



PREFACE: The Cal Poly Shared Reading Program 2008



## Montana 1948 Fast Facts

**CAPITAL:** Helena

**POPULATION:** 591,024 as of 1950

**FOUNDED:**

Became a US Territory on May 26, 1864  
Became a US State on November 8, 1889

**SLOGAN:** The last best place

**ORIGIN OF STATE'S NAME:** Derived from the Spanish word *montaña* ("mountain")

**INDUSTRY:**

Agriculture, mining, and lumber were three of the top industries in regards to both the value of the product and employment figures. In 1948, farming produced \$393,000,000, mining \$87,200,000, and lumbering \$50,200,000. Agriculture employed 59,600 Montanans; mining employed 14,500, and lumbering 5,800. Tourism was the third largest industry, generating \$100,000,000.

The Fort Peck hydroelectric power plant first generated power in 1943 and placed a second generator into operation in 1948.

**ECONOMY:**

As across the nation, World War II broke the hold of the Great Depression on Montana. The war brought additional federal monies to the state, but drew young people into military service and into wartime industries on the West Coast. The resultant wartime dislocation changed Montana forever.

Post-war or "modern" Montana (1945-2000) was characterized by a slow shift from an economy that relied on the extraction of natural resources to one that was service-based. Such traditional industries as copper, petroleum, coal, and timber suffered wild market fluctuations and unstable employment patterns. Although agriculture is dependent on the weather, a declining workforce, and international markets, it has remained Montana's primary industry throughout the era.

**POLITICAL:**

Montana had four electoral votes in the 1948 presidential election, an election considered by many historians as the greatest election upset in American history.

Virtually every prediction indicated that incumbent President Harry S. Truman would be defeated by Republican Thomas Dewey. Truman won, overcoming a three-way split in his own party.

Sources:

[http://mt.gov/discover/brief\\_history.asp](http://mt.gov/discover/brief_history.asp)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montana>

<http://www.city-data.com/states/Montana-Industry.html>

<http://www.britannica.com/eb/topic-390544/Montana-Institute-of-the-Arts>

