

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN WISCONSIN HISTORY



Effigy mound west of Trade Lake in Burnett County. COURTESY OF WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY (UW-MADISON)

First nations

Wisconsin's original residents were Native American hunters who arrived here about 14,000 years ago. About 2,500 years ago, many of these peoples began shaping the earth with massive effigy mounds, some of which still exist today. Around the same time, the area's first farmers—the Hopewell—

raised corn, squash, and pumpkins. They were also hunters and fishers, and their trade routes stretched to the Atlantic Coast and the Gulf of Mexico. Later arrivals included the Chippewa, Ho-Chunk (Winnebago), Mohican/Munsee, Menominee, Oneida, Potawatomi, and Sioux.

Under the flag of France

French explorers provided the first written accounts of the land that became known as Wisconsin. The French explored, named places, and established trading posts; however, they were interested in the fur trade, rather than agricultural settlement, and were never present in large numbers.

1100. Mississippians established a fortified settlement of 300–500 people, now known as Aztalan, on the Crawfish River.

1634. Jean Nicolet, tasked with negotiating peace between the Ho-Chunk and Odaawaa, landed near present-day Green Bay.

1654–59. Pierre-Esprit Radisson and Médart Chouart des Groseilliers became the first known fur traders in Wisconsin.

1661. Father René Médard became the first missionary to set foot in Wisconsin.



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Recreated stockades at Aztalan State Park.

1665. Father Claude Jean Allouez founded a mission at La Pointe.

1668. Nicolas Perrot opened fur trade with Indians near Green Bay.

1672. Father Allouez and Father Louis André built the St. François Xavier mission at De Pere.

1673. Louis Jolliet and Father Jacques Marquette traveled the length of the Mississippi River.

1679. Daniel Greysolon Sieur du Lhut (Duluth) explored the western end of Lake Superior.

1689. Perrot asserted the sovereignty of France over various Wisconsin Indian tribes.

1690. Lead mines were discovered in Wisconsin and Iowa.

1712–37. Competition for power in the Great Lakes region devolved into the Fox Wars between the Meskwaki (Fox) peoples and a French-led alliance of Indigenous nations.

1755. Wisconsin Indians helped defeat British General Edward Braddock during the French and Indian War.

1763. The Treaty of Paris was signed, making Wisconsin part of British colonial territory. ■ Wisconsin Indians staged a revolt against the new and comparatively more hostile British regime.

1764. Charles Langlade—later known as the “Father of Wisconsin”—settled at Green Bay.

1766. Jonathan Carver explored various sites along the Mississippi River, including a Meskwaki (Fox) settlement at Prairie du Chien.

1774. The Quebec Act made Wisconsin a part of the Province of Quebec.

1783. The second Treaty of Paris was signed, making Wisconsin a U.S. territory.

Under the flag of Great Britain

Wisconsin remained the western edge of European exploration and settlement of the North American continent, important primarily as a source of valuable furs for export. French traders plied their trade, and British and colonial traders began to appear, but Europeans continued to be few in number and reliant on alliances with Native Americans.

Achieving territorial status

In spite of the second Treaty of Paris, Wisconsin remained British in all but title until after the War of 1812. Starting in 1815, the American army began erecting forts to establish a military presence. Gradually, the British extinguished Indian title to the southeastern half of the state. Lead mining brought the first heavy influx of settlers and ended the dominance of the fur trade in the economy of the area. The lead mining period ran from about 1824 to 1861. Almost half of the 11,683 people who lived in the territory in 1836 were residents of the lead mining district in the southwestern corner of the state.

1787. Under the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, Wisconsin was made part of the Northwest Territory. The governing units for the Wisconsin area prior to statehood were the following:

- 1787–1800 Northwest Territory
- 1800–1809 Indiana Territory
- 1809–1818 Illinois Territory
- 1818–1836 Michigan Territory
- 1836–1848 Wisconsin Territory

1795. Jacques Vieau established a trading post at Milwaukee and outposts at Kewaunee, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan.

1804. William Henry Harrison’s treaty with representatives of the Meskwaki (Fox) and Sauk at St. Louis extinguished Indian title to land in the lead region, which later contributed to the Black Hawk War.

1816. Astor’s American Fur Company began operations in Wisconsin.

1819. Solomon Juneau bought Jacques Vieau’s Milwaukee trading post.

1820. Rev. Jedediah Morse traveled to the Green Bay area to report on Indian tribes to the U.S. secretary of war.

■ Lewis Cass, James Duane Doty, and Henry Schoolcraft made an exploratory trip through Wisconsin.

1821. Oneida, Stockbridge, Munsee, and Brothertown tribes began migrating to Wisconsin from the New York area.

1822. The first mining leases in southwest Wisconsin were issued.

1825. A treaty concluded at Prairie du Chien established tribal boundaries.

1827. Disturbances on Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) lands near Prairie du Chien resulted in the mobilization of U.S. troops and the subsequent surrender of Chief Red Bird.

1832. Sauk leader Black Hawk and his band of Sauk, Meskwaki, and Kickapoo followers were decimated by U.S. troops, state militia, and Indigenous allies in what became known as the Black Hawk War.

1833. The second Treaty of Chicago between the United States and the Potawatomi granted the U.S. government the land between Lake Michigan and Lake Winnebago. ■ The first Wisconsin newspaper, the *Green Bay Intelligencer*, was established.

Wisconsin territory

Newcomers were primarily migrants from New York and New England, or immigrants from England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and Scandinavia. New York’s Erie Canal gave Wisconsin a water outlet to the Atlantic Ocean and a route for new settlers. Wheat was the primary cash crop for most of the newcomers.

Politics revolved around factions headed by James Doty and Henry Dodge. As political parties developed, the Democrats proved dominant throughout the period.

Early statehood

Heavy immigration continued, and the state remained largely agricultural. Slavery, banking laws, and temperance were the major political issues of the period. Despite the number of foreign immigrants, most political leaders continued to have ties to the northeastern United States, and New York state laws and institutions provided models for much of the activity of the early legislative sessions. Control shifted from the Democratic Party to the newly formed Republican Party.

1834. Land offices were established in Green Bay and Mineral Point. ■ The first public road was laid.

1835. The first steambot arrived in Milwaukee. ■ The first bank in Wisconsin obtained its charter and later opened in Green Bay.

1836. President Andrew Jackson signed the act creating the Territory of Wisconsin and appointed Henry Dodge as governor. ■ The first session of the legislature was held, and Madison was chosen over Belmont as the permanent capital.

1837. Construction on the first capitol building began. ■ A treaty negotiated in Washington, D.C., claimed all Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) land in Wisconsin for the United States.

1838. The territorial legislature met in Madison. ■ The Milwaukee & Rock River Canal Company was chartered to create a canal connecting Lake Michigan to the Rock River and, accordingly, a waterway to the Mississippi River.

1841. James D. Doty was appointed governor by President John Tyler.

1842. Legislator James Vineyard shot

and killed fellow legislator Charles Arndt in the capitol.

1844. Nathaniel P. Tallmadge was appointed governor by President Tyler.

■ The Wisconsin Phalanx, a utopian commune, was established in Ceresco (Ripon).



Ho-Chunk men playing the moccasin game with a drum and striking stick.

1845. Dodge was appointed governor by President James Polk. ■ Mormons settled in Voree (near Burlington). ■ Swiss immigrants founded New Glarus.

1846. Congress passed the enabling act for the admission of Wisconsin as state.

■ The first constitutional convention met in Madison.

The maturing commonwealth

After the Civil War, Wisconsin matured into a modern political and economic entity. Heavy immigration continued, with composition remaining similar to the antebellum period until the end of the century, when Poles arrived in larger numbers.

The Republican Party remained in control of state government throughout the period, but faced challenges from Grangers, Populists, Socialists, and Temperance candidates in addition to the Democratic Party and dissidents within the Republican Party. Temperance, the use of foreign languages in schools, railroad regulation, and currency reform were major political issues in the state.

In the 1880s and 1890s, dairying surpassed wheat culture to become the state's primary agricultural activity, with the University of Wisconsin's agricultural school becoming a national leader in the field of dairy science. From the 1870s to the 1890s, lumbering prospered in the north, accounting for one-fourth of all wages paid in the state at its peak. During the same period, Milwaukee developed a thriving heavy machinery industry, and the paper industry emerged in the Fox River Valley. The tanning and the brewing industries were also prominent.

1847. The first proposed state constitution was rejected by the people. A second constitutional convention was held.

1848. The second proposed state constitution was adopted. ■ President Polk signed a bill on May 29 making Wisconsin a state. ■ The legislature met on June 5, and Governor Nelson Dewey was inaugurated June 7. ■ The University of Wisconsin was founded.

