

GEOGRAPHY

Except for Alaska, Minnesota is the most northerly of all the states (reaching lat. 49°23'55"N). The climate is humid continental. Winter locks the land in snow, spring is brief, and summers are hot. Prehistoric glaciers left marshes, boulder-strewn hills, and rich, gray drift soil stretching from the northern pine wilderness to the broad southern prairies. In the eastern part of the state are mountains, part of the Canadian Shield, from which iron ore is decreasingly extracted. The Vermilion and Cuyuna ranges (discovered in 1884 and 1911) are virtually depleted, and the once rich Mesabi range (1890) has also declined. South of the iron country, famous for its old-time boomtowns, lie rolling hills. In the south and the west are prairies, fertile farming country.

The state has more than 11,000 lakes and numerous streams and rivers. The rivers feed three great river systems: The Red River of the north and its tributaries in the west run north through Manitoba's lakes to Hudson Bay; streams in the east run into Lake Superior, and eventually into the St. Lawrence; and the Mississippi flows south from Minnesota headwaters above Lake Itasca, gathering volume from the waters of the St. Croix and Minnesota rivers before leaving the state.

The beauty of Minnesota's lakes and dense green forests, as seen in Voyageurs National Park, has long attracted vacationers, and there is excellent fishing in the state's many rivers, lakes, and streams. Also of interest to tourists are the Grand Portage and Pipestone national monuments (see National Parks and Monuments, table), Itasca State Park (at the headwaters of the Mississippi), and the



world's largest open-pit iron mine at Hibbing.

ECONOMY

Minnesota is one of the nation's largest producers of iron ore. Methods developed to use lower-grade ores such as taconite have kept production up in spite of the depletion of once rich high-grade deposits. Granite (from St. Cloud) and sand and gravel production are also among the largest in the country. Wheat, once paramount in agriculture, has been surpassed by corn, soybeans, and livestock. The state is also a leader in the production of creamery butter, dry milk, cheese, and sweet corn.

By the 1950s manufacturing rivaled agriculture as the major source of income in Minnesota. Major industries in the state produce processed foods, electronic equipment, machinery, paper products, chemicals, and stone, clay, and glass products. Minnesota pioneered the development of computers and other high-technology manufacturing. Printing and publishing are also important.

Reforestation and the use of relatively small trees for pulpwood have helped to keep timber one of Minnesota's assets, even though the "big woods" of the early 19th cent. have been to a large extent felled. The state is roughly 30% forestland and has two national forests. The high days of logging in Minnesota, immortalized in the legend of Paul Bunyan, were brief, but they helped build a number of large fortunes, such as that of Frederick Weyerhaeuser.

Also of great importance to Minnesota are its waterways, which have been extensively developed near industrial centers. Locks and other improvements enable Mississippi River barge traffic to pass around the Falls of St. Anthony at Minneapolis. Duluth, at the western tip of Lake Superior, has one of the busiest inland harbors in the United States; the completion of the Saint Lawrence Seaway (1959) made the city an important port for overseas trade.

GOVERNMENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Minnesota is governed under its 1858 constitution. The legislature has 67 senators and 134 representatives. The governor is elected for a four-year term and may be reelected. Arne Carlson, an Independent Republican, was elected governor in 1990 and reelected in 1994; Jesse Ventura of the Reform party, a former professional wrestler, surprisingly won the 1998 gubernatorial race. In 2002, Republican Tim Pawlenty was elected to the office; he was reelected in 2006. Minnesota sends two senators and eight representatives to Congress; it has 10 electoral votes.

Among institutions of higher learning in the state are the Univ. of Minnesota and the State Colleges and Univ. system of Minnesota, both with campuses throughout the state; Carleton College and Saint Olaf College, both in Northfield; and the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine, affiliated with the Mayo Clinic in Rochester.

FAMOUS PEOPLE

- LaVerne, Maxene, and Patti Andrews singers;
- Warren E. Burger jurist;
- William E. Colby CIA director;
- William Demarest actor;
- William O. Douglas jurist;
- Bob Dylan singer and composer;
- F. Scott Fitzgerald novelist;
- Judy Garland singer and actress;
- J. Paul Getty oil executive;
- Cass Gilbert architect;
- Jessica Lange actress;
- Sinclair Lewis novelist;
- Cornell MacNeil baritone;
- Roger Maris baseball player;
- E. G. Marshall actor;
- Charles H. Mayo surgeon;
- William J. Mayo surgeon;
- Eugene J. McCarthy former senator;
- Kate Millett feminist;
- Walter F. Mondale former vice president;
- Gen. Lauris Norstad NATO commander;
- Westbrook Pegler columnist;
- Prince musician;
- Jane Russell actress;
- Charles M. Schulz cartoonist;
- Max Shulman novelist;
- Maurice H. Stans secretary of commerce;
- Harold E. Stassen government official;
- Frederick Weyerhaeuser businessman;
- Gig Young actor.

HISTORY

There are some experts who argue on the basis of the Kensington Rune Stone and other evidence that the first Europeans to reach Minnesota were the Vikings, but French fur traders came in the mid-17th cent. is undeniably so. Other traders, explorers, and missionaries of New France also penetrated the country. Among these were Radisson and Groseilliers, Verendrye, the sieur Duluth, and Father Hennepin and Michel Aco, who discovered the Falls of St. Anthony (the site of Minneapolis).

At the time the French arrived, the dominant groups of Native Americans were the Ojibwa in the east and the Sioux in the west. Both were friendly to the French and contributed to the fur-trading empire of New France. Minnesota remained excellent country for fur trade throughout the British regime that followed the French and Indian Wars and continued so after the War of 1812, when the American Fur Company became dominant and the company's men helped to develop the area.

U.S. Absorption and Settlement

The eastern part of Minnesota had been included in the Northwest Territory and was governed under the Ordinance of 1787; the western part was joined to the United States by the Louisiana Purchase. Further exploration was pursued by Jonathan Carver (1766–67), Zebulon M. Pike (1805–6), Henry Schoolcraft (1820, 1829), and Stephen H. Long (1823).

Only after the War of 1812, however, did settlement begin in earnest. In 1820 Fort St. Anthony (later Fort Snelling) was founded as a guardian of the frontier. A gristmill established there in 1823 initiated the industrial development of Minneapolis. Treaties (1837, 1845, 1851, and 1855) with the Ojibwa and the Sioux, by which the U.S. government took over Native American lands, and the opening of a land office at St. Croix Falls in 1848 initiated a period of substantial expansion.

Territorial Status and Statehood

In 1849 Minnesota became a territory. The Missouri and White Earth rivers were the western boundary. A land boom grew as towns were platted, railroads chartered, and roads built. Attention turned to education, and the Univ. of Minnesota was established in 1851. The school, with its many associated campuses, has subsequently exerted and continues to exert a great influence on the cultural life of the state. The building (1851–53) of the Soo Ship Canal at Sault Ste. Marie opened a water route for lake shipping eastward.

The Panic of 1857 hit Minnesota particularly hard because of land speculation, but difficult times did not prevent the achievement of statehood in 1858, with St. Paul as the capital and Henry Hastings Sibley as the state's first governor. The population had swelled from 6,000 in 1850 to more than 150,000 in 1857; by 1870 there were nearly 440,000 people. Chiefly a land of small farmers (mainly of British, German, and Irish extraction), Minnesota supported the Union in the Civil War and supplied large quantities of wheat to the Northern armies.



Native American Resistance and New Settlement

During the Civil War and afterward the Sioux reacted to broken promises, fraudulent dealings, and the encroachment of settlers on their lands with violent resistance. A Sioux force under Little Crow was defeated by H. H. Sibley, virtually ending Native American resistance. Meanwhile, settlement boomed, aided by the Homestead Act of 1862. Later in the century came immigrants from Scandinavia—Swedes, Norwegians, and Finns. Lumbering, which had begun in 1839 at a sawmill on the St. Croix, became paramount, and logging camps were established. Fortunes were made quickly in the 1870s and 80s, as the railroads pushed west. A boom in wheat made the Minnesota flour mills famous across the world and brought wealth to flour producers such as John S. Pillsbury.

Discontent and Reform Politics

In the late 19th cent. farmers suffered from such natural disasters as the blizzard of 1873 and insect plagues from 1874 to 1876. To these were added the miseries that accompanied the downward trend of the national economy, and Minnesota became a center of farmers' discontent, expressed in the Granger movement. The opening of the iron mines gave new impetus to Minnesota's economy but conditions in these mines also created discontent among the laborers. They joined forces with the farmers in the 1890s in the Populist party, one of several third-party movements that challenged the Republican party's traditional leadership in Minnesota. Ignatius Donnelly was one of the Populists' most powerful figures.

Renewed agrarian discontent led to the founding of the Nonpartisan League in 1915. Farmers and laborers joined forces again in 1920 in the Farmer-Labor party, which was dominant in the 1930s. The Republicans returned to power in 1939 with the election of Harold Stassen as governor. In 1944 the Farmer-Labor party and the Democrats merged. Prob-

ably the most successful leader of the new party, the Democratic Farmer Labor party (DFL), was Hubert H. Humphrey, who was elected to the U.S. Senate four times and was vice president from 1965 to 1969. Orville Freeman, DFL governor from 1955 to 1961, was secretary of agriculture from 1961 to 1969.

Walter F. Mondale, a Humphrey protégé, was a U.S. senator from 1964 to 1977. He was elected vice president as Jimmy Carter's running mate in 1976 and ran for president in 1984, losing to incumbent Ronald Reagan. Since the 1950s the DFL and the Republicans have vied sharply in contests for state offices. In the 1970s the Republican party changed its name to the Independent Republican party. With the exception of 1952, 1956, and 1972, Minnesota has voted Democratic in every presidential election since 1932.

Cooperatives and Population Shifts

The state has been notable for experimentation in novel features of local government and has also been a leader in the use of cooperatives. This phenomenon is perhaps explained by the cooperative heritage present among its many people of Scandinavian descent. In 1919 credit unions, cooperative creameries, grain elevators, and purchasing associations were supported by legislation that protected the institutions and instructed the state department of agriculture to encourage them. Today there are several thousand cooperative associations in Minnesota serving diversified needs.

Since the mid-19th cent. the state has become progressively more urban. In 1970 the urban population was two thirds of the total. Since 1970 dramatic suburban growth has taken place, especially in the Minneapolis–St. Paul metropolitan area. Minneapolis–St. Paul International Airport has become an important hub for the region. Nearby is the massive Mall of America (1992), the nation's largest shopping center.