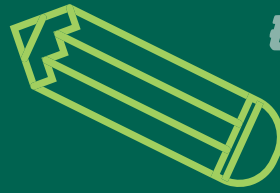




TROY HISTORIC VILLAGE

where history lives



ECONOMY



PIONEERS



Our



Oakland



Community



ECOSYSTEM



CIVICS



Introduction

You live in the state of Michigan, in its southeast **region**. Your community is in the **county** of Oakland. Oakland County contains 62 cities, **townships**, and **villages**. About 1,200,000 people live here! We have the second-largest **population** in Michigan, after our neighbor Wayne County, which has the largest.

Oakland's largest cities, by population, include Troy, Farmington Hills, Rochester Hills, Southfield, Pontiac, Royal Oak, and Novi.

The county's **government** is based in the city of Pontiac.

Oakland County was organized back in 1820, when Michigan was a **territory** and not yet a state.

Wayne County, where the big city of Detroit is located, **borders** Oakland County to the south. Macomb County borders Oakland to the east.

Many communities in Oakland are **urban and suburban**, with a lot of people who live in houses or apartments. Other Oakland communities are **rural**, where there are farms, open land, and fewer people.

Woodward Avenue is one of the main roads that may be near your community. It starts in Detroit and goes into Oakland County. It was named after Judge Augustus B. Woodward, who planned this road and a few others, after a fire in Detroit in 1805.

Another major road in our county is Telegraph Road, which was completed in 1926. It was named for the telegraph, a machine for communicating invented in the 1800s, before there were telephones.

Other main roads and highways in Oakland County include the Lodge Freeway, Lapeer Road, Eight Mile, I-75, M-59 and Southfield Freeway.

Questions

Write the name of your community here:

In what state do you live?

In what county do you live?

Name three cities in your county.

Circle which word you think goes in the sentence below.

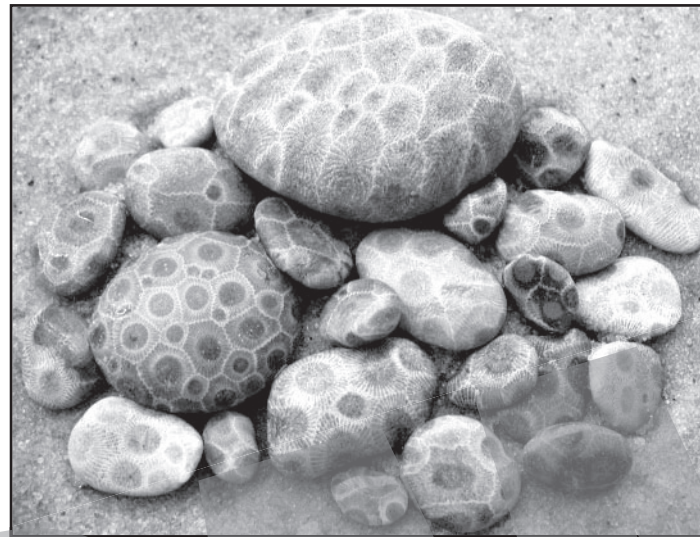
urban suburban rural

I think my community is _____.

What Geography Can I Find In Oakland County?

Oakland County is one of 83 counties in the State of Michigan. Michigan is in the Great Lakes region of North America. Nearly 1/5 of the world's surface freshwater is found here.

It wasn't always like this. Petoskey Stones are Great Lakes fossils that tell of a time when saltwater oceans covered this area. Scientists say this was about 350 million years ago!



Petoskey Stones are fossils of coral, an ocean animal.

Tens of thousands of years ago huge sheets of ice called glaciers covered all of Canada and parts of the northern United States, including Michigan. At one time, the land around your home and school was buried under two miles of ice! As the glaciers moved, they carved and shaped the land below them. Rivers and lakes were made as the glaciers melted. Mounds of rock and soil left by the glaciers created the land and hills that form our state.

In north and western Oakland County we find many hills and lakes today. The south and eastern parts are much flatter. Natural areas have woods with trees, bushes, grasses, and flowers. Oakland County has meadows, plains, and beaches, but no mountains.

