

ALABAMA

HISTORY

Alabama has been home to Native nations, French colonists, cotton planters, steel workers and rocket scientists. Each left a mark on the state.

The First Peoples

People have lived in Alabama for more than 10,000 years. Starting about 1,000 years ago, Native farmers built a large town at Moundville on the Black Warrior River. They raised flat-topped **mounds** of earth for their leaders' houses. By the 1700s, four nations held most of the land: the Creek, the Cherokee, the Choctaw and the Chickasaw.

Spain, France and Mobile

In 1540, the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto marched across Alabama. At the town of Mabila, warriors led by Chief Tuskaloosa attacked his army. The Spanish won the battle but lost most of their supplies in a fire. In 1702, the French built a fort and town called Mobile. It is Alabama's oldest city. Native hunters traded deerskins there for cloth, tools and guns.

The Creek War

Most of Alabama became part of the United States after the American Revolution. Settlers moved in. One group of Creek, called the Red Sticks, chose to fight them. In 1813, Red Stick warriors attacked Fort Mims and killed at least 250 of the people inside. In 1814, Andrew Jackson's army and its Cherokee and Creek allies defeated the Red Sticks at Horseshoe Bend. In the **treaty** that followed, the Creek gave up about 23 million acres.

Statehood and Cotton

Congress made Alabama a **territory** in 1817. Thousands of settlers rushed in to plant cotton.

Alabama became the 22nd state on December 14, 1819. In treaties signed in the 1830s, the Native nations gave up the rest of their Alabama land, and most of their people were moved west to what is now Oklahoma. Some Creek families stayed, and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians has its government near Atmore today. Much of the cotton grew on large farms called **plantations**, where enslaved Black people did most of the work. Steamboats carried the cotton down the rivers to Mobile.

The Civil War

In 1861, Alabama and ten other Southern states left the United States and formed the Confederacy. Montgomery was its first capital. In 1864, Union ships won the Battle of Mobile Bay. The Confederacy lost the war in 1865, and slavery ended.



Building Alabama

After the war, railroads crossed the state and towns grew along them. Birmingham's furnaces made iron and steel. In 1881, Booker T. Washington opened a school at Tuskegee. A teacher there, George Washington Carver, showed farmers how to grow peanuts and sweet potatoes. In the 1920s and 1930s, dams on the Tennessee River held back floods and brought electric power to farms. In World War II, Mobile's shipyards built ships and the Tuskegee Airmen trained as pilots.

ALABAMA THROUGH TIME

1540	1702	1814	1819	1846	1865	1881	1924	1958
De Soto crosses Alabama	The French found Mobile	Battle of Horseshoe Bend	Alabama becomes the 22nd state	Montgomery becomes the capital	The Civil War and slavery end	The school at Tuskegee opens	Wilson Dam is finished	Huntsville rocket lifts a satellite

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Tuskaloosa	Chief who fought de Soto in 1540.
Booker T. Washington	Started the school at Tuskegee in 1881.
Helen Keller	Blind and deaf. Became a writer.
Jesse Owens	Won four Olympic gold medals in 1936.
Hank Aaron	Born in Mobile. Hit 755 home runs.

WORDS TO KNOW

mound	a hill of earth built by people
treaty	a written agreement between nations
territory	U.S. land that is not yet a state
plantation	a large farm with one main crop