1618  Etienne Brulé passes through North Channel at the neck of Lake Huron; that same year (or during two following years) he lands at Sault Ste. Marie, probably the first European to look upon the Sault. The Michigan Native American population is approximately 15,000.

1621  Brulé returns, explores the Lake Superior coast, and notes copper deposits.

1634  Jean Nicolet passes through the Straits of Mackinac and travels along Lake Michigan’s northern shore, seeking a route to the Orient.

1641  Fathers Isaac Jogues and Charles Raymbault conduct religious services at the Sault.

1660  Father René Mesnard establishes the first regular mission, held throughout winter at Keweenaw Bay.

1668  Father Jacques Marquette takes over the Sault mission and founds the first permanent settlement on Michigan soil at Sault Ste. Marie.

1669  Louis Jolliet is guided east by way of the Detroit River, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario.

1671  Simon François, Sieur de St. Lusson, lands at the Sault, claims vast Great Lakes region, comprising most of western America, for Louis XIV. St. Ignace is founded when Father Marquette builds a mission chapel. First of the military outposts, Fort de Buade (later known as Fort Michilimackinac), is established at St. Ignace.

1673  Jolliet and Marquette travel down the Mississippi River.

1675  Father Marquette dies at Ludington.

1679  The Griffon, the first sailing vessel on the Great Lakes, is built by René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, and lost in a storm on Lake Michigan. La Salle erects Fort Miami at the mouth of the St. Joseph River.

1680  La Salle, with a small group, marches across the Lower Peninsula, reaching the Detroit River in ten days, the first Europeans to penetrate this territory.

1681  Earliest known use of “Michigan” on a map.

1686  French build Fort St. Joseph at Port Huron.

1690  Father Claude Aveneau explores the upper reaches of the St. Joseph River; establishes mission on the present site of Niles.

1694  Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac is appointed commandant of the Michilimackinac (St. Ignace) post; remains until 1697.

1697  Fort St. Joseph is built at mission on the St. Joseph River (Niles).

1701  Detroit is founded as Fort Pontchartrain by Cadillac as a permanent settlement to protect and secure the fur trade. Ste. Anne’s Church, a log structure, is erected by Cadillac’s men and dedicated two days after the founding of Detroit. Ste. Anne’s is the second oldest continuously maintained Roman Catholic parish in the United States. In the fall, Madame Cadillac and Madam Tonty arrive at the fort as the first European women in the region.
1712  British-inspired Indian raids begin, including the siege of Fort Pontchartrain.

1715  **Fort Michilimackinac** is reestablished on the southern shore of the Straits of Mackinac.

1756  France and England begin the Seven Years’ War (also known as the French and Indian War).

1759  The French surrender to the English at Montreal; this marks the decline of French power in Michigan.

1760  British Major Robert Rogers receives the surrender of Detroit, after taking Great Lakes fortifications. About 2,000 people are within the stockade; warehouses found to contain furs worth $500,000.

1761  The British occupy Fort Michilimackinac.

1762  Pontiac, an Ottawa chief, plans a conspiracy against British; calls for a council near Detroit in the spring.

1763  With the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, France loses North American mainland possessions.

1765  **Pontiac** signs a treaty with the British at Detroit, nearly a year after other tribes have made peace.

1775  Henry Hamilton takes command at Detroit.

1777  British conduct raids from Detroit into Kentucky.

1778  Construction begins on Fort Lernoult, Detroit.

1779  Nearly 3,000 persons living in the Detroit area.

1781  Spanish forces from St. Louis take Fort St. Joseph (Niles); all residents are taken prisoner; the Spanish flag is raised. Raiders depart the next day and the fort reverts to British possession.

1782  Moravians establish Indian mission near what is today Mount Clemens.

1783  The Treaty of Paris is signed, ending the Revolutionary War and including Michigan in the United States. The British control the Michigan area, however, for 13 more years.

1784  First ordinance passed by Congress governing the Northwest Territory.
1785  Congress passes first act relative to the disposal of western lands. Michigan appears for the first time on a map as a land division of the United States. Sloop Otter becomes the first vessel to navigate Lake Superior.

1786  Moravian Indian village near present-day Mount Clemens is abandoned.

1787  Congress enacts the Ordinance of 1787 (second Northwest Ordinance), outlining the government of the “Territory northwest of the Ohio River.”

1788  The first stage of American territorial government is established under the Northwest Ordinance, except in British-occupied Michigan.

1791  The Americans under Arthur St. Clair suffer a major defeat at the hands of British-allied Indians in Ohio.

1792  Detroit, including settlements on both sides of the river, holds its first election, sending three representatives to the Parliament of Upper Canada.

1794  General Anthony Wayne decisively defeats Indians and allied British troops at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, near Toledo.

1795  The Jay Treaty is ratified by Congress. The British finally agree to relinquish all Northwest Territory lands.

1796  The British withdraw their garrison from Detroit. The Stars and Stripes are raised for the first time on Michigan soil by Wayne’s advance guard.

1798  Father Gabriel Richard comes to assist at Ste. Anne’s in Detroit.

1799  The Territorial Assembly convenes at Cincinnati, Ohio. The county of Wayne (embracing all of the Michigan Territory) sends one representative, elected in the first local (Michigan) election held under United States rule.

1800  Wayne County circuit court created by act passed December 9.

1801  First post road established in Michigan.

1802  Detroit holds its first election following incorporation under an act passed January 18 by the Legislative Council at Chillicothe, Ohio.

1803  Ohio is admitted to the Union, excluding the strip of land that 30 years later will be known as the “Toledo strip.” Michigan becomes part of the Territory of Indiana.

1804  United States land office established at Detroit.

1805  The Territory of Michigan is created, with Detroit as the capital.

1806  Governor and judges authorized to lay out new town of Detroit after fire had destroyed the settlement.

1807  The Treaty of Detroit is signed by Chippewa, Ottawa, Wyandot, and Potawatomi tribes meeting with General Hull.

1808  American Fur Company founded by John Jacob Astor.

1809  The Michigan Essay and Impartial Observer, the state’s first newspaper, is printed by James M. Miller on a press imported by Father Richard.
1810 The Michigan Territory’s population is 4,762 and includes 32 slaves, most of whom are Native Americans.

1811 A memorial to Congress stresses the defenseless position of Michigan and begs for military aid against the Indians.

1812 The United States declares war against England. Father Richard urges the population to support the American cause.

Fort Mackinac falls to the British, who know of the declaration of war earlier than the frontier post.

Hull surrenders Detroit to General Isaac Brock without firing a shot. Hull later is court-martialed.

1813 At the Battle of River Raisin at Monroe, the main body of Americans is forced to surrender and promised protection from Indian allies of British.

The massacre of the River Raisin occurs. This proves to be a powerful factor in uniting American sentiment for expulsion of the British from the west.

Commander Oliver Perry’s victory on Lake Erie and William Henry Harrison’s defeat of Proctor’s army in Canada (in which Tecumseh is slain) end hostilities on northwestern American border.

Harrison, departing for Washington, leaves Colonel (later General) Lewis Cass as the military governor at Detroit. Cass continues, under presidential appointment, as the governor of the Michigan Territory for 18 years.

1814 The Americans make an unsuccessful attempt to recapture Mackinac Island.

The Treaty of Ghent ends the War of 1812; the British leave Mackinac Island.

1815 Governor Cass and judges adopt legislation reincorporating Detroit (city) and restoring a restricted municipal government.

1816 Part of Michigan Territory given to the state of Indiana.

First recorded shipwreck on Lake Superior occurs at Whitefish Point with the schooner Invincible.

Due to unfavorable reports on Lower Peninsula lands by the Surveyor General, Congress decides not to place military bounty lands in Michigan.

1817 The Catholepistemiad, or University of Michigania, is incorporated.

John Jacob Astor establishes a trading post at Mackinac Island, centering his fur-trading activities there.

1818 Public land sales begin at Detroit; immigration from the East is under way.

Michigan’s first Protestant church, the Methodist Episcopal, is erected along the banks of the River Rouge.

Walk-in-the-Water, the first steamboat on the Upper Great Lakes, arrives at Detroit on its maiden voyage.

1819 William Woodbridge is elected as the first delegate to Congress from the Michigan Territory.

With the Treaty of Saginaw, Governor Cass obtains for the United States about 6,000,000 acres of Michigan land, marking the beginning of the Indian exodus from the territory.

1820 The population of the territory is 8,096; Detroit, Mackinac, and Sault Ste. Marie are its largest towns.

The Treaty at Sault Ste. Marie is negotiated by Cass; Indians cede a 16-square-mile tract on the St. Mary’s River for a fort site, but reserve fishing rights.
1821  Cass negotiates a treaty at Chicago, gaining from the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi virtually all Michigan territory south of the Grand River that had not previously been ceded.

1822  Public stagecoaches begin running from Detroit.
Fort Brady established at Sault Ste. Marie.
Dr. William Beaumont at Mackinac begins study of human digestive processes by observing through a hole in the stomach of Alexis St. Martin.

1823  General Hugh Brady and soldiers construct Fort Brady at the Sault, ending domination of the region by the British.
Congress advances the Territory of Michigan to the second governmental grade, authorizing the Legislative Council of 9 members presidentially appointed and 18 locally elected. Enacted laws are subject to congressional approval. The first capitol, in Detroit, is built.
Father Gabriel Richard takes office as the territorial delegate to Congress (1823-1825), the only priest to serve in Congress until 1971.
United States government opens second land office in Michigan at Monroe.

1824  On motion of Father Richard, Congress appropriates $10,000 for a survey of the Great Sauk Trail (now U.S. 12) between Detroit and Chicago and makes an additional appropriation in 1825.

1825  The opening of the Erie Canal in New York facilitates settlement of Michigan and shipping of farm products to the East.

1827  Fort Shelby, Detroit, is demolished.

1828  First capitol occupied in Detroit on May 5. State Library is established.
State Historical Society organized (now Historical Society of Michigan).

1829  “Cabinet Counties” are established, named after members of President Jackson’s administration (Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Eaton, Ingham, Jackson, and Van Buren).

1830  Michigan’s population is 31,639.
Fur trade reaches its peak. Its subsequent decline leaves some regions without commercial activity.
Michigan issues a railway charter to the Detroit & Pontiac Railway, the first incorporated railway in the limits of old Northwest Territory.

1831  General Lewis Cass, appointed secretary of war by President Jackson in July, resigns the governorship.
Stevens T. Mason, at age 19, becomes the acting governor of the Michigan Territory.
Federal government opens third land office in Michigan at White Pigeon.

1832  A seven-week cholera epidemic devastates Detroit; Belle Isle is used for quarantine.
Father Richard, priest, legislator, and educator, dies of cholera, contracted while nursing the sick.

1833  Steamboat Michigan launched at Detroit.

1834  The Territorial Legislature petitions Congress for permission to form a state government. Southern states protest the admission of another free state; Ohio protests the boundary Michigan claims. Congress refuses to grant its permission.
The second cholera epidemic at Detroit begins with the death of Governor George B. Porter. It wipes out one-seventh of the population.
1835  Pioneers in Macomb and adjoining counties discover oil. The Ohio Legislature passes an act asserting claims to the "Toledo strip" along its northern boundary. Governor Mason calls out the militia as the "Toledo War" begins with more anger than gunfire. Border incidents continue into September, and jurisdictional wrangling goes on through all of 1836. A convention at Detroit drafts a state constitution in preparation for statehood. Stevens T. Mason, who had been removed from office by President Jackson because of Mason’s action on the Toledo question, is elected as the first governor of the state of Michigan at 23 years of age.

1836  Congress accepts Michigan's constitution. It agrees to admit the state upon condition that Michigan accept Ohio's boundary in return for four-fifths of the Upper Peninsula. At the first convention of assent held at Ann Arbor in September, the conditions set by Congress are rejected. The horse-powered Erie & Kalamazoo Railroad chartered in 1833 reaches Adrian from Toledo. The first steam locomotive in the state is put in operation on this line the following year, as the railroad is the first west of New York State to operate. Democrats call a convention on their own initiative and assent to entry into the Union. Whig opponents take no part in this "frost-bitten" convention held in Ann Arbor in December. Daily stages from Detroit begin carrying mail and passengers to Sandusky, Chicago, and central Michigan; a railroad between Detroit and Jackson is under construction; shipbuilding becomes important along nearby rivers and lakeshores. During seven months of navigation, 200,000 people pass through Detroit's port. Bituminous coal mining begins in Michigan. A Quaker preacher employs an underground railroad to bring slaves into Cass County, and movement of fugitive and freed slaves into the state begins.

1837  Detroit's population is almost 10,000. Michigan is admitted to the Union as a free state as Arkansas is admitted as a slave state. The Panic of 1837 strikes Michigan. Michigan experiences its first strike as journeymen carpenters parade through Detroit streets.

1838  Detroit elects Michigan's first school board under state law. The Grand Rapids furniture industry has its beginning.

1839  Effects of the Panic of 1837 help break Democratic monopoly, and Whigs carry state election. Michigan State Prison located at Jackson.

1841  Dr. Douglass Houghton, the first state geologist, reports on rich copper deposits of the Lake Superior region and makes cautious mention of the possibility of iron ore in the Marquette district. The University of Michigan, reorganized and offering college curriculum, opens at Ann Arbor.

1842  Indians cede Keweenaw Peninsula and Isle Royale, the last Indian holdings in the state.
1843  Former Governor Stevens T. Mason dies in New York City.
      U.S.S. Michigan, first iron ship in the U.S. Navy, is launched.
      Celebrated Ontonagon copper boulder arrives in Detroit from Lake Superior for exhibition.
      Albion College opens its doors.

1844  Surveyor William A. Burt (inventor of the solar compass and other important items) accidentally makes the first iron ore discovery at Negaunee.
      General Lewis Cass, former governor, former secretary of war, and ambassador to France, is elected U.S. senator from Michigan.
      The first major copper operations begin in the Keweenaw district.
      Olivet College is founded.

1845  Dr. Douglass Houghton drowns near Eagle River on October 14.

1846  Dr. A. C. Van Raalte, Dutch secessionist pastor, sails from Rotterdam with 53 Hollanders; they form the nucleus of western Michigan’s large Dutch settlements begun the following winter.
      The Jackson Mining Company begins operations on the site of Burt’s 1844 discovery, first iron ore mining in the state.
      Michigan becomes the first English-speaking jurisdiction in the world to abolish capital punishment.

1847  The old capitol in Detroit is used for the last time by the state legislature, which makes Lansing the new, permanent capital of the state.

1848  King James Strang, a Mormon leader, builds a tabernacle and lays out the town of St. James on Big Beaver Island.
      The state legislature meets for the first session in the new capitol at Lansing.

1849  The first annual statewide fair is held at Detroit.
      The Cliff Mine pays a dividend of $60,000, the first sum of this magnitude distributed in North America on copper investment.
      Michigan’s manufactured goods are valued at more than $11,000,000. There are 558 sawmills operating in the state.

1850  Michigan’s population is 397,654.
      The second state constitution is approved.

1851  Lumber mill output of Saginaw amounts to 92,000,000 board feet.
      Elizabeth D. Camp receives first academic degree conferred upon a woman in Michigan.

1852  The Michigan State Normal School is dedicated at Ypsilanti. It is the first teacher-training institute west of the Alleghenies.
      First teacher’s association in Michigan is organized.

1853  Construction begins on the Soo Canal.

1854  The Republican party is formed and named at meetings held in Jackson.
      Michigan School for the Deaf created at Flint.

1855  The Soo Ship Canal and Locks are completed and turned over to the state.
      Michigan Agricultural College (Michigan State University) is established. It becomes the nation’s first land grant college.

1856  Abraham Lincoln gives an antislavery address in Kalamazoo.
1857
General Lewis Cass is appointed U.S. Secretary of State and is succeeded in the U.S. Senate by Zachariah Chandler. The Christian Reformed Church in North America is founded by Michigan’s Dutch settlers, following secession from the Reformed Church. The Agricultural College of the State of Michigan opens its doors in what is now East Lansing, the first college of its kind in the United States.

1858
The Detroit & Milwaukee Railroad completes its line connecting Detroit and Grand Haven.

1859
First elevated iron ore dock constructed at Marquette. Grand Trunk Railroad opens line from Detroit to Port Huron. Michigan Asylum for the Insane opens at Kalamazoo on August 24. Classes begin at Adrian College.

1860
Michigan’s population is 749,113. Successful well drilling of salt begins in Saginaw County.

1861
Thomas A. Edison erects his first electrical battery and begins experiments at Fort Gratiot (Port Huron). The First Michigan Regiment leaves Fort Wayne. It is the first western regiment to reach Washington during the Civil War, in which 90,000 Michigan soldiers see service.

1862
Passes to Canada required to prevent Michigan citizens from fleeing military service.

1863
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (the oldest railroad labor union in the Western Hemisphere) founded in Michigan.

1864
First Michigan Colored Infantry is mustered in. Michigan’s black troops number 1,673. Bessemer steel is first manufactured in any appreciable amount in America, at Wyandotte. The copper lode at Calumet is discovered. Michigan’s production of copper has for 17 years exceeded that of any other state (holds first place until 1887).

1865
Jefferson Davis captured by members of the Fourth Michigan Cavalry.

1866
Michigan statesman Lewis Cass dies on June 17. Hope College is established in Holland, Michigan.

1867
Constitutional convention convened in Lansing, voters reject proposed revision. Memorial Day first observed in Michigan.

1870
Michigan’s population is 1,054,670. The value of agricultural produce for the year is estimated at $88,000,000. Annual lumber production for the state averages 3 million board feet, and is the highest in the country for a period of 20 years.

1871
Forest fires ravage the state, destroying towns and leveling thousands of acres of valuable pine, causing losses in the millions of dollars. Calumet & Hecla Mining Company consolidates local (Calumet) mining interests, controlling one of world’s richest copper districts. Calumet becomes a company town typical of the copper country. Negaunee’s average annual iron ore production reaches 135,000 tons.

1872
Republic Mine opens; the 88 percent pure iron deposits permit continuous high-level production for 55 years. Construction begins on present state capitol building. The Michigan Grange is organized to help Michigan farmers.
1873
Financial panic begins early in the year.
Michigan Department of Public Health created, fifth in the nation.
The Detroit News begins publication.

1874
Pioneer Society of the State of Michigan organized.
The Portage Lake canal is opened across the Keweenaw Peninsula.

1875
**Mackinac Island** becomes the second national park in the United States, preceded only by Yellowstone.

1876
At the Centennial Exposition (Philadelphia), Detroit is given first place among world’s stove-manufacturing centers and receives prizes for shoes. The best display of furniture from the United States credited to Grand Rapids. Michigan has the finest exhibit in forestry products and fruit.
An Ontonagon mine operator, after seeing Alexander Graham Bell’s invention at the Philadelphia exposition, builds the first telephone system (20 miles) in Michigan.

1877
Active operations begin in the mines of the Menominee iron district.

1878
Eastern Michigan Asylum for the Insane opens at Pontiac on August 1.

1879
Six years after the cornerstone was laid, the new state capitol at Lansing is dedicated and occupied, several months after completion at a cost of more than $1,500,000.

1880
Michigan’s population is 1,636,937.
Iron ore is discovered in large quantities at Bessemer in the Gogebic Range.
Detroit Baseball Company is organized.
**Michigan School for the Blind** opens in Lansing.

1881
The Soo Ship Canal and Locks are taken over by the federal government.
Railroad ferry service connects Upper and Lower Peninsulas, making the Upper Peninsula readily accessible for the first time.
A permanent hydroelectric plant is erected at Grand Rapids — one of the earliest anywhere.
Another devastating series of fires scorch the state, with the newly established American Red Cross sending help in its first disaster relief.

1882
Josiah W. Begole elected governor on the Fusion ticket, interrupting an almost unbroken Republican rule that began in 1854.

1883
A compulsory school attendance law is enacted.
Half of copper mined in United States since 1847 has come from Michigan.
Cherry orchards in the upper fruit belt first begin to bear.

1884
Working of iron ore deposits of the Gogebic Range begins, when transportation facilities are acquired.
John and Thomas Clegg build Michigan’s first self-propelled vehicle, a four-wheeled steamer auto.
Ferris Institute is established in Big Rapids.

1885
A series of lumber strikes occur in Saginaw Valley, and the militia is called out.
The ten-hour workday law is passed.
Michigan Soldiers’ Home established in Grand Rapids.

1886
Prospecting for oil and gas and first commercial production in St. Clair and Saginaw Counties begin.
Michigan Mining School is opened at Houghton.
Alma College is organized, opens in 1887.
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.
1905

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.
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.


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.
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.

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, who moved to Detroit at age 12, becomes world’s heavyweight champion in boxing.

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.

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.
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.


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.

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.

1955  During its centennial year, Michigan State College becomes a university.

1956  Wayne University in Detroit becomes a state university.

1957  Oakland University founded.

1958  G. Mennen Williams, a native of Detroit, is elected to an unprecedented sixth term as governor.

Computers are first used by state government.
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 43 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.
1974 Gerald R. Ford, former congressman from Grand Rapids, becomes the 38th President of the United States and first Michiganian to serve in that office.  

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.  

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.
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.

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 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.”


1996 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) attorney general in the nation.

1999 Casinos open in Detroit.

State welfare caseloads reach their lowest level since 1970.

2000 Michigan’s resident population is 9,938,444, up 6.9% from 1990. Michigan State University’s men’s basketball team wins its second national championship with an 89-76 victory over the University of Florida.

Michigan’s unemployment rate drops below 3% for the first time since records kept.

2001 Detroit celebrates its tricentennial. Events include a parade of tall ships on the Detroit River, a reenactment of Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac’s founding of “D’etroit” in 1701, and the dedication of the Underground Railroad Monument.

2002 Jennifer M. Granholm becomes the first woman elected governor of the state of Michigan.