

NORTH DAKOTA AT A GLANCE

North Dakota's recorded history began when the first European explorers, the French in 1738, reached the area, but Native Americans had lived here for hundreds of years. The French established no permanent settlements. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 acquired much of present day North Dakota from France. The remainder was ceded from Great Britain when the present international border with Canada was established.

Dakota Territory was created in 1861. The area was opened to homesteading in 1863, but settlement was slow until completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad provided dependable transportation. North Dakota's population was registered at 2,405 in 1870, increasing to 190,983 in 1890.

North Dakota's main attractions for settlers were the fertile Red River Valley in the east and the vast grasslands of the west. Huge "Bonanza" farms were established in the Valley, and large ranching operations, including one owned by Theodore Roosevelt, were created in the west.

North Dakota became a state in 1889; the population reached 577,056 in 1910. Demand for land caused the decline of Bonanza farming and large-scale ranching as land was divided among more farmers. New technology spurred changes and diversification in agriculture, including production of row crops in addition to small grains.

Non-agricultural industry has also been an important part of North Dakota's economy. The petroleum industry and electric power generation have been major sources of revenue and employment.

Agriculture remains an important part of the state's economy. North Dakota leads the nation in the 2003 production of barley, durum, spring wheat, all dry edible beans, pinto beans, navy beans, sunflower, canola, flaxseed, oats, dry edible peas; ranks second in all wheat, lentils and honey; and ranks third in sugarbeets and rye.

FEATURES

Latitude (Approx.)	North border 49° N, South border 45° -57' N
Longitude (Approx.)	West border 104° W, East border 97° -14' W
Total Area, 2000 (Sq. Mi.)	70,700
Water Area, 2000 (Sq. Mi.)	1,724
Land Area, 2000 (Sq. Mi.)	68,976
(Acres)	44,144,595
Land in Farms, 2002 (Acres)	39,294,879
Rank in Size	7
Number of Counties	53
North to South	212 Miles
Extreme East to West	360 Miles
Average East to West	335 Miles
Elevation:	
Lowest Point - Red River, Pembina Co.	750 Feet
Highest Point - White Butte, Slope Co.	3,506 Feet
McKenzie, Largest County (Sq. Mi.)	2,735
Eddy, Smallest County (Sq. Mi.)	635
Population (2003)	633,837

FARMS

Item	1987	1992	1997	2002
Number	35,289	31,123	32,348	30,619
Average Size (Acres)	1,143	1,267	1,227	1,283



State Motto

***"Liberty and union now and forever,
one and inseparable."***

HISTORIC DATES

Lewis & Clark Expedition	1804 - 1805
First Settlement at Pembina	1812
Established as "Dakota Territory" with South Dakota.	March 2, 1861
First Railroad to Fargo	June 8, 1872
Constitution Approved	October 1, 1889
Admitted to the Union (39 th State)	November 2, 1889
Oil Discovered at Tioga	April 5, 1951
Garrison Dam First Produced Electric Power	1956