



# Illinois

## State History

~ In a Nutshell ~

Written & designed by  
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Illinois 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.

# Illinois State History Lapbook Journal Study Guide



The Great Seal of Illinois

The state of Illinois was named after the Illinois River. The river was named by French explorer Robert Cavalier Sieur de La Salle in 1679 after the Indians he found living along the banks.

Illinois is the French spelling for the Illinois and Peoria Indian word "iliniwok," meaning men or warriors and perhaps referring to members of the Illinois tribe.

People who live in or come from Illinois are called Illinoisians, Illinoisans or Illinoians.



Map of Illinois – Capital, Major Rivers

## STATEHOOD

Before Illinois became a State, it was known as the *Illinois Territory*. In early 1818, the General Assembly of the Illinois Territory sent a petition to the United States Congress asking to be admitted into the Union.

Granting of statehood in 1818 was controversial. The population numbered less than the required 60,000. Moreover, in order to include the Chicago port area, territorial representatives induced the U.S. Congress to draw the Illinois border 51 miles to the north of the original boundary as delimited by the Northwest Ordinance.

On Dec. 3, 1818, Illinois was admitted to the Union as the 21st state.

## STATE CONSTITUTION

The first constitution of the State of Illinois (1818) was compiled mainly with provisions taken from the constitutions of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana. It was adopted by the delegates to the convention, but never submitted to the people of Illinois. This first constitution put virtually unlimited power in the hands of the Legislature while effectively keeping it away from the people.

In 1847, with an increase in the population, a movement began for calling a convention to "alter, amend, and revise" the constitution of 1818. The resulting constitution of 1848 was an improvement over the previous one, but still proved to be susceptible to abuses that encouraged greed of all kinds, which caused the Legislature to waste much time and attention, to the detriment of the public interest.

The Legislature of 1859 submitted a proposal, to hold a third constitutional convention, to a vote of the people. This proposal was endorsed in the election of 1860 and the convention convened in Springfield on January 7, 1862. According to law, the delegates to the convention were required to take an oath to support the state constitution, before starting the business of the convention. Unfortunately, the majority of the delegates not only refused to do this, but they assumed powers such as the right to interfere with military affairs - powers they did not have. This convention was soon termed a "high rolling convention", to the disgust of the people and their work was brought into disrepute. Once the delegates became aware that the convention was being severely criticized, they began to make a great effort to create a constitution acceptable to the people. The constitution was overwhelmingly defeated in the popular vote and matters left as they were until after the war.

Once the war was over and Reconstruction began, calls again began to be made for changes to the 1848 constitution. This need for constitutional changes was primarily based on the continuing growth in both population and economic complexity of Illinois.

Until 1970, Illinois had five state conventions for the purpose of creating a state constitution. Of these, the 1818, 1847, and 1869-70 conventions adopted constitutions that went into effect, while the proposed constitutions framed by the conventions of 1862 and 1922 were rejected. Illinois government basically remained static from 1870 to 1970. The sixth constitutional convention, in 1970, produced a new constitution which was approved by voters on December 15, 1970.

**PREAMBLE:** *We, the People of the State of Illinois - grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberty which He has permitted us to enjoy and seeking His blessing upon our endeavors - in order to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the people; maintain a representative and orderly government; eliminate poverty and inequality; assure legal, social and economic justice; provide opportunity for the fullest development of the individual; insure domestic tranquility; provide for the common defense; and secure the blessings of freedom and liberty to ourselves and our posterity - do ordain and establish this Constitution for the State of Illinois.*

## **STATE GOVERNMENT**

The Illinois state government is modeled after the federal government and is made up of three separate branches of state government – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. The three branches share power and jointly govern the state of Illinois. County and local governments are also constitutional bodies with limited authority to levy taxes, pass legislation, and create and maintain local public infrastructure.

The Governor of the State of Illinois is an elected Constitutional officer, the head of the Executive branch, and the highest state office in Illinois. The executive branch is split into several statewide elected offices. The governor is responsible for enacting laws passed by the Illinois General Assembly. The Governor is elected by popular vote every four years, after which he or she must run for re-election. Illinois state governors are not subject to term limits.

