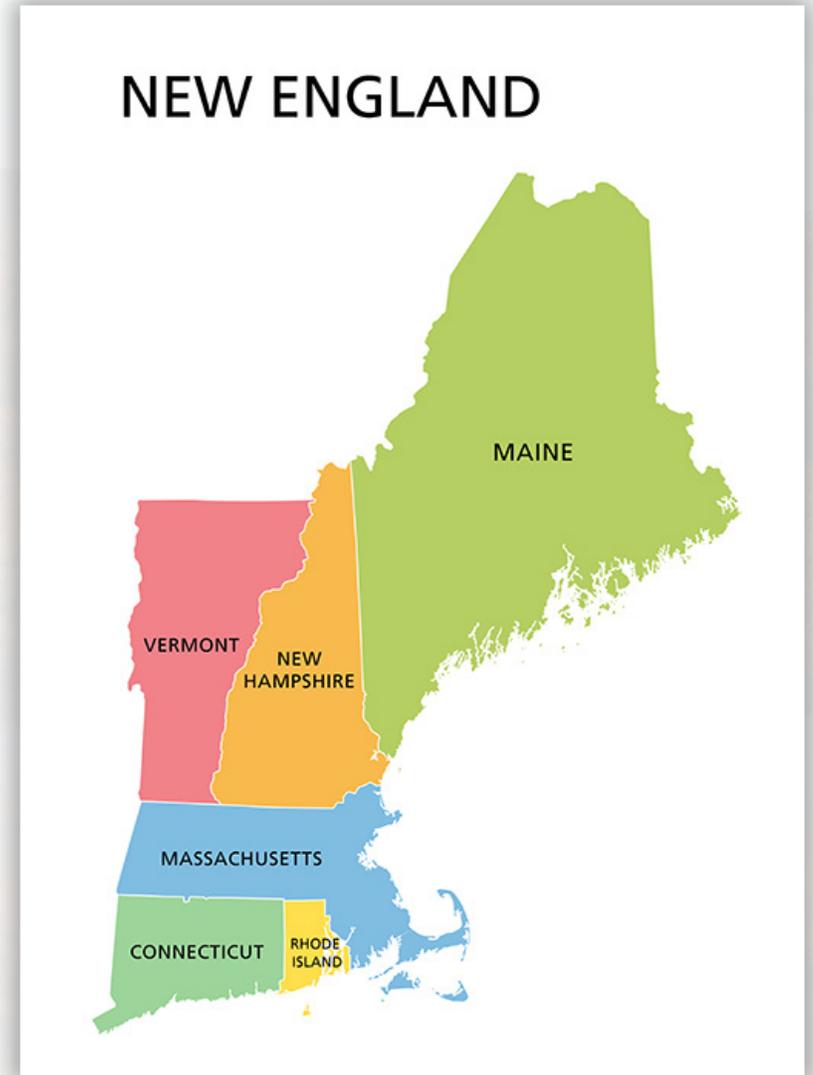


Navigating New England

A Front Porch Travelogue



New England, composed of the six states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Rhode Island, is one of the most historic and culturally rich areas in the United States. The Front Porch Travelers are having fun each taking a state to learn more about it. And, of course, they can't wait to share what they discover with you.



A New England Overview

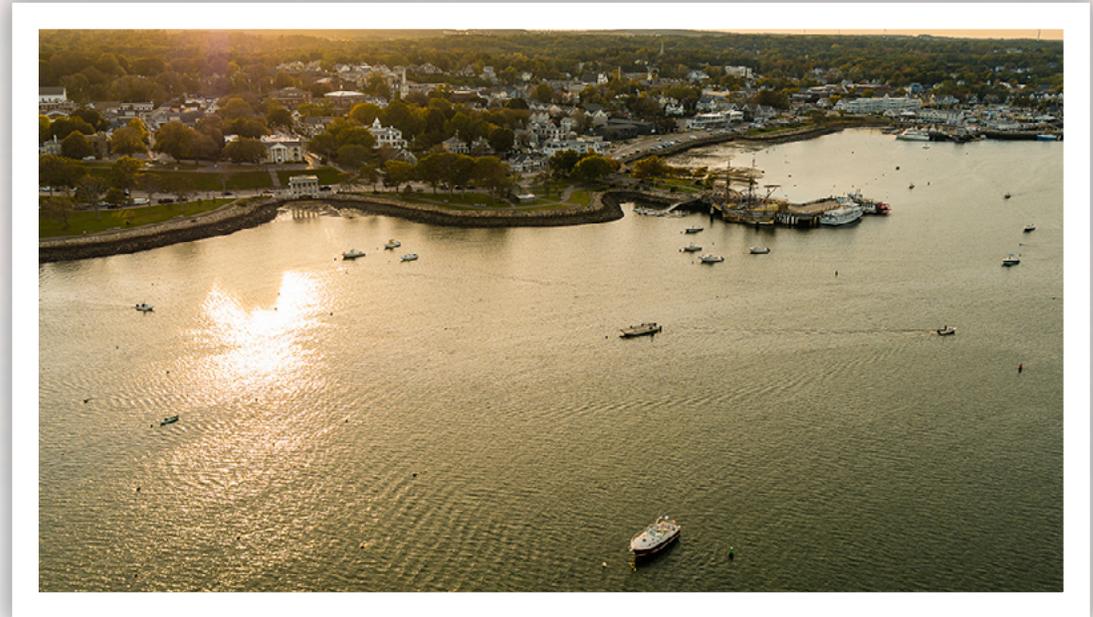


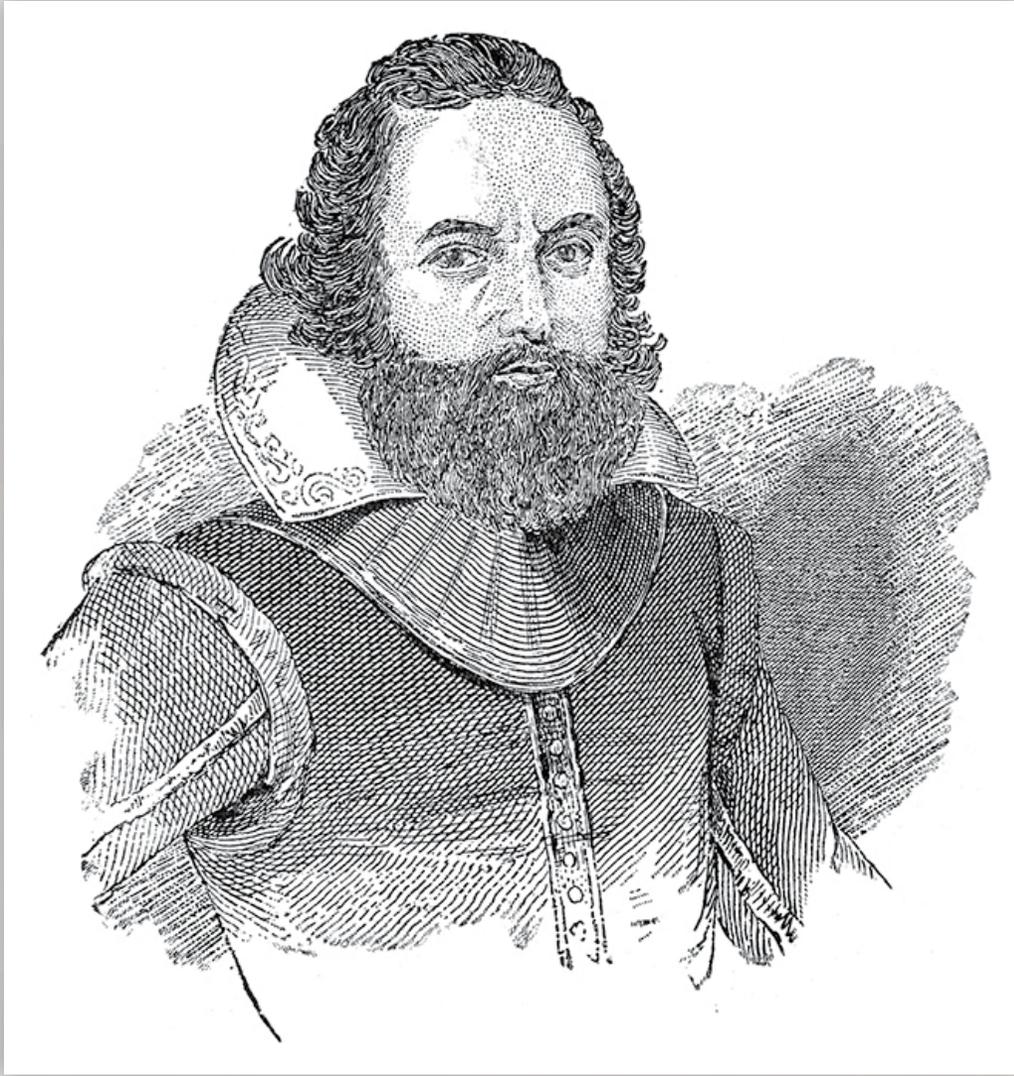
Before the Front Porchers take the stage, here's a brief overview of the region in the United States known as New England.



