

# A The United States of AMERICA @250



## The First Draft of History

*America's story, told one newspaper at a time*

BY LOIS TOMASZEWSKI  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, SHORELINE MEDIA

**W**hen I think about America's 250th birthday, I find myself thinking about old newspapers.

One of my favorite parts of working at a newspaper is opening a bound volume, scrolling through a digitized archive or pulling a yellowed clipping from a file and discovering a story written decades before I was born.

Sometimes I'm researching a historic building. Sometimes it's a community celebration still held today. Other times it's a question about a family, a business or an event that shaped a town's history.

The names change. The dates change. The details change.

But the values reflected in those stories often feel remarkably familiar.

At the same time, communities are never standing still. Every generation leaves its mark. New residents arrive. New businesses open. New ideas emerge. New goals are set. The communities we know today were built not only by those who came before us, but also by those who continue to shape them.

Transition and change are often difficult. Yet throughout our history, there are stories of people who rose to those challenges, devised solutions and tackled problems that at the time may have seemed insurmountable.

Those stories fill the pages of old newspapers and today's editions alike. They are the history of yesterday and the record of today. Someday, they will help future generations understand who we were, what we valued and how we met the challenges of our time.

As America prepares to celebrate 250 years of independence, it's worth remembering that newspapers have been recording the nation's story almost from the beginning. Long before television, radio, websites and social media, newspapers connected communities to the wider world and preserved the events, challenges and triumphs that defined daily life.

The newspapers of 1776 would look unfamiliar to modern readers. Many were openly aligned with political causes, and editors often served as advocates as much as reporters. News, opinion and political persuasion frequently appeared side by side.

Yet those early publications played a critical role in informing colonists and helping shape public understanding of the events sur-

rounding the American Revolution.

As the nation grew, newspapers grew with it.

By the time Michigan became a state in 1837, newspapers had become essential community institutions. Editors chronicled settlement, commerce, politics and daily life across the frontier. The arrival of railroads, the telegraph and improved printing technology transformed the speed of communication and expanded the reach of journalism.

Across West Michigan, newspapers developed alongside the communities they served.

In Mason County, newspapers documented the rise of Ludington from a lumber town into a bustling Great Lakes port. In Manistee, newspapers followed the growth of one of the nation's leading lumber-producing communities. In Oceana County, local publications chronicled the agricultural heritage that continues to shape the region today. In Lake County, newspapers recorded the challenges and opportunities of a rural community built around forests, recreation and small-town life. In the White Lake area, publications captured the stories of Whitehall, Montague and neighboring communities as they grew along the shoreline.

Looking through those early editions, I find stories about church suppers, school programs,

lodge meetings, baseball games, business ventures and community celebrations alongside reports about elections, industry and government.

Some of those stories seem quaint today.

Others sound remarkably familiar.

A century ago, newspapers reported on road projects, school funding, public safety, economic development and political disagreements. Today's newspapers cover many of the same issues.

What has changed is how journalism is practiced.

Looking through old editions, I'm sometimes struck by information that would never appear in today's newspaper. Names of juveniles, intimate details of family tragedies and allegations reported before facts were fully known were not uncommon.

Even the mistakes, assumptions and biases found in old newspapers tell us something about the communities and times in which they were written.

As journalism evolved, so did expectations about fairness, verification and the separation of news reporting from opinion. Modern journalism asks us to slow down, verify more and think carefully about the consequences of publication.

SEE AMERICA'S STORY, B14

**We the People**  
insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, from and our Posterity, We ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

*Article 1*  
Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall vest in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our Sacred Honor

**We offer a wide range of floor covering and Hunter Douglas Window Treatments to suit your needs**

QUARTZ COUNTERTOPS • CUSTOM TILE SHOWERS  
WINDOW BLINDS/DRAPES/SHUTTERS  
HARDWOOD • CARPET  
LUXURY VINYL PLANK

**COREtec Floors**

**BUY NOW, PAY LATER WITH 12 MONTH FINANCING**  
\*With Approved Credit

**WEST MICHIGAN CARPET & FLOOR**  
SERVING WEST MICHIGAN SINCE 1959

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 9-5; Wednesday & Saturday: 9-1; Sunday: Closed  
911 S. State St., Hart, MI | 231-873-5440 | www.wmcarpet.com

**250 YEARS Anniversary AMERICA**

**We're proud of 55 Years of Keeping Our Community Rolling**

**TOTAL CAR CARE SERVICE**

- Exhausts
- Drive Train
- Brakes
- Shocks/Struts
- Engine
- Air Conditioning
- Batteries
- Lighting
- Tires
- Diagnostics
- Alignments
- Lube & Oil
- Chassis
- Wiper Blades
- ...and more!

**PENNZOIL 10 MINUTE OIL CHANGE®**  
*No Appointment Necessary*

**2025 SHORELINE MEDIA Readers' Choice \*\*\***

Your friends at  
**Avenue Tire & Service**

**5797 W. US-10, Ludington 231-843-3414**



# 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.

### 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.

### 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 prominently 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.



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.

# Notable facts about the land of the free

The United States of America is often characterized as "the land of the free," a characterization that serves as a feather in the cap of the nation that will celebrate its two hundred and fiftieth anniversary in 2026. Upon hearing the phrase "land of the free," it's understandable if thoughts immediately go to protected rights like freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of the press. But what about the "land" in the land of free? As Americans prepare to celebrate their nation's semiquincentennial, recognition of various geographical features of the land of the free can underscore why the United States of America is such a unique place to call home.



Alaska's location makes it a particularly unique place in the land of the free.

It may surprise no one to learn that Alaska features the northernmost point in all of the United States. But it may raise an eyebrow or two to learn that The Last Frontier contains both the easternmost and westernmost points in the country. The Prime Meridian is an imaginary line that divides the Earth into the eastern and western hemispheres. According to The State of Alaska, the westernmost point in the state, and thus the entire country, is Amatignak Island. Seventy miles away and still in Alaska, but on the other side of the meridian and thus technically in the eastern hemisphere, sits Pochnoi Point on Semisopochnoi Island, which is the easternmost point in the country.

### The tallest mountain in the world is in America.

Climbers who train for years in the hopes of one day making their way up Mount Everest might be surprised to learn the mountain located on the border between Koshi Province, Nepal and the Tibet Autonomous Region is not, in fact, the world's tallest mountain. While Mount Everest is the highest mountain above sea level, the world's tallest mountain is Mauna Kea, which is in the Hawaiian islands. According to the American Geography Portal, when measured from its base on the sea floor to its summit, Mauna Kea is more than 32,000 feet tall, topping Mount Everest by a few thousand feet.

### Oregon is home to one of the world's deepest lakes.

With a depth of approximately 1,950 feet, Crater Lake in south-central Oregon is the eleventh deepest lake in the world and the second deepest lake in North America. The National Park Service notes that Crater Lake, fed by rain and snow, is among the most pristine lakes on Earth, making it a popular destination for artists, photographers and sightseers.

### You end up in the "same" place no matter which direction you go when departing Stamford, Connecticut.

Located in southwestern Connecticut, Stamford is in a notably unique geographic location. If you travel due east, due west, due south, or due north when departing Stamford, you will end up entering the same state: New York. This is the only place in all of the United States where traveling along the four compass points will leave you in the same place no matter the direction you choose.

**Happy 250th America**  
250 Years of Heart, Hope & Home

**GUESTS COMING TO VISIT?**  
NO GUEST ROOM? NO PROBLEM.

Sleeper sofas from Lundquist Furniture make hosting easy—and comfortable.

Skip the air mattress and upgrade your space with something that looks great every day.

Now's the perfect time to get ready for spring and summer guests.

**Stop in and see what's in stock!**  
We have new items arriving daily!

LundquistFurniture.com

**LUNDQUIST FURNITURE**  
The Lakeshore's Biggest & Best  
YOUR STYLE • YOUR PRICE

Downtown  
Scottville  
since 1940  
**231-757-3368**

**AMERICA 250**  
★—TURNS—★

**We've Been Making Memories Since 1935**

1935 → 1940 → 2026  
**91 Years of Memories**

*While America celebrates 250 years, we're honored to have been a small part of Ludington's story for nearly a century*

**Sand Bar**  
MUSIC MEETS MEMORIES

203 S. JAMES ST.  
LUDINGTON, MI  
**231-425-3093**

Follow Us  
f i

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA 250**

FOR 250 YEARS, AMERICA'S STORY HAS BEEN WRITTEN BY STRONG HEARTS, HARD WORK, SACRIFICE, AND COMMUNITY. AT OAKVIEW, WE ARE HONORED TO CELEBRATE THE GENERATIONS WHO LIVED THROUGH HISTORY, HELPED BUILD OUR NATION, AND CONTINUE TO INSPIRE US EVERY DAY.

**CELEBRATING 60th Anniversary**  
MASON COUNTY'S  
**OAKVIEW**  
—★ MEDICAL CARE FACILITY ★—

1001 DIANA ST  
LUDINGTON  
231.845.5185

**Happy 250th Anniversary America**

**C.A.R. CONRAD'S AUTO REPAIR**

**COMPLETE AUTO & LIGHT TRUCK REPAIR**

State Licensed, Certified Master Technician

We are Honored to be Celebrating 4 Years of Serving our Community!

- Alignments
- Tires
- Electrical
- Brakes
- Steering and suspension
- Air conditioning
- Engine
- Transmission
- Driveline
- Drivability
- Exhaust
- Cooling systems
- Oil change
- Engine performance diagnosis
- (check engine light)

**HOURS:**  
Mon.-Fri.  
8 AM-5 PM

**231-299-1161**  
230 W. Parkdale Ave.  
Manistee, MI

# 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.



published by  
**SHORELINE MEDIA**  
LUDINGTON DAILY NEWS  
OCEANA'S HERALD-JOURNAL  
WHITE LAKE BEACON  
www.shorelinemedia.net

**Ludington Daily News**  
202 N. Rath Ave.  
PO Box 340  
Ludington, MI 49431  
(231) 845-5181  
(231) 843-4011 fax

**Oceana's Herald-Journal**  
123 State Street  
PO Box 190  
Hart, MI 49420  
(231) 873-5602  
(231) 873-4775 fax

**White Lake Beacon**  
PO Box 98  
Whitehall, MI 49461  
(231) 894-5356  
(231) 873-4775 fax

**Interim Publisher:**  
Paul Heidebreder

**Sales:**  
Shelley Kovar, Monica Evans

**Graphics:**  
Judy Lytle, Julie Eilers,  
Madelyn Kerbyson

**News:** Lois Tomaszewski,  
Shanna Avery, Alexis Settler,  
Cristina Juska, Sean Chase,  
Larry Launstein Jr., Kate Babel

**Circulation:**  
Jerriann Steiger

© Copyright 2026 Shoreline Media

# 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

### Income taxes • 1776: 0%

Debates regarding income taxes may seem like an ever-present component of American life, but colonists did not pay income tax in 1776. Though taxation was undeniably a notable issue throughout colonial America, the Tax Foundation notes the situation was considerably different in 1776 than it is today, when taxes are a highly debated component of American life. In 1776, the British Crown relied on tariffs and excise taxes to fund the American colonies, whereas modern Americans pay federal and, in most states, state income taxes to finance a range of public goods and services.

### 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.

94 Years Young...

**CARTER Lumber** THE YARD

94 Years 1932-2026



Let us help make your dream cottage come true



QUALITY MATERIALS, EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE



Quick on line pricing



Your decking railing head quarters



KITCHENS FLOORING

*Et More!* Complete Home Remodeling and Design

KITCHENS • FLOORING BATHS • ROOM ADDITIONS

We make your Home Remodel an enjoyable experience... the way it should be!

See what we can do for you.

2323 West US Hwy 10  
Ludington, MI  
231-757-9000  
carterlumber.com



**HAPPY 250th BIRTHDAY USA!**

**THIS BUD'S FOR US**

SINCE 1876

**For 150 Years, This Bud's For You**

**Budweiser**  
SINCE 1876

*Michelob* | **ULTRA**

**MAKE MATCH DAY SUPERIOR**

2026 FIFA WORLD CUP



## How Lumber Built Michigan's Western Shore

From White Lake and Pentwater to Ludington, Luther and Manistee, the forests, rivers, harbors and lumber camps of the region helped supply a growing nation and shaped the communities that remain today

COMPILED BY LOIS TOMASZEWSKI  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, SHORELINE MEDIA

This article draws on reporting and historical research previously published by Shoreline Media Group, local historians and regional historical organizations.

When lumberman Justus S. Stearns looked back on Michigan's lumber era in 1916, he expressed regret for something many people once believed would never disappear.

"Of all the changes of the past third of a century in the lumber industry," Stearns wrote, "the most to be regretted is the disappearance of the Michigan pine tree."

By then, many of the towering white pines that had defined Michigan's landscape were gone. The forests that built fortunes, created communities and supplied lumber to a growing nation had largely been cut.

Yet their story remains woven into the history of the communities that grew along Michigan's western shore. Names such as Stearns, Cartier, Filer, Mears and Ludington still appear on streets, landmarks and institutions throughout the region.

From the harbors of White Lake and Pentwater to the mills of Ludington and Manistee and the logging camps that once dotted Lake County, the lumber industry shaped communities that still define the region today.

Local historian James Cabot noted that America's lumber frontier moved steadily westward as forests were harvested and new sources of timber were sought. Maine dominated the trade in the early 1800s, followed by New York and Pennsylvania. Michigan's lumber output surpassed Pennsylvania's in 1867-68, and by 1869 the state had become the nation's leading lumber producer, a distinction it would hold for roughly three decades.

As railroads expanded, cities grew and settlers pushed westward after the Civil War, demand for lumber surged. According to Archives of Michigan records, more than 1,600 sawmills operated across Michigan by 1873. Historical research published by Michigan State University notes that the state's mills cut approximately 5.5 billion board feet of lumber during the industry's peak in 1889-90.

### Along the rivers and the lakeshore

Long before paved highways connected the region, rivers and Lake Michigan served as the area's transportation network.

Each winter, crews entered forests stretching across what are now Mason, Oceana, Lake and Manistee counties and the White Lake area of Muskegon County. Trees were felled and hauled to riverbanks, where they waited for spring thaws.

When the ice broke, rivers carried thousands of logs toward mills lining the lakeshore. At harbors such as White Lake, Pentwater, Ludington and Manistee, schooners and steamships waited to carry lumber to growing cities throughout the Midwest.

What began as a pine tree in a Mason County forest might become a home in Chicago, a barn in Iowa or a railroad depot on the American frontier.

According to the National Park Service and other historical sources, lumber harvested from Michigan's forests and shipped through ports along Michigan's western shore was among the materials used in rebuilding Chicago after the Great Fire of 1871.

Lumber moved out through ports and harbors along Michigan's western shore, connecting local forests to cities hundreds of miles away.

Local historian James Cabot highlighted the role of Chicago lumber merchant John Mason Loomis and James Ludington, whose partnership linked Michigan timberlands to Chicago markets during the 1850s. Their work helped establish commercial connections



that would shape both the future city of Ludington and the broader lumber economy of Michigan's western shore.

### Charles Mears and the lakeshore frontier

Few people left a larger mark on the region's early lumber industry than Charles Mears.

According to White Lake Historical Society historian Barbara Brow, Mears arrived in western Michigan in the 1830s and spent the next quarter century building a lumber empire along the lakeshore. Within 25 years, he had acquired approximately 40,000 acres of land, operated 15 mills and built five harbors.

His influence stretched from the White Lake area through Oceana County and into portions of Mason County.

In Pentwater, Mears built a sawmill on Pentwater Lake in 1855. Brow wrote that he later improved the channel connecting Pentwater Lake to Lake Michigan and constructed a 660-foot pier extending into the lake, allowing vessels to carry lumber to his Chicago lumber yards.

Today, Pentwater is known as a resort community and boating destination. During the lumber era, it was a working port tied directly to the nation's growing demand for timber.

### The people behind the mills

Charles Mears was not alone in shaping the region's lumber economy.

Across Michigan's western shore, lumbermen built mills, bought timberlands, opened shipping routes and helped shape the communities that grew up around the industry.

Local historian James Cabot documented the role of John Mason Loomis, whose partnership with James Ludington helped connect Michigan timber to Chicago markets. In Mason County, Justus S. Stearns became one of the region's most influential lumber industrialists, building an enterprise that eventually extended beyond Michigan into Wisconsin, Kentucky, Florida and Washington.

