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## 1887-1904

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**1887** Ransom E. Olds' first auto steamer appears.  
Iron ore shipments from the Menominee Range begin; at the end of the year, total shipments amount to 6,000,000 tons.  
The Grand Hotel is completed on Mackinac Island.



**1888** **Michigan's lumber boom peaks** with the production of 4,292,000,000 board feet. ►

Shipments of iron ore from Escanaba alone reach 1,107,129 tons.

**1890** Michigan's population is 2,093,889.

**1891** Port Huron, Michigan, and Sarnia, Ontario, are joined by the Grand Trunk R.R. tunnel under the St. Clair River, first subaqueous railroad tunnel linking foreign countries.

**1892** First railroad car ferry begins operating on the Great Lakes between Frankfort, Michigan, and Kewaunee, Wisconsin.

**William W. Ferguson** becomes first African-American elected to the Legislature (House). ►



**1893** Michigan Home for the Feeble Minded and Epileptic established at Lapeer.  
Michigan Naval Militia is first organized.

**1894** Hazen S. Pingree, mayor of Detroit, attracts national attention with his city-lot potato patches for feeding 1893 depression sufferers.

Fort on Mackinac Island is given to the state for a public park.

**1895** Central Michigan University, founded as a private school, becomes a state normal school.  
Mackinac Island becomes the first state park in Michigan.

**1896** Ransom E. Olds brings out a practical four-wheeled, gasoline-powered auto in Lansing.  
Henry Ford's "quadricycle" is tested in Detroit.

Rural Free Delivery mail service begins in Michigan at the town of Climax.

Suomi College opens in Hancock to serve the Finnish Community.

**1897** Michigan adopts the apple blossom as the official state flower.

Olds Motor Vehicle Company is organized by Ransom E. Olds in Lansing.

**1898** Michigan activates 5 regiments plus its naval reserves for the Spanish-American War.

**1899** Olds Motor Works in Detroit erects the first factory built in America for the manufacture of automobiles.

Northern Michigan University is founded.

**1900** Michigan's population is 2,420,982.

**1901** Detroit celebrates its 300th birthday.

**1902** Packard Motor Car Company and Cadillac Motor Car Company are organized.

**1903** The House of David (a sect founded in 1792) is established in Benton Harbor by "**King**" Benjamin and "**Queen**" Mary Purnell. ►

The Ford Motor Company is incorporated in Detroit.



**1904** The organization of Buick Motor Company marks the beginning of auto manufacturing in Flint on a large scale.

Western State Normal School (Western Michigan University) opens in Kalamazoo.

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## 1905-1916

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- 1905** State Highway Department organized.  
Railroad depots in Michigan reach an all-time maximum of 1,776 buildings.  
Michigan begins registering motor vehicles.
- 1906** Timbering of second-growth forests begins in the Upper Peninsula.  
**W.K. Kellogg Cereal Company** is organized in Battle Creek. ➤
- 1907** Michigan's third constitution is drafted (approved by electorate in 1908).  
The Detroit Tigers, led by Ty Cobb, win the first of three consecutive pennants.  
President Theodore Roosevelt addresses joint session of legislature and visits State Agricultural College (now Michigan State University).
- 1908** William C. Durant organizes General Motors Company as Ford introduces the most famous of the early cars, the Model T.  
Fisher Body Corporation is founded.
- 1909** Department of Labor created.  
World's first mile of poured concrete road built in Detroit on Woodward Avenue.  
Railroad mileage in Michigan reaches its highest point with 9,059 road miles in operation.
- 1910** Michigan's population is 2,810,173.
- 1911** Durant organizes the Chevrolet Motor Car Company, when the Chevrolet brothers complete experiments on a new auto.  
The present **state flag** is adopted by the legislature. ➤  
Wayne County Road Commission invents the white center line for dividing two-way traffic.  
Chase S. Osborn becomes first and only Governor from the Upper Peninsula.  
Harriet Quimby, born near Arcadia in 1875, becomes America's first licensed female pilot. ➤
- 1912** Grand Rapids Board of Education establishes the state's first junior high school.
- 1913** The Western Federation of Miners calls a strike among 13,514 Upper Peninsula copper miners. Violence and bloodshed result from demands for an 8-hour day, a minimum daily wage of \$3.50, and abolition of the "widow-maker," a one-man drill.  
The legislature passes a bill providing for ten trunkline highways. There are 60,000 autos registered in Michigan.  
Michigan Historical Commission is organized.
- 1914** Henry Ford announces the adoption of a \$5 minimum wage for an 8-hour day.  
A congressional committee arrives to investigate the copper miners strike, which terminates shortly afterward, each side claiming victory. The union fails to gain recognition.  
The first Dodge auto is produced.  
Following the 1913 strike, Finns initiate cooperative stores in the copper country.
- 1915** *Michigan Manual of Freedmen's Progress*, showing the professional, political, religious, and educational achievements of African-American citizens of the state, is published by Freedmen's Progress Commission.  
Michigan issues its first stamped metal license plate.
- 1916** Many Michigan men join Canadian units leaving for France to fight in World War I.  
Annual copper production reaches a peak of 270,000,000 pounds of refined copper, while iron ore production from the Marquette Range is 5,500,000 tons.



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## 1917-1929

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**1917** The country's first War Preparedness Board is organized in Michigan. In the first year of war, Detroit builds 120 ships, spends \$10,000,000 improving plants for the making of munitions. Auto manufacturers contract to deliver 19,000 engines. Camp Custer is built near Battle Creek.

Selfridge Field is constructed near Mount Clemens.

**1918** Michigan men in World War service reaches a total of 135,485.

Snow removal inaugurated on Michigan roads.

War contracts let in Detroit now total \$705,000,000.

**1919** Commercial airplanes are placed on sale for the first time.

The influenza epidemic strikes the country and much of the world, killing 3,814 in Detroit.

Michigan issues its first driver's license on July 1.

**1920** Michigan's population is 3,668,412.

Radio station WWJ in Detroit opens as a pioneer station in the broadcasting of regular daily programs.

World's first four-way traffic signal with red, yellow and green lights appears in Detroit.

**Eva Hamilton** becomes first woman elected to the Michigan Senate. ►



**1921** Edwin Denby, who had enlisted at Detroit as a private in the Marine Corps in 1917, becomes secretary of the navy.

Important administrative reforms in state government are legislated. The superintendent of public instruction is given supervision of all schools, private, denominational, and public, and the departments of conservation, labor, public safety, welfare, and agriculture are created.

**1922** Airline service is instituted between Detroit and Cleveland.

First practical highway snow plow developed in Munising.

**1923** The **William L. Clements Library of American History** opens at Ann Arbor. ►



State ferries begin operating at the Straits of Mackinac on July 31.

**1924** Cora Anderson becomes first woman elected to the Michigan House.

Michigan High School Athletic Association is organized.

**1925** Chrysler Motor Corporation organized.

The Michigan gasoline tax is adopted.

**1926** The worst disaster in Michigan iron mining occurs at the Barnes-Hecker Mine, when quicksand breaks through the walls, entombing 52 men 1,000 feet below the surface. The mine is sealed and abandoned.

**1927** The Cranbrook Foundation (Bloomfield Hills) is created and turned over to trustees.

**1928** The first all-metal dirigible, constructed for the Navy by Detroit manufacturers, is successfully flown at Grosse Ile Airport.

Michigan develops the yellow line to indicate no-passing zones on highways.

Upper Peninsula State Fair begins.

Interlochen National Music Camp is opened near Traverse City.

**1929** Some large copper mines of the Keweenaw Peninsula close; 85 percent of the Keweenaw County population goes on relief.

First Tulip Festival is held in Holland, Michigan.

Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village are dedicated.

Ambassador Bridge is opened between Detroit and Windsor.