On September 16, 1620, the *Mayflower* departed Plymouth, England, with 102 passengers and 30 crew members on board. The passengers, known as Pilgrims, were in search of religious freedom in the New World. Although there were already established colonies in the New World, such as Jamestown in Virginia, theirs was among the most successful due largely in part to the good relationship they formed with the Indigenous tribes living there.

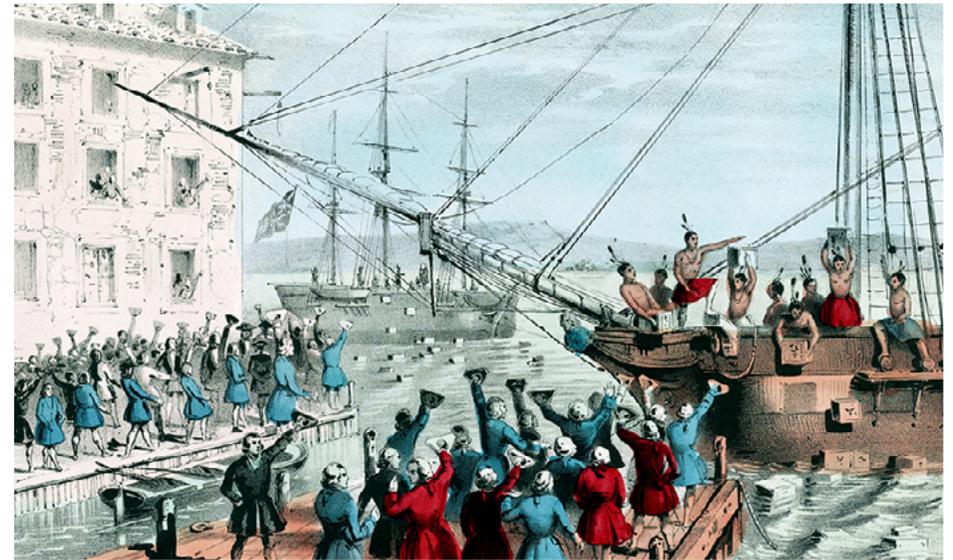
It took 66 days to cross the Atlantic, with treacherous storms and challenging conditions to be braved. The *Mayflower* arrived in Plymouth Harbor on December 16, 1620, and the first permanent settlement of Europeans in the New England area was established. Here are some additional facts:





The name *New England* was given by the English explorer John Smith and was officially sanctioned in 1620 with a royal charter for the Plymouth Council for New England.

The British colonies of New England were among the first to clamor for independence from the British Crown. In 1770, Bostonians clashed with British troops in what would be known as the [Boston Massacre](#) and again in 1773 with the [Boston Tea Party](#), a protest in which [340 chests of tea](#) were thrown into the Boston Harbor. [The American Revolution](#) broke out shortly after in 1775.





- New England was the center of the Industrial Revolution in America and was the manufacturing center for much of the nation during the 19th century.
- There is not an official flag for New England, but the one most displayed is predominantly red in color and features a pine tree.

New England clam chowder is believed to have been created by French settlers in the 17th century. Clams were abundant and were frequently used in soups and stews. Traditionally, it is made with clams, broth, potatoes, onions, and no other vegetables and is usually thickened with milk or cream. The addition of [oyster crackers](#) in the 1930s gives the chowder an extra-thick texture.



Discussion Starters

- Would you have chosen to embark on such a long journey as the Pilgrims took? Can you imagine the hardships they endured?
- Have you visited the New England area? If so, which states?
- Do you like New England clam chowder? If so, check out our Foods & Cooking section for a [delicious recipe](#).

Truman Visits Massachusetts



History

Massachusetts was one of the original 13 colonies (along with the other New England states of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut). It was named by John Smith after the Native American Massachuset tribe and is where the *Mayflower* landed. The opening shots of the American Revolution occurred at the Lexington and Concord, where the Massachusetts militia (known as the minutemen) waged the first battle against British troops (known as the Redcoats).



Trivia

- The capital of Massachusetts is Boston.
- The first winter after the Pilgrims landed in 1620 was a harsh one. It claimed the lives of half of the passengers who had arrived on the *Mayflower*. Those who survived did so with the help of the [Wampanoag people](#). During the following year, the Wampanoag taught their new neighbors how to survive in the wilderness and plant corn.





In November of 1621, the grateful Pilgrims organized a harvest feast to celebrate their new crops and may have invited their benefactors to join. Traditionally, Indigenous people already had a yearly celebration of thanks during harvest.

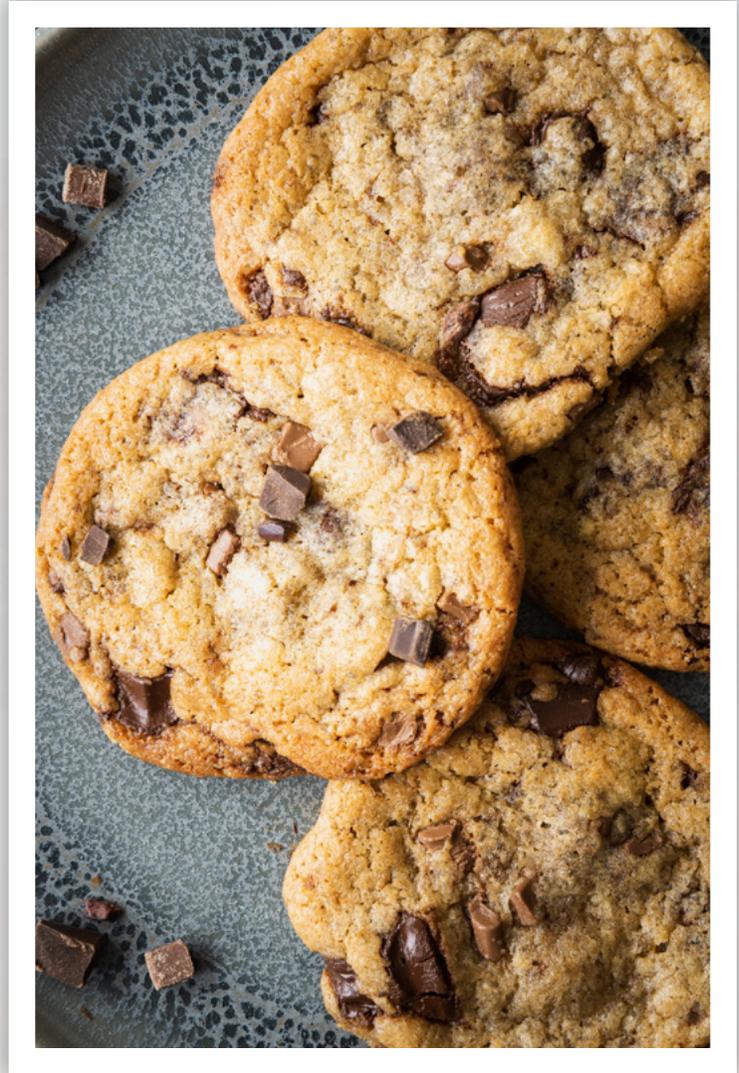
The state heroine is [Deborah Sampson](#). She assumed a male identity to fight in the Revolutionary War.





- Harvard University, established in Cambridge in 1636, is the United States' first institution of higher education.
- Boston is affectionately known as “Beantown,” and native Bostonians are famous for having a distinct accent. The best-known “quirk” is the tendency to drop the “r” sound, as in saying *cah* for *car*.

- Reportedly, the [chocolate chip cookie](#) was created in 1930 by Ruth Graves Wakefield and her husband at the Toll House Restaurant in Whitman, Massachusetts. It is the state's official cookie.
- There is a lake in Massachusetts named “Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg.” (That's 45 letters and 14 syllables in there.) We dare you to try to [pronounce it](#). It is also known as Lake Webster.





