NEVADA

THE SILVER STATE *Became a state October 31, 1864 (36th)*

Nevada is the driest state in the country, a land of desert valleys and long mountain ranges. Silver and gold built its first big towns, and much of the land is still wide open.



Why the Silver State?

In 1859, gold miners near today's Virginia City were bothered by a heavy blue-black mud that clogged their equipment. When it was tested, the mud turned out to be rich silver ore. The find, called the Comstock Lode, was the first major silver strike in the United States. By the mid-1870s about 25,000 people lived in and around Virginia City.



A Wall Across the Colorado

In 1931, during the hard years of the Great Depression, workers began building a dam across the Colorado River to control floods, store water and make electricity. Hoover Dam stands about 726 feet tall. Its builders poured enough concrete to pave a road 16 feet wide from San Francisco to New York City. About 21,000 people worked on it.



The Oldest Trees

Bristlecone pines grow high on the cold, windy mountains of Great Basin National Park. Some are thousands of years old. The harsh weather is their secret. The trees grow so slowly that their wood becomes very dense, and insects and rot cannot easily get in. One bristlecone cut down here in 1964 had 4,862 growth rings.



The River That Disappears

Most rivers end at the sea. The Humboldt flows about 300 miles across northern Nevada and ends in a desert lake that often dries up. Most of Nevada lies in the Great Basin, a region where no water reaches the ocean. In the 1840s, wagon trains on the California Trail followed the Humboldt across the desert.



Ducks Made of Reeds

In 1924, diggers in Lovelock Cave found eleven duck decoys hidden in a pit. About 2,000 years ago, hunters had bundled tule, a tall marsh plant, into the shape of ducks and added paint and real feathers. A floating decoy tricks wild ducks into landing nearby. The cave lies in the homeland of the Northern Paiute people.



A Lake in the Mountains

Lake Tahoe sits about 6,225 feet above the sea on the border with California. It is 1,645 feet deep, which makes it the second-deepest lake in the country. The Washoe people were the first to live here, and they think of the lake as the center of their world. Its name comes from their word for it.

BY THE NUMBERS

Population	About 3.3 million (31st most)
Size	About 111,000 square miles (7th largest)
Highest point	Boundary Peak, 13,147 feet
Counties	16, plus Carson City, an independent city
Neighbors	California, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Arizona

DID YOU KNOW?

- Nevada is a Spanish word that means snowy or snow-covered.
- Nevada became a state during the Civil War. That is why it is also called the Battle Born State.
- In 1864 Nevada sent its whole constitution to Washington by telegraph. The message cost more than $4,300.
- The United States government manages about 80 percent of the land in Nevada.

FIND IT ON THE MAP

1. What is the capital of Nevada?
2. Which city is closest to Hoover Dam?
3. In what year was silver found near Tonopah?

Answers: 1. Carson City 2. Las Vegas 3. 1900