# A State Takes Shape

How settlement changed Alabama's government

**SS24.4.10** "Explain how "Alabama fever" influenced Alabama's settlement, economic growth, and political development, leading to statehood and the 1819 constitution. 10a Identify contributions of Alabama's early political leaders..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline two ways Alabama fever changed life in Alabama, circle the names of five political leaders, and number the four capital cities in order in the last paragraph. Use your marks to explain how growth shaped the new state.

### Alabama Grows and Governs

1. In the 1810s, people called the rush of newcomers to Alabama "Alabama fever." Settlers sought cheap farmland and planted cotton. Rivers carried cotton to markets, helping towns and businesses grow. But this rush also pushed Native peoples from their homelands. As the population grew, residents wanted their own state government. Delegates met in Huntsville in 1819 to write a constitution, and Alabama became a state that year.

2. William Wyatt Bibb governed Alabama Territory and became the first state governor. When he died, his brother Thomas Bibb, president of the state senate, became governor. John W. Walker led the meeting that wrote the 1819 constitution. Walker and William Rufus King became Alabama's first two U.S. senators. Later, Israel Pickens served as governor while leaders debated the capital's location.

3. Alabama's capital moved as leaders argued about where a growing state should be governed. Huntsville was the first temporary state capital because delegates had met there. Lawmakers chose Cahaba, where two rivers met, as the first permanent capital. Flooding there and growth farther inland helped persuade lawmakers to move the capital to Tuscaloosa in 1826. In 1846, lawmakers chose Montgomery, a river trade center nearer the state's growing population.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Alabama fever help bring about statehood and the 1819 constitution?

2. How were William Wyatt Bibb's and Thomas Bibb's roles connected as the new state began?

3. What different parts of state government did John W. Walker, William Rufus King, and Israel Pickens help lead?

4. Why did lawmakers move the capital away from Cahaba and later choose Montgomery?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a lawmaker in 1846. Write a three-sentence speech for or against moving the capital from Tuscaloosa to Montgomery. Use a geographic fact and an economic fact from the passage, and explain how your choice could help the government serve people.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 4 · SS24.4.10

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways Alabama fever changed life in Alabama, circle the names of five political leaders, and number the four capital cities in order in the last paragraph. Use your marks to explain how growth shaped the new state. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did Alabama fever help bring about statehood and the 1819 constitution? | **Newcomers grew cotton, which helped towns and businesses grow. As the population grew, residents wanted a state government, so delegates wrote a constitution in 1819.** |
| 2 | How were William Wyatt Bibb's and Thomas Bibb's roles connected as the new state began? | **William Wyatt Bibb was the first state governor. After he died, Thomas Bibb became governor.** |
| 3 | What different parts of state government did John W. Walker, William Rufus King, and Israel Pickens help lead? | **Walker led the meeting that wrote the constitution, and he and King became U.S. senators. Pickens later served as governor.** |
| 4 | Why did lawmakers move the capital away from Cahaba and later choose Montgomery? | **Flooding at Cahaba and growth farther inland helped lead to the move to Tuscaloosa. Lawmakers later chose Montgomery because it was a river trade center nearer the growing population.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I vote to move the capital to Montgomery because it is nearer Alabama's growing population. Montgomery is a river trade center where people bring goods to market. Meeting there could help our government stay connected to the communities where the state is growing.

For the speech, accept either position if the student uses geographic and economic facts from the passage and explains how the choice could help the government serve people.