A Time-Traveler’s Companion to Our Counties
The story of our great state is brimming with vibrant characters, courageous quests, daring discoveries, and many bold stands for equality and justice. While most Alabamians are well acquainted with the more famous tales, some of the unexpected facts and lesser known details often remain overlooked. The Alabama Bicentennial PastPort invites you to embark on a statewide adventure that delves into a deep discovery of the sites where state-shaping events took place. This immersive journey ties together 67 counties and 200 years of history to vividly capture the true spirit of our people and the full, fascinating story of the land we love. Join us on this adventurous, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to unlock mysteries, spark imagination, and ignite curious exploration into who we are today, how we came to be, and what we hope to become.
67 COUNTIES
7 REGIONS
1 ALABAMA
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MAKE SURE TO

STAMP YOUR BOOK


MARION COUNTY Fall Line Hills


Long ago, the peaceful hills of Marion County were a well-traveled frontier. Early settlers bravely crossed unfamiliar territory and put down roots along ancient Indian pathways near Pikeville. Each year, locals honor the hardworking beasts that pulled their ancestors’ wagons and plowed the fields. Mule Day is celebrated every fall in streets of charming downtown Winfield. It’s a weekend filled with lively music, dancing, and parades that draw crowds from all over the Southeast. While in town, visitors can explore the Marion County Arts Trail to discover Jerry Brown’s whimsical pottery, Misty Mill’s murals, and a glorious art deco theater. Journey back in time to Pikeville for a backcountry adventure in a ghost town from the 1820s, or head three miles south of Hamilton to see ancient Indian burial mounds on the banks of the Buttahatchee River.

During the Revolutionary War, the elusive "Swamp Fox," Francis Marion, led surprise attacks against the British. His ambush, enemy troops, slipping in and out of swamps. His patriotic acts inspired the county’s name.
The Piedmont Plateau rests between Alabama’s highest mountains and its sprawling prairies. On landscapes unlike any other region in the state, Native American tribes lived and hunted for thousands of years. Later, settlers and speculators swooped into the region. Some came here seeking to strike it rich during the state’s first gold rush in the early 1800s. Others arrived to chip away treasures in the marble quarries near the area. Generations of families worked in large cotton mills, anchoring the economies of their small towns and the state. Tireless workers achieved brave and mighty feats, constructing the dams that created some of the state’s most beloved lakes. Our thrilling history celebrates the lives of great adventurers, innovators, athletes, and artists who changed the world.
Robert Posey, one of the legendary “Monuments Men,” was an Auburn graduate and Alabama native. He and his rescue team recovered more than 6,500 stolen pieces of art from the Nazis during World War II.

Lee County is a charming place with a world-changing legacy. Auburn University is well known for championing innovation. Samford Hall, the most iconic building on campus, represents its origins as an agricultural and mechanical college. Auburn’s groundbreaking research on crop rotation transformed farming across the nation, while ongoing soil studies continue to cultivate new insights. They certainly have higher education down to a science, but come game day, the Jordan-Hare Stadium packs in the football fans. There’s nothing like huge crowds cheering “War Eagle” or rolling Toomer’s Corner after a nail-biting victory. A stone’s throw away, trains whistle through the vibrant downtown area of Opelika, while the performing arts shine at East Alabama Arts. Step back in time at the Museum of East Alabama, or enjoy golfing at the Grand National Golf Course.

Robert Posey, one of the legendary “Monuments Men,” was an Auburn graduate and Alabama native. He and his rescue team recovered more than 6,500 stolen pieces of art from the Nazis during World War II.
Clay County is a rustic paradise. Cozy cabins and small towns scatter the countryside while Cheaha Mountain soars above the Talladega National Forest. Creek Indians once hunted wild game in these woods but fled following their defeat in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. Settlers soon flooded the lands they left behind. Old McIntosh Road and other Indian trails were major thoroughfares during the land rush known as “Alabama Fever.” The discovery of abundant graphite deposits opened mining hubs in Ashland. Hugo Black, a controversial Supreme Court justice, was born and raised here. His rulings on Brown vs. The Board of Education and other landmark cases helped overturn unjust laws. Today, this area is known for majestic views and scenic driving trails. Cruise along curvy roads, swim in waterfalls on the Odum Scout Trail, or pan for gold in Lineville.