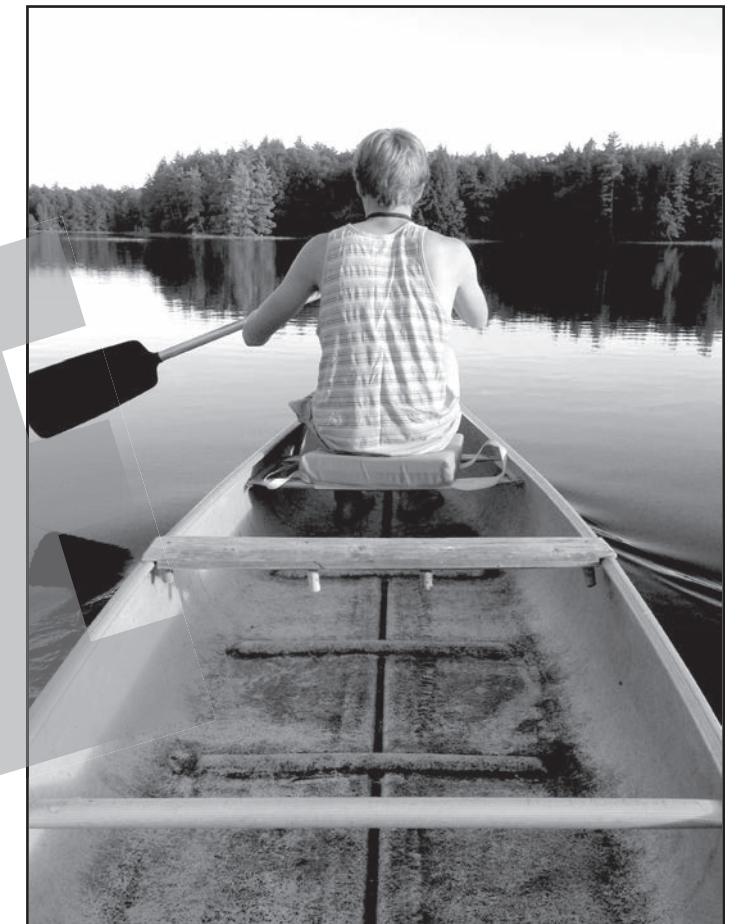
There are three major rivers in Oakland County: the Clinton River, Huron River, and Rouge River. Rouge is a French word meaning "red."

The Clinton River flows from Oakland County into Macomb County by Yates Cider Mill. The Clinton River travels for many miles through marshes, forests, farmland, cities, and parks. As the river makes its journey, the Clinton River flows through urban and suburban areas before reaching Lake St. Clair.

Our community is a playground for boating, fishing, paddling, swimming and hiking. It is made of thousands of lakes, ponds, wetlands, coldwater brooks and streams.

The largest lakes are Cass Lake, Orchard Lake, and Pontiac Lake, but there are over 350 smaller ones! Many communities are named after lakes like White Lake and Walled Lake.

People enjoy fishing, swimming and boating at the many lakes and parks like Kensington, Stony Creek, Independence Oaks, Bald Mountain and Proud Lake.



Why Did People Come Here?

American Pioneers

Cheap, **fertile** land and good transportation to and from the East made the Michigan **Territory** a good place to settle. Many of the earliest settlers in Oakland County were farmers from New York who came because they could buy inexpensive land in Michigan. Land in New York was selling for \$5 or \$6 an **acre** - pretty expensive back then!

In 1820 the United States government passed a law that allowed people to buy land in territories from the federal government for \$1.25 an acre- much less expensive than New York. For \$100 a man could buy an 80-acre farm. This does not seem like much money today, but in 1820 a man worked an entire day, from sunrise until dark, for 30 to 50 cents. It took many families over a year to save \$100.

It took early **pioneers** one or two months to reach Oakland County from New York, traveling by wagon and then steamboat across Lake Erie. But in 1825 the **Erie Canal** was opened. It greatly improved transportation from New York to Michigan. Now settlers could complete the same journey in two weeks using the Erie Canal! Farmers in Michigan could also ship their products back East on the canal **barges**.

Canal barges did not have engines or sails. They were pulled by horses or mules that walked along a path next to the canal.

