Michigan State Government Documents: A Researcher’s Guide... is in searchable PDF format.

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Michigan State Government Documents:
A Researcher’s Guide to Indexes, Finding Aids, and Reference Tools

By LeRoy Barnett

Michigan State University Libraries
East Lansing, Michigan
2013
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note to the user</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney General</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correctional Institutions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courts</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Office</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lands</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries &amp; Archives</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professions</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railroads</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldiers’ Home</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Administrative Board</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transportation.................................69
Veterans..............................................70
Vital Records.......................................71
Wildlife...............................................73
Women.................................................75
About the cover illustration..................77
Introduction

Some time ago, I was lamenting to a Michigan history professor about the dearth of research into our state’s past by graduate college students. He said that, in his opinion, this reluctance by scholars to investigate and write about the bygones of our two peninsulas is attributable (at least in part) to a scarcity of available pathfinders to the needed information. The professor felt that if more access tools existed to the records required by academics wishing to study former times in Michigan, more articles and books would be produced on the subject.

As someone employed years ago as a reference person, I certainly share the professor’s appreciation of, and desire for, more historical finding aids. Without the existence of convenient records locators, all but the most determined individuals will be discouraged from undertaking scholarship in a field of inquiry to which there is poor intellectual control. What was needed in this case, I felt, was an inventory of the indexes that exist to state government records as a means of stimulating research into Michigan’s yesterdays. The following list is a product of that notion, covering those published and manuscript keys that grant convenient passage to Michigan’s primary and secondary official state public documents.

In a desire to be comprehensive, this undertaking has defined a Michigan document to be any informational product—published, unpublished, or electronic—that has been generated by state government or created by others to facilitate access to such communications. Since the various agencies in Lansing have long been, collectively, the largest producers of raw and printed material in the state, it is not surprising that the number of facilitating gateways to these records are quite numerous.

These entrée resources have here been cataloged and divided into the following 33 categories: Agriculture; Attorney General;
Biography; Business; Census (state censuses only, no federal enumerations); Correctional Institutions; Courts; Education; Executive Office; General; Geology; Health; History; Immigration; Labor; Lands; Laws; Libraries & Archives; Local Government, Maps; Military; Natural Resources; Professions; Public Safety; Railroads; Social Services; Soldiers’ Home; State Administrative Board; Transportation; Veterans; Vital Records; Wildlife; and Women.

In concluding this introduction, it should be emphasized that this compilation does not include indexes to Michigan records created by the United States government. For example, beyond the purview of this catalog are useful federal reference tools relating to our state such as (to mention only a few) Index Cards to Naturalization Petitions for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. Southern Division. Detroit, 1907-1995 (National Archives, 2004); [Index (Soundex) to the Population Schedules of the 14th Census of the United States. 1920. Michigan] (National Archives, 1992); or Michigan: Index to Topographic and Other Map Coverage Published and Distributed by the United States Geological Survey National Mapping Program (U.S. Geological Survey, 1991).

The author conveys his gratitude for citations provided by Bernadette Bartlett and Larry Massie, plus help rendered by Carol Fink, Scott Peters, Eric Perkins, Jonah Magar and Ruth Ann Jones.

LeRoy Barnett
November 2013
Note to the user

Nearly all the items in this bibliography can be found at the Library of Michigan and/or the Archives of Michigan. Both are in the same building – the Michigan Historical Center – at 702 West Kalamazoo Street in Lansing.

Many entries include call numbers. Call numbers given without the name of a library refer to the Library of Michigan. A few call numbers and location notes are given for other collections, such as the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan; these of course do include the name of the institution holding the material.

An “x” in a call number means that the missing numeral may change from one issue to the next.

Many of the published volumes can also be found in other libraries and archives throughout the state; consult your library’s catalog or reference staff for assistance. Note that the call number for these titles may not be identical to the call number used at the Library of Michigan.

