WYOMING

THE EQUALITY STATE *Became a state July 10, 1890 (44th)*

Wyoming is a big state of high plains and snowy mountains, with fewer people than any other state. Geysers, bison and wide-open ranches fill the spaces between its small towns.



The First National Park

On March 1, 1872, Yellowstone became the world's first national park. Nearly all of it lies in Wyoming. The park sits on top of an active volcano. It has more than 500 geysers, which are hot springs that shoot water into the air. The most famous, Old Faithful, erupts about every hour and a half and averages 130 feet high.



A Ladder Up Devils Tower

Devils Tower rises 867 feet from its base. It formed when melted rock cooled underground into tall columns, and the softer rock around it wore away. On July 4, 1893, two ranchers named William Rogers and Willard Ripley made the first known climb. They used a ladder of wooden pegs driven into the cracks.



Fish Turned to Stone

About 52 million years ago, a large lake covered part of southwest Wyoming. Animals that died sank to a lake bottom with very little oxygen, where nothing disturbed them. They turned to stone with their bones still in place. Fossil Butte has given up 27 kinds of fish, along with crocodiles, bats and small horses.



Wagon Wheels Cut the Rock

From 1841 to 1869, wagon trains heading west rolled across Wyoming. Near the town of Guernsey, the trail climbed over a sandstone ridge to stay clear of marshy ground by the river. So many wheels followed the same path that they wore grooves two to six feet deep into solid rock. The ruts are still there.



The Herd That Came Back

Bison are the largest land mammals in North America. A bull can weigh 2,000 pounds. Yellowstone is the only place in the country where bison have lived without a break since prehistoric times. By 1902 only about two dozen were left there. People protected the herd, and it grew. Today about 5,000 bison roam the park.



A Wheel of Stones Up High

High in the Bighorn Mountains, at 9,642 feet, lies a great circle of stones called the Medicine Wheel. It is 80 feet across, and 28 lines of stones run from the rim to the center like spokes. No one knows for certain who built it or when. The Crow, the Arapaho and many other nations hold it sacred.

BY THE NUMBERS

Population	About 590,000 (the fewest of any state)
Size	About 97,800 square miles (10th largest)
Highest point	Gannett Peak, 13,809 feet
Counties	23
Neighbors	Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Colorado, Utah, Idaho

DID YOU KNOW?

- Wyoming is called the Equality State. In 1869 it became the first territory to give women the right to vote.
- In 1924 Wyoming elected Nellie Tayloe Ross, the first woman governor in the country.
- The jackalope, a make-believe rabbit with antlers, was invented in Douglas in 1932. The town has an eight-foot jackalope statue.
- The name Wyoming was borrowed from a valley in Pennsylvania. It comes from a Munsee Delaware word meaning "at the big river flat."

FIND IT ON THE MAP

1. Which city is the capital?
2. Which city is closest to Devils Tower?
3. How fast can an American bison run?

Answers: 1. Cheyenne 2. Gillette 3. Up to 35 mph