

Historical Society of Michigan

Michigan History Calendar

Day	Year	Events
1 SEP	1796	The American flag flew over Fort Mackinac for the first time as the British withdrew under provisions of the Jay Treaty, 1794.
1 SEP	1834	At the opening of a special session of the territorial legislature acting governor Stevens T. Mason called for a special census to determine if Michigan had a population sufficient for statehood.
1 SEP	1839	The steamboat <i>Great Western</i> burned at Detroit.
1 SEP	1884	Woodbridge N. Ferris founded the Big Rapids Industrial School at Big Rapids. It later became Ferris Institute and is now Ferris State University. Ferris served as governor, 1913-1916, and U.S. Senator 1923-1928.
1 SEP	1907	State sanatorium opened in Howell for the care and treatment of persons suffering from tuberculosis.
1 SEP	1912	A workman's compensation law was passed that required industries to pay the costs for injuries resulting from industrial accidents.
1 SEP	1939	The nations first degrees in Automotive Engineering were conferred at Lawrence Institute of Technology.
1 SEP	1945	The Ford Motor Company was reorganized when Henry Ford II became president.
1 SEP	1969	The law requiring motorcycle riders to wear helmets went into effect.
1 SEP	1972	Reggie Harding of Detroit, the first player to go from high school to the NBA, was shot in the head in a Detroit home. The Pistons had signed Harding in 1964, but his life steadily declined and he was imprisoned in 1969.
2 SEP	1902	Michigan's first fatal automobile accident occurred when a car struck the carriage of well-to-do Detroit lumberman George W. Bissell.
2 SEP	1914	The last parade of the Grand Army of the Republic was held in Detroit.
2 SEP	1977	Mary Livingston of Manistique became the first woman U.S. Air Force jet pilot in a ceremony at Williams Air Force Base in Arizona.
3 SEP	1783	The land that is now Michigan was granted to the United States in the Treaty of Paris, 1783 ending the Revolutionary War and recognizing American independence. However the British held on to the area and its profitable fur trade until the implementation of Jay's Treaty in 1796.
3 SEP	1877	The University of Detroit started classes with 84 students.
3 SEP	1911	The Wright brothers brought an airplane to Grand Rapids offering fair goers their first chance to fly.
4 SEP	1930	Wayne County Airport, now Detroit Metro Airport, was dedicated.
4 SEP	1957	Ford Motor Company's ill-fated Edsel was officially displayed for the first time in dealer showrooms.
4 SEP	1961	Michigan last summer-only passenger train, Pennsylvania Railroad's "Northern Arrow" operating to Mackinac City, made its final trip.
4 SEP	1979	Jack Laporte of Flint swam 4_ miles across the Straits of Mackinac between the Lower and Upper Peninsulas in 3 hours while 23,000 others made the traditional Labor Day walk across the Mackinac Bridge.

