

History of Minnesota

Trava Olivier, March 31, 2020

March 11, 1858 marks the date that Minnesota was admitted to the United States of America as the 32nd state; 2 months after an application for statehood was submitted. A small protrusion on its northern border makes it the northernmost state of the 48 contiguous states. It is bordered by Canada to the north, North and South Dakota to the west, Iowa to the south and Wisconsin and Lake Superior to the east.

Prior to the arrival of European settlers in the 1600s the land that became Minnesota was inhabited by Native Americans; largely the Dakota Sioux and Ojibwa tribes. As French explorers mapped the land around Lake Superior; they claimed it for France. Following France's loss to Great Britain in the French and Indian War in 1763, Britain took control of the eastern portion of what is now Minnesota. Twenty years later, that same land became the territory of the United States following the Revolutionary War. The remainder of what was to become Minnesota was purchased from France in the Louisiana Purchase.

President Thomas Jefferson sent explorers into this vast new territory. Among these explorers were Zebulon Pike who signed a treaty with the Dakota Indians for land in the area and Henry Schoolcraft who located the source of the Mississippi River with the help of the Ojibwa people. He named the source Lake Itasca. Later Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote an infamous poem "*The Song of Hiawatha*" that was based on Indian legends Schoolcraft told about Minnesota.

Fort Snelling became the first outpost of the United States in this territory in 1825. It was located at the point where the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers merge. It became a major fur trading outpost. With time, two major cities grew on each side of the confluence. The city on the west is Minneapolis and the city on the east is St. Paul, though they are often collectively referred to as the "Twin Cities". St. Paul is also the capital of Minnesota.

In 1849, part of this larger Louisiana Purchase land was set aside as Minnesota territory. Minnesota comes from the Dakota Indian word Mnisota which means cloudy waters. Settlers largely came from northern European countries such as Germany, Norway, and Sweden. Four years after statehood was achieved, Minnesota was involved in the Dakota War between the Dakota Sioux Indians and the United States. These conflicts resulted in the loss of lives on both sides of the conflict. Some settlers fled the state while others chose new territories to homestead. While many Dakota weren't involved in the conflict, they were rounded up by the U.S. Military. Some of the Dakota men were sentenced to death for their role in the conflict. Just months after it ended the Dakota Nations was forcibly removed from Minnesota by the government and sent to the Crow Creek Reservation in Dakota Territory.

Minnesota is home to woodlands in the north and prairies to the south with innumerable lakes scattered throughout. The state encompasses 86,935 square miles and has over 12,000 lakes. It is sometimes referred to as the "land of 10,000 lakes" and even the "gopher state"; its official nickname is the North Star State.

Other Minnesota symbols include the following:

- State Bird—Common Loon



- State Butterfly—Monarch



- State Drink—Milk



- State Fish—Walleye



- State Flower—Pink and White Lady Slipper



- State Apple—Honeycrisp



- State Gemstone—Lake Superior Agate



- State Muffin—Blueberry



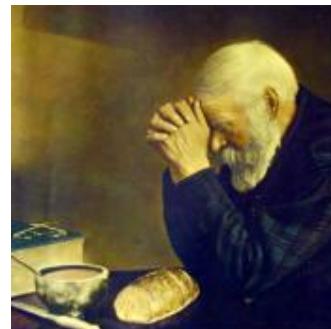
- State Grain—Wild Rice



- State Mushroom—Morel



- State Photograph—Grace



- State Tree—Red Pine



- State Motto—L’Etoile du Nord (which means Star of the North)
- State Song—Hail Minnesota
- State Flag—Field of royal blue with State Seal in the center. A wreath of white surrounds the State Seal and contains 3 dates significant to Minnesota’s History and 19 stars the represent Minnesota’s place as the 19th state after the original 13 to achieve statehood. The largest star represents its motto “The Star of the North”.



- State Seal—Comprised of multiple images that signify the rich culture and history of the state.



Here are some links to some fun and interactive ways to learn more about the history of Minnesota and its symbols!

Follow this link to an interactive game that allows you to quiz yourself on your knowledge of Minnesota’s state symbols. <https://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/StateFair3/index.htm>

Follow this link to a printable coloring sheet featuring Minnesota’s State bird and flower. <https://www.atozkidsstuff.com/colorpages/states/mncolor.html>

Follow this link to an online Minnesota coloring page. <http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/minnesota-state?colore=online>

Follow this link to an interactive map of Minnesota. Click on the points of the map to learn more about the featured cities and geographical features. <https://mrnussbaum.com/minnesota-interactive-map>

Follow this link for a printable Fun Sheet of Minnesota facts including a word search and word scramble.
<https://www.education.com/download/worksheet/82136/minnesota-fun-page.pdf>

Follow this link to hear the Common Loon. <https://www.audubon.org/news/hear-hauntingly-beautiful-call-common-loon>

Follow this link to a video and audio recording of "Hail Minnesota".
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9RuuBWYAp>

Sources:

1. <https://www.history.com/topics/us-states/minnesota>
2. https://www.ducksters.com/geography/us_states/minnesota_history.php
3. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Minnesota>
4. <http://www.theus50.com/minnesota/history.php>
5. <https://statesymbolsusa.org/states/united-states/minnesota>