- Four U.S. presidents were born in Massachusetts. They are:
 1. John Adams
 2. John Quincy Adams
 3. John Fitzgerald “Jack” Kennedy
 4. George Herbert Walker Bush

State Symbols

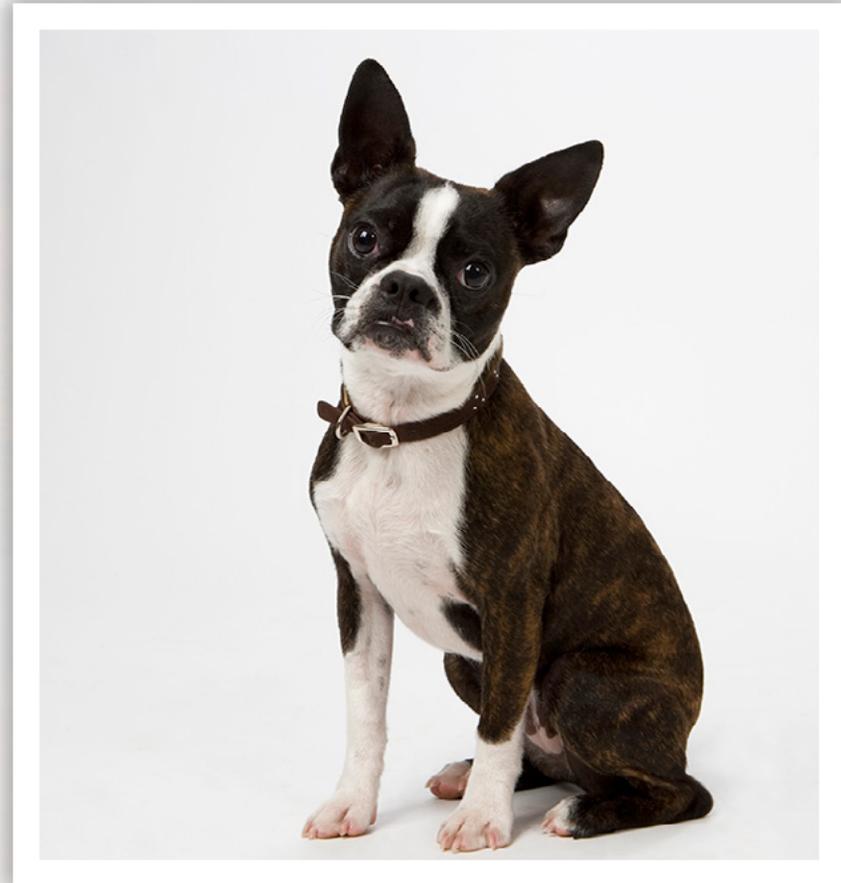
Motto: *Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem* (Latin for “By the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty.”)

Animal: Boston terrier

Beverage: Cranberry juice

Dessert: Boston cream pie

Flower: Mayflower



Best Known For



Massachusetts is home to many of the nation's firsts, including a railroad (1826), a subway system (1897), Dunkin' Donuts (1950), the prestigious universities of Harvard and MIT, and cranberries. Basketball was invented in 1891 by James Naismith in the city of Springfield.

Places to Visit

- [Boston](#) – Founded in 1630, Boston is one of America's oldest cities. Walk the [Freedom Trail](#) to relive its famous history in the American Revolution.
- [Plum Island](#) – Connected to mainland Massachusetts by one bridge from the city of Newburyport (also a lovely place to visit), Plum Island is a bird-watcher's paradise. It is named after the beach plums that grow on the sand dunes.





- [Northampton](#) – Home of Smith College, a prestigious women’s college, Northampton is an academic, cultural, and musical hub of Massachusetts. It has a vibrant downtown with an abundance of quirky shops, art galleries, and restaurants.
- [Nantucket Island, Cape Cod, and Martha’s Vineyard](#) – Rub shoulders with the rich and famous at these popular summer destinations.

Salem – Reportedly, haunted happenings still occur in this town, which is the epicenter of the infamous witchcraft trials. It is also the setting for Nathaniel Hawthorne's book *The House of the Seven Gables*.



Discussion Starters

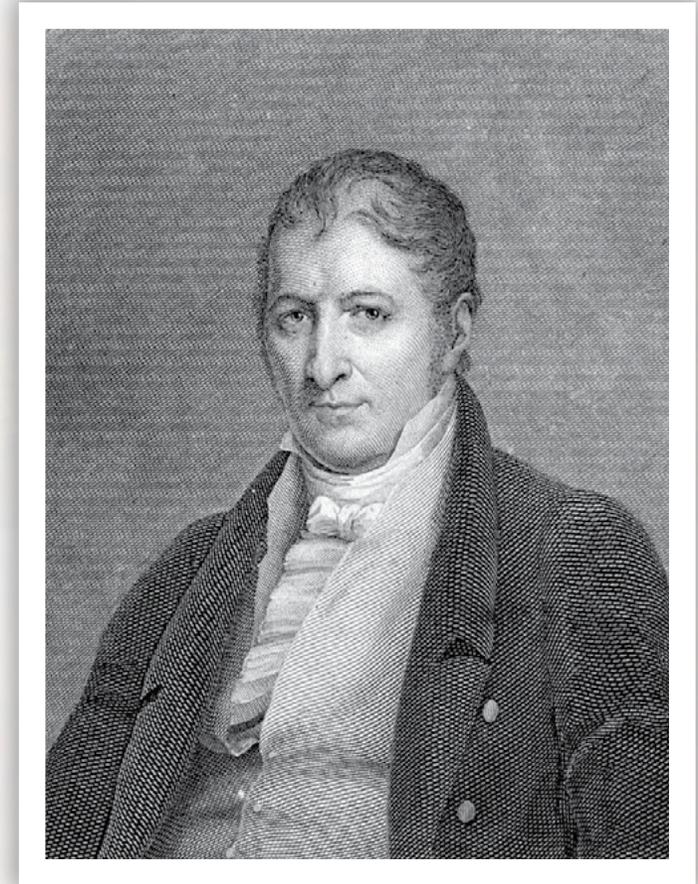
- Have you ever visited Boston? If so, what do you remember most about it?
- Was there a special place where your family routinely vacationed in the summer?
- Would you have an interest in visiting Salem to see the scene of the witchcraft trials? Did you know that one of the main catalysts for the witch trials were land disputes? How does that change your view of the events?
- What do you know about the [Indigenous Tribes in the Massachusetts](#) area?

Nell Visits Connecticut



History

Connecticut was initially an agricultural community, but by the mid-19th century, it became a textile and machine manufacturing center. It was the home of Eli Whitney (cotton gin) and Samuel Colt (gun manufacturer). Though it is the third-smallest state in the United States, it's among the most densely populated.



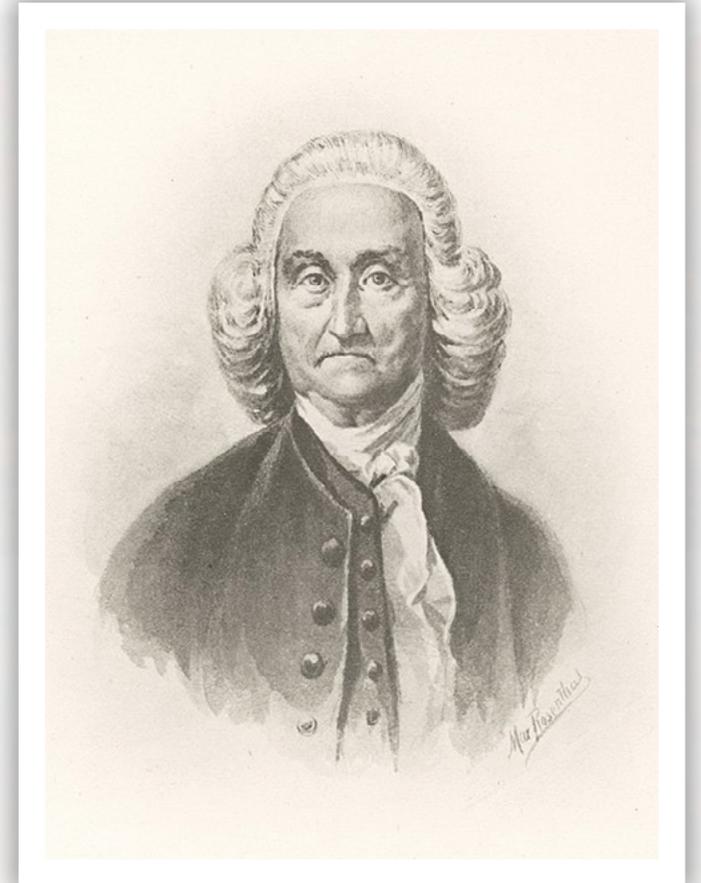


Hooker's Company reach the Connecticut.

