

EXTREMES

Lowest: The lowest point is along the Snake River near Lewiston at 710 feet (216 m) above sea level.

Hottest: The highest recorded temperature was 118°F (48°C) at Orofino in 1934.

Highest: The highest point in the state is Borah Peak at 12,662 feet (3,859 m) above sea level.

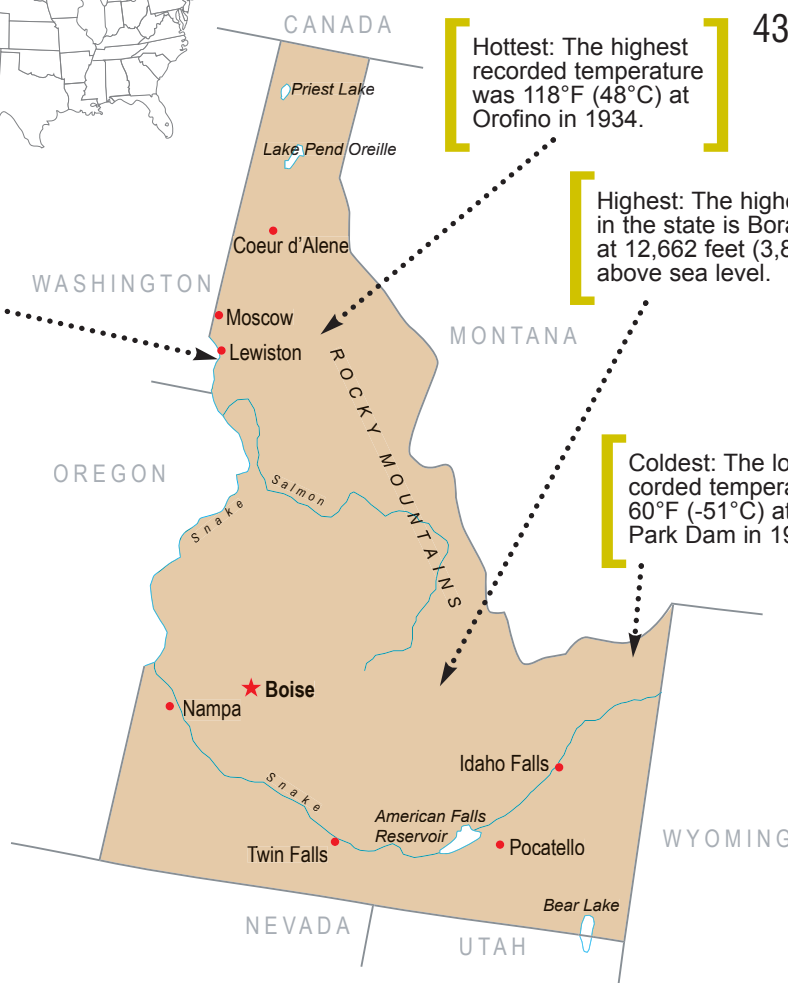
Coldest: The lowest recorded temperature was 60°F (-51°C) at Island Park Dam in 1943.

Climate

Idaho's climate varies a lot depending on location, particularly on altitude. The mountainous areas tend to be cooler and wetter. In the valleys and plains, summers are hot and winters are cold. Also, the climate is generally drier. The average January temperature in Boise is around 27°F (-3°C), compared to 16°F (-9°C) in Idaho Falls. July temperatures in Boise average 75°F (24°C), but summers are cooler in the mountains and the northern part of the state. Precipitation varies from less than 10 inches (25 cm) to around 32 inches (81 cm) annually. Idaho's climate is moderated somewhat by warm Pacific winds and mountains, which protect the state from cold arctic winds.

