Michigan Central Station Through The Years

Michigan Central Station framework, circa 1913. Michigan Central Railroad had bought 50 acres of land in Detroit’s Corktown neighborhood after the downtown depot – located at Third and Jefferson – could no longer accommodate railroad’s growing business. The first train left the station for Saginaw and Bay City on Dec. 26, 1913; that same day, the first train arrived from Chicago. Courtesy of Detroit Historical Society

A postcard depicting Michigan Central Station’s concourse, circa 1915. One year later, President Theodore Roosevelt visited Michigan Central Station. Three years later, and one day after his death, Detroit city council named the park in front of the station Roosevelt Park. Roosevelt was the first of several presidents to visit. Others included Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936 and Harry S. Truman in 1948. Courtesy of Detroit Historical Society

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A postcard depicting Michigan Central Station, circa 1955. At its peak, trains bustled in and out of the station and served approximately 4,000 customers per day. Courtesy of Detroit Historical Society

A crowded lunch counter inside Michigan Central Station in 1959. Courtesy of Detroit Historical Society

Michigan Central Station in 1973. The 1970s brought many changes to the station. In 1971, the federal government formed Amtrak, which took over Michigan Central Station. Amtrak spent $1 million to re-open the waiting room in 1975, the same year MCS was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Courtesy of Detroit Historical Society
Two ticket windows inside Michigan Central Station in 1980. The 1980s marked the last full decade of use at the train station. In 1985, Conrail announced it would try to sell the station (or abandon it) and New York-based Kaybee Corp. buys station on the 72nd anniversary of its opening – Dec. 27, 1985. Then, on Jan. 5, 1988, Train No. 353, bound for Chicago, was the last train out of the depot. Courtesy of Detroit Historical Society

Michigan Central Station, present day. In recent years, it was used as the backdrop for movies, including “Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice” in 2016, “8 Mile” in 2002 and “Transformers” in 2007. Courtesy of Detroit Historical Society

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