IOWA

THE HAWKEYE STATE *Became a state December 28, 1846 (29th)*

Iowa lies between two great rivers, the Mississippi on the east and the Missouri on the west. Its deep black soil makes it one of the best places on Earth to farm.



Bears Made of Earth

Starting about 1,400 years ago, Native people in northeastern Iowa piled up earth into low mounds shaped like bears and birds. More than 200 mounds still stand on the bluffs above the Mississippi River, and 31 are animal shapes. The Ioway, who gave the state its name, are among the nations tied to the mound builders.



Hills Built by the Wind

During the last ice age, melting glaciers washed fine, ground-up rock into the Missouri River valley. Each time the mud dried, strong winds blew the dust east and dropped it in heaps. This dust is called loess, which sounds like “luss.” In places it is 200 feet deep. Only parts of China have loess piled as deep.



Why Corn Loves Iowa

Tall prairie grass once covered about three-fourths of Iowa. Some prairie plants had roots more than 12 feet deep. For thousands of years those roots grew, died and rotted, building thick black soil. Settlers plowed the prairie and found some of the best farmland in the world. Today less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the prairie is left.



The Iowan Who Fed Millions

Herbert Hoover was born in 1874 in a two-room cottage in West Branch, where his father was a blacksmith. At age 11 he moved to Oregon to live with an uncle. During World War I he ran a program that fed millions of hungry people in Belgium. In 1929 he became the 31st president.



One Priest, 42 Years of Rocks

As a young man, Paul Dobberstein became very sick with pneumonia. The story goes that he promised to build a shrine if he got well. He went to work as a priest in the town of West Bend, and in 1912 he began setting crystals and colorful stones into concrete. He kept building for 42 years.



Plain Outside, Sparkly Inside

A geode looks like a lumpy gray ball of rock. Crack it open and it may be hollow and lined with sparkling crystals. Iowa’s geodes began about 340 million years ago in the mud of a shallow sea. Water carrying minerals seeped into hollow spaces and slowly left crystals behind. The geode became the state rock in 1967.

BY THE NUMBERS

Population	About 3.2 million (32nd most)
Size	About 56,300 square miles (26th largest)
Highest point	Hawkeye Point, 1,670 feet
Counties	99
Neighbors	Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota

DID YOU KNOW?

- The nickname Hawkeye State goes back to 1838. It was chosen in part to honor Black Hawk, a leader of the Sauk people.
- Iowa has more than seven hogs for every person.
- The Red Delicious apple began as a seedling on a farm near Peru, Iowa, in the 1870s. The farmer called it the Hawkeye.
- The Iowa State Fair has shown a life-size cow sculpted from butter since 1911. It takes about 600 pounds of butter.

FIND IT ON THE MAP

1. Which state is north of Iowa?
2. Which city is closest to Cereal Milling?
3. What are the Loess Hills made of?

Answers: 1. Minnesota 2. Cedar Rapids 3. Windblown soil