Geography

Idaho is the 14th largest state, with an area of 83,574 square miles (216,456 sq km). The state includes several geographical regions, but the most dominant is the Rocky Mountains. There are more than two hundred mountain ranges in Idaho. Some of the main ranges include the Salmon River, Clearwater, Bitterroot, and Sawtooth Mountains. Valuable forests and minerals are found in Idaho's mountains. The Columbia Plateau, another of the state's geographic areas, covers much of southern Idaho. The Columbia Plateau is important for farming and ranching. In the southeast corner is the dry Basin and Range region. The Snake River, which flows westward across southern Idaho before going into Washington, is one of the state's major rivers.



Resources and Economy

Considering its nickname—the Gem State—it shouldn't be surprising that mining has been and continues to be an important part of Idaho's economy. Idaho is a leading producer of silver, lead, and other minerals. But now the top three industries in Idaho are manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism. While most people think of potatoes when they think of Idaho, wheat, sugar beets, and peas are major crops, too. Idaho also benefits from a large livestock industry. And one of the state's most important resources is water. It is used for irrigation, to generate hydroelectric power, in industry, and to drink. But a fast-growing portion of Idaho's economy is tourism. People are drawn to the state to ski, fish, hunt, camp, and appreciate Idaho's scenic beauty.



History

Early Inhabitants

By the time whites arrived in present-day Idaho, various Native American tribes already inhabited the area. The Nez Percé, Kootenai, Pend d'Oreille, and Coeur d'Alene lived in the north. The Bannock and Shoshone lived in the south. These native inhabitants tended to move from place to place in search of food. They hunted deer, elk, bear, buffalo, ducks, rabbits, and other animals. Those that lived near rivers fished for salmon and trout. And they supplemented their diet with seeds and wild plants. In the 1700s, the Idaho tribes obtained horses through trading with other tribes. This changed their lives forever because the horses made it easier to hunt and to travel to other areas to trade.



Lewis and Clark

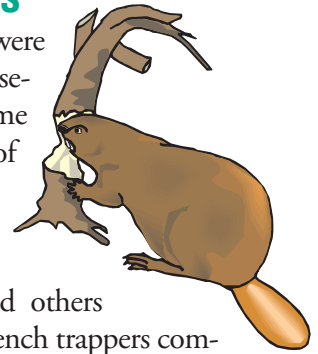
In 1803, the United States bought the Louisiana Territory, which extended west of the Mississippi to Idaho, from France for \$15 million. Soon afterward, President Thomas Jefferson sent Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the new region.



In 1805, they became the first whites to set foot in what we now know as Idaho. Lewis and Clark crossed the Bitterroot Mountains and surveyed north-central Idaho. Their reports of seeing beaver and other animals encouraged fur trappers to come to the area.

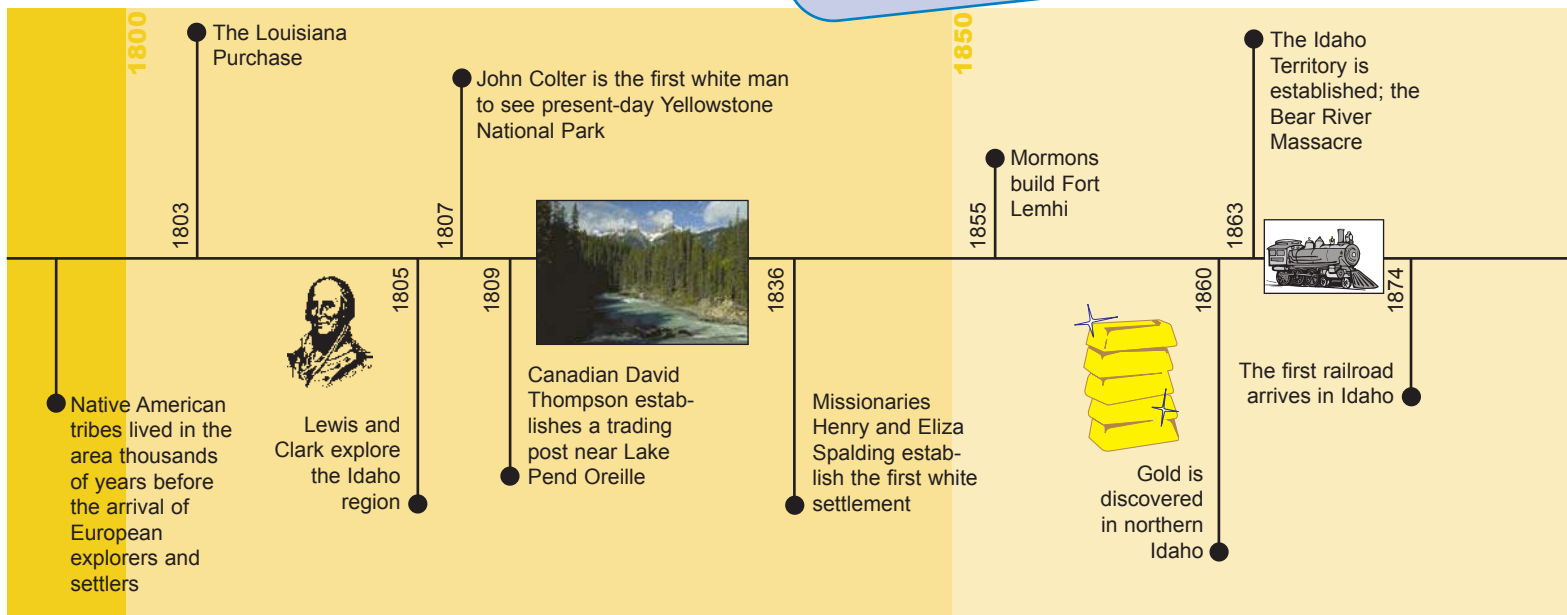
Trappers and Traders

In the early 1800s, beaver hats were fashionable in Europe and elsewhere, so trappers and traders came to present-day Idaho in search of beaver pelts that they could sell to make money. David Thompson built the first trading post near Lake Pend Oreille in 1809, and others soon followed. American and French trappers competed with the British for furs. Once a year, the trappers would meet together at a *rendezvous*, a place to get supplies, tell stories, and trade with each other.



Cultural Note

Idaho potatoes are so famous that many people refer to Idaho as the Spud State. More potatoes are grown in Idaho than in any other U.S. state. And these aren't just any potatoes. Idaho is known for a potato called the Russet Burbank, which Luther Burbank developed in New England, starting in the early 1870s. He later took them out west. These potatoes are now grown mainly in the Snake River plain. From there, they go to be processed and packaged. They are made into french fries, hash browns, potato patties, potato flakes, potato cookies, tater tots, potato puffs, and many other foods.



Christian Missionaries

Missionaries began arriving in the region in the 1830s. They hoped to convert the Native American populations to Christianity. One of the best-known missionaries was Henry Spalding, a Presbyterian minister. He and his wife, Eliza, arrived in 1836 and established a small mission at Lapwai Creek, near present-day Lewiston. In addition to teaching the Nez Percé about the Bible, the Spaldings taught them how to farm. Father John De Smet began a Catholic mission among the Coeur d'Alene tribe in northern Idaho in 1842. And Latter-day Saints (Mormons) came to eastern Idaho in 1855. They settled in a place called Fort Lemhi but left three years later after conflicts with some of the Native American tribes in the area. However, they returned in 1860 and established Franklin—Idaho's oldest town.



but some miners stayed to work in the silver and lead mines that had recently opened. In the 1890s, big companies owned many of the mines in Idaho. Sometimes there were conflicts between miners and mine owners over low pay or working conditions in the mines. Many of the miners joined *unions*, groups that worked for better treatment from mine owners. But sometimes the disagreements between the owners and the unions led to violence. In one instance, Frank Steunenberg, a former governor who fought against the unions, was killed by a bomb.