Its name derives from the Algonquian word meaning “long tidal river.” It has a variety of nicknames, including “Nutmeg State,” “Constitution State,” and “Land of Steady Habits.” Its first settlers were Dutch who established trading posts. Thomas Hooker, a minister, led a group of followers dissenting from the Puritan leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony to found the Connecticut Colony. He is known today as the Father of Connecticut.

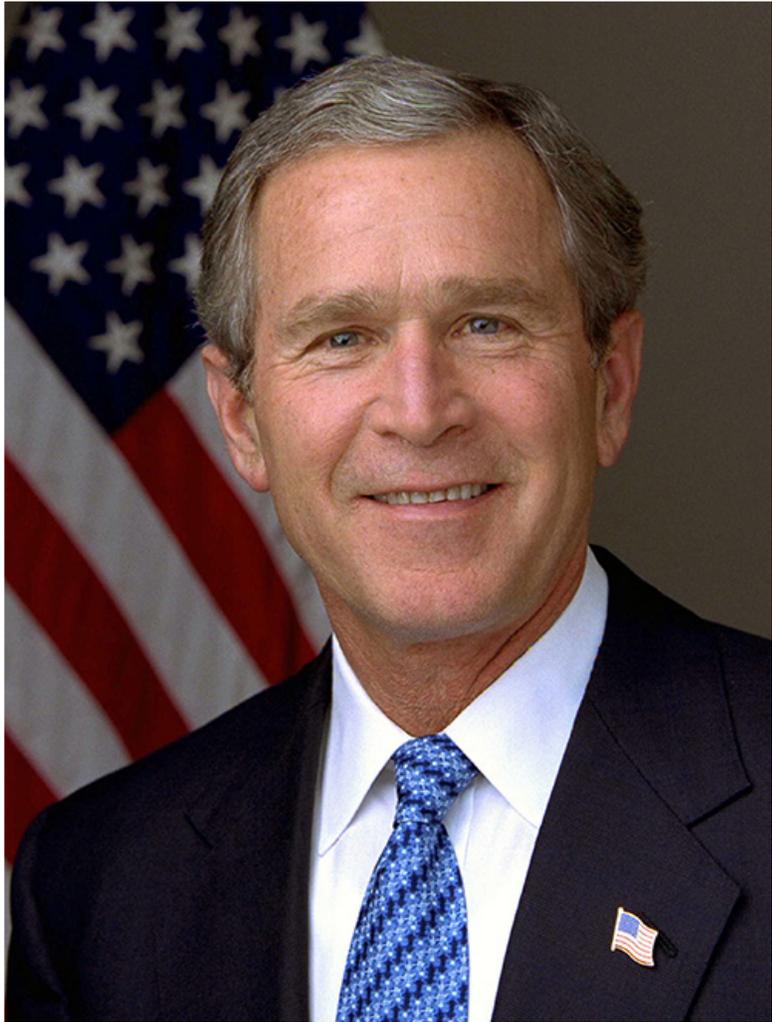
Trivia

- The capital of Connecticut is Hartford.
- George Washington called Connecticut “The Provision State” because its governor Jonathan Trumbull was the only colonial governor to support the cause of America’s independence from the British by contributing supplies to Washington’s army.
- Connecticut has the nickname of the “Constitution State” because its “Fundamental Orders of Connecticut,” adopted in 1639, is considered the first-ever written constitution. The orders acknowledged people as the true foundation of public authority, giving voters the right to elect government officials.



- [Noah Webster](#), the author of the first American dictionary, was born in West Hartford. He worked as a teacher in Connecticut and was concerned that the education system was lacking. He began writing his own books and published his first dictionary in 1806, known as “Webster’s Dictionary.”
- According to some sources, hamburgers were first invented in Connecticut by Louis Lassen in 1900 at his eating establishment known as Louis’ Lunch. The original hamburger was made with a patty of grilled ground steak sandwiched between two slices of toast. You can still sample the original hamburger recipe in the original building, which has moved to New Haven.





- Hartford is known as the “Insurance Capital of the World.” The first car insurance in America was issued in 1898 in Hartford.
- The only U.S. president born in Connecticut was George W. Bush, who was born in New Haven.

- George Smith of New Haven invented the lollipop in 1908. He came up with the idea of putting candy (originally soft candy) on a stick so it was easier to eat.
- The oldest published newspaper in America that is still published today is the *Hartford Courant*.



State Symbols



Motto: *Qui transtulit sustinet* (Latin for “He who transplanted still sustains.”)

Animal: Sperm whale

Food: [Pizza](#)

Flower: Mountain laurel

Folk Dance: Square dance

Best Known For

Connecticut is known for such things as its gorgeous fall foliage, Yale University, and ESPN, the popular cable sports channel. It is where the Polaroid camera (1948) and the helicopter (1939) were invented. It was the first state to pass a speed limit law for automobiles—a speedy 12 miles (19.3 kilometers) per hour in the city.



Places to Visit



- [Mystic Seaport Museum](#) – With a working shipyard, children’s museum, planetarium, and discovery barn, the Mystic Seaport Museum also re-creates a 19th-century seafaring village and has a large collection of historic boats.
- [Gillette Castle](#) – This 24-room medieval-style castle was designed in the early 20th-century by stage actor William Gillette. It has secret passageways, spying mirrors, and many other unique embellishments. Also impressive is the 184-acre (74.5-hectare) estate on which it resides.

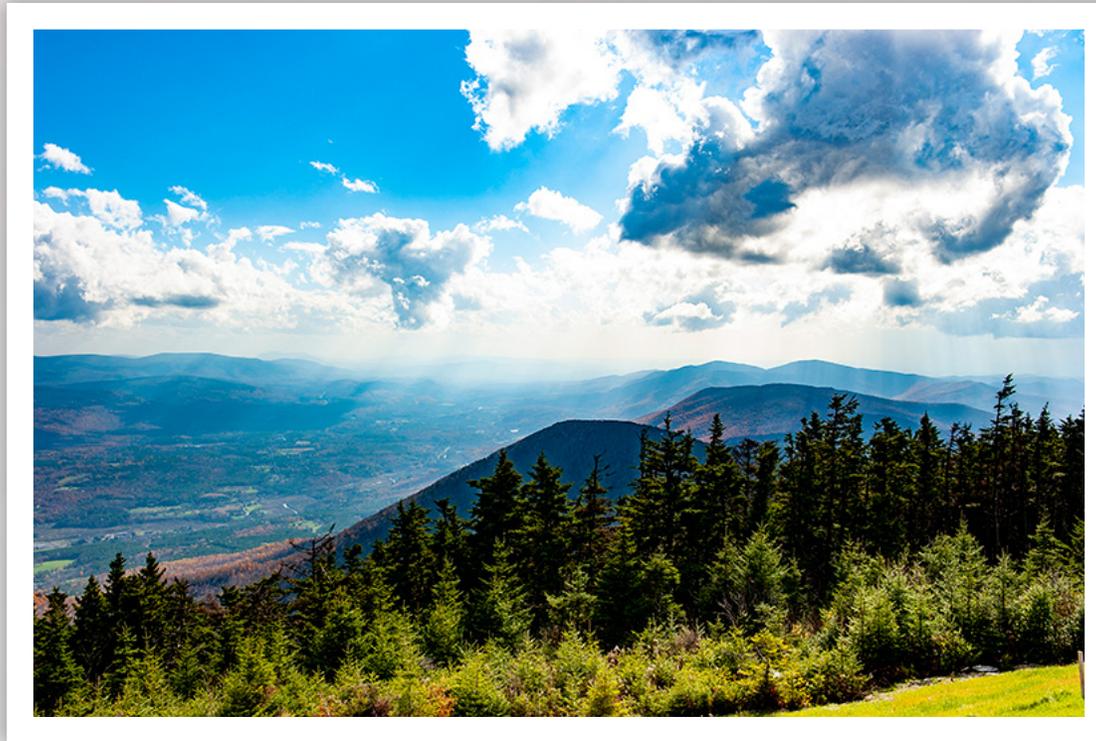
- [The Mark Twain House and Museum](#) – Samuel Clemens and his wife Olivia “Livy” Clemens moved into their newly built three-story Victorian mansion in 1874. The tour of their Hartford home includes a look at some of the eccentric habits of the man we know as Mark Twain. For instance, he apparently used to keep kittens in the pockets of the billiard table. Louis C. Tiffany was one of the designers of the home’s ornate interior.
- [The Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center](#) – There is much to see and learn about the Native American and natural history of southern New England at this tribally owned museum.



