



Oklahoma State History ~ In a Nutshell ~

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Oklahoma 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.

Oklahoma State History Lapbook Journal Study Guide



The Great Seal of Oklahoma

Oklahoma is a word that was made up by the native American missionary Allen Wright. He combined two Choctaw words, "ukla" meaning person and "humá" meaning red to form the word that first appears in a 1866 Choctaw treaty. Oklahoma means "red person."

More than 50 languages are spoken in the state of Oklahoma. There are 55 distinct Indian tribes that make the state their home, and each of these tribes has its own language or dialect. The colorful history of the state includes Indians, cowboys, battles, oil discoveries, dust storms, settlements initiated by offers of free land, and forced resettlements of entire tribes.

Oklahoma's Indian heritage is honored in its official state seal and flag.

People who live in Oklahoma or who come from Oklahoma are called Oklahomans or Oklahomians. Sometimes Oklahomans are referred to as Sooners.



Map of Oklahoma – Capital, Major Cities, Lakes, and Rivers

STATEHOOD

The land called Oklahoma was purchased from France, in 1803, as part of the Louisiana Purchase. From 1803 to 1819, Oklahoma was part of several territorial districts as the United States reorganized its land holdings due to boundary disputes and treaties. By 1819, Oklahoma, minus the panhandle, was part of the Arkansas Territory.

In the early 1800's, there was intense pressure to remove Indians from the settled east. In response, the U.S. Government reserved Oklahoma for Native Americans and, in 1828, required all settlers to withdrawn from the area. Between 1830 and 1842, a sad chapter of U.S. history, the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole Indians (The Five Civilized Tribes) were compelled to give up their homelands and move to Oklahoma. The Cherokee people referred to this migration as the "Trail of Tears."

Soon, settlers looking for more property and the railroads looking for revenue coveted the reserved Indian Territory. By the late 1880s, Native Americans were pressured again as Indian Territory was divided into two parts. In 1889, the western half of Indian Territory, including the panhandle, was opened for settlement. On March 2, 1890 this land, plus an additional 3,681,000 acres, was established as Oklahoma Territory by the U.S. Congress and Guthrie was designated as the Territorial Capital.

Demands for Indian land continued and the Dawes Commission was formed to bargain with the Indians for their land and to dissolve the Indian nations.

In 1905, leaders of the Five Civilized Tribes formed a constitutional convention in Muskogee, inviting settlers to participate. The convention adopted a constitution for a state, called Sequoyah, and voters approved it. The United States Congress was unwilling to accept Indian Territory as a separate state however. Congress wanted Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory combined into one state. In 1906, representatives from Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory met in Guthrie to draw up a new constitution that would combine the two territories as one new state.

On November 16, 1907, Oklahoma was admitted to the union. The state capital, Guthrie, was moved to Oklahoma City in 1910.

STATE CONSTITUTION

The Oklahoma State Constitution is the governing document for Oklahoma. A constitutional convention assembled in Guthrie, Oklahoma on November 20, 1906 and worked until July 6, 1907 developing the Constitution of the State of Oklahoma. It was approved by Oklahoma voters on September 17, 1907 and went into effect on November 16, 1907 when Oklahoma became the 46th state to be admitted to the Union

Amendments (changes) to the Oklahoma Constitution may be proposed in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. If an amendment is agreed to by a majority of the member of each house of the Legislature, the amendment is presented to the citizens of Oklahoma for their vote. If a majority of voters approve an amendment, it becomes part of the Oklahoma Constitution.

The Legislature may also propose that a constitutional convention be held to amend the Oklahoma Constitution. But a proposal for a convention must be approved by a majority of the voters before it may be held.

As designated by the Oklahoma Bill of Rights, voters may also petition (make a formal written request) the government to begin formal proceedings on a proposed amendment.

