A BRIEF HISTORY OF MICHIGAN

Michigan Before the Europeans

When French explorers first visited Michigan in the early seventeenth century, there were approximately 100,000 Native Americans living in the Great Lakes region. Of these, the estimated population of what is now Michigan was approximately 15,000. Several tribes made the forests and river valleys here their home. The main groups, sometimes referred to as "The Three Fires," were the **Chippewa (Ojibway)**, who lived mainly in the Upper Peninsula and the eastern part of the Lower Peninsula; the **Ottawa**, who resided along the western part of the Lower Peninsula; and the **Potawatomi**, who occupied part of southwestern Michigan after migrating from what is now eastern Wisconsin. Other significant tribes in this region included the **Huron** (sometimes known as the Wyandotte), who came to the southeastern area of Michigan from the Ontario side of Lake Huron; the **Sauk**, who resided in the Saginaw River valley; the **Miami**, who lived along the St. Joseph River before migrating to western Ohio; and the **Menominee**, who lived in northern Wisconsin and parts of the Upper Peninsula.

Most Native American settlements in the Great Lakes region were along river valleys or near the shoreline of the Great Lakes, and, much like today, most of the population located in the southern half of the Lower Peninsula. Tribal settlements were not permanent, with groups moving to new locations every few years. Although agriculture was limited by soil conditions and dense forest, the Native Americans of this region did cultivate crops. Corn, beans, and squash were grown and wild apples, berries, nuts, game, fish, honey, and wild rice provided other sources of food. Maple sugar was produced from the sap of maple trees and birch trees were used for housing materials and canoes.

The original inhabitants of this region were mobile people. They utilized the rivers and lakes for their transportation. Their trails, paths, and portages were later traversed by the coureurs de bois, English and French fur traders, and New England settlers. Several state and federal highways, including much of the interstate system, now follow pathways first traveled by these Native Americans.

The Native Americans of the pre-European era in Michigan left behind more than 1,000 **burial mounds** similar to those found in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. Many mounds were discovered in the lower Grand River and Muskegon River valleys of west-central Michigan. The most puzzling prehistoric remnants, however, were the carefully designed and arranged ridges of earth described as "garden beds." These detailed geometric creations, long since destroyed by pioneers' plows, consisted of ridges of soil about eighteen inches high and covered many acres. Outside of a few found in Indiana and Wisconsin, the "garden beds" have been found only in Michigan. Their function remains a mystery.

Another question that has plagued historians and archaeologists for generations involves the copper fields of the western Upper Peninsula near Lake Superior. Prehistoric miners worked these fields along the Keweenaw Peninsula and on Isle Royale at least 4,000 years ago. Archaeological evidence indicates that **copper** was quarried from veins in open pits for hundreds of years by an unknown tribe or tribes. Nuggets of nearly pure native copper were hammered and annealed into the shape of tools, which were valued items of trade. Michigan copper was found among Native Americans as far south as the Gulf of Mexico and from the Rockies to the Alleghenies. Curiously, however, the use and mining of copper were unknown to the tribes in this region when the Europeans came to the Great Lakes in the seventeenth century.

The French Era

The first whites to see Michigan were French explorers. The earliest encounters between Europeans and Native Americans in this region were strongly influenced by a man who probably never visited Michigan, **Samuel de Champlain**. The founder of Quebec in 1608, Champlain is thought to have visited the eastern shores of Georgian Bay by 1612. He sent a young man named **Etienne Brulé** and a companion named Grenoble to travel west, seeking the fabled "northwest passage" to the Orient. It is believed that Brulé reached the Sault Ste. Marie area in 1618 and returned to Michigan in 1621, traveling as far west as the Keweenaw Peninsula, where he picked up samples of copper. Jean Nicolet, another Champlain protégé who was seeking access to the Orient, came through the Straits of Mackinac in 1634 before coming ashore along Green Bay dressed in garb designed to impress the Chinese he hoped to find.