Mason County readers still recognize many of those names. Cartier, Filer, Danaher and Ward were among the lumber-era figures whose investments helped shape communities across the region.

While some lumbermen moved on when the pine forests were depleted, others remained, investing in new industries and helping communities transition beyond the lumber era.

### Entire cities in the woods

While mills dominated the lakeshore, the work of cutting timber took place deep in the forests.

Former lumberjack Joseph Bull offered one of the most vivid accounts of life in the woods. In a historical account highlighted by Shoreline Media reporter Shanna Avery, Bull recalled arriving in the Luther area as a child in 1871.

He described his father carrying supplies through virgin forests guided only by narrow footpaths and the distant howls of wolves.

By the late 1880s, Bull was working in the industry himself.

Luther, he recalled, was a "red-hot man town" with approximately 30 lumber camps operating within 10 miles, each housing between 50 and 100 men.

Bull recalled kerosene streetlights illuminating boardwalks crowded with lumberjacks. Hotels, saloons, dance halls, an opera house and a roller-skating rink served the bustling community.

"Street fights every night," Bull recalled. "When some giant riverman tangled with some husky swamper, it was a fight to the finish."

The camps were far more than temporary bunkhouses in the woods.

Drawing on photographs preserved in the Manistee County Historical Museum archives, museum volunteer Kurt Schindler noted that logging camps often included dormitories, dining halls, stables, warehouses, blacksmith shops, company stores and railroad facilities.

"These lumber camps were entire cities," Schindler wrote.

While many camps disappeared as the forests were cut, the transportation routes, businesses and settlements that grew around them often remained.

### Communities take root

Mason County Historical Society President James Jensen, building on research by June Dereske published in the society's Mason Memories journal, noted that many communities developed around rivers, railroads and later highways that were first tied to the lumber industry.

Jensen noted that communities first grew along rivers, later shifted toward railroad depots and eventually gravitated toward highways as transportation changed.

One example can be found in Walhalla. According to Jensen, the area's earliest permanent settlement centered on a lumber camp operated by Jacob Loucks along the Pere Marquette River before evolving alongside railroad and highway development.

According to Jensen and other local historians, lumber camps gave rise to stores, boarding houses, post offices, schools and churches. Boarding houses, schools, churches, general stores and family homes followed the camps, helping transform temporary settlements into permanent communities. Former Civil War soldiers, immigrants and lumber workers built communities that remained long after the last log drives ended.

### When the pine began to disappear

Not everyone believed the forests

would last forever.

In a 1916 article reflecting on Michigan's lumber industry, Stearns recalled that many lumbermen in the 1870s believed there was more timber in the Great Lakes states than could ever be harvested.

Local historian James Cabot pointed to a June 10, 1886, article in the Ludington Record that quoted timber cruiser Charles H. Chick warning that both the quantity and quality of Michigan pine were rapidly diminishing.

Within a few years, lumbermen across Michigan were confronting the reality Chick had recognized in 1886.

Lumber production peaked at Saginaw and Bay City in 1882, Muskegon in 1887 and Ludington and Manistee around 1892.

As the best pine forests disappeared, many lumbermen adapted by turning to hardwoods or pursuing opportunities in new timber regions.

Cabot documented how many lumbermen followed new opportunities to Wisconsin, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Florida, Arizona, Oregon and Washington as the lumber frontier continued its westward march.

The same migration that had brought the industry to Michigan eventually carried it elsewhere.

### Hardwoods and new beginnings

The end of the pine boom did not mean the end of lumbering.

According to Cabot, citing lumberman Perry Hannah and historian Frances Caswell Hanna, hardwood trees had once been viewed as obstacles standing between lumbermen and valuable pine.

The arrival of railroads changed that. Timber that once could not be floated to market suddenly became economically valuable.

Once timber could be moved by rail, maple, beech and other hardwoods became valuable commodities.

Hanna wrote that "the magnificent maples and other deciduous trees of Mason County began to share the fate of the giant pines."

At the same time, cleared lands opened new opportunities.

Across the region, former timberlands became farms, orchards and agricultural communities.

### Legacy at 250

The forests that helped build America are largely gone.

Visitors who walk the shoreline at White Lake, explore Pentwater, paddle the Pere Marquette River, travel through Luther, visit Manistee or stroll through the waterfronts and downtowns that grew from the lumber trade experience landscapes shaped by the lumber era.

Not every lumberman viewed the passing of Michigan's forests with indifference. Cabot noted that Stearns, whose fortune was built on timber, later expressed regret over the disappearance of the state's great pine forests.

In a 1916 reflection on the industry, Stearns wrote:

"Of all the changes of the past third of a century in the lumber industry, the most to be regretted is the disappearance of the Michigan pine tree."

The forests may be gone, but the communities that grew from the lumber era remain. Their harbors, rivers, downtowns and neighborhoods still tell the story of how Michigan's western shore helped build a growing nation.

Part of Shoreline Media Group's America at 250 series exploring the people, industries and events that shaped our communities. This article was developed from reporting and historical research previously published in Shoreline Media Group publications, including work by local historian James Cabot, Mason County Historical Society President James Jensen, White Lake Historical Society historian Barbara Brow, Shoreline Media reporter Shanna Avery and other contributors. Additional historical sources are attributed throughout the article.

**WASTE REDUCTION SYSTEMS, LLC**  
*A Star-Spangled Salute to 250 Years!!*

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES  
COMMERCIAL SERVICES  
DUMPSTER SERVICES

MASON COUNTY'S ONLY LOCAL WASTE HAULER

Family-Owned and operated for 35+ Years  
Mason County's Only Local Waste Hauler

Call 231-843-9129 today  
or stop by our Transfer Station:  
5848 N. Stiles Rd., Ludington  
Office: 119 S. Main St., Scottville  
wastereductionsystemsllc@gmail.com

walk the beat.  
WHITE LAKE AREA

**FREE MUSIC FESTIVAL!**

SATURDAY  
JULY 18, 2026  
1:00 PM - 5:30 PM  
DOWNTOWN  
WHITEHALL & MONTAGUE

HELP SUPPORT local musicians, businesses & community members!

- 13 Live Music Venues
- 26 Musical Acts
- \$2600+ in Free Door Prizes
- Raffles with a Chance to Win up to \$5000!
- Food Trucks, Family Fun & More!

**Red, White, Blue & Beautiful**

Celebrating America's 250th birthday and 78 years of helping create beautiful spaces right here at home.

**BUY YOUR PAINT AT LUDINGTON PAINT**

**LUDINGTON PAINT & GLASS**

213 S. James St.  
Ludington, MI  
(231) 843-8250

**America 250 Anniversary Flag**  
Official U.S. Semiquincentennial Banner

**AMERICA 250**

only \$24<sup>99</sup> plus tax for subscribers

\$29.99 plus tax for non-subscribers

Celebrate 250 years of American freedom with the official America 250 Anniversary Flag! Designed to honor the United States Semiquincentennial in 2026, this flag is perfect for homeowners, businesses, schools, and government buildings preparing for America's historic birthday.

Officially licensed 3'x5' America 250 flag • 100% Made in the USA  
Durable, outdoor-safe nylon or polycotton with brass grommets and a sturdy white canvas header.

**Ludington Daily News**  
202 N. Rath Ave., Ludington, MI 49431 • 231-845-5181 • ludingtondailynews.com

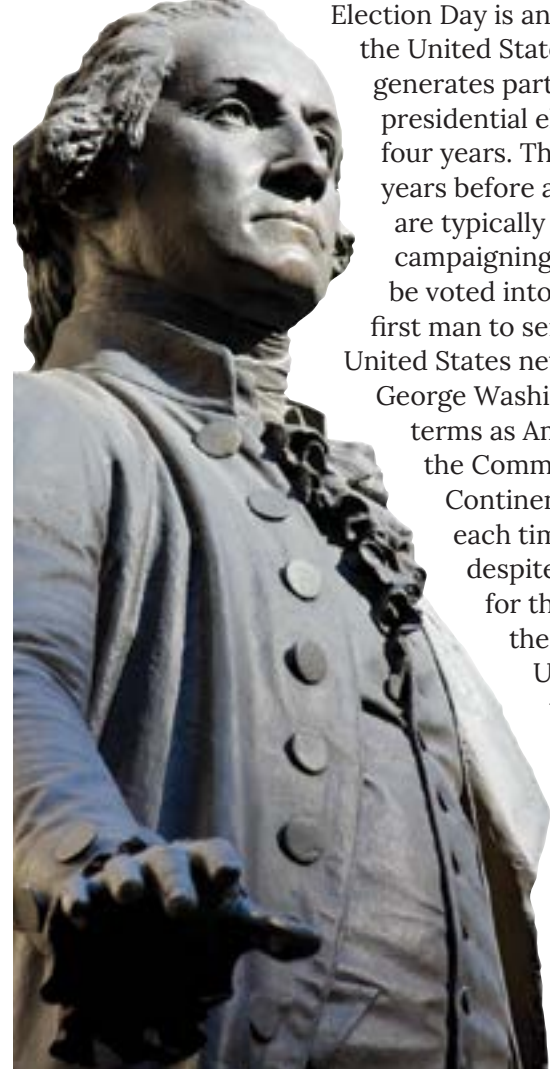
# UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



## 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.

## An era before presidential campaigns



Election Day is an annual event in the United States, and it's one that generates particular excitement when presidential elections are held every four years. The months and even years before a presidential election are typically marked by extensive campaigning by candidates hoping to be voted into the Oval Office, but the first man to serve as President of the United States never actually campaigned. George Washington served two terms as American president, but the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army was chosen each time by the electoral college despite never campaigning for the job. According to the Miller Center at the University of Virginia, the political campaigns modern voters know well did not exist in 1788. Despite the lack of campaigning, Washington was the electoral college's unanimous choice for president in 1789, a feat he repeated in 1792.



## Historic locales across the United States

Americans will celebrate the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the United States in 2026. A semiquincentennial is a notable anniversary, and there's been no shortage of noteworthy events throughout United States history. The places where many of those events took place have been preserved by local and national historical societies, and visiting such sites can make for a great way to gain a greater understanding of American history. The National Trust for Historic Preservation® works to maintain and revitalize historic sites, and that boasts a number of benefits. History buffs may insist there's no experience quite like visiting a historic site and feeling an immediate connection to past eras and peoples. And such sites also provide a boost to local economies while helping to establish a shared sense of civic duty and belonging, which ultimately helps to build strong communities. With so much to gain from visiting historic locales, those celebrating 250 years of the United States can visit any of these sites across the country to bolster those celebrations.

### • Historic Rural Schoolhouses of Montana, Montana:

The National Trust notes that each of Montana's 56 counties still features at least one rural schoolhouse, many of which are one- or two-room buildings where generations of school-aged children were educated. A visit to one of these schoolhouses provides incredible context to what life in the state of Montana was like in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



Happy 250th Birthday to the Land We Love!!!

Trusted and reliable source for quality products

## YOUR BUILDING SUPPLY SPECIALISTS

Building Relationship, Building Trust, a Tradition Since 1905

- Roofing
- Siding
- Windows
- Doors



925 N. Washington Ave., Ludington  
231-843-3235  
www.gulfeaglesupply.com

## YOUR GRILL CALLED... It Wants Sanders Meats.



SINCE 1925 SANDERS MEATS

MON.-SAT. 8 AM-5 PM  
CLOSED SUNDAYS

★ CUSTER, MICHIGAN 231-757-4768 ★

HAM ★ BACON ★ SAUSAGE  
BEER ★ WINE ★ LIQUOR



CELEBRATING AMERICA'S 250th Anniversary

and 45 Years of Warmth Close to Home

Positive Chimney & Fireplace is proud to serve the community we call home



HOURS: MONDAY - FRIDAY 10 AM-5 PM


**positive** CHIMNEY & FIRE PLACE 231-844-9001

65 S. JEBAVY DR. (formerly Larson Energy Solutions)

## 250 YEARS of AMERICAN STORIES

For generations, families have honored the people who shaped their lives.

A permanent memorial ensures their story is never forgotten.

Where memories become permanent memorials.

354 Ottawa St. Muskegon, MI 49442  
www.superiormonument.com  
231-728-2211

Headstones Mausoleums Civic & Veterans Memorials Bronze Plaques Monuments

## EXTENDED HOURS EXTENDED SUPPORT

Ludington: Tuesdays 8 am - 7 pm

Hart: Wednesdays 7 am - 6 pm

### YOU CAN DO IT. WE CAN HELP. PUEDES HACERLO. NOSOTRAS PODEMOS AYUDAR.

SUPPORT WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

MOBILE CRISIS & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH URGENT CARE

1-800-992-2061




FLAVOR YOUR CRUST FREE!

**\$33 HOWIE DEAL**

2 large 2-topping pizzas, 3 Cheeser Howie Bread® with dipping sauce and a 2 liter of Pepsi!

**Hungry Howie's** FLAVORED CRUST PIZZA

LUDINGTON (231) 843-6363  
5485 US-10 Next to Walgreens  
We Deliver • Open Late • Open for lunch

Happy 250th America

120 YEARS & STILL 'SCRAPPIN'!



## PADNOS PERE MARQUETTE

843-4455

2601 W. US-10, Ludington  
www.padnos.com

Turn your Trash Into CASH!



Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8-4  
Call for Saturday days and times

Hart  
105 Lincoln St.  
231-873-2108

Baldwin  
1090 N. Michigan Ave.  
231-745-4659

Ludington  
920 Diana St.  
231-845-6294



West Michigan CMH  
Renew. Rebuild. Recover.™

# Fun Facts

about some of the colonies that formed the U.S.



It's been 250 years since the 13 colonies joined to form the United States of America, but those 13 territories continue to feature prominently throughout the country each and every day. That's because the 13 stripes on the American flag represent the original 13 colonies.

**The American flag serves as a visible reminder of the 13 colonies,** and that's not the only interesting fact about the territories that would become the United States of America.



**There was a constitution that predates the United States Constitution.**

ConnecticutHistory.org notes that the Connecticut Colony had a framework for government by the mid-seventeenth century not unlike the one that would be spelled out in the U.S. Constitution. The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut were adopted in 1639 and are considered the first written constitution in America. Roger Ludlow of Windsor is believed to have drafted the Fundamental Orders, which consisted of a preamble and 11 orders (or laws) and mirrored trading company charters common at the time. Notably, the Orders did not reference the authority of the crown.



**A debt sparked the founding of Pennsylvania.**

After the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660, Charles II of England took the throne. Money was tight at the time, so Sir William Penn, a British admiral, funded the rebuilding of the Royal Navy out of his own pocket. Charles II was petitioned for repayment by Sir William's son, also named William Penn, twenty years later. But the younger Penn, who had become a Quaker by this point, requested land in lieu of funds, with a goal toward establishing a place where religious tolerance was rule. The king granted the younger Penn's request in 1681, and decreed that the territory granted to Penn be named after his father. Thus, Pennsylvania got its name.



**Colonial New Jersey was home to a notable rift in a famous family.**

Benjamin Franklin was among the most renowned and recognizable of the Founding Fathers of the United States, and his commitment to the ideals of the burgeoning nation did not waver even when the conflict that became the American Revolutionary War divided his family.

William Franklin was a son Benjamin fathered outside his common-law marriage to Deborah Read. Though William was raised by his father and Read, father and son did not see eye-to-eye on every issue, including the war. William, in fact, served as the thirteenth and final Colonial Governor of New Jersey, and remained a steadfast loyalist throughout the conflict. The prospects of victory were looking dim for loyalists by 1781, and William departed for England in 1782, never to return to New Jersey or the infant nation it became a part of. Curiously, William's own son from an extra-marital relationship, William Temple Franklin, sided with his grandfather during the conflict, and even served Benjamin Franklin while the latter negotiated a pivotal alliance between America and France.



**Rent was cheap in New Hampshire by the mid-eighteenth century.**

The colony of New Hampshire was so sparsely populated by the end of the French and Indian War in 1762 that Governor Benning Wentworth came up with a unique way to entice people to move to what's now known as the Granite State. According to History.com, Wentworth recruited settlers by offering one-acre lots that required annual rental payments of just a single ear of Indian corn payable on December 25.

# Did You KNOW?

## The Library of Congress is the largest library in the world

An act of the United States Congress approved in 1800 continues to have an impact even today, when it's still paying dividends for lawmakers, librarians, scholars, and the general public. As Congress prepared to move the national government from Philadelphia to Washington in 1800, founding father and then-President of the United States John Adams approved an act allocating \$5,000 for books to be used by Congressmen. Thus marked the beginning of what is now known as the Library of Congress, which has since become the largest library in the world as well as the home of the U.S. Copyright Office. In 1802, President Adams's successor, Thomas Jefferson, made the job of Librarian of Congress a presidential appointment, and it remains so today.

The Library of Congress continually adds to its collection, which currently consists of millions of books in roughly 470 languages.



# John Tyler

From the tenth president to... 2025?!



John Tyler's visage might not have survived on American currency the way images of various figures from America's early history have, but the tenth president of the United States did manage to remain newsworthy well into the twenty-first century. Tyler, who was born in 1790 and served as President of the United States from 1841 to 1845, was a father of 15. Despite passing away in January 1862, less than a year after the start of the American Civil War, Tyler still had a living grandson at the start of 2025. Harrison Ruffin Tyler, who passed away on May 25, 2025, at the age of 96, was the last surviving grandchild of President Tyler. That means the period from President Tyler's birth in 1790 until the death of his last surviving grandchild spanned nearly a quarter of a millennium.

**250 YEARS OF FREEDOM, FAMILY & COMMUNITY**

**Great Yarn Shop** ★ **A Destination for Book Lovers and Delicious Grab 'N Go Eats** ★

**Rowan Flagship Store** ★ **COFFEE, FOOD, BOOKS, GIFTS** ★

**Hours:** Mon.-Thurs. 11-4, Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-3, Sun. Noon-3

**Hours:** Mon.-Sat. 7-7; Sun. 7-5

**Nautical Yarn** ★ **Join us at Next Chapter Cafe** ★

108 S. Rath Ave., Ludington 231-845-9868 www.nauticallyarn.com

201 S. Rath Ave., Ludington 231-843-2537 www.bookmarkludington.com

1742 W. US 10, Scottville 231-613-4111

**www.nextchaptercafe.com**

**Celebrating 250 Years of the American Dream!**

*Proudly providing quality flooring to your family for 46 years*

**FLOORING STYLES FROM THE BEST NAMES IN THE BUSINESS.**

Hardwood • Vinyl Planking • Laminata • Ceramic Tile  
Quartz Counter Tops • Carpet • Graber Window Treatments

**HARBOR FLOORING**

Open Mon.-Fri. 9 AM-5 PM; Sat. By Appointment  
3473 W. US 10 (Formerly Marek Auto Parts) Ludington  
**231.845.7149**

THE OCEANA COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY COMMEMORATES & CELEBRATES

# 250 YEARS OF FREEDOM & DEMOCRACY!

America's founding documents begin with a simple idea:

## We the People

The Party of the People is working hard to protect our democracy in Oceana County.

**JOIN US!**

**OCEANA COUNTY DEMS**

oceanacountydemocrats.com

PAID FOR BY THE OCEANA COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY | P.O. BOX 145, HART, MI 49420

**Happy 250th America!**

**Country View BAKERY** A Delicious Destination

PIES • HOMEMADE BREADS  
SPECIAL RECIPE GRANOLA  
COOKIES & MORE

**OPEN:** MON. - SAT. 9-6 PM

**FRIDAY NIGHT SPECIAL: BBQ RIBS 3-8PM**  
4815 W. US 10, LUDINGTON (Same parking lot as Aldi's)  
**231.425.6791 | 231.233.6292**

America the Beautiful – **250 Years Strong**

*Proudly Serving Our Community For 84 Years*

- Expert Collision Repair
- Lifetime Warranty
- Undetectable Color Matching
- Rental Cars Available On Site
- Insurance Claims Welcome

**Benedict's Auto Center**

1742 W. US 10, Scottville 231.613.4111

COME OR CALL IN ANYTIME FOR A FREE WRITTEN ESTIMATE

*America the Beautiful - 250 Years Strong*

**The Ludington Senior Center**  
Vitality at its best!

"Keeping Seniors Active and Independent"  
Providing Activities for Healthier Living

- Matter of Balance Classes
- Painting and Craft Classes
- Tax Credits
- Medicare/Medicaid Assistance
- Exercise Classes - Enhance Fitness, Zumba, Yoga, Stretch/Fit, Line Dancing, Cardio Drumming, Feldenkrais
- Clubs - Coin, Walking, Garden, Men's Breakfast, Book Club
- Fun in-door activities
- Ping Pong
- Billiards
- Trips

Stop in and see what's new, or read a copy of our monthly newsletter! A digital copy can be accessed on our Facebook page. Come join in on the fun, ages 50 and up!

*Celebrating Over 50 Years of Serving our Community*

308 S. Rowe, Ludington 231-845-6841  
<http://ludingtonseniorcenter.org>

# Many differences, still one nation

**“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness ...”**

This Fourth of July we mark 250 years of this noble experiment named the United States of America with core values clearly stated in the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence (quoted above).



**STEVE BEGNOCHE**  
SHORELINE MEDIA CONTRIBUTOR

The Declaration launched a revolution, not just of a people oppressed by a government across the ocean, but one that placed people and their rights at the core of what would become a new kind of government, a democratic republic later defined by another revolutionary document, the U.S. Constitution.

Now, 250 years later, we are both a different people from the white, European settlers that launched this nation, while remaining one cut of the same American cloth: a people wanting our freedom, seeking life, liberty and pursuit of happiness with a far more diverse citizenry now exceeding 300 million in population. Imperfect we are,

yes. Yet, this nation remains a beacon of hope to so many outside of our borders despite uneven application of our founding principles.

Today:

We are a people of resilience. A people of innovation. A people imperfect.

We have our differences. Plenty of them.

We are white, black, yellow and red – yes, a rainbow of pigments.

We are conservative, liberal/progressive, centrist, more radical or of no discernable political bent.

We are rural, urban, suburban.

We are Northerners, Midwesterners, Southerners, Easterners, Westerners, Bayou people, native people too often neglected or cheated by our government.

We come from 50 states and several territories, each distinct in some way, yet part of the whole.

We like our music be it rock, country, classical, jazz, blues, gospel, folk, electronic, funk bluegrass, newgrass, heavy metal, smooth new age sounds and much more.

We love burgers, steaks, chops, chicken fingers ... unless we don't and pick vegetarian or vegan fare as an alternative.

We are passionate, dispassionate, interested and disinterested.

We are Christian, Jewish, agnostic, atheist, Islamic, Buddhist, and so much more.

We like football (the American kind), soccer (football to much of the world), tennis, baseball – oh, those Tigers – hockey, pickleball, basketball, golf, cornhole, running and being sedentary.

We like news, gossip, ignoring news, ignoring gossip. Conspiracy theories are as widespread as pop culture legends such as Sasquatch, Big Foot or Paul Bunyon.

We hunt, fish, garden, watch birds, hunt beach stones, seek deals.

We love grass – the kind in the yard, but some are fond of the other kind, too. We water the lawn, cut the lawn, fertilize the lawn, and water it again. Cut it again. And again. And again.

We love our leaders – some of them – but never all of them. We loathe our leaders, some of them and often most of them.

We express ourselves with different haircuts, clothing styles, color choices that we think are cool, or hip, or flattering. Years later, we chuckle over those choices.

We love our cars, our trucks – especially our trucks – our motorcycles, RVs and even our bicycles.

We love our boats – pontoon, ski/pleasure, fishing or cruiser – and our kayaks and canoes.

We love being on the move, or being at home embracing couch potatoing.

We say Buy American, but generally choose less expensive options.

Overall, we embrace guns – though not all of us and not all of them.

We carry concealed weapons for safety, despite evidence weapons in a household increase danger of harm by a weapon to the residents.

We love our cherished right of free speech, though we often want others with views we dislike to keep quiet.

We watch Fox News and believe it as unbiased gospel. Or we don't. Ditto for MSN.

We take seriously our right and responsibility to vote – if we feel like it in a given election.

We like to complain – about taxes, services, government and politics. That won't change, no matter who's running the government, providing or reducing services and levying or cutting taxes.

Like the American flag, we have changed over the years. Still, the flag remains a sewn together assemblage of fabric with red and white stripes, a field of blue now with 50 white stars. Each feature is created by an assembly of stitches. Over time, a flag becomes frayed, torn and bleached when buffeted by weather and the elements. Still, it remains our flag. Every stitch is a part of it.

Each stripe is part of the whole, no matter whether red or white. Each star represents someplace unique. Together the 50 represent a whole nation. They're set against a field of blue, pleasing and calming to the eye, much like the sky on a beautiful day.

We're all part of it. Each of us is unique. Each is a stitch in this fabric that is the United States of America.

United we stand; divided we fall.

As we mark 250 years of this imperfect, ongoing experiment, it's a good time to recommit to that second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence and practice that which we preach.

Happy 250th United States of America! Working together with respect, we can celebrate many more anniversaries in the years to come.

Steve Begnoche, is a mostly-retired community journalist who's lived, like his age peers, for more than a fourth of this young nation's existence.

# AMERICA celebrating 250 years



## AMERICA'S STORY: told one newspaper at a time

FROM PAGE 1B

Technology has transformed the profession in ways those early publishers could scarcely imagine. News that once traveled by horse, ship or telegraph can now reach readers instantly through websites, mobile devices and social media platforms.

Yet the mission remains remarkably consistent.

At its best, journalism still serves the same purpose it served generations ago: providing verified information, holding institutions accountable, documenting community life and preserving history for future generations.

In fact, browsing through old newspapers early in my career created an opportunity for me to learn more about the community I served. That exploration of the archives produced a weekly column – and my first journalism award.

The stories of those challenges and triumphs, of communities and the people who built them, help create character and personality. You can see it in

Ludington, Hart, Pentwater, Manistee, Baldwin, Idlewild, Whitehall and Montague, as well as the many townships and villages throughout our region.

Even today, journalists and columnists rely on those early newspaper accounts to bring context to current reporting.

Nearly every week, someone asks about a historic building, a long-running community event, a former business, a school, a church or a family member who once made headlines. More often than not, the answer is waiting in a newspaper archive.

Those stories linger through generations.

Looking back 100 years, we often find communities that seem very different from the ones we know today. The streets may have changed. The businesses may be gone. The headlines may reflect another era.

Yet the spirit remains recognizable, even as each generation adds its own chapter to the story.

It lives on in traditions passed from one generation to the next, in annual celebrations that continue to bring people together and in the enduring sense of community that has long defined Mason, Oceana, Manistee and Lake counties, as well as the White Lake area.

Leafing through old newspapers reveals more than headlines. It reveals how communities saw themselves at different moments in history. The language changed. The technology changed. The standards evolved.

But the essential purpose remained remarkably consistent: to document community life, inform the public and preserve a record for future generations.

As an editor, I often remind reporters that we are writing the first draft of local history. Most days, we're focused on deadlines, meetings, interviews and tomorrow's edition.

But 50 or 100 years from now, someone may open an archive looking for answers about the community we know today.

They will learn about our celebrations, our challenges, our debates, our achievements and our losses through the stories we leave behind.

When America celebrates its 250th birthday, newspaper archives remind us that history is not only made in Washington, Detroit or Lansing. It is also made in village halls, school gymnasiums, church basements, factories, farms, harbors and main streets.

For generations, local newspapers have recorded those stories.

And someday, the stories we publish today will help future generations understand the communities we call home.

Lois Tomaszewski is executive editor of Shoreline Media publications, serving readers across Mason, Oceana, Manistee, Lake and Muskegon counties through the Ludington Daily News, Oceana's Herald-Journal, White Lake Beacon and other community publications.

## A Place Called Freedom: The Story of Idlewild

Known as “Black Eden,” the Lake County resort became a refuge for generations of African American families seeking opportunity, ownership and community during the era of segregation

BY LOIS TOMASZEWSKI  
With reporting by Steve Begnoche

IDLEWILD – On summer weekends during its heyday, as many as 25,000 people traveled to a small resort community tucked among the lakes and forests of Lake County.



They came from Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland and other Midwestern cities seeking something many African Americans could not easily find elsewhere during the era of segregation – a place where they could own property, vacation freely and enjoy some of the nation's most celebrated entertainers.

For decades, Idlewild was known as “Black Eden,” one of America's most successful African American resort communities and a cultural center that attracted doctors, lawyers, educators, business leaders and some of the biggest names in music.

Today, the quiet community still carries the legacy of that remarkable history.

As African Americans left the South and settled in industrial cities such as Detroit,

Chicago and Cleveland during the Great Migration, some also sought places where they could vacation, own property and enjoy the outdoors. Idlewild would become one of those places.

National Archives records show millions of African Americans moved from the South to Northern and Midwestern cities between 1910 and 1970 during what became known as the Great Migration. At a time when segregation and discrimination limited access to many resorts and public accommodations, Idlewild emerged as one of the few places where African Americans could enjoy those opportunities without restriction.

Where better to learn the story of Idlewild than in Idlewild?

It might take imagination to fully appreciate what the small Lake County resort once meant to the tens of thousands of African Americans who enjoyed the beauty of this corner of northern Michigan. Nestled among lakes, forests and winding roads, Idlewild offered opportunities unavailable in much of the segregated United States.

In a 2023 interview with Shoreline Media reporter Steve Begnoche, Mary Trucks, executive director of FiveCAP, which operates the Idlewild Historic and Cultural Center, described Idlewild as “paradise” for African Americans during the era of segregation.

Located off U.S. 10 east of Baldwin in Yates Township, Idlewild was established in 1912 by white developers Adelbert and Erastus Branch of White Cloud and Wilbur Lemon and Alvin Wright of Chicago.

The four men who founded Idlewild saw an opportunity.

Historical accounts indicate a growing African American middle class had emerged in cities such as Chicago, Detroit and Cleveland. Many had the financial means to purchase vacation property, but segregation and discrimination limited where they could travel, stay and buy land.

By the early 20th century, segregation laws and customs commonly known as Jim Crow restricted many aspects

of life for African Americans, including access to hotels, resorts and other public accommodations.

The choice of Lake County was not accidental.

Historical accounts indicate the developers were drawn to the area's lakes, forests and inexpensive cutover timberland left behind after Michigan's lumber boom. The region was also accessible from major Midwestern cities by rail and road, making it attractive to both resort developers and vacationers.

Through the Idlewild Resort Company, the developers marketed the community directly to African Americans throughout the Midwest. Advertisements appeared in Black newspapers, including the Chicago Defender, promoting the area's lakes, forests, hunting and fishing opportunities. Excursions from major cities introduced prospective buyers to the resort and helped establish Idlewild's reputation.

But the ads sold more than fishing and summer fun.

Historical accounts and surviving promotional materials show the developers promoted Idlewild as a place where African Americans could enjoy property ownership, leisure and freedom of movement without many of the restrictions imposed elsewhere during the Jim Crow era.

The idea caught on.

Early property owners included pioneering surgeon Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, whose purchase of property helped establish credibility for the resort and encouraged other professionals, business leaders and educators to follow.

The resort soon attracted African American professionals, business owners, educators and intellectuals from across the Midwest. During the 1920s, prominent African Americans including author and civil rights leader W.E.B. Du Bois purchased property in the community.

Initially, many lot owners were members of the professional class. As word spread, however, Idlewild's appeal broadened to include middle-class families, including many employed in Detroit's

growing automobile industry, who sought respite from urban life.

Trucks told Begnoche that Idlewild attracted accomplished professionals from throughout the Midwest.

“People who were accomplished in their professions went there,” she said. “Idlewild just sparked something in their hearts and minds.”

Idlewild became much more than a vacation destination.

Historical records and the Idlewild Historic and Cultural Center show the community developed its own businesses, post office and transportation connections. In 1920, developers and property owners established the Idlewild Lot Owners Association, which became responsible for public improvements, community activities and promoting civic pride.

The association sponsored improvement projects, youth programs and social activities. Women played significant leadership roles through the Women's Club of Idlewild, which later merged with the association.

One of the community's most influential families was that of Herman and Lela Wilson.

The story of the Wilsons is still told on a Michigan historical marker in Idlewild. According to the marker, the couple arrived in 1915 as part of a group from Chicago inspecting property in what would become the resort community. They later moved to Idlewild permanently and helped develop several subdivisions, giving streets names such as Paradise Path, Righteous Road, Wisdom Way and Kindness Avenue.

The Wilsons also owned seasonal cottages, a grocery store and the Paradise Club, helping shape the community during its formative years.

Beyond recreation, Idlewild became an important center of African American entrepreneurship and property ownership. Families purchased lots, built cottages, opened businesses and established organizations that helped sustain the growing community.

**INDEPENDENCE DAY: CLIMB ABOARD THE USS SILVERSIDES SUBMARINE BEFORE SHE GOES TO DRY DOCK!**

**celebrate**  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA'S  
**250th**  
ANNIVERSARY

**OPEN JULY 4TH**

**AT THE USS SILVERSIDES SUBMARINE MUSEUM!**  
MUSKEGON, MI | SILVERSIDESMUSEUM.ORG

# Lighthouse Realty

A TEAM YOU CAN COUNT ON

Celebrating **AMERICA 250 YEARS**  
1776 ★ 250 YEARS OF FREEDOM ★ 2026

 <b>Nathan Sheldon</b> 231-690-0422	 <b>Raquel Rae</b> 231-881-2167	 <b>Don Bradley</b> 231-425-8838	 <b>Lois Mitzelfeld</b> 231-510-5065	 <b>Random Messeder</b> 231-425-8753
 <b>Ingrid Wadel</b> 231-301-0646	 <b>Dick Boyd</b> 231-590-1067	 <b>Dana Allen</b> 231-233-1620	 <b>Brooke Klein</b> 231-690-3675	
 <b>Dave Moore</b> 231-852-4700	 <b>Laura Iles</b> 231-907-0873	 <b>Pat Flagg</b> 231-852-0446	 <b>LeAnne Enbody</b> 231-233-0389	 <b>Chad Enbody</b> 231-794-8961
 <b>Monty Ashton</b> 231-907-7790	 <b>BethAnn Kozicki</b> 231-794-8960	 <b>Tim Gibson</b> 231-233-7327	 <b>Toni Monton</b> 231-233-9107	 <b>Danielle Kowalski</b> Office Manager

 **SCAN HERE TO VIEW PROPERTIES**

 **GUIDING YOU HOME**

503 S Rath Ave  
Ludington, MI  
**231-845-7500**

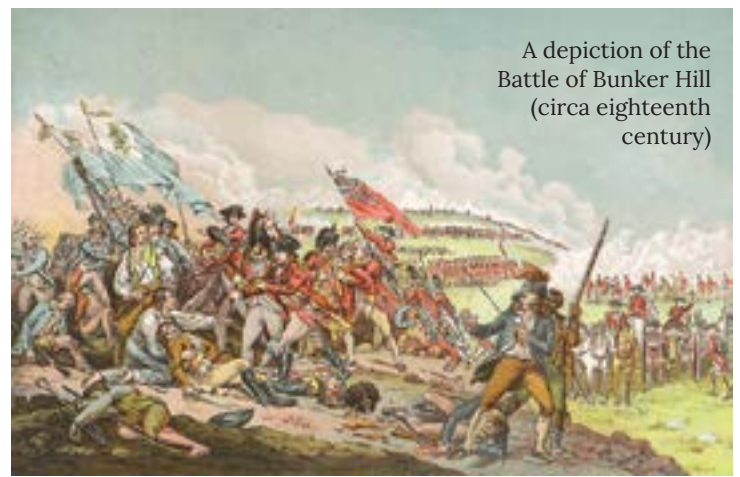
 **GOLD COAST TITLE OF MICHIGAN**  
231-425-3964 505 S Rath Ave Ludington, MI

We provide comprehensive title searches and title insurance for both residential and commercial real estate transactions. Our experienced team with local land knowledge ensures peace of mind.

**TITLE INSURANCE • TITLE SEARCH • EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONALS**

 **Nick Jamleson**  
Agency Manager

## American Revolutionary War TRIVIA



A depiction of the Battle of Bunker Hill (circa eighteenth century)

• On which day were the battles at Lexington and Concord fought?  
Answer: April 19, 1775

• True or False: Bunker Hill was fought on Bunker Hill.  
Answer: False. Despite its name, the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775, was fought on Breed's Hill.

• The mercenary-like forces hired to fight alongside the British during the American Revolutionary War were known as what?  
Answer: Hessians. Though soldiers from various German states were hired and deployed by the British during the conflict, the troops were principally drawn from the German state of Hesse-Cassel.

• This infamous figure was a decorated American military officer who rose to the rank of Major General during the American Revolutionary War.  
Answer: Benedict Arnold. Though Arnold is today widely remembered as a turncoat, he accomplished much for the Americans before defecting to the British in 1780, including leading the capture of Fort Mifflin in 1777.

• Which of these notable rivers did George Washington lead his troops across on December 30, 1776?  
A. The Hudson River  
B. The Delaware River  
C. The Rubicon  
D. The Charles River  
Answer: B. The Delaware River

• This Founding Father famously declared "Give me liberty, or give me death!" during a speech to the Second Virginia Convention in 1775.  
A. Benjamin Franklin  
B. Thomas Jefferson  
C. John Adams  
D. Patrick Henry  
Answer: D. Patrick Henry

• True or False: The American Revolutionary War is the longest conflict in American military history.  
Answer: False. While the eight-year-long conflict between the colonists and Great Britain that began in 1775 remained the longest war in American military history for nearly 200 years, the Vietnam War, in which America was engaged between 1960 and 1975, displaced it atop that list in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The invasion of Afghanistan, which began in 2001 and continued until 2021, has since become the longest conflict in American military history.

• True or False: Fewer than half of all colonists favored fighting for independence from Great Britain.


Answer: True. Though specific figures are hard to confirm, various historians estimate that only about 40 percent of colonists supported the American Revolutionary War, while roughly one in five identified as loyalists to the crown. The remaining 40 percent are believed to have held moderate views.

• This treaty, signed in 1783, marked the end of the American Revolution.

A. The Treaty of Versailles  
B. The Treaty of Paris  
C. The Treaty of Tordesillas  
D. The Treaty of Accession  
Answer: B. The Treaty of Paris.

• True or False: The Continental Congress declared its independence from Great Britain on July 2.


Answer: True. Though Americans annually celebrate the nation's independence on July 4, the Continental Congress declared its independence on July 2, two days before signing the Declaration of Independence.

 **Lake Michigan CARFERRY**  
an InterLake Maritime Services company

As the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary, the S.S. Badger stands out as a moving historical artifact that embodies the American spirit of adaptability and resilience.

Launched in 1953, the S.S. Badger is a National Historic Landmark and the last coal-fired passenger steamship operating in the United States. Originally built to carry railroad cars across Lake Michigan, this 410-foot vessel continues to sail as a floating extension of U.S. 10, serving as a living testament to American industrial innovation.

Riding the Badger isn't just transportation; it's a four-hour, 60-mile living history lesson that allows Americans to experience the golden age of steamship travel alongside the 250th anniversary celebration of the nation's independence.



SSBADGER.COM | 1-800-841-4243 | @ssbadgerferry



# Before America: The Odawa People of West Michigan

Long before the United States was founded, Indigenous families lived, traveled and traded along the rivers and shoreline that still shape life across West Michigan today.

COMPILED BY LOIS TOMASZEWSKI  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, SHORELINE MEDIA

The Pere Marquette, Manistee, Little Manistee, White and Muskegon rivers were already highways of commerce, communication and travel when the United States declared its independence in 1776.

Long before Ludington, Manistee, Pentwater, Hart or White Cloud became the communities known today, Odawa families lived along the waterways that connected what is now Mason, Manistee, Oceana, Lake and Newaygo counties.

According to the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, the ancestors of today's tribal citizens lived throughout western Michigan, establishing villages, seasonal camps and travel routes along the rivers that still shape the region today.

For generations, life revolved around the land and water. Rivers served as transportation corridors, fishing grounds

and gathering places. Families moved with the seasons, fishing rivers and Lake Michigan waters, hunting in the forests and collecting maple sap each spring.

Today, anglers cast for salmon in the Pere Marquette River, paddlers travel the Manistee and visitors gather along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Those same waterways connected generations of Indigenous communities long before roads, railroads and county lines existed.

Evidence of that history remains visible throughout the region. Historians generally trace names such as Michigan, Manistee, Muskegon, Newaygo and Onekama to Indigenous languages, reminders that Native history remains woven into the landscape of modern West Michigan.

The Odawa are one of the Three Fires Confederacy, alongside the Ojibwe and Potawatomi peoples. Their trade networks connected communities throughout the Great Lakes long before European settlement.

When French missionaries, explorers

and fur traders entered the Great Lakes during the 1600s, they encountered Indigenous communities that had long been established throughout the region.

As settlement expanded during the 1800s, a series of treaties transferred millions of acres of Indigenous land across Michigan.

Despite those changes, Odawa communities continued to live throughout western Michigan.

Despite displacement and changing federal policies, Odawa families maintained cultural traditions, family ties and connections to their ancestral homeland.

Among those traditions was maple sugaring. Indigenous peoples of the Great Lakes region harvested sap from sugar maple trees and developed methods for producing maple sugar and syrup centuries before Michigan became a state. Settlers later adopted and adapted those practices, helping establish a spring tradition that remains familiar across Michigan today.

The history of the Odawa did not end

with the treaties of the 1800s. Today, the Little River Band is headquartered in Manistee County and serves citizens throughout western Michigan. Tribal citizens are educators, health care professionals, business owners, natural resource specialists, elected leaders and community members whose ties to the region stretch back generations.

Long before sawmills rose along the Lake Michigan shoreline, before lumber schooners crowded West Michigan ports and before Michigan became a state, Odawa families traveled the Pere Marquette, Manistee, Little Manistee, White and Muskegon rivers. Those waterways remain part of daily life across West Michigan, linking the region's present to a history that stretches back centuries before the nation itself.

*Editor's note: This article was compiled from materials provided by the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, federal treaty records, historical publications and previous reporting by Shoreline Media.*

**HAPPY 250<sup>TH</sup> AMERICA**

**Dusty's** Auto Body & Detail

135 S. Jebavy Drive, Ludington, MI 231-845-1367  
"Where the Detail Makes the Difference"

**CELEBRATE 250 YEARS OF AMERICA**

**WINBERG CONSTRUCTION INC.**  
GENERAL CONTRACTING  
CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT  
DESIGN / BUILD

8868 Water Street, Montague • www.winbergconstruction.com • 231-894-8409

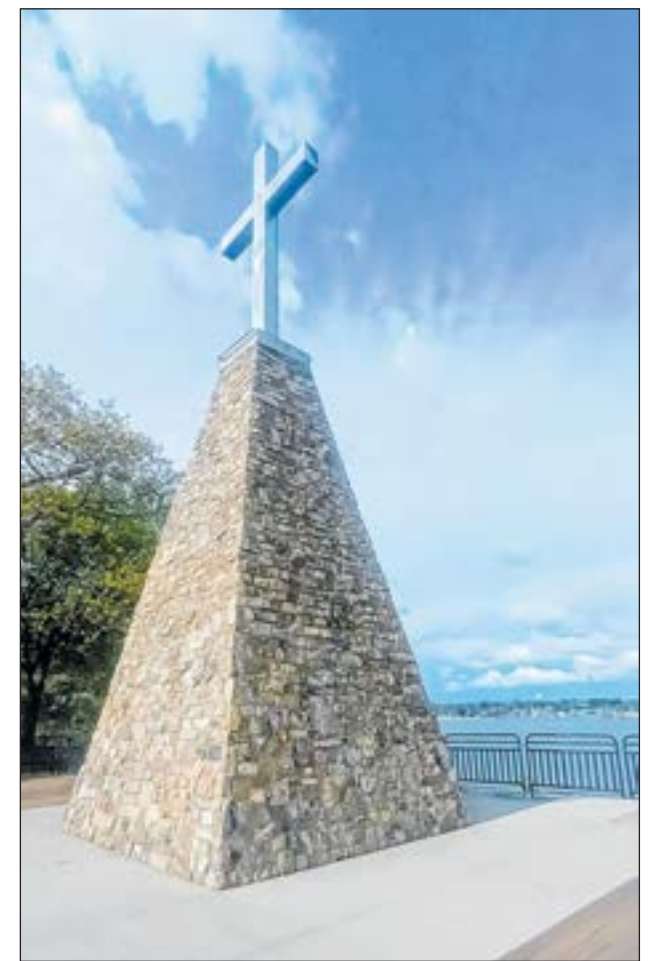
**Beltone Hearing Centers**

Do you think you might have hearing loss?  
Schedule a FREE screening today!

239 Jebavy Dr. Ludington, MI (231)843-3039  
4250 W. Tyler Rd. Hart, MI (At the Oceana Council on Aging) (800)522-9588

50 Filer Street (Briny Bldg.) Manistee, MI (231)723-0699  
9883 Business US 31 Montague, MI (231)893-6363  
843 W. Summit Ave Muskegon, MI (231)755-3920

**A Salute To America's 250th Anniversary!**



# 350 Years After Marquette's Death, a West Michigan Landmark Endures

The missionary's final journey along Lake Michigan left a mark still visible in the river, memorial and traditions that bear his name today.

More than 350 years ago, a French Jesuit missionary made a final journey along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. Though he spent only a brief time here, Father Jacques Marquette's name would become permanently attached to the region.

Today, his name survives across western Michigan — on the Pere Marquette River, Pere Marquette Lake, Pere Marquette Charter Township, Pere Marquette Highway, the Pere Marquette State Trail and numerous businesses and organizations.

According to Jesuit records, Marquette was born in Laon, France, in 1637 and joined the Society of Jesus. He arrived in New France in 1666 and spent much of his life learning Indigenous languages and serving Native communities throughout the Great Lakes region.

Marquette became known for his missionary work among Indigenous nations, but history remembers him most for the 1673 expedition he undertook with French explorer Louis Jolliet. Guided by established Indigenous travel routes and knowledge of the region, the pair journeyed from the Great Lakes into the Mississippi River Valley, producing some of the earliest surviving European accounts of that vast interior region.

Two years after that expedition, Marquette embarked on what would be his final journey.

According to accounts recorded by fellow Jesuits, Marquette was traveling north along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan in the spring of 1675 after establishing a mission among the

Illinois people. Suffering from a serious illness, likely dysentery, he traveled with companions Pierre Porteret and Jacques Largillier toward St. Ignace.

On May 18, 1675, the group landed near the mouth of the river that now bears his name. Marquette died later that day at age 37.



While historians generally agree he died near the mouth of the present-day Pere Marquette River, the precise location has been debated for generations. The historical marker at the memorial site notes that the location on the bluff overlooking Lake Michigan corresponds with early French accounts, maps and longstanding local tradition.

Two years later, according to Jesuit accounts, Native converts and Marquette's companions returned to recover his remains and transport them to St. Ignace, where they were reinterred at the mission he helped establish.

The bluff where tradition places Marquette's final hours remains one of the most recognizable historic sites along Michigan's western shoreline.

The Pere Marquette Memorial Cross stands on the Buttersville Peninsula overlooking Lake Michigan and Pere Marquette Lake. As Ludington Daily News staff writer Shanna Avery reported during the 350th anniversary of Marquette's

death in 2025, the current memorial was dedicated June 23, 1955, and continues to be maintained by the Pere Marquette Memorial Association.

The memorial seen today is not the first to mark the site.

According to Avery's reporting, a 30-foot cross constructed from Norway pines was erected there in 1938. The current cross replaced earlier memorials and continues a tradition of remembrance that stretches back well over a century.

Writing in the Ludington Daily News' 2023 sesquicentennial edition, community contributor Todd Reed noted that residents had been commemorating Marquette's death for generations through pilgrimages, religious observances and public ceremonies.

Records preserved by the Mason County Historical Society show those commemorations were already well established by the late 19th century.

A letter published in the Lake County Star in 1878 described visitors standing atop the bluff and reflecting on how dramatically the landscape had changed since Marquette's death more than 200 years earlier. The writer contrasted the pine-covered wilderness Marquette would have seen with the lumber mills, vessels and growing community surrounding Pere Marquette Lake.

The observances grew larger during the 20th century.

