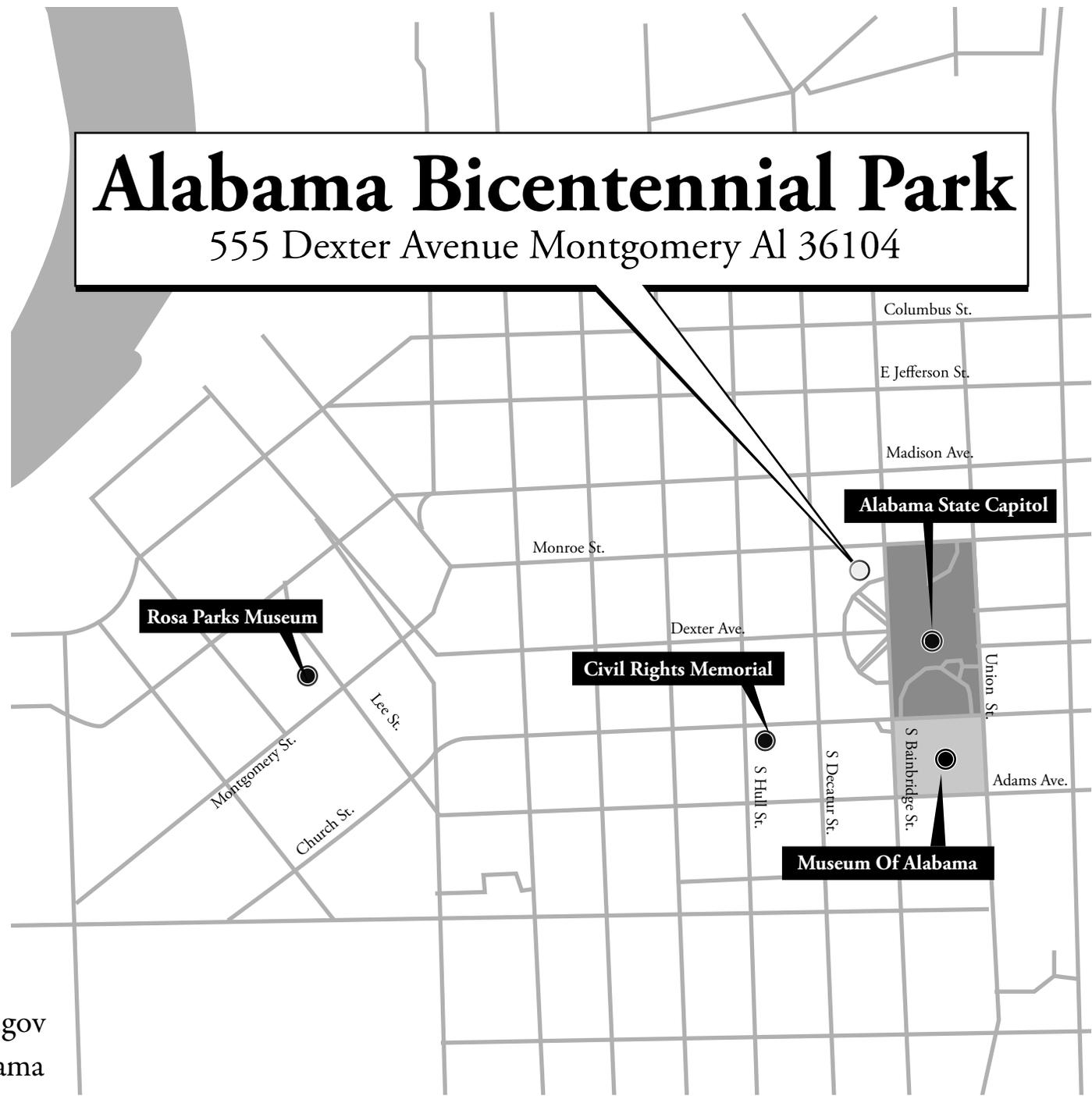
**Draw your own picture of an
Alabama historical event.**

Alabama Bicentennial Park tells the stories of Alabama people, places, and events in 16 bronze images and 32 text panels. They include every region of the state and represent Alabama's past, present, and future. Made possible by the support of the Alabama Legislature and dedicated by Gov. Kay Ivey on December 14, 2019, the park is a legacy of the state's 200th birthday.

Visit <https://www.al200park.alabama.gov> to learn more and download the Alabama Bicentennial Park app.

Alabama Bicentennial Park

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