

Significant events in Wisconsin history

First nations

Wisconsin's original residents were Native American hunters who arrived here about 14,000 years ago. The area's first farmers appear to have been the Hopewell people, who raised corn, squash, and pumpkins around 2,000 years ago. 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

The written history of the state began with the accounts of French explorers. The French explored areas of Wisconsin, 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.

1634 Jean Nicolet became the first known European to reach Wisconsin.

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

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

1665 Father Claude Allouez founded a mission at La Pointe.

1668 Nicolas Perrot opened fur trade with Wisconsin 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 asserts the sovereignty of France over various Wisconsin Indian tribes.

1690 Lead mines are discovered in Wisconsin and Iowa.

1701–38 The Fox Indian Wars occurred.

1755 Wisconsin Indians, under Charles Langlade, helped defeat British General Braddock during the French and Indian War.

1763 The Treaty of Paris is signed, making Wisconsin part of British colonial territory.

Under the flag of Great Britain

Wisconsin experienced few changes under British control. It remained the western edge of European penetration into the American continent, important only 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 visitors rather than settlers.

1763 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 Fox Indian settlement at Prairie du Chien.

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

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

Achieving territorial status

In spite of the second Treaty of Paris, Wisconsin remained British in all but title until after the War of 1812. In 1815, the American army established control. 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:

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 Indians at St. Louis extinguished Indian title to land in the lead region, which eventually became a contributing cause of the Black Hawk War.

1815 The War of 1812 concluded, leading to the abandonment of Fort McKay (formerly Fort Shelby) by the British.

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 The Winnebago War began and quickly ended with the surrender of Chief Red Bird to the United States.

1832 The Black Hawk War occurred.

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.

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

1835 The first steamboat 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 on April 20. (Provisions of Ordinance of 1787 made part of the act.)

Wisconsin territory

Wisconsin's population had reached 305,000 by 1850. 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.

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

1836 Henry Dodge was appointed governor by President Andrew Jackson. The first session of the legislature was held, and Madison was chosen as permanent capital. (The capital had initially been located in Belmont.) Madison was surveyed and platted.

1837 Construction on the first capitol building began. The Panic of 1837 drove territorial banks to failure and initiated a five-year economic depression. The Winnebago Indians ceded all claims to land in Wisconsin. Imprisonment for debt was abolished.

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 (later annexed by Ripon).

1845 Dodge was reappointed 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.

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.

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 Democrats to the Republicans during this period.

1848 The legislature met on June 5, and Governor Nelson Dewey was inaugurated June 7. The University of Wisconsin was founded. Large-scale German immigration began.

1849 A school code was adopted, and the first free, tax-supported, graded school with a high school was established in Kenosha. The first telegram reached Milwaukee.

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 begun 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. Joshua Glover, a fugitive slave, was arrested in Racine, and the Wisconsin Supreme Court, in a related matter, declared the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 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. The office of county superintendent of schools was created.

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 ends. Approximately 96,000 Wisconsin soldiers served in the war, and 12,216 died.

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 was challenged by 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.

1866 The Platteville Normal School (University of Wisconsin-Platteville) opened 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 Milwaukee newspaper publisher and Wisconsin legislator Christopher Latham Sholes invented the typewriter. The Patrons of Husbandry, an agricultural organization nicknamed the Grangers, helped elect William R. Taylor as governor.

1874 The Potter Law, which limited railroad rates, was enacted—only to be repealed two years later.

1875 A free high school law was enacted. The State Industrial School for Girls was established in Milwaukee. Republican Harrison Ludington defeated Governor Taylor. 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 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 Fire at the Newhall House in Milwaukee killed 71—the country's most lethal hotel fire. The south wing of the capitol extension collapsed; seven were killed. 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; five were killed. The University of Wisconsin established an agricultural short course.

1887 Marshfield was almost destroyed by fire.

1889 The Bennett Law, requiring classroom instruction in English, passed. In the "Edgerton Bible case," 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.

