

Historical Society of Michigan

Michigan History Calendar

Day	Year	Events
1 JAN	1837	Michigan was allowed \$95,000 from the U.S. Treasury when Congress distributed the federal surplus (from tariffs and land sales) among the states.
1 JAN	1867	Railroad carferry service began on the Detroit River with the first crossing of the <i>Great Western</i> between Windsor and Detroit.
1 JAN	1879	The present state capitol building in Lansing was dedicated.
1 JAN	1888	Railroad tracks crossed the Upper peninsula when the Minneapolis, Saulte Ste. Marie & Atlantic Railway, later the Soo Line, reached Saulte Ste. Marie.
1 JAN	1895	C.W. Post created the first batch of Postum as a coffee substitute.
1 JAN	1900	The Chicago & West Michigan, the Flint & Pere Marquette, and the Grand Rapids & Western were consolidated to form the Pere Marquette Railroad.
1 JAN	1919	Edsel Ford succeeds his father, Henry Ford, as president of the Ford Motor Company. When Edsel Ford, Henry's only son, died of stomach cancer in 1943, Henry returned to the presidency of the company for two years before being replaced by his grandson, Henry Ford II in 1945.
1 JAN	1925	Detroit's Bonstelle Playhouse opened in the former Temple Beth-El designed by Albert Kahn. It was owned and operated by actress and producer Jessie Bonstelle who produced about 300 plays on its stage before her death of cancer in 1932. It is operated today as the Bonstelle Theater by Wayne State University.
1 JAN	1972	The age of majority (adulthood) was lowered from 21 to 18.
2 JAN	1837	The first regular session of the Michigan state legislature convened in Detroit.
2 JAN	1902	Michigan defeated Sanford, 49–0, in the first Rose Bowl game. Michigan also defeated Southern Cal, 49–0, in 1948, California, 14–6, in 1951, Oregon State 34–7, in 1965, Washington, 23–6, in 1981, and Washington again, 38–31 in 1993. Michigan State defeated UCLA, 28–20, in 1954, and again in 1956, 17–14 and Southern Cal, 20–17, in 1988.
2 JAN	1920	In a nation-wide raid led by U.S. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, the "Palmer Raids," 500 Detroiters were seized and held for deportation hearings. They were accused of being Communist subversives and plotting to overthrow the government.
2 JAN	1930	New York Central acquired a 99-year lease of the Michigan Central Railroad.
2 JAN	1970	Clifton Wharton became president of Michigan State University, the first Black president of any major US college.
2 JAN	1974	Coleman Young took office as Detroit's first Black mayor. He served 20 years.
2 JAN	2004	Using 14 categories of statistics including, health clubs, sporting goods stores, fast food places, and doughnut shops, <i>Men's Fitness</i> magazine lists Detroit as the "King of Flab," the fattest city in the United States.
3 JAN	1814	Court Martial convened to try former governor William Hull on charges of cowardice and neglect of duty for surrendering Detroit to British in 1812. He was found guilty and sentenced to death. President Madison commuted his sentence because of his Revolutionary War record.
4 JAN	1843	Michigan's first governor, Stevens T. Mason, died in New York at age 31..
4 JAN	1918	Production began at Ford's River Rouge plant.

4 JAN 1922	Henry Ford purchased the Lincoln Motor Company from Henry and Wilfred Leland.
5 JAN 1861	The Amboy, Lansing & Traverse Bay Railroad was the first Michigan railroad to qualify for a federal land grant by building 20 miles of acceptable track.
5 JAN 1914	Henry Ford raised factory workers to five dollars per day so they could afford to buy the cars they were building.
5 JAN 1924	The Chrysler Six, the first car to bear Walter Chrysler's name was shown to the public for the first time at the New York Automobile Show. The car with its advanced standard features like hydraulic brakes, a high compression engine, and balloon tires was an immediate success.
6 JAN 1863	The Emancipation Proclamation was read for the first time in Michigan at the Second Baptist Church in Detroit.
7 JAN 1832	The Orchard Lake Scotsmen formed the state's first curling club and played their first match.
7 JAN 1840	William Woodbridge took office of governor replacing, Michigan's first governor, Stevens T. Mason, who had been defeated in large part because of the state's financial distress arising from the disastrous internal improvements program.
7 JAN 1971	An unarmed B-52 bomber crashed into Lake Michigan just missing the Big Rock Point nuclear power plant near Charlevoix.
8 JAN 1838	Governor Mason called out the state militia to keep the Patriots, Canadian rebels, from using Michigan as a base to attack the British government in Canada. Patriot sympathizers had raided the arsenal in Detroit and seized the schooner <i>Ann</i> for an invasion of Canada.
8 JAN 1948	WDTR-FM, Michigan's first educational FM radio station went on the air.
9 JAN 1911	In a very important victory for the automobile industry, a court ruling declared that automobile manufacturers did not have to pay royalties on the Selden patent for a gasoline engine.
9 JAN 1997	29 people died when a Comair commuter plane crashed 18 miles before reaching Detroit Metropolitan Airport.
10 JAN 1945	In a speech in the Senate, Arthur Vandenburg of Grand Rapids, a leading Republican isolationist, announced a dramatic change in his thinking—He was now convinced that in the wake of World War II, the United States must play a leading role in world affairs. He later became a delegate to the conference to organize the United Nations, supported the Marshall Plan, and made the motion in the Senate that led to the formation of NATO.
10 JAN 1964	William Clay Ford bought the Detroit Lions.
11 JAN 1805	Territory of Michigan was established with Detroit as its capital.
11 JAN 1913	The first American sedan-type automobile went on display at the 13th Automobile Show in New York. It was built by Hudson in Detroit.
11 JAN 1945	State senator, Warren G. Hooper of Albion was found murdered in his car one day before he was to testify against Grand Rapids political boss, Frank McKay, before a grand jury investigating political corruption.
12 JAN 1904	Henry Ford set the world speed record at 91.37 MPH driving the "999" on ice covered Lake St. Clair.
13 JAN 1851	Asa Whitney's proposal to build a transcontinental railroad was debated and killed in Congress. He proposed to build the line without government money. His line would have crossed the continent from Lake Michigan to the Pacific Ocean. If passed, Michigan would have been a major link in cross-country transportation.

13 JAN	1977	Joan L. Wolfe became the first woman to chair a major state commission when she became chairperson of the Natural Resources Commission.
14 JAN	1914	Production began using the first moving automobile assembly line at Ford's Highland Park plant.
15 JAN	1890	Progressive Detroit shoemaker, Hazen "Potatoes" Pingree, became mayor.
15 JAN	1965	Dearborn mayor Orville Hubbard was charged by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission for failing to act in good faith because he persisted in posting "anti-Negro" clippings on the city hall bulletin board.
16 JAN	1888	Don Dickinson became Postmaster General in the cabinet of President Grover Cleveland.
16 JAN	1948	Ford builds the first in a long line of F-series pickup trucks.
17 JAN	1854	Rail service between Michigan and New York became possible when the Great Western Railway of Canada reached Windsor.
17 JAN	1956	Stock in Ford Motor Company is sold to the public for the first time
17 JAN	1983	Last business day for downtown Detroit's J.L. Hudson Department Store.
18 JAN	1802	Detroit was incorporated as Michigan's first city.
18 JAN	2002	The first Snow House, or Lumitalo, in the United States was built in Hancock during the Mid Winter Heikinpaiva (Henry's Day) Celebration. It was designed and built by Finnish architect Seppo Makinen.
19 JAN	1841	The <i>Western Farmer</i> , Michigan's first journal for farmers, published its first issue.
19 JAN	1868	Frederick Baraga, first bishop of Saulte Ste. Marie died. He had served in the Upper Peninsula for 30 years.
19 JAN	2002	Skiers made the last jumps at the Suicide Bowl in Ishpeming. Skiers had used the site since 1926. The site was closed because Cleveland Cliffs, the mining company that owned the hill, needed the land to expand its mining operations.
20 JAN	1880	World's first international telephone line opened between Detroit and Windsor.
20 JAN	1936	Edsel Ford started the Ford Foundation.
21 JAN	1670	Rouge River (St. Anne's River) was discovered by French explorer, Robert de LaSalle.
21 JAN	1757	In the Battle on Snowshoes, Michigan Indians led by Charles Langlade ambushed Robert Rogers and his Rangers along the shore of Lake Champlain. In this French and Indian War skirmish, Rogers was wounded but was able to escape with most of his men because they had snow shoes and the French force didn't.
21 JAN	1915	The first Kiwanis Club was founded in Detroit.
21 JAN	1961	Ford president Robert McNamara resigned to become Secretary of Defense serving under both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. He became the architect of American policy in Vietnam.
21 JAN	1987	Motown singer Aretha Franklin became the first female vocalist to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.
22 JAN	1813	In the bloodiest battle ever fought in Michigan, British troops with strong Indian support surprised American troops at Frenchtown (Monroe) on the Raisin River. Major George Madison was convinced to surrender after he was promised his men would be protected.
22 JAN	1857	Flint & Pere Marquette Railroad was chartered to provide service between Flint and Lake Michigan.
22 JAN	1969	Governor George Romney resigned to serve as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Richard M. Nixon. Lieutenant Governor William G. Milliken of Traverse City served the rest of the term and was subsequently elected in 1970.

22 JAN	1971	A man holding a hatchet and claiming to have a bomb forced a plane to land at Detroit and refuel before taking him to Cuba. This was Michigan's first airplane hijacking.
22 JAN	2002	Troy based K-Mart filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy making it the biggest retailer to ever seek bankruptcy protection.
23 JAN	1813	One day after the Americans surrendered at Frenchtown, British officers left the wounded behind to be massacred. "Remember the Raisin" became the battle cry in the west for the remainder of the War of 1812.
23 JAN	1915	Supreme Court Justice, Potter Stewart was born in Jackson.
24 JAN	1906	The Smithsonian Institution accepted the art collection of Charles Freer who had made his fortune as a partner in Detroit's Michigan-Peninsular Car Company, a builder of railroad cars. His collection of Asian and American art is housed in the Freer Gallery on the Mall in Washington, D.C. It opened in May 1923.
24 JAN	1982	Super Bowl XVI was held at the Pontiac Silverdome. The San Francisco 49ers defeated the Cincinnati Bengals 26–21.
25 JAN	1945	Grand Rapids became the first city in the country to add fluoride to its water supply in order to reduce tooth decay among children.
25 JAN	1956	Hank Greenberg of the Detroit Tigers became the first Jewish player inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.
26 JAN	1837	Congress formally accepted Michigan as a state after Michigan reluctantly agreed to the Enabling Act thus giving up its claim to the Toledo Strip. In exchange Michigan acquired the western part of the Upper Peninsula.
26 JAN	1847	Slave catchers arrived at Marshall hoping to capture the Adam Crosswhite family who had escaped from slavery in Kentucky. Their neighbors spirited them away to safety in Canada. Led to passage of the Fugitive Slave Law.
26 JAN	1875	G.F. Green of Kalamazoo patented the first dental drill.
26 JAN	2004	Governor Granholm introduced the Michigan Quarter, the 26th quarter in the U.S. Mint's 50 States Quarter Program.
27 JAN	1883	The first electric lights in Michigan were installed at Metcalf's dry goods store in Detroit.
27 JAN	1967	Roger Chaffee of Grand Rapids along with astronauts Gus Grissom and Edward White II died in a flash fire aboard the Apollo I module.
28 JAN	1877	Michigan's first logging railroad, the Lake George & Muskegon River railroad, began operation in Clair County.
28 JAN	1958	Ozzie Virgil became the first Black player for the Detroit Tigers. He was acquired by trade from the San Francisco Giants.
28 JAN	1973	Lt. Col. William Nolde of Mt. Pleasant was the last American killed in the Vietnam conflict. A cease-fire went into effect 11 hours after he had been hit in an artillery barrage.
29 JAN	1796	Last session of the English Court of General Quarter Session met for the last time as the British began to give up control of Michigan under terms of Jay's Treaty.
29 JAN	1900	Detroit Tigers became 1 of 8 charter members of the new American League
30 JAN	1933	First broadcast of the Lone Ranger on Detroit's WXYZ.
30 JAN	1962	Two members of the <i>Great Wallendas</i> fell to their deaths while attempting a human pyramid on the high-wire at the Detroit State Fairgrounds Coliseum during a Shrine Circus performance.
31 JAN	1945	Pvt. Eddie Slovik of Hamtramck was executed. He was the only American soldier to be executed for desertion since the Civil War.
