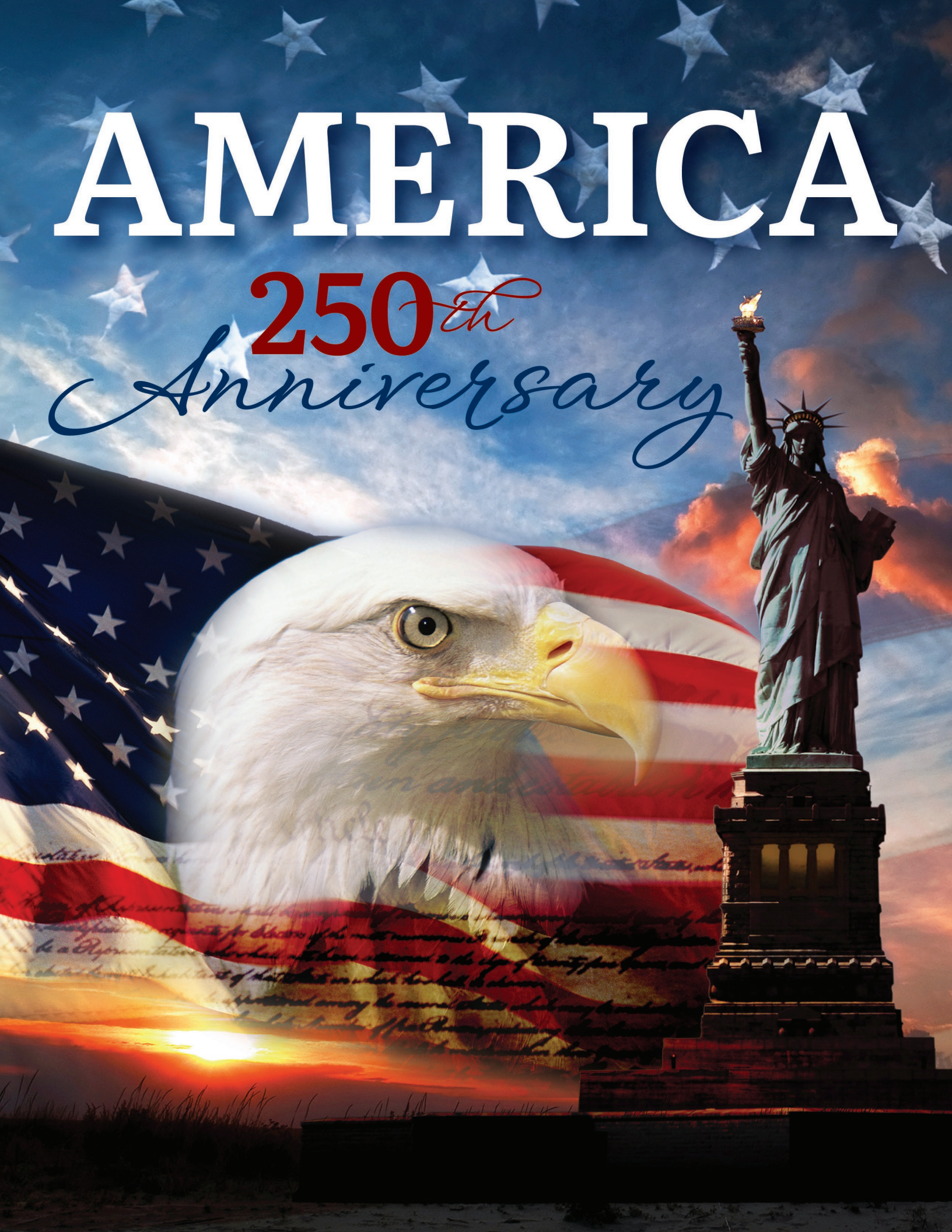


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Table of Contents

- 2** How to celebrate America's semiquincentennial
- 4** The Holland Hotel 1891-1990
- 6** An enduring, ever-evolving symbol of freedom
- 8** First business in Iosco County
- 9** A nation gets a name
- 11** The first settlement in Iosco County
- 13** A giant catch from Tawas Bay
- 14** The early days of transportation
- 16** Main streets of Iosco County
- 18** The railway roundhouse
- 20** The faces behind Lumberman's Monument
- 22** The story of Cooke Dam
- 25** Oscoda Parade, 1965
- 26** A Saturday in Tawas City, 1946
- 29** America then and now
- 30** Chippewa Heritage and Oscoda Indian Mission Church
- 33** Something special in Oscoda, 1910
- 34** Hollywood comes to Iosco County
- 36** "White City" at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair built with Iosco County dirt?

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How to celebrate and commemorate America's semiquincentennial

Commemorations of America's national history are part of annual celebrations of American independence that take place each year on July 4, which marks the anniversary of the nation's birth. Those celebrations have a reputation for being particularly festive and tend to be capped off by awe-inspiring fireworks displays once the sun sets on the Fourth of July.

The liveliness of annual celebrations of American independence figures to be taken up a notch in 2026, when the United States will celebrate its semiquincentennial. Two hundred and fifty years of nationhood warrants a particularly jovial celebration, and there are many ways Americans can commemorate and celebrate the nation on this momentous occasion.

Support a local historical society.

Local historical societies have played a vital role in preserving United States history, and many of those who work in support of these organizations do so on a volunteer basis. Expressions of support for local historical societies can go a long way toward helping them continue to fulfill their missions. Financial donations, letters to state and local political officials urging increased funding for historical societies, visits to local historical sites, and even volunteering to help organizations fulfill their missions are a handful of ways to ensure these groups can continue to make invaluable contributions to their communities and the nation.



Volunteer with local government.

Pitching in to help local government organizations planning semiquincentennial celebrations is another great way to honor America's two hundred and fiftieth anniversary. The days and weeks surrounding July 4 will likely be filled with anniversary-related events and celebrations, but many communities also plan to commemorate the semiquincentennial throughout 2026, providing plenty of opportunities for volunteers of all ages to lend a hand.

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Help digitize archival materials.

The modern world is accustomed to digital files and instant access to information, but the vast majority of records pertaining to American history and accounts of Americans' personal experiences remain preserved on paper. Photos and documents wear down over time, and American archivists face an uphill battle as they work to digitize records for the purpose of long-term preservation. Anyone who wants to lend a hand and help to preserve local and national history can speak with a local library or university librarian about what's being done to digitize historical accounts and records and

offer to lend a hand with such efforts. If no such efforts are currently being undertaken in your community, offer to spearhead a digitalization project and recruit others to participate.

America's semiquincentennial is a big deal, and there's much residents of the United States can do to take an active role in the celebration and commemoration of the nation's history.

Explore the country.

Travel presents another great way to celebrate the nation on its two hundred and fiftieth birthday. The United States is a vast nation with many unique subcultures and local customs, not to mention countless locales that have featured prom-



inently in American history. When planning vacations in 2026, resolve to stay within U.S. borders and seek ways to learn about the nation's history during your travels.

