

Name _____

Date _____

Florida

Florida is a large peninsula that juts into the Atlantic Ocean and forms the eastern boundary of the Gulf of Mexico. The Florida panhandle occupies the northeast corner of the gulf. Due to this position relative to the ocean, Florida frequently experiences hurricanes, the most hurricanes of all the states. The state of Georgia lies directly north of Florida and Alabama is north of the panhandle area.

A unique feature of Florida is the Florida Keys, a series of hundreds of ancient volcanic islands that extend into the ocean at the southern tip of Florida. The longest key is Key Largo which is thirty miles in length. The Overseas Highway links many of the keys to the mainland and a part of the highway, the Seven-Mile Bridge, is one of the longest bridges in the world.

Early History

By 750 CE, there were five major groups who inhabited the area known as Florida today. The Apalachee people lived in the panhandle area and were highly successful farmers who maintained storehouses of surplus food. The Appalachian Mountain range that extends from Georgia to Maine was named for these people. Their neighbors to the east were Timucuan who controlled territory to the seacoast. Archaeologists believe that these people had origins in Central America.

The Tocabaga people occupied the west coast of Florida, near Tampa Bay, in the central area. Remaining evidence indicates that these people built round homes. Further to the south along the west coast of Florida was home to the Calusa people who did not farm but relied on the ocean as a source of food. They built open homes on stilts, with a roof to protect them from the rain. These people sometimes are referred to as Shell Indians because they made tools, weapons and jewelry from shells. The Tequesta people occupied the southeastern edge of the peninsula. These early people also relied on the ocean for food.

In the early 1500s, Ponce de Leon was the first explorer known to have visited Florida, but his attempts at colonization were defeated by the Calusa people. In 1539 another Spanish explorer, Hernando de Soto, brought horses and 600 soldiers in a quest for gold. His group extensively explored the southeastern United States, eventually reaching the Mississippi River.

Name _____

Date _____

Florida was not settled solely by the Spanish. In 1564 French Huguenots, Protestants of the Reformed Church of France established a settlement called Fort Caroline near present-day Jacksonville. This settlement spawned a group of pirates who preyed on Spanish ships. King Philip II of Spain sent troops to drive out the Huguenots and most of the French were massacred.

Over the ensuing decades a mix of European people from Ireland, Italy, Scotland, England as well as more French Huguenots and Spanish settled in Florida. Even though Spain controlled colonial Florida, there wasn't a strong colonial government in place. Spain began losing its control over the peninsula as the French settled the lands around Louisiana and the English colonies expanded.

There were continuous power struggles in the 1700s. British leaders provided arms to the Creek Indians of Georgia to fight against the Apalachee and Timucuan. Meanwhile the Spanish leaders created a safe haven near St. Augustine for African slaves escaping from the Carolina colony and accepted them as free people.

Towards Statehood

However, through the 1763 Peace of Paris, a treaty between France, Spain and Great Britain ending the European Seven Years' War, Great Britain gained control of Florida. The British government divided Florida into two segments, east and west Florida. As more colonists arrived, the Native Americans of Florida succumbed to European diseases and many were captured and sent as slaves to other British colonies. Meanwhile, more African slaves were imported to work in orchards and farm fields. Around the time of the American Revolution, the Seminole people left Georgia and Alabama for Florida where many settled with former African slaves. This coalition was perceived as a threat to the plantation lifestyle in Georgia, the Carolinas and Alabama. Even though Florida was under British control, Florida did not participate directly in the American Revolution. Spain regained control of Florida in 1783.

The First Seminole War began in 1817 and the attack on the Seminole in Spanish Florida was led by General Andrew Jackson in retaliation for Spanish-inspired Seminole attacks on the state of Georgia. Spain relinquished control of Florida to the U.S. in 1819. In 1830 President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act which resettled Native Americans who were living east of the

Name _____

Date _____

Mississippi River to lands in the west. While many Seminoles moved westward, as many as 2,000 remained in the wild lands of Florida. The Second Seminole War lasted from 1835 until 1842 and cost the U.S. government over twenty million dollars to subdue the remaining Seminole who did not want to relinquish their homelands. The ultimate result of this long and costly war was that Florida became a state in 1845.

Name _____

Date _____

Circle True or False after analyzing each of the following statements.

1. True False The Apalachee, Timucuans and Calusa lived near the ocean and relied on the sea for food.
2. True False The Florida peninsula and the Florida Keys form the eastern boundary of the Gulf of Mexico.
3. True False The Overseas Highway and the Eight-Mile Bridge connect the Florida Keys to the mainland.
4. True False One of the early Spaniards to come to Florida was Hernando de Soto whose purpose was to create the first permanent Spanish settlement in northern Florida.
5. True False A group of devout Catholics from France, known as Huguenots, peacefully joined Spanish Catholics in Florida during the late 1500s.
6. True False Spanish leaders in Florida welcomed people of African descent who were fleeing slavery in the British colonies.
7. True False Seminoles were one of the original Native American people that the Spanish encountered when they arrived in Florida in the early 1500s.
8. True False Florida played a key strategic role in aiding the American colonies in their quest for freedom from British rule.
9. True False Andrew Jackson was a major figure in the removal of the Seminole Indians from Florida.
10. True False Due to its geographic location, Florida experiences more tornadoes than any other state.

Name _____

Date _____

Answers

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. False
6. True
7. False
8. False
9. True
10. False