

MICHIGAN BEFORE STATEHOOD

Genealogy records and jurisdiction timeline, based on Episode 1, Michigan Statehood. Part of Brick Walls Beyond Ohio.

THE FINAL LINE JANUARY 26, 1837: TOLEDO STAYS IN OHIO

Before 1837, part of northwest Ohio was run by Michigan, and much of early Michigan was run from Detroit. Match the date of every record to the government that existed on that date, and for the Toledo Strip, search both states.

WHERE TO SEARCH BY DATE

EVENT DATE	PRIMARY JURISDICTION TO SEARCH
Before July 1796	French and British records at Detroit
Aug. 15, 1796 to March 1, 1803	Wayne County, Northwest Territory (seat at Detroit), which also reached into northern Ohio
March 1, 1803 to June 30, 1805	Wayne County, Indiana Territory
June 30, 1805 to Oct. 2, 1818	Michigan Territory districts: Detroit, Erie, Huron, Michilimackinac; new Michigan counties begin in 1815
Toledo Strip, 1817 to 1836	Monroe County, Michigan Territory (Port Lawrence Township from 1827), also Lenawee and Hillsdale; Lucas County, Ohio, from June 1835
Late 1835 to Jan. 26, 1837	Still territorial, even when a record is headed "State of Michigan"
After January 26, 1837	The State of Michigan county then in existence

Key rule: Search the government and county that existed on the date of the event. If your ancestor lived in what is now Lucas, Fulton, or Williams County, Ohio, before 1837, search the Michigan side too.

KEY DATES

DATE	WHAT HAPPENED
Aug. 15, 1796	Wayne County created, seat at Detroit; its line begins at the mouth of the Cuyahoga
June 30, 1805	Michigan Territory begins; Detroit had burned on June 11; Gov. William Hull creates four districts
Aug. 16, 1812	Hull surrenders Detroit; British hold it until the fall of 1813
1815 to 1817	Wayne County re-created by Michigan Territory (Nov. 21, 1815); Monroe County created (July 14, 1817)
Nov. 30, 1815	Edward Tiffin, Ohio's first governor, now surveyor general, calls Michigan land unfit to farm
Oct. 5, 1835	Voters approve a state constitution and elect Stevens T. Mason governor
Dec. 14 to 15, 1836	The "Frostbitten Convention" at Ann Arbor accepts the Toledo Strip trade
Jan. 26, 1837	Michigan becomes the 26th state; Ohio keeps Toledo; Michigan gets most of the Upper Peninsula

MICHIGAN LAND OFFICES

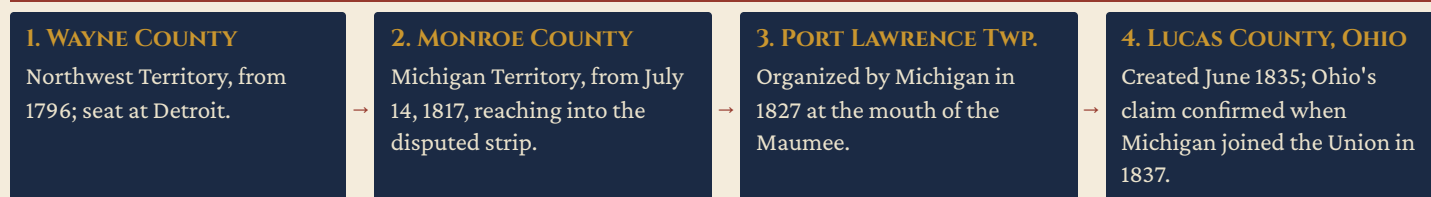
DETROIT Opened 1804; first public sale 1818	MONROE Opened 1823	WHITE PIGEON Opened 1831; moved to Kalamazoo, 1834	IONIA Opened 1836	FLINT Opened 1836
---	------------------------------	--	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

Michigan Fever: 31,639 people in 1830; 87,273 in the 1834 territorial census. Search federal patents by land office on the BLM site.

EARLY MICHIGAN RESEARCH WORKFLOW

- 1 Write down the exact date and place of every record you have.
- 2 Match each date to the timeline on page 1: Wayne County, district, territory, or state.
- 3 Between 1805 and 1818, look for the district, not only a county.
- 4 For the Toledo Strip before 1837, search Monroe, Lenawee, and Hillsdale Counties, Michigan, as well as Lucas, Fulton, and Williams Counties, Ohio.
- 5 Search federal land patents by land office on the BLM General Land Office site.
- 6 Read petitions in the *Territorial Papers of the United States*, Vols. 10 to 12 (Michigan Territory), for names.
- 7 If a Michigan family has children born in Ohio in the 1820s or 1830s, follow that trail back into Ohio.

HOW THE TOLEDO AREA CHANGED HANDS



The strip was about 400 square miles. At statehood, Michigan's Monroe, Lenawee, and Hillsdale Counties lost it to Ohio. Some deeds in the strip may be recorded in both states, so treat that as a lead to check, not a rule.

COMMON RESEARCH TRAPS

"State of Michigan" in 1835 and 1836: Records can carry the state heading while Congress still treated Michigan as a territory.

Districts, not counties: From 1805 to 1818, much county-type work was done by the four districts.

"Wayne County": The name has meant Detroit under the Northwest Territory, Indiana Territory, and Michigan. Ohio and Indiana have Wayne Counties of their own.

War of 1812 bounty land: Under the first bounty land act, Michigan land was replaced by tracts in Illinois and Missouri. Look there, not in Michigan.

Toledo in the 1830 census: The Toledo area may be enumerated under Monroe County, Michigan Territory, not Ohio.

Generated visuals: Illustrations help explain the process but are not evidence. Use verified maps and record images for specific claims.

WHERE TO SEARCH

Newberry Library · Atlas of Historical County Boundaries, Michigan	publications.newberry.org/ahcb
Michiganology · Archives of Michigan records and guides	michiganology.org
Bureau of Land Management · General Land Office Records, federal patents, free	glorecords.blm.gov
FamilySearch Wiki · Michigan Genealogy	familysearch.org/en/wiki/Michigan_Genealogy

MORE OHIO AND MIGRATION RESEARCH GUIDES: BRICKWALLSBUCKEYES.COM

Keep pushing past your brick walls.