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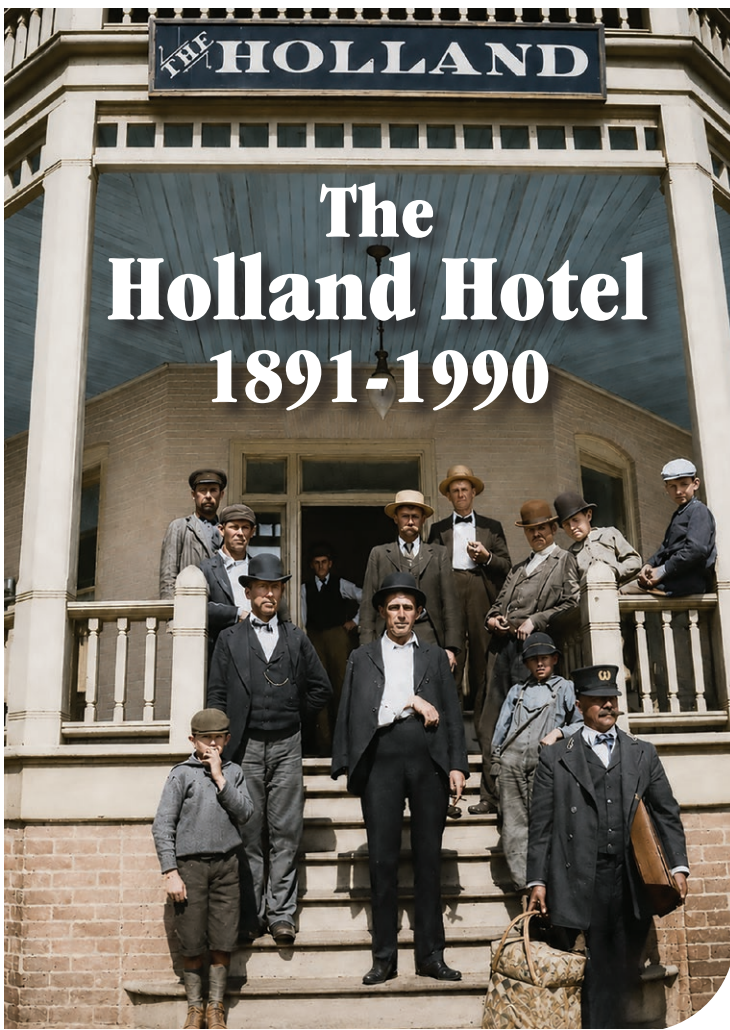
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The Holland Hotel 1891-1990

by Gaylynn Brenoel

The nearly 100-year history of the Holland Hotel has been preserved in the documents and photos catalogued at the Iosco County Historical Museum and in archived articles published by the Iosco County News-Herald (News Herald).

Construction of the Holland Hotel started in 1891 and opened for business on July 31, 1893, on the corner of U.S. 23 and Newman Street, beside the railroad tracks where Branham's Jewelry now stands.

The brick hotel was a railroad-era landmark built by the Holland-Emery Lumber Company to attract tourists and serve travelers on the Detroit and Mackinac Railway.

The hotel featured wide wooden porches for viewing the passing trains. Amenities included steam heat, electric lighting, and hot water.

The Holland quickly became a favorite for locals and travelers that offered a well-

stocked bar, conference areas for meetings, and a restaurant that featured Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's dinners and entertainment.

According to a News Herald article of January 25, 1957, Mr. John Pinter and Ernest Larson had owned the hotel since 1950. The new owners E. Richardson and Pinter purchased the 60-room three-story brick structure under the company name of the Tawas Holland Hotel Co. Pinter, as both a previous owner and now a current owner, would stay on to manage the hotel.

The new owners planned a modernization program, "to make the Holland one of the finest resort hotels in the state."

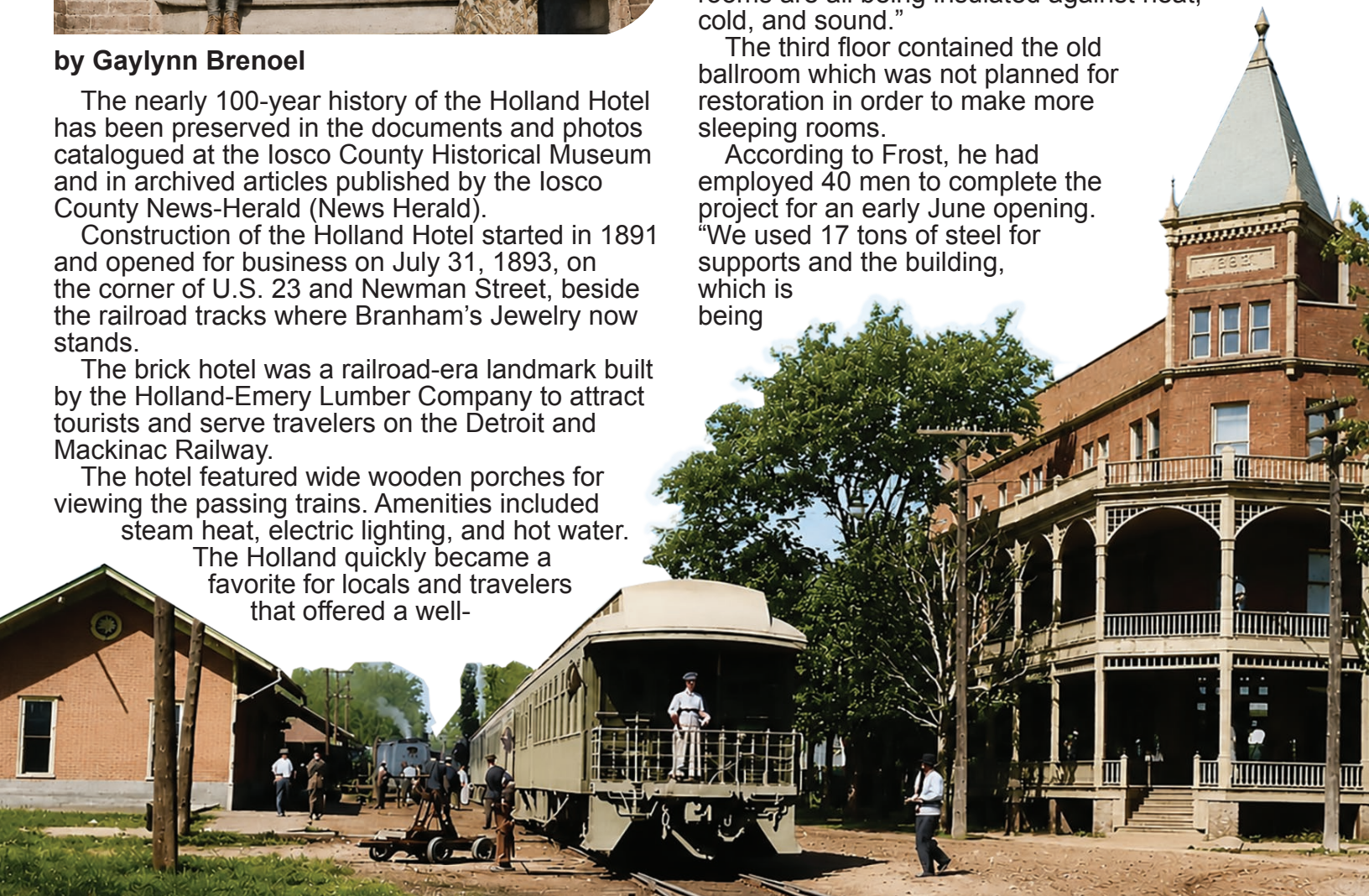
On March 13, 1958, the News Herald ran a story entitled, "New Holland' Rising". It contained a conducted tour of the Holland Hotel, under the guidance of co-owner Pinter and Milt Frosh, contractor on the \$250,000 reconstruction project.

The remodel included thick reinforced concrete walls to support the steel beams, new offices, a lobby, and a brick-enclosed elevator, men's and ladies' rooms, a cocktail lounge, a huge dining room that could be divided into three smaller ones, a kitchen, and storerooms.

"On the second floor were new rooms being plastered and included awning style windows. Every one of the 44 rooms will have a complete bath. There will be seven suites, which can be expanded from one to three rooms. The rooms are all being insulated against heat, cold, and sound."

The third floor contained the old ballroom which was not planned for restoration in order to make more sleeping rooms.

According to Frost, he had employed 40 men to complete the project for an early June opening. "We used 17 tons of steel for supports and the building, which is being



made as fireproof as possible, will have 800 sprinkler heads spaced at strategic points throughout," he said.

"The elevator is a new-type hydraulic lift, which will go from the first to third floors in 15 seconds."

The article concludes with, "yes, the famous old Holland Hotel is gone forever with its nostalgic memories for many. But in its place is rising a new and modern structure, which will not have to take a back seat for any hotel in the state, except for size."

From the 1960's through 1989, the Holland Hotel, also known as the Holland House, was a mainstay in East Tawas. The hotel was a local favorite that offered dancing to local area bands, champaign brunches, a Thursday night 'ladies night,' and Jello wrestling featuring bathing suit clad women competing for a \$100 grand prize.

An article published in the News Herald on April 4, 1990, signaled the upcoming final days of the Holland. The article heading "Code safety violations net fire inspection" read that "A telephone company worker's concern about conditions he noted in the Holland House while he was working there led to a fire code safety inspection of the East Tawas building and letters being sent to state officials..."

The East Tawas Fire Chief, William "Bill" Deckett, Assistant Chief Norman Klenow, Fireman Michael Allen and building inspector Ray Bremer checked the building and noted what he said were numerous fire code violations. Deckett sent a letter for help to the area fire marshal in Saginaw about his concerns about the Holland, which included "Not only do we have people living upstairs, but I understand they are packing them into the bar like sardines for jello wrestling contests."

Deckett also detailed items such as "combustibles and other junk in an area between the Holland and Mil End; the sprinkler system appears to be nonoperable; the door leading up the stairs opens in and has no panic hardware. In addition, the elevator was not operating; lights in the stairs and corridors were not working; many exit lights were not operable and additional signs are needed in some places; gas cans, paint



brushes, and open cans, along with clutter and bird nests in the room leading to the roof; smoke detectors not operable; no pull stations for fire alarms; no fire extinguishers visible anywhere upstairs."

Deckett's letter ended with a request for an inspection of the premises by the State Fire Marshall.

A News Herald article published on April 18, 1990, read "Fire Marshal closes ET Holland House." According to the article, five businesses and 12 families were moved out of the Holland House on Wednesday afternoon, April 11. Michigan State Fire Marshall closed the building because the building and its infrastructure was said to pose an imminent threat to life and safety.



An enduring, ever-evolving symbol of *freedom*

The American flag has been recognized across the globe as a symbol of freedom for centuries. The Stars and Stripes is recognizable to billions of people worldwide, but the flag has undergone many changes since the United States gained its independence from Great Britain. According to the National Flag Foundation, the national flag of the United States has been revised 27 times since American colonists fought for and won independence from British rule. Of course, many of those changes occurred when a new state or new states were added to the union. Each time a new state joined the union, the flag would have to be adjusted with the addition of an extra star. The 1777 flag included a star for each of the 13 colonies that eventually became one of the initial 13 states, but the modern flag now features 50 stars as representative of the 50 states. Though the flag certainly underwent many changes since the nation's inception, the NFF notes the current flag has remained unchanged since 1960, when the 50-star version was officially adopted on July 4 in recognition of Hawaii becoming the fiftieth state in 1959.



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A photograph of construction tools on a dark wooden surface. A hammer with a wooden handle and a metal head lies diagonally. Next to it are a pair of grey work gloves. A yellow hard hat is partially visible on the left. An American flag is draped across the bottom of the image.

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In the early 1820s, the American Fur Company—founded by John Jacob Astor—established a fur trading post near the mouth of the AuSable River in Iosco County. His great-grandson, John Jacob Astor IV (1864–1912), died in the Sinking of the Titanic.

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Canoes would arrive loaded with furs, especially beaver pelts, traded with local Ojibwe people. In return, goods like tools, cloth, and supplies flowed into the region. It connected this quiet stretch of shoreline to a vast trade network reaching Mackinac and beyond.

Decades later, the lumber boom would transform the area—but it all started here.

Imagine standing on that shoreline in 1823... no towns, no roads... just wilderness, water, and the beginnings of commerce in Iosco County.

Story & Photo Courtesy of Iosco County Historical Museum Digital Preservation Database



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A nation gets a name

September 9, 1776, may not be the first date Americans think of when pondering their nation's history, but it's a significant day nonetheless. According to the National Constitution Center, on September 9, 1776, the Second Continental Congress adopted a new name for a collective of colonies that had been referred to as the "United Colonies." The name chosen on that day in late summer 1776, the United States of America, has endured. While the opening sentence of the Declaration of Independence, which was issued on July 4, 1776, refers to the "Thirteen United States of America," it was a little more than two months later when the Congress passed a series of resolutions, including one in which it replaced "United Colonies" with "United States" as the fledgling nation's new name.



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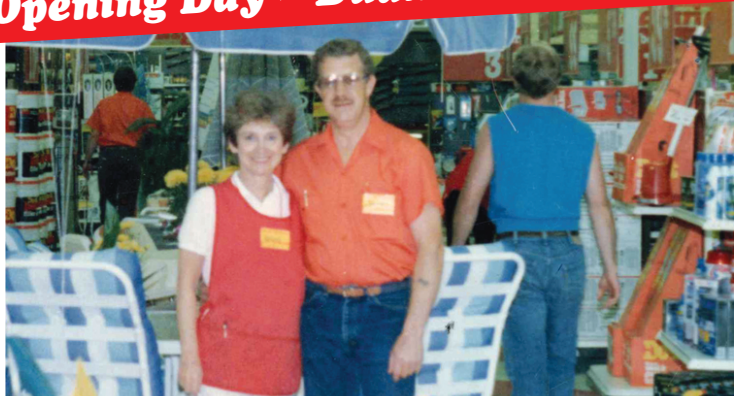


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The First Settlement in Tawas County

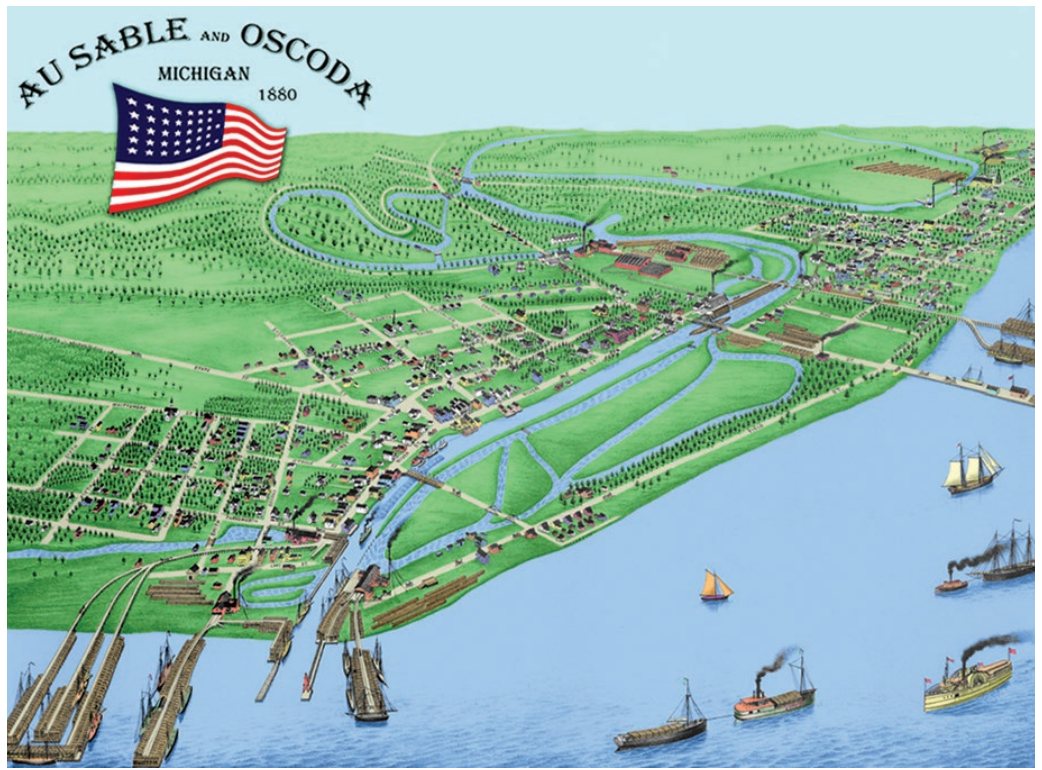
by Gaylynn Brenoel

The book, *Sawdust Days: When the Tawas Area Was Young*, published by Edna M. Otis in 1973, provides some important historical information for Iosco County.

