



Michigan Historical Museum

The Michigan Historical Museum opened in the Michigan Library and Historical Center in March 1989. It is the fourth facility to house and exhibit the state's historical collections. This is the south entrance. The State Seal of Michigan is visible over the Allegan Street entrance on the north side of the building. The building surrounds a white pine tree, the state tree of Michigan, and the Great Lakes Fountain. Between this entrance and the parking lot, visitors pass by the Polaris Ring sculpture.



From Time Immemorial

The museum's second floor exhibits trace the state's history from precontact times to around 1900. Entering the atrium, visitors see a three-story topographic map of Michigan; panels that tell the story of our glacial history; samples of Michigan's geologic elements such as limestone, granite and oil; and three tall white pine trees. The bright, glass enclosed atrium reminds us of Michigan's connection with the outdoors.



The First People

Paleo hunters on a bluff represent Michigan's earliest people. They came into this area from the south to hunt, fish, and gather. They were nomads who hunted caribou, mastodon and the Jefferson mammoth.



The First People—Archaeology

This gallery represents Michigan's unwritten history from its earliest known inhabitants until around 1620 when Europeans arrived. Archaeological findings and reproductions displayed here include projectile points, the atlatl and pottery. A time line above the cases indicates the approximate dates of the periods and civilizations.



Woodland

The Woodland Gallery features a diorama of a Michigan riverbank during the late Woodland Period. A canoe with furs rests on the shore, and sounds of a northern forest in October fill the air. The reader rails provide information about European visitors, such as Jacques Marquette and Jean Nicolet, and the importance of the fur trade during the 17th century.



Two Cultures Struggle

The facade of Fort Michilimackinac provides a setting for the story of the struggle between the European and native cultures over furs, land and ways of life. A graphic here shows the value of furs in the barter economy. A map illustrates the ceding of native lands.



Statehood

Michigan's first state capitol building was its territorial capitol in Detroit. Visitors enter through the door of a reproduction of that building. Inside, a portrait of territorial governor Lewis Cass and a mannequin of first state governor Stevens T. Mason oversee the stories of statehood, surveying and the Toledo War.



Settlement

Michigan's pioneers came to settle and farm the cheap land between 1800-1835. This gallery shows how advancements in transportation—from horses to ships to attempts at better roads—helped the state's rapid growth at this time. Visitors can try the “plank road ride” to get a feel for the long, arduous, bumpy trips the early settlers endured.



The Civil War

Although no battles were fought in Michigan, the state supplied more than 90,000 men to the war. This gallery provides a look at uniforms and weapons from the war and at disease, a greater danger to soldiers than injury. It also tells the stories of Sojourner Truth and the Underground Railroad.



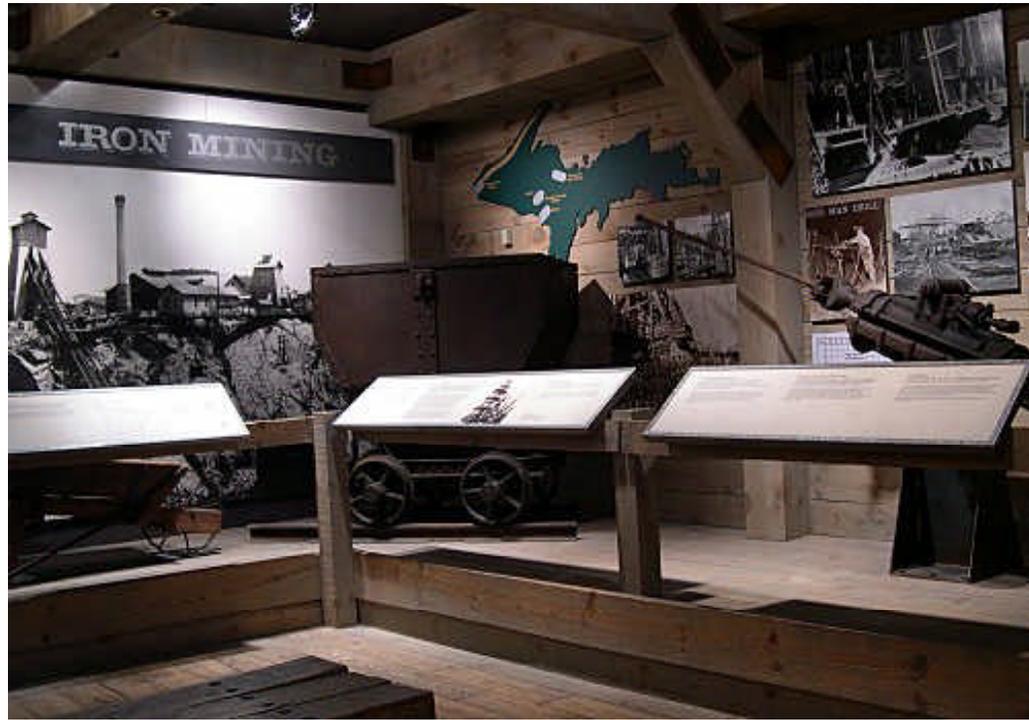
Entrance to Mining Galleries

A towering mining head frame of timber and a massive piece of float copper mark the entrance to the Mining Galleries. An alcove to the left features state geologist Douglass Houghton and the discovery of copper and William Burt, inventor of the solar compass, and the discovery of iron ore.



Copper Mine

The Copper Mine Gallery includes walk-through reproductions of an early mine drift and a mine shaft. Stop, look down the drift and up the shaft and listen to the sounds of miners discussing the dangers of their jobs. Items made from copper and its alloys are displayed. A chart shows the steps involved in copper processing.



Iron Mining

The Iron Mining Gallery includes two audiovisual programs: “Jobs in the Mines” and “The Soo Locks.” Miners’ helmets, safety equipment, tools such as the one-man drill and mining scrip (money issued by the mining companies) are displayed. A “Workforce Gallery” shows mining community life with many photographs of Upper Peninsula mining towns, schools and home life.



Lumbering in Michigan

Exiting the mining tunnel, the visitor comes upon the “Big Wheels” log hauler with its 10-foot wheels. A sawmill includes a circular saw and the tools used in the woods by the “shanty boys.” The gallery includes a wall-sized photograph of the one of the last remaining stands of virgin white pine trees.



Lumber Baron's Mansion

The Lumber Baron's Mansion is a recreation of the façade of the home built in Muskegon by Charles H. Hackley in 1889. The home, with its fine architectural details and stained glass, still stands in Muskegon. Inside the foyer, portraits of lumber barons tell more about the era.



Lumber Baron's Theater

The Lumber Baron's "Parlor" is a 25-seat theater with a 13-minute audiovisual program. It describes the life of the shanty boys and the rise and fall of the white pine era in Michigan with narration, music and photos.



Rural Michigan

Michigan in the 19th century was a rural society. Farming had taken over the tree-cleared lands. This gallery displays farm implements and objects from home and rural community life.



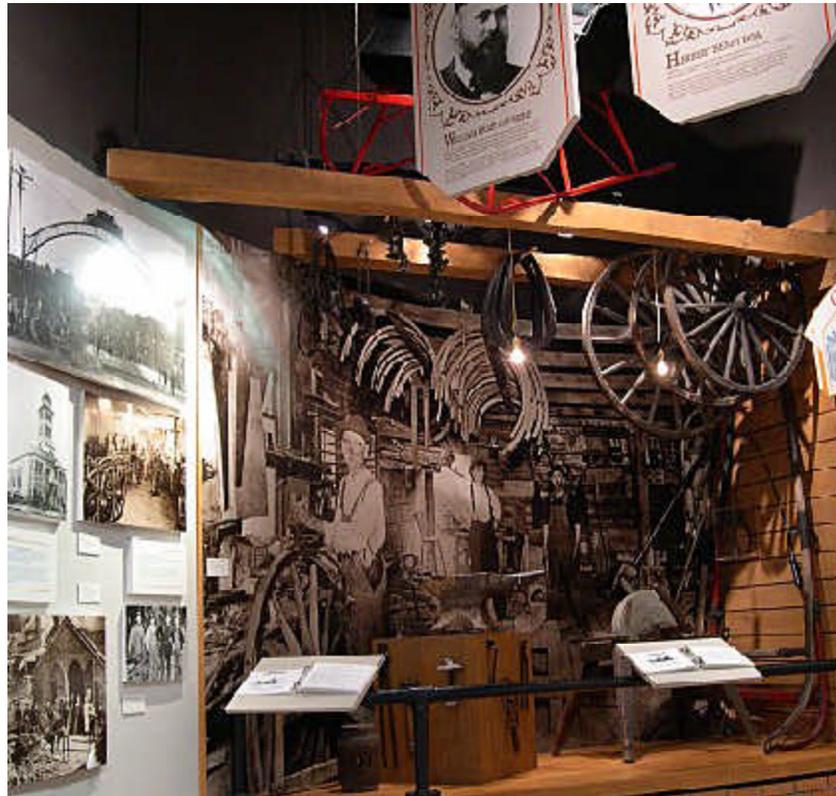
Growth of Manufacturing — Transportation

Shipping, better roads and the railroad enabled the growth of Michigan prosperity in the late 19th century. Lighthouses helped provide safe passage for boats laden with copper and iron ores and other goods. Railroads carried mail, settlers, goods and tourists in the state. Better roads enabled farmers to get their produce to town and to railroad depots for shipment to large cities such as Detroit and Chicago.



Growth of Manufacturing — Industries

Early industries in Michigan in the mid to late 19th century include iron works (stoves, farm implements, railroad cars, etc.) furniture, cereal, pharmaceuticals, paper and others. Many towns had their own cigar factory and brewery. Their stories are told in this gallery.



Growth of Manufacturing — Carriage Industry

The carriage industry in Flint, Pontiac, Detroit and other Michigan cities was the precursor to automobile manufacturing. This diorama introduces the story which continues with the “Michigan in the 20th Century” exhibits on the building's third floor.



Hometown Hoops exhibit, 2003

Special Exhibits

The first floor of the Michigan Historical Museum includes a Special Exhibits Gallery. Exhibits in this area change from one to three times per year.