



Washington 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.

Washington State History Lapbook Journal Study Guide



The Great Seal of Washington

The state of Washington is the only state to be named after a United States president. The state consists of vast tracts of forested land. Timber production is one of the state's primary economic assets. Nicknamed "the Evergreen State", Washington values its forests and their contribution to both the economy and to the region's ecosystems.

Powerful rivers run through the state, providing natural habitat for one of America's best game fish, the steelhead trout. Washington's rivers are also home to a wide variety of salmon which include sockeye, chum, coho, pink and Chinook. The mighty Columbia River is home to one of the world's most massive masonry structures, the Grand Coulee Dam, which provides 30% of the nation's hydroelectric power.

From the unique temperate rainforests of the west to the apple-producing orchards of the east, Washington is a state of fantastic natural beauty.

People who live in Washington or who come from Washington are called Washingtonians.



Map of Washington – Capital, Major Cities, Lakes, Rivers, and National Parks

STATEHOOD

On November 11, 1889, Washington became the 42nd state to be admitted to the Union.

STATE CONSTITUTION

In December of 1888, Congress introduced an act to "enable" Washington, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana to become states. Among other requirements, Congress asked each prospective state to draft and ratify a state constitution.

An election was held to choose 75 delegates to frame a constitution for the State of Washington. The elected delegates assembled on July 4, 1889 in the Territorial Capitol Building in Olympia and labored through the hot summer to draft a constitution which would form the basis for all future Washington laws. On August 23, 1889, the convention concluded its work.

Miles C. Moore, the last governor of Washington Territory, called for an election to be held on October 1, 1889 to ratify the state constitution and elect the officers of the new state government. A vote of 40,152 to 11,879 approved the Washington State Constitution.

A certified copy of the Constitution of the State of Washington was sent by courier to President Harrison whose approval was necessary before Washington was proclaimed a state. Days went by with no word; finally on November 4, 1889 a message was received, stating that Governor Moore forgot to sign the Constitution and President Harrison could not approve it. Overnight a new copy was prepared (in long-hand since there were no copying machines in 1889), and it was sent to the President by courier the next day.

On November 11, 1889, the President issued a proclamation declaring Washington's Constitution approved. The State of Washington was admitted to the Union.

PREAMBLE: *We, the people of the State of Washington, grateful to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for our liberties, do ordain this constitution.*

STATE GOVERNMENT

The Washington State Constitution describes the branches of Washington State Government, and like all states, it has three branches modeled after the federal government: executive, legislative, and judicial.

The Governor is the head of the Executive branch of Washington state government. The executive branch includes the Governor and other elected state officials. These individuals implement the laws passed by the Legislature. The Governor has the power to appoint members of the judicial branch. Further, bills passed by the Legislature are sent to the Governor to be signed or vetoed. The Governor is elected for a four year term and there are no term limits.

The Legislative branch of Washington State Government is the Legislature and is a bicameral body made up of two houses (or chambers), the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Washington has 49 legislative districts, each of which elects a senator and two representatives. Senators are elected for a four year term with no term limits. Representatives are elected for a two year term with no term limits.

The Senate and House of Representatives meet in session annually in the capitol building in Olympia to create new laws, change existing laws, and enact budgets for the state. In odd-numbered years -- the budget year -- the Legislature meets for 105 days, and in even-numbered years for 60 days. If necessary, the Governor can call legislators in for a special session for a 30-day period. Legislators can call themselves into special session with a two-thirds vote of the two bodies.

The Speaker of the House presides over the House of Representatives. The Speaker is elected by the majority party caucus followed by confirmation of the full House through the passage of a House Resolution. As well as presiding over the body, the Speaker is also the chief leadership position, and controls the flow of legislation. Other House leaders, such as the majority and minority leaders, are elected by their respective party caucuses relative to their party's strength in the House.

The Lieutenant Governor of Washington serves as the President of the Senate, but only casts a vote if required to break a tie. In his or her absence, the President Pro Tempore presides over the Senate. The President Pro Tempore is elected by the majority party caucus followed by confirmation of the entire Senate through a Senate Resolution. The President Pro Tempore is the chief leadership position in the Senate. The majority and minority leaders are elected by their respective party caucuses.

The Judicial branch of Washington state government is made up of the state courts: Trial court (Municipal, District and Superior), Court of Appeals, and Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the state of Washington. State courts make rulings on the constitutionality and legality surrounding the implementation of a law, as passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

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

STATE SEAL

The state of Washington has an official Great Seal that is simple in design, but entirely appropriate. The seal is basically just a circle with an outer ring reading "The Seal of the State of Washington 1889", and a center that contains a portrait of George Washington.



The present seal uses a Gilbert Stuart painting for Washington's portrait. The state might not have such a simple design if it had not been for jeweler Charles Talcott, who was asked to engrave a much more elaborate design for the seal back in 1889. Talcott persuaded against a proposed scenic design of the port of Tacoma, Mt. Rainier, fields, and livestock. Instead, he sketched out a design using a postage stamp portrait of George Washington. The story is that the postage stamp image proved to be too poorly detailed to engrave, so Talcott instead used George's image from a crate of cough medicine.

Several other images of George have appeared on Washington's Great Seal over the years, but the Gilbert Stuart portrait is the official image on the state's seal today.

STATE CAPITAL (Olympia, Washington)



Olympia is the state capital of Washington state. Washington's State's Legislative Building (capitol) was completed in 1928 after six years of construction. It serves as both a working governmental center and a symbol of Washington's free and democratic government.