Burroughs



Fisher



Borglum



Simplot



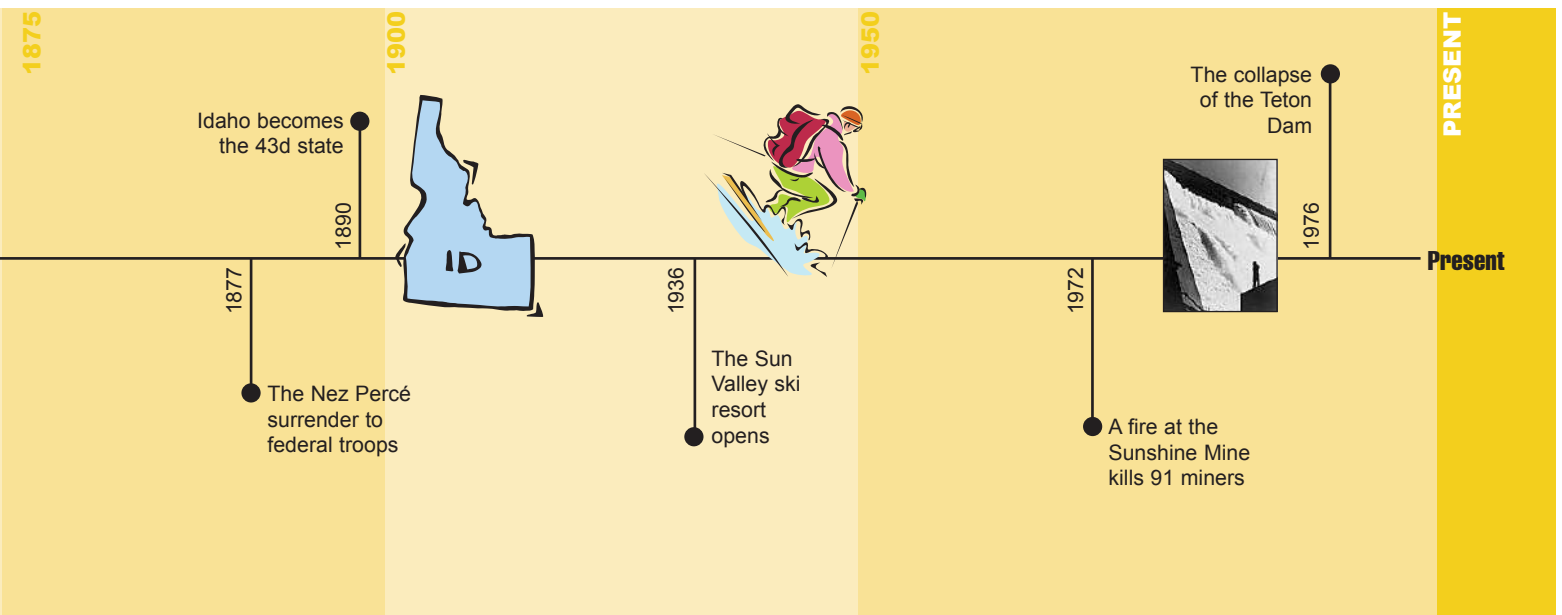
Mining in Idaho

Mining has long been important in the state. Idaho's gold rush began in 1860 when Elias Pierce discovered gold near Orofino Creek. Thousands of hopeful prospectors came to the area in hopes of striking it rich. Some of the prospectors found gold in other parts of Idaho as well. Mining towns sprang up virtually overnight. By 1870, the gold rush was over,












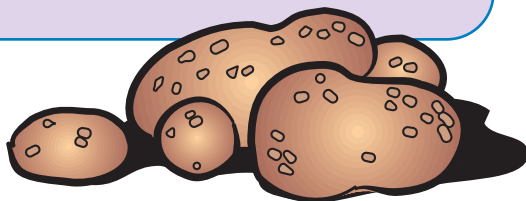
Famous People

Joe Albertson: Grocery chain founder
T. H. Bell: Educator
Gutzon Borglum: Mount Rushmore sculptor
Vardis Fisher: Author
Picabo Street: Skier
Lana Turner: Actress
Harmon Killebrew: Baseball player
Larry Echohawk: First Native American state attorney general
Philo Farnsworth: Inventor of the television
J. R. Simplot: Industrialist
Edgar Rice Burroughs: Author



