

STATE CAPITOL & OFFICIAL STATE SYMBOLS

Illinois State Capitol

Illinois has had six State Capitol buildings in three cities since entering the Union as the 21st state on Dec. 3, 1818.

Kaskaskia was the state's first capital city. The first Capitol building was a simple, two-story brick structure that housed the 29-member House of Representatives and the 14-member Senate.

In 1820, Vandalia became Illinois' second capital. The new Capitol building was a plain, two-story frame structure. After being destroyed by fire, another Capitol was built in 1824 for \$15,000.

In 1833, the General Assembly passed an act enabling voters to choose a new capital from among the cities of Vandalia, Jacksonville, Peoria, Springfield and Alton. In 1836, determined to keep their city as the capital, Vandalia residents tore down the Capitol building and replaced it with a brick State House costing \$16,000. However, Springfield was ultimately named Illinois' third capital city. The state's fifth Capitol building — now the Old State Capitol State Historic Site — was completed in 1853 at a cost of \$260,000 and is where Abraham Lincoln served as a state legislator.

The present State Capitol, located at Second and Capitol streets in Springfield, was constructed over a 20-year period and completed in 1888. Designed by architects John Cochrane, George Garnsey, Alfred Piquenard and W.W. Boyington, the Capitol is situated on a 9-acre plot in the form of a Latin cross. The dome is supported by a circular foundation, 92 feet in diameter, set on solid rock 25 feet below the grade line. The height from the ground line to the top of the dome is 361 feet and 405 feet to the tip of the flag staff. The Capitol was built at a cost of \$4.3 million.



State Capitol Building



Old State Capitol

Illinois State Flag



Illinois has had two official state flags. Ella Park Lawrence, state regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), led a vigorous campaign that included a contest among Illinois DAR chapters to design the first state flag. The Rockford chapter's entry, designed by Lucy Derwent, was chosen. State Senator Raymond D. Meekeer introduced a bill making the DAR's design the official state flag, which became law in July 1915.

More than 50 years later, a move to design a new flag was initiated by Chief Petty Officer Bruce McDaniel of Waverly, then serving in Vietnam. The identity of

the Illinois flag hanging among other state flags in his mess hall was often questioned because it did not carry the state's name. McDaniel requested that the word "Illinois" be added to the flag.

A bill to amend the original Flag Act of 1915, adding the word "Illinois" to the flag, was signed into law by Governor Richard B. Ogilvie in September 1969. Ogilvie then appointed a committee to develop specifications for the new state flag to ensure uniformity of design and color in its reproduction by flag makers.

Florence Hutchison of Greenfield submitted a flag design that contained all the required elements as specified by law. Her design — a white field with the word "Illinois" and an exact replica of the state seal — became the official state flag of Illinois in July 1970.

Great Seal of Illinois



Great Seal of the
State of Illinois
(1868-present)

The first state seal used in what is now Illinois was that of the Northwest Territory in 1788. The Seal of the Illinois Territory followed in 1809.

After Illinois gained statehood in December 1818, the first General Assembly passed a law on Feb. 19, 1819, requiring the Secretary of State to procure a permanent state seal. The design chosen was a duplicate of the Great Seal of the United States. Gunsmith Philip Creamer was paid \$85 to produce an engraving device that would affix an imprint of the seal to any document. The First Great Seal of Illinois was used until 1839 when it was recut. The new version became the Second Great Seal.

Secretary of State Sharon Tyndale was responsible for creating the seal in use today. In January 1867, he asked state Senator Allen C. Fuller to sponsor a bill authorizing a new state seal. Tyndale proposed reversing the words "State Sovereignty, National Union" in light of the Civil War, but a bill was passed on March 7, 1867, creating a new seal with the original wording. Tyndale did change the banner's placement on the seal with "Sovereignty" being upside down, decreasing its legibility.

The state seal has been recut several times since 1868, but Tyndale's design has remained unchanged. The current seal depicts an eagle with a banner in its beak with the state motto, "State Sovereignty, National Union." The words "Seal of the State of Illinois" and "Aug. 26th 1818" — the date the first Illinois Constitution was signed — encircle the design.

In August 2002, Secretary of State Jesse White announced that Illinois State Archives staff had uncovered the oldest-known impression of the original state seal while processing 19th-century Madison County court records. As a result of the discovery dated Nov. 18, 1819, the artist's rendition of the First State Seal now reflects previously unknown details visible on the new find.

The Secretary of State is the keeper of the Great Seal of the State of Illinois. Reproduction or use of the state seal or the state flag is permissible only in strict accordance with Chapter 5 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes.

Official State Symbols

State Tree — White Oak: In 1907, Mrs. James C. Fessler of Rochelle suggested to state officials that Illinois schoolchildren vote for a state tree and state flower. The native oak was selected for the state tree and became law in 1908. In 1973, a special poll of nearly 900,000 children changed the state tree from the native oak to the white oak, which was signed into law that year.

State Flower — Violet: When schoolchildren voted on the state tree, they selected the violet as the state flower, which also became law in 1908.

State Song — “Illinois”: With music by Archibald Johnston and lyrics by Charles H. Chamberlain, “Illinois” served as the state’s unofficial song for many years before the 54th General Assembly passed a bill in 1925 making it official. The bill was introduced by Senator Florence Fifer Bohrer, the first woman to serve in the Illinois Senate. (See page 61 for lyrics.)

State Bird — Cardinal: In 1928, the Macomb branch of the National Federation of Professional Women’s Clubs suggested that Illinois schoolchildren select a state bird. The cardinal was chosen from five birds common in Illinois and designated the state bird in 1929.

State Slogan — “Land of Lincoln”: The slogan that appears on Illinois license plates was adopted by the General Assembly in 1955. That same year, Congress granted Illinois a copyright for exclusive use of the “Land of Lincoln” insignia.

State Mineral — Fluorite: A bill designating fluorite as the official state mineral was passed in 1965. Calcium fluorite is a glass-like mineral used in making steel, enamels, aluminum, glass and many chemicals. Illinois is the largest producer of fluorite in the United States.

State Insect — Monarch Butterfly: In 1974, a third-grade class from Dennis Elementary School in Decatur proposed the orange and black monarch butterfly as the state insect, which became law in 1975.

State Animal — White-tailed Deer: The white-tailed deer was selected as the state animal by Illinois schoolchildren in 1980 and became law in January 1982. Native to North America, the deer has a gray coat that turns reddish brown in summer and an eye-catching tail that is bright white on the underside.

State Fish — Bluegill: The state fish was selected by schoolchildren in 1986. A member of the sunfish family, the colorful bluegill reaches only about 9 inches in length and weighs an average of 14 ounces, but it has a reputation as one of the best fighting game fish.

State Prairie Grass — Big Bluestem: A law designating big bluestem as Illinois’ official prairie grass was signed into law in August 1989. Big bluestem was chosen in a poll of students conducted by the state Department of Conservation. Named for its bluish purple stem, big bluestem is the tallest prairie grass in Illinois.

State Fossil — Tully Monster: A soft-bodied marine animal that lived 280 to 340 million years ago, the Tully monster was designated the state fossil in 1989. An impression of the Tully monster was discovered in 1955 by amateur archaeologist Francis J. Tully of Joliet. Since then, more than 100 specimens have been found.

State Dance — Square Dance: In 1990, a bill designating the square dance the official state dance was signed into law. The square dance, first associated with the early American settlers, has been in recorded history since 1651.

State Soil — Drummer Silty Clay Loam: A bill designating Drummer silty clay loam the state soil became law in August 2001. Future Farmers of America members from Monticello High School and Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences lobbied for the bill's passage. Rich, dark Drummer soils are found on more than 1.5 million acres in nearly half of Illinois' counties.

State Snack Food — Popcorn: Second- and third-grade students from Cunningham Elementary School in Joliet, along with their teacher Fran Hollister, saw their class project — to make popcorn the official snack food of Illinois — become law in August 2003.

State Amphibian — Eastern Tiger Salamander: Following a statewide online voting contest, a law was passed in July 2005 making the eastern tiger salamander the state amphibian. The species is the largest Illinois terrestrial salamander and is found throughout the state.

State Reptile — Painted Turtle: Through the same voting contest, Illinois citizens selected the painted turtle as the state reptile, which also became law in July 2005. The painted turtle is among the world's most colorful aquatic turtles and is a familiar sight in lakes and ponds across the state.

State Fruit — Goldrush Apple: A fourth-grade class at Woodlawn Elementary School chose the Goldrush apple as the state fruit, which became law in August 2007. The sweet-tart apple has a golden color with a bronze blush and is noted for its disease resistance and long storage life.

State Vegetable — Sweet Corn: Fourth-grade students from Chatham Elementary School proposed sweet corn as the state vegetable, which became law in 2015.

State Pie — Pumpkin Pie: A bill designating pumpkin pie as the official state pie became law in 2015. About 85 percent of consumed pumpkin in the United States comes from Illinois.

See back inside cover for color illustrations of the Illinois state symbols.

Official State Song

“Illinois”

By thy rivers gently flowing, Illinois, Illinois,
O'er thy prairies verdant growing, Illinois, Illinois,
Comes an echo on the breeze, rustling through the leafy trees,
And its mellow tones are these, Illinois, Illinois,
And its mellow tones are these, Illinois.

From a wilderness of prairies, Illinois, Illinois,
Straight thy way and never varies, Illinois, Illinois,
Till upon the inland sea, stands thy great commercial tree,
Turning all the world to thee, Illinois, Illinois,
Turning all the world to thee, Illinois.

When you heard your country calling, Illinois, Illinois,
Where the shot and shell were falling, Illinois, Illinois,
When the Southern host withdrew, pitting Gray against the Blue,
There were none more brave than you, Illinois, Illinois,
There were none more brave than you, Illinois.

Not without thy wondrous story, Illinois, Illinois,
Can be writ the nation's glory, Illinois, Illinois,
On the record of thy years, Abraham Lincoln's name appears,
Grant and Logan, and our tears, Illinois, Illinois,
Grant and Logan, and our tears, Illinois.

Music by Archibald Johnston; lyrics by Charles H. Chamberlain.

To listen to a rendition of the state song, visit www.illinois.gov.

State Symbols Illinois



State Snack
Popcorn



State Animal
White-Tailed Deer



State Bird
Cardinal



State Pie
Pumpkin



State Fish
Bluegill



State Amphibian
Eastern Tiger
Salamander



State Insect
Monarch Butterfly



State Reptile
Painted Turtle



State Fruit
Goldrush Apple



State Tree
White Oak



State Flower
Violet



State Prairie Grass
Big Bluestem



State Soil
Drummer Silty
Clay Loam



State Mineral
Fluorite



State Fossil
Tully Monster

JESSE WHITE • SECRETARY OF STATE