THE NATIONAL ATLAS STORY

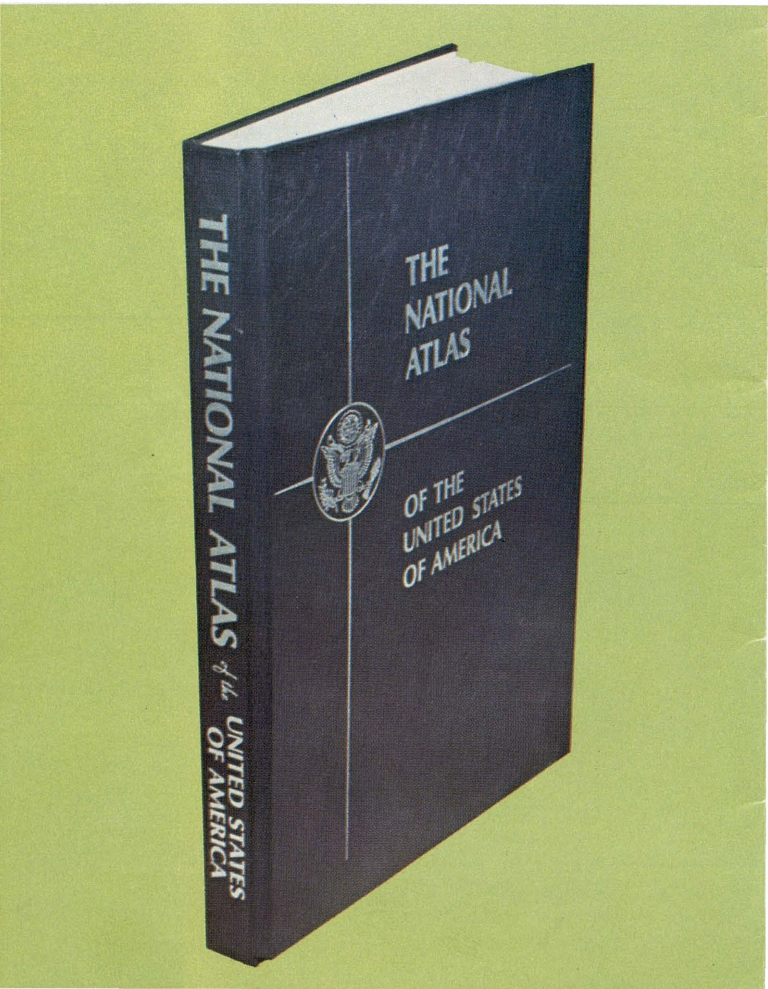
U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

THE NATIONAL ATLAS STORY

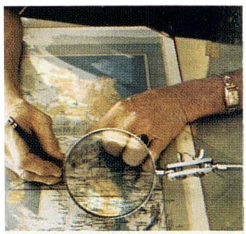
The National Atlas of the United States of America, published by the U.S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior, makes available for the first time in one volume a comprehensive source of information, presented in cartographic format, about the principal characteristics of this Nation.

The unique, 431-page, 14-pound, hard-bound volume describes the Nation through the use of 765 maps, supplemented with an index of more than 41,000 entries, including geographic coordinates, finding code, and, where appropriate, the population of places named. Each page size is 19 x 14 inches; some open double fold.

The National Atlas, a product of eight years of planning and production.







Several of the varied activities necessary to produce the National Atlas.

Publication of the Atlas, in December 1970 came about after nearly a decade of planning and work that involved cooperation among more than 80 agencies, numerous commercial firms, specialists and consultants. The volume may be purchased from the U. S. Geological Survey for $100. (For information concerning orders, discounts available for bulk purchases, and sources for inspection copies, see page 15).

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THE NATIONAL ATLAS IS A PRODUCT OF YOUR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. IT IS DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES. IT IS PUBLISHED AT A TIME WHEN THE NATION IS ENMESHED IN A VARIETY OF PROBLEMS THAT THREATEN THE FABRIC OF OUR SOCIETY. KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHT—SUCH AS IS STORED IN THE ATLAS—ARE TOOLS FOR ILLUMINATING AND SOLVING THESE PROBLEMS. BUT THE ATLAS IS ALSO A TOOL FOR THE ENRICHMENT OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE NATION'S HISTORY: ITS HERITAGE, PRODUCTS, RESOURCES AND PEOPLE.