5 SEP	1881	Forest fires started by farmers burning logger's slashings ran through Michigan's thumb area. After three days 282 people had died and 3,400 buildings were destroyed. The survivors were the first people to be helped by the newly organized American Red Cross.
5 SEP	1975	Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, a follower of Charles Manson attempted to shot President Gerald Ford, the only president to come from Michigan, while he was visiting Sacramento, CA.
6 SEP	1864	The first steel made in the Western Hemisphere using the Bessemer process was produced at the Eureka Iron Company in Wyandotte.
6 SEP	1901	President William McKinley was shot at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, NY by Leon F. Czolgosz, a former Michigan farmer and factory worker.
7 SEP	1816	Canadians christened the <i>Frontenac</i> , the first steamship on the Great Lakes.
7 SEP	1835	Ohio officials tried to show legal authority in the disputed Toledo Strip by holding a very brief court session in Lucas County then fleeing before Michigan troops could catch them.
7 SEP	1931	Dock at Detroit's Water Works Park collapses during speedboat races and 100 people are thrown into the water. All are rescued except a 3-year-old boy who drowned.
7 SEP	1959	Governor G Mennen Williams led the first 15,000 hikers across the Mackinac Bridge in what has become a Labor Day tradition.
8 SEP	1760	The last French governor over Michigan, Pierre de Rigaud Marquis de Vaudreuil capitulated, surrendering New France to the British. This ended Fighting in the French and Indian War but the Treaty of Paris was not signed until 1763.
8 SEP	1860	In Lake Michigan, the steamer <i>Lady Elgin</i> collided with the <i>Augusta</i> with the loss of 297 lives.
8 SEP	1896	Suomi College, the first Finnish college in the country opened in Hancock with 27 students. Suomi College is now Finlandia University.
9 SEP	1761	With the demise of French power in North America, British officers tried to reduce expenses by stopping the giving of gifts and selling gunpowder to the Indians. This policy contributed to the Indian uprising in 1763.
9 SEP	1910	Carferry <i>Pere Marquette No. 10</i> sank near Sheboygan, WI with the loss of about 30 individuals.
9 SEP	1925	When a racist mob threatened the family of African-American Dr. Ossian Sweet who had moved into a white neighborhood, a shot was fired from the house that killed an on looker. Clarence Darrow successfully defended the family arguing that the Sweets had the right to defend themselves when their lives were in danger.
9 SEP	1938	The Detroit Lions moved their games to Briggs Stadium, later Tiger Stadium. They continued to play there until moving to the Pontiac Silverdome in 1975.
10 SEP	1805	The territorial legislature passed a law that every male over the age of 16 must pay an annual tax of one dollar. All 525 men in the territory paid the tax.
10 SEP	1813	Captain Oliver Hazard Perry defeated a British fleet in the Battle of Lake Erie at Put-in-Bay. His message to General William Henry Harrison stated, "We have met the enemy and they are ours." His victory gave Americans control of the Great Lakes and made the recapture of Detroit possible.
10 SEP	1942	The first of 8,500 World War II B-24 Liberator Bombers was completed at Ford Motor Company's Willow Run plant.
11 SEP	1800	David Bacon, the first Protestant missionary to minister in Michigan arrived in Detroit. The Congregational Missionary Society of Connecticut had sent him.

11 SEP	1978	A small plane carrying 3 U.S. Marine Corps reserve officers were killed when they crashed into the Mackinac Bridge in a heavy fog.
11 SEP	1982	The <i>U.S.S. Michigan</i> , the country's second Trident submarine, was launched at Groton, Connecticut.
12 SEP	1887	Alma College opened with 95 students. The Presbyterian Synod of Michigan established the school.
12 SEP	1942	Michigan's first expressway was opened. It was a portion of US 12 between Detroit and Ford's Willow Run bomber plant.
13 SEP	1832	The last victim of the cholera epidemic started by soldiers on their way to put down Blackhawk's rebellion died in Detroit. He was Father Gabriel Richard, priest of St. Anne's Church. Richard had helped found the University of Michigan, started the first newspaper, opened a school for Indian children, and served in the U.S. House of Representatives. When doctors and civic leaders fled Detroit during the epidemic, Richard heroically stayed on to care for the sick.
14 SEP	1687	Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan built a fort at the head of the St. Clair River (Port Huron). This Fort St. Joseph lasted less than a year before the young French nobleman became bored, burned the post, and moved to Michilimackinac.
14 SEP	1875	George B. Pierce of Grand Rapids received a patent for the <i>Pierce Spinner</i> , the first patent for a fishing lure to be issued to anyone in Michigan. This was the start of an industry in which numerous Michigan companies have produced hundreds of thousands of lures.
14 SEP	1968	Deny McLain won his 30th game of the season. He was the last 30 game winner in major league baseball.
14 SEP	1976	The Plaza Hotel, the centerpiece of the Renaissance Center opened. At the time it was the world's tallest hotel.
15 SEP	1806	The territorial council chartered the Bank of Detroit, Michigan's first bank. The bank printed and sold over a million dollars in bank notes, but was unable to redeem them.
15 SEP	1878	Michigan's first telephone directory was issued in Detroit.
15 SEP	1886	The first classes were held at the Michigan Mining School in the Houghton Town Hall. The school, created to train mining engineers, is now Michigan Technological University.
16 SEP	1908	William C. Durant combining 30 other companies including Oldsmobile, Pontiac, and Cadillac chartered General Motors Corporation.
16 SEP	1931	In a Prohibition-era gangland execution, 4 members of Detroit's Purple Gang killed 3 rivals at the Collingwood Apartments.
16 SEP	1944	A two-day ordeal started for Oscar Johnson of Foster City. He was the only man in his unit that was not killed or wounded during an attack by five Nazi paratrooper companies. In defending his position he killed 20 German soldiers and captured 25 others while also rescuing two American soldiers. He was the only Congressional Medal of Honor winner from the UP.
17 SEP	1833	With the arrival of newly appointed territorial governor, the "Boy Governor," 19 year-old Stevens T. Mason ended his service as acting governor.
17 SEP	1933	The Grand Trunk Western Railroad moved its carferry operations from Grand Haven to Muskegon.
18 SEP	1679	The first sailing vessel on the Great Lakes, the <i>Griffin</i> , sailed away from a Pottawatomie village on Washington Island. It was loaded with furs for Robert de La Salle, but it was never seen again.