About four dozen Internet resources are referenced here, among the several hundred print resources. The URLs are current as of the first week of December 2013.

Additions to this bibliography may be sent to the author care of the Michigan State University Libraries: ebm@mail.lib.msu.edu.
Agriculture


Michigan. State College of Agriculture & Applied Science. *Bulletin Index by Number, Year, Title and Author.* [East Lansing, 1942]. Covers Extension Service Bulletins and those by the Agricultural Experiment Station. S75.E345


**Attorney General**


**Biography**


Michigan. Legislature. *Manual for the Use of the Legislature of Michigan*. Lansing, 1873. This publication has been released biennially in odd-numbered years since 1835. Only since 1873, however, has it included biographical sketches of active public officials. Pictures of officials started to appear in 1891. Title varies. JK5830.A32


legislators since 1835 plus interesting facts about them as a group. Found at: <http://qa.mdoe.state.mi.us/Legislative Biography>. Please note that this site is still under construction as of December 2013; users may encounter difficulties.


**Business**


Michigan. Legislature. Senate. “List of All Corporations That Have Filed Articles of Association in the Office of the Secretary of State, With Name, Date of Incorporation, Location, Capital, and Date of Reports, [1851-1866].” In *Documents Accompanying the Journal of the Senate of the State of Michigan at the Regular Session of 1867.* Senate Document 1, pages 1-15. J87.M5 A3


**Census**


Archives of Michigan. “Census of Croton Township, Newaygo County, 1864 Census, Surname Index.” Typescript at the Archives of Michigan, Record Group 79-62.


Burns, Matthew W. “State Census of Fruitland Township [for 1884 and 1894], Muskegon County, Michigan.” [Muskegon: Matthew Burns, 1995]. F574.F762 B87


“[Indexes to] State Census Records [for Baraga County, 1884, 1894.” Record Group 92-219, Archives of Michigan. Separate indexes for each year in binder.


Jackson County Genealogical Society. *1884 Jackson County, Michigan Census Combined Index to All Townships & Ward[s]*. Jackson, [2002]. F572.J2 A17


Sawyer, Evelyn M. *Index to the Barry County, Michigan, 1884 State Census and Death Schedule.* [Hudsonville MI], 1998. R317.74


Whitfield, Mrs. Edward H. *State Census of Oakland County, Michigan, for the Year 1845.* [Pontiac: General Richardson Chapter, DAR, 1937]. Folio F572.O2 S672


**Conservation**

(See Lands; Natural Resources; Wildlife)

**Correctional Institutions**

Michigan. Corrections Department. “Prisoner Index, ca. 1839-1987.” Lansing: Administrative Services Division, [n.d.]. Lists on cards the names (and often additional information) of all prisoners incarcerated in state penal institutions following our admission to the Union to about 1987, as part of Record Group 83-86, series 1, Archives of Michigan.


Michigan. Department of Corrections. “Offender Tracking Information System, [2010-2013].” Contains information on about 300,000 prisoners, parolees and probationers who have been under the jurisdiction of the MDOC within the last three years. On-line database available at: <http://www.state.mi.us/mdoc/asp/otis2.html>.


**Courts**

Binmore, Henry. *Index-digest of the Michigan Reports: Contained in Harrington's Chancery, Walker's Chancery, Douglas' Reports, 2 volumes, and Michigan Reports, volumes 1 to 42 Inclusive, of the Series*. Chicago: Eugene B. Myers & Company, 1881. There was also an 1882 edition. KFM4245.A3

Blume, William W. “Index to Supreme Court Cases and Cases in Chancery, [1818-1859].” Volume in Box 8 of Blume’s personal papers at the Bentley Historical Library in Ann Arbor. Also in Box 8 is “Index-Digest, 1805-1824.” This relates to the Territorial Supreme Court and appears in toto in Blume's *Transactions of the Supreme Court of Michigan*. Accession 85821 Aa 2.


