CHAPTER 1

About Michigan

- Economic, Cultural, and Political History
- Profile of People and Lifestyles
- State Facts

Economic, Cultural, and Political History

ECONOMY AND CULTURE 1660 to 1760

About 15,000 Indians lived in Michigan when Europeans first arrived in the area in the early 1600s. The Chippewa (Ojibway) lived in the Upper Peninsula and eastern lower peninsula and the Potawatomi in the southwest. Other tribes included the Sauk, Miami, Huron, and Menominee.

The earliest European immigrants came largely from France, mainly as fur traders and missionaries. Father Jacques Marquette founded the first permanent settlement in Michigan, in Sault Ste. Marie, in 1668; three years later, he founded St. Ignace. The military posts at Mackinac Island and Mackinaw City (Fort Michilimackinac) were built to protect French influence in the region.

Southern Michigan was settled a bit later. In 1690 the French established Fort St. Joseph, near Niles. In 1701 Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, who commanded Fort Michilimackinac, established Fort Pontchartrain in Detroit, which became a fur-trading hub, a strong defense against British exploration, and an early farming site.

POLITICS

In search of the mythical northwest passage to the Orient, Samuel de Champlain (founder of Quebec) sent Etienne Brulé to head west through the Georgian Bay. Brulé reached the Sault Ste. Marie area in 1618. On a later trip, in 1621, he traveled as far west as the Keweenaw Peninsula. In the 1630s Jean Nicolet explored the Lake Michigan area, reaching Green Bay.

The French settled northern Michigan first because they had made an enemy of the Iroquois Nation in southwest New York, which blocked the French path to Lake Erie and southern Michigan.

By the turn of the 18th century, the British too were interested in Michigan. The French responded by forming an alliance with various Indian tribes, as they had in the eastern areas of Canada and America. At the conclusion of the French and Indian War—which ended with a British victory on the Plains of Abraham, in Quebec—the French surrendered Detroit, in 1760, to British Maj. Robert Rogers.

1761 to 1836

Life was extraordinarily difficult in Michigan during much of this period.

Constant skirmishing occurred among the French settlers, various Indian tribes, English settlers, and—after the Revolutionary War ended, in 1783—newly independent Americans. Much of Michigan was unsettled. Control of the few forts shifted among French and British and American

The Indian tribes had found the French to be friendly and respectful, and British ascension incited nearly nonstop skirmishing among European settlers and the Indians. For example, the Ottawa leader Pontiac organized attacks against all British forts in the 1760s, and most fell.

Michigan saw little action during the Revolutionary War, and even afterward, the British settlers ignored the new U.S. government. Fort Detroit remained in British hands...
control. Indian raids, spirited by the French and British, were common.

After the War of 1812, federal surveyors dismissed Michigan as uninhabitable because of its swampland. This finding caused many easterners to settle and farm in Illinois and Missouri rather than Michigan.

Compounding problems of settlement was the lack of clearly defined property rights. Not until treaties clearing the way for titled land were signed with the Indians in 1819 through 1821 did settlers from the eastern states begin moving into the Michigan Territory.

In the 1820s and 1830s, settlement surged. New roads were built into the territory’s central parts, the first public land sales were held, and the Erie Canal’s completion, in 1825, spurred an influx of farmers from New England and New York. The territory grew faster than any other part of the United States.

In 1820 Michigan had 8,896 people, excluding Indians. By 1830 the population had grown to 32,000.

In 1833 the Michigan Territory had more than 60,000 inhabitants, sufficient to formally seek admission as a state. Voters adopted a territorial constitution in October 1835, and Michigan’s acting governor, Stevens T. Mason—who, at age 19, had been appointed by President Jackson—pushed for statehood. But a skirmish with Ohio over the rightful ownership of Toledo (eventually ceded to Ohio in exchange for the Upper Peninsula) delayed statehood until 1837.

In 1840 the new state’s population had reached 212,267, and settlers were pouring into Michigan, doubling the population by 1850 and again by 1860. Farming replaced fur trading as the state’s primary economic activity.

The transplanted New Englanders and New Yorkers brought with them Yankee values: tolerance, a strong work ethic, and love of education. Dutch farmers settled the southwest, Germans the Saginaw Valley, Irish the southeast, and Finns and Italians the Upper Peninsula.

