

The Barkers, Michigan City, Indiana and United States: Timeline

1674-1675 - Father Marquette, a French missionary, travels through the Trail Creek region, preaching to the Pottawatomie Indians.

1780 - The Battle of the Dunes, the only Revolutionary battle fought in Northwest Indiana. A small group of American colonials and Frenchmen successfully raided Fort St. Joseph (near present-day Niles, Michigan). As the raiders returned home, British soldiers and allies overcame the colonials at a site along the Indiana Dunes.

1800 - Indiana Territory is formed, with Vincennes as its capital.

1814- John Barker Sr. was born in Andover, Massachusetts.

1816 - The State of Indiana is formed, with Corydon as its capital. Its boundaries are expanded to include a ten mile strip on the south shore of Lake Michigan, originally part of Michigan Territory.

1824 - Capital of Indiana moves to Indianapolis.

1826 - The Pottawattamie Indians cede a ribbon of land 100 feet wide from the Ohio River to Lake Michigan, for the creation of Michigan Road.

1827 - The U.S. Congress authorized the Indiana General Assembly to build Michigan road.

1832 - Michigan City is selected as the endpoint for Michigan Road, having been called "the most suitable site for a commercial town and the place the best harbor could be had" by the selection committee. A survey of Trail Creek is ordered by the state legislature.

1832 - Michigan City's first mayor, Willy Peck, is elected.

1832 - Michigan City loses its bid to be county seat to La Porte.

1832 - Daniel Webster passes through Michigan City.

1832-1833 - The first log cabin in the city is constructed by Joseph Furman for Samuel Miller at the present-day intersection of 5th and Franklin. Samuel Miller becomes the city's first permanent resident.

1833 - The plat for Michigan City is recorded at the La Porte County Courthouse. In the fall, the population of Michigan City is about 50 people.

1834 - George Ames arrives in Michigan City. Ames owned a hardware store and was a noted philanthropist.

1834 - Joseph C. Orr opens a tannery. Michigan City in the 1830s also included a blacksmith shop, a tinsmith shop, a bank, taverns, shops, and hotels. It served as an outfitting location for settlers and recreation spot for travelers.

1835-John Barker arrives from Andover, Massachusetts. Established himself in Michigan City as merchant and grain broker.

1836 - Michigan City is incorporated on February 8 and chartered on July 4. The boundaries encompass 15 square miles, making it one of the largest cities by area in the United States at the time. More than 1,500 people live in Michigan City. The state grants \$20,000 for the creation of a port at Michigan City.

1836- John Barker Sr. arrived in Michigan City. He started here as general merchant.

1837 - The first harbor light is installed.

1852 - The Michigan Central Railroad reaches Michigan City and connects the city to Eastern towns. A central depot is built for the railroad.

1852-Sherman, Haskell, Aldridge & Company, a wagon and freight car firm, is established in Michigan City, Indiana.

1855 - John Barker, Sr. buys into Sherman, Haskell, Aldridge & Company, a freight car and wagon firm.

1857 - The original Barker House, home of industrialist John Barker, is built.

1858 - The Old Lighthouse is built. The lighthouse is now the Old Lighthouse Museum, the oldest structure remaining in Michigan City.

1858-Sherman, Haskell, Aldridge & Company's name changed to Haskell & Barker. Under Barker, Sr., and his son John Barker, the Haskell and Barker factory becomes the largest manufacturing plant in Indiana.

1858 - The first Episcopal Church is completed.

1860 - Construction begins on the Indiana State Prison. The prison was completed in 1868. Charles Seely, the first warden, oversaw the construction.

1861 - The first keeper of the 1858 lighthouse, Harriet Colfax, is appointed. She operates the lighthouse for more than four decades.

1861 - The Civil War begins. Hundreds of area men join the conflict, overwhelmingly for the Union side. The area serves as a major troop shipping point and producer of war goods.

1865 - The funeral train of Abraham Lincoln passes through Michigan City on its way to Springfield, Illinois.

1865 - Greenwood Cemetery is relocated to Tilden Avenue.

1860- Haskell & Barker was producing two freight cars a day.

1869 – John Barker, Sr. retires and John H. Barker takes over his father's interest in Haskell & Barker Car Company.