Avery reported that thousands of visitors attended memorial events held in Ludington during the 1930s. A three-day observance in 1935 featured a pontifical high Mass near the memorial site and a historical pageant portraying Marquette's life. Similar events followed in 1936 and 1937, drawing visitors from throughout Michigan and beyond.

Contemporary newspaper coverage cited by Avery reported that Gov. Frank Murphy was the keynote speaker during

ceremonies surrounding the consecration of the memorial site in 1938.

Interest in Marquette's story has continued into the modern era. Avery reported that a bone fragment associated with Marquette was discovered at Marquette University in 2018 and was reburied with his remains in St. Ignace during a ceremony in 2022.

Mason County Historical Society Executive Director Rebecca Berringer described Marquette's arrival and death near the river as marking "the beginning of recorded history in our region."

"Father Jacques Marquette's arrival and eventual passing at the mouth of the river that now bears his name marked the beginning of recorded history in our region," Berringer told the Ludington Daily News. "His presence laid the foundation for a settlement that would grow from fur trading routes into a booming lumber town, and eventually into the vibrant tourism destination we know today."

Marquette never established a settlement in what is now Mason County and likely spent only a short time along this stretch of shoreline. Yet the events surrounding his death in 1675 continue to be remembered more than three centuries later.

In 1878, a visitor standing on the bluff overlooking Lake Michigan reflected on how much the area had changed since Marquette's final journey. Nearly 150 years later, visitors still gather at the same site. Few places along Michigan's western shore connect the present so directly to an event recorded in the 17th century.

*Editor's Note: This article draws on Jesuit records, Mason County Historical Society materials, historical newspaper accounts, and previous reporting published by the Ludington Daily News, including work by staff writer Shanna Avery and community contributor Todd Reed.*

**McCormick Sand, Inc. has proudly been owned and operated by four generations of family.**

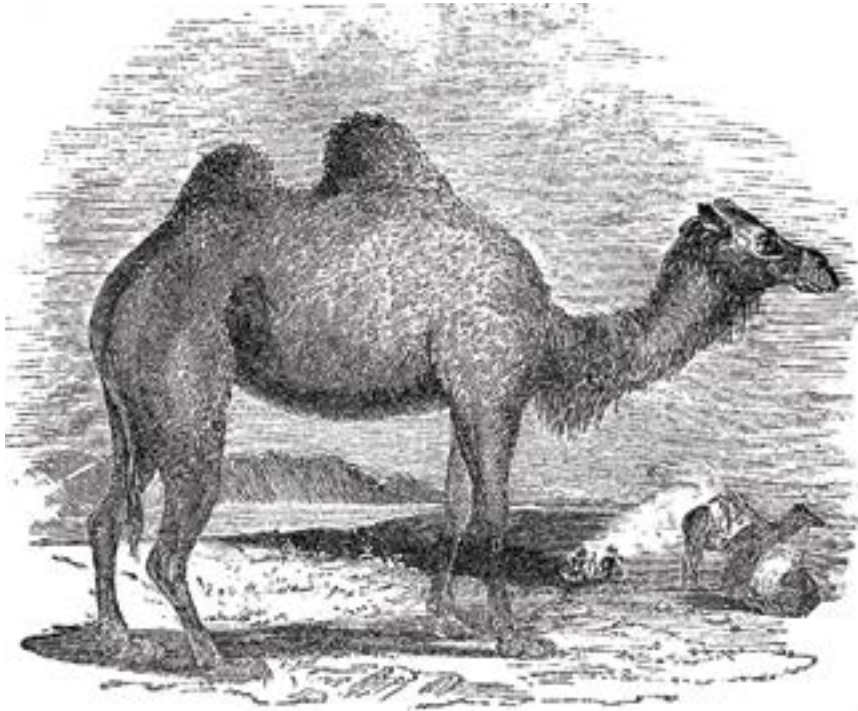
**McCormick Sand, Inc. & McCormick Sand Mine**

**McCormick**

*Delivering quality. Operating with integrity.*

5430 Russell Road Twin Lake, MI 49457  
Phone: 1-231-766-0466 Fax: 1-231-766-5162  
Email: sarah@mccormicksand.com

# Camels have a unique place in American history



Jefferson Davis's name is inextricably linked to the American Civil War, during which the politician who represented Mississippi in the United States Senate served as president of the Confederate States. But Davis's influence on the United States predated the nation's civil war, and he even played a notable role in one of the more unique events in American military history. While serving as Secretary of War in 1855, Davis ordered Brevet Major Henry C. Wayne to arrange for the importation of camels to be used for military purposes. Davis had urged Congress to establish a United States Army Camel Corps, for years, and even formally introduced measures to establish such a unit in the early 1850s, efforts that ultimately proved unsuccessful. Though few might associate camels with the United States, Davis's campaign to bring camels into the American military fold

was not as eccentric as it might seem in modern times. According to the Army University Press, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, which officially ended the Mexican-American War upon its signing in 1848, added more than half a million square miles of land to the United States, a significant portion of which included desert lands in what is now the American southwest. The discovery of gold in California around this same time also increased traffic in this new region of the country, which remained dangerous even after the signing of the treaty. Advocates of a camel corps insisted the animals would allow the U.S. Army, tasked with keeping the region safe, to do their job more effectively. Though the camel experiment ultimately failed due to a number of variables, it remains a unique and lesser known event in American military history.

**Proudly Celebrating America's Milestone Birthday**

Deli Specials • Bulk • Freezer • Bakery • Cooler  
Grocery and much more

**WEST SHORE MARKET DISCOUNT FOODS**  
TO STRETCH YOUR BUDGET

Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9 AM-6 PM; Sat. 9 AM-5 PM  
850 W. US 10, SCOTTVILLE MI • 757-9130

**Proudly Celebrating America's 250th Birthday**

Full-Service - Business Accounting

*We Are Committed To Your Success  
Local Professionals Serving Local People*

**HEYSE & ASSOCIATES, INC.**

Lakewinds Center West  
409 W. Ludington Ave., Suite 205, Ludington  
(231) 845-9500  
Fax: (231) 845-9505  
www.rphcpa.com

**A STAR-SPANGLED SALUTE TO 250 YEARS! HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA**

**CENTURY 21**  
Bayshore Real Estate  
111 E. Ludington Ave., Ludington, MI 49431  
231-845-0363  
www.C21Bayshore.com

**Happy 250th America**  
Ludington's Newest Hot Spot

**The SIDE ROOM**  
Craft Cocktails & Beer, Wine, Spirits  
Flatbreads & Charcuterie Boards

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK  
222 W. LUDINGTON AVE., LUDINGTON 231-425-3113

**Cheers to 250 Years America**

**Let Your Style Shine**

For over 40 years families have trusted our team of jewelers. We are proud to serve our community and look forward to many more years!

**SERVICES OFFERED:**  
QUALIFIED APPRAISALS  
JEWELRY REPAIR ON PREMISES  
RING SIZING & REPAIR  
OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE  
GEMSTONE & DIAMOND REPLACEMENT  
BEAUTIFUL CUSTOM DESIGNS  
ENGAGEMENT & WEDDING RINGS  
FINISHED JEWELRY FROM QUALITY USA MANUFACTURERS

**Victoria's JEWELRY**  
Ludington's Diamond Destination

327 S. James St.  
Ludington, MI 49431  
231-845-5257  
info@ludingtonjewelers.com  
www.ludingtonjewelers.com

**Discover Ludington's Newest Art Destination!**

- Showcasing over 35 Michigan artists
- Watercolor, acrylic & oil paintings, woodwork, glasswork, pottery, unique jewelry and more
- Purchase beautiful art for yourself or as a gift!
- Dive into creativity with our engaging art classes
- Unique, handmade art jewelry pieces that stand out
- Conveniently located next to Victoria's Jewelry

**ART ROCKS**

**JAMES STREET GALLERY**

323 S. James St.  
Ludington, MI  
artrocks323@gmail.com  
www.artrocks323.com

**Has your home state produced a president?**  
(Odds are against you)

When President Donald Trump was sworn in as President of the United States for a second time on January 20, 2025, he officially became the forty-seventh president in the nation's history. With 47 presidents and 50 states, one could not be blamed for thinking most states have a native son who has held the highest political office in the land. But the National Conference of State Legislatures notes that fewer than half the states in the union have been the birthplaces of presidents. In fact, just two presidents were born west of the Mississippi River. Indeed, the following rundown indicates which states have produced presidents and who and how many claim those locales as their birthplace.

**8 Virginia**

**Virginia: 8 presidents**

No state has produced more presidents than Virginia, which produced eight men who would go on to become U.S. presidents. Those eight men were:

- George Washington
- Thomas Jefferson
- James Madison
- James Monroe
- William Henry Harrison
- John Tyler
- Zachary Taylor
- Woodrow Wilson

**7 Ohio**

**Ohio: 7 presidents**

Ohio is second to Virginia in terms of native sons who have gone on to the office of the presidency. Seven U.S. presidents were born in Ohio, and those who claimed the place now affectionately known as "The Buckeye State" as their birthplace include:

- Ulysses S. Grant
- Rutherford B. Hayes
- James Garfield
- Benjamin Harrison
- William McKinley
- William Howard Taft
- Warren Harding

**4 Massachusetts**

**Massachusetts: 4 presidents**

Massachusetts was home to many notable events during the American Revolutionary War, so it comes as no surprise that the state has produced four U.S. presidents over the nation's history. Those four presidents include:

- John Adams
- John Quincy Adams
- John F. Kennedy
- George H.W. Bush

**5 New York**

**New York: 5 presidents**

Five U.S. presidents, including current president Donald Trump, were born in New York. President Trump's fellow New Yorkers to serve as president include:

- Martin Van Buren
- Millard Fillmore
- Theodore Roosevelt
- Franklin Roosevelt

**States to produce 2 presidents**

Various states are the birthplaces of two men who have gone on to serve as President of the United States. Those states include:

- **Arkansas:** Bill Clinton
- **California:** Richard Nixon
- **Connecticut:** George W. Bush
- **Georgia:** Jimmy Carter
- **Hawaii:** Barack Obama
- **Illinois:** Ronald Reagan
- **Iowa:** Herbert Hoover
- **Kentucky:** Abraham Lincoln
- **Missouri:** Harry S. Truman
- **Nebraska:** Gerald Ford
- **New Hampshire:** Franklin Pierce
- **New Jersey:** Grover Cleveland
- **South Carolina:** Andrew Jackson

**States to produce 1 president**

Thirteen states have sent one native son along to the office of the President of the United States, including:

**HONORING 250 YEARS OF AMERICAN SPIRIT WITH AMERICAN-MADE, TOP-QUALITY HEATING AND COOLING SOLUTIONS**

Depend On Us.  
**HANKWITZ HEATING & COOLING**

**SERVING MASON COUNTY AND NORTHERN PENTWATER SINCE 1975**

Heating, AC, Boilers,  
Gas Logs, Water Heaters

Energy Efficient  
No Hassle Replacement

FREE ESTIMATES  
NEW CONSTRUCTION  
REMODELS • LICENSED & INSURED

**ELITE DEALER**

**HANKWITZ HEATING & COOLING**  
609 S. Washington Ave., Ludington  
(231)843 - 2809  
westmichiganguides.com/hankwitz-heating-cooling-ludington  
office@hankwitzheating.com

**AMERICA TURNS 250**

**Happy 250th Birthday America!**

**4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY**

**CITY OF WHITEHALL**

# Game, fish and furs: How hunting, fishing and trapping shaped West Michigan

COMPILED BY LOIS TOMASZEWSKI  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, SHORELINE MEDIA

**H**unting, fishing and trapping were once essential to life in west Michigan. They provided food, clothing, trade goods and livelihoods for the people who lived along the region's rivers, lakes and forests.

For the Anishinaabe people — including the ancestors of today's Little River Band of Ottawa Indians — hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering were not recreational activities. They were essential parts of daily life, providing food, clothing, tools, trade goods and cultural connections that tied generations to the land and water.

According to historical records maintained by the Little River Band, Ottawa communities occupied lands stretching from the Manistee River south toward the Grand River, sharing hunting and trapping territories along the Pere Marquette and Manistee river systems. Rivers served as transportation corridors connecting villages, seasonal camps and trading routes throughout the region. Fish, game and furbearing animals provided sustenance while also supporting commerce among Indigenous communities long before European settlement.

When French explorers, missionaries and traders entered the Great Lakes region during the 1600s and 1700s, they encountered well-established Indigenous trade networks. Beaver pelts and other furs soon became valuable commodities in European markets, helping fuel a fur trade economy that would dominate much of the region for generations.

Trapping followed a different path than hunting and fishing. Former Ludington Daily News Editor Paul Peterson wrote that beaver pelts were among the region's earliest and most valuable trade commodities, attracting French traders and trappers into west Michigan during the fur-trade era. As the fur trade declined and other industries emerged, trapping became less important economically. It never disappeared, however. Licensed trappers continue to harvest species such as beaver and muskrat under state regulations, maintaining a practice that predates Michigan statehood.

As settlement spread westward after American independence, newcomers increasingly relied on the region's forests, rivers and wildlife. During the nineteenth century, hunting and fishing remained necessities for many families living in frontier settlements and logging communities. Wild game supplemented household food supplies, fish were harvested from Lake Michigan and inland rivers, and furs continued to provide income.

As the lumber era transformed west Michigan, it also changed wildlife habitat. Vast forests were cleared, river systems were altered and wildlife populations fluctuated. Unregulated harvest and market hunting placed increasing pressure on fish and game populations across Michigan.

By the late nineteenth century, concern over declining wildlife populations gave rise to Michigan's conservation movement. Michigan Department of Natural Resources historical records show that attorney William Alden Smith became Michigan's

first salaried state game warden in 1887. The state later created the Department of Conservation in 1921, laying the groundwork for modern wildlife management.

Lake County offers one of the clearest examples of how hunting and fishing evolved from subsistence activities into a defining part of a local economy and culture.

As logging declined and forests regenerated, Baldwin became nationally known for trout fishing. In April 1884, the U.S. Fish Commission released approximately 4,900 German brown trout fry into the Baldwin River, a tributary of the Pere Marquette River. According to the Pere Marquette Chapter of Trout Unlimited and fisheries historians, the 1884 release of German brown trout fry into the Baldwin River marked the first introduction of brown trout into American waters. The species flourished and eventually spread across North America, creating one of the continent's most prized sport fisheries.

Today, Baldwin proudly embraces that legacy. The community's annual Troutarama festival celebrates its fishing heritage, while the giant brown trout sculpture downtown commemorates the community's role in American angling history.

Local historian James Cabot said hunting and fishing have long been part of Baldwin's culture. He recalled traveling through the area as a child to visit hunting and fishing cabins owned by relatives near Sisson Lake south of Baldwin.

Cabot noted that Baldwin's reputation as a destination for sportsmen dates back more than a century. In his 1912 book, "A History of Northern Michigan and Its People," author Perry F. Powers described Baldwin as "quite a lively center for sportsmen and summer resorters in general," citing its location near some of northern Michigan's finest trout streams.

The Pere Marquette River remains one of Michigan's best-known trout streams. The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System notes that it became Michigan's first National Wild and Scenic River in 1978 and was also designated the state's first Natural River.

Hunting also became central to Lake County's culture. Surrounded by the forests of what is now the Manistee National Forest, Baldwin developed into a destination for deer, bear and small-game hunters. Families who once relied on game and fish to help fill their tables were followed by generations who hunted and fished primarily for recreation, supporting local businesses, guide services and tourism.

Some hunters also sought to preserve older practices. Michigan's muzzleloader deer season, established in 1975, reflected growing interest in hunting methods associated with early American frontiersmen and nineteenth-century hunters. As outdoors columnist Brian Mulherin wrote in the Ludington Daily News, many of the hunters who embraced Michigan's new muzzleloader season in 1975 were drawn by the challenge of hunting in a manner that echoed earlier generations. Many favored reproduction flintlock and sidelock rifles and embraced still-hunting techniques that required tracking deer through the woods rather than hunting from elevated stands.

The season remains one of the clearest links between modern hunters and the methods used by earlier generations.

While Baldwin became synonymous with trout fishing, communities along Lake Michigan developed their own fishing heritage.

