



**Office of the Governor
David Ronald Musgrove
Governor**

Greetings!

On behalf of the State of Mississippi, thank you for expressing an interest in our state, its history and the life of its citizens.

I am proud to serve Mississippians as their governor. Mississippi is a beautiful state with a rich culture and a promising future. Our state is experiencing tremendous growth as evidenced by the lowest unemployment rate in thirty years, the significant increase in personal income levels, the astounding number of small businesses created in Mississippi, and national recognition of Mississippi's potential for economic growth.

Our schools are stronger. Our hope is broader, and our determination is unwavering. This is our Mississippi. Together, we have the courage, the confidence, the commitment to set unprecedented goals and to make unparalleled progress.

Best wishes in all of your endeavors. May God bless you, the State of Mississippi and America!

Very truly yours,



RONNIE MUSGROVE

State Symbols



State

Coat of Arms

The committee to design a Coat of Arms was appointed by legislative action on February 7, 1894, and the design proposed by that committee was accepted and became the official Coat of Arms. The committee recommended for the Coat of Arms a “Shield in color blue, with an eagle upon it with extended pinions, holding in the right talon a palm branch and a bundle of arrows in the left talon, with the word “Mississippi” above the eagle; the lettering on the shield and the eagle to be in gold; below the shield two branches of the cotton stalk, saltierwise, as in submitted design, and a scroll below extending upward and one each side three-fourths of the length of the shield; upon the scroll, which is to be red, the motto be printed in gold letters upon white spaces, as in design accompanying, the motto to be ‘VIRTUE et ARMIS.’”

State Motto

The State motto of Mississippi, Virtue et Armis, meaning “by valor and arms,” was suggested by the Honorable James Rhea Preston, a native of Virginia, who was at the time Superintendent of Education in the State of Mississippi.

State Flower and Tree

An election was held in November 1900 to select a State Flower. Votes were submitted by 23,278 school children, with the magnolia receiving the most votes. The Legislature officially designated the magnolia as the State Flower in 1952.

The Director of Forestry started a movement in 1935 to have school children to select a State Tree. The magnolia received the most votes. The Legislature officially designated the magnolia as the State Tree on April 1, 1938.



State Flag

The committee to design a State Flag was appointed by legislative action February 7, 1894, and provided that the flag reported by the committee should become the official flag. The committee recommended for the flag “one with width two-thirds of its length; with the union square, in width two-thirds of the width of the flag; the ground of the union to be red and a broad blue saltier thereon, bordered with white and emblazoned with thirteen (13) mullets or five-pointed stars, corresponding with the number of the original States of the Union; the field to be divided into three bars of equal width, the upper one blue, the center one white, and the lower one extending the whole length of the flag, red—the national colors; the staff surmounted with a spear-head and a battle-axe below; the flag to be fringed with gold, and the staff gilded with gold.”



Pledge to the Flag

“I salute the flag of Mississippi and the sovereign state for which it stands with pride in her history and achievements and with confidence in her future under the guidance of Almighty God.”

The Great Seal of Mississippi

The present State Seal has been in use since Mississippi became a state in 1817. It is described in the Laws of the State of Mississippi, First Session, First General Assembly, 1817-1818, as follows: “The seal of this state of Mississippi” around the margin, and in the center an eagle, with the olive branch and quiver of arrows in his claws.



State Fish

The Largemouth or Black Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) was designated the State Fish of Mississippi, Chapter 551, General Laws of Mississippi of 1974.



State Water Mammal

An act designating the Bottlenosed Dolpin (*Tursiops truncatus*), commonly called the porpoise, as the State Water Mammal was approved April 12, 1974, Chapter 551, General Laws of Mississippi of 1974.



State Bird

Found in all sections of Mississippi, the cheerful Mockingbird was selected as the official State Bird by the Women's Federated Clubs and by the State Legislature in 1944.



State Land Mammal

The White-Tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) was designated the State Land Mammal of Mississippi by Senate Bill 2324, General Laws of Mississippi of 1974. The Red Fox was also named State Land Mammal in the 1997 Legislative Session.



State Beverage

The Legislature designated milk as the State Beverage during the 1984 regular session, Chapter 394, General Laws of Mississippi of 1984.

