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ZOOM in on america

By the U.S. Missions of Austria and Poland

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PRESENTING U.S. STATES - MAINE

President Barack Obama, first lady Michelle Obama visit Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park, Bar Harbor, Maine, July 16, 2010. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

In this issue: Maine

Z oom in on America

MAIN MAINE?

It may be a coincidence that pronunciation of the name of this state is the same as of the word "main" which means "most important", "leading", "foremost", "first", "grand", "supreme", etc., but as a matter of fact all these adjectives are useful in describing various characteristics of the state. Maine is also a leading producer of wood products, potatoes, and paper. The state is the foremost producer of the country's blueberries. It is the only state whose name is one-syllable. Maine's Acadia National Park offers beautiful natural sites to visitors and is the only National Park in the New England area. Maine was an inspiration to the 19th century landscape painter and printmaker Winslow Homer (1836-1910), the birthplace of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), a prominent American poet of the 19th century, and Stephen King (born 1947), a renowned contemporary writer, author of thrillers, among others. Last but not least, it is the first state in the U.S. to welcome the morning sun as it is the easternmost state of the contagious United States.

A few facts first

Maine is the biggest of New England states, but it is quite sparsely populated. Compare Maine's population per square mile - 43.1 with New York's - 411.2. The state's approximately 1,330,000 inhabitants have at their disposal an area of 30,843 square miles.

While Vacation State or Vacationland are among Maine's nicknames and testify to the state's natural attraction as a holiday destination, another frequently used nickname is the Pine Tree State.

Indeed, the white pine has been chosen as the state's official tree while the white pine cone and tassel is the state's flower. The white pine is depicted on the state flag and seal. *Pinus strobus* is the Latin name for the white pine, a tall tree that can grow to 55 meters tall and is a dominant tree species in eastern North American forests. In the 18th and 19th centuries these trees were extensively logged for their value in the home building and furniture making industries.

The official state bird is the black-capped chickadee. It is a tiny, cheerful and sociable bird, which does not migrate for winter and remains in its habitat all year long. The bird got its name thanks to a very specific "chick-a-dee" call used for communication. The bird is also known for what may be called a pantry storage economy. Caterpillars, spiders and other insects, as well as forest seeds and berries are hidden in store for later consumption.

The state fish is the Landlocked Salmon, a freshwater form of the sea-going Atlantic salmon. Before 1868, salm-

A rainbow spreads across the valley below Bigelow Mountain which is across from Sugarloaf Mountain in Carrabassett Valley, Maine. (AP Photo/Pat Wellenbach)

-on lived in just a few river basins in Maine, but later, lakes in this state were artificially stocked with the fish.

It is not surprising that the official berry of the state of Maine is the wild Maine blueberry. Maine's state animal is the moose and the state cat is wild coon cat.

Measured in a straight line, Maine's coastline is 228 miles long. However, taking into account the many bays and inlets along the shoreline in Maine, and adding up the exact walking distance, we get a total of 3,478 miles of coastline, which makes Maine number four (after Alaska, Florida and Louisiana) among states with the longest coastline.

Maine has a lot to offer visitors. Apart from woods and beaches it has numerous rivers and streams as well as hundreds lakes and ponds. Adding to tourist attractions are many haunted inns and lighthouses.

The largest city in the state of Maine is Portland with more than 66, 000 inhabitants. A historic city located on the peninsula that bears the same name, it was briefly the capital of the state. Four serious fires, the latest in 1866, destroyed many of its historical buildings.

Augusta, on the Kennebec River, which in the mid-19th century was a booming mill town and business center, became Maine's capital in 1832. The population of Augusta nears 20,000.

The small town of Cherryfield in Maine's Washington County on the Narraguagus River is proud to be called the "Blueberry Capital of the World." As has been said above, the state of Maine produces more than 90 percent of the country's blueberries. Cherryfield was named for the wild cherries that grew on the town's river banks.

A Little History

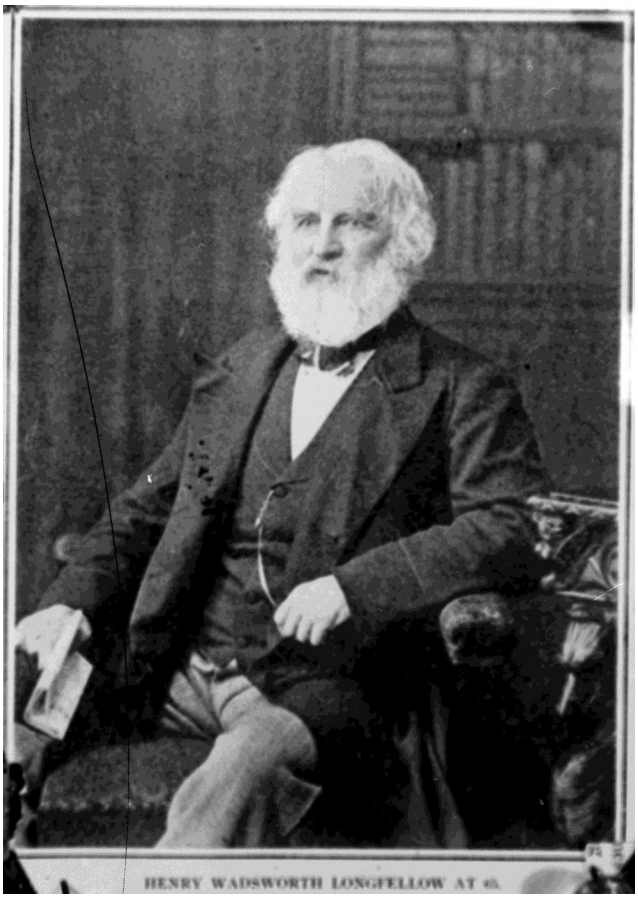
Native American tribes belonging to the Algonquian language family inhabited the area for thousands of years before 1604 when the first European settlers - the French - arrived on Saint Croix Island. The French called the territory l'Acadie. It was one of the earliest European settlements in North America.

