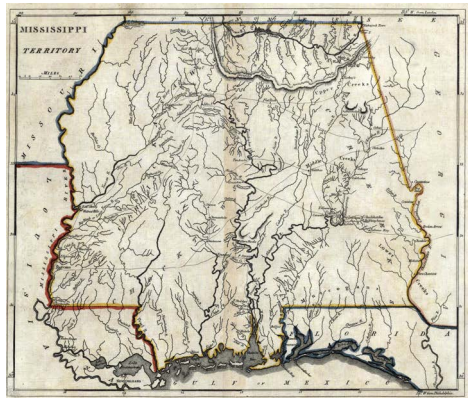


45" →

↑ 10"

ALABAMA'S PATH TO STATEHOOD



In 1817, the present-day states of Alabama and Mississippi were both part of one Mississippi Territory.

Matthew Carey published this map of the Mississippi Territory in 1814. Alabama Department of Archives and History.

↑ 36"

MARCH 3, 1817
Alabama Territory Created

As the population grew in the western half of the Mississippi Territory, its citizens asked Congress for permission to become a state. Congress agreed, and it decided that the eastern half should become a new territory called *Alabama*. The territorial capital was St. Stephens, a busy frontier town located on the Tombigbee River, north of Mobile. Seeing opportunity in the new territory, large numbers of settlers arrived from Georgia, Tennessee, and the Carolinas. They built farms and plantations on land recently occupied by Native Americans.



JANUARY 19, 1818
Territorial Legislature Meets in St. Stephens

The territorial legislature wrote the first laws for Alabama, created new counties, and authorized a census to count the population. Under federal law, the territory needed 60,000 residents before it could become a state. Although two counties did not report their numbers, the rest of the territory had 67,594 inhabitants. The legislators and Territorial Governor William Wyatt Bibb, a doctor and former U.S. Senator from Georgia, looked forward to Alabama becoming a state.



↑ 24"

AUGUST 2, 1819
Constitution of 1819 Signed in Huntsville

In March 1819, Congress and President Monroe approved the territory's request to hold a constitutional convention and develop a state government. During July and early August, 44 delegates met in Huntsville, which served as the temporary seat of government. The delegates, all white males, included lawyers, planters, physicians, ministers, farmers, and tradesmen. They signed the new constitution on August 2 and sent a copy to Washington, D.C., for consideration.



OCTOBER 25, 1819
First State Legislature Meets in Huntsville

While waiting for federal approval of the constitution, Alabama conducted elections for state officials in the fall of 1819. The new state legislature held its first session in Huntsville. It passed laws that set county boundaries, created roads, and established the court system. Governor Bibb signed these bills into law and made plans to move the state government to Cahawba, a new town located where the Cahaba and Alabama rivers meet, near Selma.



DECEMBER 14, 1819
Alabama Becomes the 22nd State

On December 14, 1819, President Monroe signed a congressional resolution accepting Alabama's constitution. His signature formally admitted Alabama as the 22nd state. In Huntsville, the new state government also passed a resolution. Theirs said "thank you" to President Monroe.



18" →

↑ 10"

WHOSE VOICE MATTERED?

The 1819 constitution was unusual for its time because it gave the right to vote to all white males 21 and older. Unlike most other states, Alabama did not require residents to own property, pay taxes, or serve in the militia in order to vote.

Not everyone could participate, however. African American men could not vote in Alabama until 1867, when the First Reconstruction Act required equal voting rights for freedmen. Regardless of their race, women in Alabama could not vote until 1920, when the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution went into effect.

36" →



Alabama will celebrate its 200th birthday on December 14, 2019. All year, communities throughout the state will hold events in honor of the occasion. How would you like to wish Alabama happy birthday?

Learn More
alabama200.org
[@al200](https://twitter.com/al200)

Above: Jane Mallory's 1818 map of the Alabama Territory. Library of Congress.



24" →