According to Otis, AuSable was known as the Lumber Capital. However, the first settlement was made by fishermen.

George Halett Duell and Horace D. Stockmen came to AuSable in the winter of 1848 and formed a fishing village.

AuSable is a French word meaning all sand. Tawas is named after the Chippewa tribe chief O-Ta-Was who lived on Tawas Bay in 1857. Both AuSable and Tawas townships were formed in Iosco County in 1857.



According to Otis, the townships of Alabaster, Grant, Plainfield, Baldwin, Oscoda, Thompson, Burleigh, Sherman, Wilber, and Reno were named between 1866 and 1885.

Photo Courtesy of AuSable Oscoda Historical Society & Museum

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Story & Photo Courtesy of Iosco County Historical Museum
Digital Preservation Database

A Giant Catch from *Tawas Bay*

This remarkable photograph, taken along Tawas Bay in Iosco County around 1910, captures a moment from the height of our region's commercial fishing era. The fisherman pictured is Sno Lixey, a local fishing company owner whose work helped support both his family and the growing community along the Lake Huron shoreline.

The enormous fish hanging beside him is a lake sturgeon, once abundant in Saginaw Bay and a cornerstone of the early fishing industry. These prehistoric giants could reach impressive sizes and were highly valued for their meat and caviar. At the time this photo was taken, catches like this were not uncommon.

In the early 1900s, fishing was more than an occupation in Iosco County—it was a way of life. Docks like this one lined the bay, and entire families were involved in the daily work of hauling nets, processing fish, and preparing shipments that fed communities across the region.

Today, images like this remind us of the hard work, resourcefulness, and rich natural history that helped shape Iosco County.

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The early days of transportation in Iosco County

By Gaylynn Brenoel

With today's modern cars and motorcycles making travel fast and efficient between cities and townships in Iosco County, it might be hard to imagine the challenges faced by residents and visitors after the formation of Iosco County in 1857.

In the book, *Sawdust Days: When the Tawas Area Was Young*, published by Edna M. Otis in 1973, Otis provides us with a unique opportunity to understand the obstacles experienced by early settlers to our area. According to Otis, for a period of about 10 years starting in 1857, people traveled by sailboats only.

During the summer months, sailboats transported mail to the area. In the winter, Native Americans with dogsleds delivered mail. After lumber docks were built, large steamers could travel to the area, but it was common to have to wait a month before a boat would return to the area.

By 1871, people could travel by train or stagecoach to Standish or points north. Otis explained that one of the obstacles for stage travel was the 'big AuGres Swamp.' According to Otis, Native Americans traveled by foot when they traveled northward following the old Saginaw to



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Mackinaw trail. Per Otis, “Early settlers in the western part of the county, brought their household goods to the Tawas area by boat, and then loaded them onto wagons to be trekked to the new home.”

According to a publication by the Iosco County Historical Society entitled *How Long Did It Take to Get Around Iosco County by Horse & Buggy?*, travel from Tawas City to Oscoda or AuSable took three to four hours. Traveling to Hale would take four to five hours. The article read, “That’s one way – add stops for rest, mud, snow, or breakdowns, and a simple trip could take most of a day. Hard to imagine now, but this was everyday life for early residents of Iosco County.”

Photos Courtesy of Iosco County Historical Museum Digital Preservation Database



MAIN STREETS OF

Downtown Oscoda



Main Street, Hale, 1900's



Tawas City Horse and Buggy, 1912





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Main Street, Whittemore, 1900's



Photos Courtesy of Iosco County Historical Museum Digital Preservation Database

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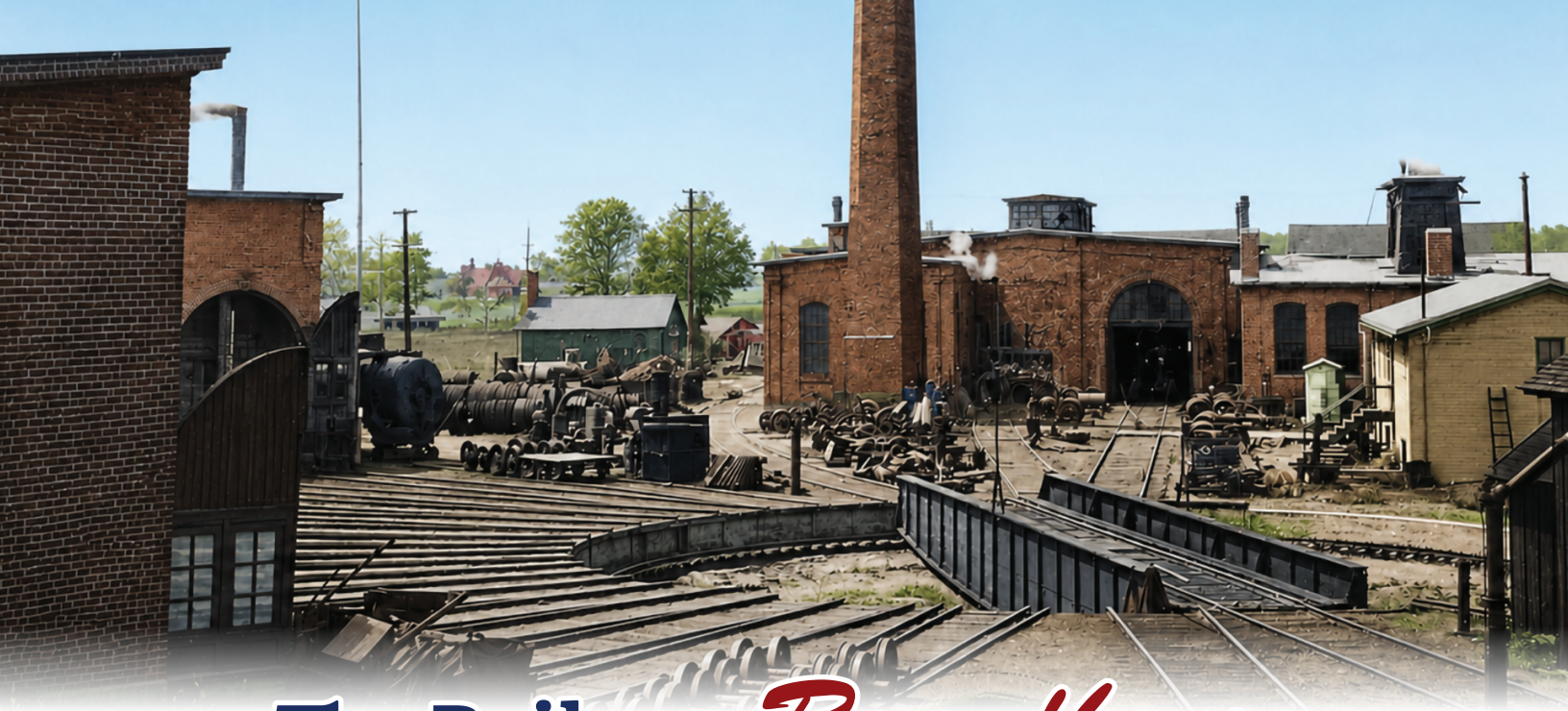
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From the 1860's the location housed two stations. In 1930, the two stations were consolidated into one. Most of the trains were filled with freight, such as lumber and salt. Records from the Tawas City Historical Society indicate there were a few passenger trains that passed through as well.

