

Historical Society of Michigan

Michigan History Calendar

Day	Year	Events
1 DEC	1886	Michigan Soldiers Home was opened in Grand Rapids for veterans of the Mexican War, Civil War, and Spanish-American War who were disabled by disease or wounds and were incapable of earning a living. Space was provided for mothers, wives, and widows of veterans.
1 DEC	1953	Former Governor Kim Sigler (1947-1948) was killed when the plane he was piloting crashed into a radio tower near Battle Creek.
1 DEC	1955	Rosa Parks refused to sit at the back of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Her arrest started a bus boycott that stimulated the career of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement. She moved to Detroit in 1957.
2 DEC	1830	Elizabeth Chandler organized the state's first antislavery society.
3 DEC	1896	Mail carriers from the post office in Climax started out with horse-draw carts to serve the country's first rural free-delivery routes.
3 DEC	1989	The first joint Sunday edition published by the <i>Detroit News</i> and the <i>Detroit Free Press</i> .
3 DEC	1990	Dr. Jack Kevorkian charged with first-degree murder in the death of Janet Adkins.
4 DEC	1844	Baptists opened Michigan Central College in Spring Arbor. It was the first in Michigan to grant degrees to women. The college was moved and reorganized as Hillsdale College in 1855.
4 DEC	1915	Henry Ford led a group of peace advocates aboard the <i>Oscar II</i> , a Danish ship chartered to carry them to Europe in an attempt to settle the conflict raging there. A peace conference was arranged, but continued German submarine warfare ended any chance for success and the United States was drawn into the war a little more than a year later.
5 DEC	1975	The first special ten-day hunting season for muzzle-loaders opened.
6 DEC	1865	The 13th Amendment to the Constitution ending slavery was ratified. Michigan's Senator Jacob M. Howard drafted the amendment.
6 DEC	1882	A meeting to organize an art exhibition was held in the home of railroad promoter James F. Joy. The meeting was the first step in organizing the Detroit Institute of Art.
6 DEC	1928	The University of Michigan became the first Big Ten School to have an indoor hockey rink.
7 DEC	1914	The first Kiwanis club was organized in Detroit as the Supreme Lodge of the Benevolent Brothers was organized in Detroit. The name was changed on 21 JAN 1915.
7 DEC	1950	Yellow oleomargarine could be sold in the state. Prior to the passage of a citizens' referendum that had been hotly opposed by the dairy industry, homemakers had to mix coloring into white margarine.
8 DEC	1823	Michigan territorial representative Father Gabriel Richard took his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, the first Roman Catholic priest to serve in Congress.
8 DEC	1919	As a result of a nationwide coal miners strike over a quarter million Michigan workers were idled when the government shut down passenger train service and all non-essential industries. The strike was settled two days later.
9 DEC	1935	The Detroit Lions won their first NFL championship by beating the New York Giants 26-7. The Lions also won championships in 1952, 1953, and 1957.

10 DEC	1887	The state's first cremation was completed at the Detroit Crematorium.
10 DEC	1905	The state attorney general halted the practice of contracting prison inmates to work for private industries.
10 DEC	1950	Ralph Bunch, who had been born in Detroit, became the first African-American to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.
11 DEC	1911	The Detroit Zoological Society was incorporated.
11 DEC	1934	Thirty-four people were killed when fire destroyed Lansing's Hotel Kerns.
11 DEC	1971	Twenty-one construction workers were killed when methane gas exploded inside a water tunnel they were trying to build under Lake Huron near Port Huron.
12 DEC	1922	The Detroit Historical Society was organized.
12 DEC	1940	The Hudson Motor Company and the UAW agreed to a contract supporting the first union shop in a major automotive plant.
12 DEC	1979	A basketball game between University of Michigan and the University of Detroit was the first event held in the Joe Lewis Arena in Detroit.
12 DEC	2000	General Motors announced it would phase out production of Oldsmobile, the nation's oldest automotive brand name. The first Oldsmobile was built by Ransom Eli Olds in 1897.
13 DEC	1819	The Pontiac Road, Michigan's first surveyed road, was laid out in Detroit. Within Detroit, M-1 is Woodward Avenue.
14 DEC	1836	State leaders meeting in "Frostbitten Convention" at Ann Arbor agreed to accept a compromise in which Michigan gained the western Upper Peninsula and recognition of statehood in exchange for giving up claims to the Toledo Strip.
14 DEC	1860	Former governor Lewis Cass resigned as U.S. Secretary of State because he couldn't support President Buchanan's decision not to challenge the secession of southern states.
14 DEC	1964	Grand Rapids became the first city in the country to have 2 freeways intersect in its downtown district when I-196 was officially opened and connected with US 131.
15 DEC	1796	Anthony Wayne who opened up Michigan for settlement and the person for whom Wayne County was named died in Pennsylvania.
15 DEC	1836	In the "Frostbite Convention" held in Ann Arbor delegates voted to relinquish Michigan's claim to the Toledo Strip in exchange for the western part of the Upper Peninsula. Following this action Congress agreed to recognize Michigan as a state.
16 DEC	1913	The Michigan Central depot in Detroit opened. At the time, it was the tallest railroad terminal in the world.
16 DEC	1979	The Detroit Red Wings played their last game at Olympia Stadium tying Quebec 4-4. During 53 years at Olympia, the Red Wings had won 11 season championships and 7 Stanley Cups.
17 DEC	1798	The first American election held in the Northwest voters had 3 days to record their choice for Wayne county's representative to the legislative council. Wayne County included all of Michigan. Solomon Sibley won but opponents charged that his friends supplied liquor to those who voted for him.
17 DEC	1908	The first factory built internal-combustion fire truck went into service in Lansing.
18 DEC	1927	Michigan's highway department became the first to paint solid yellow lines to indicate no passing zones on curves and hills. Signs had to be posted telling out-of-state motorists what the lines meant.

