



# Michigan State History ~ In a Nutshell ~

Written & designed by  
Cyndi Kinney & Judy Trout



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Michigan State History In a Nutshell  
by Cyndi Kinney & Judy Trout  
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### **What is the "In a Nutshell" series?**

This is a series of concise, easy to understand information on many popular topics. You will find that many of products in this series can also be found as part of larger publications and/or curriculum on the publisher's website. At the end of each book, you will find a list of questions that may be used to help you review the material.

# Michigan State History Lapbook Journal Study Guide



The Great Seal of Michigan

Michigan is quite unique among the states in that it is divided into two distinct geographic sections, the Upper Peninsula, and the Lower Peninsula. Lake Michigan lies between the two peninsulas. The Upper Peninsula is very sparsely populated, more than 90% of the peninsula being forested. The Lower Peninsula contains the cities, industry, and agriculture. The Upper and Lower Peninsulas were connected in 1957 with the construction of Big Mac, the Mackinac Bridge.

Michigan has more shoreline than any other state, fronting four of the Great Lakes: Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, and Lake Erie. With 3,177 miles of Great Lakes shoreline it is easy to see why Michigan boasts a thriving recreational industry, and leads the nation with approximately one million registered pleasure boats.

The word Michigan originally referred to a clearing on the Lower Peninsula and was derived from the Chippewa Indian word "majigan" which means clearing. Lake Michigan was named after this clearing by European explorers in the area in the 1670's. The name Michigan is also the French form of the Ojibwa word *mishigamaa*, meaning "large water" or "large lake."

People who live in Michigan or who come from Michigan are called Michiganders, Michiganders or Michiganders.



Map of Michigan – Capital, Major Cities, Lakes and Rivers

## STATEHOOD

On January 26, 1837, Michigan was admitted to the Union as the 26<sup>th</sup> state.

Michigan's youngest governor, Stevens T. Mason, led Michigan's struggle for statehood. He was appointed acting territorial secretary at age 19 and became acting territorial governor in 1834 at age 22. He authorized a census, one of the requirements for statehood, and convened a constitutional convention. Michigan voters approved the constitution and elected Mason governor in 1835. Because of a dispute with Ohio over Toledo (called the "Toledo War"), Michigan did not become a state until 1837. Mason served until 1839. A city in Ingham County, Mason County and a state office building are named for Stevens T. Mason.

A 6' by 15' portrait hangs in the State Capitol building. In the Statehood Gallery a mannequin portrays Michigan's first and youngest governor.

## STATE CONSTITUTION

Michigan has adopted four Constitutions. The Constitution of 1835 was adopted two years before Michigan became a state. The Constitutional Convention of 1835 met at the Territorial Capitol in Detroit on May 11, 1835, and adjourned on June 24, 1835. The Constitution of 1835 was adopted at an election held on October 5 and 6, 1835, by a vote of 6,752 to 1,374.

On June 3, 1850, a Constitutional Convention met at Lansing and completed its revision on August 15. The Constitution of 1850 was presented at the election of November 5, 1850, and adopted by a vote of 36,169 to 9,433.

Over fifty years passed before a new Constitution was adopted. On October 22, 1907, a Constitutional Convention convened at Lansing and completed its revision on March 3, 1908. The Constitution of 1908 was adopted on November 3, 1908, by a vote of 244,705 to 130,783.

Four attempts were made to call a Constitutional Convention for the purpose of revising the Constitution of 1908 before the question was approved by the voters on April 3, 1961. A primary election for the purpose of electing delegates was held on July 25, 1961, and on September 12, 1961, one hundred forty-four delegates were elected. The delegates met at Convention Hall in the Civic Center, Lansing, on October 3, 1961, and adopted the proposed Constitution on August 1, 1962. The Constitution was submitted at the election of April 1, 1963, and adopted. A recount established the vote as 810,860 to 803,436. The effective date of the Constitution of 1963 is January 1, 1964.

**PREAMBLE:** *We, the people of the State of Michigan, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of freedom, and earnestly desiring to secure these blessings undiminished to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution.*

## STATE GOVERNMENT

In Michigan government, as at the national level of government, power is distributed among three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. The legislative branch creates laws that

establish policies and programs; the executive branch carries out the policies and programs contained in the laws; and the judicial branch resolves any conflicts arising from the interpretation or application of the laws. The three branches share power and jointly govern the state of Michigan. Lansing is the state capital and is home to all three branches of state government.

