



Arkansas

State History

~ In a Nutshell ~

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Arkansas State History In a Nutshell
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What is the "In a Nutshell" series?

This is a series of concise, easy to understand information on many popular topics. You will find that many of products in this series can also be found as part of larger publications and/or curriculum on the publisher's website. At the end of each book, you will find a list of questions that may be used to help you review the material.

Arkansas State History

Lapbook Journal

Study Guide



The Great Seal of Arkansas

Arkansas, officially "The Natural State", is a state of mountains, valleys, dense woodland and fertile plains. Its clear lakes and streams and abundant wildlife help to make tourism one of the state's most important industries.

Arkan-saw or Ar-kansas? Many names of places in Arkansas including the name "Arkansas" are French pronunciations of Indian words. At the time of the early French exploration, a tribe of Indians, the Quapaws, lived west of the Mississippi and north of the Arkansas River. The Quapaws, or Oo-gaq-pa, were also known as the downstream people, or Ugakhopag. The Algonkian-speaking Indians of the Ohio Valley called them the Arkansas, or "south wind."

The state's name has been spelled several ways throughout history. In Marquette and Joliet's "Journal of 1673", the Indian name is spelled Akanseas. In LaSalle's map a few years later, it's spelled Acansa. A map based on the journey of La Harpe in 1718-1722 refers to the river as the Arkansas and to the Indians as Les Akansas. In about 1811, Captain Zebulon Pike, a noted explorer, spelled it Arkansaw.

During the early days of statehood, Arkansas' two U.S. Senators were divided on the spelling and pronunciation. One was always introduced as the senator from "Arkansaw" and the other as the senator from "Ar-kansas." In 1881, the state's General Assembly passed a resolution declaring that the state's name should be spelled "Arkansas" but pronounced "Arkansaw."

People who live in or who come from Arkansas, are referred to as Arkansans (Ar"kansans").



Map of Arkansas – Capital, Major Cities and Rivers

STATEHOOD

On June 15, 1836, Arkansas became the 25th state to be admitted into the Union.

STATE CONSTITUTION

The Arkansas State Constitution is the governing document of the state of Arkansas. It was adopted in 1874, shortly after the Brooks-Baxter War replacing the 1868 constitution that had allowed Arkansas to rejoin the Union after the conclusion of the American Civil War; the new constitution and the Brooks-Baxter war marked the end of Reconstruction in Arkansas, two years before the disputed 1876 presidential election ended it completely. Adopted toward the end of Reconstruction, the new constitution provided a transition period between it and its predecessor.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arkansas_Constitution

PREAMBLE: *We, the People of the State of Arkansas, grateful to Almighty God for the privilege of choosing our own form of government; for our civil and religious liberty; and desiring to perpetuate its blessings, and secure the same to our selves and posterity; do ordain and establish this Constitution.*

STATE GOVERNMENT

Arkansas State Government consists of three branches - Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. Each branch has a different job and different members.

Executive Branch

The Governor is the head of the executive branch of Arkansas State government. The executive branch also includes the Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, State Auditor and the State Land Commissioner.

Prior to 1986, governors in Arkansas served a two-year term, but since 1986, that term has been increased to four years. Governors may be re-elected once. The other six constitutional officers who make up the executive branch are also elected for four-year terms.

The governor as head of the executive branch plays an important part in the legislative process (the passing of new laws). The governor has the power to veto (stop) the passing of a law that he or she does not approve of. The executive branch, with the Governor as chief executive, administers these laws.

Legislative Branch

The Arkansas House of Representatives, along with the Arkansas Senate, compose the legislative branch of state government. Combined, the two organizations form the Arkansas General Assembly, which convenes in regular session on the second Monday in January of every odd-numbered year. Regular sessions may be extended by a two-thirds vote of the membership of both houses. The legislative branch of state government and has the authority to write and enact state laws.

The House of Representatives consists of 100 members elected from 100 districts. A representative member must be a citizen of the United States, at least 21 years old, a resident of Arkansas for at least two years and a resident of his or her district for at least one year prior to election. Members of the House serve two-year terms and since 1993, under Amendment 73 to the state's Constitution, may serve no more than three terms in office.

The Speaker of the House presides over the body and is elected by the membership every two years. His/her duties include supervising and directing the daily order of business, recognizing members to speak, preserving order in the House, deciding all questions of order, certifying all measures passed, assigning committee leadership, and naming members to select committees.

The Speaker also appoints a leadership team, which includes a Speaker Pro Tempore, who presides in the absence of the Speaker. The Speaker also may appoint representatives from each of the House's four caucus districts to serve as Assistant Speakers Pro Tempore who assist in leadership duties

The State Senate is composed of 35 members. A senate member must be a citizen of the United States, at least 25 years old, a resident of Arkansas for at least two years and a resident of his or her district for at least one year prior to election. Senators serve a four-year term and may be re-elected once. The Lieutenant Governor serves as President of the Senate. In his/her absence, the Senate President Pro Tempore serves in his/her place.

The Judicial Branch

The judicial branch, headed by the state Supreme Court, administers justice and interprets the law in accordance with the Constitution. The Supreme Court consists of a chief justice (judge) and six other justices, all elected to eight-year terms. The Supreme Court hears appeals from lower courts. An appeal is an attempt to change a decision or ruling that was made in a lower court. The court of appeals hears these cases before they reach the Supreme Court.

Many cases begin in circuit court. The circuit court system hears both criminal and civil cases. Civil cases involve disputes over property, documents, and labor, among other things. Criminal cases involve crimes such as murder, drugs, or theft. There are 20 circuit court districts in Arkansas. Each circuit court judge serves a four-year term.

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

The legislative branch of the United States government makes laws for our nation and raises and distributes money to run the United States government. The most evident part of the legislative branch is the United States Congress. Congress is divided into two parts, called houses. The two parts are the Senate and the House of Representatives. Congress is referred to as a bicameral body because it is made up of two houses. The Latin roots of the word bicameral, "bi" and "cameral," mean two chambers or rooms.

Members of the Senate are called Senators and members of the House of Representatives are called Representatives. Senators and representatives serving in these two bodies are sometimes referred to as congressmen, or women, and sometimes as legislators because their business is to

legislate or make laws. The role of the legislative branch is defined in the United States Constitution.

Each state elects people to represent them in the United States Congress in Washington, DC. The citizens of each state elect two senators to represent them in the Senate. They also elect representatives to represent them in the House of Representatives. The number of representatives each state sends to the House of Representatives is not a specific number like the Senate, but is based on the population of the state. The people, that are elected to represent the state's citizens in the United States Congress, are referred to as the congressional delegation.

There are 100 senators in the U.S. Senate. Each is elected to a term, in the Senate, of six years. There are 435 representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives. Each is elected to a term, in the "House," of two years.

The citizens of Arkansas elect two people, like every other state, to represent them in the Senate and four people, based on Arkansas' current population in the most recent federal census, to represent them in the House of Representatives.

STATE SEAL

The official statutes of the state of Arkansas describe the state seal as follows:

It shall be the duty of the Governor to procure a seal for the State of Arkansas, which shall present the following impressions, devices, and emblems, to wit:

An eagle at the bottom, holding a scroll in its beak, inscribed "Regnat Populus", a bundle of arrows in one claw and an olive branch in the other;

a shield covering the breast of the eagle, engraved with a steamboat at top, a beehive and plow in the middle, and sheaf of wheat at the bottom;

the Goddess of Liberty at the top, holding a wreath in her right hand, a pole in the left hand, surmounted by a liberty cap, and surrounded by a circle of stars outside of which is a circle of rays;

the figure of an angel on the left, inscribed "Mercy", and a sword on the right hand, inscribed "Justice", surrounded with the words "Seal of the State of Arkansas"



STATE CAPITAL (Little Rock)



The Arkansas State Capitol, Little Rock, was constructed between 1899 and 1915 on the site of the old state penitentiary using prison labor. (It is the second capitol building built in Little Rock and

replaced the State House (today's Old State House Museum) erected in the 1830s between Markham Street and the banks of the Arkansas River in downtown Little Rock. (The Arkansas state capitol building was built over a century ago as a replica of the US Capitol).

The original construction cost was not to exceed \$1 million. After two architects, two general contractors, six Capitol Commissions and three governors, the completed Capitol cost almost \$2.3 million. In 1911, the General Assembly convened in the unfinished building for their first session at the new State Capitol.

The neo-classical style of the building is a common example of monumental architecture of the early 20th century. The marble on the floors and walls came from Vermont, the columns from Colorado, and the grand staircases from Alabama. The exterior limestone was quarried near Batesville, Arkansas while a softer Indiana limestone was used for the dome. The Capitol contains 247,000 square feet. The distance from ground level to the top of the cupola is 213 feet. The cupola is covered in gold leaf.