State Song

On May 17, 1962, the Legislature designated "Go, Mississippi" by Houston Davis as the official song of the State of Mississippi, Chapter 654, General Laws of Mississippi of 1962.

Mississippi Facts

<i>Statehood</i>	December 10, 1817 (20 th State in the Union)
<i>Origin of Name</i>	From several different Indian words which translate "Ancient Father of Waters," "Great River," "Beyond Age," or "Chief River." The most common translation is "Father of Waters."
<i>Nickname</i>	Hospitality State
<i>Capital</i>	Jackson
<i>Population</i>	2.75 million (1998)
<i>Square Miles</i>	47,233 (including 42 miles of inland water surface)
<i>Average Temperature</i>	65 degrees

Mississippi State Government

Statewide Officials, 2000 – 2004

<i>Governor</i>	Ronnie Musgrove
<i>Lieutenant Governor</i>	Amy Tuck
<i>Attorney General</i>	Mike Moore
<i>Treasurer</i>	Marshall Bennett
<i>Secretary of State</i>	Eric Clark
<i>State Auditor</i>	Phil Bryant
<i>Commissioner of Insurance</i>	George Dale
<i>Commissioner of Agriculture And Commerce</i>	Lester Spell

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The Governor is the chief executive charged with the general administration of the state. In this capacity, the Governor sees that laws are faithfully executed, acts as commander in chief of the Mississippi National Guard, and appoints administrative heads and other officials as prescribed by law.

The Governor is responsible for the presentation of a balanced budget to the Legislature and signs or vetoes bills passed by the Legislature. The Governor may call extraordinary sessions of the Legislature and may issue pardons, executive orders and extraditions of fugitives from other states.

JUDICIAL BRANCH

The judicial branch serves as a check to the powers of the executive and legislative branches through the constitutional power of judicial review. The courts rule on the legality of executive policies and the constitutionality of laws passed by the Legislature.

The judicial power of the state is vested in the Supreme Court and other courts such as the Court of Appeals, the Chancery and Circuit Courts, and the County Courts.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Legislature is the lawmaking body of state government. The Legislature is comprised of the Senate and the House of Representatives. There are 52 Senators and 122 Representatives.

Senators serve four-year terms. Senators must be twenty-five years old, residents of the state for four years, and residents of their districts for two years. Representatives also serve four-year terms and must be at least twenty-one years old. Representatives must be residents of the state for four years and of their counties for two years.

The presiding officer of the Senate is the Lieutenant Governor. The presiding officer of the House of Representatives is the Speaker of the House.

During each session, the Legislature can be expected to send more than 500 bills to the Governor to be signed. The Legislature meets for 90 days each year and for 125 days every four years.



State Capitol

Famous Mississippians

The Arts

Margret W. Alexander* – writer
Walter Anderson* – artist
John Butler – choreographer
Hodding Carter, III – journalist
Ellen Douglas – writer
William Faulkner* – novelist
Shelby Foote – novelist, historian
Ellen Gilchrist – novelist
John Grisham – novelist
Beth Henley – playwright
Willie Morris* – journalist
Walker Percy* – novelist
William Raspberry – columnist
James Street* – novelist
Eudora Welty – novelist
Tennessee Williams* – playwright
Richard Wright* – novelist, poet
Zig Zigler – speaker/writer

Astronauts

Fred Haise, Jr.
Donald Peterson

Social Reformers

Medgar Evers* – civil rights
Fannie Lou Hamer* – civil rights
Ida B. Wells* – civil rights

Sports Personalities

Red Barber* Steve McNair
Dizzy Dean* Walter Peyton*
Brett Favre Jerry Rice
Archie Manning

Entertainers

Dana Andrews* – actor
Jerry Clower* – comedian
Morgan Freeman – actor
Jim Henson* – creator of the Muppets
James Earl Jones – actor
Dianne Ladd – actor
Gerald McRaney – actor
Bob Pittman – founder of MTV
Eric Roberts – actor
Oprah Winfrey – actor/talkshow

Musicians/Singers

Jimmy Buffett	Leontyne Price
Moe Bandy	Charley Pride
Bo Diddley	LeAnn Rimes
W.C. Handy*	Jimmie Rodgers*
Faith Hill	Marty Stuart
Robert Johnson*	Ike Turner
B.B. King	Conway Twitty*
Dorothy Moore	Muddy Waters*
Brandi Norwood	Howlin' Wolf*
Elvis Presley*	Tammy Wynette*



The Governor's Mansion

* *Deceased*

Mississippi's History

Mississippi was first inhabited by three major Indian tribes – the Chickasaws in the north, the Choctaws in the central and south, and Natchez Indians in the southwest along the Mississippi River. Other smaller tribes include the Biloxi, the Pascagoulas, the Tunicas, the Chocchumas, and the Yazoos.