Former Ludington Daily News Managing Editor David Bossick wrote in the newspaper's 150th anniversary publication that commercial fishing fleets once operated from ports including Ludington, Pentwater, Whitehall and Manistee, harvesting species such as lake trout, whitefish and perch for markets throughout the Midwest.

The fishery changed dramatically during the twentieth century. Native species such as lake trout and lake sturgeon declined because of overharvesting, habitat changes and invasive species, while brown trout, rainbow trout, smelt and salmon became increasingly important to Great Lakes fishing.

Records from the Michigan Conservation Department, cited by Bossick in his history of local fishing, show that millions of coho salmon fingerlings were stocked in west Michigan rivers during the 1960s. The effort transformed communities such as Ludington and Manistee into nationally recognized sport-fishing destinations and helped launch the charter fishing industry that remains an important economic driver today.

In Ludington, the early years of the salmon fishery became known as "salmon fever." Boats lined up for blocks waiting to launch on Pere Marquette Lake as anglers traveled from throughout the Midwest in pursuit of coho and chinook salmon. According to Bossick's account, catches during the early years of the fishery helped establish Ludington's reputation as one of the premier fishing ports on Lake Michigan.

Commercial fishing also underwent significant changes. In his book, "The Story of Ludington," local author Paul Peterson wrote that state regulators moved to end most commercial gill-net fishing operations on Lake Michigan during the 1970s because of concerns about impacts on multiple fish species. While some commercial operations continued for a time, recreational fishing increasingly became the dominant force in the local fishing economy.

By the mid-twentieth century, most residents were no longer relying on wild game or fish to feed their families. Hunting camps, fishing trips and time spent on the water became a way of life passed from one generation to the next, while conservation efforts focused on protecting the resources that made those activities possible.

Michigan's modern system of hunting seasons, fishing regulations, licensing requirements and habitat management grew from those early conservation efforts. Today, the Department of Natural Resources manages wildlife populations through scientific research, harvest regulations and habitat restoration programs designed to balance recreation with long-term sustainability. Conservation officers continue the work that began with the state's first game wardens more than a century ago.

Hunting and fishing in west Michigan also remain tied to treaty rights and Indigenous stewardship.

The Little River Band and other Anishinaabe nations continue to exercise hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering rights within the 1836 Treaty Ceded

Territory. Those rights stem from the 1836 Treaty of Washington and have been affirmed through subsequent federal court decisions and modern management agreements. Cooperative agreements among tribes, state and federal agencies continue to guide management of fisheries and wildlife resources. A federal judge approved the latest Great Lakes fisheries agreement in 2023, continuing a framework that balances treaty rights with long-term resource management.

One place where that connection remains visible is the Manistee River, where the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians is helping restore lake sturgeon, known as "nmé" to the Anishinaabe people. Once common throughout the Great Lakes, lake sturgeon populations declined because of dams, habitat loss, water quality issues and overharvesting.

For more than two decades, the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians has operated a streamside rearing program on the Manistee River designed to improve the survival of young sturgeon. The tribe collects newly hatched larval sturgeon from the river, raises them in river-fed tanks during their most vulnerable months and releases them back into the river each fall.

"Nothing happens fast in the sturgeon world. It takes a while," Archie Martell, manager of the Little River Band Fisheries Division, said during a presentation to the Sable Dunes Audubon Club reported by the Ludington Daily News.

According to Martell, the tribe has released more than 3,800 lake sturgeon through the program. More than 600 young sturgeon were released during the tribe's public release event in 2025, according to Ludington Daily News reporting. Recent monitoring has shown increasing numbers of naturally produced larval sturgeon in the Manistee River, evidence that the population is rebounding.

"The fish do it all. We just give a little help," Martell said. On a fall morning in the Manistee National Forest, hunters still follow deer trails through the woods. Along the Pere Marquette River, anglers continue to pursue trout, salmon and steelhead. Charter boats leave Ludington and Manistee harbors in search of fish, while young lake sturgeon raised by the Little River Band are released into the Manistee River each year.

For generations, hunting, fishing and trapping helped families survive, supported local economies and shaped communities throughout Mason, Manistee, Lake and Oceana counties.

Those outdoor practices continue to change, but they remain part of everyday life across west Michigan. From tribal stewardship efforts and trout streams to deer camps, charter boats and family cabins tucked along northern lakes, the story of the region's outdoors is still being written.

Sources for this article include records and publications from the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, Michigan Department of Natural Resources historical materials, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, federal fisheries agreements, Paul Peterson's historical writings, reporting by former Ludington Daily News Managing Editor David Bossick, reporting by Ludington Daily News staff, contributions from local historian James Cabot, and archives of Shoreline Media publications.



## • Ellis Island National Monument, New York, New York:

The National Trust reports Ellis Island in New York Harbor accommodated more than 12 million immigrants seeking new opportunities in the United States. Perhaps the most telling figure regarding the influence of Ellis Island concerns how many current Americans can trace their ancestry to immigrants who were processed at this globally recognized landmark. The National Trust estimates that at least 40 percent of Americans have an ancestor processed at Ellis Island.



## • Ford Piquette Avenue Plant, Detroit, Michigan:

America has long had a love affair with automobiles, so any tour of historical sites in the United States should include a trip to the Ford Piquette Avenue Plant. The birthplace of the Model T, the Ford Piquette Avenue Plant is among the most significant automotive heritage sites across the globe. The museum features more than 65 rare vehicles and enough original automotive artifacts to impress anyone interested in an industry that helped to reinvent the United States and even the world.

## • Blandwood Museum, Greensboro, North Carolina:

Designed in 1844 by New York architect

Alexander Jackson Davis, Blandwood is America's oldest Italianate-style house and museum. John Motley Morehead was the twenty-ninth governor of North Carolina and owner of the house, which was where North Carolina was surrendered during the Civil War, thus ending the conflict in the state. Human rights activist Dorothea Dix was among the many who visited Blandwood over the years, and Dix convinced Governor Morehead to fund a state hospital for people with mental illness.

## • Cozens Ranch Museum, Fraser, Colorado:

History buffs with a passion for the era of the pioneers will want to add Cozens Ranch Museum to their travel bucket list. The Grand County Historical Association notes that former Central City sheriff William Zane Cozens moved to the Fraser Valley with his family in 1874 and soon set to building a residence, among other structures. Countless weary travelers who made it through the Berthoud Pass in the nineteenth century visited Cozens Ranch over the years, making this a must-visit site for those looking to experience a taste of pioneering life during a much romanticized era in American history.



## If only Hamilton had spellcheck

Alexander Hamilton's legacy rose to new heights in the twenty-first century, a remarkable feat given that the Founding Father passed away in 1804. The debut of the Broadway musical *Hamilton* in 2015 reinvigorated interest in the American statesman, but even the most ardent fans of Lin-Manuel Miranda's wildly popular play may not realize that Alexander Hamilton made a notable "mistake" that has endured through the centuries. A careful reading of the United States Constitution reveals that the home state of each delegate is listed alongside his name. The names of the delegates' states were written into the document by Alexander Hamilton. Benjamin Franklin was the Pennsylvania delegate at the time, and when writing the state Franklin represented next to his name, Hamilton spelled it "Pensylvania." That spelling notably contains two "Ns" and not the three in the modern spelling of the state's name used today. But before Americans point a finger at the Founding Father for misspelling the name, it's worth noting that Hamilton was not necessarily incorrect. Indeed, it was considered acceptable to spell "Pennsylvania" with two or three Ns in the late eighteenth century. Alas, modern readers of the Constitution cannot be blamed for wishing spellcheck had been around when the United States became a nation.

**JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE**

**250 YEARS OF FREEDOM!**

**LET'S CELEBRATE TOGETHER**

**CELEBRATE 250 WITH BETTER SLEEP BY SHOPPING OUR SERTA MATTRESS TRUCKLOAD SALE!**

**HOT BUY**

★ ★ ★

Premium Comfort.  
Unbeatable Value.

**\$576**

QUEEN MATTRESS

**LIMITED TIME ONLY!**

**COME CELEBRATE. SLEEP BETTER. SAVE BIG.**

**LANGLOIS**

3000 HENRY ST., MUSKEGON  
800-606-7600 • 733-2528 • [www.langloisstore.com](http://www.langloisstore.com)

\*Terms apply, Limited time only, savings on new purchases only, see store for full details.

Lorri                      Lynda

On this historic Independence Day, we reflect on our commitment to the Muskegon Community, and all the communities in which we work and live.

Diebold Insurance Agency is proud to serve the insurance needs of Michigan families and businesses.

**DIEBOLD INSURANCE AGENCY**

(231) 744-3857

[www.DieboldInsurance.com](http://www.DieboldInsurance.com)



# THE LAKE THAT SHAPED THE SHORE

From sailing vessels and lumber schooners to railroad ferries, shipwrecks and the S.S. Badger, Lake Michigan helped shape the communities of Michigan's western shore

COMPILED BY LOIS TOMASZEWSKI  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, SHORELINE MEDIA

**N**early 2,000 people gathered at Ludington's waterfront on Sept. 9, 1910.

Families searched the faces of survivors. Others waited anxiously for news of loved ones aboard the Pere Marquette 18, which had sunk that morning in Lake Michigan.

As the Pere Marquette 17 returned to port carrying survivors and the bodies of victims, the community confronted a reality generations of Great Lakes sailors had long understood: Lake Michigan could provide prosperity and opportunity, but it could also demand a terrible price.

According to a 2025 Ludington Daily News article by reporter Shanna Avery, the sinking of the Pere Marquette 18 claimed 29 lives and remains one of the most devastating maritime disasters in Lake Michigan history.

The disaster reflected both the opportunities and dangers that came with life on Lake Michigan.

For centuries, Lake Michigan connected Michigan's western shore to the rest of the nation. Long before interstate highways and modern transportation networks, ships carried people, freight, lumber, fish and ideas between communities along the Great Lakes. The lake connected western Michigan ports and towns to national markets and helped fuel their growth.

As the United States marks its 250th anniversary, the history of western Michigan cannot be told without understanding the role Lake Michigan played in connecting the region to a growing nation.

## The Lake as Highway

Long before steamships and railroad ferries transformed transportation, Indigenous peoples used Lake Michigan

and its connected waterways for travel, fishing and trade.

Those routes later became pathways for traders, settlers and commercial vessels as European settlement expanded across the Great Lakes.

Later, sailing vessels ruled the Great Lakes.

According to information presented in the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum's Age of Sail exhibit, schooners, brigs and barques carried commerce across the lakes long before modern transportation systems emerged. Today, the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum preserves and interprets the maritime history of Ludington and the surrounding Great Lakes region.

Those vessels connected ports around the Great Lakes and preceded the steamship routes that would later link communities throughout the region.

By the late 19th century, steamships had become an essential part of life along Michigan's western shore.

"It cannot be overemphasized how important steamer service was to the economic and social life of small lake towns," local historian James Cabot wrote in a Ludington Daily News history column.

Cabot noted that shipping lines often served as the primary connection between western Michigan communities and the outside world before railroads arrived in northern Lower Michigan. His own great-great-grandparents likely reached Manistee in 1879 aboard a Northern Transit Company vessel after immigrating from Europe and traveling through the Great Lakes transportation network.

At the time, Manistee had not yet received railroad service. Residents often referred to trips beyond the region simply as "going Outside."

According to Cabot, Northern Transit steamers connected ports including Cleveland, Toledo, Detroit, Mackinac Island, Northport, Glen Haven, Frankfort, Manistee, Ludington, Milwaukee and Chicago. Other steamship lines linked ports throughout the Great Lakes while carrying passengers, mail and freight.

Steamships carried freight and passengers, but they also brought newcomers, tourists and business opportunities to growing communities. They connected families on opposite shores of the lake and helped transform isolated settlements into thriving towns.

Steamships also served as social connectors. In another Ludington Daily News history column, Cabot recounted how residents of Beaver Island would gather aboard arriving steamers to watch silent movies projected on makeshift screens, illustrating how closely many communities were tied to maritime travel.

## Building Harbors and Communities

Communities also invested heavily in the infrastructure needed to support shipping.

Barbara Brow of the White Lake Area Historical Society documented how White Lake's original outlet to Lake Michigan was a natural channel that limited navigation and required cargo to be transferred to larger vessels offshore.

To improve shipping access, construction of a new manmade channel began in 1867 and was completed in 1871. A lighthouse followed in 1875, and a United States Life Saving Station was established nearby in 1887.

Similar projects were underway in ports up and down Michigan's western shore.

According to a Michigan Sea Grant study, Manistee Harbor became one of the busiest ports on Lake Michigan during the lumber era and was at one time the third busiest port on the lake.

Lighthouses, channels, piers and breakwaters transformed communities including Ludington, Pentwater, Whitehall, Montague and Manistee into important shipping centers.

The improvements were driven largely by the lumber industry.

Brow noted that White Lake's Ferry Mill produced 5 million board feet of lumber in 1860. Throughout western Michigan, ships

carried lumber harvested from vast forests to growing cities throughout the Midwest.

Without ships to move lumber to regional and national markets, the growth of western Michigan's lumber industry would have been far more limited.

Maritime commerce was not limited to lumber, freight and passenger travel. Commercial fishing also became an important part of life along Michigan's western shore. According to Michigan Sea Grant, Great Lakes fisheries have supported communities for generations, providing food, employment and trade throughout the region. Fishing also connected the area to a much older tradition, as Indigenous communities relied on the lakes for food and commerce long before European settlement.

Wireless operator Stephen Szczepanek continued transmitting distress calls as the situation worsened.

The rescue ferry Pere Marquette 17 reached the scene, but not before disaster struck.

When the ship sank on Sept. 9, 1910, 29 passengers and crew members lost their lives.

The tragedy was not unique to Ludington.

Brow documented the loss of the passenger steamer Muskegon during a storm in October 1919. Among those who died were Herman and Bertha Lecus of Montague, who were returning from a visit with family in Wisconsin

As maritime traffic increased, so did the need for safer navigation.

Before GPS, radar and modern navigation systems, mariners relied on charts, compasses and lighthouse beacons.

The Port of Ludington Maritime Museum's Beckoning Beacons exhibit traces the evolution of lighthouse technology, including the development of Fresnel lenses that dramatically improved visibility and helped vessels navigate safely through darkness, storms and fog.

For sailors approaching shore after days on the water, a lighthouse beacon often meant the difference between safety and disaster.

Combined with harbor improvements and life-saving stations, lighthouses formed part of a growing network designed to make Great Lakes travel safer.

Technology reduced some risks, but storms and changing conditions continued to threaten mariners.

As railroads expanded across the nation, western Michigan became

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

home to one of the most innovative transportation systems on the Great Lakes.

Railroad companies began loading entire rail cars onto specially designed ferries for transport across Lake Michigan.

Railroad tracks extended directly onto ferry decks in Ludington, allowing loaded rail cars to roll aboard for the trip across Lake Michigan.

In the same Ludington 150 article, Peterson wrote that 34 railroad-owned vessels eventually called Ludington home during more than a century of ferry service.

The ferries connected eastern rail lines with Wisconsin and points farther west, helping move products across the nation while strengthening western Michigan's role in the regional economy.

The ferries helped make Ludington one of the most important transportation hubs on the Great Lakes.

## The Price of Working the Water

But the same lake that created opportunity could also be deadly.

Peterson documented numerous incidents involving Ludington-based vessels, including the grounding of the Pere Marquette 16 and Pere Marquette 3 during the winter of 1901-02.

A far greater tragedy followed in September 1910.

According to a Ludington Daily News article by reporter Shanna Avery, the Pere Marquette 18 began taking on water during an overnight crossing from Ludington to Milwaukee. Captain Peter Kilty ordered the ship turned toward shore while crew members pushed rail cars overboard in an effort to save the vessel.

Without ships to move lumber to regional and national markets, the growth of western Michigan's lumber industry would have been far more limited.

Maritime commerce was not limited to lumber, freight and passenger travel. Commercial fishing also became an important part of life along Michigan's western shore. According to Michigan Sea Grant, Great Lakes fisheries have supported communities for generations, providing food, employment and trade throughout the region. Fishing also connected the area to a much older tradition, as Indigenous communities relied on the lakes for food and commerce long before European settlement.

Wireless operator Stephen Szczepanek continued transmitting distress calls as the situation worsened.

The rescue ferry Pere Marquette 17 reached the scene, but not before disaster struck.