Randolph County

The story of Randolph County is filled with a colorful cast of characters who were ahead of their time. Years before women could vote, Ella Smith rose to fame as a creative genius. She invented the “Roanoke Indestructible Doll,” which won her a blue ribbon at the 1904 World’s Fair. Decades earlier, locals named a town “Louina” after a wealthy Indian woman who ran a busy trading post there. But her popularity was short-lived—the federal government exiled her on the Trail of Tears. William Holtzclaw, a Roanoke native, set out on his own difficult journey. He walked and biked all the way to Mississippi, where he founded the first African American college in the state. Today, this county is known for a world-famous potter who worked at Rock Mills. Visitors can stop by the Roanoke County Historical Museum to view the pottery and dolls that put this area on the map.
GOLD RUSH WILD WEST

THE ORIGINAL SADDLE UP & STRIKE IT CHASING RICHES ON

IN THE 1830S, PROSPECTORS DISCOVER TENT TOWNS BOOM WITH RUGGED MINERS HAUL IN GREAT FORTUNES,

BIG. JOIN THOUSANDS THE NEW FRONTIER.

GOLD AND CROWDS POUR INTO ALABAMA. CHARACTERS AND RECKLESS GAMBLERS. FEVERISHLY DIGGING DAY AND NIGHT.
The sparkling waters and rugged cliffs of Tallapoosa County set the dramatic backdrop to many epic struggles and thrilling discoveries throughout history. On the slow-moving curves of the Tallapoosa River, the fate of nations was decided in the last battle of the Creek War of 1813-1814. Chiefs defended their age-old way of life at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, but General Andrew Jackson’s forces crushed their resistance. Clouds of smoke rose over hundreds of fallen Red Stick warriors, and months later, leaders of the Creek Nation signed a treaty giving up vast acres of tribal lands. Settlers flooded the frontier, and gold dust sparked an exhilarating rush. Miners panned for gold in streams, and Goldville boomed like a Wild West town. Exciting experiences still await today at Lake Martin. Daredevils leap off Chimney Rock, and lush shorelines set the scene for endless hours of watersports.

The Wellborn Musclecar Museum brings to life the era of fast cars, rock ‘n’ roll, and rebellion. Its huge collection of high-powered, vintage Dodge Chargers adds a dose of excitement to weekends at the lake.
CLEBURNE COUNTY Piedmont Plateau

Calamities. Treaties. Gardens.

The story of Cleburne County began in prehistoric times and was shaped along the way by cultural influences from as far away as France and Greece. About 85 million years ago, a five-mile-wide meteor hurled from space and blasted into local bedrock. The massive impact wiped out many ancient creatures and left the Wetumpka Crater, one of the best-preserved craters of its kind ever discovered. Later (much later) in the early 18th century, French soldiers built Fort Toulouse to protect their New World holdings from the British. The fort became Fort Jackson during the Creek War of 1813-1814 and served as the site where General Andrew Jackson and leaders of the Creek Nation signed the Treaty of Fort Jackson. Today, families can enjoy Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson Park, or travel down the road to experience “a little corner of Greece” at Jasmine Hill Gardens.

CLEBURNE COUNTY Piedmont Plateau


Cleburne County is a place of soulful roots, tasty tales, and mountain life. Long ago, spiritual revivals swept across the South, awakening interest in old music traditions. The Denson brothers felt the calling to revive Christian shape note singings. They led singing schools and updated the Sacred Harp Songbook, and the Appalachian foothills soon rang with praise. Pastimes in these parts seem to get sweeter with age. In the 1890s, the village of Fruithurst blossomed with an influx of well-to-do Europeans. Guests sipped fine wines and savored gourmet delicacies at the Fruithurst Inn. The town’s vineyards dried up during Prohibition, but wineries nearby are now revitalizing the area’s winemaking heritage. Up the road in Cheaha State Park, Alabama’s highest mountain towers 2,407 feet. Summit the peak with an easy climb up Bunker Tower, or soak in marvelous views at Bald Rock.
Festive Food