Samuel de Champlain, in addition to advancing exploration of the Great Lakes, forged alliances and fostered conflict among various tribes that influenced Michigan's settlement for 200 years. In 1609, Champlain's use of his musket while assisting the Hurons in a battle with a small group of Mohawks, part of the Iroquois Nation, near Lake Champlain in New York made an enemy of what was probably the strongest group in the entire region. The incident also limited French access to the lower Great Lakes. As a result, the route taken by French explorers, traders, and missionaries followed the Ottawa River and Lake Nipissing instead of Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, and the Detroit River. Consequently, settlements in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan were established much earlier than in the southern portion of the state.

The earliest French explorers in the region were soon followed by **French missionaries**. These courageous and dedicated men endured unspeakable hardships in their attempt to convert the Native Americans to Christianity. They established missions and settlements throughout the lakes and the Mississippi River valley. Many Michigan landmarks memorialize their influence.

In 1641, Father Charles Raymbault and Father Isaac Jogues preached at Sault Ste. Marie. Father René Mesnard established the first regular mission at Keweenaw Bay in 1660. Beginning in 1665, Father Claude Allouez spent twenty-five years working among the people in the Keweenaw region, Green Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Illinois, and southwestern Michigan, where he devoted most of his efforts. Father Jacques Marquette founded the first permanent settlement in Michigan at Sault Ste. Marie in 1668 and, in 1671, founded St. Ignace. That same year, a military post was established at St. Ignace and named Fort de Buade. This fort was later abandoned, and **Fort Michilimackinac** was built on the southern shore of the Straits. In 1679, René Robert Cavelier de La Salle established **Fort Miami** at the mouth of the St. Joseph River, and by 1690, Father Claude Aveneau established a mission at the site of present-day Niles, where Fort St. Joseph was soon built.

The Delisle Map. This 1703 map is thought to be the first to include Detroit.

French **coureurs de bois**, a loosely defined term for unlicensed traders, were a sharp contrast to the priests and nobility who established forts and missions. They were rugged individuals who lived among the Native Americans, respected their customs, and hunted and trapped the region's rich game.

Much of Michigan's early history was shaped by the long-standing conflicts between England and France. The military forts built in Michigan and elsewhere in the Great Lakes region were a response to a growing British interest in this area. In 1694, **Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac**, the commandant of the Michilimackinac post, saw the threat posed by the British, who were forming alliances with the Native Americans. Cadillac sought and received permission to establish a fortified settlement at "place du detroit." On July 24, 1701, Cadillac and a party of 100 established **Fort Pontchartrain**, which soon became a major trading post and a strategic location for the eventual settlement of the region. Within a short time, several thousand Native Americans settled near the area, and some French families moved in and established narrow "ribbon farms" along the Detroit River. Soon after the founding of Fort Pontchartrain, the area became the site of British-inspired raids by various Indians. At the same time, the fur trade was becoming more lucrative, and the intensity of British and French animosities resulted in the **French and Indian War**, the third Anglo-French war fought during the eighteenth century. Although no major battles of this war were fought in Michigan, the war ended the French era and began the British era following the British victory on the Plains of Abraham at Quebec in 1759. On November 19, 1760, the French formally surrendered Detroit to British Major Robert Rogers, thus ending almost a century and a half of French rule in Michigan.

The British Era

The British era of Michigan history was marked by great contentiousness, military activity, and armed hostilities. Michigan was both the site of many conflicts and the base from which attacks on other areas of the region were launched, such as the settlements in Ohio and Kentucky.

The arrival of the British in Michigan brought about great changes in the interactions between the Europeans and the Native Americans. The French treated the Native Americans with a certain measure of respect and a laissez-faire attitude. Many voyageurs took wives and lived among tribes. The French missionaries sought to "save" the Native American. French officials regularly gave gifts (including copious amounts of liquor) to the tribes. Traders were thought by Indians to be fair in their dealings.

The British, meanwhile, allied themselves with tribes that were traditional enemies of the tribes in Michigan in the 1600s. The English style of imposing law was in strong contrast to the more relaxed French approach. The British were intent upon developing the rich **fur trade**. They actively discouraged settlement of the interior region of Michigan in an effort to safeguard the fur empire. In spite of efforts to discourage development, settlers began making their way across the mountains and established settlements in Kentucky and along the Ohio River.