PREAMBLE: *Invoking the guidance of Almighty God, in order to secure and perpetuate the blessing of liberty; to secure just and rightful government; to promote our mutual welfare and happiness, we, the people of the State of Oklahoma, do ordain and establish this Constitution.*

STATE GOVERNMENT

The Oklahoma state government, as outlined in the Oklahoma State Constitution, is modeled after the Federal government of the United States. The state government is made up of three separate branches – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. Through a system of "checks and balances," each of these branches has some authority to act on its own, some authority to regulate the other two branches, and has some of its own authority, in turn, regulated by the other branches.

The Governor of the State of Oklahoma is the head of the executive branch, and holds the highest state office in Oklahoma. Within the Executive branch of Oklahoma government, the Governor is assisted by the Lieutenant Governor of Oklahoma, the Secretary of State of Oklahoma, the Attorney General of Oklahoma, and the State Treasurer of Oklahoma.

The governor is responsible for appointing certain state officers, veto or approval of bills passed by the Legislature, granting pardons and paroles, calling special sessions of the legislature, and commands the state militia. The Governor is also responsible for the preparation of the state budget and ensures that all laws are obeyed in the state. The Governor is elected for a four-year term, and may serve an unlimited number of terms but not more than eight years in a row.

The legislative branch is called the Legislature and is the lawmaking branch of the state government. The Legislature has the authority to pass laws that people must obey. The Legislature is also responsible for raising and distributing the money necessary to run the state government. It is bicameral and is comprised of the Oklahoma House of Representatives and the Oklahoma Senate with all members elected directly by the people.

The House of Representatives has 101 members, each serving a two-year term. The Senate has 48 members, each serving a four-year term. Members of both houses are elected from single member districts of equal population. Senators serve a staggered term, such that only half of the senate districts have elections in any election year. Both are subject to 12 year term limits. The President pro tempore of the Senate presides over the Senate and the Speaker of the House presides over the House of Representatives. Both officers are in line to succeed to the Governorship in the event of a vacancy, behind the Lieutenant Governor.

The judicial branch of the Oklahoma Government interprets the laws. The Oklahoma Court System is made up of the Supreme Court, the Court of Criminal Appeals, the Court of Civil Appeals, and 77 District Courts. Unlike most states, Oklahoma has two courts of last resort. The Supreme Court determines all issues of a civil nature, and the Oklahoma Court of Criminal

Appeals decides all criminal matters. Members of these courts, and of the Court of Civil Appeals, are appointed by the governor from a list of three names submitted by the Oklahoma Judicial Nominating Commission.

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 Oklahoma elect two people, like every other state, to represent them in the Senate and 6 people, based on Oklahoma's current population, to represent them in the House of Representatives.

STATE SEAL



The great seal of the state of Oklahoma features symbols of the history of Oklahoma. The central figures and wreath are from the great seal of the territory of Oklahoma. In the rays of the large center star are the official seals of the five civilized Indian Nations that inhabited most of the area of present eastern Oklahoma. The tribes depicted on the seal are the Creeks, the Chickasaw, the Choctaw, the Cherokee, and the Seminoles.

The top ray displays the seal of the Chickasaw Nation with an Indian warrior holding a bow and shield.

The upper left-hand ray shows the seal of the Cherokee Nation - a seven-pointed star bearing a wreath of oak leaves.

The upper right-hand ray is the emblem of the Choctaw Nation, composed of a tomahawk, a bow, and three crossed arrows.

The lower left-hand ray is the seal of the Creek Nation - a sheaf of wheat and a plow.

The lower right-hand ray shows the seal of the Seminole Nation - houses and a factory on the shore of a lake with an Indian hunter paddling a canoe.

The forty-five small stars surrounding the central star are symbols of the forty-five states which comprised the Union at the time Oklahoma became a state in 1907.

STATE CAPITAL (Oklahoma City)

The Oklahoma State Capitol is the house of government of the U.S. state of Oklahoma. It is the building that houses the Oklahoma Legislature, and the meeting place of the Oklahoma Supreme Court. It is located along Lincoln Boulevard in Oklahoma City. The present structure includes a dome that was completed during 2002. The building is a National Historic Landmark.



