



# State of Nebraska

## Index



Nebraska



Nebraska is one of the great states that make up the United States of America. We have gathered large amounts of information about Nebraska into one place from various sources such as the state Governor's office, the US Geological Survey (USGS), the US Census, the US Postal Service and many other authorities. So whether you are looking for Nebraska history, the state bird of Nebraska, or the best places to visit in Nebraska, the answers are just a click away.

## General Nebraska State History

The precise date of settlement of the area known as Nebraska is undetermined but archeological evidence indicates that the first pioneers were prehistoric Indians who hunted big game over 10,000 years ago. Those early hunters were followed by tribes of Indians who raised crops of corn, other vegetables, and sun-flowers. At the dawn of recorded Plains history, 1750-1800, the tribes living in the area included the farming tribes of eastern Nebraska- Otoe, Omaha, Ponca, and Pawnee. These groups lived in permanent earth-lodge villages where they cultivated crops. It was still necessary, however, for these tribes to engage in buffalo hunts for a large portion of their food supply. Western Nebraska was under the control of the horse-riding, buffalo-hunting, semi-nomadic groups of the Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Potawatome. These groups lived in skin teepees which could be dismantled and carried with them as they pursued the buffalo. About 40,000 Indians lived in Nebraska when the first white man came.

Fur trading played an important role in Nebraska's preterritorial history. French traders and trappers, including the Mallett brothers who named the Platte River, were the first known white visitors. They traveled through Nebraska from 1700 to 1760, In 1804m the Lewis and Clark expedition mapped the eastern boundary of Nebraska. In 1806, Lt. Zebulon M. Pike visited the south central Nebraska as part of a government program to explore the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase. Other early explorers included the Hunt party in 1811 and Major Long's expedition in 1819.

Among the early trading groups was the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company. Manual Lisa established a post for this company in 1812 near the site where Lewis and Clark held council with Indian tribes in present Washington County. In 1820 a nearby camp became a permanent army post called Fort Atkinson. The post was established to discourage British encroachment and to protect America's western frontier. Bellevue, founded in 1823, was the first permanent settlement.

As the United States expanded to the west, the Platte Valley trails of Nebraska became the major highways. Gold seekers, Mormons and migrants on their way to California and Oregon were among the thousands of pioneers using the overland trails between 1840 and 1860. Fort Kearny was established along the route to protect these travelers. Nebraska City and other towns on the Missouri River became shipping centers and supplied both the military outposts and the new settlers. From April 3, 1860 to October 24, 1861, Pony Express riders carried their mail across the area.

In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed by Congress, organizing the Nebraska Territory. This act opened lands west of the Missouri, previously reserved for the Indians, to settlement. The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed settlers to claim 160 acres of land free in eastern Nebraska and statehood was granted on March 1, 1867, in a proclamation signed by President Andrew Johnson.

The railroads contributed greatly to the early development of the state. The Union Pacific was completed across Nebraska in 1867, and the lines of the Burlington system crisscrossed most of the state by the mid- 1880s. Many early railroads received land grants from the state and federal governments to offset the cost of construction. These lands were sold to settlers through extensive advertising campaigns, with some companies sending representatives to Europe to encourage immigrants to come to Nebraska.

Nebraska showed continued growth until the farm depressions of the 1890s. By 1900 most of the prime land in the state was settled, and larger claims were needed for profitable farming and ranching. In 1904 an act introduced by Congressman Moses Kinkaid of Nebraska was passed. The Kincaid Act increased the size of the homesteads from 160 to 640 acres. A new population swell occurred in the Sandhills area of the state. The farm depressions of the 1920s and 1930s again arrested the economic growth of the state. Since World War II, however, Nebraska's development has been generally upward.

## **Nebraska State Symbols, Facts & Info**

The United States of America accepted Nebraska as the 37th state to enter the union. Below, you will find the official state symbols and interesting facts about Nebraska.

**State Name:**  
Nebraska

**Abbreviation:**

NE

**Capital of Nebraska State:**

Lincoln

**Date of Statehood:**

March 1, 1867

**Nebraska State Population:**

1,578,385 (US Census 2005 estimate)

**Current Weather/Time:**



**Nebraska State Nickname:**

The Cornhusker State

**Nebraska State Motto:**

Equality before the law.

**Nebraska State Flower:**

Goldenrod (*Solidago gigantea*)  
(Legislation of 1895)



**Nebraska State Tree:**

Eastern Cottonwood (Legislation of 1972)

**Nebraska State Bird:**

Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*)  
(Legislation of 1929)



**Nebraska State Fish:**

Channel Catfish (Legislation of 1997)

**Nebraska State Insect:**

Honey Bee (Legislation of 1975)

**Nebraska State Gemstone:**

Blue Agate (Legislation of 1967)

**Official State Seal:**



**Official State Flag:**



**State Commemorative Quarter:**

From the 1999-2008 United States Mint 50 State Quarters® Program



**Nebraska State Postage Stamp:**

From the 2002 United States Postal Service Greetings from America series.



**Nebraska State License Plate:**

Photo under license from collector Jim Moini



**Nebraska State Location**

The image below shows the location of Nebraska state in relation to the other states in the United States of America.



Note: Alaska and Hawaii are shown out of position for reference only and are not to scale.

**Area:** 76,872 square miles (USGS)  
**Highest Elevation:** 5,424 ft (Panorama Point) (USGS)  
**Lowest Elevation:** 840 ft (Missouri River) (USGS)

## Historic Sites

### Chimney Rock National Historic Site

Chimney Rock was a guide on the trails west for the explorers and "mountain men". For the pioneers, the most recognized landmark along the Oregon Trail, Chimney Rock signaled the end of the prairie and the beginning of the High Plains and on to the more difficult mountain passage.