Discussion Starters

- Have you ever visited Connecticut? If so, what do you remember most about it?
- Have you read any of Mark Twain's books? If so, are you a fan of his writing? What do you like or dislike about his writing?
- Do you live where the leaves turn colors in fall? Do you enjoy watching the leaves change each year?
- What do you know about the [Indigenous tribes in the Connecticut](#) area?

Bert Visits Vermont



History



In 1609, the area now currently Vermont was explored and claimed for France by Samuel de Champlain. The first French settlement was established in 1666 at Fort St. Anne. In 1724, the first English settlers moved in and built Fort Dummer on the site that is today the city of Brattleboro. After the French and Indian Wars in 1763, England gained control. The name comes from the French *Vert Mont*, which means “green mountain” in English.

The Green Mountain Boys, led by Ethan Allen, won their place in history when they captured Fort Ticonderoga from the British in 1775 at the beginning of the Revolutionary War. Vermont was the first colony to abolish slavery in 1777, as well as provide full voting rights to African American males. In 1858, they underscored this commitment by ratifying anti-slavery laws into the state constitution.



Trivia

- The capital of Vermont is Montpelier.
- It is known as the “Green Mountain State” because of its many forests. It has one of the highest percentages of forest land in the country.
- Vermont is the only New England state not to border the Atlantic Ocean.
- Vermont produces more than half of all the maple syrup produced in the nation.

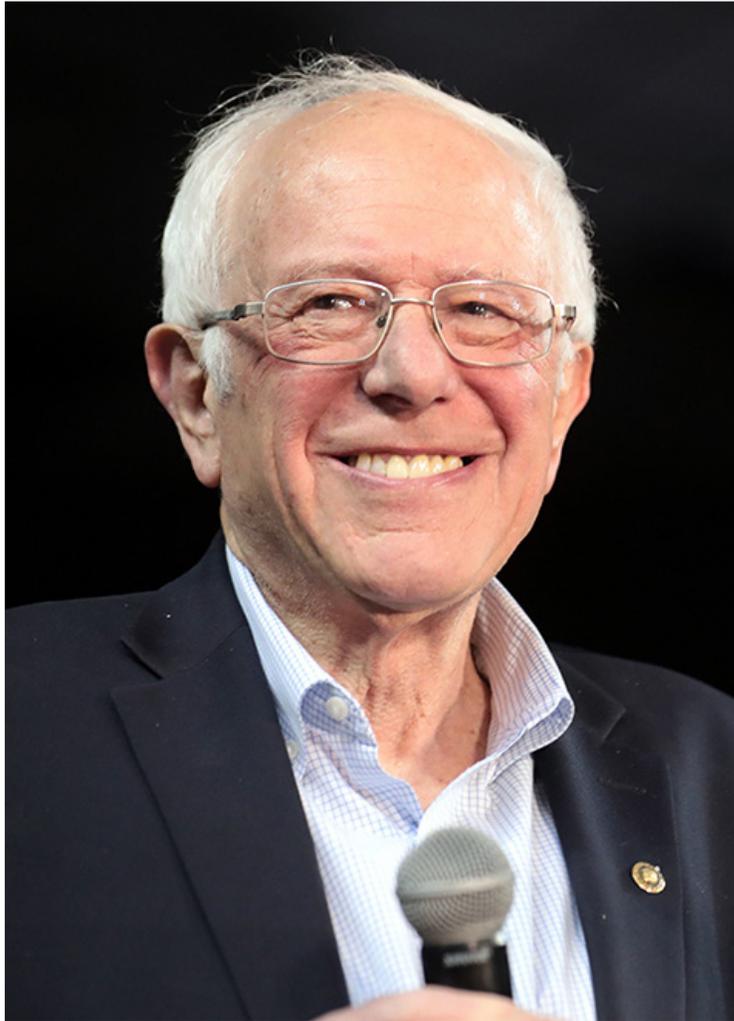




- Apple pie is the official state pie. It is considered best served with a glass of cold milk and cheddar cheese or ice cream on top. Apples are the state fruit. There are over 150 varieties grown there.
- And speaking of ice cream, it is the birthplace of Ben & Jerry's ice cream. Vermont knows dairy, from ice cream to cheddar cheese. The average dairy farm has about 192 cows. The ratio of cows to humans is one of the largest in the nation.

- Vermont has over 100 covered bridges. Most were constructed between 1820 and the late 1800s.
- The John Deere Company was founded in Vermont in 1837 and remains one of the largest manufacturers of agricultural equipment in the world. It is known for its green and yellow tractors.





- Calvin Coolidge, the 30th U.S. president, was born in Plymouth Notch, Vermont, on Independence Day in 1872. Chester Arthur was also born in Vermont.
- Bernie Sanders, a politician and activist, has served as Vermont's senator since 2007. He sought the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016 and 2020 and has not ruled out 2024.

State Symbols

Motto: Freedom and Unity

Animal: The Morgan horse

Beverage: Milk

Fruit: Apple

Flavor: Maple



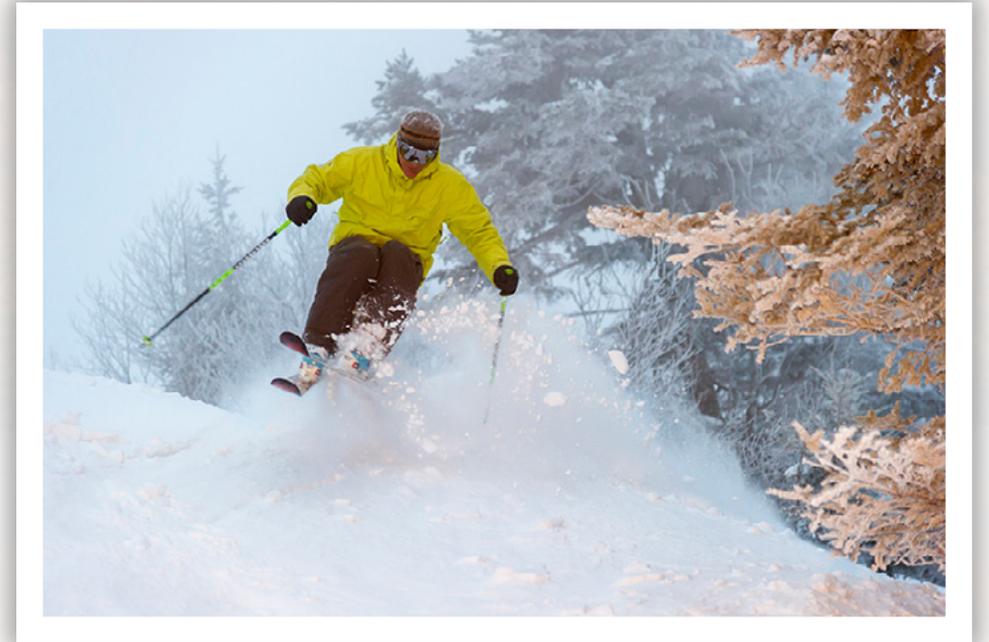
Best Known For

Vermont leads the nation in the production of maple products, monument granite, and marble. Barre, Vermont, is known as the [Granite Center of the World](#), and the town itself is known for its [unique and artistic tombs and monuments](#) in the popular tourist destination of Hope Cemetery. Vermont's rocky terrain limits agricultural farming but is best suited for dairy farming and raising fruit trees. The town of Cabot is famous for its cheddar cheese.



Places to Visit

- [Stowe](#) – Known as the “Ski Capital of the East,” Stowe is the birthplace of Alpine skiing in Vermont.
- [Burlington](#) – A lively college town, Burlington is home to the University of Vermont and is the largest city in Vermont. It is located on the shores of Lake Champlain.





- [The Vermont Teddy Bear Factory](#) – Located in Shelburne, Vermont, the factory is home to the original Vermont teddy bear. It was founded in 1981 and is one of the largest producers of teddy bears in the world.
- [The Long Trail](#) – Constructed between 1910 and 1930 by the Green Mountain Club, the Long Trail is one of the oldest long-distance hiking trails in the United States and runs from Massachusetts to Canada.