TRI-STATE BBQ FESTIVAL dothan / CULLMAN
WEEKEND huntsville / ORANGE BEACH WINE FESTIVAL
MUSIC FESTIVAL gulf shores / COTTON PICKIN' BBQ
PICKING willbrook / FLEMENS GREASE
BLUEBERRY FESTIVAL / CHILTON
birmingham / TASTE OF BIRMINGHAM birmingham
BIRMINGHAM RESTAURANT WEEK birmingham
CULLMAN / ST. WILLIAM CHURCH SEAFOOD FESTIVAL
DECATOR / PORKTOBERQUE dothan / GET OUT BOIL
GUNTERSVILLE / BIRMINGHAM MEATBALLS BREAKIN
CULLMAN / ALABAMA MEET THE FLAVOR foley / NATIONAL
ANNISTON / AMERICAN RENAISSANCE FEAST florence
PEANUT FESTIVAL dothan / CANE SYRUP MAKIN' DAY
ST. NICHOLAS ANNUAL FOOD FESTIVAL brookside
A CHILI COUNTRY CHRISTMAS brundidge
STRAWBERRY FEST CULLMAN / WHISTLESTOP
ORANGE BEACH / CAIFISH FESTIVAL scottsboro / HANGOUT
COOK-OFF HARTSELLE / BLACKBERRY BLUEBERRY FESTIVAL ATHENS / ALABAMA
PEACH FESTIVAL SHAWFISH BASH
GRAND BAY / GRAND BAY FESTIVAL grand bay
PICNIC / GARDEN PRAIRIE Erlanger / SLOSSFEST
OKRA FESTIVAL BURKERVILLE / CLUCK N BREW
BOAT RIVERFEST BARBEQUE COOK-OFF & FESTIVAL / SMOKE ON THE WATER
BREAD birmingham / CULLMAN OKTOBERFEST
SHRIMP FESTIVAL GALVESTON / NATIONAL
ALABAMA PECAN FESTIVAL / NATIONAL
BEATRICE / PILE ROAD ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR PIKE ROAD
MOBILE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL mobile
SLOCOMB TOMATO FESTIVAL slocomb
Coosa County overflows with priceless resources. Glittering waterways and sky-high dams generate electricity for Alabama communities. In 1914, Alabama Power’s founder William Patrick Lay came up with a bold plan to build the state’s first hydroelectric dam. His vision made big waves and led to the creation of Lay Lake. Today, it’s a hotspot for sunbathers and summer campers. Nearby on Lake Martin, boaters cruise its 700 miles of shoreline, while sportsmen snag catfish at Lake Mitchell. The land is filled with minerals, and companies are reviving the area’s heritage as “Alabama’s Graphite Belt.” New graphite mines could put this county at the forefront of the worldwide battery market. But perhaps the biggest local claim to fame is “Fred the Town Dog.” Animal lovers can visit his grave behind the Old Rock Jail in Rockford, or listen to townspeople tell his heartwarming story.

When Fred wandered into Rockford, he found a whole new family. The small town adopted Fred and lavished him with love and treats. The TV network Animal Planet even aired a special on the beloved “Fred the Town Dog.”
Chambers County’s history is full of brave, unstoppable heroes. The world’s greatest heavyweight boxing champion, Joe Louis, was born in a sharecropper’s shack at the foot of Buckalew Mountain. His record-breaking bouts brought blacks and whites together around crackling, international radio broadcasts. America cheered as Louis defeated German boxer Max Schmeling in the era of Nazi Germany’s white supremacy. Nearly a century earlier, locals celebrated Cusseta’s Pat Garrett for relentlessly tracking down and taking out infamous outlaw Billy the Kid. Today, adventurers are still drawn to the county. Outdoor enthusiasts can fish, hunt, hike, camp, or canoe along the shores of the Chattahoochee and Tallapoosa Rivers, or go boating at West Point Lake where there’s more than 500 miles of shoreline to explore.

A common thread weaves this county’s communities together. At the turn of the 20th century, four local mill towns formed the center of Alabama’s textile industry. The mills turned raw cotton into towels, linens, and denim.
STAMP SITE LOCATIONS

Chambers County
Chambers County Museum
Lafayette

Clay County
Clay County Museum
Ashland

City of Lineville Museum
Lineville

Cleburne County
Cheaha State Park and Lodge
Delta

Coosa County
Old Rock Jail Museum
Rockford

Elmore County
Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson Park
Wetumpka

Elmore County Museum
Wetumpka

Jasmine Hill Gardens
Wetumpka

Museum of Black History
Wetumpka

Lee County
Pebble Hill, Scott-Yarbrough House
Auburn

Lee County Historical Society Museum
Loachapoka

Museum of East Alabama
Opelika

Randolph County
Randolph County Historical Museum
Roanoke

Tallapoosa County
Horseshoe Bend National Military Park
Daviston

Tallapoosa County Museum
Dadeville

OTHER SITES TO SEE

Chambers County
Iron Bridge
Valley

Joe Louis Statue
Lafayette

Cleburne County
Shoal Creek Church
Fruithurst

Elmore County
Benjamin Fitzpatrick Bridge
Tallassee

Lee County
Toomer’s Corner
Auburn

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THE ALABAMA BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION
is pleased to bring you the Alabama Bicentennial PastPort. It is a once-in-a-lifetime gift to the students and citizens of our state. Many thanks to our corporate sponsors – Mercedes-Benz, Verizon, Airbus, and Alabama NewsCenter – for their tremendous generosity and support and to the institutions and individuals who have graciously granted access to historical images and artwork used throughout the piece. For a full list of contributors, please visit the Alabama PastPort app.

Happy exploring!