

HISTOGRAPHY:

Survey of the 50 United States



Alabama

Chapter 1 Section 1

Topic 1



A lot of first things happened in Alabama. Some of the first Spanish and French explorers touched American soil along the southern Alabama coast in the 1700s. Alabama was the first state to withdraw from the Union in 1861. The first capital of the Confederacy was Montgomery. The first woman to defy segregation laws in the South was Rosa Parks in 1955. The first big public *march* to oppose segregation was in Selma in 1965. The Tuskegee “Red Tails” were the first African-American pilots in America. They earned honor and praise for their heroic actions during WWII. Hank Williams was the first big name in country music. He became a household name during the 1940s. Nat “King” Cole was the first African-American male singer to break racial barriers in the entertainment industry. His song, *Mona Lisa*, was a smashing hit. Helen Keller was a blind and deaf woman who became famous for her academic achievements. The Speer family was among the first popular Gospel singing groups. Condoleezza Rice was the first woman to be appointed as Secretary of State. You will learn more about her at the end of this lesson.



Rosa Parks



The Tuskegee “Red Tails”

Alabama shares borders with Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee. Interstate Highway 20 carries traffic across the northern part of the state, and

I-10 crosses the southern part of the state. Thick forests along I-20 can give travelers *claustrophobia*. However, springtime in Alabama is the source of songs, poems, novels, and romance. Beautiful flowers spread magnificent displays of white, pink, and yellow buds. Honeybees and butterflies flit from tree to tree to pollinate blossoms,

VOCABULARY

March: public demonstration
Claustrophobia: fear of being closed in

keeping alive the aroma and splendor of nature at its best.

Alabama isn't first in agricultural production in America, but farm products are the number-one source of revenue in the state. Chickens and eggs rank high in the economy. More than 12 percent of the nation's *broilers* are produced in Alabama. Farmers and ranchers also raise cattle and calves. Birmingham is a primary location for production of iron and steel pipes. Two-thirds of the state is covered in forests. Therefore, a huge amount of revenue comes from timber harvests. Thick forests also provide *sanctuaries* for deer, feral hogs, doves, quail, and turkeys. Hunters annually take advantage of wildlife to harvest game animals and birds. Catfishing is a favorite sport, and catfish farms are also popular. Farmers also raise cotton, peaches, corn, watermelons, strawberries, and peanuts. More than 48,500 farms operate in Alabama.



Catching catfish in Alabama

VOCABULARY

Broilers: young chickens

Sanctuaries: places of safety

Components: parts, pieces

Other industries employ people to produce paper, cardboard, insecticides, tissue, aircraft parts, and vehicle *components*. Alabama businesses include such professions as lawyers, bankers, policemen, secretaries, accountants, teachers, medical doctors, artists, and commercial fishermen. The capital is Montgomery. Other large cities include Mobile, Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, Auburn, and Decatur. Statehood was granted in December 1819. Alabama was the twenty-second state to be added to the Union. Of course, during the Civil War years of 1861-1865, Alabama was part of the Confederacy. About 26 percent of the population is African-American. In addition to the persons mentioned previously, other famous Black people from Alabama include Joe Louis (heavyweight boxing champion), Jesse Owens (track star), and Booker T. Washington (founder of Tuskegee Institute). Unfortunately, about 70% of all Black children are born to unwed mothers. That fact impacts domestic, social, and educational matters. Most teenage runaways, black and white, are from fatherless homes. Sadly, many of those are girls who get enticed into abusive relationships by predators who promise girls (as young as twelve years of age) love, money, adventure, fame, and security.

Alabama ranks low in the nation regarding academic achievements. Even though The University of Alabama and Auburn University are often in the news during football season, more than 20 percent of high school students drop out of school before graduation. Consequently, private schools and home school are popular as parents seek alternatives to underperforming public schools.

Alabama made headlines in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina inflicted billions of dollars of damage along the southern coast of Alabama. The shrimp and tourist industries were severely damaged. Inland flooding was extensive. Places all along the coast were closed for several years after the storm *subsided*.



An Alabama home destroyed by Hurricane Katrina



The citizens of Mobile purchased the USS Alabama as a museum attraction

VOCABULARY

Subsided: went away, diminished
Subsequent: that which follows, later
Provost: University financial officer

Famous Person Vignette: ***Condoleezza Rice***



Condoleezza Rice was born in 1954, the daughter of a pastor-father and a school teacher-mother. As a young child, Condoleezza was a gifted pianist. She graduated

from high school in Alabama at age 15 and entered college on a music scholarship in Denver. She earned her college degree by age 19. During *subsequent* years, Miss Rice earned respect for her intelligence, charm, and musical talents. She became an accomplished concert pianist, as well as an astute strategist in political affairs. In 2004, she was the first woman to be appointed as US Secretary of State. Later, she was the youngest woman to be appointed as *Provost* of Stanford University. Her achievements in financial management at the university earned praise. In 2015, Condoleezza was admitted to the Augusta National Golf Club, the first woman to receive that honor. She was also asked to serve on the National Football Draft Committee. Miss Rice is a devout Christian, who boldly and humbly expresses her beliefs. She is committed to being a positive role model for youth, especially those who struggle with issues of abuse.

LIFE PRINCIPLE:

“Don’t let anyone determine what your horizons are going to be. You get to determine those yourself.”

-Condoleezza Rice (Former Secretary of State)