The state capitol campus is famous for its oil wells and remains the only state capitol grounds in the United States with active oil rigs. The capitol building is directly atop the Oklahoma City Oil Field.

Oklahoma's first capitol was originally located in the city of Guthrie. At noon on April 22, 1889 cannons sounded the start of the Oklahoma land run. In only six hours about 10,000 people had settled in what would soon become the capital city. Within only months Guthrie became a modern brick and stone town with municipal water, electricity, a mass transit system and underground parking garages for horses and carriages.

Oklahoma's newly established state government had an election to decide where the capitol should be located. As a result, on June 11, 1910, the state seal was taken from Guthrie and moved south to Oklahoma City, the present site of the state capitol. For several years the capitol offices were housed in the Huckins Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City.

The Capitol Today

The Oklahoma State Capitol is composed primarily of white limestone and Oklahoma pink granite. However, the building's dome is made of steel-reinforced concrete and reinforced plaster

casts. In the Rotunda is displayed Chickasaw artist Mike Larsen's mural *Flight of Spirit*, honoring the Five Moons, notable 20th-century Native American ballerinas from Oklahoma.

The west wing of the capitol houses the Oklahoma House of Representatives chamber and offices. The east wing houses the Oklahoma Senate chamber and offices. The Oklahoma Supreme Court and ceremonial office of the governor are located on the second floor. Elected state officials such as the state auditor and inspector, state treasurer, and state attorney general have offices on the first floor. The building also contains a museum, a cafeteria, and a barber shop.

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

STATE MOTTO

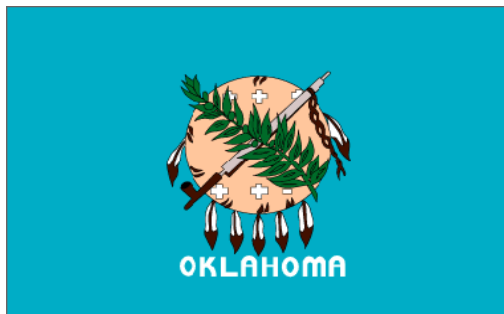
Labor Conquers All Things

The official state motto of Oklahoma is "*Labor omnia vincit*" (Latin for "Labor conquers all things").

OFFICIAL SALUTE TO THE OKLAHOMA STATE FLAG

I salute the flag of the State of Oklahoma. Its symbols of peace unite all people.

STATE FLAG



The current state flag of Oklahoma, designed by Louise Fluke, was adopted in 1925 (Oklahoma had 13 previous flags).

The blue field signifies devotion, the shield is a symbol of defensive or protective warfare, but always surmounted by the olive branch and peacepipe which betoken the love of peace by a united people.

Description of the flag from official statutes:

"A sky blue field with a circular rawhide shield of an American Indian Warrior, decorated with six painted crosses* on the face thereof, the lower half of the shield to be fringed with seven pendant eagle feathers and superimposed upon the face of the shield a calumet or peace pipe, crossed at right angles by an olive branch ... and underneath said shield or design in white letters shall be placed the word "Oklahoma", ... hereby adopted as the official flag and banner of the State of Oklahoma."

*white crosses are the Indian symbol for stars.

Oklahoma State Flag (1911-1925)

Oklahoma's first state flag was adopted in 1911, four years after Oklahoma was admitted to the union. The colors red, white, and blue were taken from the United States flag. The flag featured a large centered white star edged in blue on a red field. The number 46 was written in blue inside the star. Oklahoma was the 46th state to join the Union.



STATE NICKNAMES

The Sooner State

"Unassigned Lands" in Oklahoma were offered to settlers through a series of "Land Openings" where newcomers initially competed for the land in horse races. The Land Run of 1889 began the process of disposing of these Unassigned Lands. The Homestead Act of 1862 provided that a legal settler could claim 160 acres of public land, and those who lived on and improved the claim for five years could receive title.