Discussion Starters

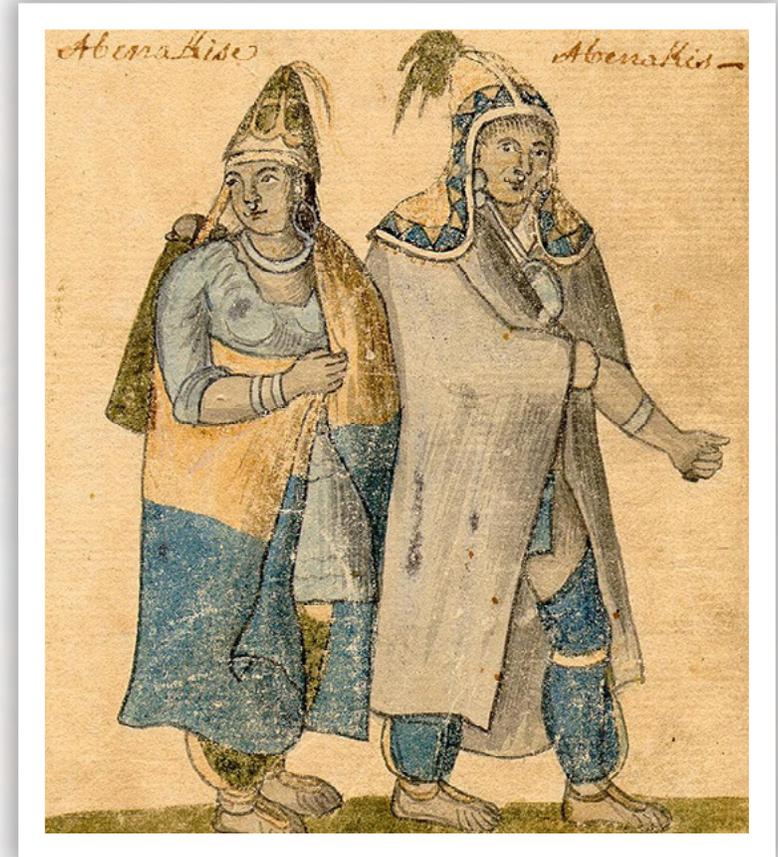
- Have you ever visited Vermont? If so, what do you most remember about it?
- Have you ever eaten your apple pie topped with cheddar cheese? If so, what did you think of it?
- What is the longest distance you have hiked? Where was it and how was it?
- What do you know about the Indigenous tribes in the Vermont area?

Mabel Visits New Hampshire



History

Before the English arrived, some 3,000 indigenous peoples inhabited the area that would become New Hampshire. The region was included in grants to Captain John Mason by the English crown during the 1620s. In 1623, a fishing and trading settlement was established. In 1629, the area was named New Hampshire after the English county of Hampshire. The main settlements were Dover, Portsmouth, and Exeter.



Trivia

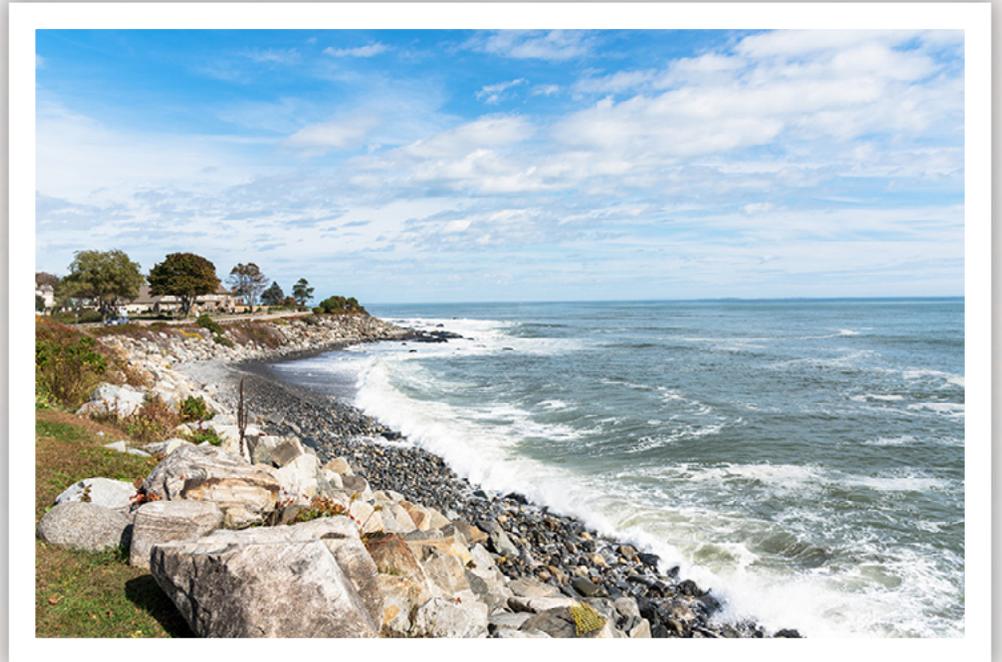
- The capital of New Hampshire is Concord.
- New Hampshire was originally known as North Virginia because of the similar landscape.
- The state motto of “Live free or die” came from a quote by John Stark, a New Hampshire resident and Revolutionary War hero. He is quoted as saying, “Live free or die. Death is not the worst of evils.”





- New Hampshire was the first of the 13 colonies to declare independence from England (six months before the Declaration of Independence was signed).
- It is known as “The Granite State” because of the many granite quarries.
- The Mount Washington Observatory recorded a wind speed of 231 miles (372 kilometers) per hour on April 12, 1934. It held the record for the highest wind speed ever recorded until Australia recorded a speed of 253 miles (407 kilometers) per hour during a typhoon.

- New Hampshire is the only state where the wearing of seat belts is not mandatory.
- Levi Hutchins invented the first alarm clock in 1787 in Concord, New Hampshire.
- New Hampshire has the shortest coastline of any U.S. coastal state, with a length of about 18 miles.
- Franklin Pierce, the 14th U.S. president, was born in Hillsborough, New Hampshire. He died in Concord.



State Symbols

Motto: Live Free or Die

Animal: White-tailed deer

Beverage: Apple cider

Vegetable: White potato. Scottish settlers planted the first potato crops in America in New Hampshire in 1719.

Treat: Whoopie pie

Sport: Skiing



Best Known For



New Hampshire inspired many of the poems of Robert Frost. It was one of the first states to hold presidential primaries. It is also known for having no income or sales tax and for the “steak bomb,” which is a sub sandwich made with steak, salami, onions, green peppers, and mushrooms.

Places to Visit

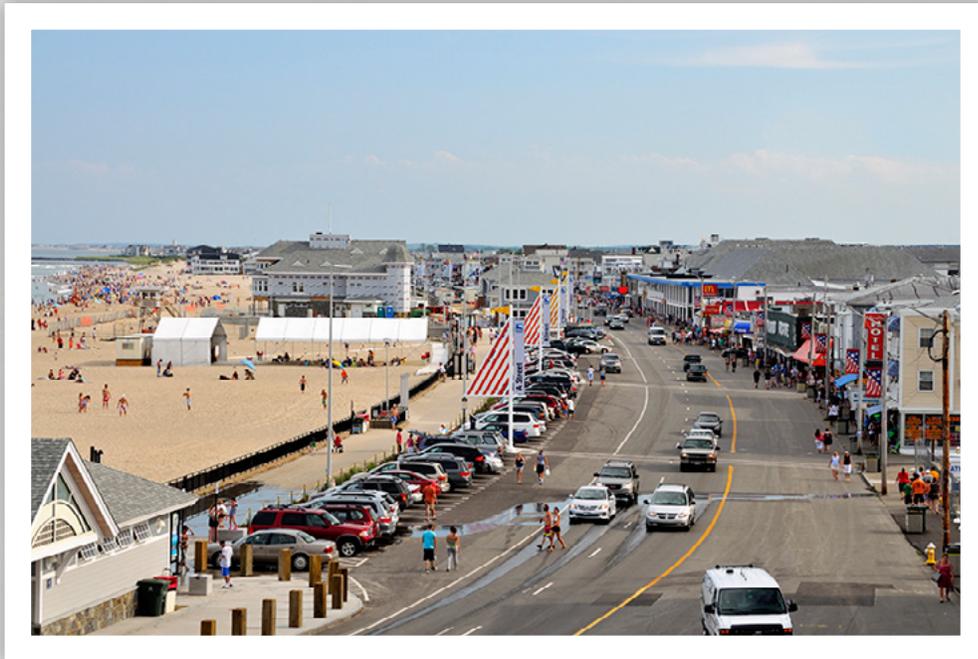
- [Portsmouth](#) – The third-oldest city in the nation, Portsmouth is home to a busy seaport. The town has many historic and cultural landmarks as well as a vibrant nightlife with restaurants, music, and boutique shops.
- [Manchester](#) – The biggest city in New Hampshire has much to offer in the way of arts, culture, sports, and entertainment.