1540-1541 – Spanish explorer Hernando De Soto is the first European to discover Mississippi and the Mississippi River.

1682 – Robert Cavalier de La Salle navigates the Mississippi River and claims all lands drained by the river for France.

1699 – Frenchman Pierre LeMoyne, Sieur D'Iberville, and his brother Jean Baptiste, Sieur D'Iberville, establish Fort Maurepas (present-day Ocean Springs) as the first European settlement in Mississippi.

1716 – Fort Rosalie is founded, the initial settlement for what becomes Natchez.

1763 – Mississippi and other French territory are given to Great Britain after France is defeated in the French and Indian War.

1781 – 1783 – After the American Revolution, in which Spain declared war against the British, the Treaty of Paris gives control of the southern half of Mississippi to Spain and the United States gains possession of the northern half.

1798 – Spain withdraws from Mississippi. Mississippi is organized as an American territory with Winthrop Sargent, appointed by President Thomas Jefferson, as the first territorial governor.

1817 – On December 10, Mississippi is admitted to the Union as the twentieth state by an Act of Congress. Washington, Mississippi, near Natchez, is the first capital. David Holmes is the first Governor.

1822 – The state capital is moved to Lefleur's Bluff in the central part of the state and the City of Jackson is founded. The "Old Capitol" (now a museum) and the Governor's Mansion are built in the 1840's.

1830 – The Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek is signed between the Choctaws and the federal government giving almost ten million acres to Mississippi.

1832 – The Treaty of Pontotoc Creek cedes north Mississippi Chickasaw land to the federal government.

1861 – On January 9, Mississippi secedes from the Union and becomes part of the Confederate States of America.

1862 – The Battle of Corinth, the bloodiest battle in Mississippi history, is fought on October 3 and 4. The Confederates are forced out of Corinth.

1863 – On July 4, Vicksburg surrenders after a long siege. The "Gibraltar of the Confederacy" falls and gives the Union control of the Mississippi River, separating Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas from the rest of the Confederacy.

1864 – Outnumbered Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest defeats Federal troops at the Battles of Okolona and Brice's Crossroads.

1865 – On May 4, Confederate General Richard Taylor surrenders his forces in Alabama, Mississippi and East Louisiana.

1867 – A military government is established in Mississippi. Reconstruction begins.

1870 – Mississippi is readmitted to the Union. Governor James L. Alcorn gradually restores civil government. Senator Hiram Revels becomes the first black U.S. Senator.

1876 – Reconstruction ends.

1890 – The Constitution of 1890 is adopted. This Constitution is still in use today.

1903 – The “New Capitol” is constructed in Jackson.

1907 – The boll weevil arrives and destroys most of the state’s cotton crop.

1922 – The Legislature authorizes a system of junior colleges, the first in the nation.

1927 – The Mississippi River floods almost three million acres and leaves thousands homeless in the Delta.

1936 – Governor Hugh White establishes the Balance Agriculture with Industry (BAWI) program to support industrial and economic development.

1962 – James Meredith integrates the University of Mississippi and becomes the first black Mississippian to attend one of the state’s segregated public colleges.

1964 – Congress passes the Civil Rights Act, which outlaws segregation in public places.

1969 – Hurricane Camille results in extensive property damage, kills 144, and injures 9,472 on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

1969 – Segregation ends in public schools.

1976 – Evelyn Gandy becomes Mississippi’s first woman Lieutenant Governor.

1983 – Lenore Prather becomes Mississippi’s first woman Supreme Court Justice.

1985 – Justice Reuben Anderson becomes Mississippi’s first black Supreme Court Justice.

2000 - David Ronald Musgrove becomes Mississippi’s sixty-second Governor.



The Old Capitol Museum

Mississippi “Trivia”

- National Geographic is printed by the Ringier-American Company in Corinth.
- The world’s only cactus plantation is located in Edwards with more than 3,000 varieties of cacti.
- Mississippi has more tree farms than any other state.
- Mississippi has more churches per capita than any other state.
- Dr. James Hardy lead the world’s first lung transplant team at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in 1963. The following year, Dr. Hardy and his team transplanted the heart of a chimpanzee – man’s closest genetic relation – into the chest of a human. The world’s first heart transplanted into man beat for 90 minutes before it stopped.
- The first football player on a Wheaties box was Walter Peyton of Columbia.
- The Teddy Bear’s name originated after a bear hunt to Mississippi with President Theodore Roosevelt.
- The 4-H Club began in Holmes County in 1907.
- On April 25, 1866, women in Columbus decorated the graves of Confederate and Union soldiers in Friendship Cemetery. This gesture became known as Decoration Day, the beginning of what we observe as Memorial Day.
- Mississippi University for Women in Columbus was the first state college for women in the country, established in 1884.
- The International Checkers Hall of Fame is in Pearl.
- Natchez was settled by the French in 1716 and is the oldest permanent settlement on the Mississippi River.
- Resin Bowie, the inventor of the Bowie Knife, is buried in Port Gibson.
- Coca-Cola was first bottled in 1894 in Vicksburg by Joesph A. Biedenharn.
- Belzoni is the Catfish Capital of the World. Approximately eighty percent of the nation’s farm-raised catfish comes from Mississippi.
- Peavey Electronics in Meridian is the world’s largest manufacturer of musical amplification equipment.
- The nation’s first Parent-Teachers Association was founded in Crystal Springs.
- Babe Ruth’s last home run was hit off a Mississippian, Guy Bush of Tupelo.

Life in Mississippi

Public Education

Mississippi's 152 public school districts are comprised of 1,021 schools, including, but not limited to, 518 elementary (K-8), 197 secondary (7-12), and 148 combined elementary and secondary (k-12) schools. Approximately 500,000 students attend these schools.

Mississippi is served by eight public institutions of higher learning and one graduate medical school. Approximately 63,000 students attended these universities in the Fall of 1999.

The Economy

Long recognized as an agricultural state, today's Mississippi is also the nation's largest manufacturer of upholstered furniture, supplies 80% of the world's supply of pond-raised catfish, and is home to NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center, where all engines for the Space Shuttle are tested. Mississippi is home to the nation's largest Army Corps of Engineers' Waterway Experiment Station, and the Grand Gulf Nuclear Power Station. The state is recognized internationally for its outstanding contributions in the medical research areas of hypertension and organ transplantation. Telecommunications is a rapidly growing market, with MCI/Worldcom, the nation's second largest long distance carrier, headquartered in Clinton.

Transportation

Major interstates in Mississippi include I-10 (east/west), I-20 (east/west), I-55 (north/south) and I-59 (southwest/northwest). Most major Mississippi cities are serviced by either a major or a commuter airline. Amtrak services several cities and towns and most towns are linked by bus service.

The *Natchez Trace Parkway* is a historic national highway that runs from Nashville, Tennessee, through Mississippi to Natchez. This scenic route allows no commercial vehicles, has no billboards, and maintains a speed limit of 50 mph.

Running parallel to the Mississippi River is Highway 61, often referred to as the *Blues Highway* and the *Great River Road*. It begins just below Memphis and runs through Mississippi into Louisiana, following the winding curves of the largest river in North America.

Recreation/Attractions

Mississippians may choose from twenty-eight state parks or historical sites for their recreational activities. Many cities host Spring pilgrimages, opening beautiful antebellum homes to the public. Casinos operate along the Gulf Coast and the Mississippi River. The Mississippi Gulf Coast is the nation's largest and longest manmade beach. Jackson is one of four cities in the world sanctioned by the International Theatre/Dance Committee to host the International Ballet Competition. Mississippi is the home to many cultural and musical festivals throughout the year, including Mardi Gras on the Gulf Coast and the Delta Blues Festival.

Mississippi

*Counties, Highways and
Municipalities with Populations
Greater than 5,000*

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