



# Chronology

- 1469: Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon marry, uniting the Kingdom of Spain under one crown.
- 1488: Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias sails around the Cape of Good Hope, opening the Asian spice trade to Portugal.
- 1492: Christopher Columbus, exploring for Spain, makes the first landfall of his voyage to the New World on the island now known as San Salvador in the Bahamas.
- 1494: The Treaty of Tordesillas establishes a line of demarcation that runs north to south through the Atlantic Ocean, with Spain receiving rights to all newly discovered land to the west of the line and Portugal earning possession of land east of the line.
- 1497: John Cabot's expedition from England reaches Canada, making Cabot the first European to visit the region since the Vikings.
- 1519: Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés departs on his expedition to Mexico, where he conquers the Aztec Empire for Spain.
- 1520: Mayan Emperor Moctezuma dies while in the custody of Hernán Cortés.
- 1521: The expedition of Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan circumnavigates the globe. Magellan himself does not survive the voyage.
- 1534: Jacques Cartier, exploring for the French, lands in Newfoundland.
- King Henry VIII of England forms the Anglican Church, spurring the Reformation in England.
- 1535: Francisco Pizarro founds the city of Lima near the coast of Peru.
- 1542: Bartolomé de Las Casa presents to the Spanish royal court *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, his treatise on the mistreatment of Native Americans by the Spanish.
- 1570: The Iroquois League adopts a constitution, establishing a participatory democracy.
- 1584: An expedition from England backed by Sir Walter Raleigh lands in Virginia. Efforts to colonize in Roanoke fail.
- 1587: A second doomed expedition to settle the Roanoke colony arrives in Virginia.
- 1588: England defeats the Spanish Armada, curbing Spain's plans to invade.
- 1603: Samuel de Champlain of France sets sail for Canada.
- 1607: The Jamestown colony, the first permanent British settlement in North America, is founded.
- 1608: Captain John Smith leads the Jamestown colony through early crises with disease and encounters with natives.
- 1609: Henry Hudson, exploring for the Dutch, navigates the river in the American Northeast that would later bear his name.
- 1619: Dutch slave traders bring the first African slaves to the Jamestown colony.
- The House of Burgesses, the first legislature in the British colonies, is established in Jamestown.
- 1620: English Puritans embark on a voyage to the New World aboard the *Mayflower*.
- 1636: Providence becomes the first British settlement in the New World to welcome people of all religious convictions.

- 1637: Anne Hutchinson is tried for heresy in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.
- 1660: England's Parliament passes the second Navigation Act, stating that American colonists can only export certain goods to England and imposing duties on those goods.
- 1675: King Philip's War breaks out between the Wampanoag natives and the colonists of the Plymouth settlement.
- 1676: Nathaniel Bacon Jr. rebels against the administration of Sir William Berkeley, the governor of Jamestown colony.
- 1681: William Penn founds the Pennsylvania colony as a "religious experiment."
- 1686: English King James II forms the Dominion of New England to consolidate authority over the New England colonies by abolishing colonial legislatures.
- 1688: King James II is deposed—and the Dominion of New England is rescinded—when the Glorious Revolution puts William III and Mary II on the throne.
- 1691: A new charter is drawn for the Massachusetts colony, reducing Puritan legal authority.
- 1693: Hysteria over witches in Salem, Massachusetts, leads to more than 185 people being charged with witchcraft, twenty of whom are executed.
- 1735: Newspaper publisher John Peter Zenger is acquitted of libeling the governor of New York colony, William Cosby.
- 1754: The French and Indian War begins over a territorial dispute in the Ohio Valley.
- 1763: The French and Indian War ends with the Treaty of Paris, which cedes all French land east of the Mississippi River to Britain.
- 1764: The British Parliament passes the Sugar Act, raising penalties for smuggling sugar and other goods.
- 1765: Parliament passes the Stamp Act, a tax on newspapers, legal documents, and printed materials.  
The Quartering Act requires that colonists provide housing and supplies for British soldiers.
- 1766: On the same day the Stamp Act is repealed, Parliament passes the Declaratory Act, a law asserting Parliament's power to impose statutes and taxes upon the colonies.
- 1767: Parliament passes the Townshend Acts, a series of taxes levied on products exported to the colonies from England.
- 1770: British soldiers fire into a crowd of protesters, killing five and wounding six others, in what comes to be known as the Boston Massacre.
- 1773: England's Parliament passes the Tea Act, giving the British East India Company a monopoly on tea sold in the colonies.  
Colonists disguised as Native Americans destroy a tea shipment in Boston Harbor in protest of the Tea Act.
- 1774: Parliament passes the Coercive Acts, designed to punish Massachusetts after the Boston Tea Party.  
The First Continental Congress is held in Philadelphia.
- 1775: Battles at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, mark the beginning of hostilities in the American Revolution.  
The Second Continental Congress convenes to discuss issues of war and independence.  
The Second Continental Congress selects George Washington to command the Continental Army.
- 1776: Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* is published, calling for independence from Britain and a more democratic system of government.  
The Second Continental Congress culminates in the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.
- 1777: The Marquis de Lafayette of France volunteers to fight with the Continental Army against the British.
- 1780: General Benedict Arnold's conspiracy to surrender the military fort at West Point is foiled.
- 1781: The Articles of Confederation are adopted by the Continental Congress.  
British forces under General Charles Cornwallis surrender at Yorktown, effectively ending hostilities in the Revolutionary War.
- 1783: Britain recognizes the independence of the United States by signing the Treaty of Paris, officially ending the Revolutionary War.
- 1785: The Continental Congress passes the Northwest Ordinance, which allows for expansion of settlements northwest to the Great Lakes.