1891 The Bennett Law was repealed after bitter opposition from German Protestants and Catholics.

1893 The Wisconsin Supreme Court ordered the state treasurer to refund to the state interest on state deposits, which had customarily been retained by treasurers.

1897 Corrupt-practices legislation was enacted to regulate caucuses and prohibit bribery of voters. The Wisconsin Tax Commission was created.

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

1899 A new law prohibited railroads from giving public officials free rides. 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 to the legislature.

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. Of those groups, Germans faced disproportionate suspicion and hostility during the two world wars.

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

1901 First Wisconsin-born governor, Robert M. La Follette, was inaugurated. Agricultural education was introduced into rural schools. The Legislative Reference Library, which served as a model for other states and for the Library of Congress, 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. A law was enacted that authorized the establishment of a state-owned sanitarium for tuberculosis patients. The Forestry Board and Railroad Commission were created.

1907 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. Eau Claire became the first Wisconsin city to adopt a commission form of government.

1911 The legislature enacted a bill to establish 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. It also required every town, city, or village with a population of over 5,000 to establish an industrial school. 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, which provided that the people, rather than the state legislature, would directly elect U.S. senators.

1915 The Conservation Commission, the State Board of Agriculture, and the State Board of Education were created.

1917 The new capitol building was

completed at a final cost of over \$7 million. Wisconsin sent approximately 120,000 soldiers to serve during World War I, of which nearly 4,000 died. Wisconsin was the first state to meet national draft requirements.

1919 Wisconsin ratified the Eighteenth Amendment, which established Prohibition, and was the first state to deliver the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted American women the right to vote.

1921 Laws establishing Prohibition and equal rights for women were enacted.

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 and won the state of Wisconsin.

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).

1935 A researcher from the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison helped convict the kidnapper and

murderer of Charles Lindbergh's son in 1932.

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

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

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 black population grew in urban areas of the state, discrimination in housing and employment became matters of increasing concern. 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.

1948 Wisconsin's Centennial Year.

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 reflect the rapid growth of urban populations.

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 The legislature initiated a long-range program of acquisition and improvement of state recreation facilities (the ORAP program). 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.

1963 John Gronouski, the state tax commissioner, was appointed U.S.

postmaster general. State expenditures from all funds for the 1963–64 fiscal year 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. The legislature enacted property tax relief for the elderly. The office of county superintendent of schools was abolished, but Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs) were created to provide regional services.

1965 The school compulsory attendance age was raised to 18. All parts of the state were placed into vocational school districts. County boards were reapportioned on the basis of population. A new state law prohibited discrimination in housing. The capitol building, in use since 1917, was officially dedicated after extensive remodeling and cleaning.

1966 The 1965 Legislature held the first full even-year regular session since 1882. 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 The executive branch was reorganized. 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 A constitutional amendment permitted the legislature to meet as provided by law rather than once per biennium. 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 by a team of scientists and surgeons at UW-Madison.

1969 Wisconsin implemented a general sales tax in place of elective 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 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. Wisconsin's portion of the Interstate Highway System was completed.

1970 Anti-war protestors bombed the 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 Wisconsin history following a constitutional amendment ratified in 1967. University of Wisconsin scientists, headed by Dr. Har Gobind Khorana, succeeded in the first total synthesis of a gene.

1971 The legislature enacted major shared tax redistribution, the merger of the University of Wisconsin and State University systems, and a revision of municipal employee relations laws.

1972 The legislature enacted comprehensive consumer protection, lowered the age of majority from 21 to 18, required an environmental impact statement for all legislation affecting the environment, repealed the railroad full crew law, and ratified the unsuccessful "equal rights" amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The state reached a record highway death toll of 1,168.

1973 A state constitutional amendment permitting bingo was adopted. 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, repealed an oleomargarine tax, funded programs for the education of all children with disabilities, and established procedures for the informal probate of simple estates.