## Legislative Branch

The Michigan Legislature is the legislative branch of Michigan state government and is made up of the Michigan House of Representatives (lower house) and the Michigan Senate (upper house). The legislature is referred to as a bicameral body because it is made up of two houses. The Latin roots of the word bicameral, "bi" and "cameral," mean two chambers or rooms.

There are 110 members in the Michigan House of Representatives, each of whom are elected based on population figures from the most recent federal U. S. Census. Members are elected in even-numbered years, and take office on the January 1 following the November general election. Each member is limited to serving three, two-year terms.

The Michigan Senate consists of 38 members. Senators are elected at the same time as the governor and serve four-year terms concurrent with the governor's term of office. Senate and gubernatorial elections are offset by two years from U.S. Presidential elections (e.g., Presidential elections were in 2004 and 2008, gubernatorial and senate elections were in 2006 and 2010). Terms for senators begin on January 1, following the November general election. Senators who have not served more than half of someone else's Senate term are eligible for two full terms (i.e. - eight years).

## Executive Branch

The Governor is the chief executive and the head of the executive branch. In addition to the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Michigan's voters elect two other executive branch officials statewide--the Secretary of State and the Attorney General. While candidates for the governor's office are chosen in the August primary election, candidates for the others are nominated at the regular year between presidential elections (voters cast one vote jointly for Governor and Lieutenant Governor). An amendment to the constitution adopted by the voters in 1992 limits these elected executives to two four year terms (eight years). This limitation applies to terms if office beginning on or after January 1, 1993.

## Judicial Branch

The Michigan Supreme Court is the highest court in the state, hearing cases appealed to it from the Court of Appeals. In addition to its judicial duties, the Supreme Court is responsible for the general administrative supervision of all courts in the state. The Supreme Court also establishes rules for practice and procedure in all courts. The Supreme Court consists of seven justices: the chief justice and six associate justices. The justices are elected to serve eight-year terms. Every two years one justice is selected by the court as chief justice. Although justices are nominated by political parties, they are elected on a nonpartisan ballot. A candidate for the Supreme Court must be a qualified elector, licensed to practice law in Michigan, and at the time of election must be less than 70 years of age.

## Michigan Tribal Governments

Michigan is home to a total of twelve federally-acknowledged Indian tribes that enjoy a special status under federal law and treaties. Federally acknowledged tribes are not merely organizations of citizens who happen to be of Native American descent. Rather, they are sovereign governments that exercise direct jurisdiction over their members and territory and, under some circumstances, over other citizens as well. Tribal governments provide a wide array of governmental services to their members including lawmaking, tribal police and court systems, health and education services, and many more.

The state generally does not have legal authority over tribal governments and tribal members when they are inside the tribe's territory - those lands designated as the tribe's reservation or trust lands. Instead, the state interacts with tribes on a government-to-government basis. This has led in recent years to a number of formal government-to-government agreements on a variety of subjects including such matters as treaty fishing rights, taxation, water quality issues, economic development, and casino gaming.

### List of the 12 Federally Acknowledged Tribes

Bay Mills Chippewa Indian Community  
Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians  
Hannahville Potawatomi Indian Community  
Huron Potawatomi-Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi  
Keweenaw Bay Indian Community  
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians  
Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians  
Little River Band of Ottawa Indians  
Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians of Michigan  
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians  
Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe  
Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians

## **U.S. CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION**

The legislative branch of the United States government makes laws for our nation and raises and distributes money to run the United States government. The most evident part of the legislative branch is the United States Congress. Congress is divided into two parts, called houses. The two parts are the Senate and the House of Representatives. Congress is referred to as a bicameral body because it is made up of two houses. The Latin roots of the word bicameral, "bi" and "cameral," mean two chambers or rooms.

Members of the Senate are called Senators and members of the House of Representatives are called Representatives. Senators and representatives serving in these two bodies are sometimes referred to as congressmen, or women, and sometimes as legislators because their business is to legislate or make laws. The role of the legislative branch is defined in the United States Constitution.

Each state elects people to represent them in the United States Congress in Washington, DC. The citizens of each state elect two senators to represent them in the Senate. They also elect representatives to represent them in the House of Representatives. The number of representatives each state sends to the House of Representatives is not a specific number like the Senate, but is based on the population of the state. The people, that are elected to represent the state's citizens in the United States Congress, are referred to as the congressional delegation.