The following questions and answers explain the history, purposes, and extent of the National Atlas and serve to assist the prospective purchaser or user in understanding the vast array of knowledge contained.

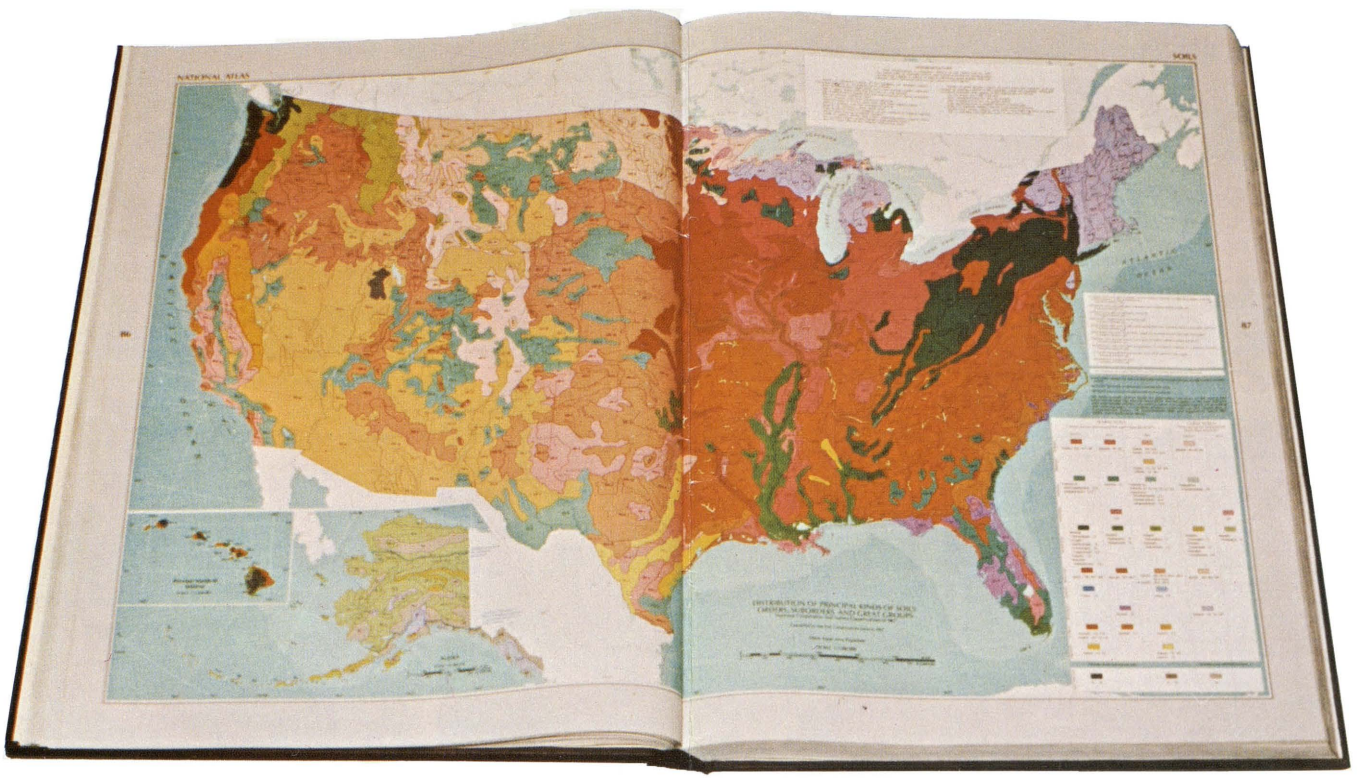
WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT THIS NATIONAL ATLAS?

Unlike general reference atlases, which only provide information such as place locations, size, and transportation connections, the National Atlas emphasizes distributional patterns of the physical, historical, economic, socio-cultural, and administrative characteristics of this country. It is an *omnibus* product, containing information that normally could only be obtained from a variety of other sources.

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF THE NATIONAL ATLAS?

The Atlas, in essence, describes the Nation through the use of 765 maps. The first part of the volume is composed of more than 40 pages of general reference maps, including maps of the 27 largest cities, and a newly-compiled sectional map of the 50 States at a scale of 1:2,000,000 (1 inch equals nearly 32 miles).

Following the general reference maps, there are 281 pages of thematic or special subject maps,



The Atlas opened to a soils map of the United States.

