50 More Facts About the 50 States - mental_floss on YouTube (Ep.44)

List Show
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Hi, I'm John Green, welcome to my salon. This is Mental Floss on YouTube. Once upon a time, we did a video with 50 facts about 50 states and people liked it, and it turns out that there are more facts about those same 50 states; so let's do it again. Last time we went alphabetically, but I'm gonna mix it up and go in order of the states admission into the US because that's what the state quarter system did and I just cannot get enough of that adorable pelican on the Louisiana quarter. Anyway, that means we're going to start with Delaware. Wait. Delaware's a state? I thought it was just the biggest county in Maryland.

(Intro)

1. The Delaware state wildlife animal has been the gray fox since 2010 when a fourth grade class started a letter writing campaign to state legislators as part of an English lesson. The letters I wrote in fourth grade English class were all to Jennifer Keen, and they ended with "Do you like me? Yes, No, Maybe" and she always checked no.

2. Pennsylvania contains the oldest zoo in the United States, the Philadelphia Zoo. It was chartered in 1859, but it didn't open until 1874, because of the pesky Civil War interfering. Now the zoo is best known for having had an episode of *Ghost Hunters* filmed there, but they also have over 1,300 animals. I don't know why all these zoos make such a big deal about all the animals they got. I mean, do any of them have a meerkat in a jar?

3. New Jersey is home to the world's largest spoon collection, which has over 5,000 spoons.

4. The capital of Georgia, Atlanta, was named Terminus, Thrasherville, and then Marthasville, before citizens landed on Atlanta.

5. Waterbury, Connecticut is home to the now closed theme park Holy Land, USA. The park's heydays were in the 60's and 70's, when you could visit replications of Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and the Garden of Eden.

6. Massachusetts had the first public beach in the United States, Revere Beach, as well as the public park, the Boston Common.

7. Maryland is known as the "Free State" because they heroically refused to enforce prohibition. In 1923, *Baltimore Sun* editor Hamilton Owens wrote a satirical article claiming Maryland should succeed so they could continue to sell alcohol. The article was called "The Maryland Free State," and the nickname stuck. Which reminds me, I wonder what's inside of my copy of Eugenia Price's *Beauty From Ashes*. Oh wait! It's liquor! Here's to you, Maryland!

8. If you want to be a fortune-teller in South Carolina, and who doesn't, really, you need a permit. Wow, I can be both a fortune-teller and a South Carolinian? How lucky can one guy get? I'm just trying to alienate people from all the states.

9. The classic American film *Jumanji* was filmed in Keene, New Hampshire. In the movie the dad of Robin Williams's character, owns a shoe company called "Parish Shoes." The crew left an advertisement for the fictional company on a building downtown, and it still remains there today. Which makes sense, really, because you know there's quite a bit of *Jumanji* related tourism business.

10. In 2012 a tie-wearing cat named Hank came in third place in Virginia's senate election. What began as a promotion for animal rescue turned into a successful write-in campaign. Hank's campaign slogan was "vote the humans out", which is a nice slogan, although it wrongly implies that congress-people are people.

11. *Wizard of Oz* author L. Frank Baum was born in Chittenango, New York. The citizens are so proud that they have installed a yellow brick road downtown. There's also a festival every year called "Oz-Stravaganza." If Indianapolis would like to start an "Agustus-travaganza," I give you my permission.

12. America's largest privately owned home is located in North Carolina. The Biltmore Estate is around 175,000 square feet, and it is still owned by, you guessed it, the Vanderbilts. During World War II, the house provided storage space for art from the National Gallery of Art's collection, but now it's just a gigantic house that no one lives in.

13. Of the original 13 colonies Rhode Island was the last to become a state, but Bristol, Rhode Island has had an annual Fourth of July celebration every year since 1785, making it the oldest yearly celebration of the holiday.

14. Vermont has the most covered bridges per square mile of any state in the United States.

15. Kentucky has both a state song and a state bluegrass song. Because, you know, Kentucky.

16. The opening line of the Ballad of Davey Crockett is "born on a mountaintop in Tennessee." Crockett was born in Tennessee, but in a river valley, not on a mountaintop. Furthermore, he did not kill a bear when he was only three.

17. Ohio contains both the world's largest rubber stamp, which is 28 feet tall, and the world's largest basket, which is 192 feet tall.

18. Pirates Jean and Pierre Lafitte smuggled goods into Louisiana during the early 1800's, defying the embargo act of 1807, but in 1814 the brothers helped Andrew Jackson win the Battle of New Orleans, so the government pardoned the Lafitte's of all their crimes. And so I say to those of you entering the workforce, consider piracy.

19. The Lost River of Indiana is about 85 miles long, but 23 of those miles are completely underground.

20. In 1969 Hurricane Camille hit Mississippi, and the intense storm divided an entire island, transforming Ship Island into West Ship Island and East Ship Island. The water in between has been dubbed the Camille Cut.

21. The town of Normal, Illinois was the site of the first Steak 'n Shake restaurant, famous for having once employed me. Steak 'n Shake got its start when its founder, Gus Belt, decided to close his chicken restaurant and turn it into a hamburger stand.