Campbell, Colin P. *An Index Digest of Michigan Supreme Court Decisions, July 1898-January 1902*. Grand Rapids MI: Index Digest Publishing Company, 1902. KFM4245.1 C36 1902

Cooley, Thomas M. *A Digest of the Reported Cases Contained in the Michigan Reports [Short Title]*. Ann Arbor: Dr. Chase’s Steam Printing House, 1866. KFM4245.1.D53

Cooley, Thomas M. *Digest of the Michigan Reports [Short Title]*. Ann Arbor: Gilmore & Fiske, 1872. KFM4245.1.C77

Doty, James Duane. “Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of the Territory of Michigan [1807-1821, with Index].” University of Michigan Rare Books, MC62S9re or KFM4257.M57 1807x

Hopkins, Charles C. *Index to Cases Decided by the Supreme Court of Michigan since Jacobs & Chaney's Digest, or From October 19, 1888, (72 Mich.) to April 8, 1892: Including Cases Heard January Term, 1892, Together with the Rules of the Supreme Court in Force*
June 7, 1892. Lansing: Robert Smith & Company, 1892. KFM4245.6.H67


McGrath, John W. Mandamus Cases Decided in the Supreme Court of Michigan [Short Title]. Detroit: J.F. Eby, 1898. KFM4753.M2 M3


Michigan Territory. Supreme Court. “Index to Volume 2d, Journal of the Transactions of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Michigan from Oct. 7 1814 to Nov. 16, 1819.” In manuscript volume entitled Journal of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Michigan From October 1814 to November 1819. Records of the
Michigan Supreme Court, Box 23, Archives of Michigan, Record Group 2013-32.

Michigan Territory. Supreme Court. “Index to Docket 1821” and “Index to Docket for 1824-1825.” Two volumes in Records of the Michigan Supreme Court, Box 23, Archives of Michigan, Record Group 2013-32.

Michigan Territory. Supreme Court. “[Name] Index to Calendars, 1822 & 1823.” In Calendar No. 3, Archives of Michigan, Record Group 2013-32.


Talbot, John A. *Table of Cases Cited, Affirmed, Modified and Overruled of all the Michigan Reports, From Harrington’s Chancery to the Thirty-third Michigan, Inclusive.* Albany NY: Banks & Bros., 1878. KFM4245.A333

**Education**

“Index to the Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction From 1836 to 1891.” In *Fifty-sixth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Michigan, with*

Michigan. Asylum for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb, and the Blind. Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees of the Michigan Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind. Lansing, 1854[-1918]. Title varies slightly. This series briefly transfers in 1873-74 to the first and second Annual Abstract of Statistical Information Relative to the Insane, Deaf, Dumb, and Blind in the State of Michigan (Lansing, 1874-75. HV1555.M5 A66). The reports for the school for the deaf and the school for the blind become separate in 1882. During this 64-year period the names and counties of residence are given for all students based on type of handicap. RA790.65.M5 B54


### Executive Office


For Governor Engler’s Orders for 2000-2002, see: <http://www.michigan.gov/formergovernors/0,1607,7-212-31303_31305----Y,00.html>.


**General**


[Card Index to Michigan State Documents Prior to 1901]. Slips in chronological order, arranged by subject, indexing the publications issued by state government in the nineteenth century. At time of writing, resource kept in a metal card file in offices of the state government documents specialist at the Library of Michigan.


number, circuit court circuit number and district court number. KFM4621.C5


**Geology**

(See also Lands)


Michigan. Department of Natural Resources. Geological Survey Division. “Field Notebooks [Indexed by Township, Range and Section], 1885-1950.” Record Group 81-69, series 1, Archives of Michigan.


**Governor's Office**

(See Executive Office)
Health


Michigan. Department of Mental Health. “General Index [to] Patient Registries [for the Traverse City Regional Psychiatric Hospital], 1885-1908.” Record Group 89-151, volume 10, Archives of Michigan. Confidential.