When the ship sank on Sept. 9, 1910, 29 passengers and crew members lost their lives.

The tragedy was not unique to Ludington.

Brow documented the loss of the passenger steamer Muskegon during a storm in October 1919. Among those who died were Herman and Bertha Lecus of Montague, who were returning from a visit with family in Wisconsin

after celebrating their first wedding anniversary.

According to the National Museum of the Great Lakes, nearly 35 percent of the estimated 8,000 Great Lakes shipwrecks rest in Lake Michigan, earning it the description of "the true graveyard of the Great Lakes." The museum notes that the lake's north-south orientation leaves vessels exposed to storms sweeping across the Midwest, helping explain



why lighthouses, life-saving stations and rescue crews became such an important part of life along Michigan's western shore.

## Courage and Service

As maritime traffic increased and storms continued to claim ships, communities invested not only in harbors and lighthouses, but also in rescue services.

The building that now houses the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum served as Coast Guard Station Ludington for 70 years. Generations of Coast Guardsmen responded to emergencies, conducted rescues and patrolled Lake Michigan from the facility.

Their service continued a tradition established by the United States Life Saving Service, whose stations once dotted the shoreline.

During the Armistice Day Storm of 1940, stories of heroism emerged amid the tragedy.

The storm remains one of the deadliest weather disasters in Great Lakes history.

In an article republished in the Ludington Daily News' 2023 special section commemorating Ludington's 150th anniversary, former editor Paul Peterson recounted how hurricane-force winds battered Michigan's western shoreline, claiming the freighters Novadoc, William B. Davock and Anna C. Minch and taking 60 lives in waters off Ludington and Pentwater.

Peterson also told the story of the Canadian freighter Novadoc, which grounded near Pentwater, leaving survivors stranded aboard the wreck for 36 hours.

Pentwater fisherman Clyde Cross and his crew aboard the fish tug Three Brothers ultimately rescued 17 survivors.

"If it hadn't been for you, all my men would have perished," Novadoc Capt. Donald Steip later wrote to the rescuers.

The rescue earned official recognition from the Canadian government and remains one of the most celebrated maritime rescues in local history.

## A Living Link to the Past

While many of the vessels that once crossed Lake Michigan have disappeared, one remains in active service.

The S.S. Badger continues to carry passengers, vehicles and commercial traffic between Ludington and Manitowoc, Wisconsin, preserving a transportation tradition that stretches back nearly 150 years.

According to Lake Michigan Carferry, cross-lake steamer service began in Ludington in 1875 when the Flint & Pere Marquette Railroad established service between Ludington and Wisconsin ports. The first railroad car ferry entered service in 1897, allowing loaded rail cars to be transported directly across Lake Michigan.

The railroad car ferry system grew into one of the most important transportation networks on the Great Lakes. During its peak in the 1950s, seven ferries operated year-round from Ludington, carrying rail freight and passengers across the lake.

The S.S. Badger, launched in 1953, was among the last and largest railroad car ferries built in the United States. Today, it is the last coal-fired passenger steamship still operating in the country and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2016.

The vessel's history was the subject

of the 2026 documentary Railroad on Water, which explored the evolution of steamships, railroad ferries and cross-lake transportation on Lake Michigan.

In the documentary, filmmaker Drayton Blackgrove described the vessel as representing "a nearly 135-year tradition of cross-lake service between Michigan and Wisconsin."

Lake Michigan continues to shape the region's economy and identity. In 2026, Ludington city officials approved plans for the American Cruise Lines vessel American Patriot to dock at Waterfront Park as part of a Great Lakes cruise itinerary, bringing visitors to local attractions, businesses and museums.

The Badger's significance extends beyond transportation.

In a May 2026 Ludington Daily News article about the premiere of Railroad on Water, Lake Michigan Carferry Public Relations Director Thom Hawley said the vessel represents far more than its role as a ferry.

"The SS Badger is more than just a big ship — it's a symbol of Ludington's maritime heritage," Hawley said. "This documentary captures not only the ship's legacy, but the people and communities that have sustained it."

Hawley's observation speaks to a history shared by communities all along Michigan's western shore. For generations, Lake Michigan connected communities to markets, brought immigrants and visitors to new homes, supported industries from lumbering to commercial fishing, and provided livelihoods for sailors, shipbuilders, lighthouse keepers and Coast Guardsmen.

## A Legacy That Endures

Many of the vessels that once crossed Lake Michigan have disappeared.

Some rest beneath the water. Others survive only in photographs, newspaper accounts and museum exhibits.

Each time the S.S. Badger leaves Ludington harbor, it follows a path carved by centuries of commerce, trade, innovation and resilience on the Great Lakes.

This article draws on research and reporting by local historians and journalists including James Cabot, Barbara Brow, Paul Peterson and Shanna Avery, as well as materials from the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum, Lake Michigan Carferry, Michigan Sea Grant and other historical sources.

**PENTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM**  
**PRESENTS OUR NEWEST EXHIBIT...**  
*The Founders' Resolve*

It is the story of our nation's origin: Of famous men who signed the Declaration of Independence and were memorialized through various landmarks found in Oceana County and throughout our nation.

Come visit our Museum... Learn the entire story... of the Declaration's primary authors, its signatories, how this document was the first formal step in forming our nation. You will learn how the Revolutionary War was financed, and how diplomacy with other nations helped in the effort to become an independent nation. It is a beautiful, informative exhibit and one you, your family and friends will not want to miss.

The Museum, in conjunction with the Pentwater District Library...will celebrate this monumental occasion with children's activities and prizes for completed pages of the passbook.


In celebration of Americas 250th Birthday!

Please come and visit our Museum and the Celebratory display of our nation's founding!

Voted "Best thing to do on a rainy day!" Or any day!

Funding provided by GLE People Fund, Pentwater Service Club, and Pentwater Women's Club.

Learn more at <https://pentwaterhistory.org> • Email: [info@pentwaterhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@pentwaterhistoricalsociety.org)  
85 S. Rutledge Street



Celebrating

250

years

OF AMERICAN SPIRIT

Just as America marks a historic milestone, we celebrate the trust placed in us by West Michigan for nearly a century.



SSB | Shelby State Bank

www.shelbybank.com

Member FDIC



# Generations of Service

From Civil War soldiers and World War II survivors to veterans of Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, generations of West Michigan residents have served their country — and returned home with stories that continue to shape their communities

BY LOIS TOMASZEWSKI  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, SHORELINE MEDIA

For many in Mason, Lake, Oceana and Muskegon counties, military service has been part of family history for generations. Names found in local cemeteries, veterans halls, newspaper archives and war memorials tell the stories of residents who served in conflicts ranging from the Civil War to Iraq and Afghanistan.

One of the region's earliest documented veterans was Wait Wright, a Canadian-born farmer who enlisted in the Union Army during the Civil War. Serving with Company G of the 17th Michigan Infantry, Wright fought in battles including South Mountain and Antietam before being captured and imprisoned for four months at Belle Isle Prison in Virginia.

After the war, Wright settled in Amber Township and raised a family. For decades, however, his military service was largely forgotten. In 2002, more than a century after his death, descendants gathered at Town Cemetery in Amber Township for a formal military graveside dedication ceremony organized by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

By the early 20th century, military service had become a familiar part of community life across the region, with local residents serving in conflicts far beyond Michigan.

Whitehall's American Legion Post 69 bears the name of Algot Johnson, a Whitehall native who was killed in France in 1918. In Ludington, the Leveaux family became one of the community's enduring symbols of sacrifice after losing three sons during World War I. Their memory is preserved through Leveaux Park, named in honor of the brothers.

## World War II's Defining Generation

World War II produced some of the region's most remarkable military stories.

Charles "Chuck" Hansen of Free Soil survived more than two years as a prisoner of war after being captured by German forces in North Africa. Scottville's Frank Maleckas Jr. survived two aircraft crashes and a 50-hour swim to safety in the South Pacific. Pentwater resident Mureland Mitterer fought through the Battle of the Bulge, while Whitehall veteran Norman Sills landed on Omaha Beach during the Normandy invasion.

Hansen, drafted in 1940, served with the Army's 1st Armored Division. Captured during fighting in Tunisia in 1943, he spent more than two years as a prisoner of war before being liberated near the end of the conflict.

"Nobody knows, unless they experience it, what freedom costs," Hansen told the Daily News in 1999. Maleckas served as a navigator aboard a B-24 bomber with the 13th Air Force in the South Pacific. He first survived a training flight crash in Kansas in which he was the lone survivor. Months later, on Oct. 25, 1943, his bomber was shot down north of Choiseul Island in the Solomon Islands.

Once again, he was the sole survivor. Maleckas spent nearly 50 hours in the ocean before reaching land.

"I knew if I went to sleep I would die and I wanted to live," he recalled years later. Thoughts of his future wife, Helen, helped keep him going.

Mitterer fought in Europe during World War II, including service during the Battle

of the Bulge and the Allied advance into Germany. More than 50 years after the war ended, he finally received the Bronze Star and other military decorations he had earned.

Whitehall veteran Norman Sills also received long-overdue recognition. A member of the Army's 1st Infantry Division, Sills landed on Omaha Beach during the Normandy invasion on June 6, 1944. Nearly six decades later, he received the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and several other military honors.

"I felt like a general walking down the road," Sills said after receiving the medals. Hart resident Harold Tate was drafted in 1945 and spent a year in occupied Japan following the war. He later became a rural mail carrier and one of Oceana County's most active American Legion members, spending decades participating in military funerals, Memorial Day observances and veterans programs.

## POWs and Long Memories

For many veterans, coming home was only the beginning of another battle. Some returned carrying physical wounds. Others lived with memories that remained vivid decades later.

Carr Settlement resident Lyle Taylor parachuted from his damaged aircraft over Austria in 1944. Injured and burned, he spent weeks recovering in a German hospital before being transferred to a prison camp, where he remained for approximately 15 months. During part of that time, Taylor was listed as missing in action, leaving his family uncertain of his fate.

Toward the end of the war, Taylor and thousands of other prisoners were liberated and eventually returned home. "I feel I was one of the lucky ones that came home," Taylor said in a 2002 interview.

Veterans advocate Rose Two Eagles later noted that former prisoners of war often carried physical and emotional scars long after returning to civilian life.

"The POWs are kind of like the forgotten group," she said. "They deserve to be honored. They earned it."

"The POW/MIA flag — bearing the words "You Are Not Forgotten" — continues to fly at veterans organizations, government facilities and homes throughout the region as a reminder of prisoners of war and those still missing in action.

## Korea and Vietnam

The Korean conflict produced one of the region's most highly decorated veterans.

William R. Charette of Ludington served as a Navy corpsman attached to a Marine rifle company during fierce fighting in Korea. In March 1953, while treating wounded Marines under enemy fire, Charette threw himself over a grenade that landed near a wounded serviceman. Despite suffering wounds in the blast, he continued treating casualties and assisting fellow Marines.

For his actions, Charette received the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military award. President Dwight D. Eisenhower presented the medal in 1954. Charette later retired from the Navy after a 26-year career.

Other veterans of the Korean era received recognition much later in life.

Fruitland Township resident Al Sabec served with the 3rd Infantry Division

on the front lines in Korea. Fifty years after the conflict, the South Korean government presented him with a commemorative medal and letter of appreciation.

"It's been 50 years," Sabec said. "This is not something I ever expected."

Vietnam veterans carried different memories home.

Shelby resident Dennis Osborne spent more than three decades waiting for a Purple Heart after records documenting his combat injuries were lost. Through the efforts of local veterans advocates, Osborne finally received the medal in 2002, more than 30 years after being wounded when an anti-tank mine exploded beneath his vehicle.

For Clyde "Butch" Bursley of Hart, Vietnam left lasting emotional scars. Serving with a reconnaissance unit deep in the jungle, he later struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder. His sons, Mark and Scott, would also choose military service, creating a family legacy that stretched from Vietnam through the Gulf War era.

Another Oceana County veteran, Dale Thebo of Shelby spent 30 years in military and civilian service with the Air Force. Although much of his work in Southeast Asia remained classified decades later, Thebo often reflected on the opportunities and lessons military service provided.

## Native Veterans

Military service has long been a tradition among Native American communities, including the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians.

The Little River Band formally established a Warrior Society to recognize tribal citizens who served in the military and support veterans and their families. The organization continues a tradition of military service that extends across generations of tribal members.

One of the Warrior Society's most visible veterans has been former Little River Band Ogema Bob Guenthardt. A U.S. Army veteran and longtime charter fishing captain, Guenthardt founded Tight Lines for Troops, a program that has brought veterans from across Michigan together on Lake Michigan each year for fishing, fellowship and support.

As Shoreline Media columnist Dave Barber wrote, Guenthardt's idea was simple: give veterans a day on the water and an opportunity to spend time with others who understand military service.

## Women in Uniform

Women have also played an important role in the region's military history, although their service was often less visible than that of their male counterparts.

Nancy Frye, who served in the Air Force beginning in 1958, became the first woman commander of Whitehall's American Legion Post 69 in 2003. A former Muskegon County commissioner and community leader, Frye represented a generation of women whose military contributions often received less public attention than those of their male counterparts.

Hart Township's Gina Mead represented a newer generation of women veterans. A Hart High School graduate and the first female football player at her school, Mead served in the

U.S. Navy as a plane captain working with F-14 Tomcat aircraft before becoming a Seabee in naval construction forces.

Years later she was selected as a finalist in the Ms. Veteran America competition, which raises awareness and support for homeless women veterans.

## After Sept. 11

Following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, a new generation of local service members found themselves deployed overseas.

Ludington native Todd Hansen served aboard the USS Bataan during Operation Enduring Freedom. As a Navy journalist and assistant public affairs officer, Hansen helped escort the American flag recovered from Ground Zero after the attacks on the World Trade Center.

"The flag is symbolic of the freedom that Americans have protected for almost 226 years," Hansen said while describing the significance of the flag to fellow sailors and Marines.

Ludington High School graduate Ryan DeWeerd deployed to Kuwait as a Marine during the opening stages of the Iraq War, following in the footsteps of his older brother Nathan.

Not every local service member returned home.

Memorials throughout Mason, Oceana and Muskegon counties preserve the names of men and women lost in service, from World War I through Iraq and Afghanistan. Their stories include Whitehall native Algot Johnson, killed in France during World War I; the three Leveaux brothers whose sacrifice is remembered at Ludington's Leveaux Park; Vietnam casualty Roger Dains; and Army Sgt. Todd Robbins, who was killed during the Iraq War in 2003.

## Remembering the Fallen

Many of those stories are remembered each year during Memorial Day and Veterans Day observances across the region. Veterans organizations place flags on graves, conduct military honors and read the names of local service members who never returned home.

In communities large and small, the traditions help ensure that military service remains part of the area's collective memory.

Their names appear on memorials, in cemetery records, in veterans halls and throughout decades of local newspaper archives. Some stories are well known. Others were nearly forgotten until family members, historians and fellow veterans brought them back to light.

Together, they tell the story of generations of local residents who answered their country's call, served far from home and returned to build lives in the communities they once left behind.

This story is part of *Shoreline Media's America 250 series examining the people, places and events that shaped the history of West Michigan and the nation. This article was compiled from archival reporting, columns and feature stories published by the Ludington Daily News, Oceana's Herald-Journal and White Lake Beacon, along with more recent reporting by Shoreline Media journalists, columnists and contributors. Historical quotations and accounts are drawn from original interviews and published reports spanning several decades.*

## Murder of Luther H. Foster overshadowed US Centennial in 1876

The United States' Centennial in 1876 was overshadowed in Ludington by the murder of one of the city's leading citizens. Early on June 29, 1876, Luther Hall Foster was shot and killed by a burglar.

A native of East Machias Maine, where he was born on May 31, 1827, Foster engaged in lumbering in Ridgeway, Pa., Oshkosh and Stiles, Wis., and Muskegon.

In November 1866 he came to Pere Marquette (now Ludington) as James Ludington's resident manager, bringing with him his wife, Lucy Amelia, and their sons, Frank Augustus and Edward Clarence.

He built a home in 1867 at the northwest corner of Ludington Avenue and Main Street (now Gaylord Avenue).

Upon the retirement of James Ludington in 1869, Foster drew up plans for the organization of the Pere Marquette Lumber Company and was elected its secretary. He was a member of the lumber firm of Foster & Stanchfield, and

was a member of the Ludington Board of Education from 1868 until his death.

Although the Ludington newspapers for 1876 have not survived, the Lake County Star of July 6, 1876, quoted the account of Foster's murder from the Ludington Appeal:

"Early Thursday morning a terrible report spread through the city, that Luther H. Foster had been murdered in the night, by an unknown hand. Visiting his residence about 5:30 a.m., we found the impossible story only too true. Here in his own parlor lay the most public spirited and generous of our citizens, assassinated by the bullet of a robber. No clue to the murderer has yet been found. The sheriff has detained several on suspicion and every means is being employed to discover the villain. A reward of \$500 has been offered by a number of citizens for the arrest, or such information as will lead to the arrest and conviction of the criminal. But the sad fact remains that a distinguished man, a kind neighbor, a benevolent Christian has been suddenly and wantonly torn from his family and friends.

"It seems a robber entered Mr. Foster's residence, went down cellar, and into various rooms, lighted a lantern in the cellar-way, ate and drank what he wanted, took a revolver belonging to Eddie Foster

which lay unloaded on the table, loaded it from a box of cartridges which was beside it and rummaged about until Mrs. Foster saw his light and spoke to her husband. Mr. Foster asked who was there, and receiving no answer jumped out and after the man. As they reached the gate, the robber shot and wounded Mr. Foster, who nevertheless pursued him into the street and around the corner into the street between Mrs. Hutchins' and Mr. Foster's garden, and then he probably caught the robber, for he received two more wounds in quick succession, and when his wife came looking for him a few moments after he was dead."

The Star also quoted the inquest testimony of Dr. Edmund N. Dundass, who stated that he "found three pistol shot wounds on the body, two of which might have proved fatal; the upper one of the three being the one that must have occasioned death; this ball passed in at the right side of the neck, going downward and forward; from the direction of the ball, it must have passed near the heart; from the course of the ball, and the position of the wound, I should think the deceased was down or attempting to rise when he received his wound."

Foster's elder son, Frank, wrote in his diary that day: "Mother woke me up this morning about 3 o'clock saying that Father

had chased a burglar out of the house & there had been a pistol fired, then a cry of murder. We went out to see what the trouble was & after searching about ten minutes found Father — dead — shot three times — by the person he had followed out of the house. We have passed a dreadful day."

Ludington's first high school graduation exercises, planned for June 29, were postponed and later canceled. A memorial petition was adopted by the Ludington City Council on July 3, 1876, the day before the national Centennial.

The surmise of the family was that the burglary had aimed at the theft of a ledger that turned up missing after Foster's murder. This came to be called "Foster's Black Book," an allusion to the "Wisconsin Black Book" from the 1858 investigation of corruption in that state. Foster had reportedly amassed evidence of serious fraud and corruption in the lumber industry.

Frank Foster believed he knew who had hired the burglar, but proving it was another matter; an investigation by a Pinkerton detective he hired in 1886 proved unavailing. The mystery remains today, 150 years after Foster's death and 250 years after the founding of the United States.

## FREEDOM: The Story of Idlewild

FROM PAGE 1C

For many families, Idlewild offered more than a summer getaway. Historians describe it as a place where African Americans could own property, build friendships, create traditions and feel fully accepted at a time when opportunities to do so were often limited elsewhere. What began as a real-estate venture evolved into a community where generations gathered to swim, fish, attend dances, hear nationally known entertainers and enjoy a sense of freedom often unavailable elsewhere.

According to Michigan historical records, Idlewild was one of more than 30 African American resort communities in the United States. It occupied a unique place in the Midwest as the only resort where African Americans could both purchase land and vacation during the Jim Crow era.

The community eventually encompassed roughly four square miles and became a gathering place for families from throughout the country. During the summer months, visitors enjoyed boating, swimming, fishing and other outdoor recreation on Idlewild Lake, Paradise Lake and surrounding waterways. At its peak, Idlewild drew as many as 25,000 visitors on summer weekends.

Idlewild attracted some of the most accomplished African Americans of the era. Among them was Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, the pioneering Chicago surgeon credited with performing one of the nation's first successful open-heart surgeries.

According to a Michigan historical marker at the site of his former cottage, Williams and his wife, Alice, were among Idlewild's earliest residents and built Oakmere around 1920. Williams' stature as a nationally respected physician encouraged other Black professionals to spend time in the community.

When Williams died at Oakmere in 1931, activities throughout Idlewild reportedly were canceled for the day in recognition of his contributions.

Other notable property owners and visitors included Du Bois, author Charles

Waddell Chesnutt, entrepreneur Madam C.J. Walker and attorney Violette Nealy Anderson.

Idlewild's influence extended far beyond northern Michigan.

Purdue University historians note the community became known as the "Summer Apollo of Michigan" because of the performers and audiences it attracted. Count Basie, Sarah Vaughan, Billy Eckstine, Sammy Davis Jr., Della Reese, Louis Armstrong, Aretha Franklin and the Four Tops were among the entertainers who appeared in Idlewild.

The community's nightlife centered around venues such as the Flamingo Club, Paradise Club and El Morocco. Williams Island stood at the center of much of that activity.

A Michigan historical marker notes the island featured hotels, dance halls, cottages and entertainment venues. During the 1930s and 1940s, entrepreneur Virgil Williams operated businesses there before ownership passed to Detroit hotelier Phil Giles.

Trucks told Begnoche that visitors should imagine Williams Island during its peak years, with restaurants, businesses, a skating rink, hotels and entertainment venues lining the waterfront.

The Flamingo Club, opened by Giles in 1955, became one of the premier African American entertainment venues in the country. A 1956 article in the Chicago Defender described it as being among the nation's top nightclubs.

Musicians who appeared in Idlewild helped define the jazz, rhythm-and-blues and early rock-and-roll eras. Audiences traveled from across the Midwest to attend performances. The Mason-Lake Musical Heritage Trail notes some performances were broadcast by Ludington radio station WKLA and carried on broader radio networks.

Today, the Flamingo Club building still stands and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

For roughly half a century, Idlewild flourished.

Then came the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

National Archives records show the landmark legislation prohibited discrimination in public accommodations and expanded opportunities for African Americans to travel, vacation and stay at destinations that previously had been closed to them.

The legislation marked a major victory for the civil rights movement, but it also had an unintended consequence.

As travel opportunities expanded nationwide, the unique role Idlewild had filled gradually diminished.

The resort's heyday came to an end. But the story did not end there. Idlewild never disappeared.

While some buildings have been lost and reminders of the past remain scattered throughout the woods, the community continues as both a residential area and a historic destination.

The Idlewild Historic and Cultural Center preserves and interprets the community's story through exhibits, tours and educational programs.

Efforts to preserve that history have gained national recognition.

The Cultural Landscape Foundation included the Idlewild Historic District in its What's Out There Guide to African American Cultural Landscapes, a national guide highlighting more than 140 sites across the United States associated with African American history and cultural life.

Idlewild was recognized alongside Woodland Park in neighboring Newaygo County, another historic African American resort community founded in 1921. The two communities maintained close ties during the era of segregation and offered opportunities for recreation and respite to African American families throughout the Midwest.

The recognition followed preservation efforts launched in 2022 by residents, economic development organizations, Michigan State University Extension and community leaders working to identify historic structures, landscapes and cultural resources worthy of long-term stewardship.

"The fragility and invisibility of significant African American cultural landscapes like Woodland Park and Idlewild makes them vulnerable to change or, even worse, erasure," said Charles A. Birnbaum, president and CEO of The Cultural Landscape Foundation.

Today, both communities continue to preserve their histories while serving residents and visitors.

Driving through Idlewild today requires a bit of imagination.

But don't mistake Idlewild for a ghost town. As Begnoche reported in 2023, families still return to cottages owned for generations, festivals continue to draw visitors and residents remain deeply connected to the community's history.

Historic markers stand beside quiet roads. Family cottages share space with newer homes. Lakes that once hosted thousands of vacationers continue to draw visitors seeking peace and recreation.

More than 100 years after the first lots were sold, Idlewild remains one of Michigan's most important historic landmarks and one of the nation's most significant African American resort communities.

Its story touches many of the forces that shaped America during the last century — migration from the South, the growth of a Black middle class, the struggle for civil rights and the determination of families to build communities of their own.

The crowds are smaller now, and many of the buildings are gone.

But along roads with names like Paradise Path, Wisdom Way and Righteous Road, the story of Black Eden continues.

Editor's Note: Portions of this article draw on reporting and interviews originally conducted by former Shoreline Media reporter Steve Begnoche for a 2023 LakeStyle Magazine feature on Idlewild. Additional reporting, historical research and updates were completed for this America 250 special section by Executive Editor Lois Tomaszeowski.

**CHEERS TO 250 YEARS AMERICA**

**Sleep Better & Save More**

**Unbeatable Deals:**  
Take advantage of summer savings for maximum value

**Comfy new furniture and mattresses**

**BoxDrop**  
Mattress & Furniture Direct

**DON'T MISS OUT**  
bring this ad in for an additional **10% OFF** already incredible prices!

Open 11-5 - 5 Days  
Closed Sunday & Wednesday  
707 US 10, Scottville  
231-342-7547

**Red, White & Bloom!**

**Create a garden worth celebrating at your local Independent Garden Center!**

**WEESIES BROTHERS**

MANISTEE MONTAGUE HART NUNICA  
3691 US 31 South 33365 Fruitvale Rd 2343 Comfort Drive 12968 Cleveland St

**Eagle Flag Pole Holder Plaque** \$119<sup>99</sup>  
Flag & Flagpole Not Included  
Wall Mount  
Size: 10" x 15.25"  
Colors: Black/Gold, Bronze Verdigris, Oil-Rubbed Bronze, Red/Gold  
Personalization lines 1 & 2: (1) - 1.25" WP font

**Birth of a Nation** \$49<sup>99</sup>  
Hanging Wall Mount  
Size: 9.75" x 6.75"  
Colors: Black/Gold, Bronze Verdigris, Copper Verdigris

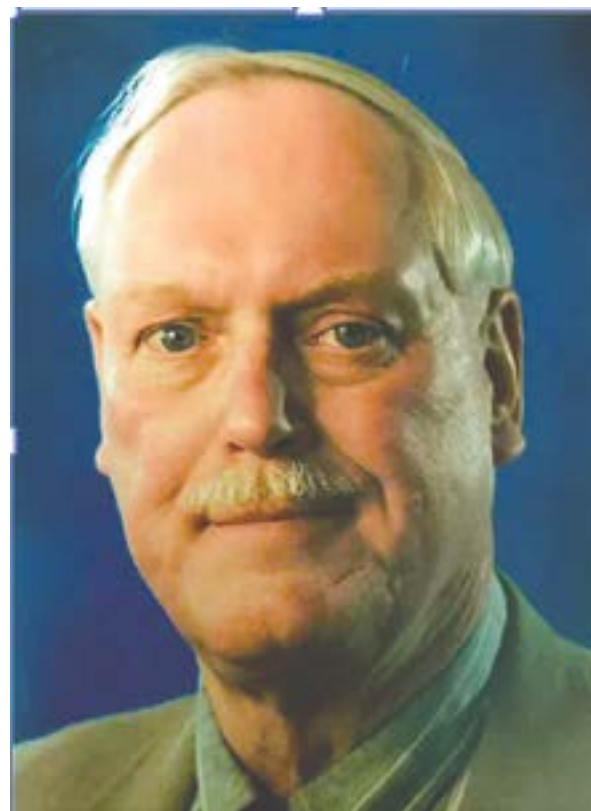
**We The People** \$99<sup>99</sup>  
Wall & Lawn Mount  
Size: 18" x 7.75"  
Colors: Antique Brass, Black/Gold, Bronze Verdigris, Oil-Rubbed Bronze  
Personalizations: (1) - 1.25" WP font

**Great Seal** \$49<sup>99</sup>  
Hanging Wall Mount  
Size: 9" Round  
Colors: Black/Gold, Bronze Verdigris, Copper Verdigris, Oil-Rubbed Bronze

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AMERICA!**  
Mark the 250<sup>th</sup> year with hand-crafted patriotic décor, American-made by Whitehall Products.

**Whitehall**  
HANDCRAFTED SINCE 1911

CALL US AT 1-800-728-2164 TO PLACE AN ORDER • ADDRESS SIGNS, MAILBOXES, DECOR & MORE ONLINE AT WHITEHALLPRODUCTS.COM



# VOTE AUGUST 2026 Republican Primary (Thank You)

Counties of: Benzie, Manistee,  
Mason, Muskegon, Oceana

**AXE THE TAX - VOTE FOR MAX**

- Private to Lt Colonel; Retired after 32 years of military Service; 12 years Active Duty; 13 years - Michigan Army National Guard; U.S. Army Reserve; Vietnam & Iraq Veteran - one year each; served in Germany; Iceland; Kuwait; Korea; CIB; BSM; LOM; MSM; ABN Badge ..... ARCOM (3); AAM (3) Branched Infantry; Military Intelligence; & Civil Affairs
- Active Member of Muskegon County Republican Party Executive Committee; Member of Third Congressional District Republican Executive Committee; Attended numerous Republican County & State Conventions as a voting GOP Precinct Delegate
- NRA & VFW Life Member; Past VFW Post; County Council & District Commander.; Life Member of the Sons of the (American) Revolution; Mother was a Daughters of American Revolution Member
- Retired Michigan Public School Teacher; 23 years. I fully support Public Schools; Charter Schools; Home Schooling; & Christian Schools. Expand Vocational-Skills Quality Education

**Lower Taxes & Less Government** in our lives

**AXE THE TAX - VOTE FOR MAX**

- We are A Republic - NOT a Democracy; I fully support the U.S. Constitution & Bill of Rights

Michigan Citizens should **NOT** pay **property taxes on their homes**; & reduce property TAXES on Farm Land; especially family farms.

Preserve our valuable Farm Land; If you like to eat - thank a farmer ... Give serious thought to our State & Federal Government wiping out every farmers debt just as 'they' did for the banks in 2008. Because without Farmers, there is NO Food and without Food, there is no country .... **End Food Insecurity**



*"Mankind must put an end to War, or war will put an end to mankind"*  
- JOHN F. KENNEDY -  
US Senator / President / WWII Naval Hero

- Twice awarded Bronze Medal from Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge. George Washington Honor Medal for Individual Achievement



**REQUIRE PHOTO ID TO VOTE**

- Our Electric Rates are **too high**; Fix our rural Infrastructure; Family, Faith; & Patriotism; NO free Public Education or free anything for non-US Citizens; Fully fund our Michigan State Parks; along with supporting Hunting & Fishing - which helps support our Michigan Environmental resources; Reform the DNR, Clean Water; Clean Air; **Protect our Electric Grid from PRC Bad actors ...**

**NO TAX ON ONES PRIMARY RESIDENCE**

Welcome students from Republic of (Free) China & Tibetan Students; NO PRC students at or in our public schools; colleges/universities

- As YOUR State Senator; I will **lobby for NO more foreign wars**. Michigan needs to have free & fair trade with the world "Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all". - General and President George Washington

**MAKE ALL RETIREMENT INCOME TAX FREE IN MICHIGAN**

- End Food Insecurity
- Max was twice elected Fruitport Township Parks Commissioner
- Prevent Foreign Adversaries from infiltrating our schools, universities and electric grid

*"Peace commerce, and honest friendship with all nations - entangling alliances with none"*  
- Thomas Jefferson -

- Keep our community safe by prohibiting foreign countries from purchasing Michigan farm land - especially near military bases
- Stop Foreign Nationals from voting in Michigan elections & **require proper photo ID**
- Max & Son both Graduated from Fruitport Public Schools; K-12; Max attended Muskegon Community College; Max has two Master Degrees from WMU in Political Science; Education, History and International Relations; Max; K-12 Teaching Certificate - from **WMU**; My Son is an Eagle Scout (73 MB's); He Graduated with a BS Degree (Geo-Physics) from **Michigan State University** with a minor in Environmental Admin. and Sustainability studies. He is currently pursuing an MA at **MSU** in Civil Engineering. He is also a member of the Michigan Army National Guard where he earned the **Air Assault Badge**. He fully supports his father being his (your) State Senator

\*Paid for by the Committee to Elect Max Riekse  
PO Box 82, Fruitport, MI 49415