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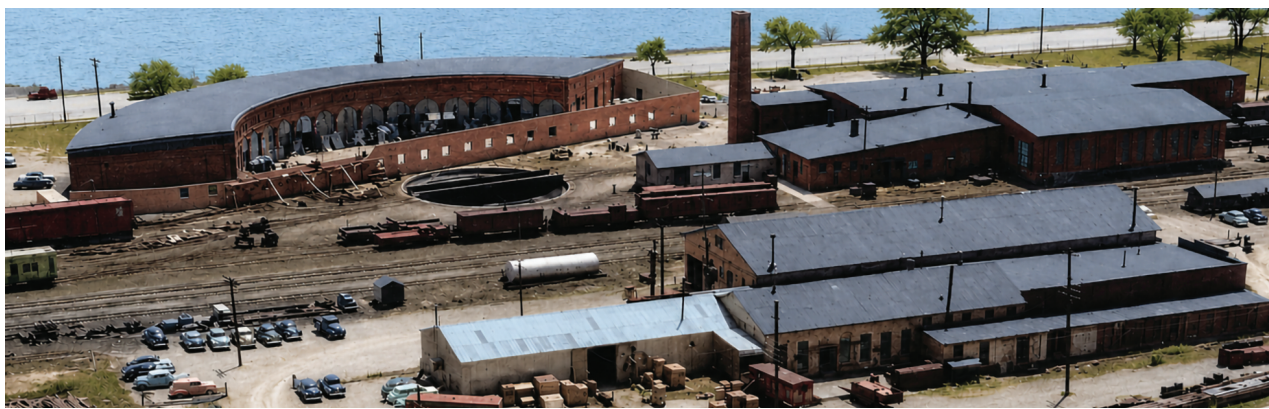
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In 1931, a group of lumber mill owners raised \$50,000 to honor the men who built Michigan's timber industry. They hired New York sculptor Robert Ingersoll Aitken, but Aitken insisted on using local woodsmen as his models.

He sculpted the monument in clay, then cast it in a 4.5-ton, 14-foot bronze statue. It was built in New York, shipped by train to Tawas City in 1932, and dedicated July 16, 1932.



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Meet the three men:

Center - The Timber Cruiser

Robert I. Aitken himself — compass in hand, scouting the forest for the best trees to send to the mill owners. The sculptor became part of his own work.

Right - The Sawyer

William “Bill” Taylor — he and his partner were the ones who actually felled the massive white pines.

Left - The River Rat

Alexander “Emil” Wargstrom — he directed the logs down the Au Sable River to Lake Huron, then on to the Bay City lumber mills.

Next time you visit the monument off River Road, you’ll know their names.

Special Thanks to Ted Reinke, an Iosco County native for the information!

Story & Photo Courtesy of Iosco County Historical Museum Digital Preservation Database

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The Story of Cooke Dam

Before the Water Rose

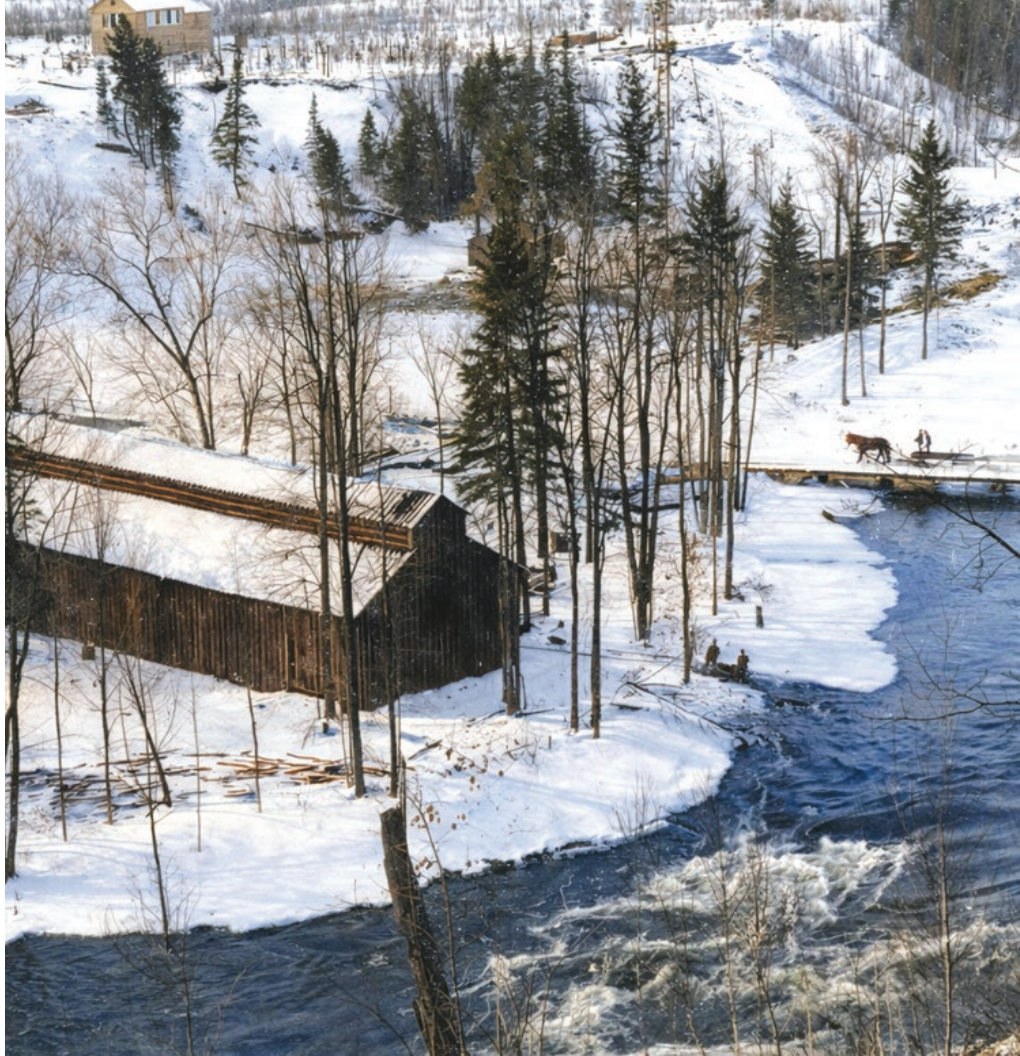
Before Cooke Dam transformed the AuSable River, this stretch of northern Michigan looked very different.

What was here before the dam?

Long before construction began in 1910, the AuSable River flowed freely through dense forests of white pine. This river was a major route during Michigan's lumber boom, carrying logs downstream to mills. The area was largely undeveloped wilderness—quiet, remote, and shaped by logging camps and river travel rather than roads or permanent settlements.

Who owned the land?

The dam site itself was identified with the help of banker Andrew Cooke, who helped secure financing for the project—and ultimately gave the dam its name. The



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development was carried out by what became the Consumers Power Company, led by hydroelectric pioneer William A. Foote.

What changed when the dam was built?

Construction began around 1909–1910, bringing a massive workforce and even a temporary village to the area. Workers lived in camps complete with housing, schools, and supplies—turning a remote forest into a bustling community almost overnight.

When the dam was completed in 1911, everything changed:

The river was impounded, creating what we now know as Cooke Dam Pond—a large, lake-like body of water.

Flowing rapids and riverbanks were replaced by flooded lowlands and expanded shoreline

The project brought electric power to Michigan cities, even transmitting electricity over 100 miles—a record at the time.

