

Michigan Prehistory: Time Periods, Ages, and Key Events

Cultural Periods		Inception of Cultural Phases Calendar ¹⁴ C Age	Key Cultural Events	Key Geological Events and Time Stratigraphy	
European Contact		A.D. 1640 0.36 kyBP	Europeans arrive in Michigan	High levels of Great Lakes; “premodern” flood phase (<0.8 kyBP - Little Ice Age)	Holocene
Upper Mississippian/ Late Woodland		A.D. 1200 0.8 kyBP	Upper Mississippian in southwest Michigan		
Woodland	Late	A.D. 500 1.5 kyBP	Complex, egalitarian social systems		
	Middle	0 A.D./B.C. 2.0 kyBP	Complex mound burial; use of tropical and indigenous cultigens	High levels of Great Lakes; Post-Algoma flood phase (2 -1.5 kyBP)	
Early	550 B.C> 2.55 kyBP	Initial mound/earthwork construction First ceramics introduced	Low levels of Great Lakes; “Low” flood interval (3.0 - 2.0 kyBP)		
Archaic	Late	3 kyB.C 5.0 kyBP	First cultigens (squash)	Nipissing-Algoma high water phase; flooding common (3.5 - 5.0 kyBP)	
	Middle	6-5 kyB.C. 7-8 kyBP	First extensive regional exchange	Nipissing transgression Chippewa-Stanley phase initiated	
	Early	8 kyB.C. 10 kyBP	Early and Middle Archaic occupations (now submerged under Great Lakes)	Michigan-Huron basins ice-free	
Paleo-Indian		10-9 kyB.C. 11-12 kyBP	Earliest Paleo-Indian penetration in Michigan	Algonquin phase initiated Greatlakean Advance High-level lake in Lake Michigan basin Early Lake Algonquin in Lake Huron basin	Late Wisconsinan (Pleistocene)
Glaciated		11 kyB.C. 13 kyBP	Port Huron glacial advance; much of southern Lower Michigan is ice-free High-level glacial lakes in all basins (low-level lakes between 13.5 and 13 kyBP)		