A combination of policy changes by the British and awareness of the threat presented by encroaching settlers led to **Pontiac's Rebellion**. Pontiac was a brilliant and forceful Ottawa leader. Encouraged by the French who remained in the region, Pontiac and leaders of other tribes across the interior devised a plan to oust the British. Pontiac was the architect of the plan in Michigan. Through a series of locally orchestrated attacks, all of the British forts, except for Detroit, Pitt, and Niagara, fell in 1763. In Detroit, Pontiac's plan was frustrated by an advance warning to Major Henry Gladwin, who learned of the plan and surprise attack. Instead, Pontiac laid siege to Detroit beginning in May, 1763, and continuing until November of that year, when the overall failure of the plan led to its abandonment and the siege of Detroit was lifted. Elsewhere, Fort Michilimackinac fell to the Chippewas on June 2, 1763, the British were defeated at Sault Ste. Marie, and Fort St. Joseph near Niles was abandoned.

The American Revolution, although it certainly changed Michigan's fortunes forever, had little immediate impact on this part of the country. Michigan was firmly controlled by the British. It was sparsely populated and remote from military engagements on the East Coast. In addition, its largely French and British residents did not feel a strong allegiance to the American cause.

Most of the military activity of the region consisted of British-supplied **tribal raids on American settlements** in Kentucky and southern Ohio. Governor Henry Hamilton paid for scalps brought to Detroit and earned himself the nickname "hair-buyer."

The famous 1778 capture of the British forts on the Wabash River in Indiana by **George Rogers Clark** prompted the British to build a new fort on Mackinac Island. The fort at Detroit was also rebuilt.

The 1783 **Treaty of Paris** signified the end of the American Revolution and stipulated an international boundary for the United States that included Michigan. However, it would be thirteen years before the British would relinquish their control of the area. The British ignored the treaty for several reasons. The British wished to keep peace and maintain their friendship with the Indians. They also felt the Americans failed to pay pre-war debts or compensate loyalists for losses during the war. The British coveted the lucrative fur trade of the Great Lakes and valued Michigan's strategic location. Finally, the British believed that another conflict between England and this upstart nation was imminent. Attempts made by George Washington to use diplomatic means to take Fort Detroit and Michigan into American possession were thwarted. Because of this situation, Michigan was included in Kent County of what was called the Province of Upper Canada. The **first elections held in Michigan** were to choose area representatives to the Upper Canadian Assembly in 1792.

After the American Revolution ended, the British in Detroit continued to orchestrate Indian raids on settlers in the Ohio River valley. The raids led to several major confrontations, including the loss in 1791 of hundreds of men under the command of **Arthur St. Clair**, the first governor of the Northwest Territory. President Washington then turned to Revolutionary War hero **"Mad Anthony" Wayne**, who defeated the British-backed Indians at the **Battle of Fallen Timbers** near Toledo in 1794. Shortly after this major victory and the signing of **Jay's Treaty** in 1794, British control of Michigan ended. On July 11, 1796, the American flag finally flew over Detroit.

Michigan as a Territory

Michigan's status changed many times even after it came under the control of the United States in 1796. Wayne County, part of the Northwest Territory under the **Ordinance of 1787**, included most of Wisconsin, all of Michigan, and the northern portions of Indiana and Ohio and sent delegates to the General Assembly of the Northwest Territory. In 1800, the western half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula and most of the Upper Peninsula became part of the **Indiana Territory**. Michigan's boundaries changed in response to the establishment of states from the Northwest Territory. For a brief period beginning in 1834, the Michigan Territory included Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and part of the Dakotas.

With the signature of President Thomas Jefferson on January 11, 1805, **Michigan became a separate territory**. Detroit, where most of the people lived, was designated the capital. The structure of government was determined by the Northwest Ordinance. This landmark document's basic provisions constituted a governmental blueprint that was followed by most of the states of our nation. According to the Northwest Ordinance, the first government that was uniquely Michigan's consisted of an assembly that, in effect, combined the executive, legislative, and judicial powers of government in one unit. The initial government was appointed entirely by President Jefferson and included William Hull from Massachusetts as the governor; Stanley Griswold from New Hampshire as the secretary; and Samuel Huntington from Ohio, Augustus Woodward from Washington, D.C., and Frederick Bates from Detroit as the judges. The governor and the judges constituted the lawmaking body, while the judges presided as the judicial equivalent of today's supreme court. Laws were to incorporate provisions already in effect in one or more of the states.

The first days of Michigan's new status as a territory were beset by hardship. On the very day the federal law was to take effect, July 1, 1805, Detroit was little more than ashes, the charred remains of a fire that had swept through the entire settlement. One of the first actions of the new government was to arrange for rebuilding the town.

At that time, Detroit was truly a frontier town, with pelts accepted as a medium of exchange. The English agents and fur traders who worked with Native Americans were headquartered at Fort Malden on the Canadian side of the Detroit River. In Detroit, French influence remained strong. French was probably spoken as much as English in most areas. **Father Gabriel Richard**, a French priest, brought one of the first printing presses to this side of the Alleghenies, published the first newspaper, and, together with the Reverend John Monteith and Judge Augustus Woodward, organized the **University of Michigan**. In 1823, Father Richard was Michigan's delegate to Congress, the only Catholic priest to sit in the United States House of Representatives until 1971.

Michigan's growth and development slowed at this time for a variety of reasons. Although a treaty was negotiated in 1807 with Native Americans involving the southeastern portion of the state, there were constant threats from British-incited Native Americans. Many of the same forces that inspired Pontiac in 1763 led Shawnee **Tecumseh** to attempt to unite western tribes to repel the region's settlers. Although Tecumseh's plan suffered a serious setback to future President William

Henry Harrison in 1811 at the Tippecanoe River in Indiana, the issue of British meddling in the west combined with concern over freedom of the seas on the East Coast to bring about the **War of 1812**.

Lewis Cass

Michigan soon found itself returned to British control. On the night of July 16, 1812, the British, who learned of the declaration of war before the Americans in Michigan, landed on the northern shore of Mackinac Island, forcing the surrender of the fort without a shot being fired. On August 16, 1812, after a few weeks of uncertain maneuvers in Canada, **Governor Hull**, fearing a massacre at the hands of Tecumseh's warriors and the British soldiers, turned Detroit over to the British. This surrender — the only time an American city has been surrendered to a foreign power — led to Governor Hull's court martial and sentence to be shot. Although spared from execution because of his heroism during the Revolution, Governor Hull was replaced by General **Lewis Cass**.

The War of 1812 resulted in many Michigan tragedies, most notably the defeat and slaughter of Americans at Frenchtown (Monroe) at the River Raisin in January 1813. However, with the dramatic victory of **Oliver Hazard Perry** over the British on Lake Erie and the triumph of William Henry Harrison over the British and Tecumseh at the Thames River in Canada, the British abandoned Detroit for the final time in September 1813. Britain, weary from war after fighting Napoleon and then the United States, ended the war with the **Treaty of Ghent** in 1814. In July 1815, the British returned Mackinac Island to the Americans and withdrew to Fort Collier on Drummond Island, which was then believed to be British territory.

After the war, federal surveyors commissioned to **survey the interior of Michigan** and secure lands to compensate those who had fought in the war effectively dismissed Michigan as uninhabitable because of swamplands. Much of the work of Governor Cass, including an expedition through the interior of the territory in 1820, aimed to promote **internal improvements** to disprove these claims and encourage the settlement needed for statehood.

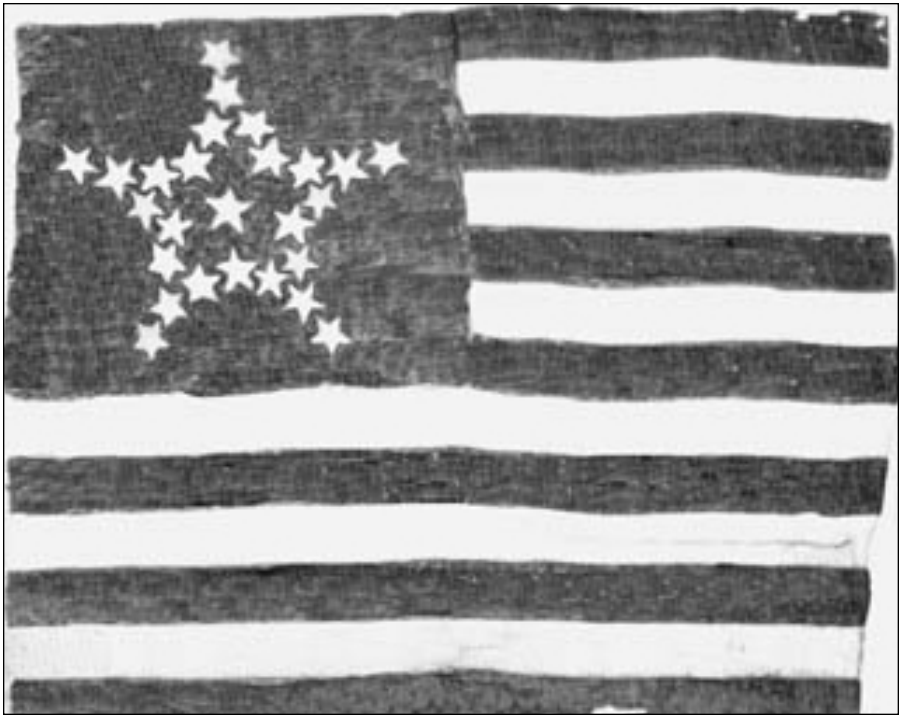
As a result of the government surveyors' report that Michigan was unfit for cultivation, land in Illinois and Missouri instead was procured for veterans of the War of 1812. Although this decision delayed Michigan's inevitable growth, the most significant barrier to development was a lack of legally titled land. It was not until tribes relinquished their respective property rights that the pioneer era could begin. Governor Cass, who made many efforts to promote statehood, secured treaties with the Indians in 1819, 1820, and 1821 that provided the groundwork for a tremendous surge in population in Michigan in the 1820s and 1830s. Roads were soon built into the interior and, in 1818, the first public land sales were held along the southern tiers of counties. Settlement was aided by the **Territorial Road** and the Chicago Road, along which communities were

The Man With the Window to His Stomach

In 1822, an accident occurred on Mackinac Island that made possible important advances in medical science, specifically, the study of the process of digestion. The case involved a 19-year-old French-Canadian trapper and an Army surgeon.

On June 6, 1822, Alexis St. Martin suffered a severe gunshot wound at close range to his chest and abdomen. In spite of the seriousness of the wound, **Dr. William Beaumont**, an Army surgeon stationed at Fort Mackinac, was able to save the young man's life. The nature of the injury, however, was unique, for the damage of the blast and the subsequent healing left the stomach near the exterior of the abdomen, with an "opening" to the external wound. The result was a "window" to the stomach that remained after St. Martin returned to overall good health. In 1825, after Dr. Beaumont took St. Martin into his own family and supported him, the physician began a **series of physiological studies** using the French-Canadian's stomach. Dr. Beaumont carried out a variety of experiments with different foods to test his hypothesis that the process of digestion was essentially a chemical process. In addition to being able to observe the stomach, Dr. Beaumont could also extract some of its contents, thereby studying the stages of digestion. In 1833, Dr. Beaumont published *Experiments and Observations on the Gastric Juice and the Physiology of Digestion*. This work was an important contribution to medical knowledge.

Ironically, Alexis St. Martin outlived Dr. Beaumont by nearly thirty years. St. Martin died in 1880 after having lived a robust enough life to have fathered twenty children.



A twenty-six-star flag, reflecting Michigan's admission to the Union.

established. The onset of steam transportation to Michigan and the completion of the **Erie Canal** in New York in 1825 opened the floodgates as farmers and families from New England and New York joined the westward migration. By the 1830s, the rush to Michigan — **"Michigan Fever"** — was in full gear, and the territory grew faster than any other part of the country. In 1820, according to the census, Michigan had 8,896 people, excluding Indians. By 1830, the population had jumped to nearly 32,000, and in 1840, there were 212,267 inhabitants.