1849. The first free, tax-supported, graded

school with a high school was established in Kenosha. ■ The first telegram reached Milwaukee.



Governor Nelson Dewey, the first governor of Wisconsin.

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1850. The state opened the Wisconsin Institute for Education of the Blind at Janesville.

1851. The first railroad train ran from Milwaukee to Waukesha. ■ The first state fair was held in Janesville.

1852. The Wisconsin School for the Deaf opened in Delavan. ■ Prison construction began at Waupun.

1853. Capital punishment was abolished following the controversial execution of John McCaffary in 1851.

1854. The Republican Party formed in Ripon. ■ The first class graduated from the University of Wisconsin. ■ Antislavery activists liberated Joshua Glover, who escaped slavery and was subsequently arrested in Racine. The Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled the Fugitive Slave Act unconstitutional. ■ The Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad reached Madison.

1856. Two candidates claimed themselves winners of a contested gubernatorial race. Coles Bashford took office only after acting Governor William Barstow was found to have committed election fraud.

1857. The first passenger train reached Prairie du Chien, connecting Milwaukee with the Mississippi River.

1858. Legislators uncovered bribery by former Governor Bashford and other members of the 1856 Legislature.

1859. Abraham Lincoln spoke at the state fair in Milwaukee.

1861. The U.S. Civil War began. ■ A bank riot occurred in Milwaukee.

1862. Governor Louis P. Harvey drowned. ■ Draft riots occurred.

1864. Chester Hazen founded the state's first cheese factory in Ladoga.

1865. The U.S. Civil War ended. Approximately 96,000 Wisconsin soldiers served in the war, and 12,216 died.

1866. The Platteville Normal School (University of Wisconsin–Platteville) opened



UW-PLATTEVILLE: SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN ROOM

A classroom in Platteville's teacher training school.

as the first teacher preparation institution in the state. ■ The legislature formally named the University of Wisconsin a land-grant institution and incorporated an agricultural department.

1871. The Peshtigo fire resulted in over 1,000 deaths—the most fatalities by fire in U.S. history.

1872. The Wisconsin Dairymen's Association organized in Watertown.

1873. Wisconsin legislator Christopher Latham Sholes invented the typewriter. ■ The populist and reform-minded Patrons of Husbandry (nicknamed the Grangers) helped elect William R. Taylor as governor.

The typewriter that introduced the modern QWERTY keyboard, designed by Wisconsin legislator Christopher Latham Sholes.



WHS IMAGE ID 38797

1874. The Wisconsin Supreme Court upheld the Potter Law, affirming the legislature's right to regulate corporations.

1875. A free high school law was enacted. ■ The State Industrial School for Girls was established in Milwaukee. ■ Oshkosh, a leader in the lumber trade, was almost destroyed by fire.

1876. The community of Hazel Green was destroyed by a tornado.

1877. John Appleby developed and later patented a device to bind bundles of grain with twine, a significant contribution to automating agricultural production.

1882. The Wisconsin Constitution was amended to make legislative sessions biennial. ■ The world's first hydroelectric plant was built in Appleton.

1883. A fire at the Newhall House in Milwaukee killed 71. ■ The south wing of the capitol extension collapsed, killing seven. ■ The legislature established the Agricultural Experiment Station at the University of Wisconsin. ■ Wisconsin first observed Arbor Day.

1885. Gogebic iron range discoveries made Ashland a major shipping port.

1886. Strikes related to the eight-hour work day movement in Milwaukee culminated in confrontation with the militia at Bay View, killing five. ■ The University of Wisconsin established an agricultural short course. ■ Raphael Baez, thought to be the first Mexican immigrant to arrive in Wisconsin, settled in Milwaukee.

1887. Marshfield was almost destroyed by fire.

1889. The Bennett Law, requiring classroom instruction in English, passed but was repealed two years later after opposition from the state's significant German-speaking population. ■ The Wisconsin Supreme Court prohibited reading and prayers from the King James Bible in public schools. ■ Former Governor Jeremiah Rusk became the first U.S. secretary of agriculture.

1890. Stephen M. Babcock invented an easy and accurate test for milk butterfat content.



Dr. Stephen Babcock with a dairy cow.

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1897. A new law regulated caucuses and prohibited bribery of voters. ■ The legislature tasked the newly created Wisconsin Tax Commission with reforming the state's property tax system.

1898. Wisconsin sent 5,469 men to fight in the Spanish-American War, suffering 134 losses.

1899. The New Richmond Tornado, the deadliest ever recorded in Wisconsin, killed 117 people.

The progressive era

The state's prominent role in the reform movements that swept the country at the beginning of the century gave Wisconsin national fame and its first presidential candidate. Republicans controlled the state legislature, but the Progressive and Stalwart factions fought continually for control of the party. Milwaukee consistently sent a strong Socialist contingent before the Socialist Party merged with the Progressive Party in 1935.

Large-scale European immigration ended during this period, but ethnic groups retained strong individual identities and remained a significant force in the politics and culture of the state.

Heavy machinery manufacturing, paper products, and dairying continued to drive the state economy. Meanwhile, lumbering faded in importance and brewing ground to a halt with the onset of Prohibition.

1900. Interstate Park, Wisconsin's first state park, was established near St. Croix Falls.

1901. The first Wisconsin-born governor, Robert M. La Follette Sr., was inaugurated. ■ Agricultural education was introduced into rural schools. ■ The Legislative Reference Library was established and later renamed the Legislative Reference Bureau.

1904. A referendum vote approved popular election of primary candidates for state-level offices (in place of selection by party leaders). ■ The state capitol burned down, destroying many records and state artifacts.

1905. The state civil service was established. ■ An auto license law that required residents to register their automobiles and display license plates was enacted.

1907. Lucian Palmer was sworn into the Wisconsin State Assembly, becoming



Lucian Palmer, the first Black legislator in state history.

the state's first Black legislator. ■ Construction on the current capitol building began.

1908. A referendum amended the Wisconsin Constitution to permit taxing the income of individuals and corporations.

1910. Milwaukee elected Emil Seidel as the first Socialist mayor of a major city in the United States.



WHS IMAGE ID 62512

Emil Seidel, the first Socialist mayor of Milwaukee.

1911. The legislature established the state income tax. ■ The Workmen’s Compensation Act required employer compensation for on-the-job injuries.

- The legislature created a pension plan for public school teachers statewide.
- The State Highway Commission was created to regulate the construction and inspection of highways and bridges and to ensure highways would form continuous routes. ■ The State Industrial Commission was formed to investigate and create administrative rules relating to industrial safety.

1913. Wisconsin ratified the Seventeenth Amendment, providing for the direct, popular election of U.S. senators.

1917. The new capitol building was completed at a cost of over \$7 million. ■ Wisconsin sent approximately 120,000 soldiers to serve in World War I, nearly 4,000 of whom died.

1919. Wisconsin ratified the Eighteenth Amendment (Prohibition) and was the first state to deliver the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment (women’s suffrage).

1921. The legislature passed the nation’s first law establishing equal rights for women.

1923. Military training at the University of Wisconsin was made optional, rather than compulsory.

1924. Robert M. La Follette Sr. ran for president as the Progressive Party candidate. ■ Women were elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly for the first time.

1925. Professor Harry Steenbock developed a way to increase vitamin D in certain foods and prompted the formation of the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation to ensure that his patent would benefit the University of Wisconsin.

1929. The legislature repealed all Wisconsin laws enforcing Prohibition.

1933. Dairy farmers orchestrated strikes to protest low milk prices. ■ Wisconsin voted for the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment (Prohibition).



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Dairy farmers pour out milk in protest of low prices.

1935. A researcher from the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison helped convict the man who kidnapped and murdered Charles Lindbergh’s son in 1932.

1942. Governor-elect Orland Loomis died; the Wisconsin Supreme Court

The middle years of the twentieth century

After the demise of the Progressives, the Democratic Party began a gradual resurgence and, by the late 1950s, became strongly competitive for the first time in over a century. As the state's Black population grew, concern over segregation, housing discrimination, and employment access galvanized civil rights leaders. Other issues included the growth in the size of state government, radicalism on the university campuses, welfare programs, and environmental questions. Tourism emerged as a major industry during this period.

decided that Lieutenant Governor Walter Goodland would serve as acting governor.

1941–45. Wisconsin sent over 330,000 to serve in World War II (including approximately 9,000 enlisted women), of whom about 8,000 died.



Student nurses during World War II.

1946. The Wisconsin Progressive Party dissolved and rejoined the Republican Party.

1949. The legislature enacted a new formula for the distribution of state educational aids and classified school districts for this purpose.

1950. Approximately 132,000 Wisconsinites served during the Korean Conflict, and 747 died.

1951. Legislative districts were reapportioned to provide more equal representation based on population.

1957. A new law prohibited lobbyists from giving anything of value to a state employee.

1958. Professor Joshua Lederberg, a geneticist at the University of Wisconsin, won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

1959. Gaylord Nelson, the first Democratic governor since 1933, was inaugurated. ■ The Circus World Museum was established in Baraboo. ■ Famous Wisconsin architect Frank Lloyd Wright died.

1960. Dena Smith was elected state treasurer, becoming the first woman elected to statewide office in Wisconsin.

1961. Menominee became Wisconsin's 72nd county when federal supervision of the Indian tribe terminated.

1962. Selective sales tax and income tax withholding were enacted. ■ The Kohler Company recognized its workers' union after a record-long strike that began in 1954.



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Kohler workers picket during the strike of 1954.

1963. Annual state expenditures topped \$1 billion for the first time.

1964. The Wisconsin Supreme Court redistricted the legislative districts after the legislature and the governor failed to agree on a plan. ■ Two National Farmers Organization members were killed in a demonstration at a Bonduel stockyard.

1965. The school compulsory attendance age was raised to 18. ■ A new state law prohibited discrimination in housing.

1966. Governor Warren P. Knowles called the National Guard to keep order during civil rights demonstrations in Wauwatosa. ■ The Wisconsin Supreme Court upheld the Milwaukee Braves baseball team's move to Atlanta. ■ A grand jury investigation of illegal lobbying activities in the legislature resulted in 13 indictments.

1967. Legislators repealed a ban on colored oleomargarine. ■ Civil disturbances broke out in Milwaukee in late July. ■ Activists advocated for a Milwaukee

open housing ordinance. ■ Anti-war protests at the University of Wisconsin–Madison culminated in violence.

1968. The State University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh expelled 94 Black students who confronted administrators about civil rights issues. ■ Doctors performed Wisconsin's first heart transplant at St. Luke's Hospital in Milwaukee. ■ The first successful bone marrow transplant that was not between identical twins was performed at UW–Madison.

1969. Wisconsin implemented a general sales tax in place of selective sales taxes. ■ Father James Groppi led protests at the capitol on the opening day of a special legislative session on welfare and urban aids. The National Guard was called, and Groppi was cited for contempt and



WHS IMAGE ID 42404

Advertisement opposing colored margarine.

jailed. ■ Student strikes at UW–Madison demanded a Black studies department, and the National Guard was again activated. ■ Wisconsin Congressional Representative Melvin R. Laird was appointed U.S. secretary of defense.

1970. Anti-war protestors bombed the



UW–Madison Black student strike leaders, including Harvey Clay.

Army Mathematics Research Building at UW–Madison, resulting in one death.

- “Old Main” at Wisconsin State University–Whitewater burned down in an apparent arson.
- State constitutional officers were elected to four-year terms for the first time in state history.
- University of Wisconsin scientists, headed by Dr. Har Gobind Khorana, succeeded in the first total synthesis of a gene.

1971. The University of Wisconsin and the State University systems merged.

1972. The legislature enacted comprehensive consumer protection, lowered the age of majority from 21 to 18, and ratified the unsuccessful “equal rights” amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

1973. Barbara Thompson became the first woman to hold the elective office of state superintendent of public instruction.

- The 1954 Menominee Termination Act was repealed by the U.S. Congress.
- The legislature enacted a state ethics code and funded programs for the education of all children with disabilities.

1974. The legislature enacted a comprehensive campaign finance act and

strengthened the open meetings law.

- Democrats swept all constitutional offices and gained control of both houses of the 1975 Legislature for the first time since 1893.
- Kathryn Morrison became the first woman elected to the state senate.
- The Hortonville School District fired striking teachers.

1964–75. 165,400 Wisconsinites served in Vietnam; at least 1,161 were killed.

1975. Menominee Indians occupied the Alexian Brothers Novitiate.

- The legislature established property tax levy limits on local governments and eliminated statutory distinctions based on sex.

- UW–Madison scientist Dr. Howard Temin won the 1975 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.
- Exxon discovered sulfide zinc and copper deposits near Crandon.

1976. The first Hmong refugees arrived in Wisconsin.

- A U.S. district court judge ordered the integration of Milwaukee public schools.
- Ice storms caused \$50.4 million in damages.
- Shirley Abrahamson was appointed the first woman on the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

A Hmong woman and her granddaughter wear traditional jewelry and headresses for a cultural program in Milwaukee.



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The late twentieth century

Health care reform, welfare, the state's business climate, taxation, education, and prisons received significant attention from policymakers in the 1990s. At the same time, women began to win more seats in the legislature.

California challenged Wisconsin's dominance of the dairy industry. After an economic downturn in the 1980s, the 1990s saw a robust economy throughout most of the state, with Madison leading the entire country in employment for several months. The farm sector and brewing industry continued to experience difficulties.

Litigation and demonstrations over off-reservation resource rights of the Chippewa Indians continued throughout the 1980s, to be replaced by controversy over Indian gaming in the 1990s and into the new century.

1977. Governor Patrick Lucey was appointed as the ambassador to Mexico, and Lieutenant Governor Martin Schreiber became the acting governor.

- The first state employees union strike lasted 15 days, leaving the National Guard to run Wisconsin prisons.
- The legislature enacted no-fault divorce.

1978. Vel Phillips, elected as secretary of state, became Wisconsin's first Black constitutional officer.

- The legislature established a hazardous waste management program and reorganized the court system.

1979. The Wisconsin Supreme Court allowed cameras in state courtrooms.

- A moratorium on tax collections gave state taxpayers a three-month "vacation" from taxes.
- Shirley Abrahamson became the first woman elected to the Wisconsin Supreme Court after having served by appointment.
- The legislature established a school of veterinary medicine at UW–Madison.



WHS IMAGE ID 118333

Vel Phillips is sworn in as secretary of state

1980. Eric Heiden of Madison broke Olympic records when he won five gold medals for ice speed skating.

- Fort McCoy housed 14,250 Cuban refugees following the Mariel boatlift.
- Former Governor Patrick Lucey ran as an independent candidate for U.S. vice president.

1981. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled against Wisconsin's historic open primary.



Cuban refugee children at Fort McCoy.

WHS IMAGE ID 10522

- 1982.** State unemployment hit the highest levels since the Great Depression.
- Wisconsin became the first state to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.
 - Voters endorsed the first statewide referendum in the nation calling for a freeze on nuclear weapons.
 - Stroh Brewery Company of Detroit acquired the Schlitz Brewing Company and closed all Milwaukee operations.
- 1983.** The continued recession resulted in a budget including a 10 percent tax surcharge and a pay freeze for state employees.
- A law raising the minimum drinking age to 19 passed (to become effective in 1985).
 - Inmates at Wau-pun State Prison took 15 hostages but released them uninjured the same day.
- 1984.** The most powerful U.S. tornado of 1984 destroyed Barneveld, killing nine residents.
- 1985.** A Milwaukee plane crash killed 31.
- A major consolidation of state banks by large holding companies occurred.
- 1986.** Exxon dropped plans to develop a copper mine near Crandon.
- Legislation raised the drinking age to 21 and limited damages payable in malpractice actions.
 - Protests against Ojibwe spearfishing intensified, and some lawmakers proposed suspending or eliminating Indian hunting and fishing rights.
- 1987.** Voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing pari-mutuel betting and a state lottery.
- The legislature passed a mandatory seatbelt law.
- 1988.** The first state lottery games began.
- Chrysler Corporation's automobile assembly plant in Kenosha, the nation's oldest car plant, closed.
 - Mandatory family leave for employees was enacted.
- 1989.** The legislature created the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.
- 1990.** More than 1,400 Wisconsin National Guard and Reserve soldiers were called to active duty in the Persian Gulf crisis, and 10 died.
- The legislature established the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program.
- 1991.** The price of milk hit its lowest point since 1978.
- The first state-tribal gambling compacts were signed.
 - Governor Tommy G. Thompson vetoed a record 457 items in the state budget.
- 1992.** A train derailed, spilling toxic chemicals and forcing the evacuation of over 22,000 people in Superior.
- Protests at six abortion clinics in Milwaukee led to hundreds of arrests.
- 1993.** President Bill Clinton appointed Wisconsin Congressman Les Aspin as secretary of defense and UW-Madison Chancellor Donna Shalala as secretary of

health and human services. ■ Thousands in Milwaukee became ill as a result of cryptosporidium in the water supply. ■ California passed Wisconsin in milk production. ■ The legislature imposed revenue limits on school districts.

1994. Coach Barry Alvarez led the Wisconsin Badgers football team to its first Rose Bowl victory.



Quarterback Darrell Bevell celebrates UW–Madison’s win in the 1994 Rose Bowl.

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1995. Elk were reintroduced in northern Wisconsin. ■ A July heat wave contributed to 152 deaths.

1996. Governor Thompson’s welfare reform plan, known as Wisconsin Works (W-2), received national attention. ■ A train derailment forced the evacuation of Weyauwega. ■ Pabst Brewing closed its 152-year-old brewery in Milwaukee. ■ Following his tie-breaking vote in favor of the new Brewers stadium, State Senator George Petak was removed from office in the first successful legislative recall election in state history.

1997. Workers broke ground on Miller Park, the future home of the Milwaukee Brewers.

1998. Tammy Baldwin became the first Wisconsin woman and first openly gay woman elected to U.S. Congress. ■ The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the extension of Milwaukee Parental Choice school vouchers to religious schools. ■ The legislature enacted truth-in-sentencing.

1999. Supermax, the state’s high security prison, opened at Boscobel. ■ The Department of Natural Resources began monitoring chronic wasting disease in the state’s deer herd.

2000. The legislature approved a local sales tax and revenue bonds for the renovation of Lambeau Field, home of the Green Bay Packers.

2001. Governor Thompson ended a record 14 years in office and became U.S. secretary of health and human services. ■ Lieutenant Governor Scott McCallum became governor and appointed State Senator Margaret Farrow as the first woman to serve as lieutenant governor. ■ Extensive Mississippi River flooding occurred. ■ Miller Park opened.

2002. Barbara Lawton became the first woman elected lieutenant governor, and Peggy Lautenschlager became the first woman elected attorney general. ■ The deadliest single traffic accident in state history killed 10 and injured almost 40 near Sheboygan. ■ Several state legislators faced criminal charges following an investigation into legislative caucus staff.

2003. Controversy over the Crandon mine ended when local Indian tribes purchased land and mining rights. ■ The

renovated Lambeau Field opened.

- State Senator Gary George became the second legislator in Wisconsin history to be recalled.
- Wisconsin National Guard and Reserve units were activated for service in the Iraq War.
- Wisconsin held its first mourning dove hunt.

2004. Louis Butler Jr. became the first Black justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. ■ The state government reduced its automobile fleet after allegations of misuse.

2005. Wisconsin experienced a record 62 tornadoes during the year, including a record 27 on August 18. ■ Several current and former members of the legislature were convicted of illegal campaign activities.

2006. The legislature limited the use of condemnation power for the benefit of private individuals. ■ Voters approved a constitutional amendment limiting marriage to persons of the opposite sex and an advisory referendum in favor of the death penalty.

2007. Milwaukee-based Miller Brewing Company merged with Denver's Coors Brewing Company.

2008. A sharp economic downturn led to the closing of the General Motors plant in Janesville. ■ The Great Lakes Compact received state and federal approval, regulating the use of Great Lakes water outside its watershed.

2009. The ongoing economic crisis resulted in a projected budget deficit of \$6 billion for the next biennium.

- More than 3,000 members of the Wisconsin National Guard prepared for



WHS IMAGE ID 40731

General Motors auto plant in Janesville.

mobilization to Iraq. ■ A severe influenza outbreak resulted in 47 deaths.

2010. Several powerful tornadoes hit southern Wisconsin, severely damaging the Old World Wisconsin historic site.

- Republicans swept the November elections, capturing the governor's office and both houses of the legislature—the first time in over 70 years that partisan control of all three switched in the same election.
- Governor-elect Scott Walker declined \$810 million in federal funds to build a high-speed rail line between Madison and Milwaukee.

2011. Governor Walker's proposal to curtail collective bargaining rights for public workers led 14 Democrats to leave the state to deny the senate a quorum. Thousands of protesters surrounded the capitol to oppose the legislation, which was ultimately enacted. Wisconsin remained in a state of political agitation into the summer as nine senators were the subject of recall elections; two senators were recalled. ■ The legislature

enacted a legislative redistricting plan for the first time in three decades.

2012. Governor Walker, Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, and four senators were the subject of recall elections. Walker, Kleefisch, and two senators were retained; one senator resigned; and one senator was defeated. ■ U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan was nominated for U.S. vice president. ■ Tammy Baldwin became the first Wisconsin woman and first openly gay woman elected to the U.S. Senate.