The Illinois General Assembly is the Legislative branch of Illinois state government. The General Assembly is responsible for enacting the laws by which the State of Illinois is governed. It is bicameral and consists of the Illinois House of Representatives and the Illinois Senate.

STATE REPRESENTATIVES: Representatives in Illinois each represent people in a specific area of the state. These areas are called house districts. Based on Illinois' current population, there are 118 men and women representing 118 house districts in the Illinois House of Representatives. Each representative serves for a period of two years in the House of Representatives, after which he or she must run for re-election. Illinois state representatives are not subject to term limits.

STATE SENATORS: Senators in Illinois each represent people in a specific area of the state. These areas are called senate districts. There are currently 59 men and women representing 59 senate districts in the Illinois Senate. Each senator serves for a period of four years in the Senate, after which he or she must run for re-election. Illinois state senators are not subject to term limits.

The Judiciary branch is composed of the Supreme Court of Illinois, Illinois Appellate Court and Illinois Circuit Courts. The Supreme Court of Illinois is the highest judicial body in Illinois. The court oversees the lower courts and commissions that jointly make up the Judicial branch.

## 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 Illinois elect 2 people, like every other state, to represent them in the Senate and 19 people, based on Illinois' current population, to represent them in the House of Representatives.

## STATE SEAL

The Great Seal of the State of Illinois features an eagle carrying a shield in its talons. Thirteen stars and thirteen stripes on the shield represent the original thirteen states of the Union. This basic design has survived through several modifications since it was first conceived in 1818, the year that Illinois gained statehood. The date of the state's first constitution, Aug. 26, 1818, appears along the bottom arc of the circle, and 1868, the year of statehood, displays on the seal below 1868.



But what about that banner in the eagle's beak? And why is one of the words on the banner upside down? Here's where we get a hint of some intrigue and controversy...

When the banner first appeared on the seal, it read "State Sovereignty, National Union". But then, in 1867, the Secretary of State Sharon Tyndale decided that some changes should be made to the seal. Under Illinois law, the Secretary of State is the guardian of the seal, but changes need to be authorized by the General Assembly. So the Secretary of State approached Senator Allen Fuller with the idea of changing the seal, and the Senator brought the proposal to the General

Assembly. Now this was all happening at the time when the Civil War and issues of state's rights were still fresh in the nation's mind, and one of the changes that Tyndale had proposed was a change to the wording on that banner in the eagle's beak. The Secretary's proposal was to have the words on the banner read "National Union, State Sovereignty", instead of "State Sovereignty, National Union". The General Assembly disagreed, and decided that the wording should remain unchanged. So, the Secretary went along with the General Assembly's decision and made the minor changes that were agreed upon... almost. Perhaps it was a twinkle in the Secretary of State's eye (or maybe a bit of spite?), but the Secretary made one small change to that banner that still exists today -- the word "Sovereignty", which previously was as readable as any of the words on the banner, ended up being turned upside down on the 1868 seal.

## **STATE CAPITAL (Springfield, Illinois)**



The current Illinois State Capitol building was completed in 1889 and has an architectural style based in the French Renaissance. It is shaped like a Latin cross aligned to the major points of the compass.

It is the tallest non-skyscraper capitol, even taller than the United States Capitol in Washington, DC.

Source: [tripadvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com)

The first capitol building was in Kaskaskia, Illinois. It was a two-story brick building.

The second capitol building was in Vandalia, along the Kaskaskia River. It was the site of three capitol buildings. Vandalia's first capitol was a simple two-story structure, which was destroyed by fire. In 1824, Vandalia's second capitol was built to replace the burnt building for \$15,000. Soon after the third capitol building was built, many Illinoisans began lobbying to move the capital to a more central location in the state. In 1833, the General Assembly responded by passing an act allowing Illinoisans to choose their capital city. This worried the people of Vandalia, who did not want to lose the capital. Therefore, in 1836, without authorization from the General Assembly, the city tore down the third capitol building and replaced it with the fourth, a brick state house costing \$16,000. Despite this, after strong pressure from Abraham Lincoln, the capital was moved to Springfield, Illinois by an 1837 legislative vote.