The area shifted from logging-based use to recreation, tourism, and energy production

The lasting impact

Today, Cooke Dam is part of a chain of hydroelectric dams along the AuSable River and remains a key piece of Iosco County's history. What was once a wild logging river is now a mix of scenic waterways, outdoor recreation, and early 20th-century engineering that helped power Michigan's growth.

From pine forests and logging drives to electricity and recreation—the story of Cooke Dam is a story of transformation.

Story & Photo Courtesy of Iosco County Historical Museum Digital Preservation Database

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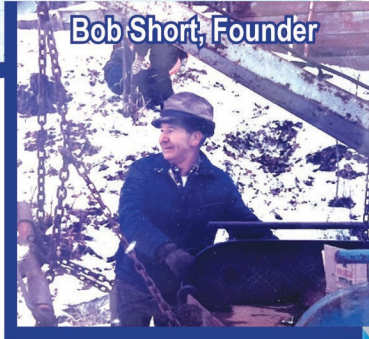
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Oscoda Parade 1965

This is a 1965 photo of an Oscoda parade - probably 4th of July. The scene is facing South on State Street. Present day AuSable Hardware (Vinnie's) would be on the right and the Sunoco Station on left was Dick Killmaster's. The white building on the left was the old American Legion.

Photo & Story Courtesy of AuSable Oscoda Historical Society & Museum



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A Saturday in Tawas City – 1946

It's the summer of 1946, and downtown Tawas City is alive with activity. The war is finally over, fishermen are heading out onto Tawas Bay, and families from the farms around Iosco County are coming into town to shop along Lake Street.

Tawas City was the county seat and the original settlement of the Tawas area, and its small downtown had everything a family needed.

A few businesses you would have found in Tawas City in 1946 included:

- **Lixey's Hardware** – a well-known Tawas City business where locals bought tools, nails, paint, and fishing gear. A hammer might cost about \$1.25, while a box of nails was only 15–20¢.
- **Keiser's Drug Store** – the place to stop for prescriptions, toiletries, and a soda at the counter. A bottle of aspirin cost about 10¢, and an ice-cream soda was around 15¢.
- **Barkman Lumber Company** – supplying lumber and building materials as families repaired homes and barns after the war years.
- **Tawas City Bakery** – the smell of fresh bread and pastries often drifted out the door in the mornings. A loaf of bread cost about 10¢, and a dozen donuts were about 20–25¢.



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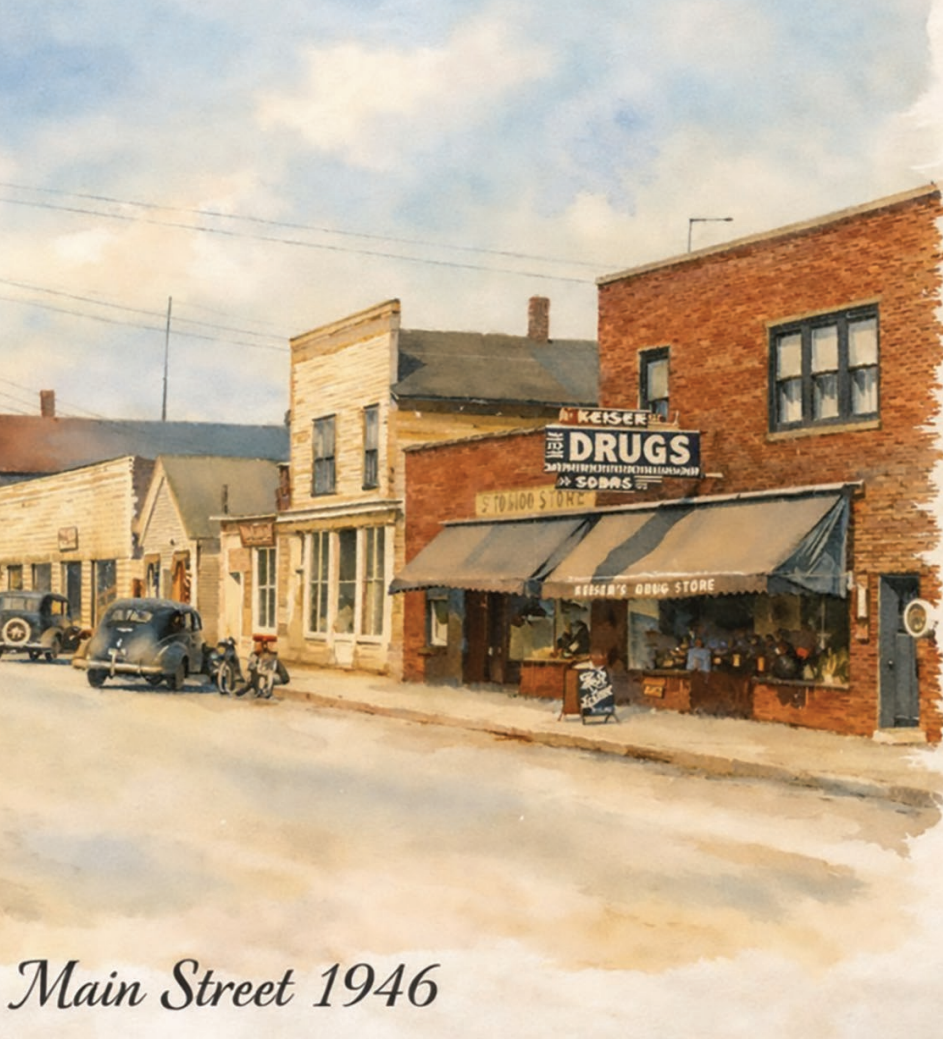
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Main Street 1946

Typical prices around town in 1946

Milk – about 14¢ a quart
 Hamburger – about 35¢ per pound
 Eggs – roughly 45–55¢ a dozen
 Gasoline – around 21¢ per gallon

Saturday Night at the Rivoli Theatre

When the shopping was done, many families headed to the Rivoli Theatre in Tawas City for the evening show. Admission was usually about 30¢ for adults and a little less for kids.

Popular movies playing in American theaters in 1946 included:

The Best Years of Our Lives
 The Razor's Edge
 Cloak and Dagger

Popcorn, a cold soda, and a newsreel before the film made it a full night of entertainment!

Story & Photo Courtesy of Iosco County Historical Museum Digital Preservation Database



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America then and now

Celebrations of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the United States of America will unfold throughout 2026. As millions join in the festivities, it can be fun to compare the nation in its infancy to the one that has since firmly established itself as a global leader.

Population

- **1780:** 2.8 million*
- **2025:** 342 million**

* The National Archives note that the first decennial census of the United States was not taken until 1790, so the figure cited for 1780 is a widely accepted estimate of the burgeoning nation's population during the opening years of the American Revolutionary War.

** This represents the U.S. Census Bureau population estimate as of late 2025.

States

According to the National Constitution Center, a series of resolutions passed by the Second Continental Congress in September 1776 officially cited the collective colonies fighting in the American Revolutionary War as the "United States."

- **1776:** 13
- **2026:** 50

Land mass

- **1783:** 800,000 sq miles
- **2026:** just under 3.6 million sq miles

The Times Atlas of World History indicates that the United States had an area of approximately 800,000 square miles in 1783. The country is considerably larger today, with a rough land mass of just under 3.6 million square miles according to the U.S. Census Bureau. To put that expansion since the nascent days of the nation in perspective, today the combined land mass of the country's two largest states eclipses the land mass of the entire nation in the early 1780s. Alaska (estimated land mass 571,000 square miles) and Texas (262,000), with roughly 833,000 square miles between them, are larger than the total land mass of the United States in 1783.