It is the centerpiece of the five historic buildings designed by New York architects Walter Wilder and Harry White. Conceived

in the architectural competition of 1911 and selected by the State Capitol Commission, Wilder and White's designs for the Legislative Building were completed and set into motion in 1922.

Since it opened, the Legislative Building has withstood three major earthquakes, the most recent being the February 28, 2001 "Nisqually" earthquake, thanks in large part to the excellent structural design by Wilder and White, and the superior craftsmanship of the original builders. The building underwent significant seismic upgrades following the earthquakes of 1949 and 1965.

A three-year rehabilitation and earthquake-repair project was completed in 2004. The \$120 million project added modern heating and cooling, plumbing, fire protection and state-of-the-art wireless technology systems, while maintaining historic features. It also improved accessibility, added new public space, made further seismic and security upgrades, and repaired damage caused by the 2001 earthquake.

As part of the environmentally-friendly building practices used throughout the project, more than 80 percent of the construction waste - 8,000 tons of wood, concrete, paper, bricks, dirt, metal and drywall - was recycled. The project also placed 144 solar panels atop the fifth-floor roof of the building - the largest array of solar panels on a capitol in the United States.

The Legislative Building is comprised of more than 173 million pounds of stone, brick, concrete and steel. It is the fourth tallest masonry dome in the world, rising 287 feet high.

Source: <http://www.ga.wa.gov/visitor/facts.htm>

STATE MOTTO (unofficial)

"Bye and Bye"

Washington's *territorial* motto is *Alki* , or *Bye and Bye* (an official motto has not been recognized by Washington state legislature).

Alki (or Al-ki) is an Indian word which means "bye and bye." The motto was originally used on the territorial seal which on one side displays an immigrant wagon and a log cabin with a fir forest background; the other side pictures an anchor and the Goddess of Hope in the center (the goddess points at the word "Alki"), a sheet of water in the background with a sailing vessel, a steamer, and a city in perspective.

Early settlers from the schooner *Exact* named their settlement on Alki Point "New York." However, as the settlement was slower to grow than the east coast NY, the name was changed to "New York-Alki" (the 1850s term for "bye and bye" or "I will see you, bye and bye").

STATE FLAG

Admitted to the Union on November 11, 1889, Washington was a little slow about officially adopting a state flag specification. But, once the territory became a part of the United States, there seems to have been little doubt that a state flag would honor George Washington in some way.

At the beginning of the 20th century, many towns and cities throughout the state informally adopted a military flag that displayed a gold profile of our first President on blue bunting. Other flags in use simply centered the state seal on a field of purple or green similar to the current design.



When an official Washington State Flag was finally adopted on May 5, 1923, over thirty years after Washington became a state, the legislature described the flag as

"...of dark green silk or bunting and shall bear in its center a reproduction of the seal of the state of Washington..."

Originally, the law allowed that the flag to might be edged with either gold or green fringe. This was changed in 1925 to specify a gold or yellow color of "the same shade as the seal."

The specifications for the flag were amended in 2005 to reflect "textile industry standards." Today's specification calls for Cable Color (Textile) Spanish Yellow 80068 or Pantone PMS DS-5-4 for both the state seal gold and the gold fringe, if any.

The Washington State Flag is the only state flag with a green field and it's the only state flag that displays an image of an actual person. It's a fitting representation of the Evergreen State, the only state to be named to honor a United States president.

STATE NICKNAMES

The Evergreen State (Official)

Washington is popularly known as "The Evergreen State." This nickname, coined by Seattle realtor C.T. Conner and adopted by the state legislature in 1893, was given because of the large fir and pine trees in the state. Washington is always green, a color echoed in the State Flag.

The Green Tree State

This is another nickname referencing the conifer forests of Washington.

The Chinook State

One doesn't hear this nickname too often, but it can be traced back to 1890. This nickname refers to the Chinook Indians of the state.

STATE BIRD

The willow goldfinch (American goldfinch) was adopted as the official state bird of the State of Washington in 1951.

The Washington Legislature struggled to adopt an official state bird for the state for at least twenty-three years beginning in 1928.

In 1928, the first of three campaigns was produced to decide on an appropriate bird to represent Washington. State legislators approached Washington school children with the question. Overwhelmingly, the children decided that the western meadowlark was the best choice. The

meadowlark is a wonderful bird, but legislators were concerned that this bird was popular in too many other states. Two other states had just adopted the western meadowlark (1927) as their own. Next door, the Governor of Oregon had proclaimed the western meadowlark that state's official bird and in Wyoming, the Legislature had adopted the western meadowlark as its official state bird. The western meadowlark was popular, though unofficial, in several other states as well.



The Washington Legislature did not take any action on the 1928 vote. In 1931, the Washington Federation of Women's Clubs sponsored another state-wide referendum. In this contest, the willow goldfinch (American goldfinch) made a strong showing over the western tanager, the song sparrow, the junco and the pileated woodpecker.

By 1951, after two state-wide contests, the Washington Legislature still had not approved a bird to officially represent the state. They called for run-off between the western meadowlark and the willow goldfinch. The willow goldfinch (American goldfinch) was adopted as the official state bird of the State of Washington in 1951.

Also called American goldfinch or wild canary, the male goldfinch has a bright yellow body with black wings and tail, and black on top of his head. The female's plumage is more muted with an olive-yellow body and dark brown tail and wings (the male goldfinch also displays this same dull plumage in the winter months).

Active and acrobatic little birds, goldfinches fly with a bouncy, undulating pattern. The diet of the goldfinch consists mainly of seeds. The American goldfinch is also the state bird of Iowa and New Jersey.

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:

