



America 250 Years

Celebrate 250 years of America and
discover Michigan's unique history

girlscouts 
of michigan
shore to shore

250 Years of Red, White, and Blue

As the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary in 2026, the America250MI patch program invites Girl Scouts to explore the people, places, and events that have shaped our nation since 1776. In Michigan, that story is especially rich and dynamic. From its early days as a frontier territory following the American Revolution to statehood in 1837, Michigan has played a vital role in shaping the nation.



This patch program intentionally brings history closer to home. Earning this patch encourages you to explore your own towns and counties, visit local museums and historic sites, interview community leaders, and uncover stories that may not always appear in national textbooks.

By connecting big moments in American history to local landmarks, family histories, and community traditions, you'll strengthen your understanding of where you live and why it matters. American history is not distant or abstract—it is woven into our streets, schools, and neighborhoods.

Earn this commemorative patch by completing an activity from each of the 5 sections:

1. **Before the American Revolution**
2. **After the American Revolution**
3. **Statehood and Government**
4. **Changing populations & rights**
5. **Active citizenship today**

You can work on this patch individually, with your troop, or even with your family. When you've completed all 5 steps, you'll have earned the America250MI Patch — and you'll carry forward the spirit of citizenship, courage, and community that has always shaped our state and country.

Note to adults: *Activity choices can be adapted to best fit your Girl Scout's level – adjust to make a lesson introductory for Daisies or Brownies, or challenge older Girl Scouts to investigate and deepen their understanding.*



1. Before the American Revolution

Choose 1

Learn about Michigan's earliest history and the people who lived here before the United States was formed.

- **Option A: Explore the daily life of Anishinaabe nations.**

People have lived in Michigan for longer than anyone can remember. Before the French and British came here in the 1600s and 1700s, Michigan was home to several tribes. Together, they are Anishinaabe, or “original people.”

What tribes lived on the land you currently inhabit? What traditions and practices were part of their daily lives?



- **Option B: Discover Michigan cities with French names**

Our state has numerous cities and towns whose names are derived from French. Some notable cities are Detroit, Sault Ste. Marie, Charlevoix, St. Ignace, and Cheboygan. Dig into the history of these towns and how they came to be. Have you visited any of these towns?



- **Option C: Explore old maps of Michigan's early Native American and French communities.**

Enjoy these online, interactive learning sites – then test your knowledge with pop quizzes along the way!

Old French Maps Discovering Michigan's Past

[Click here to view online](#)

The French in Michigan

[Click here to view online](#)



2. After the American Revolution

Choose 1

Discover how Michigan changed after 1776 as new groups arrived and the territory moved toward statehood.

- **Option A: Find a local building, park, farm, or site that was established between 1776 and 1837.**

If possible, visit this location in person! How has this site changed over the years?



Colonial Michilimackinac (Mackinaw City)

Though active earlier, it was moved and abandoned in favor of Fort Mackinac during the war years, with ongoing archaeology.



Fort Mackinac (Mackinac Island)

Believing Fort Michilimackinac (at what is now Mackinaw City) was too vulnerable to American attack, the British moved their fort to Mackinac Island in 1780

- **Option B: Build a timeline of events from 1776 to 1837, the year Michigan officially became a U.S. State.**

Identify at least 5 dates with moments you find particularly meaningful to Michigan or U.S. history.

What timeline can you discover about your town? Was it established before or after 1776?

- **Option C: Research Michigan treaties after 1776**

A treaty is an agreement or promise between two groups. After the American Revolution, some Native American groups and the people in Michigan made treaties to decide who could live on certain lands, share land, or trade safely.

How did these treaties impact Native Americans who had been living on the land for centuries before the American Revolution?

3. Changing Populations & Rights

Choose 1

Michigan's story is shaped by the people who have called it home over time. In this section, you'll explore how populations have changed, and how rights and opportunities have evolved along the way.

- **Option A: Explore how Michigan's population shifted over time — and how rights expanded (or didn't) for different groups.**

Who were the predominant immigrant groups in the early 1800s? Early 1900s? What about today?

- **Option B: Pick one demographic and investigate how the rights of this group have changed in Michigan.**

How were they treated differently compared to other groups at the time? Have their rights changed during 250 years of American history?

- **Option C: Attend a cultural celebration to learn about traditions and communities different than your own.**

Get out and experience something new! Attend a cultural festival or event and explore the traditions, food, music, or art of a different community.

Think about what makes this culture unique and how it adds to Michigan's story.



4. Government & Statehood

Choose 1

Learn how Michigan's government or the U.S. government formed and why it matters today.

Option A: Hold a mock legislative session and pass a troop "bill."

Objective: Girls learn how laws are made by drafting, debating, and voting on a troop-specific "bill" (rule, event plan, or initiative).

Materials Needed:

- Paper and pens or laptops/tablets for drafting
 - Whiteboard or large paper to display bills
 - Optional: gavel or "speaker" hat for the facilitator
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Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Explain the Concept of a Bill

- Introduce a bill as a proposal for a new rule, activity, or project that the troop might adopt.
- Give examples: "Add a new community service day," "Hold a cookie decorating contest," or "Introduce a troop reading challenge."

