MISSOURI

THE SHOW-ME STATE *Became a state August 10, 1821 (24th)*

Missouri sits near the middle of the country, where two of America's greatest rivers meet. For years it was the jumping-off place for explorers, pioneers and mail riders heading west.



The Big Muddy

The state is named for its river, and the river is named for the Missouria people. Their name is said to mean people of the dugout canoes. At about 2,340 miles it is the longest river in North America. It joins the Mississippi just north of St. Louis. It carries so much mud and sand that it is nicknamed the Big Muddy.



Ten Days by Pony

In 1860, a letter could take weeks to reach California. On April 3, a rider left St. Joseph with a bag of mail to start the Pony Express. Riders changed horses every 10 to 15 miles and passed the mail along like a relay race. It crossed more than 1,800 miles in about 10 days. The telegraph replaced it after only 18 months.



A Scientist for Farmers

George Washington Carver was born near Diamond around 1864. Neighbors called the boy the Plant Doctor. He became a scientist and teacher at Tuskegee Institute. Years of growing only cotton had worn out Southern soil. Carver taught farmers to take turns with peanuts and sweet potatoes, which helped the soil recover.



Gateway to the West

In the early 1800s, St. Louis was the starting place for many trips west. Explorers, fur traders and pioneer families gathered supplies there. The Gateway Arch honors those journeys. Finished in 1965, it is covered in stainless steel and is exactly as wide as it is tall. Small tram cars carry visitors to the top.



A Boy on the River

Samuel Clemens moved to the river town of Hannibal when he was four. As a young man he piloted steamboats on the Mississippi. Boatmen called out "mark twain" when the water was two fathoms, or 12 feet, deep, safe for a steamboat. Clemens took it as his pen name. In 1876 he turned his boyhood into The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.



The Missouri Mule

A mule has a horse for a mother and a donkey for a father. Mules almost never have babies of their own, but they are strong and tough. For many years Missouri raised more mules than any other state. Missouri mules pulled pioneer wagons west, plowed farm fields and hauled supplies in both world wars.

BY THE NUMBERS

Population	About 6.3 million (18th most)
Size	About 69,700 square miles (21st largest)
Highest point	Taum Sauk Mountain, 1,772 feet
Counties	114, plus the city of St. Louis
Neighbors	Iowa, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska

FIND IT ON THE MAP

1. What is Missouri's largest city?
2. Which city is closest to the Pony Express Museum?
3. What is Missouri's top crop by acreage?

Answers: 1. Kansas City 2. St. Joseph 3. Soybeans

DID YOU KNOW?

- One story of the nickname: in 1899 Congressman Willard Vandiver said, "I am from Missouri. You have got to show me."
- Huge earthquakes shook the Bootheel in 1811 and 1812. One witness wrote that the Mississippi ran backward for a few minutes.
- Missouri has about 8,000 known caves. Only Tennessee has more.
- Harry S. Truman, the 33rd president, grew up in Independence. He is the only president born in Missouri.