1870 – First transcontinental rail passengers travel Michigan Central route through Michigan City during seven-day journey from Boston to San Francisco.

1871 - A beacon light is installed on the east pier.

1871-Haskell & Barker Car Company was incorporated.

1879- Haskell & Barker was producing one thousand cars a years.

1879 - The Michigan City Police Department is formed, replacing the town marshals (May).

1880 - The Roeske Mill is built by Christopher and August Roeske. The mill processed lumber, grist, bricks, and flour.

1883- John H Barker becomes president of the company and oversees an era of unprecedented growth for the Haskell & Barker.

1889 - Construction is completed on the present Trinity Episcopal Church, southeast corner of 6th and Franklin. The first Trinity Church was built in 1836 on Pine St. between 4th & 5th. A Gothic-style church was built on the 6th & Franklin lot in 1850.

1890s - The Hoosier Slide Sand Company, operated by William B. Manny, begins mining sand from the Hoosier Slide.

1891 - Development of Washington Park begins.

1891 - John H. Barker donates the original band stand.

1893 - Haskell and Barker purchased the property to be used as a social club for its employees. Later, it was used as a rest home and health spa.

1893 - The Winterbotham Soldier's Memorial at the entrance of Washington Park is dedicated on Decoration Day. The monument memorialized Union soldiers who died in the Civil War.

1893 - The peristyle in Washington Park is completed. The peristyle was donated by John Barker and copied after a building at the Columbian Exposition.

1895 - The Michigan City Library Association is founded.

1897 - The former Michigan City Public Library building is dedicated. The library was the result of a \$5,000 bequest in the will of George Ames. The library was built using citizen donations, including John H. Barker, who donated 1/3 of the cost. The building serves as the library until 1977.

1899 - President William McKinley speaks from his train at a rail crossing in Michigan City.

1900-1908 - Amusement area is built in Washington Park. Initially, it contains a wooden roller coaster, large carousel, Whirligig, and miniature locomotive train. Later, a Ferris Wheel, boat ride and other rides and games are added.

1904 - The original Saint Anthony Hospital is built, partially funded by a donation in the name of Mrs. John H. Barker.

1905 - The expansion of the Barker Mansion is completed. The mansion includes 38 rooms.

1907 - The Michigan City YMCA is formed as a result of a citizen meeting organized by Mr. and Mrs. John H. Barker.

1908 - The first South Shore train arrives in Michigan City from Chicago, under the name "Chicago, Lake Shore and South Bend Railroad." The first South Shore train runs between Michigan City and South Bend. The South Shore is the oldest remaining interurban train in the U.S.

1908 - A body suspected to be Belle Gunness is found in a fire at her La Porte farmhouse. The remains of at least ten bodies are found buried on her property. She is suspected of killing at least 25 people.

1909 - The Superior Courthouse and old post office are built.

1910- Spokane International 8-wheeled cabooses were built by Haskell & Barker.

1911 - The original band shell donated by John Barker is destroyed in a fire. A band stand designed by H.M. Miles is constructed and rededicated on July 6, 1911. The Michigan City Municipal Band held weekly summer band concerts at the band stand until 1978, when the amphitheater was completed.

1912 - The Michigan City YMCA facility is opened.

1913 - The biggest fire in the history of Michigan City begins in the south lumber yards of the Haskell & Barker Car Company. It burns for 10 hours over 20 acres, causing \$700,000 in damages, before it is brought under control.

1914 - The second Michigan Central Railroad depot is destroyed in a fire. A new depot is built and completed the following year. The site still functions as an Amtrak stop.

1915 - The lake front amusement grounds catch on fire, heavily damaging the roller coaster and other attractions.

1915 - The *Eastland* Disaster, the largest loss of life from a shipwreck on the Great Lakes - An excursion ship named the *S.S. Eastland* is commissioned to take the families of Western Electric Company workers from Chicago to Michigan City for a picnic. The overloaded ship rolls over while tied to the dock in the Chicago River, killing 844 passengers.

1915 - The Life-Saving Station is adopted into the U.S. Coast Guard.