Stock market crash begins the Great Depression. Thousands of unemployed stand in **soup lines in Detroit**. ►



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## 1930-1941

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**1930** Michigan's population is 4,842,325, an increase of more than 1,170,000 since 1920. Urban centers account for 68.2 percent of the population, almost an exact reversal of the situation in 1880. The vehicle tunnel between Detroit and Windsor, Ontario, is opened.



**1931** The Robin becomes the **official state bird** of Michigan. ►

**1932** The "Ford Hunger March" riot occurs at the Ford plant in Dearborn.

**1933** Governor William A. Comstock calls a statewide "banking holiday" to avoid bank runs, after disclosure of the condition of the Union Guardian Trust Company, Detroit.

Michigan votes to end national prohibition.

First Michigan sales tax inaugurated.

**1934** Wayne University is organized in Detroit.

**1935** Michigan celebrates its centennial of statehood.

One-fifth of Michigan's employables are without work; the state population has dropped 28 percent since the 1930 census.

The United Automobile Workers (UAW) is organized.

Nation's first travel information lodge opened on US-12 at New Buffalo.

The Detroit Tigers win the World Series. With championships in this era from the Lions in professional football, the Red Wings in hockey, and Joe Louis in boxing, Detroit is known as the "City of Champions."

**1936** Mass organization of labor under the CIO is strengthened by the affiliation of International Union, United Automobile Workers of America, with the CIO.

With the Flint sit-down strike leading the way, General Motors shuts down, affecting 150,000 workers and closing more than 60 plants in 14 states.



**1937** **Joe Louis** becomes world's heavyweight champion in boxing. ►

The UAW strike reaches a peaceful conclusion as collective bargaining agreements are signed by General Motors and most other automotive and parts manufacturers, except the Ford Motor Company, which fought unionization until 1941.

Keweenaw Peninsula copper mining again turns upward, with production reaching 75,000 pounds.

Civil Service merit system introduced to Michigan government.

A wave of sit-down strikes in various industries eventually leads to a breakdown of the open-shop tradition in the state.

**1938** International "Blue Water Bridge," connecting Port Huron and Sarnia, Ontario, is dedicated.

**1939** Frank Murphy, former governor, takes office as Attorney General of the United States. Governor Frank D. Fitzgerald dies.

**1940** Luren D. Dickinson, acting governor of Michigan, appoints Matilda R. Wilson as lieutenant governor, the first woman to serve in that capacity.

**Attorney General Frank Murphy** is appointed to the United States Supreme Court to succeed the late Associate Justice Pierce Butler. ►



Michigan's population is 5,256,106.

**1941** Auto plants are converted to the production of war materials and Michigan becomes known as the "Arsenal of Democracy."

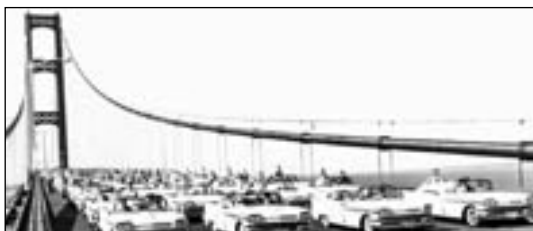
The United States enters World War II. By the time the war ended in 1945, 673,000 Michigan men and women had served in the armed forces.

