



# HISTORY CHALLENGE

190

Brain teasers about  
the United States

**LEVEL 1**



Arnold Cheyney

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# Look!

The first people to come to North America came from Asia across what is now Russia and Alaska.

What names do the descendants of these people have today?



*In the United States, Native Americans or American Indians; in Canada, First Peoples; in Mexico indigenas or indios. Most prefer to be identified by the name of their tribe or group.*

3

# Neat!

The Maya, Indian people of Central America and southern Mexico, are known for their advancements in astronomy, mathematics, and the development of a yearly calendar. What was their major advancement in communication?



*They created a hieroglyphic writing system.*

**4**

# Really?

The Anasazi, better called ancestral Puebloans, built houses that look like our present-day apartments. How did these Indians get to the upper levels of their homes?



5

*By ladders*

# Fact!

Christopher Columbus, navigator and explorer, sailed west across the Atlantic Ocean searching for a sea route to Asia. What did Columbus find?



*The West Indies and the coast of  
Central America*

**6**

# Look!

Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese sea captain, was in charge of the first expedition that proved our planet was round. After sailing around South America, he found a peaceful ocean. What did he name it?



*The Pacific Ocean. Actually, the Pacific has violent storms. Magellan just saw it on a calm day.*

# Fact!

The first permanent European settlement in the United States was founded in 1565 on the east coast of Florida. What is its name?



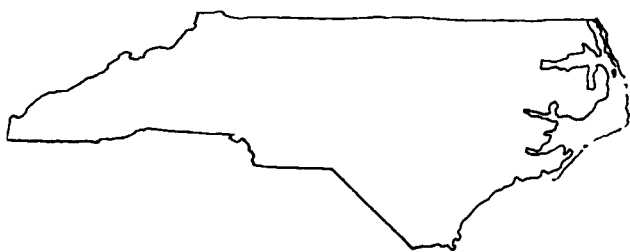
*St. Augustine*

8



# Weird!

Off the coast of North Carolina on Roanoke Island, more than one hundred English colonists settled in 1587. Three years later a supply ship from England returned to the site. Everyone was gone. What was the group called?



*The Lost Colony*

# Who Knew?

The first permanent English settlement in North America was begun in 1607 in what is now Virginia. What was the name of the settlement?



*Jamestown*

**10**

# Listen!

Because the Pilgrims wished to worship differently than the Church of England dictated, they sailed for America. What was the name of their ship?

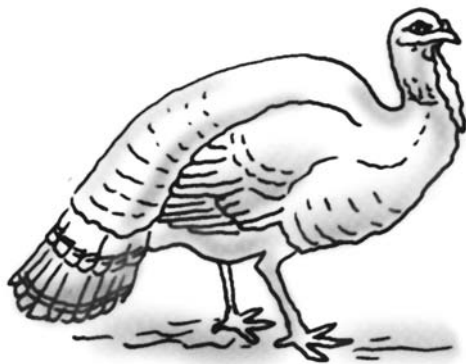


*The Mayflower*



# Neat!

The pilgrims showed their thanks to their Indian friends by inviting them to a feast. They also used this time to thank their God for his help. What has this day become known as? In what month is it celebrated?



*Thanksgiving Day; November  
(October in Canada)*

**12**

# Fact!

The early settlers in America came for freedom of worship, work opportunities, and land.

How many original colonies were there?

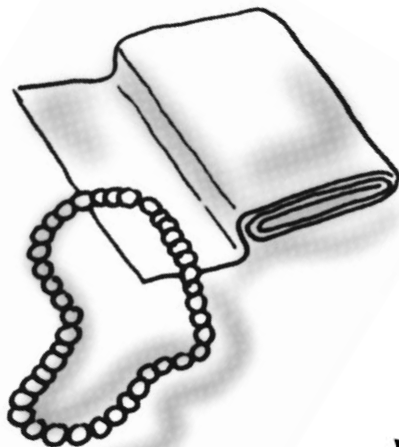


*Thirteen*

**13**

# Really?

The governor of the colony of New Netherland bought an island from some Indians in 1626 in what is now the state of New York. What was his name and the amount he paid, and what is the present name of the island?

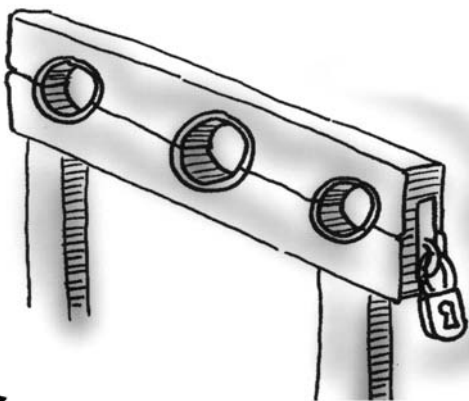


*Peter Minuit; \$24 (60 guilders)  
in beads, cloth, and trinkets;  
Manhattan*

**14**

# Weird!

A colonist in early America who broke the law might have his or her head and hands locked between blocks of wood in a public place where everyone could see him or her. What was it called to be punished in this embarrassing way?

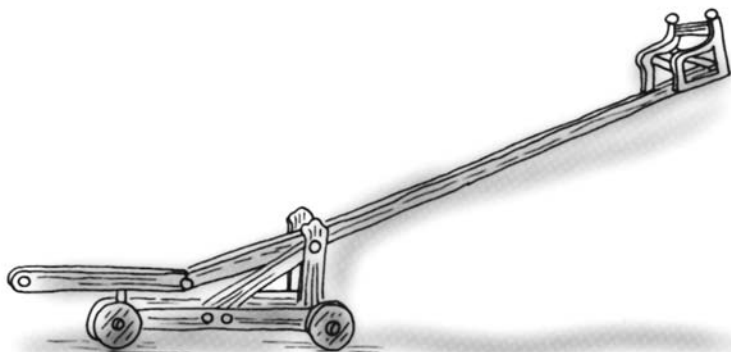


15

*Being pilloried or put in the pillory*

# Weird!

Women who gossiped and nagged their husbands in the New England colonies were sometimes punished by being tied to a “ducking stool.”  
What was a ducking stool?



*A chair on a long pole, which was lowered down into water and brought back up*

16



# Weird!

Some communities in colonial America had a man whose duty it was to keep people awake during the services by tickling them with a squirrel's tail attached to a long pole. What was he called?



*A tithingman (He also had other law enforcement duties. For example, he was responsible for making sure people didn't work on Sundays and for watching over Indian families.)*

17

# Listen!

Public school started in New England in the 1630s. A child read from a page attached to a paddle-shaped wooden board that was covered with a thin sheet of transparent horn. What were these reading devices called?



*Hornbooks*

**18**

# Cool!

Squanto (Tisquantum), a Pawtuxet Indian, learned to speak English after escaping from Spain, where he had been held as a slave. When he returned to America, whom did he help?



19

*The Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony*

# Fact!

Edward Teach was a British pirate who spread terror along the Carolina and Virginia coasts by capturing ships and seizing people for ransom. What was his pirate name?



*Blackbeard*

**20**

# Who Knew?

Colonial housewives saved waste grease, bits of fat, and lye made from wood ashes. After this mixture was boiled for several hours, it was poured into crocks and cooled. What did it become?



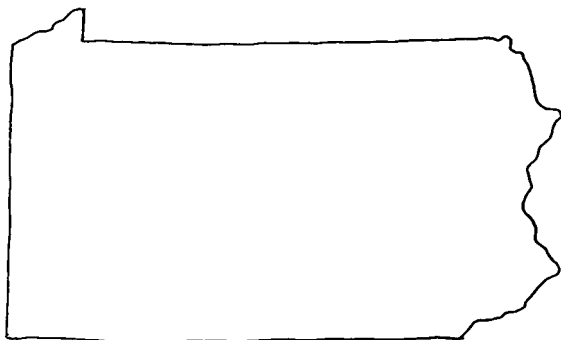
*dbos*

21



# Fact!

William Penn, an English Quaker, was given wilderness land in America by King Charles II to repay a debt to Penn's father. What does the word Pennsylvania mean?



*"Penn's woods"*

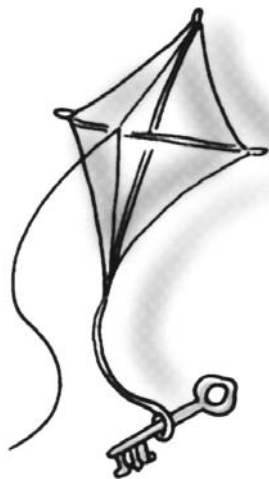


**22**



# Neat!

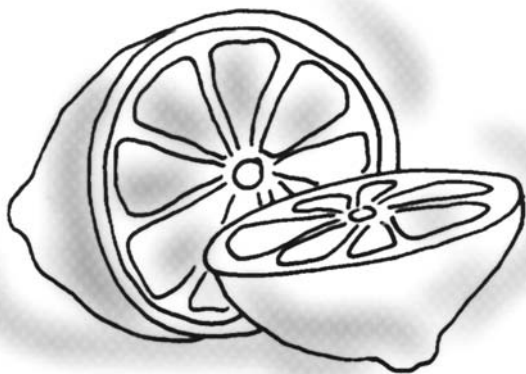
In 1752 Benjamin Franklin made a kite and flew it during a storm. Lightning came through a wire on the kite and down the string to a key, causing a spark. This led Franklin to invent a device that has saved many homes and barns. What is it?



*The lightning rod*

# Really?

In 1795 the British navy followed the advice of a Scottish physician, James Lind, and began issuing rations of lemon juice to its sailors. What disease did this prevent?



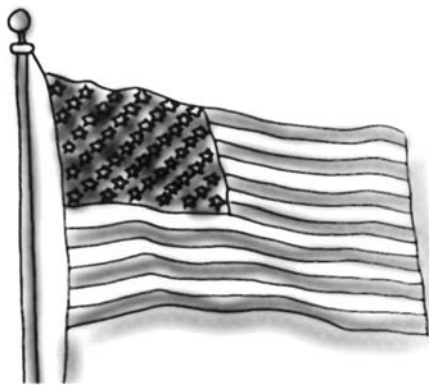
*Scurvy*

**24**



# Listen!

We honor our country by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance as we face the U.S. flag. Where is a person's right hand placed when saying this pledge?



