

KENTUCKY

HISTORY

Native hunters, pioneers from Virginia, farmers and coal miners each helped build Kentucky. It was the first state west of the Appalachian Mountains.

The First Peoples

People have lived in Kentucky for at least 12,000 years. Early hunters followed bison and deer. Later, Native farmers grew corn and built earth mounds. One mound town stood at Wickliffe, near the Mississippi River. By the 1700s, few Native towns were left in Kentucky. The Shawnee from the north and the Cherokee from the south both hunted here. The Chickasaw held the far west.

Through the Gap

Kentucky was then the western **frontier** of Virginia. In 1774, James Harrod and his men built Harrodsburg, the first lasting settlement. In 1775, a land company bought a large part of Kentucky from Cherokee leaders in a **treaty**. Some Cherokee leaders spoke against the sale. That year Daniel Boone cut the Wilderness Road and built Fort Boonesborough.

War on the Frontier

During the American Revolution, the Shawnee sided with Britain. Shawnee warriors attacked the forts, and Kentucky militia burned Shawnee towns north of the Ohio River. In 1778, the Shawnee chief Blackfish held Boonesborough under **siege** for more than a week but could not take it. In 1782, a British and Native force beat the Kentucky militia at Blue Licks. The fighting in Kentucky ended by 1795, when the nations signed a treaty in Ohio.

The Fifteenth State

Settlers poured in by the Wilderness Road and by flatboat down the Ohio River. Kentucky became the 15th state on June 1, 1792. Isaac Shelby was the first governor, and Frankfort was chosen as the capital. In 1818, the Chickasaw sold their land west of the Tennessee River to the United States. Native people live in Kentucky today.

Between North and South

Farmers grew tobacco, corn and hemp, a plant used to make rope. Enslaved people did much of the work on the larger farms. When the Civil War began in 1861, Kentucky tried to stay **neutral**. Both armies entered anyway, and Kentucky stayed in the Union. Kentuckians fought on both sides. The biggest battle here was at Perryville in 1862, and the Southern army left the state afterward. Slavery ended in Kentucky in December 1865.



Building Kentucky

Steamboats made Louisville a busy river port. A canal opened there in 1830 so boats could pass the Falls of the Ohio. Railroads followed. In the early 1900s, the tracks reached the eastern mountains, and coal towns grew up beside the mines. In 1944, Kentucky Dam was finished on the Tennessee River. It made electricity and created Kentucky Lake. Later, factories came to build cars and trucks.

KENTUCKY THROUGH TIME



PEOPLE TO KNOW

Daniel Boone	Pioneer who cut the Wilderness Road in 1775.
Henry Clay	Lexington lawyer and senator. Called the Great Compromiser.
Abraham Lincoln	Born near Hodgenville in 1809. The 16th president.
Loretta Lynn	Country singer from Butcher Hollow. A coal miner's daughter.
Muhammad Ali	Born in Louisville. World heavyweight boxing champion.

WORDS TO KNOW

frontier	the edge of settled land
treaty	a written agreement between nations
siege	surrounding a fort or town to force it to give up
neutral	not taking either side in a fight