The first English settlement in Maine was Popham Colony. Established in 1607, it did not last very long because of harsh living conditions and conflicts with the local peoples.

After the American Revolution Maine was part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, until 1820 when it seceded from Massachusetts and became the 23rd state of the United States on March 15, 1820.

A couple taking in the view from the ocean lookout ledges on 1375-foot Mount Megunticook at Camden Hills State Park in Camden, Maine. (AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty)

FAMOUS MAINERS



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. (Photo AP)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was one of the most beloved American poets of the 19th century. He was also a linguist, a traveler, a Romantic and a thinker who drew from the rich European tradition and literature. The natural beauty of the state where he was born was a big and lasting influence on his artistic sensitivity. Longfellow was born in 1807 in Portland where he debuted on the literary stage. Later, he studied languages in Europe and was a teacher at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. He later moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts to teach at Harvard.

In a poem "My Lost Youth", written in 1855, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow brings back the memories of his youth in Portland. These are the poem's final lines:

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."
And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,

President Barack Obama awards the 2014 National Medal of Arts to author Stephen King on September 10, 2015, during a ceremony in the East Room at the White House in Washington. (AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)

I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Writer **Stephen Edwin King** was born on September 21, 1947 in Portland, Maine. He developed an interest in books early in his life and started writing while still at school. King graduated from the University of Maine and contributed to the student newspaper for which he wrote a column entitled "Garbage Truck."' He later taught creative writing at the University of Maine. His first "professional" short story was entitled *The Glass Floor* and was published in 1967 and his first novel *Carrie* appeared in 1973.

In his writing King chooses different literary genres, but his favorites include suspense, fantasy, science fiction and horror. A prolific writer, King has published numerous short stories and over 50 novels which have sold more than 350 million copies. Many of his books have been adapted for screen and comic books. His horror novel *The Shining* was adapted for a movie under the same title directed by Stanley Kubrick and starring Jack Nicholson. For some time King used the pen name Richard Bachman.

His native state of Maine is a set of many of King's books and stories. A fictitious city he invented in Maine is called Derry.

Stephen King has always been an active member of the Maine community, publicly expressing his political views and encouraged to run for public office. He is well-known for his philanthropy and support for libraries.

King has been awarded numerous prizes at home and abroad and is perhaps the most well-known Mainer.

The sun's rays strike the rocky coast of Acadia National Park, in Maine. (AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty)

Lightning strikes north of Macworth Island in Portland, Maine. (AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty)

The Statehouse in Augusta, Maine. (AP Photo/Joel Page)

Lobster boats are tied up at a wharf on the waterfront in Portland, Maine. (AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty)

Activity Page

Exercise 1: Listening comprehension.

Listen to Kevin Kareckas, a Fulbrighter who is currently teaching English to Polish students at the University of Rzeszow, interviewing his parents Michelle and John Kareckas about a unique character of the state of Maine.
(http://goo.gl/kmUnYS)

Now, answer the questions:

1. How does Michelle Kareckas characterize the northern part of Maine?
2. What is southern Maine known for?
3. What is Michelle Kareckas's occupation?
4. When and from where did John Kareckas move to Maine?
5. What does the federal government do for the states?
6. What is the bicameral government?
7. What do people from Canadian provinces Ontario and New Brunswick come to Maine for?
8. Did John Kareckas know much about South Berwick before he moved to live there?
9. What makes South Berwick a special and unique place to live?

Exercise 2: Reading comprehension:

Here is a fragment of the transcript of the interview (http://goo.gl/kmUnYS). Some words have been taken out. Listen to the interview again and fill in the blanks:

John Kareckas: I've lived in Maine since ..... (1). We moved there from Portsmouth, New ..... (2).

Kevin Kareckas: Could you describe a little bit of how the state local government is organized?

John Kareckas: Well, the state government is very similar to other state ..... (3) in the United States. We have a federal system, where states gave up their autonomous rights that existed before the American Revolution in the ..... (4) century. And the states decided to give power to a ..... (5) government, the federal government. And the federal government takes money; it raises an ..... (6) to protect the country and provides the Treasury, the ..... (7) Office, the general administration. State government is the ..... (8) government; it has a Senate, a small body of 35 Senators and there is a larger body of 200 Representatives. They form the legislative ..... (9) of the government as well as the governor provides the executive branch of the government. And there's courts, which is legal side of things and they provide the third ..... (10) of the government which is the administration of the law. Our local government takes its authority from the central state government and we have a town council of 5 members with the town manager and then we provide services to fund schools and also to maintain roads, and to do the general ..... (11) of our town, which is about 35 square miles.

Kevin Kareckas: Wonderful. And what do people do for recreation around your region of Maine?

John Kareckas: Many, many people come to Maine to enjoy our ..... (12). We are fortunate to have sandy beaches and people come from pretty much Ontario, they come from New Brunswick, to come to the beaches in Maine.

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Wind-blown frost clings to berries following a snowstorm on Little Jackson Mountain, Friday, Dec. 4, 2015, near Weld, Maine. (AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty)