

# Michigan Time Traveler

An educational supplement produced by Lansing Newspapers In Education, Inc. and the Michigan Historical Center.

## KIDS' History

### Michigan-Canada Connections

Go north or east or, in one place, south from Michigan, and you'll find another country—Canada. Today's Time Traveler explores some of our connections to our next door neighbor.

### Boundaries and Borders

The geographical boundary between the United States and Canada was first set by a treaty between the United States and Great Britain after the American Revolution (1783). It has been adjusted in other treaties and conventions since then. The boundary follows the 49th parallel in the west and natural landscape features in the east.

On land the boundary is identified by straight lines that meet at 5,528 boundary monuments. However, Michigan's boundary with Canada falls mostly in the waters of the Great Lakes. There the boundary is identified by lines that meet at unmarked turning points. Of all the states, Michigan has the second longest border with Canada: 721 miles (1,160 kilometers). Only Alaska's is longer. The International Boundary Commission—with a Canadian commissioner and a U. S. commissioner—maintains the boundary and regulates any construction near it.

The boundary is also our political border. The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service patrols the U. S. side of the border. It has the authority to inspect and investigate people who cross the border to enter the U. S. In Canada, Canadian Immigration Control officers do similar work. After the tragedies of September 11, 2001, the U. S. and Canada signed an agreement that strengthened security along their 3,000-mile border.



Postcards like this one let folks at home know that their relatives or friends were international travelers. (State Archives of Michigan)

### At the Museum

- Learn more about our French heritage and the founding of Detroit in the Woodland Gallery.
- Visit the Prohibition exhibit to see bottles found in the Detroit River by archaeologists. Smugglers tried to bring illegal liquor to Michigan from Canada by crossing the Detroit River during Prohibition (1917-1933). Many bottles were lost in the water or dumped there when police came.

The Michigan Historical Museum, 702 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, is located two blocks west of the Capitol in downtown Lansing. Museum admission is free. Hours: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. The museum telephone hotline: (517) 373-3559. The museum is part of the Michigan Historical Center, Department of History, Arts and Libraries. Visit us on the Web at [www.michiganhistory.org](http://www.michiganhistory.org).



Lansing Newspapers In Education (NIE) provides *Lansing State Journal* newspapers and supplemental teaching materials for area classrooms at little or no cost to the schools. The newspaper becomes a "living textbook," providing students with timely and relevant topics for discussion in class and at home.

If you are interested in sponsoring classroom papers or using the newspaper in your classroom, please contact Patricia O'Hearn, NIE Manager at (517) 377-1242.

### Michigan's French-Canadian Heritage

Jacques Cartier was the first European to use the word *Canada*. In 1535 he named what is now the St. Lawrence River *rivière de Canada* and his encampment (now Quebec City) *Canada* and *Stadacona*. French explorers, fur traders and missionaries paddled canoes west from Quebec and met the First Peoples of the Great Lakes region. Samuel de Champlain reached Lake Huron in 1615, and Etienne Brûlé ventured as far as Sault Ste. Marie in 1621. In the 1660s the French established trading posts and missions at Sault Ste. Marie and St. Ignace. In 1701 Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac founded the settlement of

Detroit. The region now known as Michigan and eastern Canada was part of New France.

The French lost New France to Great Britain in the French and Indian War (1763). Michigan became British, but many people with French ancestors stayed. You can find Michigan cities, streets and parks named with French words or for French people. Later, French Canadians joined other immigrant groups who came to work in Michigan's mines and forests. Many Michigan families who research their history find an ancestor from Ontario or Quebec.



This section of a map published in 1722 by Guillaume De L'Isle shows the Great Lakes area as *Canada Nouvelle (New) France*. (State Archives of Michigan)

### Boats, Tunnels and Bridges

Early travel through Michigan and Canada was by canoe and, later, by boat. After the United States was formed, travel between Canada and Michigan meant crossing the border—still by boat. When trains and, later, automobiles became the main means of transportation, the two nations cooperated to build tunnels and bridges.

The St. Clair River Tunnel between Port Huron and Sarnia, built in 1891, was the first full-size underwater tunnel built in North America. (It is a National Historic Landmark today.) The Michigan Central Railroad built an underwater tunnel in 1909 to connect its rails at Detroit to Canadian lines in Windsor, Ontario. In 1930 the Detroit-Windsor Vehicular Tunnel provided passage for cars and buses, too. The cities of Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit jointly own the almost one-mile-long tunnel. In 1995 the Canadian National Railway built a new St. Clair River Railroad Tunnel to replace the 1891 tunnel.

The Ambassador Bridge between Detroit and Windsor opened in 1929. Both the U. S. Congress and Canada's Parliament approved its construction. Both countries provided money and construction firms to build the first Bluewater Bridge, in 1938, between Port Huron and Sarnia, Ontario. A second span—a joint venture of Canada's Blue Water Bridge Authority and the Michigan Department of Transportation—was added in 1997. In 1935 the Michigan State Legislature and the government of Ontario created an International Bridge Authority to plan and finance a bridge at Michigan's northern border with Canada. The Sault Ste. Marie International Bridge, near the Soo Locks, opened in 1962.



The photo of the International Bridge at Sault Ste. Marie looks north toward Canada. These participants in the 1962 bridge dedication posed with the highway signs of both nations. (State Archives of Michigan)

### Things To Do

There are many modern connections between Canada and the United States. Watch for stories about topics like these in the newspaper.

- Before and during the Civil War, fugitive slaves came north through Michigan on the Underground Railroad to safety in Canada. Look for news stories about how people today are preserving this history in Michigan and Canada.
- Both Michigan and southern Canada depend upon the Great Lakes for fresh water. In 1909 Canada and the United States cooperated to establish the International Joint Commission to protect the lakes. Look for an article about a Great Lakes issue.
- Many U. S. and Canadian businesses, such as the auto industry, are connected. Find an article about a company that operates in both countries.
- "Mr. Hockey"—hall-of-famer Gordie Howe—played for the Detroit Red Wings from 1946 to 1971. He was born in Floral, Saskatchewan. Ron Mason, college hockey's winningest coach and current M.S.U. athletic director, comes from Blyth, Ontario. What players do you know from Canada or the U. S. who play on the other nation's teams?
- Check out the weather forecasts this winter. You may read that an Alberta clipper will bring especially cold weather to Michigan. What is it?
- Canada and the U. S. have many similar holidays. Find out when Canadians celebrate Thanksgiving Day, Canada Day, Labour Day and Remembrance Day. How are they like or different from our holidays?
- Former Michigan Governor James Blanchard served as U. S. Ambassador to Canada between 1993 and 1996. The late former Governor John Swainson (1961-62) and Michigan Governor-elect Jennifer Granholm were born in Canada. Find other Michigan-Canada political connections.



Keith, Cole and Destiny, students in Mrs. Tribell's 3rd grade at Dimondale Elementary School, study a museum display that explains the founding of Detroit by the French. As participants in the "Extended Tours" program, they wear sashes similar to those worn by French voyagers.

November 17 - 23, 2002, is Geography Awareness Week. This year's theme is "America's Backyard: Exploring Your Public Lands." Get FREE lesson plans by contacting Patricia O'Hearn at (517) 377-1242.