1917 - The United States enters World War I. More than 2,000 Michigan City men register for service. A total of 30 Michigan City men are killed in action, in training, or as a result of the pandemic flu outbreak during the conflict.

1917 - The Michigan Central Railroad Repair Shops, employer of hundreds of skilled laborers, moves from Michigan City to Niles, Michigan.

1920 - The Dunes Highway, the shortest direct route between Detroit and Chicago at the time, is approved by the state.

1920 - Warren G. Harding meets with political leaders at the Vreeland Hotel prior to the Republican Convention, at which he is nominated for President.

1920-1924 Twenty-two new factories, including Weil-McLain, Hoosier Factories, Jamar-Ruby, and Steel Fabricating, open in Michigan City during a time of great economic growth.

1920s - Sheridan Beach Hotel is constructed.

1922 - The Tivoli Theater opens at the site of the Grand Opera House, showing films for a nickel.

1922 - The Lakeview Casino opens in Washington Park. It includes table games, slots, an entertainment hall, and an eatery.

1922 - The Masonic Temple is built.

1922 - Haskell & Barker merges with the Pullman Company, which is later called Pullman-Standard.

1924-Catherine Barker established the Barker Welfare Foundation.

1924 - John Lloyd Wright builds his house and studio in Long Beach. He designed many Long Beach and other area properties.

1925 - The Chicago, Lake Shore and South Bend Railroad is bought in receivership by Samuel Insull and organized as the Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railroad.

1925 - The Warren Building is completed.

1926 - World War I "doughboy" monument in Washington Park is dedicated on Armistice Day, November 11, 1926. The Service Star Legion War Mothers conducted a fundraising drive to erect the monument.

1927 - The Eleventh Street Station for the South Shore Line opens. The two-story building cost more than \$200,000 to complete. It has a terra-cotta facade and neoclassical design. The station was the longest lasting storefront urban depot, closing in 1986. The building is still standing.

1927 - The Oasis Ballroom opens in the building of the Lakeview Casino, which went out of business. The ballroom retains the desert oasis theme of the casino. It was one of the largest dance halls in the Midwest, holding in excess of 2,400 people. Many top entertainers performed at the Oasis, including Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Tommy Dorsey, and Lawrence Welk. After the big band era was over, a game center was added to the building to try to capitalize on the pinball craze.

1928 - The Washington Park Zoo is built. It expands throughout the 1930s with the assistance of WPA workers. The WPA built Monkey Island in 1934 and the Zoo Castle in 1937, along with other installations.

1929 - Stock market crashes.

1929 - John Dillinger is imprisoned for almost a year at Indiana State Prison. A few years later, he is credited with facilitating the escape of ten inmates.

1929 - NIPSCO begins construction on the generating plant at the site of the former Hoosier Slide, once a 200-foot sand dune that had been mined for 30 years for glassmaking. The plant is completed around 1931.

1930-1937 The Civilian Conservation Corps, Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and Works Progress Administration (federal programs employing people during the Great Depression) renovates and restores Washington Park. Workers build lakefront walls, many installations at Washington Park Zoo, the Washington Park Observation Tower, gardens, tennis courts, parking lots, picnic areas, and more.

1933 - The lighthouse gets electricity and an electronic foghorn.

1934 - Amelia Earhart visits Michigan City to speak in support of the city's new airfield.

1934 - A mass tree planting takes place in Washington Park on Arbor Day. Many of these trees still grace the park today.

1934-The Michigan City plant became the Haskell & Barker Shops of Pullman-Standard.

1935 - The first Indiana Days festival is held. An estimated 200,000 people visited the city during the 1935 Indiana Days celebration.

1936 - International Friendship Gardens opens. It was built by the Stauffer brothers, a trio of master gardeners whose exhibit at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair inspired the garden.

1936 - Michigan City donates land for the construction of an armory, to be built by the WPA.

1937 - The Engineer's castle and observation tower in Washington Park Zoo are dedicated.

1938 - The Michigan City News and Evening Dispatch are consolidated into the News-Dispatch.

1939 - U.S. Coast Guard takes over servicing the lighthouse.

