

# Historical Society of Michigan

# Update

**Our State  
Our Stories  
Your Impact**



*Annual Report of the Historical Society of Michigan*

**2023**

# Welcome to the Update

## Dear Members and Friends of HSM,

### Can you imagine not having access to the history stories of the Great Lakes State?

Whether you're an automotive-industry guru or a lighthouse lover, being a part of the Historical Society of Michigan (HSM) community means you've got a one-stop shop for our state's history. We are proud to continue providing educational programming for people of all ages, from school-age children to retired adults. Many history enthusiasts gladly joined our bus tours and conferences in person once more. Students participating in Michigan History Day® were also able to compete in person after three years of virtual events due to COVID.

Without your support, HSM wouldn't be able to offer those programs. In gratitude for your part in HSM's story, we are pleased to present you with the annual Update. Your support has successfully enhanced the programs and services you love at HSM—and even helped launch new ones.

### New this year:

- The Michigan History Alliance® Grant Program provided funding for small- to medium-size history organizations that are HSM members. HSM awarded grants totaling \$25,080 to 14 of its member organizations throughout Michigan.
- The America250MI Committee for the United States Semiquincentennial (2026) met for the first time and began planning priorities.
- HSM hired its first librarian for its Lois and Avern Cohn Library and Archives.

**Whether as individuals, historical organizations, or representatives of businesses, many of you joined in our mission of preserving and promoting history this past year.** Additionally, many of your historic homes and businesses were recognized through the Milestone, Michigan Heritage Home®, and Centennial Farm awards.

Wherever you meet us in the coming year, we are glad you've chosen to be a part of HSM. We look forward to seeing you soon. Thank you for supporting Michigan history education!



**Shannon White**  
Board President



**Larry Wagenaar**  
Executive Director and CEO



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### On the Cover

Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse,  
photo by jstone/Pixabay.





# New at HSM

## CELEBRATING AMERICA'S

## *Semiquincentennial*

In 2020, Governor Whitmer designated, through executive action, HSM and the Michigan History Center as the lead organizations for planning the state's commemoration of the country's semiquincentennial. **The America250MI Committee for the United States Semiquincentennial (America250) was established to plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate the state of Michigan's commemoration of the founding of the United States.** In 2022, the America250MI program coordinator jumpstarted the program.

### Here are a few highlights from the first year:

- The website [america250mi.org](http://america250mi.org) was created.
- America250MI established partnerships with Pure Michigan, Mackinac State Historic Parks, the Michigan History Center, HSM, and the Michigan Humanities Council.
- The program coordinator attended trainings in Williamsburg, Virginia, with more than 300 other state representatives.
- In collaboration with Revolution250 Boston, a Boston Tea Party Participant marker was placed on the gravesite of Thompson Maxwell in Dearborn Heights, Michigan.
- A program guide is being developed for cultural organizations all over the state.

## THE LOIS AND AVERN COHN LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

Although HSM is not a collecting organization—meaning that we do not house a museum—we do maintain a modest library of Michigan history books. **In 2022, HSM hired its first librarian to catalog books**, including a generous number from Judge Avern Cohn's collection. Judge Cohn served on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan from 1979 to 2019. When he was appointed by President Jimmy Carter, he was the only Jewish judge on that court. He was a skilled historian and an avid supporter of HSM, donating many volumes from his personal library. In the past year, more than 400 of his books—including 41 rare items—have been cataloged and added to the shelves of the Lois and Avern Cohn Library and Archives.

In addition to Judge Cohn's contribution, **approximately 1,200 other books have been cataloged and added to the shelves since September 2022.**

# 3

Years until the United  
States Semiquincentennial

# 400+

Books from Avern Cohn's  
collection in the HSM library



# Michigan History Day®

This year, nearly 3,000 Michigan elementary, middle, and high school students across the state participated in Michigan History Day® (MHD). Those students put on their historian hats and built skills for success as they researched their history topics and created projects to present their findings.

When HSM announced a return to in-person competitions this year, HSM's director of education and member services, Amy Bradfield, received many emails from teachers emphasizing how excited students were to compete. After three years of virtual competitions, students were eager to create and present their documentaries, exhibits, historical papers, performances, and websites.

The 2023 theme, **"Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas,"** allowed students to explore topics that spoke to them on a personal level or that were about some aspect of history they'd never encountered. Aliah Mohmand of Kalamazoo Central High School used her father's oral history to create her exhibit, entitled "Afghan Mujahideen: Catalyst for Collapse; Changing the Communist Frontier." Aliah's exhibit finished third in the nation at the

National History Day competition. Isaac Gonzalez and Sincyere Poe of Saginaw Arts Science Academy created a website on the Australian Frontier Wars, something they would not normally learn about in school.

A total of **55 Michigan students advanced to the National History Day competition in June**, with 9 of those students receiving special honors at this year's contest. Among those students was Isabella Causie, whose website was awarded the "Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers" prize. Isabella researched anesthesia and its impact on alleviating the agony of surgery. She shared, **"My favorite thing about MHD is being able to choose what topic I want to talk about and learn about each year. I get to learn about topics I'm interested in for the future, and it could help me when choosing my career."**





# 450

Students participated  
in district contests

## TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Michigan History Day provides a unique opportunity for students to explore historical figures or topics from their communities, allowing them to gain a better understanding of the places they call home.

**Carl Lowe, a teacher at Adams Middle School in Wayne-Westland, encourages his students to select topics from Michigan for their projects.** Eighteen of Carl's student projects advanced to the State Finals hosted by Central Michigan University, and most of those projects had a strong connection to Michigan. Some of the topics researched by Carl's students were William Webb Ferguson, the Toledo War, the Kellogg Company, and Ossian Sweet. When asked what their favorite part of MHD was, three of Carl's students responded, "Learning about new things I've never seen or heard of before." Those young scholars felt pride in learning about local history and sharing that knowledge with community members, building connections that few experiences can match.

# 317

Students competed  
at the State Finals

# 55

Michigan students  
advanced to National  
History Day



Brianna Perry, one of Carl Lowe's students, researched Sophia Bethena Jones to create her documentary. Bethena Jones was the first Black woman to graduate from the University of Michigan Medical School. Brianna's documentary finished in the top 30 in the nation at the National Finals.



**NHD**  
NATIONAL  
HISTORY DAY



# Conferences

# 892

Attendees across all three conferences

# 20

Out-of-state conference registrants



HSM's three conferences took place in person this past year, after a nearly four-year hiatus!

The **September 2022 Annual Meeting and Michigan History Conference in Albion** offered programming covering Albion, Calhoun County, and the whole state. Nearly 200 attendees gathered on campus at Albion College for two days filled with 22 varied sessions, workshops, and exhibitors' displays.

The **March 2023 Michigan in Perspective: Local History Conference in Novi**, the largest of our three conferences, offered more than 540 attendees Detroit-area stories, including those of Vernors Ginger Ale, the Detroit Walk to Freedom, and Albert Kahn's legacy on Belle Isle.

From sunken shipwrecks to high-flying aviators, the **June 2023 Upper Peninsula History Conference in Iron Mountain** had an interesting array of U.P. history topics for everyone. The event brought together more than 150 attendees from Michigan and beyond to enjoy Western Upper Peninsula-themed keynotes, breakout sessions, and workshops.

## LIFELONG HISTORY FRIENDS

Dick Humphreys of Saginaw and Bud Huysken of Livonia met as college fraternity brothers and have remained lifelong friends. One way that they stay connected is by meeting up at HSM's history conferences. They may have met decades ago at Alma College, but they continue to support and keep up with each other, and their shared love of Michigan history gives them a great reason to enjoy HSM conferences together.



**Don't miss out on our next HSM conference! We might be visiting your neck of the woods soon...**

Stay up to date on conference news at [www.hsm.pub/conference](http://www.hsm.pub/conference) or by scanning the QR code on the right.



# Publications

For more than 100 years, **Michigan History magazine** has put the stories of our state front and center with in-depth articles, reminiscences of days gone by, news items, and so much more. Our readers often tell us that they read it from cover to cover as soon as it comes in the mail.

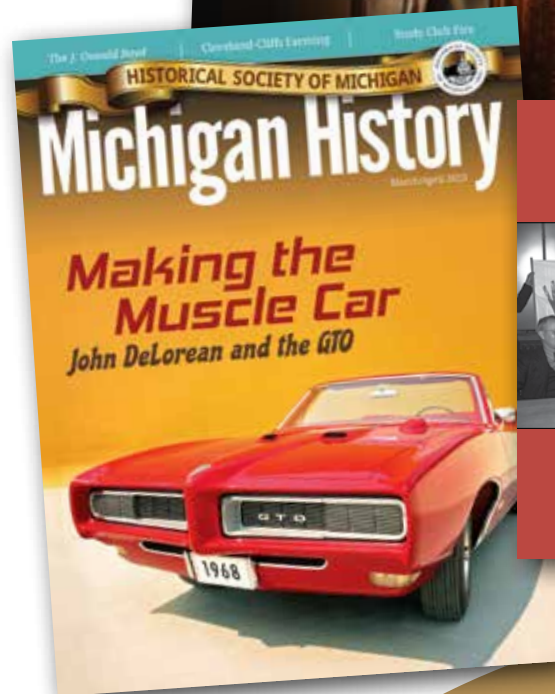
**Chronicle**, our quarterly membership magazine, shares additional history articles and HSM activities and news. Each issue includes tidbits about our member historical organizations, Michigan Heritage Homes®, Centennial Farms, award recipients, and more.

Since 1974, **The Michigan Historical Review** has been the only scholarly journal dedicated to the history of the Great Lakes State. The journal promotes research of Michigan history through academic articles.

Longtime member Janet Going of Grand Rapids recently wrote to our editorial team, “History is so fascinating. I am concerned as to what future history [students] will have to read about. I share my *Michigan History* magazines with a neighbor who just moved here from Seattle, Washington. She loves them. I also give subscription cards to people, and some now subscribe to the magazine.”

We hope every HSM reader is able to experience history with Janet’s enthusiasm! **Our three publications are essential to the mission of HSM, for they are a concrete means by which we connect Michigan’s residents to the past.**

Stay tuned for more exciting history content in your next issues!



## SHARE YOUR IDEAS

HSM’s Editorial Committee welcomes article queries and submissions to its publications from the public. Email our editorial team at [editor@hsmichigan.org](mailto:editor@hsmichigan.org) to submit your ideas, and learn more on our website at [hsmichigan.org/submission-guidelines](http://hsmichigan.org/submission-guidelines).

# 569

Full-color pages of stories and images from across the state in 2022-2023

# 19k

Circulation of *Michigan History* magazine

# Awards

Michigan is home to many incredible historic homes, farms, businesses, and organizations—and HSM Awards celebrate each one.

The **Michigan Centennial Farm** program recognizes farms that have been owned and operated by the same family for 100 years or more. **In the past year, 69 centennial farms and another 45 sesquicentennial farms joined the ranks of registered historic farms in Michigan.**

The properties are marked by the iconic green Centennial Farm sign, which also recognizes the major sponsors that make the program possible: Consumers Energy Foundation and DTE Energy Foundation.

# 69

Recently certified  
Centennial Farms

# 12

Michigan Milestone  
Awards granted

# 133

Certified awards in the  
2022-2023 fiscal year

This past December, the **Joostberns Farm in Allegan County earned its Centennial Farm Award.** Nancy Joostberns has lived her entire life on the farm, which was established by her grandfather John in 1919. John Joostberns immigrated from Germany in 1892 and slowly built up a successful farm and a large family with 12 children. The family has raised dairy cows, hogs, and chickens and farmed crops including corn and soybeans. Nancy still uses her father's 1949 John Deere tractor today to care for the small farm that has persevered amid larger, corporate farms.

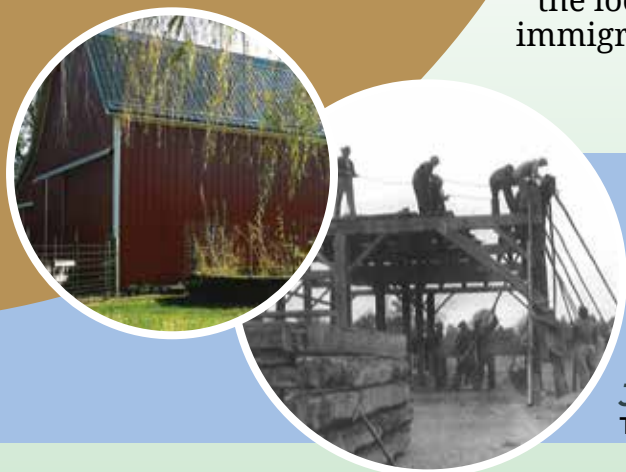
The **Michigan Heritage Home®** program certified seven new historic homes this year. The program recognizes houses that are at least 100 years old and in substantially original condition. From ornate Victorian dwellings to simple wooden cottages, those homes have stood the test of time.

Built by August Pollakowski in 1909, a beautiful brick Colonial Revival home in Dearborn Heights became a recognized Heritage Home this year. Its current residents treasure the many historic details of the house, for the home has much of its original interior woodwork intact, and its bricks likely came from the local Wagner Brickyard, where many local German immigrants worked.

For more information about HSM's awards and recognition programs, visit [hsmichigan.org/awards](https://hsmichigan.org/awards), email [awards@hsmichigan.org](mailto:awards@hsmichigan.org), or call (800) 692-1828.

**Joostberns Farm**

The barn raising in the early 1900s (left) and the barn today (far left).





HSM's awards programs are an impactful way to celebrate, promote, and preserve your history.

**Michigan Milestone Awards** celebrate the state's businesses, organizations, and municipalities that reach their 50th, 100th, 150th, or 200th anniversaries with custom-made metal plaques. Sponsored by the Meijer Foundation, the designation is a great way to celebrate your organization's past and the heritage of your community.

**The Flat River Historical Society and Museum in Greenville was one of 12 organizations to earn a Milestone Award this year.** The museum, which is housed on the lot where city founder John Green built his first house, was dedicated on October 10, 1972. Fifty years later, the museum includes a Victorian garden; a series of period rooms on the second floor of the museum building; and the Eureka Township Hall, which was moved to the site in 1980.

HSM's **History Awards** are given to individuals and organizations annually during HSM conferences. The awards—which include the State, Upper Peninsula, and History Hero Awards—acknowledge those who have made outstanding contributions to the appreciation and understanding of Michigan history through the collection, preservation, and/or promotion of state and local history.

**Among this year's award recipients was Chuck Stokes, editorial/public affairs director for WXYZ-TV/Channel 7 and longtime volunteer with HSM.** Chuck's career has allowed him to tell the stories of many recent historical figures, such as past U.S. presidents, Michigan's governors, and famous personalities ranging from the late Civil Rights Era icon Rosa Parks to Baseball Hall of Fame Detroit Tigers announcer Ernie Harwell. Chuck embodies a passion for telling the story of the Great Lakes State and beyond.

From showcasing books and programs to recognizing accomplished educators and volunteers, HSM's History Awards highlight the excellent work Michiganders are doing to promote their state's history.



*Dianne Schmitigal (top left) and Chuck Stokes (left) receiving their History Hero Awards.*



Learn how you can apply for a Milestone Award, register your Centennial Farm status, or nominate for the State and Upper Peninsula History Awards at [hsmichigan.org](http://hsmichigan.org).

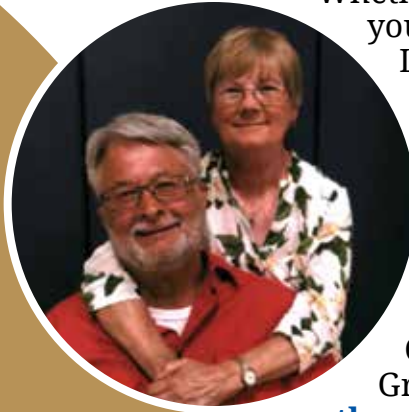


# Legacy Circle

There are lots of ways to become a member of the HSM Legacy Circle.  
Learn about all of the different options at [hsm.pub/legacy](http://hsm.pub/legacy).

## 62

Members of  
the Legacy Circle



Whether you are 18 or 108, now is the perfect time for you to set up your plans, include HSM, and join the Legacy Circle! **In 2013, the Legacy Circle was created to recognize those who have designated HSM as a beneficiary in their wills or trust plans.** There is no minimum level of support required. Members receive recognition, invitations to special HSM donor receptions, and reserved seating at one special event during HSM conferences.

One of our newest Legacy Circle members, Jeff Greene from Marshall, said it best: **“I’ve always thought I hope to live to be 100-plus. But you never know. Just in case something happens, I know this part of my life is set.”** A Marshall native, Jeff came across *Michigan History* magazine more than ten years ago at a friend’s home and has been enjoying it ever since.

**We do not need to know the details—just telling us you will remember HSM as part of your estate plans makes you a Legacy Circle member.**

If you are thinking that one person cannot make a difference, consider Judy Siess. Judy, who worked as a social worker in Detroit and belonged to a car-racing club, channeled her love for HSM’s conferences into a bequest that will ensure that HSM’s programming, including the conferences, remains available to others.

Join us in bringing the Legacy Circle to 200 members by our 200th birthday. You can be a part of a growing group of people who believe so deeply in the Michigan history education mission that they want it to continue long into the future.

Join the growing Legacy Circle—designate HSM with the following in your plans: Historical Society of Michigan (Fed. ID. #38-1452689), 7435 Westshire Drive, Lansing, MI, 48917.

## 200

Our goal for Legacy  
Circle members by 2028  
to celebrate HSM’s  
bicentennial

## \$0

Required minimum to  
join the HSM Legacy  
Circle—none!



**Letting us know that you’ve included HSM in your legacy plans not only allows HSM to better plan for its future, but also gives us the ability to thank you for your generosity.**



## Members of the Legacy Circle

Floyd Andrick  
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Virginia Paganelli Caruso and Phillip Caruso  
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Shannon White and Randy Dykhuis  
Anonymous (1)\*  
Anonymous (2)  
\*Deceased

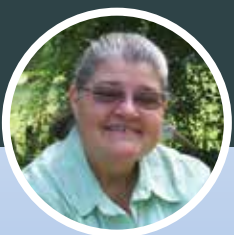
## KEEPING HISTORY ALIVE

*We chose to include the Historical Society of Michigan (HSM) in our estate plans to ensure that we can continue to contribute to this work long into the future. We both have a great appreciation for history and organizations that work to keep the stories of us all alive. HSM does this through so many programs that touch youth, adults, and local societies throughout our state.*  
-Shannon White and Randy Dykhuis



### Legacy Circle Gifts Received This Year

Gaylor Forman\*  
John Mendler and Janet Nellis Mendler\*  
Margaret Roets\*  
Judy Siess\*  
Cornelius Wagenaar\*  
Anonymous\*



Learn more by emailing [history@hsmichigan.org](mailto:history@hsmichigan.org), calling (800) 692-1828, or visiting our website at [www.hsm.pub/legacycircle](http://www.hsm.pub/legacycircle).



# Education Programs

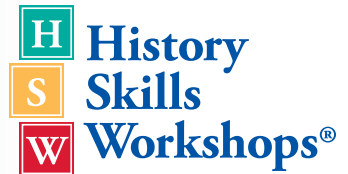
HSM's education programs are a fantastic way to brush up on your history skills and connect with your local history community.

This year's three-hour **History Skills Workshops**® offered outstanding learning opportunities for history professionals and volunteers alike. Our workshops covered diverse subjects such as creating living-history programs, the care and conservation of quilts, and writing memoirs. In all, HSM held 17 workshops for nearly 200 people.

Six times yearly, representatives of our member organizations get together via Zoom to share problems and solutions, stories of successes and flops, and updates on new opportunities. Our **Michigan History Alliance**® (MHA) program is all about the benefits of old-fashioned networking, with a free, one-hour mini workshop as a bonus. As one person put it, "I learn a lot from conference sessions and other programs, but sometimes I can learn even more by talking about things [with others]."

We also introduced our new **Michigan History Alliance Grant Program** last fall, and there was an immense response. HSM awarded grants totaling \$25,080 to 14 member organizations. Each application showcased the amazing work of historical societies throughout the state.

Among them is the Alcona Historical Society, which received a grant to renovate the exhibits in the Sturgeon Point Lighthouse. With the help of a historian, an author, and an archaeologist, the society will showcase maritime history, the commercial fishing industry, the lighthouse itself, and community life at Sturgeon Point.



For more information about HSM's education programs, visit [www.hsm.pub/programs](http://www.hsm.pub/programs), email [hsm@hsmichigan.org](mailto:hsm@hsmichigan.org), or call (800) 692-1828.