Michigan. Department of Mental Health. “Index Cards to State Hospital Commission Minutes.” Record Group 79-9, box 3, Archives of Michigan.

Michigan. Department of Mental Health. “Index to Individuals [at the Kalamazoo Regional Psychiatric Hospital, 1859-1911].” Record Group 81-108, volume 95 and worktable box 78, Archives of Michigan. Confidential.


Michigan. Department of Mental Health. “Index to State Hospital Commission Reports From June 1, 1929-ca. 1941.” Record Group 81-108, box 471, Archives of Michigan.

Michigan. Department of Mental Health. “Patient Index Cards [to the Oakdale Regional Center at Lapeer], ca. 1895-1982.” Record Group 92-24, series 4, Archives of Michigan. See also Record Group 92-384, Series 1, and Record Group 92-358. Confidential.


Michigan. Department of Mental Health. “Record of Visits [to See Patients at the Traverse City Regional Psychiatric Hospital], 1957-1989.” Record Group 89-151, Boxes 10-20, Archives of Michigan. Confidential.


KFM4554.A33 1967


Michigan Historical Records Survey. Division of Community Service Programs. “[Records Inventory of the] State Board of Health.” [Detroit, 1938]. A 271-page typescript found on microfilm roll 44 at the Bentley Historical Library.

Highways

(See Transportation)
History


Orser, Charles E., Jr. *Annotated Bibliography of Archaeological Contract Surveys Conducted in Michigan from 1970 Through 1979*. Lansing: Bureau of History, 1984. Annual manuscript lists after 1979 exist in the office of the State Archaeologist through 1993. Inventories after that date are in an Argus database searchable only by the State Archaeologists. Much of the information in the surveys is confidential and the studies or reports are not allowed to circulate. Z1208.U5 A5


**Immigration**

Blume, William W. *Transactions of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Michigan.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1935-1940. Six volumes. Naturalization issues generally fall within the domain of the federal or municipal courts (in the case of Detroit and Grand Rapids) or with the various county clerks, thus putting them outside the purview of this compilation. However, prior to statehood the Michigan Supreme Court handled some naturalizations, as manifested in volume 1, pages 623-625;
volume 4, pages 585-586; and volume 6, pages 433-436. KFM4245.A19


**Labor**


KFM4542.A25 W6


Lands


this monograph were issued in 1940, 1953, and 1966. KFM4651.A3


Michigan. Department of Natural Resources. *Michigan, Lake Map Index*. Lansing: The Department, 1969. Arranged alphabetically by county, then alphabetically by name of lake. Provides township and range location of each water body plus its acreage. The approximately 2,500 lake maps referenced in this index were apparently turned over to the Michigan United Conservation Clubs for sale to the public. GB1625.M5 M53 1969


Michigan. Department of Natural Resources. Real Estate Division. “Surveyors' Field Notes, 1815-1918.” Record Group 87-155, series 1, Archives of Michigan. Index in binder.


Michigan Historical Records Survey. Division of Community Service Programs. “[Inventory of the Records in the Land Office Division of the Michigan] Conservation Department.” A 281-page typescript found on microfilm reel 44 at the Bentley Historical Library.


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**Laws**

(See also Courts)


Michigan. Laws, Statutes, etc. *Laws of the Territory of Michigan, With Marginal Notes and an Index.* Detroit: Sheldon & Reed, 1820. KFM4230 1805-35 .A42


Michigan. Secretary of State. *Index to the General Laws of the State of Michigan: Enacted by the Legislature During the years 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1877, 1879 and 1881, and to Sections and Chapters of the Compiled Laws, Amended or Repealed.* Lansing: W.S. George & Company, 1881. Editions of this work also appeared in 1877 and 1879. KFM4230 1881 .A23