DO OTHER NATIONS HAVE SUCH ATLASES?

Yes. More than 40 Nations other than the United States have such atlases. They have been produced during the past half-century by large countries such as Canada, Brazil, India, and the Soviet Union; by small countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, and New Zealand; by old countries such as Austria, Finland, and France; and by new countries such as Tanzania and Uganda.

at scales of 1:7,500,000 (1 inch equals nearly 120 miles); 1:17,000,000 (1 inch equals nearly 275 miles) and 1:34,000,000 (1 inch equals nearly 550 miles) which convey significant concepts of man-environment relationships, and provide reliable bases for

analyzing the Nation's economic development. All of these multi-colored maps were designed to give the best possible visual presentation of the information they contain.

Text in the Atlas is limited, with few exceptions, to map captions and explanations. References are provided, where possible, to primary data sources and larger scale maps.

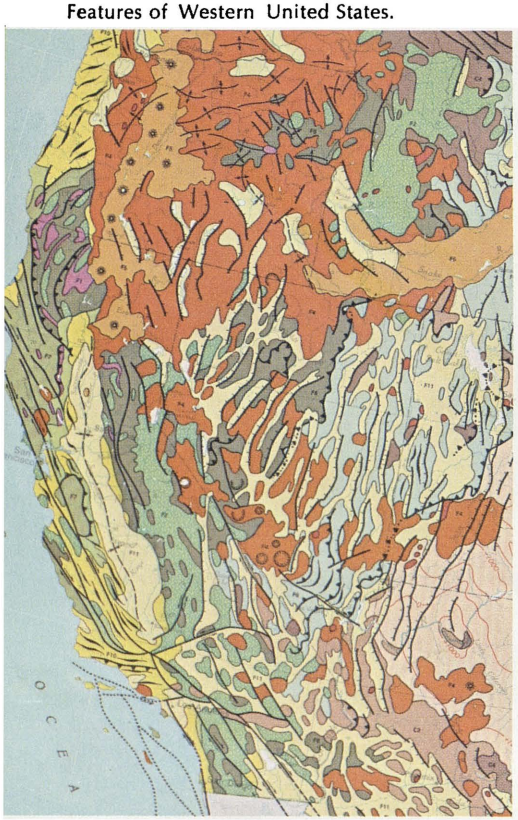
The index to the volume contains more than 41,000 entries, including geographic coordinates, an alpha-numeric code, and where appropriate, population statistics.

EXACTLY WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION DOES THE ATLAS PROVIDE?

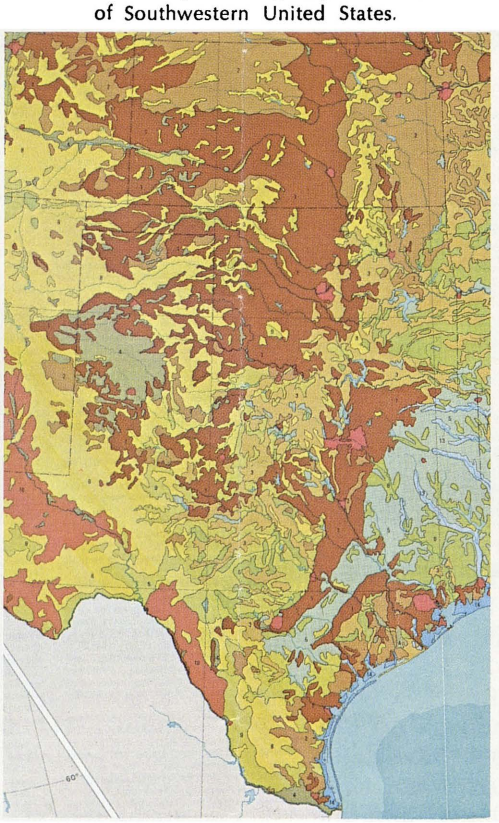
The Atlas serves as reference to a broad variety of specific characteristics of the Nation, organized under topical headings such as: *Physical* (Relief, Earthquakes, Geology, Tides, Soils, Vegetation, Monthly Sunshine, Precipitation, Freeze-Free Periods, and Water Resources); *History* (Discovery, Exploration and Settlement, Landmarks); *Economic* (Fishing and Forestry, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Mineral and Energy Resources, Business, and Transportation); *Socio-Cultural* (Population Trends, Per Capita Income, Education); *Administrative* (Congressional Districts, Counties, Time Zones); *Mapping and Charting* (Aeronautical Charting, Topographic Mapping, Geologic Mapping).