25

*Over the heart*

# Fact!

The Declaration of Independence is a document that states that the United States of America is a country free to rule itself. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?



*Thomas Jefferson*

**26**



# Fact!

The U.S. Constitution provides for citizens of the United States to vote for a president to govern them. Who was the first president?



27

*George Washington*



# Cool!

The United States of America's birthday dates from July 4, 1776. What is that day called, and how old is the United States this year?

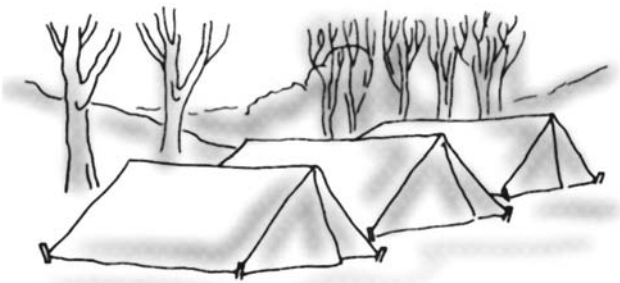


*Independence Day; Responses will vary.*

**28**

# Who Knew?

During the Revolutionary War, General George Washington asked a German military officer, Baron von Steuben, to train the American troops. Where were they camped?

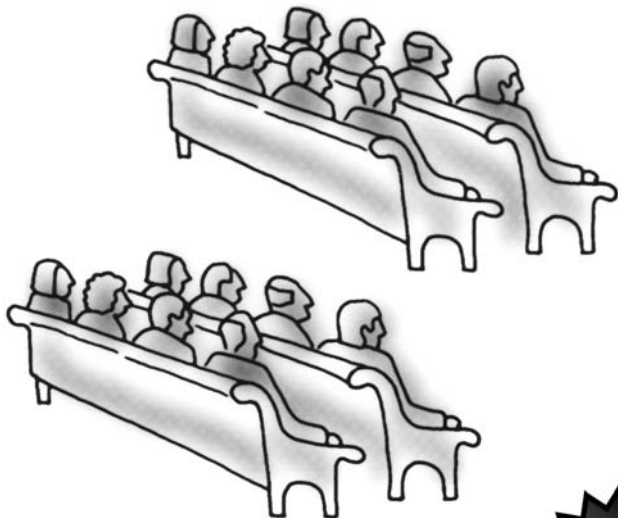


29

*At Valley Forge, Pennsylvania*

# Fact!

The U.S. Congress makes the nation's laws. The Congress is made up of two groups elected by the people. What are the two groups?



*The Senate and the House of Representatives*

**30**

# Really?

During the Battle of Monmouth (1778) in the Revolutionary War, Mary relieved her husband at his artillery position when he dropped to the ground from sunstroke. Mary had brought water in a pitcher to befriend the men and to swab out the hot cannons. Who did she become known as?



*Molly Pitcher*

31

# Neat!

Daniel Boone, a pioneer, an Indian fighter, and an explorer, led a party of woodsmen cutting a trail from Tennessee through the Cumberland Mountains into central Kentucky. What settlement did he find, and what was the trail called?



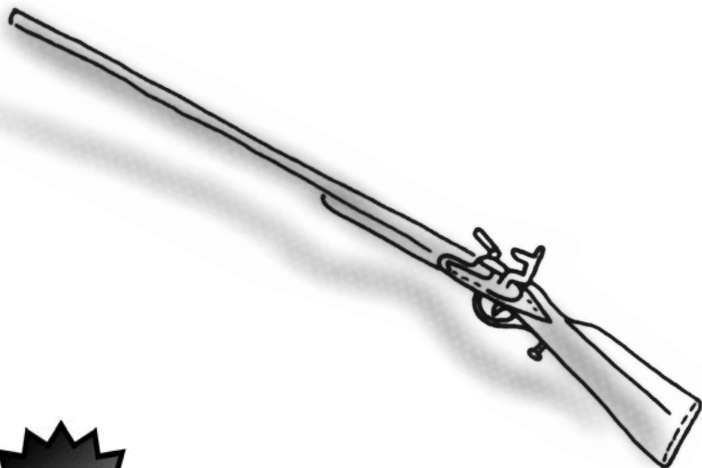
*Boonesborough; Wilderness Road*

32



# Listen!

Minutemen were volunteer soldiers in the American colonies who were trained to fight against the British in the Revolutionary War (1775–1783). Why were they called minutemen?



33

*They were supposed to be ready to fight at a minute's notice.*

# Listen!

The first person to print and sell books for children was the English printer John Newbery. The Newbery Medal is awarded annually to an American author for the most distinguished contribution to children's literature during the previous year. Which book received the award last year?

**34**

*Responses will vary.*

# Really?

George Washington called one of his officers “the bravest of the brave” for his heroism against the British in the Revolutionary War. Then this man turned traitor and joined the British forces. What was his name?



*Benedict Arnold*

35

# Weird!

In 1773 American colonists disguised themselves as Indians and dumped tea from three British ships into a harbor to avoid paying taxes on the tea. What was this incident called?



*The Boston Tea Party*

**36**

# Listen!

A distinguished lawyer, statesman, and orator ended a speech with these words: "I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!" Who made that speech and at the beginning of what war?

**37**

*Patrick Henry; the Revolutionary War*

# Who Knew?

General Anthony Wayne was a Revolutionary War hero known as "Mad Anthony" because of his courage. A fort in Indiana was named for him. What city is it now?



*Fort Wayne*

**38**

# Fact!

Twenty-one-year-old Nathan Hale was sent behind British lines by General George Washington to get information about the military position of the English. He was caught out of uniform. What happened to him?



39

*He was hanged as a spy.*

# Look!

George Washington was president of the United States beginning in 1789 and again in 1792. He refused to run for a third term. On which U.S. bill and coin does his picture appear?



*The dollar bill and the quarter*

**40**



# Who Knew?

The Marquis de Lafayette, French soldier and statesman, helped America gain its independence.

What U.S. general did he serve under during the Revolutionary War?



*George Washington*

41

# Fact!

In 1793 a machine was invented to pick the seeds out of a cotton ball. Who invented the machine?



*Eli Whitney (The machine is known as the cotton gin.)*

**42**

# Neat!

A committee headed by George Washington is believed to have asked a seamstress, Betsy Ross, to make the first U.S. flag with stars and stripes. How many stars and stripes were on the first flag?



*Thirteen stars and thirteen stripes  
(one for each of the original  
colonies)*

43

# Cool!

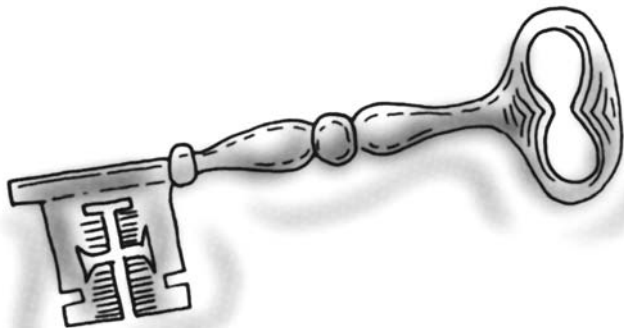
The Declaration of Independence was signed at the Pennsylvania State House, now Independence Hall, in 1776. Who signed the document as president of the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention?



*John Hancock*

# Fact!

The Bastille, a Paris prison fortress, was captured by French revolutionaries on July 14, 1789. To what famous American was the Bastille prison key given?



45

*George Washington  
(by the Marquis de Lafayette)*

# Fact!

In 1798 Eli Whitney proposed a new way of making gun parts. What impact did this have on the manufacturing process in many other industries?



*Whitney made guns with interchangeable parts. If a part failed, it could be replaced quickly. This led to the use of interchangeable parts in the manufacturing of other products.*

46

# Who Knew?

In 1815, Congress bought more than 6,000 books from a U.S. president to expand the Library of Congress. Who was that president?



47

*Thomas Jefferson*

# Neat!

Four great documents in U.S. history are the Declaration of Independence, the Treaty of Alliance with France, the Treaty of Peace with Great Britain, and the Constitution of the United States. Who was the one person to sign them all?



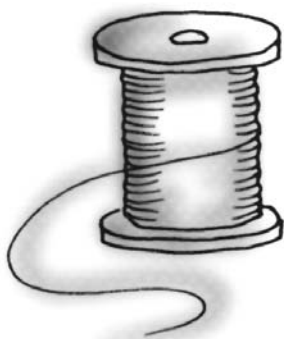
*Benjamin Franklin*

**48**



# Really?

The Industrial Revolution began in the 1700s in Great Britain. Power-driven machinery reduced the need for doing things by hand. What simple device used in homes was no longer needed when high-quality threads were made by machines?



*The spinning wheel*

# Cool!

John Chapman developed apple-tree nurseries throughout Ohio and Indiana for the benefit of early settlers. What was his nickname?



*Johnny Applesed*

**50**

# Fact!

In 1803, the United States purchased the area bounded by the Mississippi River, Canada, the Rocky Mountains, and the Gulf of Mexico from France. What was this sale called?



51

*The Louisiana Purchase*

# Fact!

The purchase of the Louisiana Territory in 1803 gave the United States the opportunity for westward expansion. Who sold the land to the United States for \$15 million? Of what country was he emperor?



*Napoleon Bonaparte: France (With interest, the final price was a little more than \$27 million.)*

52

# Really?

During the earliest presidential administrations, guests at receptions bowed to the presidents. Which president introduced handshaking in reception lines?



*Thomas Jefferson*

53

# Fact!

John Adams and John Quincy Adams, father and son, both became presidents of the United States. Who was the wife of John and the mother of John Quincy?