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 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.

The late twentieth century

Democrats lost control of the senate in 1993 for the first time since 1974, and in 1995 they lost control of the assembly for the first time since 1970. Women began to be widely represented in the legislature for the first time in the 1990s.

Health care reform, welfare, the state's business climate, taxation, education, and prisons were the chief concerns of policymakers in the 1990s.

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.

1975 Menominee Indians occupied the Alexian Brothers Novitiate. The legislature made voter registration easier, 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 A U.S. district court judge ordered the integration of Milwaukee public schools. Ice storms caused \$50.4 million in damages. The legislature established a system for compensating crime victims. Shirley S. Abrahamson was appointed the first woman on the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

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. Constitutional amendments authorized raffle games and revised the structure of the court system by creating a court of appeals. Legislation enacted included public support of elections campaigns, no-fault divorce, and an implied consent law for drunk driving.

1978 The Wisconsin Supreme Court allowed cameras in state courtrooms. Vel Phillips, elected as secretary of

state, became Wisconsin's first black constitutional officer. The legislature enacted a hazardous waste management program.

1979 A constitutional amendment removed the lieutenant governor from serving as the president of the senate. 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 for three years. The legislature established a school of veterinary medicine at UW-Madison.

1980 Eric Heiden of Madison broke several 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. A state revenue shortfall led to a 4.4 percent cut in state spending.

1981 The U.S. Supreme Court ruled against Wisconsin's historic open primary. The legislature enacted stronger penalties for drunk driving and changes in mining taxes.

1982 State unemployment hit the highest levels since the Great Depression. 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 Waupun State Prison took 15 hostages but released them uninjured the same day. Laws enacted included a "lemon law" on motor vehicle warranties and changes in child support collection procedures. The UW-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine enrolled its first class.

1984 The most powerful U.S. tornado of 1984 destroyed Barneveld, killing nine residents. The Democratic Party chose presidential convention delegates in caucuses rather than by a presidential preference primary because of new Democratic National Committee rules. Economic conditions began to improve from the low point of the previous two years.

1985 A Milwaukee plane crash killed 31. A major consolidation of state banks by large holding companies occurred. A state tax amnesty program was implemented for the first time.

1986 Farm land values fell across the state. 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 Ojibwa 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. Laws enacted included a mandatory seatbelt law, antitakeover legislation, a gradual end to the inheritance and gift taxes, and a “learnfare” program designed to keep children of families on welfare in school.

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 Department of Corrections, the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, and a state-wide land 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. Milwaukee’s homicide rate broke records, raising concerns about drugs and crime. Laws enacted included a major recycling law and a Milwaukee Parental Choice voucher program for public and non-sectarian private schools.

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. Laws enacted included parental consent requirements for abortion, health care reform, and the creation of a three-member Gaming Commission.

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. Republicans won control of the state senate for the first time since 1974. Laws enacted included a 1999 sunset for traditional welfare programs, a cap on school spending, and permission to organize limited liability companies.

1994 Laws enacted include the removal of about \$1 billion in public school operating taxes from property taxes, to take effect by 1997; a new framework for the Public Service Commission’s regulation of telecommunication utilities; and granting towns most of the same powers exercised by cities and villages.

1995 Republicans won control of the state assembly for the first time since 1970. 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. Laws enacted included a mining moratorium, new penalties for failure to pay child support, truth-in-sentencing, and penalties for substance abuse by expectant mothers.

1999 Laws enacted included requirements for local comprehensive plans, graduated drivers licensing, and a sales tax rebate. Supermax, the state's high security prison, opened at Boscobel. State unemployment reached a record low. Chronic wasting disease was detected 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.

Recent years

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. Laws enacted included establishing a telemarketing "no call" list, wetland protection, and the "Senior-Care" prescription drug assistance plan.

