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New Jersey

New Jersey is located on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, the state just south of New York. The Delaware River forms the boundary between New Jersey and Pennsylvania to the west. The Delaware River widens considerably as it flows into Delaware Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. The state of Delaware is located west of the mouth of the Delaware River.

Early History

Around 1200 CE, the Lenni-Lenape Native Americans became the dominant tribe in the area of present-day New Jersey. The Lenni-Lenape, later called the Delaware by Europeans, were part of the Algonquin people who lived in present-day eastern Canada and the United States. Even though the Algonquin tribes spoke various languages, they all were dialects of a common language and Algonquins shared some spiritual beliefs and other social customs. In the Lenape language the name of the tribe means "original people" and other Algonquins looked to the Lenni-Lenape as mediators and elders.

The first European to explore the area of New Jersey was Verrazano, who sailed a ship from Italy in 1524. He and his crew never came ashore in New Jersey but sailed along the coast. In 1609, British explorer Henry Hudson sailed into the Delaware Bay and up the Delaware River before sailing the Atlantic Coast of New Jersey to the Hudson River. However, Hudson was sailing under a Dutch flag and the Netherlands claimed the land around the mouth of the Hudson River. Today, at the mouth of the Hudson River the land east of the river, including Long Island, belongs to New York State and land to the west is part of New Jersey. The first European settlement in New Jersey was a Dutch fur trading post at Bergen which was established in 1618, followed by Pavonia in 1630 which eventually was renamed to Jersey City. The area was known as New Netherland.

In 1664 King Charles II of England gave the territory of New Netherland to his brother James and sent the Royal Navy to claim the land, which they did without firing a shot. By 1702, the area was a colony named Jersey. As more Europeans came to the area, the Lenape Indians were exposed to new diseases, especially smallpox, measles and tuberculosis. While these diseases were not fatal to most Europeans, the North American Indians had no immunity to them and

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about 90% of the Lenape population died. The remaining Lenape were driven out of New Jersey and many settled in Oklahoma.

Towards Statehood

Once New Jersey was a British colony, the colonial governors encouraged people from the more populated New England colonies to move to New Jersey. Farmers discovered that the New Jersey soil was fertile and easier to plow than the rocky New England soil. Farms flourished and even today New Jersey is called the Garden State.

New Jersey was affected by the taxation imposed upon the colonies by the British government. In fact, in December 1774 men from Greenwich, New Jersey destroyed a shipment of tea and this event is called the Greenwich Tea Party. However, the citizens of New Jersey were almost evenly divided in their sentiments towards colonial rule. About half the citizens were Tories, the name given to those who remained loyal to Great Britain, while about half were Patriots. During the Revolutionary War, New Jersey was home to many fights among the residents themselves.

New Jersey was a pivotal location during the Revolutionary War due to its location. The British, along with hired German soldiers called Hessians, occupied Trenton, New Jersey early in 1776. Washington's famous crossing of the Delaware River occurred on Christmas Day 1776 and his army succeeded in recapturing Trenton and then Princeton shortly thereafter. Washington's army then spent the winter at Morristown. Washington's army also wintered in Morristown beginning in December 1779.

The Revolutionary War ended in 1783 with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. During the war, the original American government for the colonies was defined by the Articles of Confederation in 1777. American leaders realized that this government was inadequate and delegates from all the former colonies except Rhode Island met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in May, 1787 to revise the Articles of Confederation. The result of the meeting was the creation of the Constitution of the United States which remains the basis of the American government today.

New Jersey played a key role in the development of the American government. As one of the smaller states New Jersey did not want to be dominated

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at the federal level by the larger states. Under what was called the New Jersey Plan, the United States Senate would have two senators from each state, giving equal power to states regardless of size. The New Jersey Plan for the structure of the Senate was adopted.

The thirteen original colonies became states when their respective legislatures adopted (ratified) the new Constitution. New Jersey became the third former colony to become a state.

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

1. True False The states of New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware are all neighbors to New Jersey.
2. True False Delaware is another name for the Algonquin Indian nation known as the Lenni-Lenape.
3. True False Even though explorer Henry Hudson himself was British he was sailing under the French flag and claimed land he explored for France.
4. True False The large islands named Manhattan and Long Island in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of New Jersey belong to New Jersey.
5. True False King Charles II of England gave the territory of New Netherland to his brother James even though it was not British territory at the time of the gift.
6. True False Even though the Native Americans living in New Jersey did not have immunity to the diseases brought to North America by the Europeans, half of the natives survived their disease experience and became immune.
7. True False At the beginning of the Revolutionary War the citizens of New Jersey were evenly divided between Patriots who were loyal to Great Britain and Tories who wanted independence.
8. True False George Washington's army recaptured the city of Trenton, New Jersey early in the Revolutionary War in an attack that surprised British and Hessian soldiers on Christmas Day.
9. True False The New Jersey Plan influenced the writing of the Constitution of the United States because it recommended having two senators from each state.
10. True False A former colony could become a state when its legislature adopted (ratified) the new Constitution of the United States.

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Answers

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