People who entered the district illegally to lay claim to lands, before the designated entry time, were called "Sooners." The name came from a section in the Indian Appropriations Act of March 2, 1889, that said that nobody would be permitted to enter upon and occupy the land before the time designated in the President's opening proclamation and that those that did would be denied rights to the land. This section became known as the "sooner clause."

Early legal settlers had a very low opinion of Sooners of course. This began to change by 1908 when the University of Oklahoma named the football team the "Sooners." Like many nicknames, this one's negative connotations faded over time and the name, Sooners, is now worn with pride. Though not official, Oklahoma is popularly known as "The Sooner State."

Boomer's Paradise

The terms "Boom" and "Boomer" were first used by Dr. Morrison Munford in the *Kansas City Times* in reference to the effort to establish settlements in the "Unassigned Lands" and to the people involved in those efforts. Promoting the "Boomer's Paradise," early advocates of settlement in the Unassigned Lands began what is referred to as the "Boomer Movement." The Boomer Movement was initiated before the Unassigned Lands were legally opened for settlement. Early Boomers included James Madison Bell a Cherokee, who tried to settle in the Cherokee Outlet and Kansas and Missouri settlers, organized by Kansan Colonel Charles C. Carpenter, who entered Indian Territory and tried to settle along the North Canadian River. These Boomers were evicted by U.S. Troops.

In 1880, David Lewis Payne led a party of 21 settlers to the south bank of the North Canadian River and laid out a town called Ewing. They were removed by the U.S. Fourth Cavalry. Payne continued to flaunt the government's proclamation forbidding unlawful entry into Indian Territory and returned to Ewing with a larger group of settlers. Judge Isaac Parker levied a \$1,000 fine against the Boomer leader for his second intrusion. Mr. Payne's arrest seemed to make him more popular and he continued to guide Boomers into the forbidden territory.

When David Lewis Payne died suddenly, of a heart attack, in 1884, his lieutenant, William L. Couch, assumed leadership of the Boomer Movement and led four more excursions into the Oklahoma territory. Again and again the Boomers were arrested and expelled from the area. Illegal intrusions by Mr. Couch ended in 1885.

The Boomer Movement gained new momentum in 1886 and 1887 when the Santa Fe Railroad constructed a line that ran from Arkansas City, Kansas to Gainesville, Texas right through the Unassigned Lands. At this time political pressure was exerted to open up the Unassigned Lands to settlement. In 1889 an amendment to the Indian Appropriations Bill allowed President Benjamin Harrison to proclaim the Unassigned Lands open for settlement.

STATE BIRD

(Scissor-tailed Flycatcher)



In 1932, the Oklahoma Federation of Women's Clubs sponsored a contest to determine the citizens' preference regarding a state bird. The winner was the bobwhite quail.

Later, the popular bobwhite quail was among the contenders that the scissor-tailed flycatcher had to defeat in order to secure the position of state bird of Oklahoma.

House Joint Resolution No. 21, designating the scissor-tailed flycatcher the Oklahoma state bird, began with a group of Oklahoma school children. Before long, it won the strong support of Oklahoma's Audubon Society, garden clubs, other wildlife groups and, eventually, of Lou Allard, Chairman of the House Committee on Game and Fish. The flycatcher's appetite for grasshoppers, crickets, spiders and other ground-dwelling insects made them economically important to farmers. Its nesting range, centered in Oklahoma, and the fact that no other state has claimed the bird for its own clinched the title of Oklahoma state bird for the scissor-tailed flycatcher.

House Joint Resolution No. 21 was approved and on May 26, 1951, the scissor-tailed flycatcher became the state bird of Oklahoma.

Protected by law, the scissor-tailed flycatcher is of great economic value (its diet consists almost entirely of non-useful and harmful insect species such as grasshoppers, crickets, and beetles).

This songbird's unique scissor-like tail can be twice as long as its body. It catches most prey by aerial hawking, but will also grab insects off vegetation.

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:

