MINNESOTA

THE LAND OF 10,000 LAKES *Became a state May 11, 1858 (32nd)*

Minnesota is a northern state of lakes, pine forests and prairie farms. The Mississippi River begins here, and in the far north you can travel for days by canoe.



More Than 10,000 Lakes

Minnesota's nickname sells it short. The state counts 11,842 lakes of ten acres or more. Glaciers made most of them. Long ago, sheets of ice scraped hollows in the land and left blocks of ice buried behind. When the ice melted, the hollows filled with water. The name Minnesota comes from Dakota words often translated as sky-tinted or cloudy water.



A River You Can Wade Across

The Mississippi River begins at Lake Itasca as a stream about 18 feet wide and knee deep. From there it flows about 2,350 miles to the sea. In 1832 an Ojibwe guide named Ozaawindib led the explorer Henry Schoolcraft to the lake. Schoolcraft made up the name Itasca from parts of the Latin words for truth and head.



The Flour Mills at the Falls

St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis is the only major waterfall on the Mississippi River. Its power ran flour mills that ground wheat from prairie farms. The Washburn A Mill opened in 1880 as the world's largest flour mill. At its busiest it made almost two million pounds of flour a day. Minneapolis led the world in flour for about 50 years.



Red Dirt on the Iron Range

In 1890, the Merritt family found iron ore on the Mesabi Range, close to the surface as soft red dirt. Miners scooped it from huge open pits. Trains carried it to Duluth, and ships took it across the Great Lakes to steel mills. When the rich ore ran low, the mines switched to taconite, a hard rock crushed to get the iron out.



The Sacred Red Stone

In southwestern Minnesota, a layer of soft red stone lies under hard rock. For about 3,000 years, Native people have dug it by hand and carved it into pipes used in prayer. By tradition, the quarries were a place where even enemies worked in peace. Today only members of Native nations may quarry the stone.



Canoes Full of Furs

Voyageur is a French word for traveler. In the 1700s and early 1800s, French-Canadian canoe men called voyageurs paddled the lakes along today's border with Canada. They carried trade goods west and beaver furs east. The furs were made into hats in Europe. Voyageurs paddled their birchbark canoes up to 16 hours a day.

BY THE NUMBERS

Population	About 5.8 million (22nd most)
Size	About 86,900 square miles (12th largest)
Highest point	Eagle Mountain, 2,301 feet
Counties	87
Neighbors	Wisconsin, Iowa, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Canada to the north

DID YOU KNOW?

- Split Rock Lighthouse stands on a cliff about 130 feet high. Its building materials came by boat and were lifted up by crane.
- It has been against the law to pick the state flower, a rare lady's slipper, since 1925.
- Most birds have hollow bones. Loons have solid ones, and the extra weight helps them dive as deep as 250 feet.
- Wild rice is not really rice. It is the seed of a water grass that the Ojibwe call manoomin.

FIND IT ON THE MAP

1. What is Minnesota's largest city?
2. Which city is closest to Split Rock Lighthouse?
3. At which lake does the Mississippi River begin?

Answers: 1. Minneapolis 2. Duluth 3. Lake Itasca