Illinois' fifth capitol building was built in Springfield in 1853 at a cost of \$260,000. As Illinois prospered and its population increased, it became apparent that a much larger Capitol was needed. The crowding which occurred during the Civil War expansion of government demonstrated the old Capitol's inadequacies. An enabling act authorizing a new Capitol building was passed by the Twenty-fifth General Assembly on February 24, 1867. This act resulted in the construction of the sixth and final capitol. Construction was begun in 1868 and took over twenty years to complete at a cost of \$4.5 million.

## STATE MOTTO

The official state motto of Illinois is "State Sovereignty, National Union."

## STATE SLOGAN

*"Land of Lincoln"*

Illinois designated "*Land of Lincoln*" as the official Illinois state slogan in 1955. Regarded as a great symbol of democracy, Abraham Lincoln was the sixteenth president of the United States and is honored for his noble vision, statesmanship, humanity, and political skill.

Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky in 1809. At the age of 21 years of age, 1830, he was living in Indiana and moved to Illinois from Indiana and lived there until he became President in 1861. Lincoln represented Illinois in the U.S. House of Representatives for one term (1847-1849) and was a member of the Illinois Legislature for four terms (1834 to 1841).

Lincoln's home in Springfield, Illinois is a National Historic Site administered by the National Park Service. The Lincoln Tomb in Springfield is a state historic site.

## STATE FLAG

The Illinois State Flag was adopted July 1, 1970.



Flag History: Mrs. Ella Park Lawrence, of Galesburg, was elected Illinois State Regent of the Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) in 1911. As State Regent, she was required to attend the National Congress at the D.A.R. headquarters in Washington, D.C. each year. While attending a meeting in Memorial Continental Hall, she noticed that among the State flags hanging in the hall, there was none representing Illinois. Mrs. Lawrence was determined to remedy this situation.

She found that Illinois had no official State flag and, in 1912, she began a vigorous campaign to adopt a design for an official State banner for the State of Illinois. Mrs. Lawrence visited D.A.R. chapters across the State and lobbied State officials and members of the Illinois General Assembly in her efforts to promote interest in an official State flag. She sent a letter to every D.A.R. chapter in Illinois, offering a \$25.00 prize to the organization that submitted the best design for an official State flag.

Four judges, led by Secretary of State Lewis G. Stevenson, evaluated thirty-five designs in 1913 and 1914. They eventually selected the entry submitted by Miss Lucy Derwent of the Rockford



Chapter. Miss Derwent's design featured the pictorial content of the 1868 Great Seal of the State of Illinois on a white field.

State Senator Raymond D. Meeker introduced the flag bill in the Illinois Senate. The design was approved by both houses of the General Assembly and became official on July 16, 1915 when Governor Edward Fitzsimmons Dunne allowed the bill to become law without his signature. The law stipulated that the design be reproduced in black or in color on the white background.

Mrs. Lawrence requested five hand-made flags. Three by five feet in size, they were made of silk taffeta and bound with a yellow fringe. The design was painted on each flag using oil-based paints. One flag was given to the National Headquarters of the D.A.R. and another given to the State organization. The remaining three were distributed to Secretary of State Stevenson, Governor Dunne, and the Illinois State Historical Society. One of these original flags currently hangs in the Henry Knox Room at the Knox County Courthouse.

#### Original Illinois State Flag



While serving in Vietnam, Chief Petty Officer Bruce McDaniel of Waverly became concerned over a perceived deficiency of design of his Illinois State Flag. One of many State flags that hung in his mess hall, its identity was consistently questioned. McDaniel requested that the design of the flag be amended to include the State's name.

Governor Olgilvie appointed a committee consisting of the State Historian, the Director of the Illinois Information Service, and the State Records Archivist to develop specifications for the new flag to ensure uniformity in production and color by flag makers Mrs. Sanford Hutchison of Greenfield was brought in to Assist. Mrs. Hutchison had previously done extensive research on the design for the State seal and she submitted a design for this new flag that was accepted by the committee, the Secretary of State and the Governor on July 1, 1970.

The flag includes the emblem of the Illinois State Shield on a white field. The name of the State represented by the flag, Illinois, is printed below the emblem in blue upper case letters.

The Bald Eagle, representing the United States, holds a red streamer in its beak. The State motto, "State sovereignty, national union," means that Illinois governs itself under the government of the United States. In the Bald Eagle's talons is a shield with thirteen bars and thirteen stars representing the original thirteen colonies. The date Illinois was admitted to the Union and the date of the State seal are printed on the boulder. The ground around the boulder symbolizes the rich soil of this prairie State.

## STATE NICKNAMES

### *The Prairie State*

This familiar nickname for Illinois dates back at least as far as 1842. Most of the state was once covered with prairie grasses. Today, Illinois continues to pay homage to the prairie. According to the *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, Illinois has designated the third full week of September as Illinois

Prairie Week "...to be observed throughout the State as a week for holding appropriate events and observances in the public schools and elsewhere to demonstrate the value of preserving and reestablishing native Illinois prairies."

### *Land of Lincoln*

This name refers to Illinois as the state where Abraham Lincoln began his political career. This name is the Official State Slogan of Illinois, designated in 1955. In the same year, the U.S. Congress granted Illinois a special copyright for exclusive use of the "Land of Lincoln" insignia. Though Lincoln was born in Kentucky and lived in Indiana before moving to Illinois, it was in Illinois where young Abraham Lincoln began his political career with an unsuccessful run for the Illinois General Assembly in 1832. Lincoln eventually was elected to four terms in the Illinois General Assembly and served from 1834-1841. Illinois was also where Lincoln lived when he became President of the United States in 1861.

### *The Corn State*

This nickname is an appropriate nickname for a state where corn plays such an important role in the agricultural economy. Illinois is one of the leading producers of corn in the country. The region of the country referred to as the Corn Belt is centered in Iowa and Illinois.

### *The Garden of the West*

This old nickname came about because of the rolling prairies of Illinois and the miles of cultivated fields that made Illinois one of the leading producers of corn and later, soy beans, in the United States. A similar term, "The Garden State" was sometimes heard.

### *The Sucker State*

There are a few of theories about the origin of this interesting nickname. One has it that the name was the result of a comparison between the large number of miners going to and coming from the Galena Lead Mines in 1822 and the fish. According to Malcolm Townsend, in his *U.S.: An Index to the United States of America* (1890), "An old miner said to them 'Ye put me in [the] mind of suckers, they do go up the river in the spring spawn, and all return down ag'in in the fall.'"

Malcolm Townsend talks about another possible origin of the nickname. Evidently, the prairies were filled, in many places by crawfish holes. Travelers were able to suck cool pure water from these holes using long, hollow reeds. According to Malcolm Townsend, whenever a traveler would happen upon one of these holes, he would cry out "A sucker, a sucker!"

Yet another theory, offered by former Governor Thomas Ford in *A History of Illinois* (1854), has it that this nickname referred to the poor folk of southern Illinois that moved into the state to escape the suppression of wealthy landowners in the southern states. According to Ford, sucker was a reference to the sprouts off the main stem and roots of tobacco plants. These suckers will sap nutrients from the main plant and are stripped off by farmers and thrown away. In the same way, according to Ford, "These poor emigrants from the slave States were jeeringly and derisively called "suckers," because there were asserted to be a burthen upon the people of wealth; and when they removed to Illinois they were supposed to have stripped themselves off

from the parent stem and gone away to perish like the "sucker" of the tobacco plant. This name was given to the Illinoisans at the Galena mines by the Missourians."

### *Egypt*

This nickname referred to the southern end of Illinois. It is thought that the nickname for this fertile soil around Cairo, Illinois was a reference to the fertile soil of Cairo, Egypt after the Nile has flooded. The nickname may have also been related to the city name as well.

## **STATE BIRD**

The cardinal was adopted as the state bird of Illinois on June 4, 1929 by an act of the Fifty-sixth General Assembly of the State of Illinois.



## **STATE FLOWER**



"The State legislature on February 21, 1903, declared the native violet (probably the wood violet, or the Bird-foot violet, *Viola pedata*) to be the State flower of Illinois. This law went into effect on July 1, 1908."

The 1893 World Exposition, held in Chicago, is credited with sparking a nationwide interest in the adoption of flowers to represent a state. That year, the purple iris was one of the suggestions fielded to represent Illinois. It was never officially adopted however.

**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:**