There are 100 senators in the U.S. Senate. Each is elected to a term, in the Senate, of six years. There are 435 representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives. Each is elected to a term, in the "House," of two years.

The citizens of Michigan elect two people, like every other state, to represent them in the Senate and 15 people, based on Michigan's current population in the most recent federal census, to represent them in the House of Representatives.

## STATE SEAL

The great seal of Michigan also appears on both sides of the state flag. The moose and elk represent Michigan, the bald eagle is a symbol for the United States.



### Meaning of Latin Phrases on State Seal:

“E Pluribus Unum,” *From Many, One* (our nation was made from many states).

“Tuebor,” *I Will Defend* (refers to the frontier position of Michigan).

“Si Quaeris Peninsulam Amoenam, Circumspice,” *If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you.* (also Michigan's state motto).

## STATE CAPITAL (Lansing, Michigan)



The Michigan State Capitol is in Lansing and has served as Michigan's seat of state government since its completion in 1879 and is home to all three branches of Michigan state government.

The Michigan capitol was the first of three state capitols designed by Elijah E. Myers in the 1870s and 1880s. Its successful completion established Myers' reputation as the premiere capitol-builder of the

post-Civil War period, and secured his career as one of the country's most successful architects of public buildings. No architect was responsible for more state capitols than Myers, and no single architect had more influence on their design in the latter years of the nineteenth century. Myers was among the first to use the national capitol in Washington, D.C., as a model, and his design for Michigan would help establish the standard for state capitols for decades to come.

The Michigan State Capitol reflected-and inspired-the national trend after the Civil War for monumental fireproof buildings, constructed to house state governments growing in size and complexity, as well as to serve as suitable repositories for mementoes of the war itself. The interior embellishment of the Michigan State Capitol, undertaken over a period of several years after the dedication and occupation of the building, involved the extensive use of decorative, or architectural painting. So skillful and elaborate were the techniques and patterns employed, and so effective their color palette, that the building, as now restored, ranks today as one of the best surviving displays in the United States of the Victorian painted decorative arts. An extensive historical restoration, begun in 1987 and completed in 1992, returned both the interior and exterior to their original appearances, while adapting the building for the future as Michigan's permanent state capitol.

### Capitol Facts:

- National Historic Landmark, listed October 7, 1992
- Marker, erected March 10, 1980
- National Register, listed January 25, 1971
- State Register, listed February 18, 1956

## STATE MOTTO

"If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you."

Michigan's state motto is: "*Si quaeris peninsulam amoenam, circumspice*" which is Latin for "If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you."

## STATE FLAG

The current Michigan state flag is the third official state flag of Michigan and was adopted by Public Act 209 in 1911.

The first flag displayed a portrait of Michigan's first governor, Stevens Thomson Mason on one side and the state coat of arms on the other side.

In 1865, this flag was changed. Stevens Mason's portrait was removed and the flag displayed the Michigan coat of arms on one side and the United States coat of arms on the other side, perhaps in response to the end of the civil war. Today the flag displays only the Michigan coat of arms on a field of blue.



Depicted on the shield is a lake with a yellow sun rising over the blue waters. A man is standing on a peninsula with one hand raised in a greeting of friendship and the other hand holding a rifle. An Elk and a Moose support the shield between them and a Bald Eagle grasping an olive branch and arrows in its talons is shown above the shield.

Three mottos are shown on the coat of arms: *E Pluribus Unum* (From many, one), *Tuebor* (I will defend), and *Si Quaeris Peninsulam Amoenam Circumspice* (If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you). These mottos are reflected in the coat of arms pictorially. *E Pluribus Unum*, also our national motto, aligns with the depiction of the Bald Eagle. *Tuebor* is represented in the arrows clasped in the eagle's talons and the gun held in the man's left hand. *Si Quaeris Peninsulam Amoenam Circumspice* is supported by the warmth of the sun, the man's friendly greeting from the peninsula and the olive branches held by the Bald Eagle.

The Bald Eagle represents the United States and the Elk and Moose represent Michigan.

## STATE NICKNAMES

### *The Wolverine State*

It has been generally accepted that Michigan was nicknamed "The Wolverine State" for the abundance of wolverines that once roamed the peninsula. However, according to the Michigan Historical Center, wolverines were very rare in Michigan if they were present at all. It's not clear how this nickname originated, but there are two theories.