Transportation

- **Late eighteenth century:** Horses
- **2025:** 298.7 million registered vehicles

The Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress notes that walking was the most common and cheapest mode of transportation in the late eighteenth century. Horses and wagons enabled business and distance travel, but such modes were only available to those who could afford it, greatly limiting who could get around by any means other than their own feet. Getting around in the present day is a little more accessible, and a recent analysis from Hedges & Company found there were 298.7 million registered vehicles in the U.S. in 2025.

Chippewa Heritage and Oscoda Indian Mission Church mark *250 years of shared history*

by Gaylynn Brenoel

The year 2026 marks the United States Semiquincentennial (250 years) of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Iosco County shares in the rich history of the United States past 250 years. One of the many significant elements of that history is the Chippewa Indian Settlement and the Oscoda Indian Mission Church located at 7994 Alvin Road, the intersection of Kings Corner Road and Alvin Road.

According to the book, *Methodist Indian Ministries in Michigan 1830-1990*, written and published by Dorothy Reuter in 1993, starting in the late 1700's and into the 1800's, the Chippewa lived in the northeast end of Van Etna Lake. According to Reuter, one of the roving bands of Chippewa Indians moved to our area "to find fish, game, and berries and to move away from the invading white settlers."

An article written in the Iosco County News (now the Iosco County News-Herald) in July 1976, reads that The Oscoda Indian Church and cemetery "spans the border between Oscoda Township and Mikado Township with the church and cemetery, and probably most of the members of the community, living in Oscoda Township."

According to Reuter, "Mrs. Mary Nedwash, whose Indian name was Shownah, which means south wind," was born in 1857 and passed away at age 98 in 1955. Nedwash shared her recollections of the tribal dances that were held in the fall and spring each year. Although this was before Christianity came to the Indians, they knew of a Great Spirit to whom they offered their prayers.

As Reuter explained, "in the late 1850's a young Indian local preacher named John Tadgwasung came north from Saganing and worked among the Indians at the settlement." Reuter emphasized that the area settled was not a reservation, it was a settlement. "The Indians owned the land and paid taxes.

"At first, the community members built dome-shaped bark huts with leaves and branches woven in and out through the frame to cut the wind and rain."

Around the year 1870, a log church was constructed on the road that leads to the Indian Burial Grounds. Per Reuter, Indians traveled by horseback, canoe or on foot to attend church services which were conducted in the Chippewa language.

According to Reuter, early Indian preachers like Peter Jones translated English hymns and the New Testament into the Chippewa language. Jones, an Ojibwe author and Methodist Minister from Canada was a prolific translator. The Ojibwe and Chippewa are the same people as part of the Anishinaabe group meaning "Original People" or "True People." In Canada, the preferred term is Ojibwe, and Chippewa being more commonly used in the United States.

As more Chippewa moved north to the settlement, the existing church became too small to handle the growing congregation. Along with the existing huts, many log homes were built in the settlement. The need for a new church led the residents to collect money among themselves to purchase lumber to build a new church. According to Reuter, "when enough money was collected to buy a load of lumber, one of the members would go into Oscoda where there were several lumber mills and purchase a load." The church



PRESENT DAY OSCODA METHODIST CHURCH OF INDIAN MISSION - Chippewa Indians came to the Oscoda area in the late 1700s to live in an area that was plentiful in fish and berries. The original church constructed in the late 1800s has been upgraded over the years but continues to preserve and honor the history and resilience of the Chippewa People.

that exists today "was completed in the winter of 1879 when it was dedicated free of debt."

The Indian Burial Ground is located about three-quarters of a mile from the church.

According to the 1976 News Press article, "one of the most well-known people to serve at the church was the Rev. Simon Greensky (Green Sky) who was pastor from 1889 to 1933. At the age of 82, he passed away in 1937.

John Silas, whose Indian name was "She-Bah-Gee-Shig," meaning Hole-in-the Sky, was a nephew of Greensky. As an ordained minister, he was appointed in 1934 to follow Greensky at the Oscoda Indian Mission Church. According to Reuter, "Silas was a Chippewa who was trained in a government school to be a mechanic and an electrician. Before taking over the Indian work for the Methodist Church, he worked several years building the log cabin parsonage on the south side of the present church, where it still stands. It

had a basement workshop where he taught boys to make things." Silas served until his death in 1948.

Reuter's book read that Silas' wife, Estella M. Silas, whose Indian name "Now-qua-kee-shiq-go-quah" meant "Noon-Day-Lady," served as the minister of the church from 1948-1958. "During her tenure as pastor, she saw to it that the church was painted and new steps were added.

From 1959 through 1964, Lawrence Nahgahgwon provided leadership to the church. T. Leonard Sanders was appointed in 1965. Donald J. Daws was appointed for the years 1966 and 1967 and Bertram McNally in 1968. William L.

Stone was appointed in 1969 and served until 1976. James A. Smith came to the Oscoda Indian Mission Church in June of 1976 and served until 1983.

According to Reuter, during Smith's time as pastor, the church building consisted of a 28 foot by 40-foot sanctuary without running water or plumbing. Through personal donations, the congregation was able to install new windows, insulation, and replace the clapboard siding. The church members also wanted to build a fellowship hall. They were able to obtain some funds from the Ethnic Minority Local Church Fund. The remaining funds needed for construction were raised by having bazaars and by selling the removed clapboard pieces. Hazel Lavoie travelled throughout the area to share the story of the church's journey and was able to raise enough money to complete the building of the fellowship hall in 1981 as a 24-foot by 32-foot addition with a bathroom and kitchen. The total cost of the project was less than \$30,000.

Rev. F. Richard MacCanon served as pastor of the church from 1983 until June of 1988. MacCanon prided himself in learning enough Chippewa language to be able to sing the songs the Indians love to sing and pray the Lord's Prayer and the doxology in Chippewa. During his tenure, the church paved the parking lots in 1988 and installed a new wall furnace.



CHIPPEWA INDIAN CEMETERY HONORS VETERANS - The Chippewa Indian Cemetery memorial on Indian Road honors all deceased Chippewa who served in the Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korean, and Vietnam Conflicts.

Per Reuters book, "The Oscoda Indian Church in 1988 was very proud of its three trained lay speakers who were Shirley A. Johnson of Oscoda, Hazel R. Lavoie of Oscoda, and Nelson C. Nedwash of Mikado."

Also of significant historical achievement was the return of skeletal remains that had been placed in a museum at the University of Michigan. Per legislation, the remains were returned to the area where they had been removed and placed in a special burial area at the Oscoda Indian Burial site in 1988.

Rev. William Cargo was appointed to the Oscoda Indian Church in June of 1988 and served until July 1, 2006.