Statehood

By 1833, the Michigan Territory had more than the 60,000 inhabitants required by the Northwest Ordinance to form a state government and formally seek admission to the Union. By 1835, Michigan had **drafted a constitution** believed to be acceptable to the Congress. This constitution, which was to guide our state's development, was adopted by voters in October 1835 by a vote of 6,299 to 1,359. At this point, Michigan's admission into the Union may have proceeded smoothly but for one problem — a boundary dispute with the state of Ohio. While the dispute between Michigan and Ohio in 1835 has taken on a legendary quality over the years, it was never the full-fledged **"Toledo War"** as is sometimes claimed.

At stake was a 468-square-mile strip of land acknowledged to be Michigan's. People living in the area voted in Michigan elections and were governed by Michigan laws. The admission of Ohio as a state in 1803 enabled Ohio to exercise authority over the disputed territory and have a stronger voice through the Ohio congressional delegation. In 1835, a territorial militia was mobilized as volunteers organized to deal with the so-called "trespassers" from Ohio. In taking up arms, the "Boy Governor," Stevens T. Mason (1835-1840), enraged **President Andrew Jackson**, who removed him from office. Eventually, Congress proposed the compromise that gave the "Toledo Strip" to Ohio and the western four-fifths of the Upper Peninsula to Michigan. Michigan citizens did not accept this compromise immediately. At the first Convention of Assent in Ann Arbor in September 1836, delegates refused to accept this condition of statehood. However, in December, at the "Frostbitten Convention" in Ann Arbor, it was accepted. On January 26, 1837, Michigan became the twenty-sixth state.

With statehood achieved, an ambitious internal improvements program was begun. The new government embarked upon a plan to borrow five million dollars to finance a variety of projects. These included the construction of three railroads across the state, a network of roads, and a system of canals to facilitate river transportation. Although several elements of the plan were eventually completed, many of the projects, including the canal building, were never finished. Instead, because of the **Panic of 1837**, the internal improvements venture nearly crippled the state's finances.

The Panic of 1837 was a serious blow to the new state. It stemmed from lax banking practices due, in part, to President Jackson's attitude toward bankers, whom he considered to be "soulless monopolists." This attitude led to laws across the country, including Michigan, permitting virtually anyone to open a bank. As a result, a great amount of paper money was printed. This led to wild speculation, especially in places like Michigan where land sales were exploding. Rampant inflation followed, causing President Jackson to issue a directive (the Specie Circular) that government land could only be bought with gold or silver coin. Banks failed everywhere,

The Toledo War

One of the legendary events in Michigan history was the Toledo War. Although referred to as a "war," this conflict was more of a legal skirmish involving the Michigan Territory, the state of Ohio, and the U.S. Congress. This serious matter, which delayed Michigan's entry into the Union, also had its humorous side. The Toledo War made several contributions to Michigan folklore.

The Toledo War was the result of conflicting identification of the **boundaries separating Michigan and Ohio**. In 1787, as part of the establishment of the Northwest Territory, the state boundaries were to include a border running due east from the southernmost tip of Lake Michigan. This dividing line would have given Michigan a 468-square-mile strip of Ohio that includes Toledo. In 1803, Ohio was admitted to the Union with a boundary line that extended several miles to the north, enabling Ohio to include the mouth of the Maumee River, at Lake Erie. In 1805, Congress ignored the boundary set by Ohio and returned to the 1787 boundary line when it created the Michigan Territory, including the Toledo strip. People on this land considered themselves to be residents of Michigan. They voted in Michigan and were served by Michigan courts and county officials in Monroe.

As Michigan prepared for statehood, Acting Governor **Stevens T. Mason**, who was appointed to this post at the age of nineteen by President Andrew Jackson, led the effort to assert Michigan's dominion over this area. In April 1835, Governor Mason called for volunteers and mobilized troops to go to the Toledo strip to enforce laws passed by Michigan that imposed a fine or imprisonment on anyone who contested Michigan's authority on this land. Led by Mason, who was nicknamed "the Boy Governor," the Michigan militia arrested several surveyors who were representing Ohio's interests. The actions of Governor Mason incensed President Andrew Jackson, who removed Mason from office on August 29, 1835.