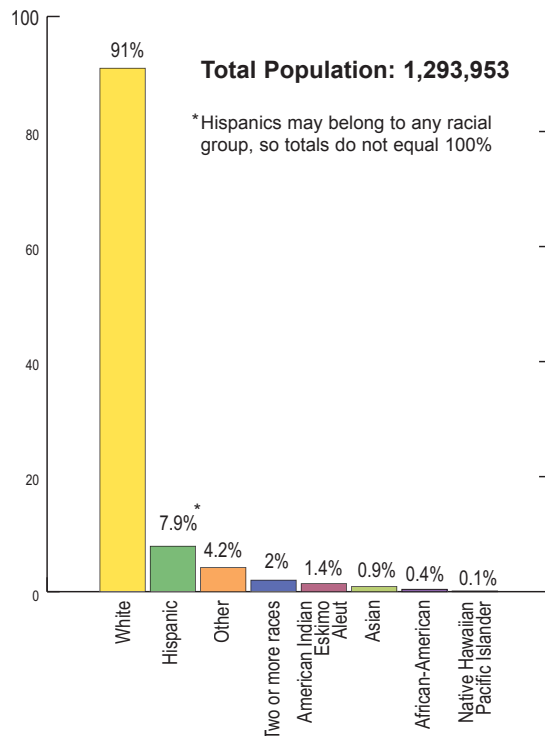
Did You Know?

-  Lewiston is a port city. Ships go down the Snake and Columbia Rivers and then out to the Pacific Ocean.
-  Rigby is known as the Birthplace of Television, since Philo T. Farnsworth, the inventor of television, was born there.
-  The Boise statehouse is heated by underground hot springs.
-  The National Old Time Fiddlers Contest is held in Weiser. Weiser is also home to the National Fiddlers Hall of Fame.
-  Two-thirds of all potatoes grown in the United States are grown in Idaho.
-  Idaho produces 72 different kinds of gemstones.
-  The deepest river gorge in North America is Hell's Canyon, at 7,900 feet (2,400 m) deep.
-  Shoshone Falls, near Twin Falls, drops 52 feet (16 m) farther than Niagara Falls.
-  One of the largest diamonds ever discovered in the United States, almost 20 carats, was found near McCall.



Population

In 1800, almost all Idahoans were Native Americans. The first white settlers were fur trappers or missionaries. Then a gold strike in 1860 brought thousands of miners. Chinese workers opened laundries and stores or worked building the railroad. In 1870, one-quarter of the population was Chinese. Cattle drives, trains, and steamboats on the Columbia River brought many settlers and immigrants. Basques from northern Spain and southern France came to graze sheep. By 1900, the population had grown five times bigger than it was in 1880.



State Symbols



State Animal
Appaloosa horse—Adopted as the state horse by the 1975 legislature, the appaloosa was once valued as a warhorse by the Nez Percé.



State Flower
Syringia—Meriwether Lewis of the Lewis and Clark Expedition first saw the flower in 1831.




State Tree
Western white pine—This tree is valuable commercially because of its long, straight trunk. It grows in the northern Rockies of Idaho.




State Bird
Mountain bluebird—The mountain bluebird is the state bird of Idaho and Nevada.

Government

Capital: Boise
Governor: Dirk Kempthorne
U.S. Senators: 2
U.S. Representatives: 2
Counties: 44

 The governor is elected for a four-year term.

 Idaho has four electoral votes in presidential elections.

State Motto: *Esto Perpetua*—This Latin phrase means “Let It Be Forever.”

For more information: See www.state.id.us or contact the Idaho Department of Commerce, PO Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0093; phone (800) 842-5858; Web site www.visitid.org.



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