

NORTH DAKOTA

HISTORY

Native farmers and hunters, fur traders, soldiers, railroad builders and homesteaders each helped make North Dakota.

The First Peoples

People have lived in North Dakota for more than 10,000 years. The Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara built villages of round **earth lodges** along the Missouri River. They grew corn, beans, squash and sunflowers. Their villages were busy trading centers. The Lakota and Dakota hunted bison on the plains. The Chippewa hunted and trapped in the northeast.

Traders and Explorers

In 1738, a French trader named La Verendrye visited the Mandan villages. Lewis and Clark spent the winter of 1804 nearby. Fort Union opened in 1828 near where the Yellowstone River meets the Missouri. Native hunters brought bison robes and furs there to trade for cloth, tools and guns. In 1837, smallpox killed most of the Mandan. The Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara later joined together in one village.

Dakota Territory and War

Congress made Dakota **Territory** in 1861. After a war in Minnesota in 1862, the Army chased Dakota bands west. In 1864, General Alfred Sully's soldiers attacked a large Lakota and Dakota camp at Killdeer Mountain and drove the people out. That fall, Lakota warriors attacked a wagon train headed for the gold fields and killed several men. In **treaties**, the nations kept reservations and gave up other land. In 1876, George Custer led soldiers out of Fort Abraham Lincoln to fight the Lakota in Montana, and he was killed there.

The Lakota leader Sitting Bull surrendered at Fort Buford in 1881. Four Native nations have their governments in North Dakota today.



Rails and Bonanza Farms

The Northern Pacific Railroad reached the Missouri River in 1873. The town there was named Bismarck. In the Red River Valley, railroad land became bonanza farms. These were wheat farms that covered thousands of acres. The **Homestead** Act offered 160 acres to a settler who lived on the land and farmed it for five years. Many came from Norway. Others were Germans who had lived in Russia. Trees were few, so families built houses of sod.

The 39th State

North Dakota became the 39th state on November 2, 1889. Bismarck was its capital. In 1919, the state opened its own bank. In 1922, it opened its own flour mill. Both still run today.

Hard Times and Big Projects

In the 1930s, drought and dust ruined crops, and many families left. The capitol burned in 1930. Workers finished a new one in 1934, a tall tower instead of a dome. Garrison Dam was finished across the Missouri in 1953. Its lake covered farms and towns of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara, and the families moved to higher ground.

NORTH DAKOTA THROUGH TIME



PEOPLE TO KNOW

Sacagawea	Shoshone. Joined Lewis and Clark here.
Sitting Bull	Lakota leader. Surrendered at Fort Buford.
Theodore Roosevelt	Badlands rancher. The 26th president.
Louis L'Amour	Western writer born in Jamestown.
Roger Maris	Fargo ballplayer. 61 home runs in 1961.

WORDS TO KNOW

earth lodge	a round house covered with soil
territory	U.S. land that is not yet a state
treaty	a written agreement between nations
homestead	land a settler could own by farming it