2. Brainstorm Ideas

- Split the troop into small groups and let each group come up with one bill idea.
- Encourage them to make it clear what the bill is about, why it's needed, and how it will work.

3. Draft the Bill

- Provide a simple template for the bill:
 - **Title:** Name of the bill
 - **Purpose:** Why it's needed
 - **Action Steps:** What the troop will do if it passes
 - **Expected Outcome:** How it will benefit the troop or community

4. Present the Bills

- Each group presents their bill to the whole troop.
- Encourage questions and discussion, just like in a real legislative debate.

5. Debate and Amend

- Allow girls to suggest friendly amendments to improve a bill.
- Discuss pros and cons together.

6. Voting

- Take a vote on each bill. Options: simple majority, two-thirds, or a secret ballot.
- Celebrate the passing of bills by announcing which will become “troop law” or action items.

7. Implement the Bill

- Assign responsibilities for carrying out the bill.
- Track progress and outcomes—girls can see the results of their “legislation.”

Option B: Design your own mini-constitution.

Objective: Girl Scouts collaboratively create a guiding document that outlines their troop’s values, rules, and goals, similar to how a constitution sets rules for a country.

Materials Needed:

- Large sheets of paper or a whiteboard
- Markers, pens, and sticky notes
- Optional: printed examples of a real constitution or simplified “mock” constitutions

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Introduction to Constitutions

- Briefly explain what a constitution is: a set of rules and principles that guide how a group functions.
- Give simple examples like the U.S. Constitution or a classroom code of conduct.

2. Brainstorm Values and Principles

- Ask each girl to write down values they think are important for the troop, e.g., kindness, honesty, teamwork, respect.
- Collect ideas and group similar ones together.

3. Create Roles and Responsibilities

- Discuss roles in the troop (leader, treasurer, event planner) and what responsibilities each role should have and why.
- This can help mimic the “branches” of government idea in a simplified way.



4. Draft Rules and Guidelines

- Ask the group to write 5–10 key rules everyone agrees on, e.g., “Listen when someone is speaking,” “Be prepared for meetings,” or “Help each other.”

5. Decide How to Make Changes

- Introduce a simple system for updating the constitution, e.g., “Two-thirds of the troop must agree to add a new rule.”

6. Finalize and Celebrate

- Write the final version neatly on a poster or booklet.
- *Optional:* Have a small signing ceremony where each girl signs the constitution as a symbol of commitment.

Option C: Discover the history of Michigan’s Capitol.

Lansing was not always our state’s capitol! Use the button below to explore the history how it came to be and what cities served as the capitol before Lansing.



Did you know? The Michigan State Capitol is open to visitors year-round. Self-guided and guided tours are available. Make a special trip with Girl Scout sisters to explore the capitol yourselves!

Michigan State Capitol History

Click here to view online

5. Active Citizenship Today

Choose 1

Connect Michigan's history to your role as a Girl Scout and citizen.

- **Option A: Participate in Sharing the Spirit of America.**

This statewide movement launched by America250MI isn't just a reenactment - its a renewal.

On July 8, 2026, at 6:00 PM EDT, Michigan will lift its voice—together—in a synchronized reading of the Declaration of Independence.

Find an event to join or host your own! Hear and claim the promises that launched a nation. Program assets available in 12 different languages.



Learn More

Click here to view online

- **Option B: Interview a community leader about their role**

Examples include:

- **Local Government Officials:** Mayor, city council members, or county commissioners. From them you can learn how local government works and how decisions are made.
- **School board members:** Understand education policy and community involvement.
- **Law Enforcement & Public Safety:** Police officers, sheriffs, or firefighters. Discuss community safety, civic duties, and public service.



- **Judicial & Legal Leaders:**

Judges or magistrates. Learn about the legal system and the importance of laws.

Local attorneys or public defenders. Discuss rights, responsibilities, and community advocacy.

- **Elected Representatives:**

State or federal legislators. If accessible, Girl Scouts can learn about the law-making process and advocacy.

- **Option C: Take part in a community service or advocacy project.**

Volunteering has been a cornerstone of Girl Scouting since the beginning.

By sharing your time and effort with organizations in your community you become an active citizen who makes a difference.

What issues do you care about? Some examples include:

1. Environmental Stewardship
2. Helping People in Need
3. Health & Wellness
4. Education & Literacy
5. Arts & Culture
6. Civic Engagement

Make your impact bigger:

The Girl Scout Highest Awards (Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards) are a challenge to make a lasting difference. Instead of participating in a one-time volunteer opportunity, take action and make a sustainable solution that can help your community for years to come.



Highest Awards

Click here to view online



Way to Go Girl Scout!

In partnership with America250MI, you've just earned a new patch. What an achievement!

By completing this program, you've taken another exciting step in celebrating 250 years of America and uncovering the rich, one-of-a-kind history of Michigan.

Participants viewing this booklet digitally may click the patch image below to order. Those using a printed copy can scan the QR code to access the order form.





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