

MICHIGAN ARCHAEOLOGY

From Detroit to Copper Harbor and Ironwood to Drummond Island, archaeological sites reveal how people have lived in Michigan for nearly 14,000 years. Archaeology is the scientific study of the human past, using places and objects to understand changing people and environments. It is the study of sand dunes and forests, seas and cities, hardship and resourcefulness, ingenuity and innovation, and above all, communities. Across time and space, archaeology helps us know the past, understand the present, and plan for a sustainable and vibrant future.

CONTACT

State Archaeologist, State Historic Preservation Office
Michigan State Housing Development Authority
735 East Michigan Avenue, P.O. Box 30044
Lansing, MI 48909-8240
PHONE: 517.373.1630
michigan.gov/archaeology



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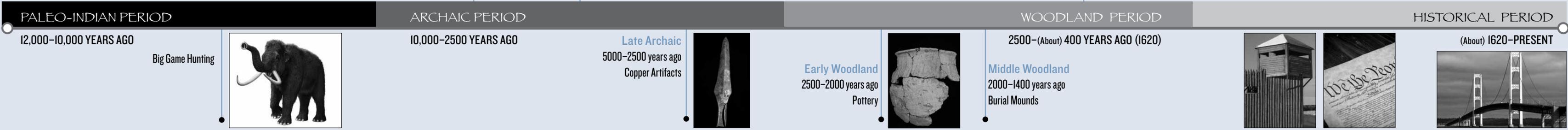
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Cover image: Turkey Tail points, Bay County, State Archaeological Collections



Michigan Archaeology

Recording the schooner Maid of the Mist, Lake Huron. Photo by Don Tipton.



ARCHAEOLOGY

TEACHES

- Cultural diversity
- Principles of anthropology, history, geography, math, geology, biology, chemistry, physics and language
- Critical thinking
- Patience and attention to detail
- Outdoor skills

Research in our state contributes to a constantly growing body of information available in a variety of sources—from popular media to textbooks—changing and expanding our shared knowledge of Great Lakes history. Investigations are conducted in Michigan every summer: field schools teach basic scientific techniques, while others allow the public a first-hand look at archaeologists at work. The public often contributes to these investigations by sharing a broad range of local knowledge and skills. Archaeology is a collaborative practice that relies on the expertise and participation of many people from many different backgrounds.

REVEALS

- Dynamic social relationships
- Environmental stability and change
- Biological variation
- Technological and artistic transformations
- Our shared curiosity

Annually, Michigan Archaeology Day draws people of all ages to the Michigan Historical Center to experience special exhibits, demonstrations, hands-on activities, and lectures. Learn how this unique science can make you think about the world—and maybe even yourself—a little differently. For more information about Michigan Archaeology Day, visit michigan.gov/archaeology or michigan.gov/museum.

GUIDES

- Planning efforts
- Construction to assess possible impacts on significant sites
- Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act and other laws that protect cultural resources
- Environmental studies for federal, tribal, state, and local development

ATTRACTS

- Public involvement where diverse backgrounds are respected and valued
- Tourism for museums, parks, and main streets through the interpretation of local history
- Local leaders desiring to strengthen a shared sense of community

IS FOR EVERYONE

Archaeology is more than just digging—it is cooperative research, analysis, reporting, curation, stewardship, education, and public outreach. Support Michigan archaeology by respecting sites on public land, being good stewards of sites on your property, volunteering, and learning more.



THE STATE ARCHAEOLOGIST

- Maintains a record of archaeological sites in Michigan that includes more than 22,000 land sites and 1,500 shipwrecks
- Protects archaeological sites on state-owned lands and bottomlands
- Provides environmental review for federal compliance projects
- Collaborates with federal, tribal, state and local agencies, and organizations
- Curates artifact collections that are available for research and exhibition
- Accepts the donation of archaeological collections
- Maintains a library of professional reports to assist researchers and planners
- Nominates significant sites to the National Register of Historic Places
- Conducts educational programming in collaboration with the Michigan Historical Center
- Provides volunteer opportunities for students and the public



HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Once removed from their original locations, artifacts lose their research value unless the removal is properly documented. Contact the State Archaeologist if you think you have discovered an archaeological site.
- Maintain good records for any artifacts you find, including a map of their original location and notes on how they were discovered.
- We cannot protect or learn from sites that we do not know exist; we accept site reports from everyone. Report a potential site at michigan.gov/archaeology.
- Artifacts are the property of the landowner; you must have permission to remove artifacts from private land.
- Artifacts on federal or state land belong to all of our citizens, and it is illegal to disturb them. Leave them in place and report them to the land manager.
- Do not metal detect on state and federal land unless you know the regulations.
- Temporarily disable the automatic geotagging feature on your cell phone and other handheld photographic devices. Do not disclose the locations of otherwise unmarked archaeological and burial sites by geocaching on them or sharing geotagged photographs.
- It is illegal to intentionally disturb human remains and associated artifacts. If you accidentally discover human remains, immediately stop any activities in the area and contact the police and the State Archaeologist. Respect the dignity of burial sites by protecting and reporting them. Do not disturb them.

All artifacts pictured are in the State Archaeological Collections unless otherwise indicated.
 Top: Mammoth, stock imagery; copper spear point, Houghton County, photographed courtesy of Bobbie Dalquist; Woodland pottery vessel fragment, Ottawa County; Fort Michilimackinac, Mackinaw City, courtesy Mackinac State Historic Parks; Declaration of Independence, stock imagery; Mackinac Bridge, stock imagery.
 Bottom: Excavation of the Riley Mammoth site, Saranac; antler harpoon from the Marquette Mission site, St. Ignace; diver on Grecian, Lake Huron, photo by Tane Casserley, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; artifacts from Walker Tavern site, Lenawee County; archaeological investigation in Fayette Historic Townsite, Delta County, courtesy Michigan Department of Natural Resources.