



The Mitten

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Michigan AT 200

On January 11, 1805, President Thomas Jefferson created the Michigan Territory.

The story of the Michigan Territory began on April 30, 1802, when the U.S. Congress passed an act allowing the people of Ohio to write a constitution and form a state government. (At the time, Ohio was part of the Northwest Territory.)

After Ohio joined the Union as a state in May 1803, the rest of the Northwest Territory (which included Michigan) became known as the Indiana Territory. The territorial capital was Vincennes, a settlement on the Wabash River in southwestern Indiana.

At the time, most Michiganians lived in Detroit. No one had asked Detroiters about the territorial change. Detroiters soon discovered being part of the Indiana Territory was a problem. It was more than 350 miles from Detroit to Vincennes, and there were no roads, only trails. It also did not appear that the government officials

in Vincennes took Detroiters seriously.

When Indiana territorial governor William Henry Harrison ordered an election to be held in the territory, the order never reached Detroit and Detroiters never voted.

When the Michigan Territory was founded in 1805, it included the Lower Peninsula and the eastern tip of the Upper Peninsula, shown in the blue frosting.

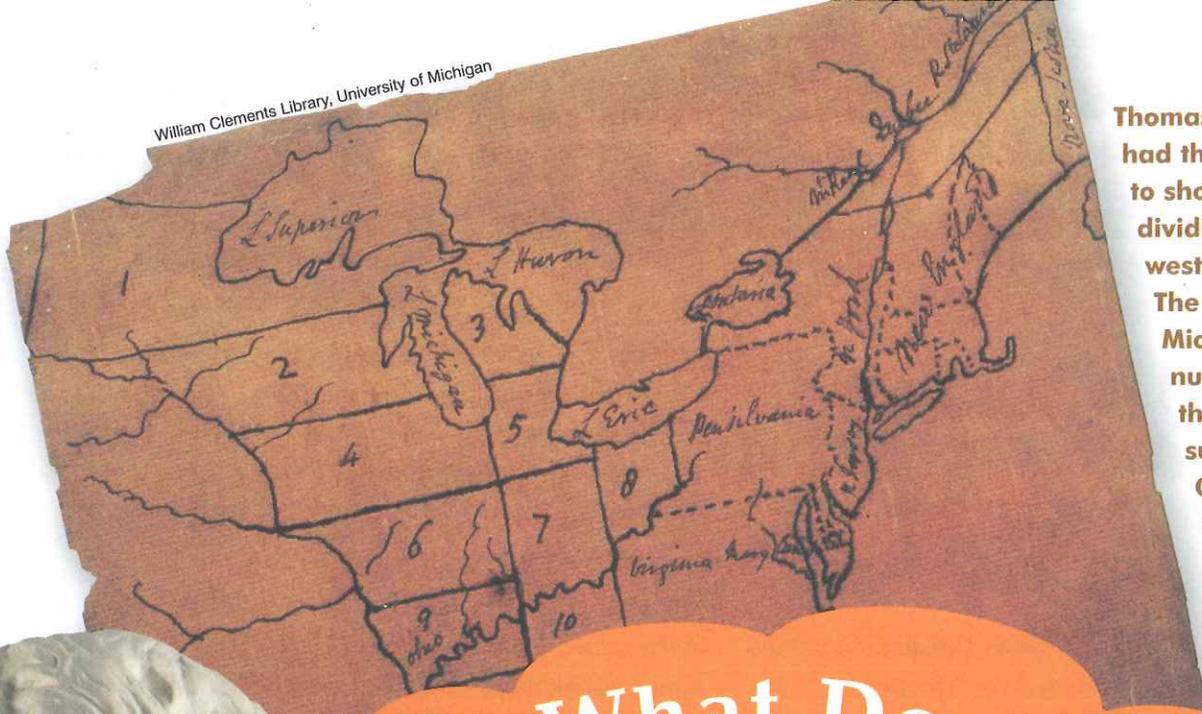
On October 13, 1804, Detroiters gathered at a town meeting and signed a **petition** calling for the creation of a separate territory. The petition said it was the “**unanimous** opinion” of the people living in Detroit that “good order and **prosperity**” depended on creating a new territory. The petition carried more than 300 signatures, about half of the adult males living in Detroit. (Only men signed petitions at the time.) Jefferson’s followers in Congress agreed with the Detroiters and passed the act that the president signed on January 11, 1805.

President Jefferson then **appointed** William Hull Michigan’s first territorial governor. This 52-year-old lawyer and veteran of the American Revolution arrived in Detroit shortly before the territory’s official first day (June 30, 1805). Hull realized the Michigan Territory would have a rough beginning. Only three weeks earlier, a fire had destroyed Detroit, the new territorial capital.



Jeff Glenn

Thomas Jefferson had this map made to show his plan for dividing up the western territories. The future state of Michigania was number two on the map. Jefferson suggested the name Cherronesus for the Lower Peninsula (number three on the map).



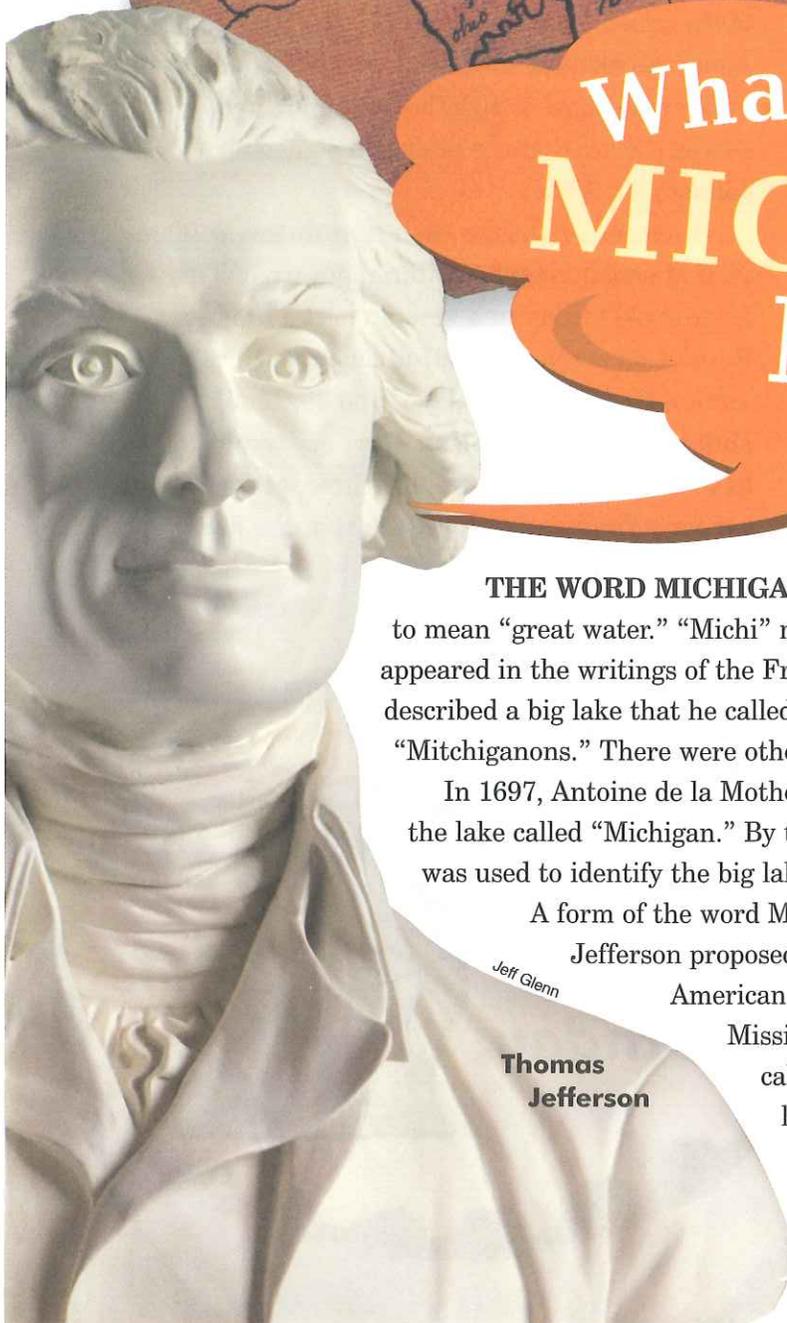
What Does MICHIGAN Mean?

THE WORD MICHIGAN is a Native American word generally interpreted to mean “great water.” “Michi” means great. The earliest written use of Michigan appeared in the writings of the French Jesuit missionaries. In 1670, one Jesuit described a big lake that he called “Machihiganing.” Another Jesuit called it “Mitchiganons.” There were other spellings.

In 1697, Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, who later founded Detroit, wrote about the lake called “Michigan.” By the mid-1700s, Michigan (spelled as we know it today) was used to identify the big lake between present-day Michigan and Wisconsin.

A form of the word Michigan was used in 1784 when Virginian Thomas Jefferson proposed a law that divided up the **sparsely** occupied American lands between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River. One of those future states was to be called Michigania. (This state, however, was to be located in present-day Wisconsin.) Jefferson’s bill was never adopted.

When the Michigan Territory was created, it seemed logical to name it after Lake Michigan.



Jeff Glenn
Thomas Jefferson

STEPS to STATEHOOD

The Michigan Territory existed for 32 years. During that time, the president of the United States **appointed** its territorial governor. As more people moved to Michigan, its territorial government grew. In 1819, Congress allowed Michigan voters to select a nonvoting delegate to Congress. This man (only men could vote or be elected to political office) could observe what Congress was doing. He was not allowed to vote on bills. In 1823, Michigan voters received the right to elect a territorial council. The 9-man council (later enlarged to 13 men) worked with the territorial governor to make laws for the territory.

According to the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, once a territory had 60,000 people it could write a state constitution. If Congress approved the constitution, the territory became a state. Voters of the new state then elected a governor and a legislature.

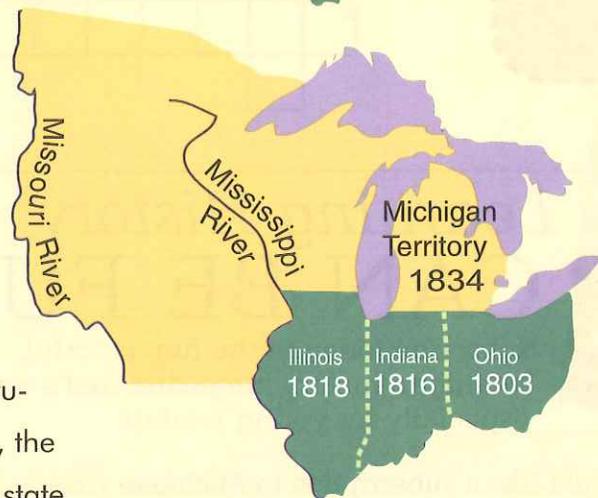
By the mid-1830s more than 85,000 people lived in the Michigan Territory, which stretched all the way to present-day North Dakota. In early 1835, Michigan prepared to become a state. It was a difficult struggle that took two long years. On January 26, 1837, President Andrew Jackson signed a bill creating the state of Michigan.



1 When Indiana became a state in 1816, the Illinois Territory was created and the Michigan Territory was slightly expanded.



2 When Illinois became a state in 1818, the Michigan Territory was expanded to include the present-day state of Wisconsin.

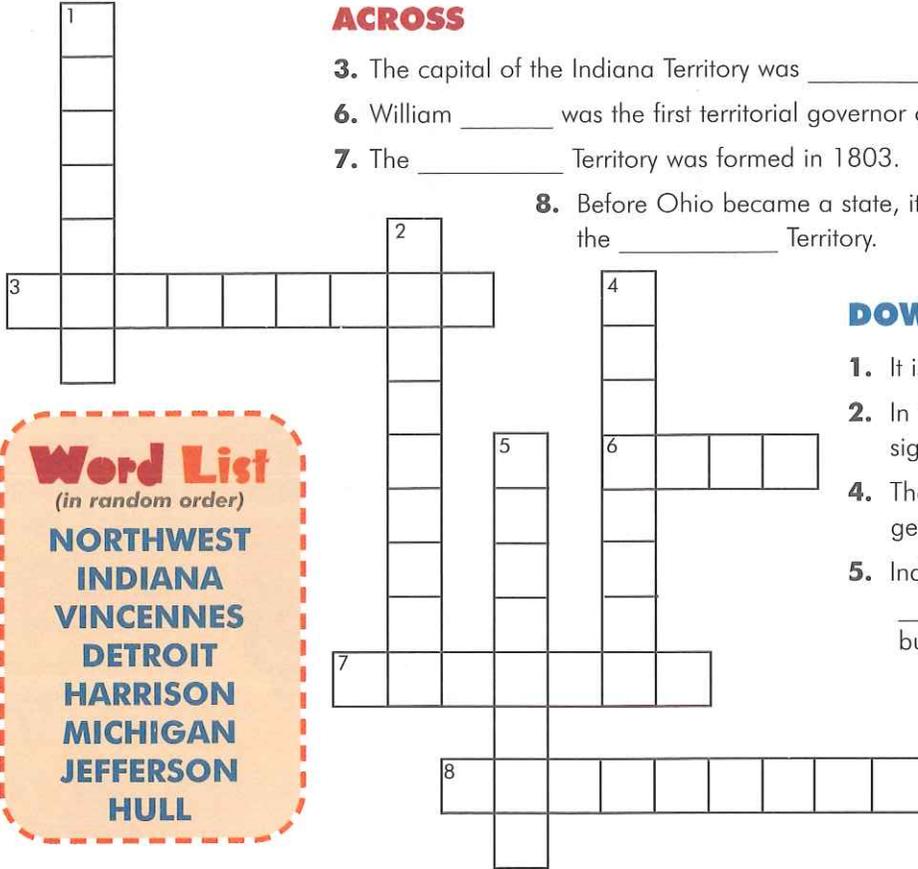


3 By the 1830s the Michigan Territory stretched from the Detroit River to the Missouri River.



4 When Michigan became a state in 1837, the Wisconsin Territory was created. Wisconsin became a state in 1848.

What Did You Learn?



ACROSS

3. The capital of the Indiana Territory was _____.
6. William _____ was the first territorial governor of Michigan.
7. The _____ Territory was formed in 1803.
8. Before Ohio became a state, it was part of the _____ Territory.

DOWN

1. It is 350 miles from _____ to Vincennes.
2. In 1805, President Thomas _____ signed a bill creating the Michigan Territory.
4. The word _____ is a Native American word generally interpreted to mean "great water."
5. Indiana's Territorial governor, William Henry _____ ordered an election in Vincennes, but the order never reached Detroit.

Word List

(in random order)

NORTHWEST
INDIANA
VINCENNES
DETROIT
HARRISON
MICHIGAN
JEFFERSON
HULL

Vocabulary

Appoint: to select a person for an important job

Petition: a list of signatures in support of an idea or law

Prosperity: having success, usually involving money

Sparse: occurring at widely spaced intervals

Unanimous: being in complete agreement