STATE MOTTO

Like many other state mottoes, Arkansas' motto was first adopted as an element of an official seal. An Act of the Arkansas General Assembly, approved in 1864, specified *Regnant Populi* in its description of the seal.

This description was updated by the Arkansas General Assembly on May 23, 1907 when it passed legislation changing the motto to correct the Latin.

Original motto: *Regnant Populi*, Translation: The People Rules

1907 motto: *Regnat Populus*, Translation: The People Rule

STATE FLAG

The state flag of Arkansas is red white and blue to signify that Arkansas is one of the United States.

The flag was adopted by the Arkansas Legislature on February 26, 1913 and a 4th star added by legislative approval in 1924.

The large diamond represents the only diamond producing state in the USA (Arkansas).



25 white stars show Arkansas as the 25th state to join the Union; three blue stars below the word ARKANSAS are symbols for the three nations which ruled Arkansas before it became a state (Spain, France, and the United States), and also signify that Arkansas was the third state created out of the Louisiana Purchase; the fourth lone star above the word ARKANSAS represents the Confederacy.

For additional flag history, visit, <http://www.soskids.ar.gov/5-8-history-flag-story.html>

SALUTE TO STATE FLAG

“I Salute the Arkansas Flag With Its Diamond and Stars.
We Pledge Our Loyalty to Thee.”

STATE NICKNAMES

The Natural State

(Official) This nickname was officially adopted by the legislature in 1995 and is intended to highlight the "...unsurpassed scenery, clear lakes, free-flowing streams, magnificent rivers meandering bayous, delta bottomlands, forested mountains, and abundant fish and wildlife." This nickname replaced the official *Land of Opportunity* nickname following the slogan, *Arkansas Is a Natural*, which was used to promote tourism and outdoor recreation.

Land of Opportunity

This was the *official* state nickname of Arkansas prior to the adoption of *The Natural State* in 1995. Adopted in 1947, this nickname served for 38 years.

The Wonder State

This nickname served the state of Arkansas as the *official* nickname from 1923 to 1947. This name was adopted by concurrent resolution of the legislature to promote Arkansas' abundance of natural resources and to replace the nickname, the Bear State, which was so widely in use and, it was feared, gave a false impression of the state.

The Razorback State

Though not *official*, Arkansas is very often referred to as the *Razorback State* in reference to the athletic teams of the University of Arkansas. A razorback is a thin, long-legged wild hog resident in the state of Arkansas.

The Hot Springs State

This nickname is in reference to the world-famous hot springs of Arkansas. A related, though less known, nickname was *The Hot Water State*.

The Bowie State

This nickname, along with *The Toothpick State*, references the famous knives that were in use in the Arkansas territory. The Bowie knife was first crafted by blacksmith/knifsmith James Black, to Jim Bowie's specification. It was said that a Bowie knife had to be sharp enough for shaving and heavy enough to use as a hatchet. It had to be long enough to be used as a sword and wide enough to paddle a canoe.

The Toothpick State

Another large knife, made by Arkansas blacksmiths/knifsmiths and referred to as an Arkansas Toothpick, was similar in heft to a Bowie knife, but longer and designed for throwing.

The Bear State

This is the earliest known nickname for Arkansas, first seen in print in 1858. Undoubtedly, Arkansas was referred to as *The Bear State* by early settlers who found the territory home to many bears. This nickname was pronounced, "Bar" State.

STATE BIRD

The mocking bird, or mockingbird, was adopted by the Forty-seventh General Assembly of Arkansas by House Concurrent Resolution No. 22 on March 5, 1929.

The mockingbird was recognized as the official state bird of Arkansas in 1929. Northern Mockingbirds have extraordinary vocal abilities - they can sing up to 200 songs, including the songs of other birds, insect and amphibian sounds, even an occasional mechanical noise. The northern mockingbird is also the state bird symbol of Florida, Texas, Tennessee and Mississippi



Below, you will find 15 general questions to help review what you have learned. Use the following page(s) for documenting your answers. Older students may choose to write a State Report as well.

Review Questions:

1. List the states and/or bodies of water that border this state.
2. What was the date of statehood?
3. What is the state capital?
4. What is the state motto?
5. Name at least one state nickname.
6. Describe the state flag.
7. What is the state bird?
8. What is the state flower?
9. List at least 5 other state symbols.
10. Describe this state's government.
11. Name the major imports and exports for this state.
12. Describe the weather and climate in this state.
13. List at least 5 famous people from this state.
14. Describe at least 5 significant events in this state's history.
15. What other interesting information have you learned about this state?

Answers to Review Questions:

