

MISSISSIPPI

HISTORY

Native nations, French colonists, cotton planters and shipbuilders each helped build Mississippi.

The First Peoples

People have lived in Mississippi for more than 10,000 years. Long ago, Native farmers piled up earth to make flat-topped **mounds** for temples and leaders' houses. Emerald Mound, near Natchez, covers about eight acres. By the 1600s, the Choctaw lived in the middle and south, the Chickasaw in the north and the Natchez in the southwest.

Spain and France

In 1540, the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto led an army into Mississippi. He camped for the winter beside Chickasaw towns and demanded men to carry his supplies. Chickasaw warriors attacked his camp at night and burned it. De Soto reached the Mississippi River in 1541. In 1699, the French built a fort on the coast at what is now Ocean Springs. In 1716, they built Fort Rosalie, which grew into the town of Natchez.

Wars with the French

French farmers wanted more Natchez land. In 1729, Natchez warriors attacked Fort Rosalie and killed more than 200 colonists. French soldiers and their Choctaw allies then defeated the Natchez, and the survivors were captured or scattered. The Chickasaw traded with the British instead. In 1736, they beat a French army at the Battle of Ackia, near today's Tupelo.

Territory and State

After the American Revolution, the land became part of the United States. Congress made Mississippi a

territory in 1798. Settlers came to plant cotton. In the Creek War of 1813 and 1814, Choctaw warriors under Chief Pushmataha fought beside American soldiers. Mississippi became the 20th state on December 10, 1817. In **treaties** signed in 1830 and 1832, the Choctaw and Chickasaw gave up the rest of their Mississippi land, and most were moved west to what is now Oklahoma. Some Choctaw stayed, and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians has its government near Philadelphia today.

Cotton and the Civil War

Cotton became the state's main crop. Much of it grew on large farms called **plantations**, where enslaved Black people did most of the work. In 1861, Mississippi and ten other Southern states left the United States and formed the Confederacy. The Union army captured Vicksburg in 1863. The Confederacy lost the war in 1865, and slavery ended.



Building Mississippi

After the war, workers cleared the swampy Delta forest for farms. Railroads crossed the state, and sawmills in the pine woods cut millions of logs into lumber. In 1927, the Mississippi River broke through its banks and flooded much of the Delta. A shipyard opened in Pascagoula in 1938 and built ships during World War II. In the 1960s, NASA began testing moon rocket engines near the coast.

MISSISSIPPI THROUGH TIME



PEOPLE TO KNOW

Pushmataha	Choctaw chief who fought beside American soldiers.
Hiram Revels	Of Natchez. First Black U.S. senator, in 1870.
Eudora Welty	Writer from Jackson. Won the Pulitzer Prize.
B.B. King	Blues guitarist born near Itta Bena, in the Delta.
Walter Payton	Football star born in Columbia.

WORDS TO KNOW

mound	a hill of earth built by people
territory	land run by the United States that is not yet a state
treaty	a written agreement between nations
plantation	a large farm that grows one main crop to sell