

WISCONSIN HISTORY PRIOR TO STATEHOOD

Under the Flag of France

Although American Indians lived in the area of present-day Wisconsin for several thousand years before the arrival of the French—numbering about 20,000 when the French arrived—the written history of the state began with the accounts of French explorers. The French explored the area, named places, and established trading posts, but left relatively little mark on it. They were interested in the fur trade, rather than agricultural settlement, and were never present in large numbers.

1634 Jean Nicolet: First known European to reach Wisconsin. Sought Northwest Passage.

1654–59 Pierre Esprit Radisson and Medart Chouart des Groseilliers: First of the fur traders in Wisconsin.

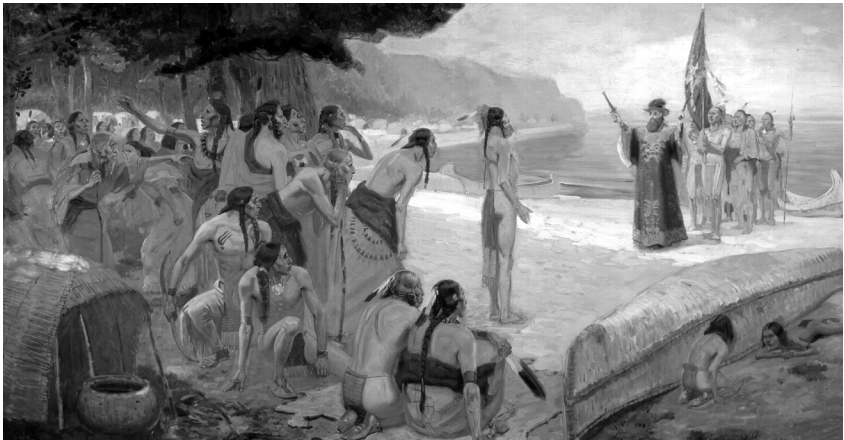
1661 Father Rene Menard: First missionary to Wisconsin Indians.

1665 Father Claude Allouez founded mission at La Pointe.

1666 Nicholas Perrot opened fur trade with Wisconsin Indians.

1672 Father Allouez and Father Louis Andre built St. Francois Xavier mission at De Pere.

Jean Nicolet, a French explorer, is the first known European to arrive in Wisconsin, making landfall in 1634 at Green Bay. He is depicted in this commissioned painting from 1907 meeting a group of Menominee Indians, wearing a Chinese robe and brandishing two pistols.



1673 Louis Jolliet and Father Jacques Marquette discovered Mississippi River.

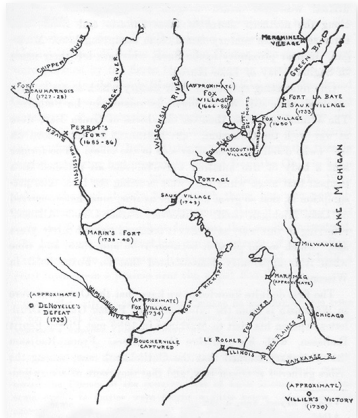
1678 Daniel Greysolon Sieur du Lhut (Duluth) explored western end of Lake Superior.



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(top) Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet traveled the Mississippi River in 1673. (above left) Lead mining by Indians in the southwest part of the state was first noticed by the French in 1690, and became a driving force for white settlement in the area during the 1800s. (above right) Important locations related to the Fox Indian Wars from 1701 to 1738 are shown in a historical map.

1685 Perrot made Commandant of the West.

1690 Perrot discovered lead mines in Wisconsin and Iowa.

1701–38 Fox Indian Wars.

1755 Wisconsin Indians, under Charles Langlade, helped defeat British General Braddock.

1763 Treaty of Paris. Wisconsin became part of British colonial territory.

Under the Flag of England

Wisconsin experienced few changes under British control. It remained the western edge of European penetration into the American continent, important only because of the fur trade. French traders plied their trade and British and colonial traders began to appear, but Europeans continued to be visitors rather than settlers.

