

# **“Water resources of the United States of America”**

The United States has many thousands of streams. Some of them are mighty rivers, which cross the state and even international boundaries. Others are tiny streams. The rivers of the USA belong to the Atlantic and the Pacific basins.



# ***The Mississippi River System.***

The chief drainage system of the country is **the Mississippi River System**. The Mississippi is one of the world's great continental rivers. Its waters are gathered from two-thirds of the United States and, together with the Missouri (its chief western branch), the Mississippi flows some 6400 km from northern sources in the Rocky Mountains to the Gulf of Mexico, which makes it one of the world's longest waterways. It is a swift and wide river, and navigable almost throughout its entire length. The Mississippi River starts at Lake Itasca in northern Minnesota. It is a pristine, sparkling place, and the waters from which it comes are very clear and cold. The river is narrow here that you can walk across it in 15 steps. The Mississippi has been called the **"father of waters"**.



The Missouri (the deepest river of the USA) is really two rivers: one of water, and one of small bits of soil washed off the land. Where the Missouri pours into the Mississippi from the west, it colours the river deep brown with small pieces of soil. Further down the stream, waters of the Ohio River join the Mississippi (the Ohio is the Mississippi's principal eastern tributary). Its waters are clear and blue; they come from hills and valleys where plentiful forest and plant cover has kept the soil from being washed away.

Like the Mississippi, all the rivers east of the Rockies finally reach the Atlantic. All the rivers to the west of the Rockies finally arrive at the Pacific. For this reason the crests of the Rockies Mountains are known as the Continental Divide.



# ***The Missouri River.***



# ***The Ohio River.***



# The Colorado River and the Columbia River.

The 2 greatest rivers of the Pacific side are the Colorado in the south, and the Columbia, which rises in Canada and flows to the north. In the dry Western part of the country, both rivers are important and necessary sources of life, but they are very different. *The Columbia* was wild in prehistoric times, cutting and shaping the land. Now, however, it flows with quiet dignity. But *the Colorado River* is still a river of enormous fury- wild, restless and angry. It is cutting deeply into the desert rocks, *forming the Grand Canyon*.

The Colorado and the Columbia Rivers are navigable only in their lower reaches; they have great value as sources of water power.

# The Columbia River.



# The Colorado River.



**The Rio Grande**, about 3200 km long, is the most important river of the Southwest. It forms a natural boundary between Mexico and the United States, which together have built irrigation and flood control projects of mutual benefit.



# Niagara Falls.

Niagara Falls is the most widely known natural wonder in America. It has been visited by a greater number of people from home and abroad than any other place on the continent.

*Niagara Falls is situated directly on the New York Central Lines, midway between New York and Chicago.* It is reached from all directions by the through cars of the great railroad system.

Niagara is an Indian word which means “roaring waters”. Indeed the roar of the falling water can be heard within a distance of 25 km.



Niagara Falls is almost beyond description. Its beauty, majesty and power impress each beholder differently. The great features of Niagara are the same, again and again, but their individual expression is constantly changing. With every season, every sunbeam, every shadow, Niagara Falls takes on a different appearance, inspires a fresher interest, and compels new admiration years after years, generation after generation.









***Aside from the scenic beauty of the Falls, the industrial development on both sides of the river will interest many tourists.***

***The development of electrical power has brought with it manufacturing processes that were unknown a century ago. More than a million horse-power is being developed now at Niagara, both for local use and transmission to cities and towns in New York State and the Province of Ontario within a radius of 200 miles.***





# ***The Great Lakes.***

The United States has thousands of lakes of all kinds and sizes. **The Great Lakes** make up the largest group of lakes in the country, as well as the greatest collection of fresh –water lakes in the world. **The total area of the Great Lakes (about 245 000 square km)** is equal to that of Great Britain and forms a vast “inland fresh-water sea”



Only **Lake Michigan** lies entirely inside the United States. The other 4 lakes, **Superior, Huron, Erie and Ontario** form a border between north-eastern United States and Canada. They stretch nearly half the distance across the country. The lakes are interconnected by short rivers and channels. Through the St. Lawrence River (on the Canadian side) and the Hudson River the Great Lakes are connected with the Atlantic Ocean. Between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, on the Niagara River, which links the two lakes, are powerful Niagara Falls, precipitating from the high of almost 50 metres.

*The most famous salty lakes are the Great Salt Lake, in Utah, and the Salton Sea, which lies some 80 metres below sea level in Southern California. The Great Salt Lake contains 6000 million tons of salt. The lakes often change size and shape with the rainfall and sometimes dry up completely in hot weather.*