Reid, James W. *Reid's Index to the Amended Laws of Michigan: Containing a Synopsis of New Laws Passed Since the Compilation of 1857, Together with Amendments Thereto; Also References to all Amendments to the Compiled Laws*. Lansing: Jno. A. Kerr & Company, 1867. KFM4240.R45z

Trask, Albert. *Index of the Michigan Statutes, 1904*. [Saginaw, 1904?]. KFM4230 1897 .A2z


**Libraries & Archives**

“Answer: The Library of Michigan’s Online Catalog.” Lansing: Department of History, Arts & Libraries, [1987-present]. The main repository for printed Michigan government documents is the Library of Michigan. This is the search engine to the Library’s holdings, which allows access by author, title, date, call number, material type, language, and keyword. Obsolete printed inventories of holdings can be found in various editions of the “Catalogue of the Michigan State Library,” which first appeared in 1850 and were published for decades thereafter. A separate listing was made for legal volumes under the 1896 title, “Catalogue of the Michigan State Library Law Department.” From time-to-time special lists have been prepared by the State Library for the benefit of researchers, such as the 1906 “Finding List of Works on Genealogy and American Local History in Michigan State Library.” Many holdings of the Archives of
Michigan are also included in the Answer database.  
<http://Answercat.org>


Michigan.  State Archives.  “Archival Circulars.”  Sixty-three multi-page handouts identifying holdings of the State Archives by subject.  Topics covered include Account Books & Ledgers; Aeronautics; Architectural Plans & Drawings; Associations & Organizations; Bounties, Premiums, Subsidies & Relief; Business Records; Census Records; Circuit Court Records; Civil War Manuscripts; Commissions; Committees; Confidential Records; Corporation Records; Correctional Facilities; Depression Era Agencies; Diaries, Daybooks & Personal Journals; Election Records; Fairs & Expositions; Fishing Records; Game & Wildlife; Handicapped (Records about the); Infirmaries/Sanitoria/Poor
Michigan State Government Documents

Homes; Investigations; Land Records; Legislative Records; Libraries; Licensed Professions; Lumbering, Logging & Forestry; Manuscripts; Mental Health Records; Military Records; Mining Records; Minorities; Naturalization Records; Pardons, Paroles, Warrants & Extraditions; Parks; Photography; Politicians’ Records; Pollution (Records about); Probate Court Records; Public Land Grants/Private Claims; Public Officials; Railroads; Roads & Bridges; Rural Property Inventories; School Records; Scrapbooks & Albums; Shipping & Navigation; Studies Conducted; Surveyors’ Records; Swamp Lands; Task Forces, Councils & Boards; Tax/Assessment Rolls; Vital Records; Women (Records Relating to); and Youths (Records Relating to).

CD3302.A2


**Local Government**


Brake, Merle E. *Local Laws of Wayne County.* [Detroit]: Legislative Committee of the Wayne County Board of Supervisors, 1946. Lists all laws ever passed by the Michigan legislature relating to Wayne County and its various subdivisions. KFM4225.A25252


Maps

“Argus Map Database.” An electronic catalog of over 16,500 maps in the Archives of Michigan. Searchable by author, title, subject, date and more, at this time the cartographic register can only be accessed by the staff.


Michigan. Department of Information Technology. Center for Geographic Information. Home to the Michigan Geographic Data Library and cartographic representations of our state’s school districts, census tracts, political districts, wetlands, natural features, geology, hydrology, mineral ownership, land ownership, and more at: <http://www.michigan.gov/cgi>.


Michigan. Department of Natural Resources. “Indexes to Maps and Plats [Produced by the State Land Office], ca. 1945. Record Group 88-93, box 1, Archives of Michigan.

Michigan. Department of Natural Resources. Mapping & Photography Directory as Contained in the Recommendations of
Michigan. Department of Natural Resources. Plat Maps [for Michigan, 1815-1860, Made of the Townships by the Original Surveyors]. These are the earliest detailed maps of the state, generally drawn in advance of settlement. These hand-drawn cartographic representations can be found at: <http://seekingmichigan.org/discover/plat-maps>.

