

YORKS OF THE WORLD



New York, New York, USA

The most famous of York's descendants, New York State and City were both renamed when the British captured what was then a Dutch colony known as New Netherland (and its city New Amsterdam) in 1664. James Duke of York, brother of King Charles II, became the proprietor of the colony and so it was that the state and the city became called New York. New York State now has a population of 20 million, and New York City's population is 8 million.

York, Pennsylvania, USA

Yorkers here can genuinely boast that their town was the first capital of the United States. The fledgling Continental Congress met here - in what was then called York Town. Nine months earlier its members had fled Philadelphia between 1777 and 1778, leaving George Washington at Valley Forge. It was an historic stay, during which the Articles of Confederation (the nation's first constitution) was signed and the first National Day of Thanksgiving was held. The first steamboat and first iron locomotive were made here. The population is around 30,000, with many locals commuting to nearby Harrisburg and Baltimore.

York, Nebraska, USA

Nearly 8,000 people live here, midway between the larger city of Grand Island to the west, and the state capital of Lincoln. Some say it was named, in 1875, after York, Pennsylvania, by early English and German settlers, but it may have been named after the English York. At the time names were being chosen, the family of the Nebraska territorial governor was from York, England. Founded in 1869 by the South Platte Land Company, it was located on the "Nebraska City Cut-off" of the famous Oregon Trail, and was a stopping place for many travellers. The county seat of York County, it remains remote - but reasonably affluent through industry and agriculture and distinctive for its huge, multicoloured water tower shaped like an overgrown hot air balloon.

York, Maine, USA

Once a lazy fishing village, today's York is the product of York Harbor, York Village, York Beach and Cape Neddick combining about 20 years ago. During the off-season, York is home to just 14,000 people, though the sandy beaches see this reach 40,000 in summer. Some of the 3,000 hotel rooms have superb views of the ocean but a moratorium of tourist developments has been voted in by residents, who want to preserve something of the 'old' York.

York, South Carolina, USA

This is USA's fifth largest York. It may be named after our York by Scots-Irish immigrants from Pennsylvania who moved in during the 1750s, replacing the Catawba Indians. Nearby, the colonists and English fought battles of King's Mountain and Brattonsville in 1780. Like York, Pennsylvania, it is known as the 'white rose' town but its local brochures parade its link to York, England. It has a population of 6,000.

York, Alabama, USA

A town of 3,000 people sandwiched between Meridian and Montgomery - two towns made famous by the civil rights movement. It is stricken by poverty; its unemployment rate has been around 12%, forcing many to board 3am buses for work in neighbouring states.

York County, Canada

The place that the Canadians know as York was named after the British commanding general the Duke of York - just like New York is. It was originally called Kingston but its development owes much to one of Canada's many English colonialists - John Graves Simcoe, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. He renamed the place 'York' and established its first public buildings. At the first town meeting in July 1797, 241 inhabitants were enumerated - British officials and their families, soldiers, and a small assortment of labourers, storekeepers and craftsmen. But Americans eagerly took up the rich farmland and the British and Irish soon followed. Today the county's population is over 80,000 and the county 'capital' is New Brunswick.

York, Western Australia

England's York and its western Australian twin share superb histories. York, Western Australia, 97 km from Perth, remains one of the best preserved and restored nineteenth century towns in Australia. The first inland European settlement in Western Australia, it was first surveyed by a band of explorers led by Ensign Robert Dale in 1831 and named after the English York. It was settled in the same year by farmers who concentrated their efforts on sheep, wheat and occasionally barley. The township began to appear in 1835/36 when an army barracks and store were built and some 50 acres of land were cleared.

The arrival of the railway in 1886 and, within two years, the discovery of gold at nearby Southern Cross, Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie meant that by the late 1880s the town was teeming with miners and prospectors. It was during the period 1886 to 1900 that most of the town's impressive, and very solid, buildings were constructed.

Cape York, Queensland, Australia

The isolated, tropical Cape York is the pointy end at the northern extremity of Australia. It is a wild and sparsely populated area and is only accessible during the dry months of April to December. Its rugged coastline points towards New Guinea while the eastern side of Cape York is fringed by the coral gardens of the Great Barrier Reef. The Cape York region is one of the largest wilderness areas in the world that remains relatively untouched, maintaining its original beauty and variety of sights. The 40,000 year old tradition and cultures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are preserved here. It is a popular location for fishermen, since much of its water is sheltered from the South East trade winds which blast through the Cape from June to November. Wildlife includes kangaroos and the unusual dugongs.

Cape York, Greenland

This is one of the most unusual Yorks - a place where in 1818 polar explorer Captain John Ross found a group of Eskimos who were so isolated they believed themselves to be the only people in the world. They were using nickel-iron tools and heard stories of the "iron mountain" as the source of the metal. In 1894 on his second expedition to Greenland Admiral Robert Peary was led to the site and discovered the "iron mountain" to be three huge chunks of meteoritic iron: a 59 ton mass called Ahnighito or "the tent", two smaller masses called "the woman" and "the dog". In those days it was a case of finders' keepers so, after four summers' work, Admiral Peary was able to move the three Cape York irons to New York arriving in 1897. The Cape York iron 'Tent' is the largest known meteorite. Even today few ships sail this far north along the Greenland coast.

SOME SMALLER U.S. YORKS

Little York, Indiana

Originally called Hathaway's Corners after the first doctor in town, it was changed to York when families from New York moved here in the 1830s. Current population: 190!

York, California

In 1913, William York moved his family to far northern California, just 25 miles south of the Oregon state border. Today, his descendants own 9,600 acres of Siskiyou County, using most of it to raise cattle and hay. With a view of 14,162-foot Mount Shasta, it became known as York because so many families named York live nearby. It is 18 miles from the county seat of Yreka.

York, Iowa

George Stewart planned 'the future great York' after he built a post office and blacksmith shop here on the Iowa prairie in 1854. But a cholera outbreak whittled down an already small population, the

railroad missed the place when built in early 1870s and around 20 people now live amid the corn and bean fields.

York, Montana

After finding gold in 1864, a New York state resident named the town New York, and across the creek was the town of Brooklyn. "New" was soon dropped. Two areas of gold were quickly exhausted and now it's a quiet, agricultural place with 100 residents and a 'Friendly York' bar. Recently the western forest fires forced many Yorkers from their homes, which were destroyed.

York, Arizona

This York is more of a valley than a place. It is 4,000 feet above sea level, subject to 100-degree heat and said to have been founded by G.R. York, a former Confederate Army officer who built a ranch in the valley. Within 15 years, San Carlos Apaches attacked the ranch and killed York but York railway station existed until 1956.

York, New York

It is said that the original residents of this place couldn't think of name when they formed the town in 1819. Then a man with an old hound dog walked through the door. 'What's the dog's name?' someone asked. 'York,' he said. 'That's good,' said the first man. 'That's what we'll name our town.' Before becoming United States president, Chester A. Arthur attended school here while his father ministered at the York Baptist Church.

York, Wisconsin

The biggest event for the population of 50 is the York Rodeo - no bucking broncos but greased pig contests, chicken catching and sack races. It was once home to a creamery, grocery stores, mill and a school which closed 25 years ago.

York, Illinois

Built on the Wabash River in 1816, when the river was awash with sternwheelers, barges and passenger traffic. Although it never had a post office, York once had a funeral home, a ferry, cannery, a mill and a couple of grocery stores. The last few years have been quiet for this town of 100 people. But it has flooded often, including 1985 and 1992, isolating many homes.

The Yorks of Ohio

Originally called Updegraff for the Quaker settlers who settled here in 1824 from York, Pennsylvania, it was later renamed York. A tiny town not far from Steubenville, Ohio, it was a centre for mining for

about 80 years. Two other Yorks — both train stops, one now deserted and another with a resident population of less than a dozen — give Ohio the distinction of holding three Yorks.

York, North Dakota

The town was created by railroad man James Hill as a supply town along the Lake Superior and Puget Sound Railway in 1893. Settled first by George Wilson, it was originally called Wilson's Siding. But after Wilson died, Hill renamed towns along the railway for English cities — York, Leeds and Rugby. He went on to create the Great Northern Railway. York's population peaked at 1,000 and it was busy with a post office, hotel, restaurant and churches. Now it has less than 30 inhabitants

OTHER YORK FACTS...

- York, Minnesota, was built around the railroad and existed from 1883 until about 1932, when the Great Depression crippled the iron ore mining industry the trains served.
- More than 170 years ago, a cluster of rural homes was known as York, Michigan, named by the local squire who was a New Yorker. York, Kentucky, once had 25 residents and possessed a post office for 120 years until 1987 - by which time only the very old knew it by the name
- Most of the land that once made up York, in north central Florida, is now owned by George Steinbrenner III, who owns the world champion New York Yankees baseball team. Built on limestone quarrying and the Gulf Railroad, it once had 200 residents.
- The York House, billed as Georgia's oldest country inn, is — and has been — York, Georgia's only residence since the town's beginning in 1851. It was named for Mollie Gibson York - a granddaughter of the first family.
- Russia is only 80 miles away from unpopulated York, Alaska, once a tin town, named from its location on Cape York. (The cape was named for the Duke of York by British explorer Frederick William Beechey in 1827.)

For more information and to book your stay in York:

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