



# Wisconsin State History ~ In a Nutshell ~

Written & designed by  
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Wisconsin 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.

# Wisconsin State History Lapbook Journal Study Guide



The Great Seal of Wisconsin

In the north woods of Wisconsin, clear, clean lakes abound. Fishing is fine, and wildlife is plentiful. Outdoor recreation and adventure is a main draw for out-of-state visitors. 15,000 lakes are enjoyed by swimmers, fishermen and fisherwomen and boaters. The deep, cool woods provide wonderful hiking and horseback riding trails.

Below the wooded north country lies America's dairy land, where cows are king (make that queen). Wisconsin's dairy farms lead the United States in the production of milk, cheese, and butter, providing 40% of the nation's cheese and 20% of its butter. Picturesque farms, sun-dappled fields, contented cows...

Wisconsin is also a leader in the manufacture of machinery and produces more paper than any other state.

This state was named after the Wisconsin River. Wisconsin means "grassy place" in the Chippewa language.

People who live in Wisconsin or who come from Wisconsin are called Wisconsinites.



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

## STATEHOOD

On May 29, 1848, Wisconsin became the 30<sup>th</sup> state to be admitted into the Union.

## STATE CONSTITUTION

The Wisconsin State Constitution is the governing document for the state of Wisconsin. It establishes the structure and function of state government, describes the state boundaries, and declares the rights of state citizens. When voters rejected the first draft (1846) of the Wisconsin constitution, a second constitutional convention was held in Madison, Wisconsin in December 1847. This produced a less controversial document that was approved on Feb. 1, 1848, adopted by voters on March 13, 1848, and is still, with amendments, the basic law of the land in Wisconsin.

**PREAMBLE:** *We, the people of Wisconsin, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, in order to secure its blessings, form a more perfect government, insure domestic tranquility and promote the general welfare, do establish this constitution.*

## STATE GOVERNMENT

Wisconsin's Constitution outlines the structure and function of state government. Wisconsin's government is organized into three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial.

### *Executive*

The executive branch is headed by the governor. In addition to the governor, the executive branch includes five other elected constitutional officers: Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Treasurer, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

### *Legislative*

The Wisconsin State Legislature is Wisconsin's legislative branch. The Legislature is a bicameral body consisting of the Assembly and the Senate. Wisconsin's legislature has a senate with 33 members and an assembly with 99 members.

### *Judicial*

Wisconsin's court system has four levels: municipal courts, circuit courts, the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court. Municipal courts typically handle cases involving local ordinance matters. The circuit courts are Wisconsin's trial courts, they have original jurisdiction in all civil and criminal cases within the state. Challenges to circuit court rulings are heard by the Wisconsin Court of Appeals, consisting of sixteen judges who typically sit in three-judge panels. As the state's highest appellate court, the Wisconsin Supreme Court may hear both appeals from lower courts and original actions. In addition to deciding cases, the Supreme Court is responsible for administering the state's court system and regulating the practice of law in Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup>

*Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisconsin#Government>*

## State-Tribal Consultation Initiative

In 2004, Executive Order #39 was issued, recognizing the government-to-government relationship between the state and tribal governments and requiring strengthening of the working relationship between the two governments.

As a result, the State-Tribal Consultation Initiative was created. Nearly all of the agencies in the Governor's Cabinet have drafted policies which establish a framework for interaction with tribes. These policies were drafted with input from representatives of all of Wisconsin's tribal governments at meetings hosted by the state's 11 tribes. The policies state that whenever the agencies consider programs or initiatives that would affect tribes; they share this information with them. Conversely, whenever tribes have an issue with the state, the Initiative establishes processes through which these can be shared with state government.

The goal of this Initiative is to greatly improved communications allowing for any potential issues to be corrected early on or avoided entirely on both sides. Through the Initiative, valuable state and tribal resources are put to more effective use delivering government services in a more streamlined, coordinated and economically efficient manner.

*Source: <http://witribes.wi.gov/>*

## TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

Tribal Government operates separately from Wisconsin Government. For more information, visit: <http://www.doi.gov/governments/tribalgovernments.cfm>

## Federally Recognized Tribes in Wisconsin

- Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians
- Forest County Potawatomi Community
- Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin
- Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin
- Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of the Lac du Flambeau Reservation of Wisconsin
- Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin
- Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin
- Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin
- St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin
- Sokaogon Chippewa Community
- Stockbridge Munsee Community

Source: <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/tribal/list-of-federal-and-state-recognized-tribes.aspx#wi>

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

## STATE SEAL

The great seal of Wisconsin, created in 1851, features the state coat of arms.

The banner above the shield has Wisconsin's state motto: "Forward."

Directly below this is a badger (the state animal).

Supporting the shield are a sailor and a miner (the two most important industries of the state at the time it was founded).

On the shield itself are displayed:

- A plough to represent the farmers and agriculture of Wisconsin.
- A pick and shovel as a symbol of the early lead mining industry - galena ore (lead sulfide) is the state mineral of Wisconsin. The mining of lead ore was the principal



occupation of the settlers of early Wisconsin, concentrated in the southwest corner of the state (in what are now the counties of Iowa, LaFayette and Grant - in the 1820's and 1830's, the population of these 3 counties was greater than that of Milwaukee or the east coast of Wisconsin).

- An arm and hammer to represent Wisconsin's artisans and laborers.
- An anchor as a symbol for the sailing and shipping industry. The western edge of Wisconsin is the Mississippi river (the chief shipping lane of mid-America during the early 1800's) and the upper part of Wisconsin is bounded by Lake Superior (source of the shipping trade for eastern Wisconsin).

The center of the shield is the United States shield with the motto *E Pluribus Unum*. Below the shield are a cornucopia (a symbol for the plenty of the state), bars of lead to represent Wisconsin's mineral wealth, and 13 stars which symbolize the thirteen original states. The coat of arms also appears on both sides of the Wisconsin state flag.

## STATE CAPITAL (Madison)

Madison is the capital city of Wisconsin and the county seat of Dane County. It is the second largest city in Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin State Capitol is located in the heart of downtown Madison on an isthmus formed by Lake Mendota to the north and Lake Monona to the south. Accenting the beauty of the Capitol building is the 13.5 acres of Capitol grounds on which it sits.

Wisconsin State Capitol



The Wisconsin State Capitol houses both chambers of the Wisconsin legislature along with the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the Office of the Governor.

The capitol building is the fifth to serve as the Wisconsin capitol since the first territorial legislature convened in 1836 and the third building since Wisconsin was granted statehood in 1848.

The Wisconsin State Capitol is a designated National Historic Landmark.

Construction of the Wisconsin Capitol began late in 1906 and was completed in 1917. George B. Post & Sons were the architects for the project. Originally, the Capitol and its power plant cost 7.25 million to build. Today the building is insured for \$200 million, not including the artwork and furnishings. The Wisconsin State Capitol is 284.4 feet high from the ground floor to the top of the statue on the dome - just three feet and one-half inch shorter than our Nation's Capitol in Washington D.C.

The exterior of the Capitol is constructed entirely of White Bethel Vermont granite. This material compares to marble in whiteness and general appearance. It is the hardest and most durable stone used in the construction of the Capitol building.

The four wings of the Capitol face the four diagonal streets of the City of Madison. Each wing is one hundred and twenty-five feet wide, eighty-four feet high and one hundred and eighty-seven feet long. The west wing houses the State Assembly. The east wing contains the Governor's Conference Room and the Supreme Court. The State Senate is in the south wing. The North Hearing Room and the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) Memorial Hearing Room are found in the north wing of the Capitol.

The dome, completed in 1915, is the focal point of the Capitol building. It dominates the four wings and rises 162 feet above them. The Capitol dome is the largest dome by volume in the United States and one of the largest in the world. It is also the only granite dome in the United States. The dome consists of inner and outer structures. The inner dome (coffer dome) is visible from the Capitol rotunda. Three observation decks encircle the outer dome. The lowest observation deck is open for public viewing during the summer months.

On top of the great granite dome stands the gilded bronze statue "Wisconsin" which symbolizes our state motto "Forward". "Wisconsin" has graced the top of the Capitol since 1914 and is 15 feet, 5 inches tall and weighs over 3 tons. In her left hand, "Wisconsin" holds a globe with an eagle perched on it and on top of her helmet is our state animal - the badger. Daniel Chester French of New York sculpted the statue for a cost of \$20,325.

## STATE MOTTO

“Forward”

## STATE FLAG

The Wisconsin state flag features the state coat of arms on both sides against a field of blue, with the state name of *Wisconsin* above and 1848 below. (1848 is the year Wisconsin was admitted to the Union).





## STATE NICKNAMES

### *The Badger State*

This nickname originally referred to the lead miners, of the 1830s, who worked at the Galena lead mines in Illinois. These mines were in northwestern Illinois close to the borders of Wisconsin and Iowa. The Wisconsin miners lived, not in houses, but in temporary caves cut into the hillsides. These caves were described as badger dens and, the miners who lived in them, as badgers. This derisive nickname was brought back to Wisconsin by these miners. Eventually, the nickname was applied to all of the people of Wisconsin and, finally, to the state itself. The badger was adopted as Wisconsin's state animal in 1957.

### *The Dairy State*

A more fitting nickname for Wisconsin, "The Dairy State" is in direct reference to the large production of dairy products, particularly cheese and butter, in the state.

### *America's Dairyland*

America's Dairyland, another reflection of Wisconsin's dairy production and a phrase that appears on Wisconsin state license plates.



### *The Cheese State*

Wisconsin has also been referred to as "The Cheese State" because of its large cheese production.

### *The Copper State*

This nickname is in reference to the Copper mines in the northern part of the state.

## STATE BIRD



Wisconsin designated the American robin (*Turdus migratorius*) as the official state bird in 1949 (voted on by the school children of Wisconsin in 1926-27). Robins are one of America's favorite songbirds and are watched for each year as the herald of spring.

Robins were named by early settlers after the familiar robin red-breast of Europe (a bird with similar markings that is not closely related to the American Robin). The most widespread thrush in North America (because of its adaptation to human-modified habitats), robins are a familiar backyard bird often observed pulling up earthworms on suburban lawns.

**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:**