The White Mountain National

Forest – This park is home to mountain ranges, spectacular scenery, and green forests. There are black bears, moose, and bald eagles along with other diverse flora and fauna. The Appalachian Trail winds its way through its forests and mountains. During fall, the brilliant yellow, red, and orange leaves make for a magical sight.





- [Strawberry Banke](#) – This outdoor museum located in the historic South End district of Portsmouth portrays centuries of American history. Historic buildings and costumed actors bring to life the story of Portsmouth’s first English settlers.
- [Hampton Beach](#) – With miles of pristine beaches, this fun summer destination also boasts a busy boardwalk and loads of entertainment.

Discussion Starters

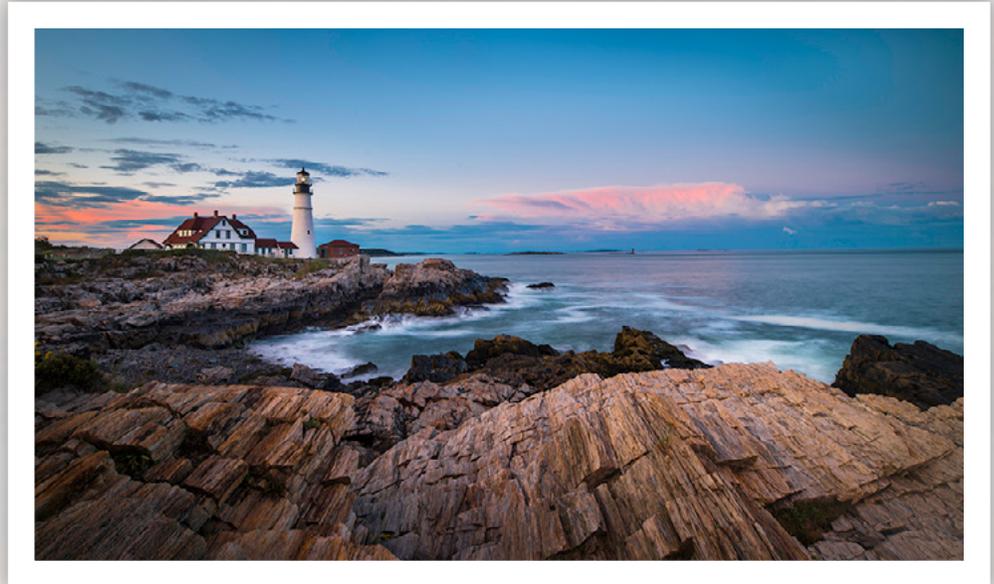
- Have you ever been to New Hampshire? If so, what do you most remember about it?
- If you were asked to come up with a motto for the state where you live, what would it be?
- Have you ever eaten a whoopie pie? If so, what did you think of it?
- What do you know about the [Indigenous tribes in the New Hampshire](#) area?

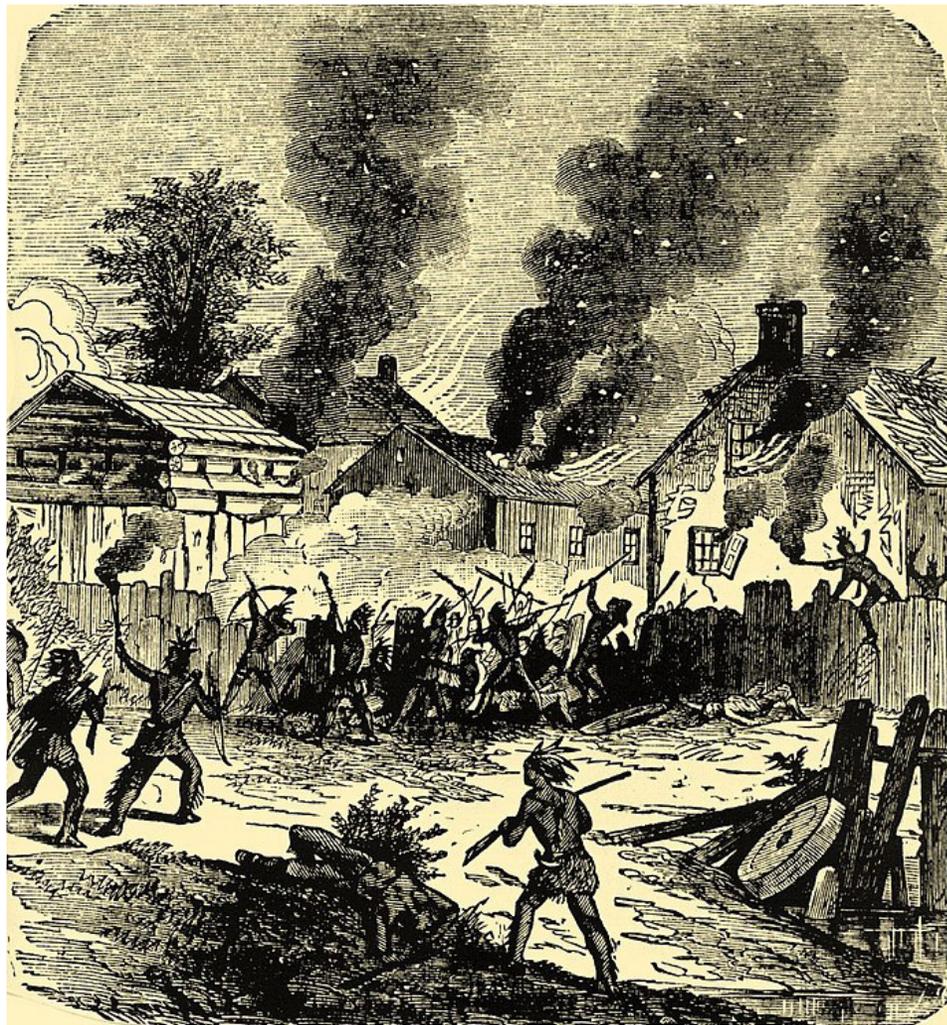
Maude Visits Maine



History

The glaciers of the last Ice Age carved hundreds of bays, inlets, and harbors into the coast of Maine and, when they retreated, formed some 2,000 small islands off its coast. In 1607, English colonists led by George Popham established Fort St. George, the same year Jamestown, Virginia, was founded. After Popham died, the colonists, now without a leader, returned to England, as they were unable to endure the harsh climate.





During King Philip's War, starting in 1675, settlers in Maine were decimated when Indigenous inhabitants paired up with French settlers. The survivors of that war were taken in by neighboring colonies, most notably the settlement in Salem, Massachusetts, as Massachusetts absorbed much of Maine during that time.

On March 15, 1820, Maine became the 23rd state as part of the Missouri Compromise, which approved Missouri entering the Union as a slave state and Maine as a free state. Maine is bordered by New Hampshire, the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick and Quebec, and the Atlantic Ocean.



Trivia



- The capital of Maine is Augusta.
- Until 1820, Maine was a district of Massachusetts.
- Geographically, Maine is almost as big as the other five New England states combined.

- Maine is all about lobsters. More than 100 million pounds of lobster were harvested in 2021. Now an expensive delicacy, during the colonial era, lobster meat was commonly fed to indentured servants and inmates or ground up and used as fertilizer.
- Maine has some 3,500 miles (5,632 kilometers) of coastline, making it the state with the fourth-most coastline in the nation (following Alaska, Florida, and Louisiana).





- Maine has some 65 lighthouses along its rocky coast.
- It has over 6,000 lakes and ponds.
- The largest lake in Maine is the 75,000-acre (30,351-hectare) Moosehead Lake.

The Maine coon cat (or wild coon cat) originated in Maine and is the official state cat. These gentle giants have dog-like characteristics and a dense coat of fur, making them well-suited to the cold climate. It's believed they were brought over by settlers to New England and are descended from Norwegian or Siberian Forest cats.





- Maine has one of the highest moose populations outside of Alaska. The moose is Maine's state animal. It can stand up to seven feet tall, is [able to swim](#), and is most active at dusk and dawn.
- Maine is the only U.S. state name with just one syllable.