A sampling of the types of information detailed on the maps and in the text of the Atlas includes: distribution of power production and consumption by States, including source and use of power, type of consumption, per capita production and consumption; location of National Historical Sites and Landmarks, including historic areas under public and private ownership; seasonal ocean temperatures along coastal areas, with minimum, maximum, and mean figures; population distribution, urban and rural, with many other demographic facts among which are migration, age-group distribution, birth rate, marriage rate and many more; results of Presidential Elections, with major candidates and parties, electoral and popular vote totals and percentages,

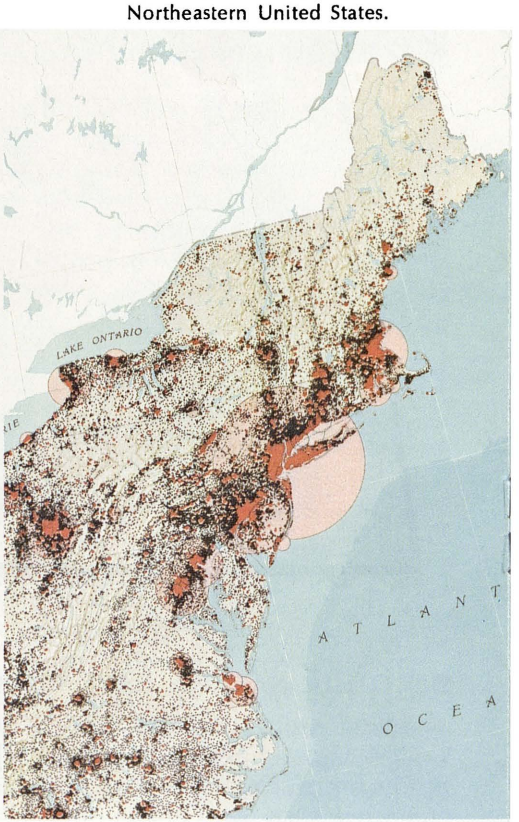
Portion of Map Showing Tectonic Features of Western United States.



Portion of Map Showing Major Land Uses of Southwestern United States.



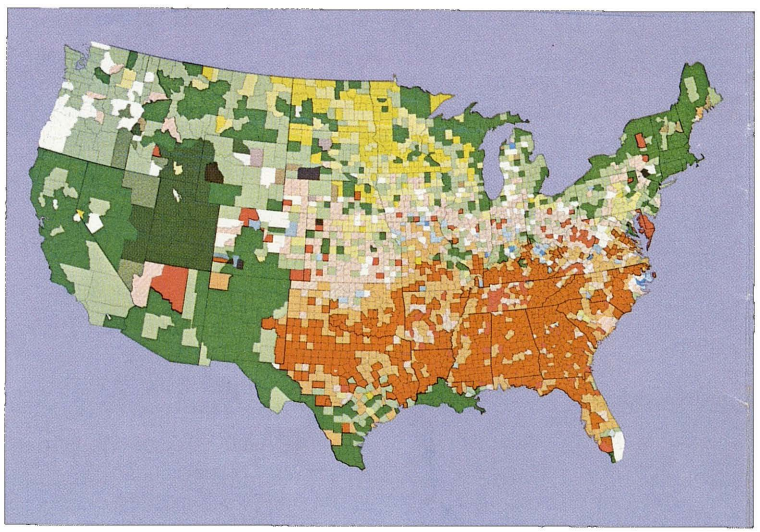
Portion of Map Showing Population of Northeastern United States.



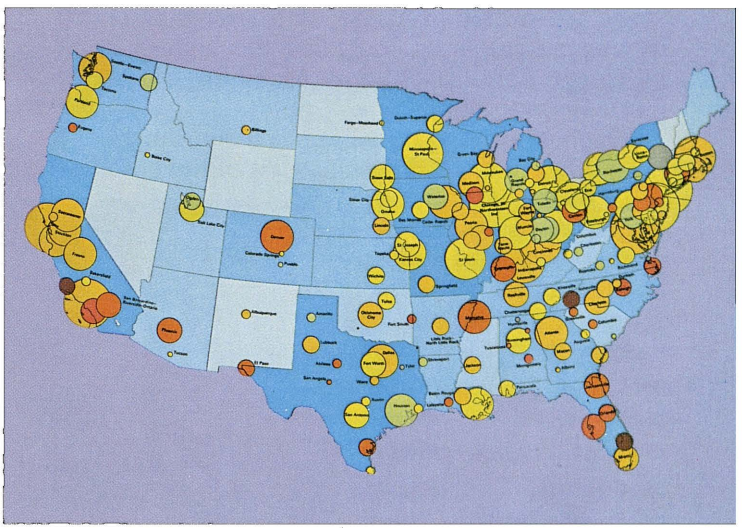
and State voting records; a breakdown of farm sizes and types including figures for livestock and crop harvests; location of commercial and non-commercial television stations, giving affiliations with major networks; and school enrollment and median school years completed, by county, along with a listing of higher education institutions.