Stevens T. Mason

At the same time, the Buckeye State, under Governor Robert Lucas, had no interest in relinquishing land that was, according to its state constitution, clearly Ohio's. Ohio had a stronger voice in Congress because it was already a state, but Michigan had a strong legal case, based on several surveys. After nearly a two-year delay, Congress fashioned a **compromise** that was approved, on its second try, by the people of Michigan. The compromise granted Michigan more than 9,000 square miles of the Upper Peninsula.

In addition to Michigan's vast land acquisition, the Toledo War resulted in Michigan's nickname as the "**Wolverine State**." It is thought that this term originated as a derisive name given to the Michigan residents by the people of Ohio. The Ohioans were fond of comparing Michigan residents to an animal considered to be among the greediest, ugliest creatures.

especially in Michigan. This financial crisis, in addition to hampering the development of several visionary plans, left a lasting impression on the state's involvement in major projects.

Michigan's early development as a state included a strong **focus on education**. The Constitution of 1835 is notable in our nation's history for providing for the appointment of a permanent Superintendent of Public Instruction and for its promotion of "Intellectual, Scientifical, and Agricultural improvement." Following the leadership of Superintendent John D. Pierce and Isaac Crary, two prominent New England immigrants, a system of district libraries, township boards of school inspectors, and a primary school fund based upon money raised through the sale of lands was established. The University of Michigan, established in 1817, was now formally organized as a state institution at Ann Arbor.


John D. Pierce

In addition to establishing institutions throughout the state, including the State Prison at Jackson and the teachers' college at Ypsilanti in 1849, Michigan took steps to provide a **permanent seat of government** for the state. Although Detroit had been the center of most activity in the region and along the Great Lakes for many years, the founders of the state were aware of the need to locate the state capital in a more centralized place. As a state bordering a foreign country, one which the United States had engaged in war only a generation earlier, Michigan needed to establish a more secure location for its seat of government. There was also a strong sentiment that big cities, like Detroit, had a corrupting influence not appropriate for a state capital. Recognizing these concerns, the delegates who drafted the Constitution of 1835 provided that Detroit would serve as the state capital until 1847, when it was to be permanently located by the Legislature. In 1847, following intense debate over various locations, **Lansing Township** was selected. The area had few inhabitants and even fewer improvements. Nonetheless, the town, originally named "Michigan" and soon renamed Lansing, became the seat of government.

Reform Politics and the Civil War

Before the Civil War, Michigan's development, like much of the country's, was affected by the "second great awakening." This was an explosion of **religious fervor** that appears to have originated in New York State. Rooted in religious faith, this movement embraced the belief that each person had a duty to improve the world. In Michigan, this zeal led to sweeping social reforms in areas such as education, women's suffrage, slavery, prisons, and establishing institutions for the blind, deaf, and feebleminded.

The **state penitentiary** established at Jackson in 1838 replaced whipping posts and other severe forms of punishment with a system of prison discipline that was humane. This reflected what was, for the time, the enlightened idea that prisoners could be rehabilitated. In 1846, **capital punishment** was abolished in the wake of a highly publicized hanging in neighboring Ontario in which, it was later proved, an innocent man had been executed. Michigan became the first English-speaking jurisdiction to outlaw capital punishment.

Efforts on behalf of those with special needs included the establishment of the Kalamazoo Asylum for the Insane (1859), a state institution for the deaf and blind in 1854 in Flint, and the facility for the blind in Lansing in 1879.

In Battle Creek, Seventh Day Adventists built the **Western Health Reform Institute in 1866**. The first of a worldwide system of sanitaria, hospitals, and medical dispensaries, the institute became the Battle Creek Sanitarium in 1876. Work in the fields of health and nutrition aided the development of the cereal industry in the late nineteenth century.

