# NEBRASKA

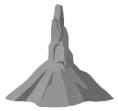
**THE CORNHUSKER STATE** *Became a state March 1, 1867 (37th)*

**Nebraska lies near the middle of the country. Cornfields cover the east, grassy sand hills and cattle ranches roll across the north and west, and the wide, shallow Platte River runs across it all.**



## Why the Cornhusker State?

To husk corn is to pull the dry leaves off each ear. Before machines, farmers did it by hand, one ear at a time. Around 1900 a sportswriter named Cy Sherman began calling the University of Nebraska's teams the Cornhuskers. He disliked their old name, the Bugeaters. The new name stuck, and later the whole state took it.



## A Signpost Made of Stone

In the mid-1800s, families heading west on the Oregon, California and Mormon trails crossed Nebraska in covered wagons. After many days of open prairie they saw a thin spire of clay and sandstone standing more than 300 feet above the valley. Chimney Rock became the landmark everyone watched for. Wind, rain and lightning have made it shorter since then.



## A River Full of Cranes

Every spring more than half a million sandhill cranes stop along the Platte River on their long flight north. The birds stand three to four feet tall. By day they eat grain left behind in the cornfields. At night they rest on sandbars in the shallow river, where coyotes and other hunters cannot easily reach them.



## The Holiday for Planting Trees

Settlers found few trees on the Nebraska prairie. They needed trees to block the wind, hold the soil, give shade and supply wood. J. Sterling Morton, a newspaper editor in Nebraska City, called for a special day of planting. On Nebraska's first Arbor Day, April 10, 1872, Nebraskans planted about a million trees. Every state now celebrates it.



## A Drink You Could Mail

Edwin Perkins of Hastings sold a liquid fruit drink mix called Fruit Smack. The bottles were messy and cost a lot to ship. In 1927 he found a way to take out the liquid and leave only a powder. He named it Kool-Ade, and the spelling later changed to Kool-Aid. It is now Nebraska's official soft drink.



## Stonehenge, but With Cars

Stonehenge is a famous ring of giant stones in England. In 1987 Jim Reinders and about 35 relatives built a copy of it on a farm near Alliance, using cars instead of stones. They set 39 old cars in a circle about 96 feet wide and painted them all gray. Reinders made Carhenge to honor his father.

### BY THE NUMBERS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population** | About 2 million (38th most) |
| **Size** | About 77,000 square miles (16th largest) |
| **Highest point** | Panorama Point, 5,429 feet |
| **Counties** | 93 |
| **Neighbors** | South Dakota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming |

### DID YOU KNOW?

- The name Nebraska comes from Otoe and Omaha words meaning "flat water." That was their name for the Platte River.
- Nebraska is the only state whose legislature has one house instead of two.
- The mammoth is the state fossil. Mammoth bones have been found in most Nebraska counties.
- Nebraska's highest point is not a mountain. Panorama Point is a low rise on the plains.

### FIND IT ON THE MAP

1. Which city is Nebraska's capital?
2. Which city is closest to Carhenge?
3. In what year was the drink mix invented in Hastings?

Answers: 1. Lincoln 2. Scottsbluff 3. 1927