1761 Fort at Green Bay accepted by English.

1763 Conspiracy of Pontiac. Two Englishmen killed by Indians at Muscoda.

1764 Charles Langlade settled at Green Bay. First permanent settlement.

1766 Jonathan Carver visited Wisconsin seeking Northwest Passage.

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

1781 Traditional date of settlement at Prairie du Chien.

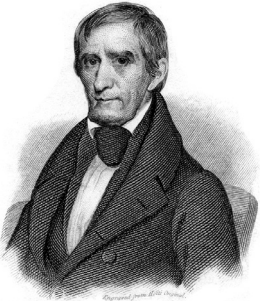
1783 Second Treaty of Paris. Wisconsin became United States territory.

Achieving Territorial Status

In spite of the Treaty of Paris, Wisconsin remained British in all but title until after the War of 1812. In 1815, the American army established control. Gradually, Indian title to the southeastern half of the state was extinguished. 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:

1787–1800 Northwest Territory.



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W. H. Harrison

Future U.S. President William Henry Harrison was appointed governor of the Indiana Territory in 1800. The area included present-day Wisconsin until 1809.

1800–1809 Indiana Territory.

1809–1818 Illinois Territory.

1818–1836 Michigan Territory.

1836–1848 Wisconsin Territory.

1795 Jacques Vieau established trading posts at Kewaunee, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan. Made headquarters at Milwaukee.

1804 William Henry Harrison's treaty with Indians at St. Louis. United States extinguished Indian title to lead region (a cause of Black Hawk War).

1814 Fort Shelby built at Prairie du Chien. Captured by English and name changed to Fort McKay.

1815 War with England concluded. Fort McKay abandoned by British.

1816 Fort Shelby rebuilt at Prairie du Chien (renamed Fort Crawford). Astor's American Fur Company began operations in Wisconsin.

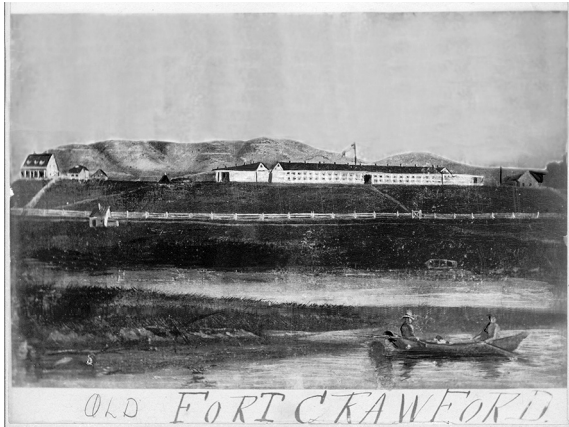
1818 Solomon Juneau bought trading post of Jacques Vieau at Milwaukee.

1820 Rev. Jedediah Morse preached first Protestant sermon

in Wisconsin at Fort Howard (Green Bay) July 9. Henry Schoolcraft, James Doty, Lewis Cass made exploration trip through Wisconsin.

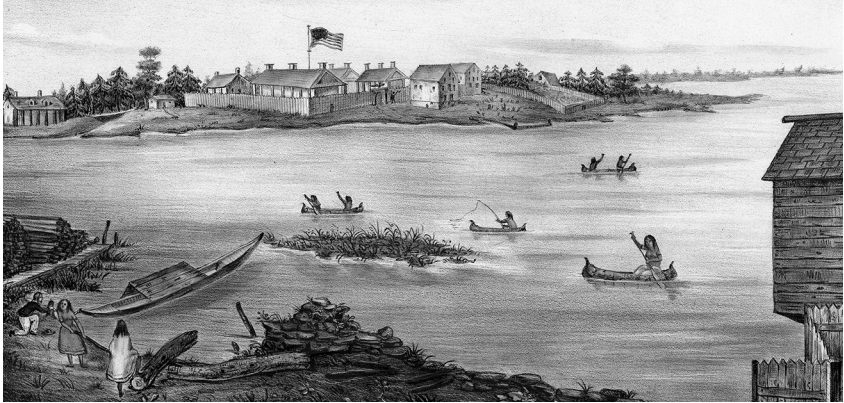
1822 New York Indians (Oneida, Stockbridge, Munsee, and Brothertown) moved to Wisconsin. First mining leases in southwest Wisconsin.