1939 - Construction of the Naval Armory, designed by John P. Parrish and Ben H. Bacon, is completed. It is part of the 9th Naval District until 1965, when the Navy deactivates its Naval Reserve in Michigan City. Ships assigned to the Armory included the USS Hawk, USS Sacramento, and HSS Havre.

1939 - Ames Field is completed. The first high school football game played at the field resulted in a Red Devils loss to Chicago Parker, 7-0.

1940 - Washington Park's Midway, including games and concessions, is added.

1940 - Babe Ruth makes a guest appearance with the Michigan City Cubs, a semi-professional baseball team that played in Ames Field throughout the 1940s.

1940 -The Old Lighthouse is closed.

1941 - Ninth Naval Reservists aboard the USS Sacramento leave Michigan City for the Hawaiian Islands to serve as defense patrol. The ship and its crew are present during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

1941 - The United States enters World War II. Ninety-nine Michigan City men are killed in action during the war. Michigan City citizens contributed \$18 million in war bonds.

1941 - Workers at Michigan City's prosperous Pullman-Standard plant go on strike to secure union representation.

1943- During WWII, the Haskell & Barker works built twenty-four thousand troop sleeper for the United States military. These were the first passenger cars built by Haskell & Barker since the late 1850s.

1945 - A fire erupts in the south yards of Pullman-Standard, destroying a shed and 22 new cars and causing \$125,000 in damage.

1947- The Haskell & Barker built the first modern assembly line to produce the PS-1 steel box car that became the standard for railroads.

1947-The first PS-1 box car came off the line at Haskell & Barker shops of Pullman-Standard.

1948-Catherine Barker Hickox deeded the Barker Mansion to Purdue University to be used as a educational center in Michigan City.

1950s - The decade marks the end of large ferry service to Michigan City. Throughout the preceding 50 years, ferries such as the *Theodore Roosevelt*, *Eastland*, *Missouri*, and *United States* brought hundreds of thousands of visitors a year to the city.

1950 - The Korean War begins. Over the next three years of the conflict, 10 Michigan City men are killed in action.

1956 - The Michigan City White Caps, a New York Giants affiliate in the Midwest League, are formed. They play for four seasons before dissolving. Notable players included Juan Marichal, Manny Mota, Jose Tartabull, and Matty Alou.

1956 - Michigan City native and New York Yankee Don Larsen pitches the only perfect World Series baseball game in history.

1956 - The Cargill grain elevator at the harbor is built.

1957 - Michigan City is the site of the first official Miss Indiana Pageant, held in the Tivoli Theater.

1959 - The Smith Brothers Cough Drop Factory closes.

1959 - Midwest Steel constructs a \$100 million mill at Burns Harbor.

1959 - Michigan City Port Authority is formed.

1962 - A court injunction blocks the renewal of the lease for Washington Park's amusement area, stating that public property could not be leased for private use. The Oasis Ballroom and amusement area at Washington Park are demolished.

1963 - Work begins on the building of Bethlehem Steel mill, the largest steel mill in the world at the time.

1965 - Michigan City is named an All-America City by the National Municipal League.

1965 - Heisman Harbor, a 30-acre marina, is developed.

1965 - Building begins at Purdue North Central. The campus opens in 1968.

1965 - South Shore Railroad is purchased by Chesapeake and Ohio Railway.

1965 - Plans for Marquette Mall are unveiled. Sears, J.C. Penney, and other retailers move from downtown to the new shopping center.

1965 - The U.S. commits troops to the conflict in Vietnam. Many Michigan City men serve bravely as troops.

1968- The Barker Mansion and property were returned to the Barker Welfare Foundation, once the Purdue North Central Campus were established.

1968 - Senator Robert Kennedy visits Michigan City and speaks at the courthouse.

1968 - Saint Anthony Hospital is expanded, culminating in the opening of a new five-story building on January 10.

1969 - The peristyle in Washington Park is demolished.

1970 - The Pullman-Standard factory closes on December 18, after more than 1,000 workers had been laid off.

1970 - Construction begins on the new NIPSCO generating plant and cooling tower.

1970-The death of Catherine Barker Hickox. She is laid to rest at Greenwood Cemetery at the Barker family plot.

Written summer 2015 by intern Keri Jakubowski. Sources available upon request.