

WISCONSIN

HISTORY

Native nations, French fur traders, miners, farmers and immigrants from many lands each helped build Wisconsin.

The First Peoples

People have lived in Wisconsin for more than 10,000 years. More than 1,000 years ago, people built **effigy** mounds shaped like birds, bears and other animals. Later, the Ho-Chunk and the Menominee lived near Green Bay and Lake Winnebago. They hunted, fished, grew corn and gathered wild rice. The Ojibwe, Potawatomi, Sauk and Meskwaki moved in during the 1600s and 1700s.

French Fur Traders

In 1634, Jean Nicolet of France landed near Green Bay and met the Ho-Chunk. In 1673, Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet paddled up the Fox River. They carried their canoes over a short **portage** to the Wisconsin River. Then they floated to the Mississippi. French traders gave metal tools, guns and cloth for beaver furs. Trading posts grew at Green Bay and Prairie du Chien. Britain took over the fur trade in 1763.

Lead, Forts and War

After the War of 1812, the United States built forts in Wisconsin. In the 1820s, miners rushed to dig lead in the southwest. In 1832, the Sauk leader Black Hawk led more than 1,000 Sauk and Meskwaki people back across the Mississippi into Illinois. His warriors fought the militia and raided farms and forts. The army chased the band into Wisconsin and defeated it at the Battle of Bad Axe.

Treaties and Statehood

In **treaties** from the 1820s to the 1850s, Native nations sold most of their land to the United States. The

Menominee and the Ojibwe kept reservations. The government moved the Ho-Chunk west several times, and many came back. The Oneida and Stockbridge-Munsee moved here from New York. Wisconsin became a territory in 1836. Wisconsin became the 30th state on May 29, 1848. Eleven tribes have their governments in Wisconsin today.



Farms and Free Soil

Immigrants from Germany, Norway, Ireland, Poland and other lands came for cheap farmland. The number of people grew from about 30,000 in 1840 to about 300,000 in 1850. The law banned slavery here, but a few early army officers and lead miners brought enslaved workers. Wisconsin joined the country as a free state. About 90,000 Wisconsin soldiers fought for the Union in the Civil War.



Building Wisconsin

Lumberjacks cut the northern pine forests, and logs floated down rivers to sawmills. In 1871, the Peshtigo Fire burned forests and towns near Green Bay. More than 1,000 people died. Milwaukee grew into a city of factories. In 1903, William Harley and the Davidson brothers built their first motorcycle there. Paper mills rose along the Fox River. The Green Bay Packers football team began in 1919.

WISCONSIN THROUGH TIME

1634	1673	1763	1832	1836	1848	1871	1903	1919
Nicolet lands near Green Bay	Marquette and Jolliet cross the portage	Britain takes over the fur trade	The Battle of Bad Axe	Wisconsin Territory is created	Wisconsin becomes the 30th state	The Peshtigo Fire	First Harley-Davidson built	The Green Bay Packers begin

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Black Hawk	Sauk leader in the war of 1832.
Oshkosh	Menominee chief. A city is named for him.
John Muir	Grew up here. Helped save wild lands.
Frank Lloyd Wright	Architect born in Richland Center.
Harry Houdini	Magician who grew up in Appleton.

WORDS TO KNOW

effigy	a shape made to look like an animal
portage	a trail for carrying canoes
treaty	a written agreement between nations
immigrant	a person who moves to a new country