1825 Indian Treaty established tribal boundaries.



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The military fort at Prairie du Chien was rebuilt in 1816 after the war with England and renamed Fort Crawford, the name it retains to this day.



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Fort Howard on the Fox River at Green Bay, like Fort Crawford, was built to protect travel routes from invasion during the War of 1812. This lithograph from the 1840s shows the second fort built on higher ground.

1826–27 Winnebago Indian War. Surrender of Chief Red Bird.

1828 Fort Winnebago begun at Portage.

1832 Black Hawk War.



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The building housing the Main Street offices of the *Green Bay Intelligencer*, the state's first newspaper, established in 1833.

1833 Land treaty with Indians cleared southern Wisconsin land titles. First newspaper, *Green Bay Intelligencer*, established.

1834 Land offices established at Green Bay and Mineral Point. First public road laid out.

1835 First steamboat arrived at Milwaukee. First bank in Wisconsin opened at Green Bay.

1836 Act creating Territory of Wisconsin signed April 20 by President Andrew Jackson. (Provisions of Ordinance of 1787 made part of the act.)

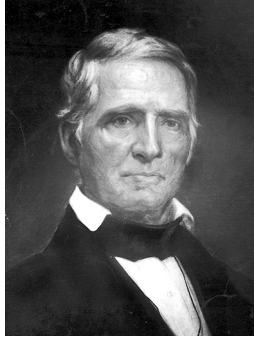
Wisconsin Territory

Wisconsin's population reached 305,000 by 1850. About half of the new immigrants were from New York and New England. The rest were principally from England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and Scandinavia. New York's Erie Canal

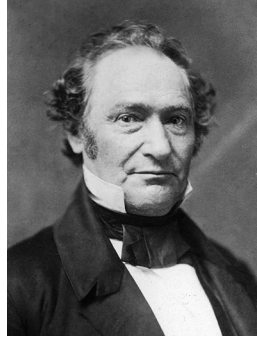
gave Wisconsin a water outlet to the Atlantic Ocean and a route for new settlers. Wheat was the primary cash crop for most of the newcomers. State politics revolved around factions headed by James Doty and Henry Dodge. As political parties developed, the Democrats proved dominant throughout the period.

1836 Capital located at Belmont—Henry Dodge appointed governor, July 4, by President Andrew Jackson. First session of legislature. Madison chosen as permanent capital.

1837 Madison surveyed and platted. First Capitol begun. Panic of 1837—all territorial banks failed. Winnebago Indians ceded all claims to land in Wisconsin. Imprisonment for debt abolished.



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Henry Dodge (*top left*) and James Doty (*top right*) both served as appointed governors of the Wisconsin Territory. (*above*) The first session of the territorial legislature was held in 1836 at this building in Belmont.

1838 Territorial legislature met in Madison. Milwaukee and Rock River Canal Company chartered.

1840 First school taxes authorized and levied.



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Nathaniel Tallmadge was appointed governor of the Wisconsin Territory in 1844. The above portrait was painted when he served as a U.S. Senator for New York State.

1841 James Doty appointed governor by President John Tyler.

1842 C.C. Arndt shot and killed in legislature by James R. Vineyard.

1844 Nathaniel P. Tallmadge appointed governor. Wisconsin Phalanx (a utopian colony) established at Ceresco (Ripon).

1845 Dodge reappointed governor. Mormon settlement at Voree (Burlington). Swiss colony came to New Glarus.

1846 Congress passed enabling act for admission of Wisconsin as state. First Constitutional Convention met in Madison.

1847 Census population 210,546. First Constitution rejected by people. Second Constitutional Convention.

1848 Second Constitution adopted. President James K. Polk signed bill on May 29 making Wisconsin a state.