*Abigail Adams*

**54**

# Cool!

In 1804–06, two U.S. military officers led an expedition through the wilderness in what is now the northwestern United States. What were their names?

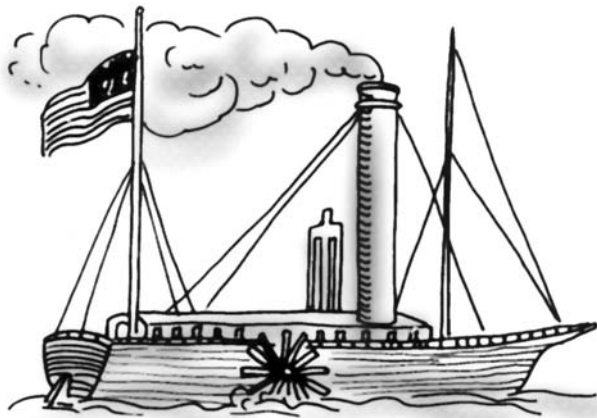


55

*Captain Meriwether Lewis and  
Lieutenant William Clark*

# Neat!

The first commercially successful steamboat, the *Clermont*, was designed by an American engineer and inventor. Who was he?



Robert Fulton

56



# Weird!

A national symbol of the United States dates back to the War of 1812 when a meatpacker with a government contract put the initials U.S., for United States, on his shipping barrels. What did the letters U.S. humorously come to mean?



*Uncle Sam*

# Cool!

“The Star-Spangled Banner” was written on the back of an envelope during the bombardment of Fort McHenry in 1814. In 1931 Congress approved the music and words as the national anthem of the United States. Who wrote the anthem? What was the author’s profession?

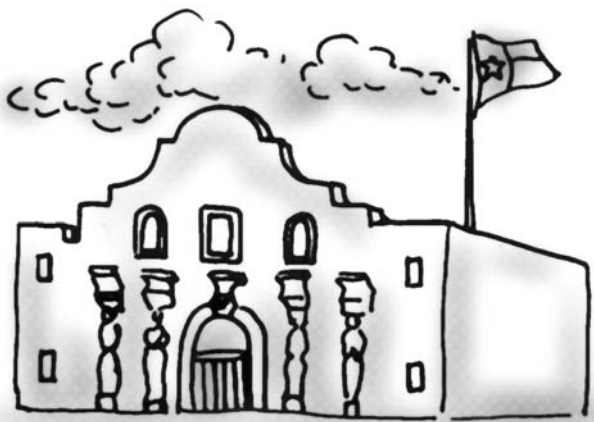


*Francis Scott Key; lawyer*

**58**

# Look!

During the war for Texan independence, a famous battle was fought in San Antonio at a Roman Catholic mission. What was the name of the mission?



59

*The Alamo*

# Listen!

Jacob Ludwig Grimm and his brother Wilhelm Carl Grimm, language scholars, wrote a German dictionary and a German grammar. For what are they best known?



*Their collection of fairy tales*

**60**

# Neat!

In 1821 Sequoyah, a Cherokee, completed a system of writing by which his people could publish works in their own language. In what state is a national park named for him?

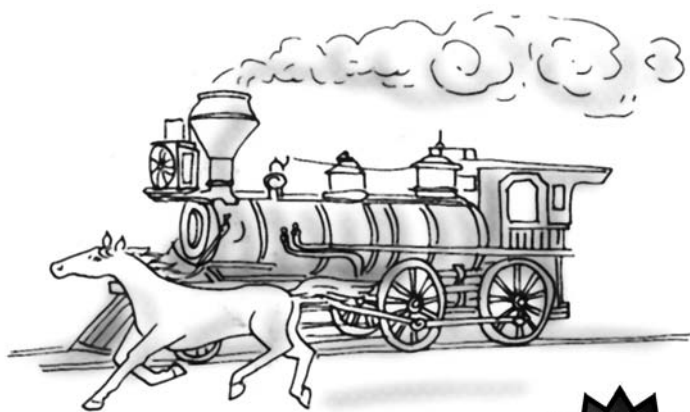


61

*California (Sequoia National Park)*

# Weird!

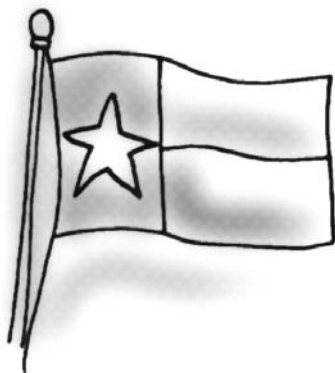
Peter Cooper built the *Tom Thumb*, a steam-driven locomotive, in 1830. In a race with a horse, the *Tom Thumb* lost when an engine belt came loose. What is another name for a locomotive?



*Iron Horse*

# Who Knew?

During the afternoon of April 21, 1836, an army of Texans surprised General Santa Anna of Mexico and won the independence of Texas in a battle that lasted 18 minutes. Who led the Texans?

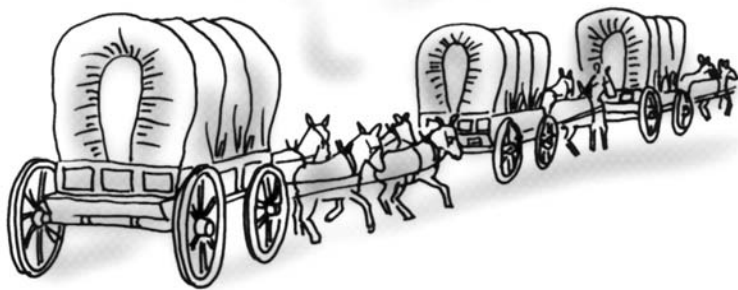


*Sam Houston*

63

# Fact!

Mormon pioneers, led by Brigham Young, moved west and founded Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1847. What is the official name of the Mormon religion?



*The Church of Jesus Christ  
of Latter-day Saints*

**64**



# Really?

Two U.S. presidents died on July 4, 1826, and another on the same date in 1831. Who were the three?



*John Adams and  
Thomas Jefferson;  
James Monroe*

65

# Listen!

Henry Clay served the people of the United States as speaker of the House of Representatives, senator, and secretary of state. He campaigned unsuccessfully for the presidency five times. What title was he given because of his position on slavery?



*The Great Compromiser  
(also the Great Pacifist)*

66

# Cool!

Amelia Jenks Bloomer, American social reformer, wore loose trousers gathered at her ankles, because they attracted attention to her when she spoke on temperance and suffrage subjects. What were these bloomers called in 1850?

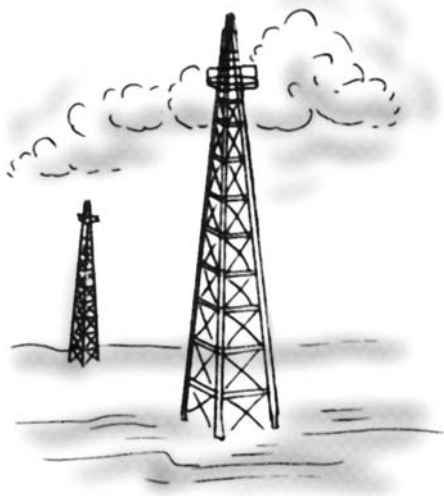


*Turkish pantaloons*

67

# Really?

The first practical oil drilling began in 1858 when Edwin L. Drake, a retired railroad conductor, drilled a well with an old steam engine. Where did he drill for oil?



*Titusville, Pennsylvania*

# Neat!

The first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States was Elizabeth Blackwell. What did she organize during the Civil War?



*Union Army*

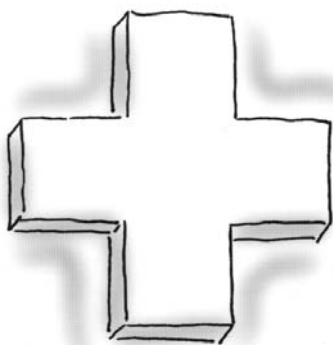
*The nursing service for the*

69



# Listen!

Clara Barton, Civil War nurse, started a project to find missing men that began the U.S. Bureau of Records. Then she became president of a relief organization. What was the name of the organization?



*The American Red Cross*



70



# Who Knew?

During the Civil War, two ironclad ships fought each other, a first in history. Neither ship won. What were the names of the ships and the side each was on?



71

*The Monitor for the North and the Virginia for the South (The Virginia is also referred to by its original name of Merrimack.)*

# Neat!

In the mid-1800s young men, some teenagers, rode swift ponies in shifts throughout the day and night, carrying mail from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, a distance of 1,966 miles (3,164 kilometers). The trip took ten days. This postal service, begun in 1860, lasted two years. What was the service known as, and why did it stop?



*The Pony Express. The transcontinental telegraph began operating.*

72



# Cool!

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, an American literary humorist, wrote *Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. What was his pen name?

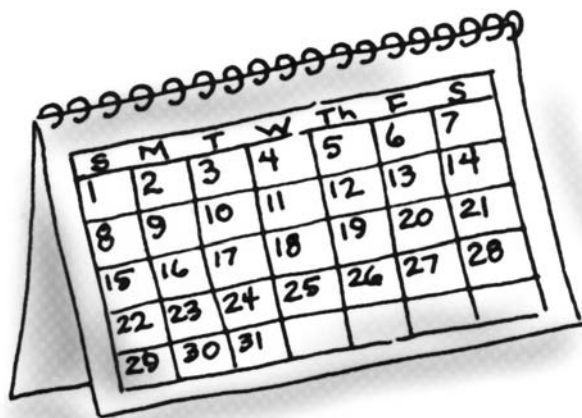


Mark Twain

73

# Really?

The ninth president of the United States spent the shortest time in office of any president. Who was he, and how many days was he president?



*William Henry Harrison; He died after serving 31 days.*

**74**

# Weird!

During the time that Abraham Lincoln lived, most children walked to school. What did the children often carry to keep their hands warm in winter?

