

FRONTIER TO FREEDOM HITS THEATERS JUNE 5TH

The origin story of Michigan to celebrate America250.

GRAND RAPIDS, MI, UNITED STATES, June 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Manitou Films is announcing the official theatrical release of Frontier to Freedom. The film will open at Celebration Cinema, Emagine Entertainment, and independent theaters across Michigan beginning June 5th, 2026. Tickets are available at frontiertofreedom.com and your local box office.



Frontier to Freedom

Frontier to Freedom is a historical documentary feature film that unearths the rich and often overlooked history of Michigan, tracing its evolution from a vast, untamed wilderness inhabited by Indigenous peoples in 1600 to its emergence as the 26th State in 1837. Through a blend of expert interviews, archival imagery, animated maps, and stunning visuals, the film explores the region's formative years, its history of war and conflict on the American frontier, and the complex socio-political forces that shaped its path to statehood.

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Our goal is to reinspire patriotism and civic engagement in generations of Michiganders by telling the origin story of our great state in a bold and truthful documentary.”

Director Keith Patterson

Manitou Films, a Grand Rapids-based film and television production company produced Frontier to Freedom to celebrate the America250. The film's underwriters include America250MI, The Americana Foundation, The Order of

the Founders and Patriots of America, The Meijer Foundation, WGVU Public Media, The George Washington Endowment Foundation, The Frey Foundation, Centennial Securities, and the Daniel and Pamella DeVos Foundation. Fiscal Sponsorship was provided by The Michigan Society Sons of the American Revolution and WGVU Public Media.

About Manitou Films

Manitou Films is dedicated to illuminating Michigan's rich narratives through powerful storytelling, captivating visuals, and a commitment to preserving the state's cultural heritage for future generations. Keith Patterson founded Manitou Films in 2022 with the purpose of producing world-class documentary feature films and series like *Frontier to Freedom*, *Beer City, USA*, *The Spirit of Sleeping Bear Dunes*, and *The Light and the Deep: Shipwrecks and Lighthouses of the Great Lakes*. Keith previously worked in Los Angeles for 15 years and served as a producer and post-production supervisor on scripted television series for ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, the CW, USA, Lifetime, E!, ABC Family, Nat Geo, and Disney XD, and Manitou Films was the recipient of the 2024 State History Award for Media from the Historical Society of Michigan.

Quotes from our *Frontier to Freedom* Underwriters:

"The founding of the United States was nothing short of miraculous, but the full story is far more complex than many of us realize. Even though Michigan was not one of the original 13 colonies, our region played a significant role in shaping the nation's early history. There are chapters that inspire pride—and others that may surprise or even shock us. This story deserves to be told, and WGVU is proud to bring *Frontier to Freedom* to public media audiences across the country," - Jim Rademaker, General Manager of WGVU Public Media

"From concept to a grant-supported documentary, Keith Patterson's journey shows what thoughtful public investment in history can achieve. This powerful documentary, *Frontier to Freedom*, was funded through the America250MI History Grant program. This is exactly the kind of project America250MI was created to champion—work that interprets, preserves, and explores Michigan's rich history, delivers lasting impact, and aligns with our 5 Guiding Themes. We're thrilled by what Keith has accomplished and wish him and Manitou Films continued success!" - Robert Doran-Brockway, Program Director of America250MI

"*Frontier to Freedom* brings Michigan's early history to life by sharing not only well-known narratives but also the stories and perspectives of Indigenous nations, African American communities, and other voices too often left out of traditional narratives. The film invites audiences to understand Michigan's path to statehood—and the ideals of freedom and self-determination—from a place of depth and honesty. We are proud to have contributed to the thoughtful, inclusive storytelling in this film that helps to broaden understanding of Michigan's early history." - Kathryn Buckner, President and CEO of The Americana Foundation

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