Hosted by HSM, the weekly **History Hounds® Lecture Series** continues to delight our members and friends with its wide range of popular and lesser-known topics tailored to a public audience. From the Underground Railroad to shipwrecks, the diverse lineup of presentations followed by hands-on community discussions remains a perennial member favorite!

In the past fiscal year, **the program saw an average of 120 households and member organizations stream our lectures each week.** It has been wonderful to learn about history from around the state and nation together.

Unsurprisingly, HSM's most popular lecture was "Tragedy in November: The Wreck of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*," presented John Beck of Heritage Christian Academy. A total of 182 households and organizations tuned in to learn about the tragedy that inspired Gordon Lightfoot's famous song.

HSM member organizations can stream History Hounds for their members, or their members can tune in directly by referencing their organization's name. Dan LeBlond, president of the Elk Rapids Area Historical Society, shared, "I really like the presentations and promoting them to our members." Being able to offer History Hounds to their constituents gives local history organizations a leg up on programming. Tune in for more great content in the year to come!



## Maximize your online benefits

Are you taking advantage of your digital HSM membership benefits? Our website, [hsmichigan.org](http://hsmichigan.org), hosts exclusive online content—including recordings of past History Hounds lectures, digital editions of *Michigan History* and *Chronicle* magazines, and more. There is so much extra history to explore, watch, and read... We hope you enjoy!

Explore [hsmichigan.org](http://hsmichigan.org) today! Have questions? Email us at [hsm@hsmichigan.org](mailto:hsm@hsmichigan.org) or call (800) 692-1828.



# 5,568

Households attended  
History Hounds lectures  
in the past year

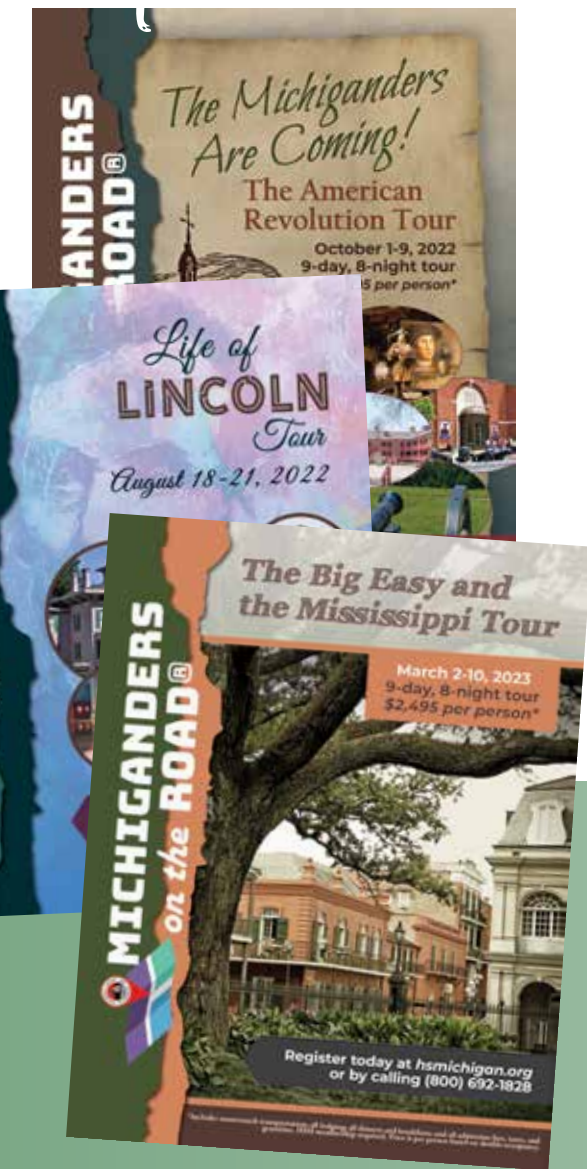
# 182

The largest attendance  
for a single lecture

# 787

Participating members of  
HSM member organizations

# Michiganders on the Road®



The 2022-2023 Michiganders on the Road® tour season was quite an adventure! We enjoyed a four-day **“Life of Lincoln Tour”** to Springfield, Illinois, in August, and three nine-day tours: **“The Michiganders Are Coming: The American Revolution Tour”** in October; **“The Big Easy and the Mississippi Tour”** in March; and our long-postponed **“Vive L’Histoire: Québec City and French Canada Tour”** in June. Each tour is a unique experience in which we visit regional historic sites and often arrange behind-the-scenes tours unavailable to the general public. Our tours also include all dinners at locally-owned restaurants so that participants get a genuine flavor of the local cuisine.