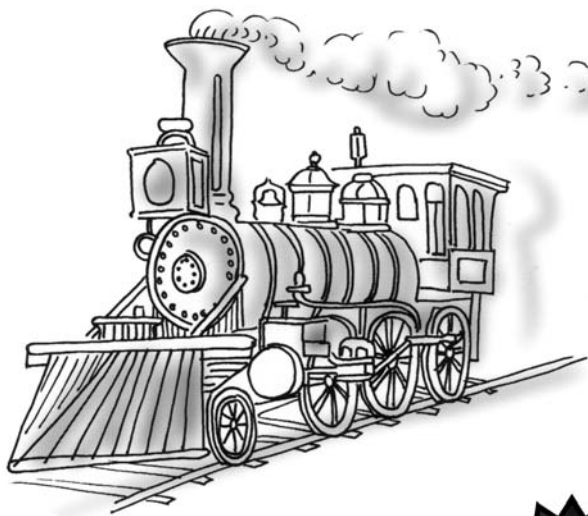


*Hot potatoes*

75

# Fact!

In the mid-1800s locomotives took a long time to stop. Then air brakes were invented. Who invented air brakes for locomotives?



*George Westinghouse*

76

# Who Knew?

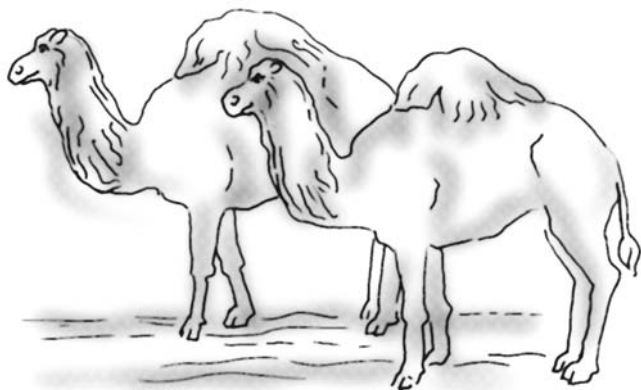
Two states claim the name "Mother of Presidents." The first state had eight presidents born within its borders; the second had seven presidents born within it and another living there when he became president. What are the two states?



*Virginia and Ohio*

# Weird!

In 1856 seventy-six camels were brought to the U.S. Southwest to carry heavy loads. Why were camels chosen?

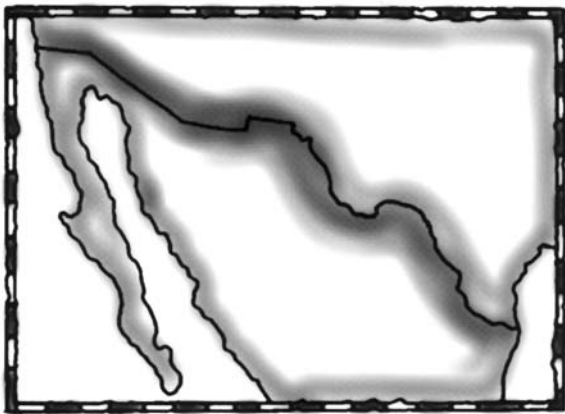


*They could survive the hot weather  
for days without water.*

**78**

# Look!

If you lived in California, Arizona, or New Mexico in 1830, what country were you living in? When would you become an American citizen?



79

*Mexico. These areas became U.S. territories in 1848 at the end of the Mexican War. Everyone living in them was granted U.S. citizenship.*

# Really?

The first successful repeating pistol was made by Samuel Colt in the early 1800s. These pistols became popular with frontiersmen in the West. What were they called?



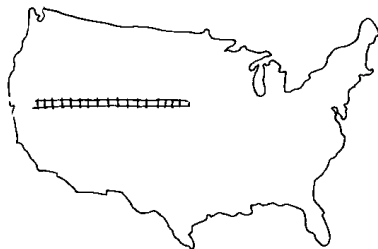
*Six-shooters (The model was called the Peacemaker!)*

**80**



# Neat!

To connect the East Coast with the West Coast of the United States, transcontinental rail lines were proposed in the early 1860s. The Central Pacific Railroad laid track eastward from Sacramento, California, while the Union Pacific moved westward from Omaha, Nebraska. Where did they meet?



*Promontory, Utah*

81

# Listen!

In 1862 Congress passed the Homestead Act, which granted 160 acres (65 hectares) of free public land to people who lived on the land and farmed it for five years. What is a homestead?



*A small farm*

**82**

# Fact!

The Battle of Gettysburg was a turning point in the Union's favor during the Civil War. When and where was the battle fought?

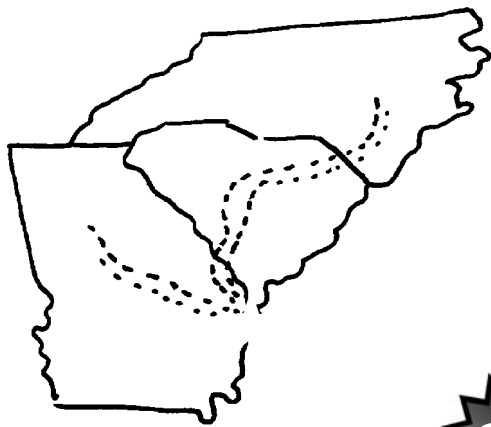


83

*July 1-3, 1863, at Gettysburg,  
Pennsylvania*

# Fact!

William Tecumseh Sherman, a Civil War Union general, led his soldiers across Georgia in what has been called the "March to the Sea." What southern Georgia city did he capture on the Atlantic coast?



Savannah

84

# Neat!

Dorothea Dix encouraged the states to build hospitals for the mentally ill and to improve the conditions for prisoners. What governmental position did she hold during the Civil War?

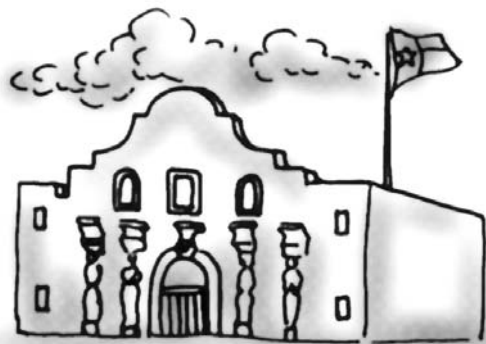


*Superintendent of army nurses for  
U.S. Civil War service*

85

# Fact!

James Bowie is thought to be the inventor of a hunting knife bearing his name, the bowie knife. As a hero in the Texas Revolution, in what battle did he die?

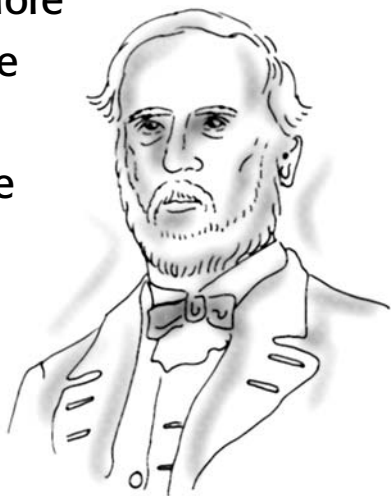


*The Battle of the Alamo*

**86**

# Listen!

Robert E. Lee, commanding general of the Confederate Army, freed his inherited slaves before the beginning of the Civil War. What did Lee mean when he told Southerners after the war, "Make your sons Americans"?

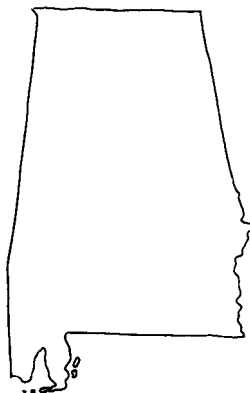


*Responses will vary, but should convey the idea of reuniting the country after the Civil War. The full quotation is "Don't bring up your sons to detest the United States Government. Recollect that we form but one country now. Abandon all these local animosities and make your sons Americans."*



# Who Knew?

Montgomery, the state capital of Alabama, was the first Confederate capital of the Civil War. Here the Constitution of the Confederacy was written. Who was the first (and only) president of the Confederacy?



*Jefferson Davis*



88





# Really?

Ulysses S. Grant, Union Civil War general, was the first West Point Military Academy graduate to become president of the United States. What was the nickname, based on his first two initials, that people gave Grant after he won some early battles?



*"Unconditional Surrender" Grant*

89

# Fact!

An American, Richard Gatling, invented the first fast-firing machine gun developed in the United States. Although best known for his Gatling gun, what else did he invent?

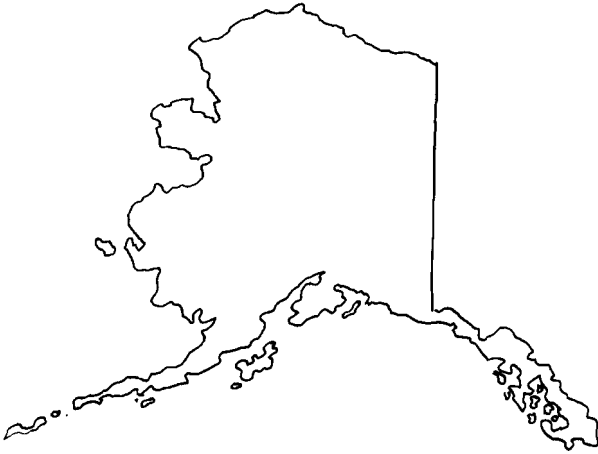


*Agricultural machinery, especially  
for sowing seeds*

90

# Fact!

Alaska was bought from Russia in 1867 for \$7,200,000. Who was the U.S. secretary of state who arranged the sale?



91

*William H. Seward*

# Who Knew?

On October 8, 1871, a fire started in Mrs. Patrick O'Leary's barn in a Midwestern city. Some 300 people died and 90,000 were left homeless in the aftermath of the three-day fire. What was the name of the city? What animal supposedly started the fire? What was thought to have happened?