Some think the nickname was originated by Ohioans in 1835 during a dispute over an Ohio/Michigan boundary called the "Toledo Strip." This dispute became known as the Toledo War. Though Michigan and Ohio both sent troops to the area, no shots were ever fired. It's said that Ohioans, at that time, referred to Michigianians as "...as vicious and bloodthirsty as wolverines."

Another theory is proposed that Native Americans compared the way that settlers were taking land, in the 1830s, to the way the excessively greedy wolverine went after its food.

### *The Great Lake State*

or "The Great Lakes State", or "The Lakes State" nicknames have been applied to Michigan for many years. They refer to the fact that Michigan shores meet four of the five Great Lakes and to the number of inland lakes in the state. The four Great Lakes that border Michigan are Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron and Lake Erie. There are also more than 11,000 inland lakes in Michigan and, according to the Michigan Historical Center, one is never more than six miles from an inland lake or more than 85 miles from one of the Great Lakes.

From 1968 to 1975 and from 1979 to 1983, the legend on the standard Michigan License Plate read "The Great Lake State." This legend recognizes the Great Lakes and more than 11,000 inland lakes found in the state. This legend was changed to "Great Lakes" in 1984.

### *Water Wonderland*

This promotional nickname again references the water resources of the state of Michigan. "Water Wonderland" appeared on Michigan license plates beginning in 1954. It was modified to "Water-Winter Wonderland" in 1965. This modified legend appeared on Michigan license plates from 1965 through 1967.

### *Lady of the Lake*

With over 40,000 square miles of water surface within its boundaries, Michigan's history has been "saturated" with the association. "Lady of the Lake" is another nickname referencing the influence of water in the state. It is thought that this nickname may have been taken from Sir Walter Scott's poem, "The Lady of the Lake."

### *The Auto State*

This nickname draws attention to the automobile manufacturing that has played such an important role in the history of the state.

## STATE BIRD

The robin was designated the official state bird of Michigan in 1931 after an election held by the Michigan Audubon Society.

The legislation noted that "the robin redbreast is the best known and best loved of all the birds in the state of Michigan." The robin is also the state bird of Connecticut and Wisconsin.

Robins were named by early settlers after the familiar robin red-breast of Europe (a bird with similar markings that is not closely related to the American Robin). The most widespread thrush in North America (because of its adaptation to human-modified habitats), robins are a familiar backyard bird often observed pulling up earthworms on suburban lawns. The American robin has many vocalizations - rich songs composed of long phrases and "whinny" and "tut" calls. The female is muted in color compared to the male.



The robin's claim to the title of official state bird of Michigan has come under fire however. In late 2003 a group of 3rd, 4th, & 5th graders arrived at the state capital to lobby for the Kirtland's Warbler as the state bird of Michigan. Some of their reasons: the Kirtland's Warbler nests exclusively in Michigan, it is the rarest warbler in North America, and has recovered from near-extinction (expected to be removed from endangered species list soon) thanks to conservation efforts to preserve their only habitat, Michigan's Jack Pine Barrens.

## STATE FLOWER



William Harris of Norwood introduced the legislation proposing that the apple blossom be adopted as the official state flower of Michigan on February 9, 1897.

Joint Resolution No. 10 noted that apple trees add to "the beauty" of Michigan's landscape and that "Michigan apples have gained a worldwide reputation."

Citing the blossom of the native Michigan *Pyrus coronaria* (sweet crabapple) as particularly beautiful and fragrant, the legislation does not specify this species as the state flower but refers to the generic apple blossom as the state flower of Michigan. Michigan adopted the blossom of the apple tree as its state flower by an act of the legislature on April 28, 1897.

*Pyrus coronaria* is now referred to as *Malus coronaria*

**Below, you will find 15 general questions to help review what you have learned. Use the following page(s) for documenting your answers. Older students may choose to write a State Report as well.**

**Review Questions:**

1. List the states and/or bodies of water that border this state.
2. What was the date of statehood?
3. What is the state capital?
4. What is the state motto?
5. Name at least one state nickname.
6. Describe the state flag.
7. What is the state bird?
8. What is the state flower?
9. List at least 5 other state symbols.
10. Describe this state's government.
11. Name the major imports and exports for this state.
12. Describe the weather and climate in this state.
13. List at least 5 famous people from this state.
14. Describe at least 5 significant events in this state's history.
15. What other interesting information have you learned about this state?

## **Answers to Review Questions:**