2013. A polar vortex ushered in a winter of record-low temperatures across the state.

2014. Court rulings legalized same-sex marriage in Wisconsin. ■ The deer harvest was the lowest in 30 years. ■ Governor Walker denied the Menominee Nation permission to operate a casino in Kenosha.

2015. Senator Mary Lazich was elected president of the senate, becoming the first woman to be elected presiding officer of either house of the legislature. ■ The legislature enacted “Right to Work” legislation, raised the speed limit to 70 miles per hour on certain highways, and approved funding for a new Milwaukee Bucks arena. ■ Governor Walker announced his candidacy for U.S. president in July but dropped out of the race in September. ■ U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan was elected Speaker of the House.

2016. An outbreak of Elizabethkingia meningoseptica killed 18 people. ■ Heavy rains caused flooding in western and west central Wisconsin. ■ Donald Trump became the first Republican

presidential candidate to win Wisconsin since President Reagan in 1984.

2017. The legislature held a special session to address the opioid epidemic.

■ The legislature passed a \$3 billion incentive package for Foxconn, a Taiwanese tech company that agreed to establish a large manufacturing facility in Mount Pleasant.

2018. Several areas of the state saw severe flooding following heavy storms.

■ The legislature met in extraordinary session to enact legislation curbing the powers of the governor and attorney general.

2019. Mandela Barnes became the state’s first Black lieutenant governor.

■ Heavy rainfall caused record-breaking water levels in the Great Lakes. ■ A rainbow flag flew above the capitol building to commemorate LGBTQ Pride Month for the first time in state history. ■ Dairy farmers struggled due to low milk prices and a continued trade war with China.

■ The state first observed Indigenous Peoples’ Day on the second Monday of October.

Health care students at Lakeshore Technical College during the COVID-19 pandemic



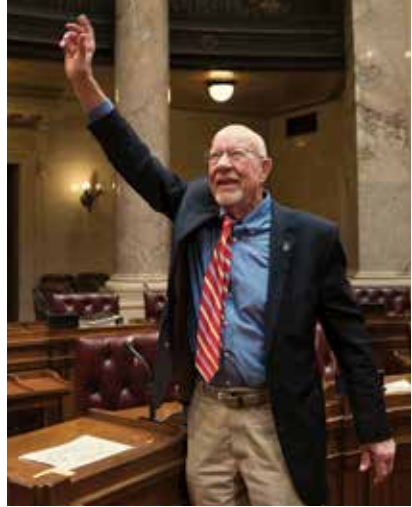
2020. Governor Tony Evers declared a public health emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; the Wisconsin Supreme Court later invalidated some related emergency orders, which closed schools and businesses. ■ Unemployment rates reached record highs. ■ Protests erupted across the state following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. ■ COVID-19 led to the cancellation of in-person events at the Democratic National Convention in Milwaukee. ■ Unrest rocked Kenosha following the shooting of Jacob Blake by police.

2021. Fred Risser retired after serving 64 years in the legislature, the longest tenure of any legislator in state history.

■ The COVID-19 vaccine became available in Wisconsin. ■ Giannis Antetokounmpo led the Milwaukee Bucks to their first NBA Championship in 50 years. ■ Afghan refugees arrived at Fort McCoy following the U.S. military's withdrawal from Afghanistan. ■ Six were killed and dozens injured when a driver tore through the Waukesha Christmas Parade. ■ Wisconsin deaths attributed to COVID-19 surpassed 10,000.

2022. The U.S Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, prompting the cessation of most abortion services in Wisconsin. ■ A 3,000 year-old canoe was recovered from Lake Mendota; archaeologists subsequently recovered additional canoes ranging from 800 to 4,500 years old.

2023. Secretary of State Doug La Follette—the longest-serving elected statewide official in the nation—retired.



GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

Senator Fred Risser, who served 64 years in the state legislature.

■ The Wisconsin Air National Guard received its first F-35 aircraft at Truax Field. ■ Television show *Top Chef* filmed in Wisconsin, showcasing local cuisine and chefs. ■ The legislature approved a deal to finance renovations of American Family Field (formerly Miller Park).

2024. Governor Evers signed new legislative maps into law following years of court challenges to the old maps. ■ Protests erupted at UW System campuses over Israeli military operations in Gaza. ■ The Republican National Convention was held in Milwaukee. **BB**