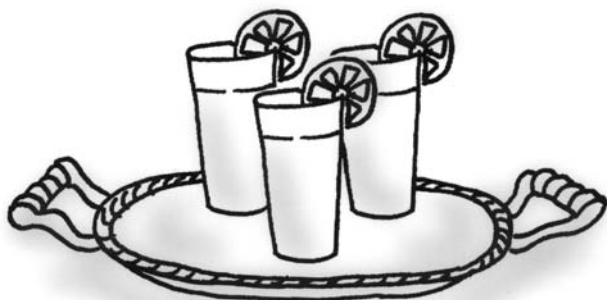


*Chicago: a cow; the cow supposedly kicked over a lit lantern.*

**92**

# Really?

President Rutherford B. Hayes and his wife, Lucy Ware Webb, would not drink or serve alcoholic beverages at White House receptions. What was her nickname?



93

*Lemonade Lucy*

# Fact!

George Armstrong Custer, a Union Civil War general and Indian fighter, was defeated by Sioux and Cheyenne Indians in 1876 in the Battle of the Little Bighorn. By what other name is the battle known?

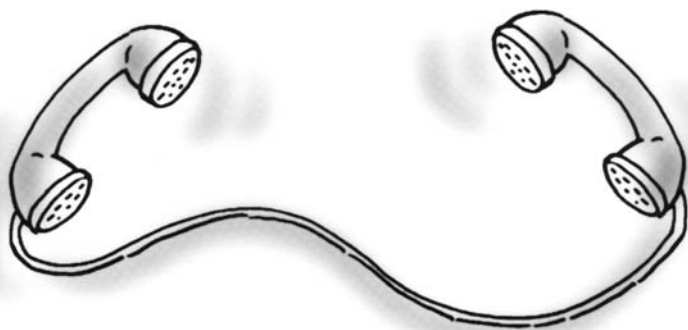


*Custer's Last Stand*

**94**

# Neat!

In 1876, the first telephone line covered a distance of two miles between Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts. Who invented the telephone?



95

*Alexander Graham Bell*



# Really?

During Grover Cleveland's second term of office as president of the United States, there were eight congressmen who had the same first and middle names. What was the name?



*George Washington*





# Look!

Children's picture books were originated by an English illustrator, Randolph Caldecott. The Caldecott Medal is awarded every year to one American illustrator. Which book received the award last year?



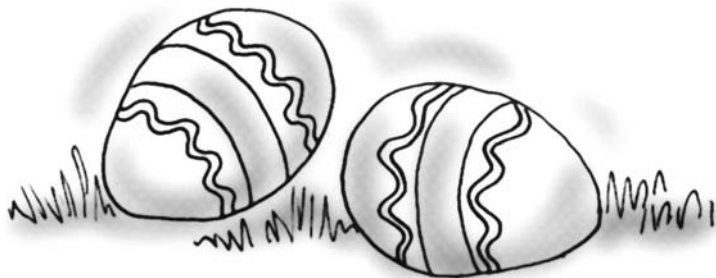
97

*Responses will vary.*



# Cool!

Easter egg rolls began at the White House in Washington, D.C. Who was the first lady who started this tradition?



*Lucy Hayes*



98

# Look!

Families traveling to settle in the West often went in wagons whose white canvas tops resembled a sail. What was the name of these wagons?



99

*Prairie schooners*

# Who Knew?



The Statue of Liberty stands at the entrance to New York Harbor. What is the complete name of the statue?

*"Liberty Enlightening the World"*



# Really?

Between 1892 and 1924, 17 million immigrants arrived in the United States at one island in New York Bay. What is the island's name? Did any of your ancestors pass through it?



101

*Ellis Island; Answers will vary.*

# Listen!

Geronimo, an Apache Indian warrior, attacked settlers and soldiers in the southwest United States and Mexico trying to keep his people free. His Apache name was Goyathle, or "one who yawns." The Mexicans called him Geronimo. What does Geronimo mean in Spanish?



*Jerome*

# Fact!

Organized in 1873, the national law enforcement department of Canada is called the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. What are the graduates of the RCMP called when they finish the training program?



*Constables*

# Neat!

"America the Beautiful" was written as a poem in 1893 by American poet and educator Katharine Lee Bates. What scenic view inspired her to write the poem?



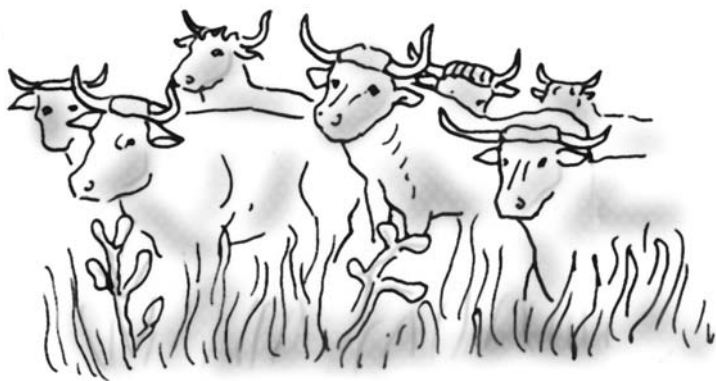
*The view from the top of Pikes Peak*





# Look!

Texas cowboys drove cattle herds on the Chisholm Trail. The roughly 1,000-mile (1,600-kilometer) trail began near San Antonio, Texas, and went into Kansas. Why did it stop in Kansas?



105

*The cattle were put on the Kansas Pacific Railroad.*

# Listen!

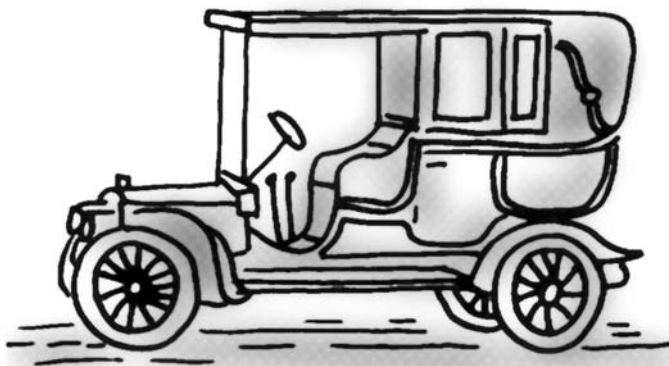
When Laura Ingalls Wilder was a little girl, she lived in the woods of Wisconsin. But she didn't publish her first book about her experiences in a pioneer family until 1932 when she was 65 years old. What was the name of her first book?



Little House in the Big Woods

# Really?

In the early 1900s the automobile replaced horses and buggies as the favorite means of transportation. What was the automobile first called?

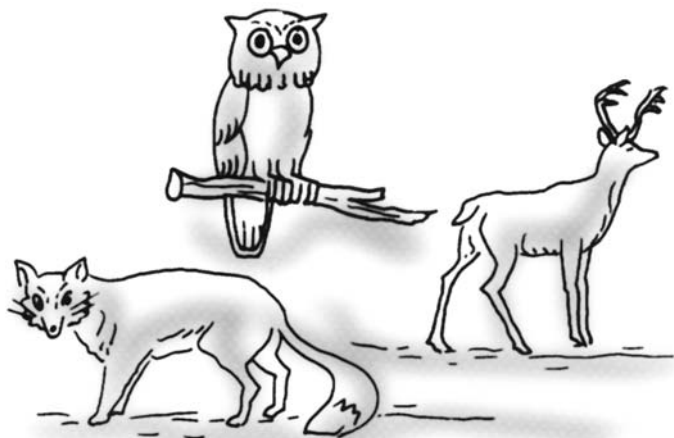


107

*Horseless carriage*

# Listen!

The National Audubon Society was named after the artist/naturalist John James Audubon. What is the purpose of the society?



To "conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats"

**108**

# Neat!

Andrew Carnegie made a great deal of money in steel manufacturing. When he retired, he distributed much of his wealth to charities, including building libraries. How many libraries did his money build?

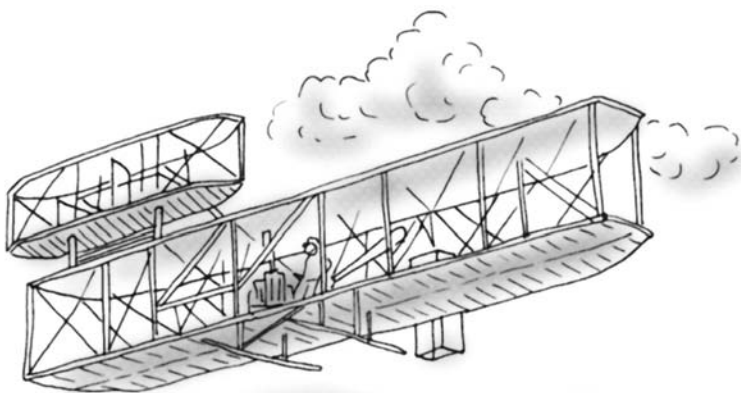


109

*More than 2,500 in the English-speaking world; 1,679 in the United States*

# Cool!

The Wright brothers, Orville and Wilbur, invented an airplane and flew it on December 17, 1903. Where was it tested?



*Near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina*



# Fact!

The Amish are a Protestant religious group that began in Switzerland. They farm, do not use electricity, and end their education at eighth grade. What religious group did the Amish split off from?

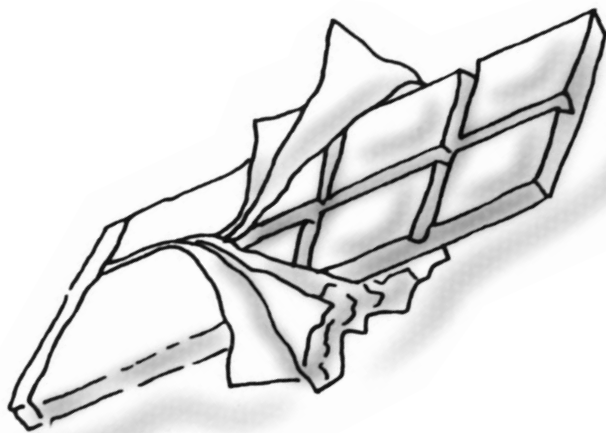


*The Mennonites*



# Really?

In 1905 the world's largest chocolate factory was constructed. What is its name, and where is it located?



*Hershey Chocolate Co., U.S.A., 1900  
East Chocolate Avenue, Hershey,  
Pennsylvania*

**112**



# Fact!

During the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, the twenty-sixth president, a large U.S. construction project was begun in Central America. What was it?



113

*The Panama Canal*

# Fact!

In the election of 1912, Woodrow Wilson defeated two opponents who were former presidents. Who were they?



*William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt*



# Neat!

In 1889 Jane Addams, a social reformer, took an old run-down mansion in Chicago and turned it into a place where poor immigrants and their children could come for educational programs and nursery care. What was the name of this first neighborhood center, or settlement house?



Hull House



# Look!

Surrounding the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C., are Japanese cherry trees given to the people of the United States by the Japanese government. What president's wife suggested this gift to a Japanese official?



*Helen Taft, wife of President  
William Howard Taft*

**116**


# Fact!

On April 18, 1906, San Francisco, California, experienced the most devastating earthquake in California history. At least 3,000 people were killed, more than 500 city blocks were destroyed by fire, and damage cost \$400–\$500 million. Why did the firemen have difficulty fighting the fires?



117

*The water mains had burst.*



# Cool!

For the first time, on April 14, 1910, a president of the United States tossed a baseball to open an American League game between Washington and Philadelphia. Who was the president?



*William Howard Taft*



**118**



# Who Knew?

George Washington Carver, an African American agricultural research scientist, was head of Tuskegee University's Department of Research. What legume is Carver most noted for in his research?



*The peanut*

119



# Neat!

The Girl Scouts of the United States of America began in Savannah, Georgia, in 1912. Who was the woman who started the American organization?



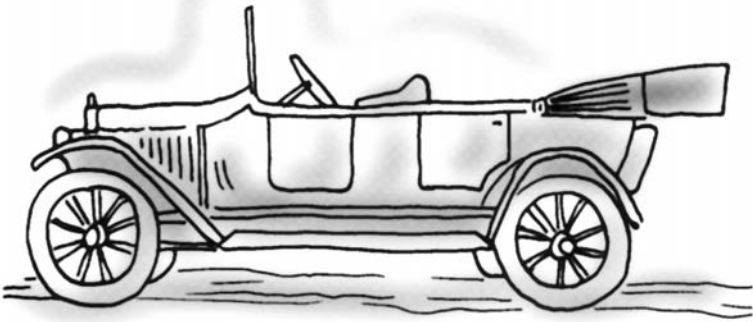
*Juliette Gordon Low*





# Fact!

Henry Ford established the Ford Motor Company and made a car that cost less than those of his competitors. What was it called?

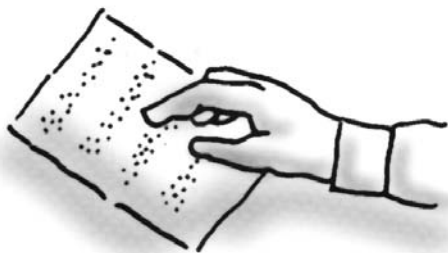


**121**

*The Ford Model T*

# Really?

A 15-year-old blind French student worked out a system of arranging raised dots on paper to represent letters and numbers. Now people with visual impairments use this system to read with their fingers. What was the inventor's name? What is the system called?



*Louis Braille; the Braille system*



# Neat!

Anna Jarvis is recognized as the founder of Mother's Day on the second Sunday in May. What does the symbol of wearing a colored or white carnation on the day mean?



**123**

*A colored (red or pink) carnation indicates that the mother is living; the white indicates she is deceased.*

# Really?

In 1912 the largest ship on the seas, which was considered "unsinkable," went down about 400 miles (640 kilometers) off the coast of Newfoundland. What was the name of the ship? What sunk the ship?



*Titanic; an iceberg*

**124**

# Who Knew?

The second-smallest state of all fifty in the United States was also the first to be admitted to the Union. What is its name?



*Delaware*



# Listen!

Irving Berlin wrote the song "God Bless America" in 1918, but it did not become popular until 1938, when Kate Smith sang it over the radio on a patriotic holiday. What did Irving Berlin do with the money he (and Kate Smith) earned for the song?



*He gave it to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America.*

**126**

# Fact!

One of the most honored presidents in U.S. history received more than fifty honorary degrees from American universities and more than twenty-five from foreign universities. He was also named, along with Thomas A. Edison, as one of the two greatest engineers in U.S. history. Who was he?

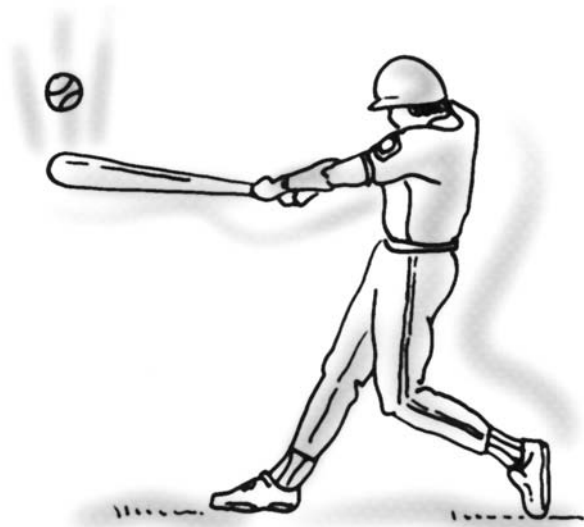


*Herbert C. Hoover*



# Cool!

During his baseball career, Babe Ruth hit 714 home runs. What player hit more home runs in his career?

**128**

*Henry "Hank" Aaron with 755*



# Really?

Richard E. Byrd, a rear admiral in the U.S. Navy, explored the Arctic and Antarctic regions as a navigator and aviator. What was he the first to do as an aviator?

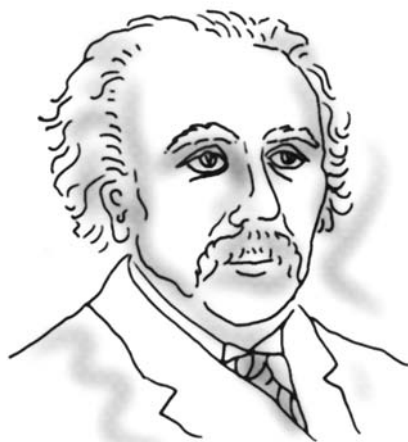


129

*Fly over the North and South Poles*

# Fact!

Albert Einstein, a renowned scientist, developed the theory of relativity at the age of twenty-six. His theories led others to develop a nuclear weapon. What was the weapon?



*The atomic bomb*

**130**

# Listen!

Frank Winfield Woolworth and his brother, Charles, founded the F. W. Woolworth Company, whose stores became known as “five-and-tens.” What did “five-and-tens” mean?

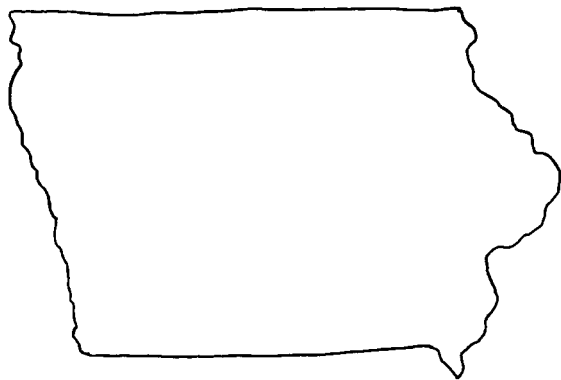


**131**

*Items in the stores originally cost no more than 10 cents.*

# Fact!

The first U.S. president born west of the Mississippi River came from the state of Iowa. Who was he?



*Herbert C. Hoover*

**132**

# Cool!

Amelia Earhart received the Distinguished Flying Cross from Congress. For what accomplishment did she receive this award?



*She was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.*

**133**

# Fact!

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), created by Congress in 1933, provides electric power, flood control, water recreation, and navigable waterways in Tennessee and surrounding states. How many dams control the waterways in the TVA system?



*forty-nine*

**134**

# Who Knew?

Maple syrup comes from the sap of maple trees. Vermont is the leading producer in the United States. What province in Canada produces more maple syrup than all the states in the United States combined?



Quebec

# Really?

The U.S. Constitution can be changed by adding amendments. These amendments can be repealed (canceled). What is the only constitutional amendment to be repealed? How long was it in effect?



*The eighteenth, or Prohibition, amendment outlawing the sale of alcohol; 1919–33*

**136**



# Look!

The first U.S. highway to charge a fee for its use opened in 1940. Now it stretches from Ohio to New Jersey. What is it called?



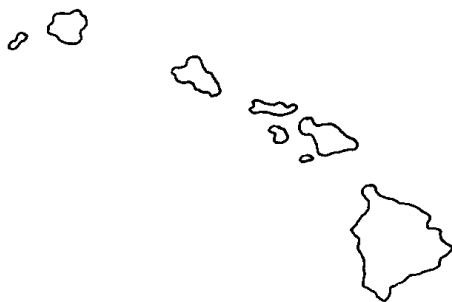
**137**

*The Pennsylvania Turnpike (known as "America's First Superhighway")*



# Listen!

At the Pearl Harbor Naval Base in Hawaii, there is a partly submerged battleship that remains there as a memorial to those who died in the surprise Japanese attack on December 7, 1941. What is the name of the battleship?



USS Arizona

**138**

# Fact!

Franklin Delano Roosevelt served as U.S. president for more than 12 years. How many times was he elected?



*Four times*

**139**

# Really?

Lieutenant Audie Murphy was the most decorated U.S. soldier of World War II, receiving twenty-four medals from the United States and four from other countries. One of his medals is the highest U.S. military award. What is it?



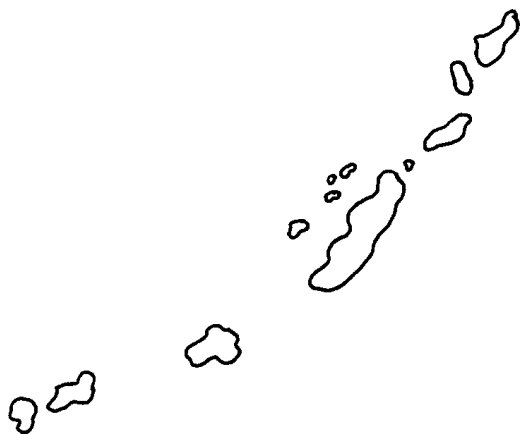
*The Medal of Honor*

**140**




# Fact!

The last major battle in the Pacific during World War II began on April 1, 1945. What was the name of the island invaded?



**141**

*Okinawa, in the Ryukyu Islands  
south of Japan*



# Fact!

The American soldier and statesman George C. Marshall was the first professional soldier to be appointed secretary of state. His European Recovery Plan helped rebuild western Europe after World War II. What was another name for this plan?



*The Marshall Plan*

**142**

# Fact!

The first atomic bomb was exploded near Alamogordo, New Mexico, in 1945. What is the name of the process that splits the atoms?



*Fission*

143

# Fact!

General Dwight D. Eisenhower was the supreme commander of the Allied forces in Europe during World War II. What position of trust did he take after that?



*He became the thirty-fourth president of the United States.*

**144**



# Neat!

The United Nations was created at the end of World War II as an organization of nations working for peace, security, and the betterment of humankind on earth. Where are the UN headquarters located?

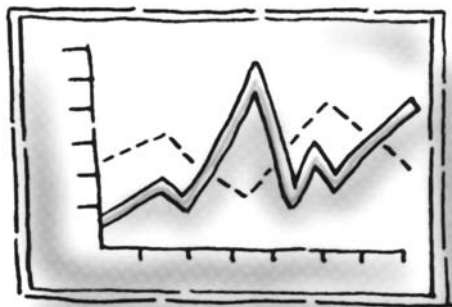


**145**

*New York City*

# Fact!

The average prices of a group of selected stocks and bonds tells whether a day is good or bad on the New York Stock Exchange. What is this average called?



*Dow Jones*

**146**

# Listen!

The public bus system in the South in 1955 maintained that African American people had to sit in the rear of buses. Who led the boycott of the Montgomery, Alabama, bus system to end this policy?

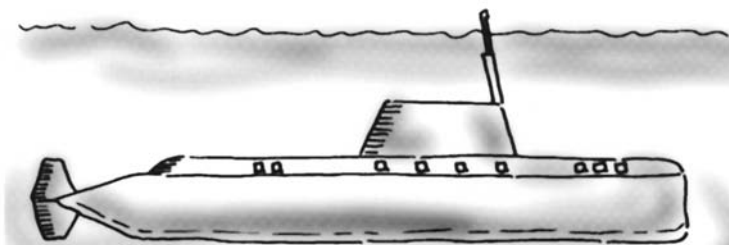


147

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

# Cool!

The first nuclear-powered submarine was built in Groton, Connecticut. It was the first to cruise under the North Pole ice in 1958. What was it named?

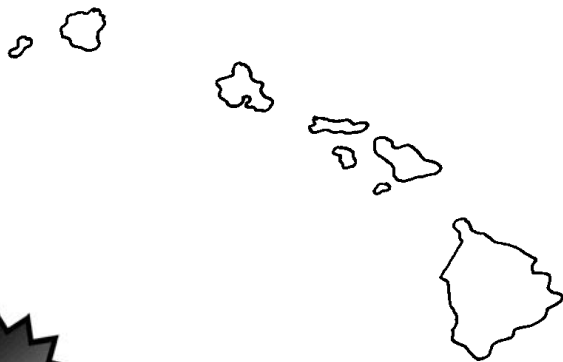


Nautilus

**148**

# Who Knew?

Hawaii was admitted to the Union in August 1959. The people of Hawaii voted 17 to 1 for statehood. Who was the president that signed the bill to admit Hawaii?



149

*Dwight David Eisenhower*

# Really?

The size of the United States increased by nearly 20% on January 3, 1959. What happened on that date?

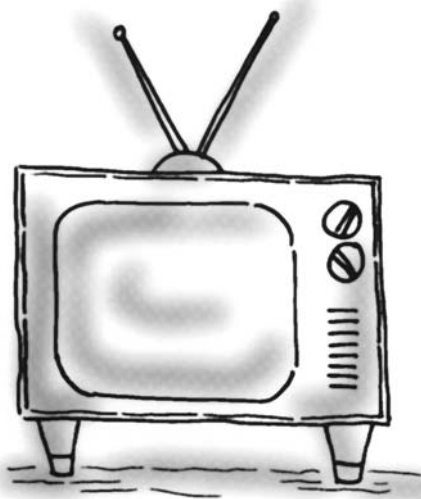


*Alaska received statehood,  
becoming the largest U.S. state.*



# Look!

The first television debates between two presidential candidates were held in the fall of 1960. Who were the two candidates, and who won the election?



*John F. Kennedy and  
Richard M. Nixon;  
Kennedy*

151

# Fact!

On November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy, the youngest man ever elected to the presidency, was shot as he rode through the streets of Dallas, Texas. Who succeeded him as president?



*Lyndon B. Johnson*

**152**



# Neat!

A U.S. citizen who is 18 years or older can volunteer for the Peace Corps, begun in 1961. Those selected help raise living standards of people in poor countries. How long does a Peace Corps volunteer agree to serve?

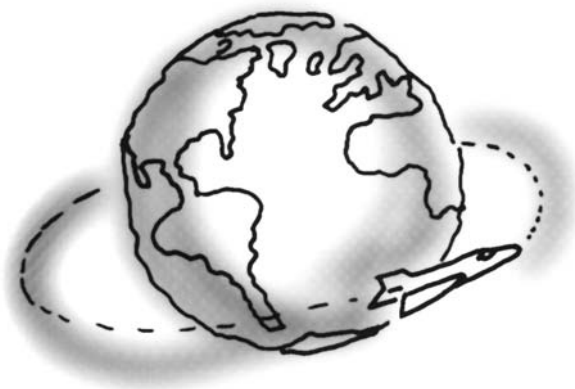


2 years

153

# Cool!

On April 12, 1961, Yuri A. Gagarin of the Soviet Union became the first person to orbit in space around the earth. Who was the second person, and where was he from?



*John H. Glenn from the United States (Alan Shepard, of the United States, was the second man in space, but his mission did not involve orbiting the earth.)*

**154**

# Listen!

During the Civil Rights Movement, people of color fought for the same rights as white people. One of the most important laws passed was the Voting Rights Act. When was it passed? What practices did it stop?



*In 1965, Many states used taxes or tests as a way to keep poor people and people of color from voting. The law stopped these and said the federal government could step in if the voting process was unfair.*

155

# Really?

Anna Mary Robertson Moses started painting when she was in her 70s. Although she never had an art lesson, Robertson became the famous artist known as Grandma Moses. How long did she live?



*101 years*

**156**

# Fact!

The first American in space rode inside a capsule atop a modified Redstone rocket. He landed in the Atlantic Ocean 15 minutes after takeoff. What was his name?

**157**

*Alan B. Shepard, Jr.*

# Listen!

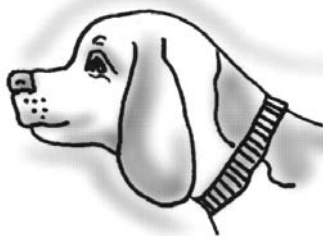
Astronaut Neil Armstrong made this statement on a live television broadcast: "One small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." Where was he at the time, and what did he mean?

**158**

*On the moon; Responses will vary.*

# Weird!

The initials "LBJ" stand for Lyndon Baines Johnson, thirty-sixth president of the United States. They also stand for his wife, Lady Bird Johnson; his two daughters, Lynda Bird and Luci Baines Johnson; his ranch, the LBJ; and one of his dogs. What was the dog's name?



*Little Beagle Johnson*

159



# Fact!

Mao Zedong (also Tse-tung), leader of Communist China, had problems in his own country and poor relations with the Soviet Union to overcome. He decided to improve relations with the United States. What U.S. president did he invite to China in 1972?



*Richard M. Nixon*





# Neat!

Sonora Louise Smart Dodd originated the idea of a special day for fathers. An official national holiday was proclaimed by Lyndon B. Johnson in 1966. When is Father's Day celebrated in Canada and the United States?



*In 1972 a law was passed establishing the third Sunday in June as Father's Day.*

161



# Who Knew?

The first African American four-star general in U.S. history (1975) was Daniel "Chappie" James, Jr. In what branch of the military service did he serve?



*The United States Air Force*

**162**

# Fact!

Anwar el-Sadat, president of Egypt in the 1970s, led the Egyptians during the Arab-Israeli War in 1973. Menachem Begin of Israel and Sadat met in the United States with a U.S. president to draft a peace treaty. Who was the U.S. president?



163

*President Jimmy Carter*

# Fact!

During the presidency of Jimmy Carter, two treaties were signed: The Panama Canal Treaty and the Permanent Neutrality Treaty, which keeps the canal neutral but permits the United States and Panama to defend it. When did Panama take full sovereignty and control over the canal?



*January 1, 2000*





# Really?

The oldest person to be inaugurated as president of the United States also saved seventy-seven people from drowning when he was a young lifeguard in Illinois. Who was he?



*Ronald Reagan*





# Fact!

The first African American to be elected a governor of a state in the United States was L. Douglas Wilder in 1989. Which state did Governor Wilder govern?



*Virginia*



166



# Listen!

The supertanker *Exxon Valdez* struck a reef in Prince William Sound in southeast Alaska in March 1989. Eleven million gallons of crude oil poured into the water. What did this do to many mammals and sea birds?