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## 1942-1958

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- 1942** Sidewheeler *Seeandbee* converted to the aircraft carrier U.S. *Wolverine* for training naval air pilots on Lake Michigan.
- 1943** Interracial riots strike Detroit, leaving 34 dead and hundreds injured.
- 1944** Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York, a native of Michigan, nominated by the Republicans for President.
- 1945** **Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg** from Grand Rapids helps frame the United Nations Charter. ➤  
Michigan Tourist Council created.  
The Detroit Tigers win the World Series.
- 1946** Lake Superior State College is opened at Sault Ste. Marie.
- 1947** Walter Reuther assumes the presidency of the U.A.W.  
WWJ-TV, Detroit, begins commercial television broadcasting in Michigan.
- 1948** G. Mennen Williams elected Governor, serves six terms.
- 1950** Michigan's population is 6,371,766.  
Ferris Institute, founded in 1884, becomes a state institution.  
The Detroit Red Wings win the Stanley Cup.
- 1951** Fire destroys much of the State Office Building in Lansing.
- 1952** The Detroit Lions win the first of three world championships in professional football in the decade (also 1953 and 1957).
- 1953** About 250,000 Michigan men and women see military service during the Korean War (1950-1953).
- 1954** American Motors Corporation is formed by the merger of Hudson Motor Car Company and Nash-Kelvinator Corporation.  
The first slogan — Water Wonderland — appears on Michigan license plates.  
Construction begins on the Mackinac Bridge.
- 1955** During its centennial year, Michigan State College becomes a university.  
The White Pine is adopted as the official State Tree.
- 1956** Wayne University in Detroit becomes a state university.  
The Interstate Highway Act is passed. It provided for federal-state cooperation in highway construction.
- 1957** Oakland University founded.  
After ages of dreams and efforts in the 1930s halted by the war, the five-mile-long **Mackinac Bridge is completed**, finally uniting Michigan's two peninsulas.



Professional basketball comes to Michigan when the Fort Wayne Pistons move to Detroit.

- 1958** G. Mennen Williams, a native of Detroit, is elected to an unprecedented sixth term as governor.  
Computers are first used by state government.

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## 1959-1973

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- 1959** Detroit and the entire Great Lakes region gain access to world markets with the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway.  
First annual Labor Day Mackinac Bridge walk is held.
- 1960** Cobo Hall is built as the Detroit Civic Center.  
Michigan becomes the first state to complete a border-to-border interstate highway (I-94).  
Michigan's population is 7,823,194.
- 1961** Constitutional convention meets in Lansing.  
Otis Smith becomes first African-American to serve on the Michigan Supreme Court.  
**G. Mennen Williams** named Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs by President John F. Kennedy. ➤
- 1962** The International Bridge at the Soo is opened, connecting the U.S. and Canada.
- 1963** Grand Valley State College is opened.  
Michigan's fourth state constitution, drafted in 1961-1962, is approved by the voters.
- 1964** James McDivitt of Jackson commands the Gemini IV mission and becomes Michigan's first astronaut.
- 1965** State Executive Organization Act passed.  
Michigan adopts the Petoskey Stone as its official State Stone.  
Saginaw Valley State College is chartered as a state institution.  
Michigan begins putting photos on driver's licenses.  
Slogan on Michigan license plates changed to Water-Winter Wonderland.
- 1966** Last operating mine on the Gogebic Iron Range closes.
- 1967** The urban unrest that has been evident in several U.S. cities strikes Detroit with a riot that leaves 45 dead.  
The state income tax act is enacted.
- 1968** The Detroit Tigers win the World Series.  
Slogan on Michigan license plates changed to Great Lake State.
- 1969** **Governor George Romney** resigns to become the U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the Nixon administration. ➤
- 1970** Michigan's population is 8,881,826.
- 1971** Privately operated, nonrecreational railroad passenger service ends in Michigan as Amtrak is formed.  
1,000-foot-long vessels appear on the Great Lakes.
- 1972** The Michigan Lottery Bureau is created.  
Michigan adopts the Chlorastrolite (Isle Royale Green Stone) as the State Gem.
- 1973** **Mary Stallings Coleman** becomes the first woman to serve on the Michigan Supreme Court. ➤  
American military involvement in Vietnam ends; over 400,000 Michigan men and women serve.  
An accident in which a fire retardant containing polybrominated biphenyl (PBB) is mixed with livestock feed sets off a crisis that threatens Michigan's agriculture and public health.



