

# City Sketches

1. Albuquerque, New Mexico, founded in 1706, was named in honor of the viceroy of New Spain, the Duke of Albuquerque, referring to a town in Spain named 'Abu al Qurq', or *father of cork oak trees*. The Sandia Mts. rise up on the eastern side of Albuquerque, and the Rio Grande flows through the city, north to south. The town, situated on El Camino Real (King's Hwy), was a farming community and an important military outpost for Spain and, later, for Mexico. The original town was laid out in the Spanish style, with a central square, or plaza, oriented NSEW. In 1880 the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe RR depot was placed 2 mi. outside of town. "New Town" quickly grew, yet Albuquerque remained a sleepy town of under 10,000 people until 1937, when Route 66 was completed. The establishment of Kirkland AFB (1939) and Sandia National Laboratories (1949), along with the expansion of the University of New Mexico, further contributed to Albuquerque's growth. The area's dry climate brought many tuberculosis patients seeking a cure to the area in the early 1900s. Some of the largest hospitals in the Southwest found their beginnings in this way. Roughly half the population of New Mexico now lives in the greater Albuquerque area. Albuquerque's population was over half a million at the time of its tri-centennial in 2006. The city hosts the world's largest hot air balloon festival each October.

2. Anchorage, Alaska, unlike every other large town in the state south of the Brooks Range, was neither a fishing village nor a mining camp at the outset. It grew up as a tent city at the mouth of Ship Creek, at a construction site for the Alaska Railroad (1914). People, including entrepreneurs, flocked to the instantly created frontier town, and built the city from scratch. A popular hardware and clothing store, named "The Anchorage", was housed in a dry docked steamship, and, from this, the post office took the name for the city. Initially, Anchorage's economy centered on the railroad, but air transportation and the military stimulated economic growth in the 30s, 40s and 50s. Today, its airport is one of the busiest air transfer points in the world. In 1968, oil was discovered in Prudhoe Bay. The resulting growth spurred Anchorage's further economic development. Today, Anchorage contains 40% of Alaska's population. Tourism and recreation, featuring 3 major ski resorts, have become the mainstays of Anchorage's economy. The longest day in Anchorage is 19.5 hours, the shortest 5.5. Anchorage experienced a 9.2 magnitude earthquake, lasting 5 minutes, on Good Friday, 1964. It was the second largest quake in recorded history.

3. Atlanta, Georgia is built on the site of a Creek village, called Standing Peachtree. The Cherokee, too, lived in the area. The land was expropriated from these two tribes in 1822. In 1838, the Western and Atlantic RR was constructed there to provide a trade link to the Midwest. The area around the eastern terminus was developed, and took on the name Terminus. Later, it was called Atlantic-Pacific, and soon shortened to Atlanta. During the Civil War it was a major supply and railroad distribution center for the Confederacy. Near the end of the war 90% of the structures in Atlanta were burned to the ground by Gen. Wm. T. Sherman on his "March to be Sea". Atlanta has the highest average elevation of any major city east of Denver. The Eastern Continental Divide runs through the city. Rainwater that falls on the south and east side runs into the

Atlantic Ocean, while rainwater on the north and west side of the divide runs into the Gulf of Mexico. Unlike most major cities, Atlanta has no natural boundaries that might restrict growth. Atlanta chose not to retain its historic “Old South” architecture. Instead, it opted to use modern architectural styles. Atlanta ranks third (behind New York and Houston) in the number of Fortune 500 companies headquartered within its boundaries, or in its nearby suburbs. Atlanta is also home to one of the largest concentrations of colleges and universities in the country. Boasting the world’s busiest airport, it is the hub of Delta airlines, the city’s largest employer. Atlanta is the second fastest growing metropolitan area in the country, behind Dallas-Ft. Worth. In the 1960’s, Atlanta, home of Dr. Martin Luther King, was a major organizing center of the Civil Rights Movement. In 1996, Atlanta became the 3<sup>rd</sup> American city to host the Summer Olympics. Atlanta, and neighboring cities (Sandy Springs and Marietta), as well as parts of Alabama, form the 9<sup>th</sup> largest metro area in the country.

4. Austin, Texas was named for Stephen F. Austin, known as the “Father of Texas”. The town, which, before settlement, had been inhabited by Comanches, Apaches and Tonkawas, was originally called Waterloo, by pioneers who settled in central Texas on the banks of the Colorado River in 1830. Chosen to be the capital in 1839, the city was renamed, Austin. At one point Sam Houston sought to transfer the capital to San Antonio, but citizens responded to the threat by forcibly preventing records from being moved. The state capitol building was completed in 1888, and was acclaimed as the 7th largest building in the world. The University of Texas was established in 1883. The seeds of Austin’s flourishing hi-tech industry were planted in post-Depression times, and by the 50s several research facilities and think tanks had been founded. Located at the intersection of 4 major ecological regions, Austin is biologically diverse. Austin is the largest city in the country without a franchise in a major professional sports league. However, locals are highly supportive of the Univ. of Texas Longhorns who, in 2005-06, were national champions in both football and baseball

5. Baltimore, Maryland was named after Lord Baltimore, of the Calvert family, the founders of the Maryland colony. Baltimore comes from the Irish *Baile an Ti Mhoir*, meaning “Town of the Big House”. Baltimore lies on the fall line between the Piedmont Plateau and the Atlantic Coastal Plain. The city grew swiftly in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a granary for the sugar-producing colonies in the Caribbean. During the War of 1812, the British attacked Baltimore. Francis Scott Key, a Maryland lawyer, who was aboard a British ship in the harbor negotiating the release of an American prisoner, witnessed the attack and jotted down the notes that later become *The Star Spangled Banner*. The construction of the National Road, and the creation of the Baltimore & Ohio RR, made Baltimore a major shipping and manufacturing center, by linking the city with major markets in the Midwest. After New York, Baltimore was the second city to reach a population of 100,000, (followed by New Orleans, Philadelphia and Boston). Maryland did not secede from the Union during the Civil War. However, when Union soldiers entered the city at the start of the war, Confederate sympathizers fired on them, leading to a major riot. Union troops occupied the city for the duration of the conflict. At the time, Baltimore had one of the largest concentrations of free black Americans of any city. Following an economic panic in 1873, the B&O RR lowered workers wages, which led to the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 in which 10 were killed and 25 wounded. In 1904 a fire

destroyed much of the city, but the subsequent rebuilding created a kind of renaissance. Once primarily an industrial city with iron, steel, machinery, food processing and printing facilities, Baltimore now has, as well, a modern service economy, providing financial, business and health service for the Mid-Atlantic region. Baltimore's port facilities have been, and remain, central to its prosperity.

**6. Birmingham, Alabama**, an industrial city, was named after Birmingham, England, in 1871. It was founded near the planned crossing of two railroads. Nearby were deposits of iron ore, coal and limestone, the three key components of steel. Birmingham is the only site in the world where these three raw materials are found in such close proximity. Up to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Birmingham was called the "Pittsburgh of the South". It was hard hit by the Great Depression, but wartime demand for steel returned it to prosperity. In the 1950s and 60s Birmingham was a center of the Civil Rights Movement. Sit-ins, a bus boycott and mass marches led to desegregation of public accommodations, and ultimately, to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Today, banking, insurance, publishing, medicine and biotechnology have given Birmingham a more balanced economy. Often referred to as the "Heart of the New South", Birmingham is a vital educational and cultural center. The University of Alabama at Birmingham, a major medical and research center, is one of the city's leading employers. A 55 ft. cast iron statue of Vulcan, the Roman god of the forge, overlooks the city from atop Red Mountain.

**7. Boston, Massachusetts** was founded in 1630 by Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It is named after Boston, Lincolnshire, England, from which several prominent founders had come. Boston was the largest town in North America until Philadelphia surpassed it in the mid-1700s. Many events of the Revolutionary War period occurred in or near the city. After the Revolution, Boston became a leading trading port. When the War of 1812, and the British embargo, curtailed Boston's seagoing commerce, local merchants, found alternatives for their capital investments, thereby stimulating manufacturing. In the 1820s, Boston's population swelled with the first wave of European immigrants, with the Irish predominating. Between 1631 and 1890, Boston tripled in size through land reclamation, by filling in marshes and other low areas. Adjacent towns were also annexed. Even so, Boston has the second smallest area of any city with 600,000 people or more (after San Francisco). The Port of Boston is the oldest continuously operating fishing port in the Western Hemisphere. Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox, is the oldest sports arena in the U.S. (1912). Boston was the site of the first World Series (1903), between the Boston Americans (AL) and the Pittsburg Pirates (NL). The Boston Celtics have won more NBA championships than any other team. More than 100 colleges and universities are located in the Greater Boston Area, which is the 10<sup>th</sup> largest metro area in the country.

**8. Buffalo, New York** has never been home to the large, hairy animal sometimes called the 'bison'. Thus, it remains a mystery why the city received this name. Burned by the British in the

War of 1812, it was slow to recover. Then, within 16 years, Buffalo experienced two events which turned it from a small village into a major city. The first was the building of the first Great Lakes steamboat, *Walk-on-the-Water*, in 1818. The other was its establishment as the western terminus of the Erie Canal in 1825. The canal brought a 400% surge in population within just a few years. Buffalo's port continued to develop during the 1840s. It was from there that many settlers headed west by steamboat over the Great Lakes. Buffalo was a major transfer point for midwestern grain. It was also a major center of the abolitionist movement, and a terminus for the Underground Railroad. By 1900, Buffalo was the 8<sup>th</sup> largest city in the country, a major railroad hub, the largest grain-milling center in the country, and home of the largest steel-making operation in the world. Theodore Roosevelt was inaugurated there in 1901, following the assassination of Wm. McKinley at the Pan-American Exposition. Prosperity continued into the 1950s, but the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a reversal of Buffalo's fortunes. The rerouting of Great Lakes shipping due to the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway (1959), and the closure of many steel mills, contributed to the decline. More recently, diversification has created opportunities for growth into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.