

ARKANSAS HISTORY COMMISSION

1 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
www.ark-ives.com

Arkansas History Questions and Answers

How did Arkansas get its name?

From the Quapaw Indians, who were called Akanseá by certain other tribes. The name means "South Wind."

Why is the name Arkansas pronounced and spelled as it is?

The spelling comes from early French usage and the precedent set by the Arkansas Gazette. The pronunciation was determined by the General Assembly of 1881 after scholarly investigation.

Which Indian tribes were in Arkansas when European exploration and settlement began?

The Quapaws, who lived on the lower Arkansas River near the Mississippi; the Osages, who roamed the Ozark region; and the Caddo, who lived along the streams of the southwest. After 1790 Cherokees, Choctaws, and a few Shawnee and Delaware came into Arkansas.

Who was Sequoyah?

A Cherokee who invented an alphabet for his people. He lived in Arkansas for a few years before 1828.

What was the Trail of Tears?

The route taken by the eastern Cherokees on their forced removal to Oklahoma in 1838-1839. The "trail" crossed northern Arkansas.

Do Indians still live in Arkansas?

Citizens of Indian ancestry live here, but there have been no tribes or reservations since the Quapaws were removed in 1834.

Who were the first Europeans in Arkansas?

A Spanish expedition led by Hernando de Soto in 1541-1542.

When did the French come to Arkansas?

Marquette and Joliet explored the Mississippi to the mouth of the Arkansas in 1673. Then in 1682 La Salle claimed the land for the King of France.

What was the first permanent European settlement in Arkansas?

Arkansas Post, founded in 1686 by Henry de Tonty on the Arkansas River south of present day DeWitt.

What did La Harpe do?

La Harpe, a French explorer, led expeditions up the Red and Arkansas rivers in 1719-1722.

What does the name "Ozark" mean?

The word comes from the French "aux arcs" but the meaning is uncertain. It could have meant "of the Arkansas" or "from among the Arkansas"; "with bows," referring to Indians; or the curves and bends of the rivers.

What is the origin of the name "Ouachita"?

It was the name of an Indian tribe in what is now Louisiana.

How long did Arkansas belong to France?

Until 1762, when France ceded Louisiana Territory including Arkansas to Spain. In 1800 a secret treaty returned Louisiana to France, but Spanish officials were still in charge when the Americans took over at Arkansas Post in 1804.

Did Spanish Arkansas have any part in the American Revolution?

Spain joined the Americans in their war against England. An attack by pro-English forces on Arkansas Post in 1783, known as the Colbert Incident, was repulsed by the Spanish and Quapaws.

How did Arkansas become American Territory?

By the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, when France sold most of the territory between the Mississippi and the Rockies to the United States.

What was the political status of Arkansas in 1803-1819?

Arkansas was a part of Louisiana Territory and then of Missouri Territory before it became the Territory of Arkansas in 1819.

Has Arkansas had any major earthquakes?

The New Madrid earthquake of 1811-1812 affected northeastern Arkansas.

Where and when was the first post office established in Arkansas?

At Davidsonville, near present day Pocahontas, in 1817.

When did Arkansas become a state?

Arkansas was admitted to the Union as the twenty-fifth state on June 15, 1836.

Who was the first governor of the state? Who were the first United States senators and who was the first representative?

James S. Conway was the first governor; Ambrose H. Sevier and William S. Fulton, the first senators; and Archibald Yell the first representative in Congress.

Has Little Rock always been the capital of Arkansas?

Arkansas Post was the capital of Arkansas Territory from 1819 until 1821, when the capital was moved to the new town of Little Rock. The latter place has been the capital ever since, except in 1863-1865 when the Confederate state government was at Washington in Hempstead County.

How did Little Rock get its name?

From a stone outcropping on the bank of the Arkansas River which was a landmark to early travelers. A cliff called "Big Rock" was located upstream.

What was the first Arkansas newspaper?

The Arkansas Gazette, founded by William E. Woodruff at Arkansas Post in 1819 and moved to Little Rock two years later.

What were two of the earliest roads in Arkansas?

The Southwest Trail, which led across Arkansas from the northeast to Fulton on Red River; and the Memphis military road to Little Rock, built in 1826-1828.

Who or what was the "Arkansas Traveler"?

A humorous dialogue and fiddle tune attributed to Sanford C. "Sandy" Faulkner (1806-1874). Edward Payson Washburn, early Arkansas artist, did a painting illustrating the story.

Who was Albert Pike?

Pike (1809-1891) was an attorney, poet, journalist, schoolmaster, explorer, soldier, and Masonic leader who became the most famous Arkansas personality of his time.

Where was the first Arkansas railroad?

In 1858 the Memphis and Little Rock railroad company began operating trains on 38 miles of track between Hopefield on the Mississippi and Madison on the St. Francis River.

On which side did Arkansas fight in the Civil War?

Arkansas seceded from the Union in 1861 and joined the Southern Confederacy. About 60,000 Arkansas men fought for the South and 15,000 for the Union.

What were the most important Civil War battles in Arkansas?

In order of occurrence, they were Pea Ridge, Prairie Grove, Arkansas Post, Helena, Poison Spring, Marks' Mills, and Jenkins' Ferry.

Who was David Owen Dodd?

An Arkansas youth of seventeen, sometimes called the "Boy Martyr of the Confederacy," who was hanged as a spy by Union military authorities in Little Rock in 1864.

Which Civil War generals came from Arkansas?

The best known were Confederate generals Patrick R. Cleburne, Thomas C. Hindman, Thomas J. Churchill, and James F. Fagan.

Who was "Hanging Judge Parker"?

Judge Isaac C. Parker presided over the U.S. district court at Fort Smith from 1875-1896. His court hanged 88 criminals and brought in almost 9,500 convictions.

Who discovered bauxite in Arkansas?

John C. Branner, state geologist, in 1887.

How did large-scale rice growing get started in the state?

In 1904 William H. Fuller, who learned rice cultivation in Louisiana, raised his first successful crop near Hazen.

Who found the first Arkansas diamonds?

John M. Huddleston, a Pike County farmer, found the first diamonds near Murfreesboro in 1906.

Why are University of Arkansas athletic teams called "Razorbacks"?

Coach Hugo Bezdek is credited with naming the football team in 1909 when he referred to his men as "a wild band of razorback hogs."

Where was the largest military camp in Arkansas in both world wars?

Near North Little Rock. It was called Camp Pike during the First World War and Camp Joseph T. Robinson in the Second.

When did the oil industry begin in Arkansas?

In 1921 when a well near El Dorado produced a "gusher."

What was the first large artificial dam in the state?

Rommel Dam on the Ouachita River, completed in 1924.

When did radio and television come to Arkansas?

The first radio station, WOK in Pine Bluff, began broadcasting in 1921. Television station KRTV in Little Rock went on the air in 1953.

How many state constitutions has Arkansas had?

Five, adopted successively in 1836, 1861, 1864, 1868, and 1874.

Who served longest as governor of Arkansas?

Orval E. Faubus served six terms in 1955-1967.

Which political party has been strongest in Arkansas?

The Democratic party. Of our elected governors, 38 have been Democrats and four Republicans. The Democrats have controlled the general Assembly since 1873.

How many counties does Arkansas have?

Seventy-five. The first five - Arkansas, Lawrence, Pulaski, Clark, and Hempstead - were established while Arkansas was part of Missouri. The last county created was Cleburne in 1883.

What is the official nickname of Arkansas?

"The Natural State." Earlier names were "The Land of Opportunity" and "The Wonder State."