Interpretive possibilities from the hundreds of maps are numerous, but a few examples, illustrating the range of subject information, are:

- Alaska, New Mexico and Utah have the highest percentage of families with children. Florida, Missouri and New York have the lowest such percentage. Iowa has the highest percentage of people 65 years old and over, Utah has the highest percentage 17 and under.
- Most states west of the Mississippi River have more males than females, while states in the southeast of the Nation have more females than males. Nevada has the highest divorce rate and also the highest marriage rate of any state in the Union. States west of the Mississippi also have a generally, higher median education level; additionally, these states have generally higher crime rates.
- The southeast States have the largest black populations; Washington, D. C., is predominantly black. North Carolina has the largest American Indian population of any state east of the Mississippi.
- The dominant religion in Georgia is Baptist; in Massachusetts, Roman Catholic; in North Dakota, Lutheran; in Utah, Mormon; and Methodist in Maryland, Delaware and Virginia.
- Three significant voyages of discovery were made to North America prior to Columbus' voyage in 1492; they were by Norsemen B. Herjulfssen (985), Leif Ericsson (995), and T. Karlsefni (1003).
- North Dakota is the only one of the 50 states that has never recorded a major earthquake; New Hampshire is the only one entirely lacking in battle sites.



Leading Religious Denominations.



Food and Kindred Products.

- The only frost-free areas of the United States are Hawaii and south-coastal Florida, although Honolulu in Hawaii is the windiest city in the Nation and Florida reports the most days with thunderstorms per year—100.
- The United States has some form of jurisdiction over 41 areas in the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean totaling 6,000 square miles and about 4,000,000 people. Of the 41 areas, 23 are claimed by other countries.
- Idaho produces and consumes more electric power per capita than does New York, or California. Texas ranks highest in total value of Mineral products (metals, non-metals and fuels); Delaware produces the least.
- Average traffic flows on the U. S. Interstate Highway System show heavy concentration in the corridors from Boston, Mass., to Petersburg, Va., New York, N.Y., to Detroit, Mich., and San Fran-

cisco to San Diego, Cal., each with 15,000 vehicles per day. Interstate routes in Montana, and in North and South Dakota carry less than 500 vehicles per day.

- During the summer, the mean surface temperature of Virginia coastal waters is 18-20 degrees warmer than California coastal waters in the same latitude. During the same period Spokane, Wash., Boise, Idaho, and Great Falls, Mont., receive more hours of sunshine per day than do Miami and Tampa in Florida.
- Seventeen of the 20 highest peaks in the United States are located in Alaska, all in excess of 14,000 feet above sea level, including the highest point in North America—Mount McKinley at 20,320 feet.
- The highest average annual family income in the U. S. is reported in areas north and east of the Potomac and Ohio Rivers, and in the far West; lowest income is reported to be in the Southeast and the Plain States with notable exceptions in large cities.
- By 1968, 13 nuclear reactors were in operation as civilian power generators. The largest of these, Indian Point on the Hudson River, is capable of generating over 1,000 megawatts of electrical energy.
- The Atlas gazeteer of more than 41,000 place names includes *National,* Iowa, (population 35) and *Atlas,* Missouri (population 100). There is a *United,* Pennsylvania (population 2,044) and a *Statesville,* North Carolina and Tennessee (populations 20,800 and 100 respectively). The listing of *Interior,* South Carolina (population 179) has nothing to do with the Interior Department's production of the Atlas but the population of *Page,* North Dakota (432) exceeds by one the number of pages in the National Atlas of the United States.

WHEN AND HOW DID PLANS FOR THE U. S. NATIONAL ATLAS DEVELOP?