*It killed them.*

# Cool!

Many people come to Florida to enjoy the beaches, Walt Disney World, and other attractions. What is Florida's nickname?



*The Sunshine State*

**168**



# Weird!

The Mardi Gras celebration attracts tourists from around the world to New Orleans, Louisiana. What does *Mardi Gras* mean in French?



169

*Fat Tuesday*

# Listen!

At the end of May, U.S. citizens honor those who gave their lives for our country. What is the name of the holiday?

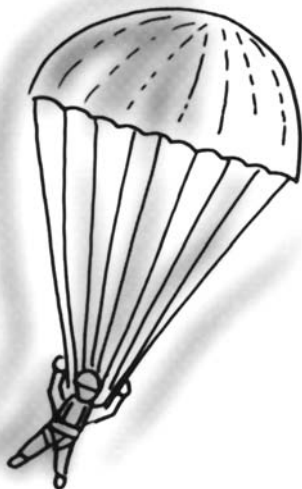


*Memorial Day*

170

# Really?

President George H. W. Bush, as a navy flyer in 1944, bailed out of his TBM Avenger bomber into the Pacific Ocean. He had painted his fiancée's first name on the plane. What was her name?

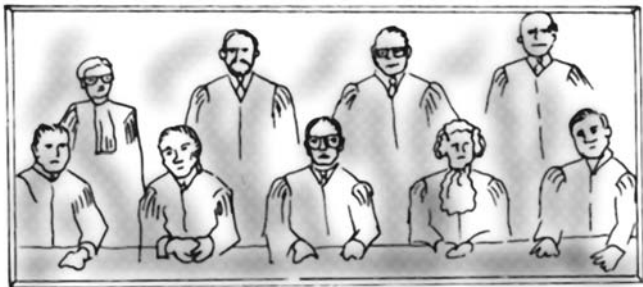


*Barbara*



# Fact!

The U.S. Supreme Court, the highest court of the judicial branch of government, decides if laws are being applied correctly. How many judges sit on the Supreme Court?



*Nine*

**172**

# Fact!

The consumer price index (CPI) measures the change in prices for a set of goods and services that people purchase. What is it called when the cost of goods and services rises faster than wages?



*Inflation*

**173**

# Look!



Thomas Jefferson was our first president whose last name ended in "-son." Who were the other seven?

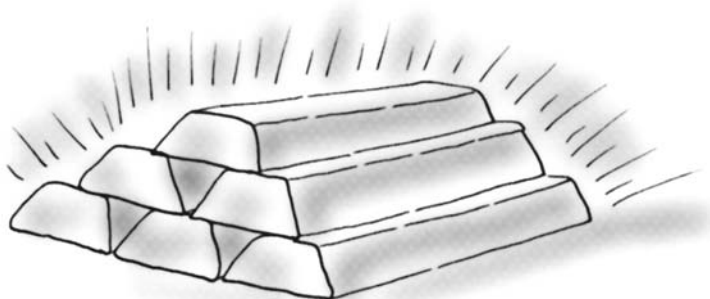


*James Madison, Andrew Jackson, William H. Harrison, Andrew Johnson, Benjamin Harrison, Woodrow Wilson, and Lyndon B. Johnson*

**174**

# Who Knew?

The United States Treasury Department has a depository of gold in its vault at Fort Knox, Kentucky. How much gold is kept there?



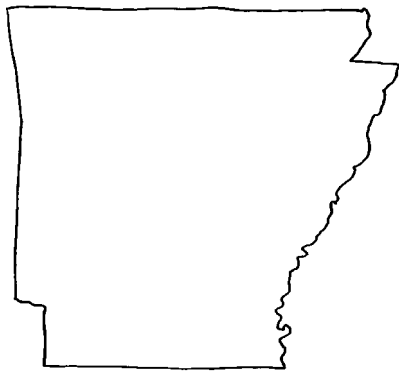
**175**

*Six billion dollars*



# Fact!

Arkansas has produced a number of famous people, such as General Douglas MacArthur of World War II fame, but only one president of the United States. Who is he?



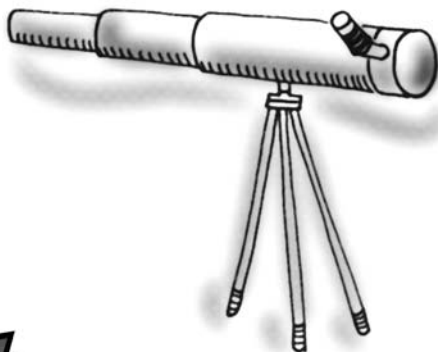
*President William Jefferson Clinton*

**176**



# Neat!

Astronomers built a reflecting telescope that orbits about 380 miles (610 kilometers) above the earth. Radio commands control the telescope. What is the name of the telescope, and for whom is it named?



*Hubble Space Telescope; Edwin  
Powell Hubble, U.S. astronomer*

177

# Fact!

On the first Monday in September, the people of the United States honor all those who work. What is the day called?



*Labor Day*

# Neat!

The United Nations agency known as UNICEF helps children around the world with respect to their health, nutrition, education, water supply, and sanitation. What is the full name of this agency?



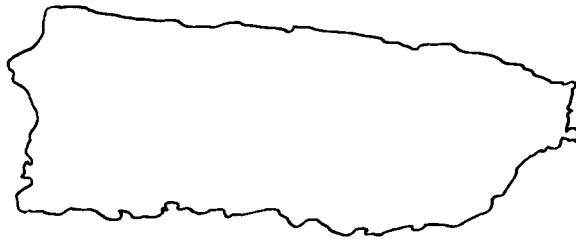
179

*United Nations Children's Fund*



# Really?

Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens but cannot vote for U.S. presidents or elect members to Congress. What tax do Puerto Ricans not have to pay?



*Federal income tax (Puerto Rico does have one nonvoting delegate to the U.S. Congress.)*



# Fact!

Amendments to the U.S. Constitution cannot become law unless three-fourths of the states approve them. How many years do the states have to ratify a proposed amendment to the Constitution?



**181**

*Seven years (a time frame that is required to be included as part of each amendment)*

# Weird!

The area known as “Silicon Valley,” south of San Francisco, in California, is considered the birthplace of the computer industry. Why is the valley nicknamed Silicon?



*Silicon is used in making  
semiconductors for computer  
microchips.*

**182**

# Fact!

The governmental agency that sets standards for clean air, water, and land is the EPA. What does the acronym "EPA" stand for?



183

*Environmental Protection Agency*

# Fact!

There are three branches of the federal government. What are they?



**184**

*Legislative, executive, judicial*



# Who Knew?

The U.S. government manufactures (mints) coins. In what four cities does the government mint the coins we use?



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Denver, Colorado; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; San Francisco, California; West Point, New York

# Fact!

The president of the United States carries out the laws made by Congress. Who are the current president and vice-president of the United States?

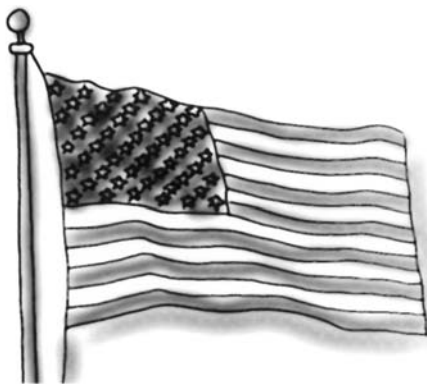


*Responses will vary.*

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# Fact!

On September 11, 2001, the worst terrorist attack ever in the United States occurred. What happened? What holiday is now observed on September 11?



*Terrorists crashed planes into the twin towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. A third airplane, probably headed for the U.S. Capitol building, crashed in Pennsylvania; September 11 is Patriot Day.*

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# Really?

Eleanor Roosevelt, one of the most respected first ladies of all time, was appointed a UN delegate by Harry Truman. But only one former first lady has been elected to political office. Who is she? To what office?

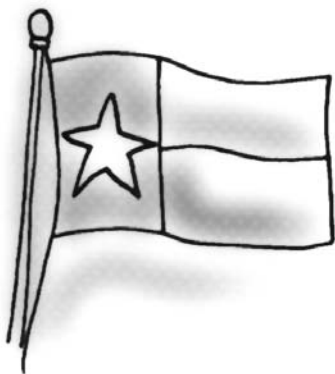


*Hillary Rodham Clinton, wife of former President Bill Clinton, was elected to the U.S. Senate from New York.*

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# Who Knew?

John Adams and John Quincy Adams were father and son presidents. Who are the only other pair of father and son presidents?



*George H. W. Bush and  
George W. Bush*

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# Fact!

A major earthquake struck Loma Prieta, near San Francisco, on October 17, 1989. What big event was just about to begin? What nickname was the quake given?

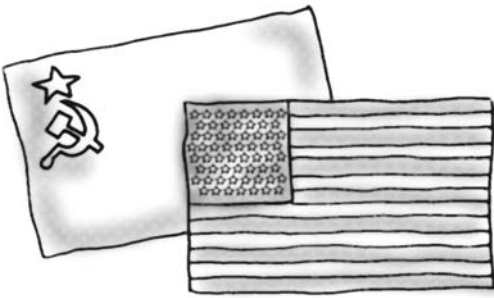


*Game 3 of the World Series between the Oakland As and the San Francisco Giants; the World Series quake*



# Listen!

From 1945 to 1991, the United States was said to be in a war. But hardly a shot was fired. What was this war of words called? Who was it against? What was it over?



*The Cold War. The United States and countries in western Europe were against the Soviet Union (now Russia) and countries of eastern Europe. The Cold War divided the world between countries that practiced democracy and countries that practiced communism.*

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# Cool!

In 2003 the longest hiking trail on earth was completed between the Mexican and Canadian borders. What is it called?



*Pacific Crest Trail (2,650 miles; the Continental Divide Trail, under construction, will be the longest on completion, at around 3,100 miles)*

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