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 staffs. Milwaukee County board members resigned or were recalled over a pension scandal.

2003 Jim Doyle became the first Democratic governor in 16 years. 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. Significant legislation included a livestock facility siting law and a revision to clean air and water laws intended to spur job creation. Voter turnout in the fall election was 73 percent, the highest in many years.

2005 The state minimum wage was increased. Wisconsin experienced a record 62 tornadoes during the year, including a record 27 on August 18, when tornadoes hit Viola, Stoughton, and other communities, resulting in one death and 27 injuries. Several current and former members of the legislature were convicted of illegal campaign activities.

2006 Immigration reform and the Iraq War were potent, divisive issues. 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. An advisory referendum in favor of the death penalty was also approved by the voters.

2007 The legislature modified ethics laws and elections regulations. Milwaukee-based Miller Brewing Company merged with Denver's Coors Brewing Company. The state budget passed in late October as one of the latest budgets in state history.

2008 A sharp economic downturn led to rising unemployment and the closing of the General Motors plant in Janesville. Louis Butler, Jr., became the first sitting Supreme Court justice to be

defeated at the polls in 40 years, losing to Michael Gableman. Severe flooding hit southern Wisconsin. Flooding caused Lake Delton to drain, destroying nearby homes. The Great Lakes Compact received state and federal approval, regulating the use of Great Lakes water outside its watershed.

2009 Democrats opened the 99th Legislature with control of the governor's office and both houses of the legislature for the first time since the 1985 session. 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 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 in order to deny the senate a quorum. Thousands of protesters surrounded the capitol to oppose the legislation, which was delayed for

weeks before being 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, revamped the state's economic development efforts, and expanded the parental school choice program.

2012 Governor Walker, Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, and four senators were the subject of recall elections in the wake of the 2011 collective bargaining law. Walker, Kleefisch, and two senators were retained; one senator resigned; and one senator was defeated, giving the Democrats control of the senate. A period of severe heat and drought occurred in June and July. Republican Paul Ryan was nominated for U.S. vice president. In November elections, Republicans regained control of the state senate, and Tammy Baldwin became the first Wisconsin woman and first openly gay woman elected to the U.S. Senate.

2013 The legislature revised regulations for the mining of metallic ferrous minerals, easing the way for the construction of an iron mine in northern Wisconsin's Gogebic Range. Wisconsin's role as a major source of sand used in the "fracking" method of natural gas extraction presented questions for state and local quarry regulators. The winter of 2013–14 was the most severe in many years.

2014 Voters passed a constitutional amendment requiring that transportation fund resources be used only for transportation. 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. Efforts to open an iron mine in the Gogebic Range were abandoned. 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. Voters approved a constitutional amendment requiring the Wisconsin Supreme Court to elect its chief justice by majority vote. Governor Walker announced his candidacy for U.S. president in July but dropped out of the race in late September. Congressman Paul Ryan was elected Speaker of the House.

2016 The Wisconsin Elections Commission and the Wisconsin Ethics Commission replaced the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board. An outbreak of Elizabethkingia meningoseptica killed 18 people. In the presidential election, Republican Donald Trump became the first Republican presidential candidate to win Wisconsin since President Reagan in 1984.

2017 A special session of the legislature was held to consider and pass legislation to curb the opioid epidemic in the state. The legislature voted to eliminate the forestry mill tax, Wisconsin's only state property tax. 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 Voters rejected a constitutional amendment eliminating the office of the state treasurer. After hearing oral arguments, the U.S. Supreme Court handed *Gill v. Whitford*—a case asking whether Wisconsin district lines were an unconstitutional partisan gerrymander—back to the lower courts. Wisconsin's unemployment rate reached a record low. Several areas of the state saw severe flooding following heavy storms. The legislature met in extraordinary session to enact legislation that was later challenged in court. Tony Evers was elected governor, defeating two-term incumbent Scott Walker. **BB**