Almost a century ago, the second director of the U. S. Geological Survey, John Wesley Powell, conceived the idea of a National Atlas for the then westward-expanding Nation. Although several Federal agencies continued to point out the need for a National Atlas, no practical steps were taken to create one until 1952, when the American Geographical Society, with funds from the American Council of Learned Societies, and a general plan provided by Dr. Samuel S. Boggs, then Geographer of the Department of State, prepared a prototype Atlas of some 400 pages.

Commercial organizations to which prototype volumes were submitted felt that the compilation and production of a National Atlas should be a government responsibility. The fact that all national atlases of other countries had been produced by official government agencies gave weight to that opinion. Consequently, the National Academy of Sciences created a Committee on the National Atlas of the United States to establish standards and coordinate efforts of Federal mapping agencies in accumulating maps, which had been made for other purposes, in a loose-leaf binder. This activity, the Committee expected, would gradually evolve into a National Atlas.

Efforts between 1954 and 1961 resulted in 80 published sheets of special subject maps. However, the Academy's Committee recognized the handicaps of decentralized distribution, lack of a predetermined table of contents, and the general difficulty in controlling quality and content in a multi-agency produced, looseleaf volume.

In June 1960, the Committee recommended that responsibility for producing the National Atlas of the United States be placed in a single Federal

agency, preferably the U. S. Geological Survey. The recommendation was accepted by the Department of the Interior, and a suitable organizational structure within the Survey was arranged.

Under this organization a group of several eminent geographers and cartographers from universities, commercial firms, and government agencies was asked to study existing atlases and to prepare a preliminary plan. The group reviewed recommendations by the International Geographical Union's Commission on National Atlases, and by the former Committee of the National Academy of Sciences. They also surveyed the potential market interest for such an Atlas, and then drafted a detailed plan for the organization, scope, and format of the projected volume.

Although responsibility for the compilation, reproduction, and distribution of the National Atlas was specifically assigned to the U. S. Geological Survey, the final product represents the work of 84 Federal agencies, several commercial organizations, numerous universities, and a few individual scholars.

WHAT ARE PLANS FOR REVISING AND UPDATING THE ATLAS?

To continue to meet Atlas' objectives in the future, revised editions and regional atlases now under consideration may possibly be supplemented by information gained from Earth-orbiting satellite systems. Such systems may help to expedite the production of more up-to-date atlases, and may make it possible to obtain directly from data storage banks and electronic computers some of the types of information now gained in part from maps and other atlases. Meanwhile, selected sheets of the Atlas will be updated as new information becomes available. Current plans call for periodic publication of completely revised Atlas editions.

WHO WILL FIND THIS ATLAS USEFUL?

General use of this reference tool will help public officials, business and industrial organizations, libraries, educational institutions, and scholars throughout the world. Its specific uses are varied depending on the area of interest. For example, the volume can be valuable to engineers and construction specialists, marketing and sales managers, authors, reporters, historians, teachers, students, administrators, jobbers, manufacturers, retailers, merchandisers, actuaries, scientists, environmentalists,

planning and zoning officials, and many others who require background or trend information on a wide variety of subjects. The Atlas is designed, essentially, to be of practical use to those who are required to visualize Nation-wide distributional patterns and relationships between environmental phenomena and human activities. The significance of the creation of a reference tool as useful as the National Atlas is expressed in the following dedication by President Nixon:

> *"This comprehensive documentation of the Nation's physical features, resources, and human activities, is dedicated to the people of the United States of America as an aid in the development of a better understanding of our environment and man's impact on it."*

HOW CAN THE NATIONAL ATLAS BE PURCHASED?

The National Atlas of the United States may be ordered from the Distribution Section, U. S. Geological Survey, 1200 South Eads Street, Arlington, Virginia 22202. The price is $100 per volume with prepayment required; checks and money orders should be made payable to the U. S. Geological Survey. For your convenience, a handy mail order form is provided on the last page of this publication which may be used to expedite purchase.

ARE DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE?

Yes. If bulk purchases of 25 or more copies of the Atlas are made, a 25 percent discount is allowed per volume. Larger corporate, educational, library, and other organizations are urged to take advantage of this discount.

CAN THE ATLAS BE SEEN WITHOUT PURCHASING IT?

Yes. Copies of the National Atlas are available for public inspection at U.S. Geological Survey offices listed on the next page. In addition, copies have been forwarded to hundreds of depository libraries throughout the Nation. For further information about the library nearest your area, or for additional information about the Atlas, write to the Director, U. S. Geological Survey, Washington, D. C. 20242.