18 DEC	1976	Denise Thal of Huntington Woods, a senior at Harvard University, was named among the first group of women to receive a Rhodes Scholarship for study at Oxford University.
19 DEC	1842	First issue of <i>The Detroit Daily Gazette</i> was published. It was the first successful newspaper in Michigan
19 DEC	1940	General Motors president, William Knudsen became head of the U.S. National Defense Council.
19 DEC	2004	Joseph R. Beyrle, of Muskegon died. Beyrle was the only serviceman to serve in both the US and Soviet armies during World War II. He was one of the first paratroopers to land in Normandy on D-Day and was quickly captured by the Germans. He escaped from a prisoner of war camp in Poland and joined a Soviet tank unit. After being wounded he rejoined the American army.
20 DEC	1948	A Michigan law banning female bartenders was upheld in a 6-3 decision by the United States Supreme Court.
20 DEC	1971	Al Kaline signed a contract making him the first ballplayer in Detroit Tiger history to receive a salary of \$100,000 for a season. He had compiled a career batting average of .300 during his 19 years with the Tigers.
21 DEC	1821	Detroit Lodge of Free Masons was instituted.
22 DEC	1998	Comerica Bank spent \$66,000,000 to have its name on the new home of the Detroit Tigers.
23 DEC	1873	Nattie Pease Lowrie received the country's first bachelor of music during graduation exercises at Adrian College. She majored in vocal and instrumental music.
23 DEC	1978	Michigan's drinking age was again raised to 21 as a result of a constitutional amendment passed by voters concerned about drinking and driving by high school students.
24 DEC	1814	The Treaty of Ghent was signed ending the War of 1812. The treaty provided for the return of captured territory including the return of Fort Mackinac to the United States. The British withdrew to Drummond Island, which they held until 1828.
24 DEC	1847	Senator Lewis Cass, seeking the Democratic nomination for the presidency, wrote the "Nicholson Letter" in which he proposed that the residents of a territory should determine if a state should be slave or free. He was accused of promoting the concept of "popular sovereignty" just to gain support in the South.
24 DEC	1913	Seventy-two people, most of them children, died during a panic driven rush to the door when someone yelled fire into the Italian Hall at Calumet. The children were attending a Christmas Party for the families of striking miners.
25 DEC	1660	Michigan's first known Christmas celebration was recorded by Father René Ménard who honored the occasion near Keweenaw Bay with a few <i>coureurs-de-bois</i> and some Huron converts.
25 DEC	1867	The Jackson Mining Company fired up its first blast furnace to process iron ore at Fayette. Operations at Fayette continued until 1891 when coal-burning furnaces made charcoal smelting obsolete. The village is preserved as Fayette State Park in the Upper Peninsula.
26 DEC	1944	Floyd M. Edwards of Kalamazoo became the first Michigan veteran to take advantage of the "G.I. Bill of Rights" when he purchased a home with a VA Loan.
26 DEC	1991	Despite the fact the British had agreed to give Michigan to the United States in the Treaty of Paris, 1783, Michigan was made part of Upper Canada.
27 DEC	1899	The Copper Range Railroad completed its line between Houghton and McKeever.
28 DEC	1901	The Escanaba & Lake Superior Railway started service between Escanaba and Channing.

28 DEC	1917	To improve wartime railroad efficiency, the government took control of all railroads including those in Michigan and operated them under the United States Railroad Administration (USRA).
29 DEC	1953	Diesel locomotives replaced electric locomotives used in the Detroit River railroad tunnel.
30 DEC	1899	The excursion steamer <i>Tashmoo</i> was launched at the Wyandotte Shipyards. The side-wheeler was the fastest ship on the Great Lakes.
30 DEC	1933	With the repeal of prohibition, Governor William Comstock bought a bottle of Old Taylor, the first bottle of whiskey sold in the state.
30 DEC	1936	The sit-down strike at Flint's Fisher Body plants began. The 44-day strike affected 150,000 workers in more than 60 plants. On 11 FEB 1937 General Motors agreed to recognize the UAW as the bargaining agent for its workers.
30 DEC	1974	The Crestwood School District Board of Education fired 184 teachers because they stayed out on strike hoping for a better contract.
30 DEC	1976	Governor William G. Milliken signed Michigan's law allowing residents to contribute \$2 of their income taxes to the gubernatorial-campaign fund.
31 DEC	1883	The Michigan Central Railroad opened an international railroad carferry service between Detroit and Windsor.
31 DEC	1887	Michigan's only international railroad bridge built across the St. Mary's River between the Saulte Ste. Maries was opened to create a route from the upper Midwest to the Atlantic seaboard.
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