State Symbols

Motto: *Dirigo* (Latin for “I Direct”)

Animal: Moose

Beverage: Moxie

Fruit: Blueberry

Food: Lobster rolls



Best Known For



Maine is famous for its rocky coastline and for being the nation's leading producer of lobsters and blueberries.

Places to Visit

Portland – A quarter of the state’s population lives in Portland. A favorite with people who love good food, it is teeming with restaurants, bars, pubs, breweries, and cafes. For those who love to shop, there are wonderful boutiques, art galleries, and craft stores.



[Acadia National Park](#) – First opened in 1916, all of this U.S. national park’s 47,000 acres (19,021 hectares) were acquired through donations. It is the only national park in the northeast. The town of [Bar Harbor](#), located on Mount Desert Island, shares borders with the park and is well worth a visit.





Freeport – The L.L. Bean Company, specializing in outdoor clothing, shoes, and recreation equipment is headquartered in Freeport. The company's flagship store is huge and a fun place to visit. Its first product, designed in 1951, was a hunting boot that combined a rubber bottom and a leather top.

Discussion Starters

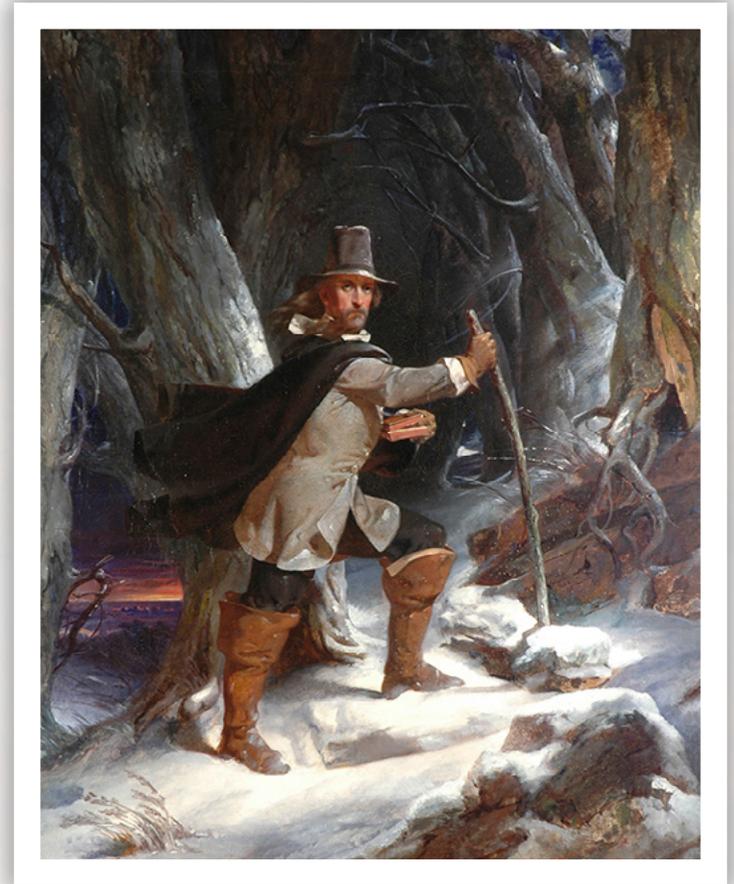
- Have you ever visited Maine? If so, what do you remember about it?
- Do you like to eat lobster? If so, how do you best like it prepared?
- Have you ever visited a national park? If so, where was it and what was your experience?
- What do you know about the [Indigenous tribes in the Maine](#) area?

Ethel Visits Rhode Island



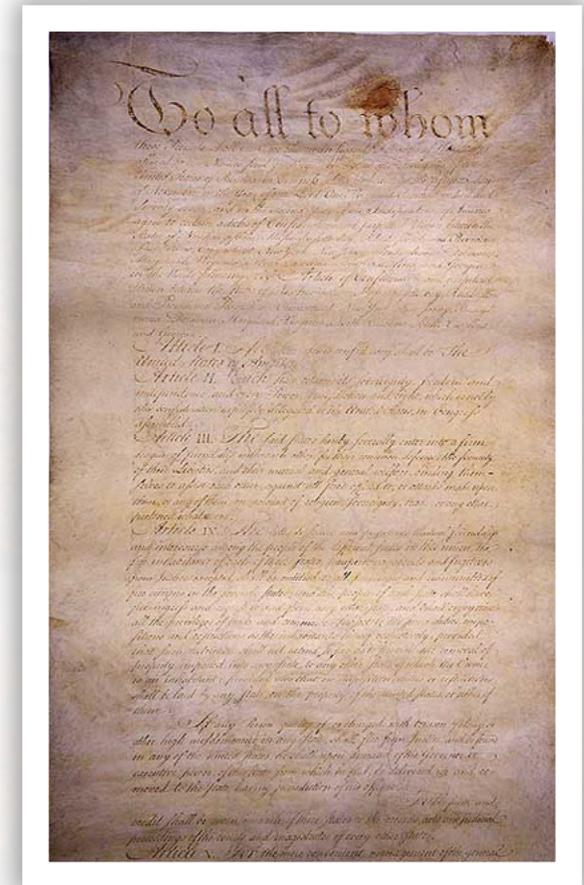
History

Rhode Island is the smallest U.S. state, “weighing in” at 48 miles (77.2 kilometers) long and 37 miles (59.5 kilometers) wide. Known as the “Ocean State,” it has more than 400 miles (644 kilometers) of coastline. It was founded in 1636 by Roger Williams, who was banished from the Massachusetts colony for his advocacy for religious tolerance and the separation of the church from the state. During colonial times, it was a major hub for shipping and trading. It figured prominently during the Industrial Revolution and was the first of the 13 colonies to renounce allegiance to the British Crown at the Continental Congress in 1776.



Trivia

- The capital of Rhode Island is Providence.
- Rhode Island got its name from Dutch explorer Adrian Block. He named it *Roodt Eylandt*, meaning “red island” after the red clay lining the shore. The name was anglicized after the area came under British rule.
- Rhode Islanders preferred the Articles of Confederation and refused to participate in the creation of the U.S. Constitution. It was the last of the 13 states to ratify the Constitution.



- Roger Williams, as testimony to his belief in religious freedom for all, founded the Touro Synagogue in Newport. It was built between the years 1759 and 1763 and is the oldest surviving U.S. synagogue.
- In addition, in 1638 he established the first U.S. Baptist church in Providence.
- Rhode Island is known as the sailing capital of the world.
- Rhode Island is not an island and has just a few islands off its coast. The largest is Aquidneck Island, which lies in Narragansett Bay.





- Providence is home to Hasbro Toys. For that reason, some license plates have Mr. Potato Head on them.
- John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Bouvier were married on September 12, 1953, at St. Mary's Church in Newport. It is Rhode Island's oldest Roman Catholic church, established in 1828.

State Symbols

Motto: Hope

Bird: Rhode Island Red (chicken)

Beverage: Coffee milk
(combination of coffee syrup
and milk)

Fruit: Rhode Island greening apple

Flower: Violet



Best Known For



Rhode Island is famous for its pristine beaches, silverware, fine jewelry, and custard pie.

Places to Visit



During the late-19th and early-20th centuries, wealthy families such as the Asters and Vanderbilts had summer “cottages” in Newport. These huge mansions can still be seen when strolling along the [Cliff Walk](#). [The Breakers](#), built by Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1895, is testimony to his unimaginable wealth. [The Marble House](#) mansion is where Alva Vanderbilt held rallies for women’s rights.

- Newport is famous for its Newport Jazz Festival and [Newport Folk Festival](#), both of which are held in summer.
- [Block Island](#) with its Mohegan bluffs is fun to explore on foot or bike.





- [Providence](#) is a city with an exciting downtown with arts and entertainment. The prestigious Rhode Island School of Design is on the historic East Side and is housed in five buildings.
- The [Roger Williams Park Zoo](#) in Providence is one of the oldest in the nation. It's spread over 40 acres (16 hectares) and houses animals from all over the world.

Discussion Starters

- Have you ever visited Rhode Island? If so, what do you most remember about it?
- Do you remember the toy Mr. Potato Head? Do you recall playing with it?
- Have you ever ridden on a sailboat? How would you describe your experience?
- What do you know about the [Indigenous tribes in the Rhode Island](#) area?



Thanks for joining us in our New England travels. See you next month for the holidays.



The End



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