The Germans, in particular, strongly encouraged establishing public schools in each community. Borrowing from the Northwest Territory’s policy, the property tax revenue from one section of each township in each county was dedicated to public schools.

In the 1830s oil was discovered in Macomb County, and in the 1840s rich copper and iron ore deposits were found in the Upper Peninsula.
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ECONOMY AND CULTURE

1837 to 1859

Rapid economic growth prompted land and money speculation fueled by an unregulated credit and banking system. Following the Panic of 1837, the boom evaporated, leaving impoverished farmers, failed banks, and abandoned projects that included several grand schemes for state-financed railways and canals. Economic stability returned during the 1850s with agricultural growth and the burgeoning lumber and mining industries.

1860 to 1899

The population of the state reached 749,113 in 1860, and farming, lumbering, and early manufacturing dominated the economy in the last half of the 19th century.

Michigan’s climate and fertile soil led to national leadership in wheat production. Important cash crops were fruit along the temperate Lake Michigan shoreline, sugar beets in the Thumb, and celery in the Kalamazoo area.

Lumbering became a huge industry after the Civil War. Michigan woodlands, producing about a quarter of the nation’s total supply, spurred furniture manufacturing in Grand Rapids and papermaking in Kalamazoo and produced enormous capital and wealth throughout the state. Another successful industry established in this early period was the production of cereal foods, launched by W.K. Kellogg and C.W. Post.

Railroads transformed Michigan’s economy by making it easier to distribute the state’s timber, livestock, and food nationwide.

Between 1860 and 1890, more than 700,000 immigrants, more than half of them from Europe and Canada, migrated to Michigan.

1900 to 1948

By 1900 the population of the state had reached 2,402,982, and in the next few decades the major turning point in the Michigan economy occurred: Henry Ford introduced the assembly line into automobile manufacturing. Ford and such other auto pioneers as R.E. Olds, William Durant, and Walter Chrysler set in motion the 20th century’s greatest wealth creator—the automobile industry.

POLITICS

1837 to 1859 (cont.)

With the exception of a single term (1840–41), when Whigs William Woodbridge and James Wright Gordon served, Democrats controlled the governorship from statehood until 1854. In 1854 the new Republican Party’s standard bearer, Kingsley S. Bingham, was elected chief executive, and no Democrat managed to win the office back until 1890.

1860 to 1899

The Civil War solidified Republican control of Michigan politics. Michigan was fiercely pro-Union, and residents revered President Lincoln.

A major force in state politics was the Grand Army of the Republic—veterans of the Civil War and staunchly Republican. Michigan’s Civil War governor, Austin Blair, became one of the most prominent chief executives in America; he marshaled troops to serve in the war and raised considerable money for the effort.

Blair’s successor as governor was Henry Crapo, the first of several lumber barons to serve as chief executive. One of his grandsons was William C. Durant, the founding president of General Motors.

In 1882 Josiah Begole was elected governor as a Fusionist, a political party that combined Democrats and Greenbackers (who favored paper money and populist ideals). The only other non-Republican governor in this era was Edwin Winans, a Democrat who served in 1891–92. The century ended with the election of the last person from Detroit to serve in Michigan’s highest office, Hazen S. Pingree; he led property tax reform and sought unsuccessfully to make taxes progressive and shorten the workday.

1900 to 1948

The Republicans so dominated Michigan politics in the first half of the 20th century that the state came close to one-party control. From 1918 to 1928, not one Democrat was elected to the state Senate and only nine served in the state House of Representatives.

The Republicans, however, were torn between two factions: Progressives such as Pingree and Chase Osborn and
Automobile manufacturing created an enormous number of jobs, attracting people to Michigan from Canada, the southern states, and Europe. Between 1900 and 1930, only Los Angeles grew faster than Detroit, the population of which soared from about 286,000 to nearly 1.6 million. Flint grew from 13,000 to more than 156,000.

During this time, new immigrants were less likely than before to be German or English, as in earlier years, and more likely to be Polish, Hungarian, Italian, Greek, and African-American. With the heterogeneous influx, the old Yankee influences—social, political, and economic—began to wane.

As the automobile industry grew, so did the labor force’s unity and activism. Michigan witnessed bitter confrontations between unions and large employers. As labor organizing drives became more successful, the benefits and wages of the automobile workplace grew richer and began to spill into other segments of the economy.

The Great Depression of the 1930s took a terrible toll. By 1934, 800,000 of the state’s five million residents were receiving some form of public relief. Half of the nonagricultural work force was unemployed. But by the early 1940s, World War II and the need for arms production had boosted the state’s industrial capacity and ignited a new era of economic growth.

In 1949 to 1982

In 1950 the population reached 6,372,009, and in that decade the domestic vehicle industry reached its zenith.

Without serious competition from other states or countries, Michigan automobile companies spread enormous wealth among workers and employers. In 1955 Michigan’s per capita income was 16 percent above the U.S. average—among the highest in the world—and by 1960 the state probably had the world’s broadest middle class.

A high standard of living translated into public acceptance of considerable government intervention in the social and economic spheres, as evidenced by Michigan’s highway system, construction of the Mackinac Bridge, and among the nation’s most generous education and welfare programs.

Gov. “Soapy” Williams transformed the Michigan Democratic Party and state politics. He represented a new coalition of labor leaders, recent immigrants, and blacks and created a vibrant two-party system in the state.

In 1948 Republicans had controlled both U.S. Senate seats from Michigan, held all statewide elected offices, and enjoyed a 95-5 majority in the state House and a 28-4 majority in the Senate. By 1959 Democrats held both U.S. Senate seats, all statewide partisan offices, 12 of the 34 state Senate seats, and 55 of the House’s 110 seats (a tie).

The one-man, one-vote apportioning of state legislative districts in the mid-1960s reduced the disproportionate power of out-state, rural areas and greatly strengthened Democratic representation in the state legislature. From
In 1960, however, the trickle of imported foreign cars—which later became a flood—began, and Michigan’s primary reliance on the motor-vehicle industry’s fortunes showed signs of becoming a serious problem. “When the nation gets a cold, Michigan gets pneumonia” was the epigram summing up the effects that national recessions had on the state.

Seeds of racial unrest emerged in the 1940s and 1950s as the black population of Detroit and other cities grew and racial segregation policies came under attack. By the 1960s, urban unrest escalated into the worst civil disturbance in the nation, as rioting cost 43 lives in Detroit.

From 1969 to 1993, Democrats enjoyed uninterrupted control of the state House.

From 1963 through 1982, liberal Republicans George Romney and William G. Milliken held the governorship (Milliken—in office for 14 years—is Michigan’s longest serving governor).

Before he became the state’s chief executive, Romney was instrumental in rewriting the state constitution and then, as governor, in winning its adoption by voters. Still in force, the 1963 constitution consolidated executive power in the office of the governor and eliminated from statewide election several positions, including treasurer, highway commissioner, superintendent of schools, and auditor.

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1979 to the Present

From 1980 to 1983, the bottom seemed to have dropped out of the Michigan economy, as two serious national recessions were aggravated by fierce international competition in the automobile industry. Michigan suffered more unemployment than any other state: Some communities, such as Flint, endured an unemployment rate higher than 20 percent. The state per capita income fell to almost 7 percent below the national average.

In recent decades the Michigan economy has become less reliant on the automobile industry. Service jobs have increased dramatically, and in the 1990s Michigan led the nation in economic gains. The state unemployment rate was below the national average during most of the 1990s, and per capita income again rose above the U.S. average.

Michigan weathered the 2001 recession better than many states, but a combination of factors—a revenue slowdown associated with the recession plus phased reductions in personal income and single business taxes—created serious fiscal problems for state government in late 2001. Revenue from the largest taxes declined by 2.3 percent from 2000, and the state’s “rainy day fund” was tapped heavily in 2002. The state budgets for the next few years will be among the tightest in modern history.

After 40 years of liberal domination of Michigan politics, the state has become fairly conservative. The economic anxieties of the 1980s, coupled with social unrest and racial tensions in the 1960s and 1970s, produced skepticism about government and opposition to taxes, and the Republican Party’s fortunes have risen.

Democrat Gov. James J. Blanchard was upset in 1990 in his bid for a third term. The winner, Republican John Engler, instituted many conservative policies such as reforming welfare programs, eliminating the inheritance tax, and introducing competition into the state public school system.

Republicans have controlled the state Senate since 1983, but the House has shifted back and forth. At this writing, Republicans hold both chambers, enjoying a 58-52 majority in the House and a 23-15 majority in the Senate.

Voters adopted two far-reaching changes in the 1990s. In 1992 they added term limits to the constitution, restricting state representatives to three terms in office (six years) and the other major elected officials—senators, governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, and attorney general—to two terms (eight years). In 1994 voters approved sweeping changes in K–12 school funding by raising the sales tax and lowering and restricting the growth of the local property taxes that had supported schools.

A Profile of People and Lifestyles

POPULATION
- The 2000 Census reports the Michigan population to be nearly 10 million, roughly the same as the neighboring Canadian province of Ontario, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Greece, Portugal, Senegal, or Mali.
- Michigan’s population grew by 643,147, or 6.9 percent, in the 1990s. This is 19 times its growth in the previous decade but still well below the national average growth of 13.2 percent.
- Michigan is the 8th most populous state. Of the top ten, six are growing more rapidly than Michigan and three more slowly.
- Michigan’s population density, averaging 174 residents per square mile, is much higher than the nation as a whole (the national average is 77). New Jersey, the most densely populated state, has 1,100 people per square mile.
- Michigan’s youngest and oldest residents are roughly equal in number: about 7 percent are aged under five, while about 6 percent are over 75.
- In the percentage of population aged 65 and older, Michigan, at 12.4 percent, ranks just under the national average of 12.7 percent.
- In 2000 the 136,048 babies born in Michigan included 99,667 non-Hispanic whites, 24,003 blacks, 6,923 Hispanics, and 3,631 Asian/Pacific Islanders. One in three births was to an unmarried woman, and more than one in 10 births was to a teen. Abortions totaled 12.2 for every 1,000 women aged 15–44, lower than the 1997 national average of 22.2.

ECONOMY
- In 2001 Michigan’s gross economy was nearly $298 billion. If it were a nation, Michigan would rank as the world’s 16th largest economy, exceeding Argentina, Switzerland, Belgium, and Russia.
- The median household income approaches $43,000, ranking Michigan 17th in the nation. Among Michigan households, 28 percent earn less than $25,000, and about 12 percent earn more than $100,000.
- In 1998 the average household spent $28,000 on retail purchases.
- While still relying on vehicle manufacturing as a generator of high wages, Michigan is diversifying steadily. One economic diversity measure is a state’s position in relation to the median of all states (100 percent): In 1970 Michigan stood at 80 percent, which meant that most states had an employment base more diverse than Michigan’s; by 2001 Michigan’s economic diversity score was up to 94 percent.
- Of employed Michigamians, 22 percent work in manufacturing, 40 percent in services, and 12 percent in retail.
- In 1996 Michigan firms exported $38 billion in goods to other nations, ranking the state 4th in the nation; 57 percent of the goods went to Canada.

FAMILIES
- Of Michigan households, 68 percent are family households; of these, about half are married couples, and one-third of these couples have minor children. Female householders with no husband present comprise 13 percent of the family households, and 8 percent of these women have minor children.
- The average household size is 2.6 people, and the average family size is 3.1.
- In 1998, among every 1,000 people there were seven marriages and four divorces.
- More than a fourth (27 percent) of Michigan households receive Social Security.
- Three of four Michigamians (74 percent) live in single-unit structures, 19 percent live in complexes, and 6 percent in manufactured homes.
- Among homeowners with a mortgage, the median monthly housing cost is $961; among those who have paid off their mortgage, the figure is $282. Renters pay an average of $552 a month.
- The average person in 1997 consumed 31 million British thermal units of energy, ranking Michigan 31st in the nation in energy consumption.
- In 8 percent of Michigan households, a language other than English is spoken.
- Ten percent of residents live at or below the federal poverty level (in 2002, $15,020 for a family of three); included in this group are 14 percent of the state’s minors and 9 percent of those aged 65 and older. Fifteen percent of Michigamians receive some type of means-based public assistance or non-cash benefits.
More than half of all households have a computer. Nearly two-thirds of adults have used the Internet, and nearly one-third have made an on-line purchase.