During the antebellum period, several colleges with affiliations to various religious denominations were established. These included Kalamazoo College, Hillsdale College, Albion College, and Olivet College. Although it would be several generations before questions involving women's rights were addressed in earnest, Michigan was the scene of considerable activity related to women's suffrage. As early as 1846, people like Austin Blair, who later became Michigan's Civil War governor, and, a bit later, Kent County pioneer Rix Robinson promoted women's right to vote. In 1874, in a highly emotional campaign that attracted such leaders as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and **Susan B. Anthony**, the issue of **voting rights for women** was placed on the ballot in a statewide election. In 1867, limited voting rights were extended to women who owned property and wished to vote on school matters. Despite this early step, unabridged voting rights were not realized in Michigan until 1918 — only two years before the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Closely linked to women's rights was the issue of temperance. In pioneer America, the presence of hard liquor was a fact of life. Liquor — especially whiskey — exerted a tremendous impact on daily life, and it was a significant factor in many of the dealings between Native Americans and settlers. **Temperance groups** were established throughout Michigan following the 1833 establishment of the Michigan Temperance Society. Although abstinence from alcohol did not become part of American life (at least according to the law) until the Prohibition of the 1920s, there were efforts at the state and local levels to curb the making and selling of liquor in the 1850s.

Sojourner Truth

The most dramatic social reform in Michigan was the **antislavery movement**. The large number of small, proudly independent farmers that comprised the state's population contributed to the hatred of slavery. In 1850, according to the census, 35.4% of Michigan residents were born in Michigan; 33.6% were born in New York State; 7.8% were born in New England; and less than 1% were born in slave states. Antislavery societies flourished in Michigan. They were led by such prominent Quakers as Laura Haviland and Elizabeth Chandler. The popular sentiment of the people and Michigan's proximity to Canada made the state a hotbed of controversy concerning runaway slaves. The **Underground Railroad**, which included such remarkable individuals as **Sojourner Truth**, conducted a great deal of business in Michigan. Many courageous Michigan citizens were involved in this informal, loosely structured activity as "conductors" along the two main lines of the underground railway.

There were several notable confrontations between Michigan citizens and agents of slaveholders who journeyed north in an effort to recover slaves. One of the most famous incidents took place near Marshall, a major center of abolitionist strength. **Adam Crosswhite** and his family, fleeing Kentucky in 1844 by way of the Underground Railroad, lived in Marshall. In January of 1847, a group of Kentuckians came to Michigan to retrieve Crosswhite and his family. In a dramatic response, citizens of the town stood up to the Kentuckians and had them arrested and jailed while the Crosswhite family safely fled to Canada. The outcry from the southern states was deafening, with Henry Clay calling Michigan "a hotbed of radicals and renegades." The sentiment reflected in this incident and others like it elsewhere in the country led to the enactment by Congress of the controversial **Fugitive Slave Act of 1850**, which further divided the North and South.

An important outgrowth of the slavery question was the development of the **Republican Party**. This new element on the American political scene was founded in Michigan at the famed meeting "under the oaks" at Jackson in 1854. The new party, the dominant force in Michigan politics for many decades, resulted from the unification of former Whigs, some disenchanted Democrats, and several smaller parties and activist individuals rallying under the banner of antislavery and specific economic issues.

Michigan was loyal to the Union and to **Abraham Lincoln's** pledge to preserve it, and, when war broke out with the bombardment of Fort Sumter in South Carolina in April 1861, Michigan's citizens responded militarily and at home through agriculture and mining.

On May 16, 1861, the First Michigan Infantry arrived in Washington — the first regiment from the western states to heed President Lincoln's call for troops. A tearful Lincoln was reported to have exclaimed upon the arrival of the Michigan troops, "Thank God for Michigan." Michigan men fought in virtually all of the major campaigns and battles of the **Civil War**. In the face of war weariness, draft riots, which quickly became a race riot, occurred in Detroit in 1863. However, Michigan's response was overwhelmingly loyal. It is estimated that 23% of the male population of the state served in the Union armed forces. This percentage included some Indians and more than 1,600 black soldiers, an impressive total that included men who returned to Michigan from Canada to enlist. With the final victory in sight, the Union soldiers from Michigan were recognized by a grateful state ". . . for their unfaltering faith in the justice of our cause, their self-sacrificing patriotism, their patient endurance, their heroic fortitude, their unsurpassed valor, and their glorious victories."