OFFICE AT WHICH THE NATIONAL ATLAS MAY BE REVIEWED.

- Map Information Office, Geological Survey, GSA Building, 18th and F Sts. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20242. Telephone: Area 202, 343-2446.
- Public Inquiries Office, Geological Survey, 8102 Federal Building, 125 South State St., Salt Lake City, Utah 84111. Telephone: Area 801, 524-5652.
- Public Inquiries Office, Geological Survey, 1012 Federal Building, 1961 Stout St., Denver, Colo. 80202. Telephone: Area 303, 837-4160.
- Public Inquiries Office, Geological Survey, 1100 Commerce Street, Room 1 C45, Dallas, Tex. 75292. Telephone: Area 214, 749-3230.
- Public Inquiries Office, Geological Survey, 7638 Federal Building, 300 North Los Angeles St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90012. Telephone: Area 213, 688-2860.
- Public Inquiries Office, Geological Survey, 504 Custom House, 555 Battery St., San Francisco, Calif. 95111. Telephone: Area 415, 556-5627.
- Public Inquiries Office, Geological Survey, 678 U. S. Court House, West 920 Riverside Ave., Spokane, Wash. 99201. Telephone: Area 509, 456-2524.
- Public Inquiries Office, Geological Survey, 108 Skyline Building, 508 2nd Ave., Anchorage, Alaska 99501. Telephone: Area 907, 277-0577.
- Topographic Division, Geological Survey, 345 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park, Calif. 94025. Telephone: Area 415, 325-2411.
- Topographic Division, Geological Survey, 9th and Pine Sts., Rolla, Mo 65401. Telephone: Area 314, 364-3680.
- Distribution Section, Geological Survey, 1200 S. Eads St., Arlington, Va. 22202. Telephone: Area 703, 557-2753.
- Distribution Section, Geological Survey, Building 41, Federal Center, Denver, Colo. 80225. Telephone: Area 303, 233-8988.
- Distribution Section, Geological Survey, 310 First Ave., Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. Telephone: Area 907, 456-7084.
- Information Office, Geological Survey, GSA Building, 18th and F Sts. N. W., Washington, D. C. 20242. Telephone: Area 202, 343-4646.

MAIL ORDER FORM To: Washington Distribution Section, U. S. Geological Survey,
1200 South Eads Street, Arlington, Va. 22202

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*A 25-percent discount is applicable to single order for 25 copies or more.

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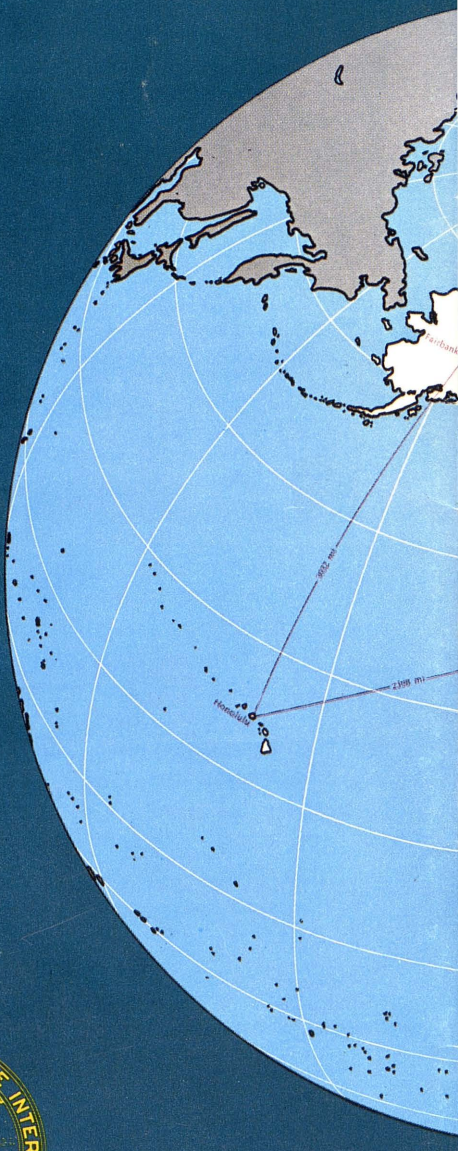
As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources."

The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.



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