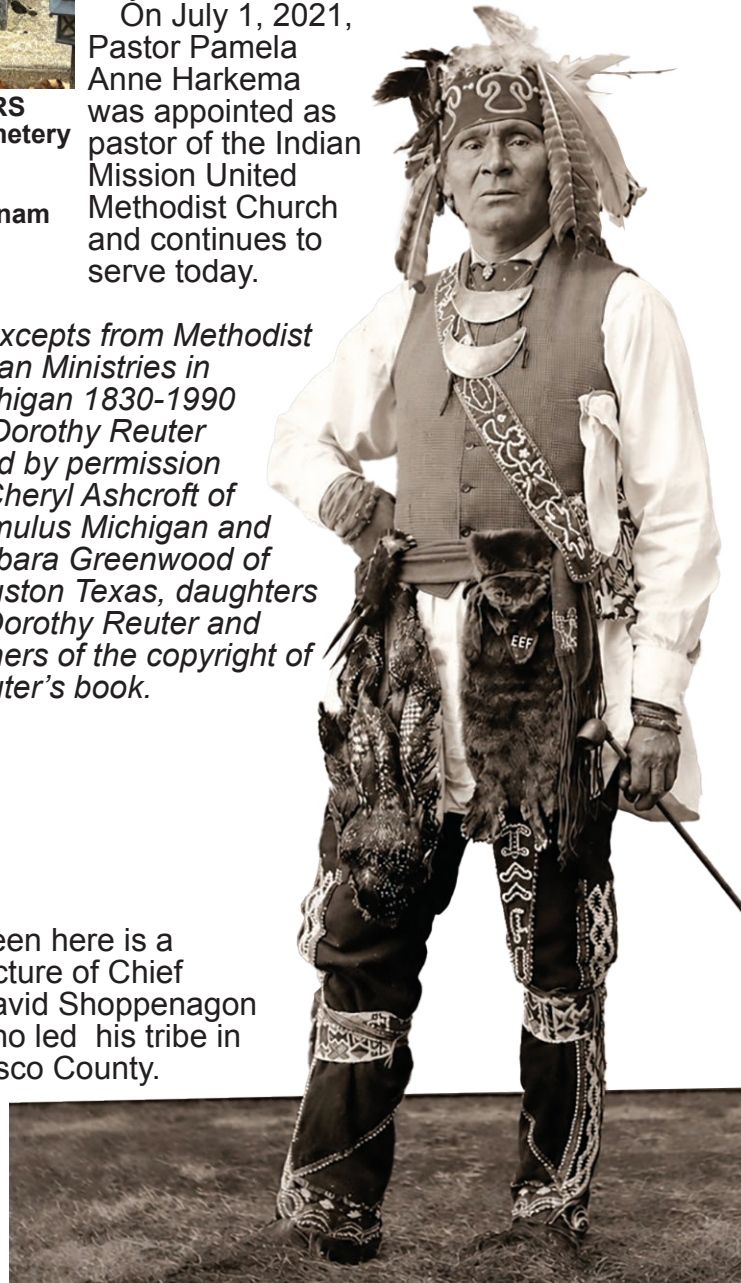
According to *UMData.org*, the pastors of the Indian Mission United Methodist Church pastors since 2006 are:

Rev. Briony Erin Peters Desotell from July 1, 2006, until June 30, 2014, followed by Rev. William Ralph Seitz from July 1, 2014, until June 30, 2021.

On July 1, 2021, Pastor Pamela Anne Harkema was appointed as pastor of the Indian Mission United Methodist Church and continues to serve today.

Excerpts from Methodist Indian Ministries in Michigan 1830-1990 by Dorothy Reuter used by permission of Cheryl Ashcroft of Romulus Michigan and Barbara Greenwood of Houston Texas, daughters of Dorothy Reuter and owners of the copyright of Reuter's book.

Seen here is a picture of Chief David Shoppenagon who led his tribe in Iosco County.



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There's something special about old *Main Street in Oscoda in 1910*

This photo captures a time when horses and carriages still traveled the sandy streets of downtown Oscoda, long before the steady hum of automobiles. You can almost hear the clip-clop of hooves and imagine neighbors stopping to talk along the boardwalks.

Prominent in the image is the well-known Currie House, once a centerpiece of activity and hospitality in town. Nearby stands Oscoda Lodge #400, a reminder of the strong fraternal traditions that helped shape early community life in Michigan. Organizations like the lodge played an important role in bringing residents together for fellowship, charity, and civic leadership.

At that time, Main Street was the heart of business, conversation, and daily life in what would grow to become the modern community we know today. From lumbering days to resort town beginnings, every building along that street tells part of the story of Iosco County.

Photos like this remind us how much has changed — and how much of that early spirit still remains.

Do you have memories or stories passed down about the Currie House or Oscoda Lodge #400?



Story & Photo Courtesy of Iosco County Historical Museum Digital Preservation Database

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Hollywood Comes to Iosco County

by Gaylynn Brenoel

In 1948, the film *Fighter Squadron* was produced in Hollywood by Warner Bros. Pictures. The movie was primarily filmed at Oscoda Army Airfield, now Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda.

The starring cast included Robert Stack as Captain Stu Hamilton and Edmond O'Brien as Major Ed Hardin.



Robert Stack standing far right in white T-Shirt



Hilltop Owner Grace Hopcroft (left)
with Robert Stack of the movie
Fighter Squadron

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Legend has it that the staff and crew were frequent diners at the Hilltop Bar and Grill in Oscoda. According to Hilltop's current owner Miles Schmidt, he believes the stories to be true. "The Hilltop is perhaps the oldest bar in northeast Michigan. It's been in the same place since 1884."

Photos at the Hilltop seem to confirm the claim. Robert Stack is pictured with Hilltop owner, Grace Hopcroft in 1948.

Another interesting historical fact is that Rock Hudson, then 23-years-old, made his film debut in the movie.



Robert Stack is shown sitting in the Jeep in the center.



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Happy 4th of July!



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Fun fact: That same fair introduced the world to the Ferris Wheel, Cracker Jack, and Juicy Fruit gum — all surrounded by walls made from our backyard.

Two companies still mine gypsum in Alabaster today! Next time you drive US-23, wave at the quarry. You’re passing a place that literally helped build history.

Who else had NO IDEA Alabaster helped put Chicago on the map?!

Story & Photo Courtesy of Iosco County Historical Museum Digital Preservation Database



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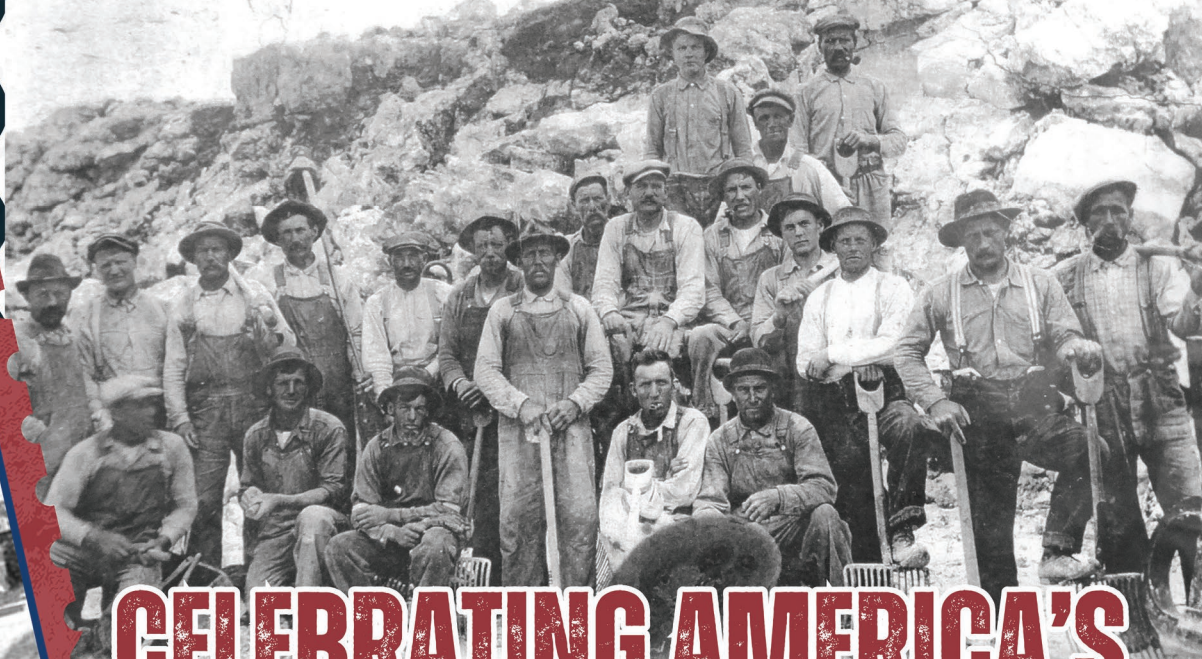
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