22. Houses on the Magnolia River in Alabama have their mail delivered by boat. This means that Alabama contains the sole river route of the United States Postal Service. It is also the only place where boat delivery occurs year round.

23. Mental Floss writer Meredith is from New Hampshire, so she would like you to know that Maine is the worst state in the Union. But one good thing did happen there: E. B. White wrote Charlotte's Web. That's great, Meredith, we don't have to be worried about people from Maine being angry with us. It's not like all of them own axes.

24. Kansas City, Missouri is second only to Rome for most fountains in one city. It's also the only major city named for a state that it is not in.

25. The name Arkansas derives from a term used by the alouini

American Indian tribe that means “people of the south wind,” which is actually how they described another tribe. But you know, the European settlers weren’t that keen on like, accurate translation.

26. No matter where you go in the state of Michigan, you will be at most 85 miles away from a Great Lake.

27. In 2012, a goat from Florida broke the world record for farthest distance skateboarded by a goat. Happy the Goat skateboarded for 118 feet, which is literally further than I could skateboard.

28. Texas is home to Selena Gomez. Meredith, can I please get a real fact about Texas? If Texans dreams came true and they succeeded, Texas would be the 40th largest country in the world, just smaller than Zambia and a bit bigger than Burma.

29. Herbert Hoover, the 31st president of the United States, was born in Iowa, making him the first president to be born West of the Mississippi.

30. Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin, prides itself on being the troll capital of the world. I mean, there are statues of trolls all around town, and you can also visit places like the Grumpy Troll Brewery and Restaurant. Wisconsin, where you can’t have a restaurant without it also being a brewery.

31. In 1953, the California grizzly bear became the official animal of the state. The last time a wild grizzly bear had actually lived in California? 1922.

32. Minnesota has a state muffin: the blueberry muffin. Mark, does Indiana have a state muffin? No? We should really get on that before the other states pick all the good muffins and we’re stuck with something disgusting like bran.

33. The state with the most ghost towns is Oregon, and yet the ghost hunters spend all their time at the Philadelphia Zoo.

34. Kansas is home to some of the most amazing fictional characters: Clark Kent, Sam and Dean Winchester, Dorothy and Toto, Mackenzie Zales.

35. Poca High School in West Virginia once came in 1st place on ESPN’s list of best high school mascots. They are the Poca High School… Dots. Booooooooooooo.

36. Nevada has the most mountain ranges of any state, which explains why its name came from the Spanish word for “snow-capped.” I’d like to congratulate Nevada on getting through an entire facts about states video without a single mention of hookers or gambling.

37. Kool-Aid was invented in Nebraska. Presumably a large talking pitcher of the drink smashed through a wall in Hastings, and then Edwin Perkins was just like “Oh hey, I invented this!”

38. English professor Kathy Lee Bates wrote the song “America the Beautiful” after taking a trip to Pikes Peak in Colorado. She got to the top of the peak and there was the Kool-Aid man, and she said, “man this really is a beautiful country!”

39. North Dakota is the state least visited by tourists. I’m sorry, guys, at least you have fracking.

40. The only reason South Dakota is not the least visited state is Mt. Rushmore, which costs less than 1 million dollars to build, but they won’t sell it. Even if you offered them, like, 2 million dollars.

41. Loma, Montana experienced the biggest temperature shift within a 24 hours period that the United States has ever seen. On January 15th, 1972 the day started at -54° Fahrenheit, and climbed all the way up to 49° above Fahrenheit. A 103 degree difference.

42. Pictionary was invented by a waiter from Seattle, Washington. He created the game with a $35,000 loan from his uncle, and then success came when Nordstrom, headquartered in Seattle, bought 167 copies.

43. Idaho’s Sun Valley was one of the first ski resorts in the United States. In 1936, the resort built the first ever chair-lift.

44. Harry Longabaugh went to Sundance Jail in Wyoming, and his story inspired the film *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, which means that we can thank Wyoming for the Sundance Film Festival, even though the festival takes place in...

45. Utah, where it has been going on since 1978 in Salt Lake City.

46. Of all the state quarters, they minted the fewest of Oklahoma’s.

47. While Florida is more famous for its role in the 2000 election, New Mexico’s election was even closer. Al Gore beat George W. Bush by just 366 votes.

48. It’s illegal to damage a saguaro cactus in Arizona, and if you do you face up to 25 years in prison.

49. Alaska has a longer coastline than every other state… combined.

50. And lastly I return to my salon to tell you that even though *Hawaii Five-0* was a hugely popular television program, Hawaii does not actually have a statewide police force.

Thanks for watching Mental Floss here on YouTube, which is made with the help of all of these nice people.

Every week, we endeavor to answer one of your mind-blowing questions. This week's question comes from unfabgirl, who asks, “Why is Scotland's national animal a Unicorn?” First off, unfabgirl, I think that you're pretty fab. Secondly, I would like to commend the Hulk on attacking unicorns. I hate unicorns. But the reason that the unicorn is the animal of Scotland is because King Robert III put the unicorn on Scotland's seal during the 1300’s because it stood for purity and strength. But if they're so pure, how come their blood kept Voldemort alive and allowed him to go on his big killing spree?

Anyway, thanks again for watching Mental Floss here on YouTube, and as we say in my hometown, don’t forget to be awesome.