18 SEP	1981	Michigan's only presidential museum, the Gerald R. Ford Museum, opened in Grand Rapids.
18 SEP	1987	Pope John Paul II made an historic visit to Detroit.
19 SEP	1806	The Michigan's territorial legislature passed an act to establish a bank in Detroit. It turned out to be a fraud. The bank distributed \$165,000 in bank notes, but was unable to redeem them.
19 SEP	1844	While doing a government survey near Negaunee, William Austin Burt noted that his magnetic compass didn't work right. As he and his men tried to understand the fluctuations, they found deposits of iron ore. Three years later the Jackson Mining Company began mining on the spot.
19 SEP	1864	In a daring attempt to free Confederate prisoners held in Ohio, rebel raiders hijacked the passenger steamer <i>Philo Parsons</i> . The plot failed and the would-be rescuers joined the men they had planned to rescue.
19 SEP	1866	Representatives of car departments of 11 railroads met at Adrian to discuss common problems. They agree to meet again the following spring in Massachusetts, a meeting that led to the founding of the Association of American Railroads.
19 SEP	1876	Melville R. Bissell of Grand Rapids patented the first carpet sweeper. He ran a china shop and the straw used for packaging aggravated his allergies. He built a device to pick-up dirt rather than scatter dust.
19 SEP	1891	The St. Clair tunnel between Sarnia and Port Huron was opened. It was built by the Grand Trunk Railway and it was the first railroad tunnel to connect two countries.
20 SEP	1932	Detroit speedboat racer, Gar Wood set a world record of 124 MPH in his <i>Miss America X</i> , on the St. Clair River.
20 SEP	1940	Father Charles E. Coughlin, the radio priest of Royal Oak's Shrine of the Little Flower, announced he was giving up broadcasting under pressure from powerful men. Coughlin gained popularity as a social activist, but when war broke out in Europe, his radio addresses were violently anti-Semitic, anti-British, and anti-Roosevelt.
20 SEP	2004	Eugene Armstrong, a civil engineer from Hillsdale was beheaded by a militant group headed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq. He had been taken hostage by the militants who killed him and another American two days later in an attempt to win release of two Muslim women held prisoner by the American forces that had conquered Iraq.
21 SEP	1835	New territorial secretary John Horner arrived in Michigan to replace Stevens T. Mason, but Michiganians ignored him. Mason was removed as an appointed territorial secretary because as elected governor he pursued Michigan's claim to the Toledo Strip.
21 SEP	1911	President William Howard Taft visited Kalamazoo. He laid the cornerstone for the new YMCA replacing one destroyed by fire. After short speeches at Kalamazoo College and Western State Normal School, he closed the day with a major speech on settling international disputes through arbitration.
22 SEP	1850	Michigan's first Jewish congregation, the Beth El Society was formed by 25 German-Jewish families in Detroit.
22 SEP	1931	American Legion sponsored the longest parade in Michigan's history. The parade in Detroit lasted 8 hours and had 85,000 marchers and a million spectators.