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## 1974-1990

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- 1974** **Gerald R. Ford**, former congressman from Grand Rapids, becomes the 38th President of the United States and first Michigianian to serve in that capacity. ➤
- 1975** The Pontiac Silverdome is opened.
- 1976** Throwaway bottles are banned as the result of an initiative requiring deposits on beer and soft drink containers.
- 1977** The Detroit Renaissance Center is completed.
- 1979** The Michigan State University Basketball Team wins the NCAA championship.
- 1980** Michigan's population is 9,262,078  
A presidential convention (Republican) is held in Detroit for the first time.
- 1981** **William G. Milliken** becomes the state's longest-serving governor. He serves a total of 14 years. ➤
- 1982** The movement to renovate Michigan's 103-year-old capitol begins with the organization of Friends of the Capitol.
- 1983** Martha Griffiths becomes first elected woman Lieutenant Governor.
- 1984** The Detroit Tigers win the World Series.  
"Big Three" American automakers — General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler — report total profits for year of \$9.8 billion, a new high.  
Detroit holds its first Grand Prix automobile race.
- 1985** Michigan begins celebrating its sesquicentennial.  
Michigan's mandatory seat belt law goes into effect (third state in nation to enact such a law).
- 1986** Republican William Lucas is the first black candidate to represent a major party in a gubernatorial election in Michigan.
- 1987** Michigan celebrates its sesquicentennial of statehood.  
The 84th legislature convenes with the highest number of women lawmakers in state history (2 senators and 20 representatives).
- 1988** The Brook Trout becomes the official State Fish of Michigan.
- 1989** The **Michigan Library and Historical Center** is dedicated in Lansing. ➤  
The University of Michigan Men's Basketball Team wins the NCAA championship and the Detroit Pistons win the first of two consecutive National Basketball Association crowns.
- 1990** The restored chambers of the Senate and of the House are reopened and the lawmakers return to their traditional home after holding sessions elsewhere. The Senate becomes the first state legislative body in the nation to include microcomputers on the chamber floor.  
Michigan begins the Adopt-a-Highway program.  
Michigan's population is 9,295,297.



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## 1992-1999

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**1992** The U.S. Congress passes the Michigan Scenic Rivers Act protecting over 500 miles on 14 rivers from development. The Twenty-Seventh Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is ratified by the vote of Michigan. The text of the amendment, which provides that no law varying the compensation of Senators and Representatives shall take effect until an election of Representatives has intervened, was originally submitted to the states as part of the Bill of Rights in 1789. Michigan completes its portion of the interstate highway system.



The restored Michigan State Capitol is rededicated. ►

**1993** Chemists at the University of Michigan synthesize a gigantic ball-shaped molecule that may suggest how proteins function in living organisms. It is the largest molecule ever created in a laboratory from carbon and hydrogen atoms alone.

**1994** The unemployment rate in Michigan drops to 4.2%, the lowest level in nearly two decades.

Governor John M. Engler is reelected to a second term; coupled with state legislative victories, Republicans control both houses of the legislature and the governor's office for the first time in 26 years.



Michigan State Parks celebrate 75th anniversary. ►

Michigan accounts for 32.6% of all U.S. car production, building 2.1 million passenger cars; Lansing reclaims title as "Car Capital of North America."

**1995** General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler report record earnings and auto sales.

Organized labor announces merger of U.A.W. with Steelworkers Union and International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

**1996** Michigan voters approve Proposal E, an initiative to permit casino gaming in qualified cities.

**1997** President Bill Clinton addresses joint session of Michigan Legislature, the first U.S. President to do so since President Theodore Roosevelt visited the state capital in 1907.

The Detroit Red Wings win the Stanley Cup, its first Cup victory since 1955.

Lansing celebrates its sesquicentennial as Michigan's state capital.

**1998** Voters approve the Clean Michigan Initiative, authorizing \$675 million in bonds for environmental and natural resources programs.

Frank J. Kelley retires as the longest-serving (1962-1998) state attorney general in the nation.

**1999** Casinos open in Detroit.

Michigan's unemployment rate drops to 3.2%, a new record low for the state.