**EDUCATION**

- Michigan pre-primary school enrollment is 306,000, K–12 enrollment is 2.7 million (about 66,000 are in public school academies, or so-called charter schools), and 2,000 Michigan children are home schooled; 588,000 Michiganders are in college.
- Eighty-five percent of adult residents have a high school diploma. Among all adults, 15 percent have a bachelor’s degree and 8 percent a graduate or professional degree.
- Among 16–19 year olds, 10 percent are not enrolled in school and have not graduated from high school.
- The average K–12 teacher’s salary in 2000 was $49,044, ranking Michigan 5th in the country.

**MOBILITY**

- Eighty-four percent of workers drive alone to their workplace, spending, on average, 23 minutes. Nine percent carpool, 3 percent work at home, and one percent take public transportation. There are 192,000 households in metropolitan Detroit without a vehicle.
- In 2000, 15 percent of all state residents lived in a dwelling different from where they resided the previous year.
- In 1998, 14,000 foreign immigrants settled in Michigan; the countries of origin of the greatest numbers were India (1,500), Mexico (1,000), and China (560).

**CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

- In 1996 state and local police totaled 20,600, or 21 for every 10,000 Michigan residents; the national average is 25.
- In 1999 Michigan experienced 575 violent crimes for every 100,000 people, ranking the state 12th highest in the nation; this is an improvement over 1990, when Michigan ranked 8th with 790 crimes per 100,000 residents.

**HEALTH**

- Among all Michigan residents aged five and older, 16 percent report a disability.
- Compared to all Americans, Michiganders are more likely to die from heart disease, diabetes, or homicide and less likely to die from cancer, cerebrovascular diseases, a motor-vehicle accident, HIV, or suicide.

In 1998, 27 percent of Michiganders smoked; the national figure is 23 percent.

In 1998, 35 percent of Michigan adults were overweight (the national average is 33 percent); this is up considerably from 1989, when 26 percent were overweight.

Roughly one in 10 Michiganders (one million) are without health insurance; 311,000 are children.

Michigan has fewer medical doctors and more nurses than the national average. MDs number 22,000 (225 per 100,000 residents) and nurses 83,000 (830 per 100,000).

About 25 percent of state residents are enrolled in Medicare or Medicaid. Medicare and Medicaid expenditures in Michigan total roughly $12 billion.

**RECREATION**

The National Sporting Goods Association surveys Americans about their recreational activities and compares participation among the states. An index is created whereby a number larger than 100 means that compared to the national average, more people in that state participate in the given activity. An index of 150, for example, means that 50 percent more than the national average say that they participate in that activity. The five highest ranking activities and their Michigan index numbers are the following:

- Boating (203)
- Darts (144)
- Golf (142)
- In-line roller skating (140)
- Camping (128)

**SOURCES:** Center for Educational Performance and Information; Michigan Department of Community Health; Michigan Department of Education; Michigan Information Center; National Sporting Goods Association; U.S. Bureau of the Census; U.S. Statistical Abstract; World Bank.
CHAPTER 1: ABOUT MICHIGAN

State Facts

NAME
The state’s name derives from Michigama, a Chippewa word meaning “large lake.” Michigan is nicknamed the Wolverine State. Residents are referred to as Michiganders or Michiganders.

COUNTIES
Michigan has 83 counties.

SIZE
Michigan is 456 miles long and 386 miles wide and has 56,817 square miles of land.

INLAND WATER
There are 11,037 inland lakes in Michigan, 36,000 miles of rivers and streams, and 1,573 square miles of inland water.

GREAT LAKES
Michigan borders on four of the five Great Lakes: Erie, Huron, Michigan, and Superior. The state's Great Lakes shoreline (including islands) is 3,288 miles.

REPRESENTATION IN CONGRESS
Michigan has two U.S. senators and is entitled (based on population) to 15 members in the U.S. House of Representatives.

LEGISLATURE
Thirty-eight senators and 110 representatives comprise the Michigan Legislature.

FLAG
The present state flag was adopted by the legislature in 1911. On a dark blue field is the state coat of arms, which is identical to the state seal but without the encircling words.

SYMBOLS
- Bird Robin (1931)
- Fish Brook trout (1987)
- Flower Apple blossom (1897)
- Fossil Mastodon (2002)
- Game mammal White-tailed deer (1997)
- Gem Chlorastrolite, commonly known as greenstone (1972)
- Reptile Painted turtle (1995)
- Soil Kalkaska soil (1990)
- Stone Petoskey stone (1965)
- Tree White pine (1955)
- Wildflower Dwarf lake iris (1998)