You don’t have to be a historian to enjoy our tours! Stay tuned for our future adventures at [www.hsm.pub/motr](http://www.hsm.pub/motr) or by scanning the QR code.

## JOYCE’S STORY

As a child, Joyce enjoyed exploring forts and rocky beaches throughout Michigan during road trips with her parents. Those trips ignited her love of history and travel, so it’s no surprise that, one day after her retirement at the age of 71, Joyce was on a motorcoach for a Michiganders on the Road adventure. Since then, she’s been on 12 trips with HSM, including all four of the tours over the last year.

**“Which tour did I like best? I can’t choose,” Joyce said about this year’s adventures.** Each one had something special; she says the World War II Museum in New Orleans is one of the best she’s ever visited, and the re-creation of Abraham Lincoln’s lying in state at the presidential museum in Springfield is incredibly moving. From eating dinner at a mansion where cannonballs are still lodged in the floor to walking the field of Valley Forge, Joyce has loved experiencing the history of America firsthand with HSM.





# Honor Roll of Donors

Donors like you are the driving force behind the vital resources HSM provides. Because HSM is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization, it does not receive state-appropriated funding. Your donations help ensure Michigan's history is shared. The following pages contain a list of donors who gave to HSM between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023.

HSM's mission is to advance Michigan history education across our state. We thank our members and friends who have contributed to our growth and success. While we have endeavored to make this list as accurate as possible, we do apologize for any errors it may contain and would appreciate being notified of any corrections needed.



## 49%

The percentage of donor support  
in HSM's operating revenue

## \$0

Appropriated support from  
the State of Michigan

## 1,401

Number of donors in the  
2022-2023 fiscal year



View the entire donor list  
at [www.hsm.pub/yourimpact](http://www.hsm.pub/yourimpact).

Thank you for your support!

# Honor Roll of Donors

## Founder Circle \$10,000 & above

Consumers Energy Foundation  
DTE Energy Foundation  
Gaylor Forman  
Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation  
Huntington Library of Michigan  
Richard and Jane Manoogian Foundation  
John & Janet Mendler  
Michigan Arts and Culture Council  
Michigan Humanities Council  
Dr. William F. Pickard  
Margaret Roets  
The Dragonfly Fund  
The Meijer Foundation  
Anonymous

## Steward Circle \$2,500 & above

Dart Bank  
Detroit Historical Museum  
Burton Historical Collection  
Edsel & Eleanor Ford House  
Mackinac State Historic Parks  
Stuart Gillette  
Grand Rapids Public Museum  
Michigan State University Press  
R.E. Olds Foundation  
PayPal Giving Fund  
Tourism Association of the Dickinson County Area  
University of Michigan Press  
Larry & Deb Wagenaar  
Wayne State University Press  
Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History

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## Platinum \$500 & above

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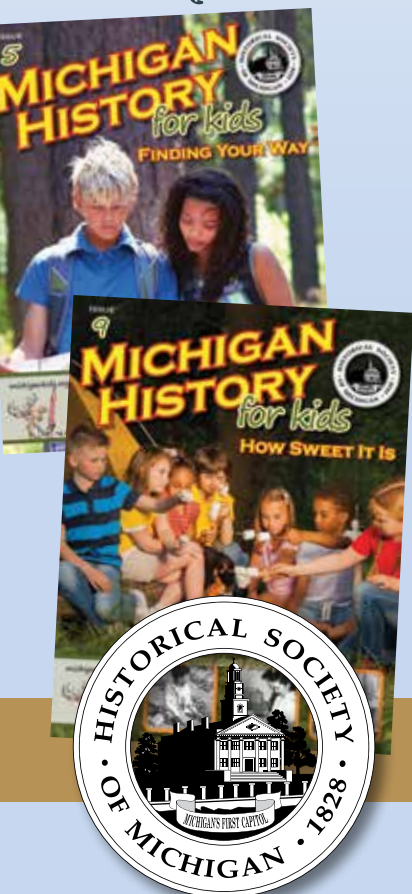
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