

VERMONT

HISTORY

Abenaki families, French soldiers, New England farmers and mill workers each helped build Vermont.



The First Peoples

People have lived in Vermont for about 12,000 years. Most were Abenaki. They lived in villages along rivers and Lake Champlain. They grew corn, beans and squash, hunted deer and moose, and fished. In late winter they made maple sugar. The Mohican lived in the southwest corner. Abenaki people live in Vermont today.

French and English Forts

In 1609, the French explorer Samuel de Champlain paddled onto the big lake with Native **allies**. He gave it his own name. In 1666, the French built a fort on Isle La Motte. It was the first European settlement in Vermont. In 1724, Massachusetts built Fort Dummer near where Brattleboro is now. It became the first lasting English settlement.

Wars on the Frontier

England and France fought over this land for many years. Most Abenaki were allies of the French. In the 1720s, the Abenaki leader Grey Lock led raids on settlers in Massachusetts. Settlers and soldiers raided Native villages too. In 1759, British rangers burned the Abenaki town of St. Francis in Canada. Britain beat France in 1763. Some Abenaki moved north, and others stayed. Then New Hampshire and New York both gave out land grants here, and new settlers poured in.

A Republic, Then a State

In 1775, Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys captured Fort Ticonderoga from the British. In 1777, Vermont became its own **republic**. Its first **constitution** banned slavery for adults. It was one of the first places in America to do so. That summer, Americans fought the British at Hubbardton and won the Battle of Bennington. In 1791, Vermont joined the United States. Montpelier became the capital in 1805.

Building Vermont

Settlers cleared the forests for farms. The University of Vermont opened in 1791. In 1823, the Champlain Canal linked the lake to the Hudson River and New York City. By 1840, Vermont had more sheep than people. Railroads came about 25 years later. In St. Johnsbury, the Fairbanks brothers built a new kind of scale. Workers came from Ireland, Canada and Italy to cut slate, marble and granite. In 1864, Confederate raiders robbed banks in St. Albans. It was the farthest north fight of the Civil War.

Modern Vermont

Many farm families moved west for better soil. The farms that stayed turned to **dairy** cows. In 1923, Calvin Coolidge, born in Plymouth Notch, became President. In 1927, a great flood washed away many bridges, roads and mills. Vermonters rebuilt them. Ski hills opened in the 1930s. New highways brought visitors from the cities.

VERMONT THROUGH TIME

1609	1666	1724	1777	1791	1805	1823	1864	1923
Champlain reaches the lake	French fort on Isle La Motte	Fort Dummer is built	Vermont declares independence	Becomes the 14th state	Montpelier is the capital	Champlain Canal opens	St. Albans Raid	Coolidge becomes President

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Grey Lock	Abenaki leader in the 1720s.
Ethan Allen	Led the Green Mountain Boys.
Alexander Twilight	Teacher. First known Black U.S. college graduate.
John Deere	Grew up in Vermont. Built a steel plow.
Calvin Coolidge	Born in Plymouth Notch. 30th President.

WORDS TO KNOW

ally	a friend who takes your side in a war
republic	a country where people choose their leaders
constitution	the written plan for a government
dairy	milk and foods made from milk