It was noted in hundreds of journals of covered wagons emigrants; the spectacular shaft marked a good camping spot with a dependable spring nearby. Thousands of emigrants climbed up the base to carve their names on the tower. Today the column towers 500 feet above the nearby North Platte River. Additional Information: Chimney rock National Historic Site, PO Box F, Bayard, NE 69334-3680. Phone: 308-586-2581

### Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

Located 20 miles south of Harrison or 34 miles north of Mitchell on Nebraska highway 29. See fossil beds with bones of animals formed 19 million years ago. The visitors center contains paleontology exhibits and one of the most noted Native American artifacts displays. The monument includes upper Niobrara River wetlands set in a High Plains ecosystem. Additional Information: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, 301 River Rd.. Harrison, NE 69346-2737. Phone: 308-668-2211

### Scotts Bluff National Monument

A majestic landmark used by the Indians, fur trappers, pioneers and modern travelers. Visitors center museum tells the story of the Oregon Trail, Oregon Trail ruts still visible. Walk the winding trails or drive to the 800-foot summit for a spectacular view of the North Platte River Valley and Laramie Peak (100 miles to the west). Name for Hiram Scott, a trapper who died here after his companions deserted him, this Oregon Trail landmark is just 3 miles west of Gering on Hwy 92. Additional Information: Scotts bluff National Monument, PO Box 27, Gering, NE 69341-0027. Phone: 308-436-4340

### **Homestead National Monument of America**

Four miles west of Beatrice in southeastern Nebraska, a reconstructed log cabin and a one-room school house honor Daniel Freeman, one of the first to take advantage of the 1862 Homestead Act of "free land". Stroll through the tall grass prairie and view pioneer artifacts in the visitor center explaining the expansion of settlers from across the country moving to new territories to stake their claim. Additional Information: Homestead National Monument of America, Rt. 3, Box 47, Beatrice, NE 68310-9416. Phone: 402-223-3514

### **Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park**

Home of famed showman-scout William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, Buffalo Bill Ranch SHP at North Platte., in central Nebraska, recaptures the life and career of the famed Pony Express rider, army scout, buffalo hunter turned showman. The spectacular house and magnificent barn exhibit memorabilia of this fascinating man. Buffalo Bill held the first known rodeo near his ranch. Horseback trail rides in the adjacent 233-acre state recreation area are also available. The ranch also boasts a bison viewing area. Additional Information: Buffalo Bill Ranch SHP, RR 1 Box 229, North Platte, NE 69101-9706. Phone: 308-535-8035

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## **Tourist Attractions**

### **Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo**

Swing the world's largest indoor rainforest viewing thundering waterfalls, exotic plants and animals, then watch sharks and stingrays swim beside you as you walk through a 70 foot underwater tunnel in the Scott Aquarium.

Also visit North America's largest Cat Complex, a four-acre open aviary, polar bears and over 4,500 exotic animals. The Zoo also boasts larger-than-life movies on the Lozier IMAX Theater, with a screen as tall as six elephants. Additional Information: Henry Doorly Zoo, 3701 South 10th St., Omaha, NE 68107-2200. Phone: 402-733-840

### **Cabela's**

Visit Cabela's, a world renown sporting goods megastore selling outdoor equipment of every sort from fishing and hunting and backpacking at this huge 62,000 sq. ft. store. View it's more than 500 mounted wildlife specimens found around the world and an 8,000-gallon aquarium with fish from Nebraska. Additional Information: Cabela's, 115 Cabela Drive, Sidney, NE 69162. Phone: 308-254-7889

### **Strategic Air Command Museum (SAC)**

This multi-million, dollar facility boasts numerous military aircraft; interactive children's gallery, a permanent restoration center, research library, 200-seat theater and a traveling exhibit area. Located near Ashland, in eastern Nebraska, I-80 exit 426, this facility comprised of 300,000 square feet houses 33 aircraft, six missiles and more than 4, 000 artifacts. The highlight of the museum, the SR-71 Blackbird a craft that has the ability to fly more than three times the speed of sound, greets the visitors in the glass atrium entryway. Additional Information: Strategic Air Command Museum, PO Box 70, South Bend, NE 68058-0070. Location address: 28210 W. Park Hwy, Ashland, NE Phone: 402-944-3100

### **Harold Warp Pioneer Village**

The story of how America grew, view more than 20,000 historic items from every field of human endeavor, including 350 antique autos, extensive collection of pioneer memorabilia tracing man's progress sine 1830 are displayed in 28 buildings on 20 acres. Authentic originals arranged in their order of development, all mechanical items in operating condition, some run with the push of a button. Located at Minden, in south central Nebraska, US 6, 34 & 10, twelve miles south of I-80 at exit 279 this display is so well arranged in chronological order of development that is can all be seen by walking less than a mile. Additional Information: Harold Warp Pioneer Village, US Hwys 6, 34 & NE 10, Minden, NE 68959 Phone: 800-445-4447

### **Arbor Lodge State Historical Park**

This beautiful estate in Nebraska City was home to J. Sterling Morton, founder of Arbor Day. "Other holidays repose upon the past. Arbor Day proposes for the future." Mr. Morton was an editor, farmer, legislator, Nebraska territorial secretary and US secretary of agriculture. From its beginning in 1855 as a four-room frame house, the magnificent mansion grew to 52 rooms through several remodeling. Authentic furnishings grace the rooms and displays capture the life and times of this exceptional man. Additional Information: Arbor Lodge SHP, PO Box 15, Nebraska City, NE 68410. Phone: 402-873-7222