Michigan. Department of State Highways. Office Services Division. “Index to Record of County Plats [in Michigan], 1836-1982.” Lansing, 1983? Microfilmed index (as part of Record Group 68-52) to plats filed with the Michigan Department of Treasury (as Record Group 67-97 and later) as preserved in the Archives of Michigan. Microfilm reels 96-100. These plats can be viewed individually at the website: <http://www.cis.state.mi.us/platmaps/sr_subs.asp>.


Medical

(See Health)
Military

(See also Soldiers’ Home; Veterans)


Michigan. Adjutant General. *Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Michigan for the Year 1862*. Lansing: John A. Kerr & Co., 1863. Also includes reports for years 1863-1866. All reports provide a brief description of individual regimental activities during the respective period of the Civil War, along with lists of Michigan troops who have died, are missing, or have been discharged during the reporting period. Personal information usually includes name, unit, residence, and remarks. UA43.M5


Michigan. Department of Management & Budget. “United Spanish War Veterans [Files], 1898-1983.” Record Group 84-88, Archives of Michigan. Includes records of camps and members, with comprehensive name index in reading-room card file and on microfilm reels 445-450.


Michigan. Department of Military Affairs. [Index to General and Special Orders]. Lansing, 1909. Another edition issued in 1912. UA43.M5369


Michigan. Department of Military Affairs. “Register of Personnel Who Served in World War I [From the Michigan Naval Force],
Michigan. Department of Military Affairs. “Service Record of Discharged Men [From the State Troops], 1921-1926.” Record Group 80-36, boxes 37-50, Archives of Michigan.


Michigan. Secretary of State. *Alphabetical General Index to Public Library Sets of 85,271 Names of Michigan Soldiers and Sailors Individual Records.* Lansing: Wynkoop Hallenbeck Crawford Co., 1915. This is an index to what are popularly known as the “Brown Books” listing Michigan’s Civil War soldiers. E514.3.A583z and E514.3.M622 These 46 volumes can also be found at: <http://seekingmichigan.org/discover/michigan-civil-war-volunteer-registries>


**Natural Resources**

(See also Geology; Lands; Wildlife)


Colby, Joyce. *Alphabetical Index of Michigan’s 8,632 Lake and Pond Names from Lake Inventory Bulletins, 1 to 83*. East Lansing: Department of Resource Development, [1965]. Folio GB705.M5 W3 no. 17


Michigan. Department of Natural Resources. *Index to Division and Office Policies and Procedures.* Lansing: The Department, 1980. HC107.M5 M43332

Michigan. Department of Natural Resources. “[Index to the DNR Photo Collection, ca. 1960-1980].” While the subject of each image is noted on the cards, arrangement is by ascending negative number. Record Group 98-131, Archives of Michigan.


Michigan. Department of Natural Resources. “[Natural Resources] Commission Proceedings [Index], 1990.” Record Group 94-56, box 1, Archives of Michigan.


Michigan. Department of Natural Resources. “Natural Resources Commission Proceedings [Index], 1993.” Record Group 99-6, box 1, Archives of Michigan.


Professions

(See also Business; Labor)


Public Safety


Michigan Historical Records Survey. Division of Community Service Programs. *Inventory of the State Archives of Michigan: State Police*. Detroit: Works Projects Administration, 1941. CD3304.I5
Railroads

(See also Transportation)


Michigan. Department of Transportation. “Interlocker Files, 1888-1988.” Interlockers are generally manned, two-story buildings from which actions are taken to ensure the safe passage of trains where two or more mainline tracks cross. Record Group 93-72, Archives of Michigan. Indexed by railroad, county and city.


**Social Services**

Duquette, Donald N. *Michigan Child Welfare Law: Child Protection, Foster Care, Termination of Parental Rights.* Lansing:
Department of Social Services, 1984. Other editions issued in 1990 and 1994. KFM4550.C4 D86


editions issued in 1895, 1898, 1900, 1908, 1914 and 1917. Titles vary slightly. KFM4284.5.P7 A3


**Soldiers’ Home**

(See also Military; Veterans)


inhabitants, variously providing name, admission number, age, military unit, rank, months in service, pension amount, nationality, and prior residence. UB384.M5 M53


**State Administrative Board**


Michigan Historical Records Survey. Division of Community Service Programs. “[Records Inventory of the State] Administrative Board.” [Detroit, 1940]. A 21-page typescript on microfilm roll 44 at the Bentley Historical Library.
Transportation

(See also Railroads)


Hyde, Charles K. *Historic Highway Bridges of Michigan.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993. A current inventory of these structures is maintained by the Department of Transportation at: <http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/1,1607,7-151-9620_11154_11188---,00.html>. TG24.M45 H93


Michigan. Secretary of State. *Laws of the State of Michigan Relating to Highways, Bridges, and Drainage.* Lansing, 1875. Other editions were issued in 1877, 1880, 1885, and 1896 (the latter two years minus drainage in the title). KFM4644.A3


**Veterans**

(See also Military; Soldiers’ Home)


*United States Civil War Soldiers Living in Michigan in 1894.* St. Johns: Clinton County Historical Society, 1988. This is an alphabetical name index to *Census of the State of Michigan, 1894: Soldiers, Sailors and Marines,* a volume arranged geographically and found under call number HA443.S75 1894 Vol. 3. E494.U6

**Vital Records**


**Wildlife**

Blouch, Ralph I. *Annotated Bibliography of Wildlife Research Conducted by the Department of Natural Resources*. Lansing: Department of Natural Resources, 1979. Wildlife Division


Michigan. Department of Natural Resources. *Index to Reports on Fisheries Research, 1930-1967, in Report Series of Institute for*
**Fisheries Research.** Lansing: Research and Development Division, 1968. SH222.M5 I643


Michigan. Department of Natural Resources. “Wildlife Division Reports.” A current online list of such publications (giving number, title and author) from number 288 through 3499. Available at: <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10363-172565--,00.html>.


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**Women**

Thereto as They Relate to Women and Girls; Also, Pointed Decisions of the Supreme Court of Michigan Affecting the Same. Detroit: Michigan Equal Suffrage Association, 1911. A revised edition of same was issued in 1915. KFM4611.5.W6 A3


In 1858, a decision was made to put ornamental panels in a skylight over the House chamber of our nation’s capitol. In keeping with our country’s motto at the time—E Pluribus Unum (out of many [states], one [commonwealth])—it seemed appropriate to have each panel in the skylight dedicated to a state or territory that had representatives under the roof. The way in which this ambition would be realized was by glazing the coats of arms of Uncle Sam’s constituent political units onto individual sections of the large, overhead window.

Every state and territory was asked to supply a copy of its coat of arms for artists to use as a guide. With these images in hand, craftsmen painted the escutcheons onto white glass roundels twenty-inches in diameter, at a cost of just $50 each. The enameled panels were then put in cast iron frames and secured in place to collectively form an area of natural illumination in the ceiling of the House.

These translucent, emblematic designs remained in place until 1949 when, due to deterioration with age, they were declared unsafe and dismantled. As the renovation of the House chamber that year did not include reuse of the painted panels, they were put into temporary storage. In 1950, the Architect of the Capitol notified the appropriate governors that they could claim the mothballed replicas of their state’s coat of arms for the asking. Michigan gladly accepted this offer, and the desired object arrived in 1951 to be placed in the State Museum. It is unknown if the cracks at the top of the glass pane occurred in Washington or during shipment to Lansing, but the present from the District of Columbia arrived in this condition.

Image by Dorothy Potter Barnett. Artifact at State Museum.