1786: Daniel Shays leads an armed rebellion in western Massachusetts, protesting taxes imposed by the state legislature.

1787: The Constitutional Convention convenes in Philadelphia for the purpose of replacing the Articles of Confederation.

The series of essays known as the Federalist Papers is published in various New York newspapers.

1789: George Washington is unopposed in the first presidential election.

Alexander Hamilton becomes the first secretary of the Treasury.

1790: Statesman Benjamin Franklin dies in Philadelphia at the age of eighty-four.

1791: The first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, called the Bill of Rights, are ratified.

1792: George Washington is reelected president of the United States.

1794: Farmers in western Pennsylvania take up arms against federal excise taxes in the Whiskey Rebellion.

1796: Vice President John Adams defeats Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson in the first contested presidential election in American history.

1797: French agents solicit bribes from American envoys in what comes to be known as the XYZ Affair.

1798: The Federalist-controlled U.S. Congress passes the Sedition Act, granting the president broad powers to suppress criticism of the government.

1799: Congress passes the Logan Act, which prevents private citizens from negotiating with foreign governments.

1800: Thomas Jefferson defeats John Adams in the presidential election of 1800.

1802: Journalist James T. Callender reveals that President Thomas Jefferson fathered children with Sally Hemings, Jefferson's slave.

1803: The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Marbury v. Madison*, which sets forth the doctrine of judicial review.

The Louisiana Purchase treaty is ratified by Congress, nearly doubling the size of the United States for the price of \$15 million.

1804: The Twelfth Amendment changes the procedure for presidential elections so the pres-

idential runner-up is no longer awarded the vice presidency.

President Thomas Jefferson sends Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on an expedition of the newly acquired Louisiana Territory.

Alexander Hamilton is killed in a duel with Vice President Aaron Burr.

President Thomas Jefferson wins reelection.

1807: Aaron Burr is arrested for treason for his plot to invade the Louisiana Territory.

1808: James Madison is elected the fourth president of the United States.

1812: The U.S. Congress declares war on Britain, initiating the War of 1812.

1814: New England Federalists gather in Hartford, Connecticut, to protest the War of 1812.

The War of 1812 ends with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent.

1816: James Monroe wins a landslide victory over Federalist Rufus King.

1819: Spain sells Florida to the United States in the Treaty of Adams-Onís.

The U.S. Supreme Court decides the seminal free speech case *Schenck v. United States*.

The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *McCulloch v. Maryland*. The decision both defends the power of the federal government to engage in banking and curtails the state's ability to tax a federal entity.

The financial Panic of 1819 is caused by an economic downturn following the end of the Napoleonic Wars and a concurrent increase in loan foreclosures.

1820: Congress negotiates the Missouri Compromise, which allows for territorial expansion of the United States while maintaining the balance of power between northern and southern states.

1823: President James Monroe outlines his foreign policy with regard to Latin America and the Caribbean, later known as the "Monroe Doctrine."

1824: The U.S. Supreme Court decides the landmark case of *Gibbons v. Ogden*, which determines that transportation across state lines cannot be restricted by state laws.

- 1825: John Quincy Adams wins the contested election of 1824, after the decision is thrown to the House of Representatives due to an electoral college deadlock among four candidates.
- 1828: Andrew Jackson, the father of the Democratic party, defeats incumbent John Quincy Adams in the presidential election.  
John C. Calhoun is reelected as vice president, joining George Clinton as the only vice presidents to serve under two different presidents.
- 1830: The Indian Removal Act authorizes federal involvement in forced resettlement of Native Americans.
- 1831: The majority of Andrew Jackson's cabinet, including Vice President John C. Calhoun, resign as a result of the Eaton Affair.  
Nat Turner leads a slave rebellion in Virginia that claims the lives of fifty-five white men, women, and children over the course of a single day.
- 1834: Antonio López de Santa Anna declares himself dictator of Mexico.
- 1835: John Marshall, the longest sitting and most influential chief justice in U.S. Supreme Court history, dies.
- 1836: The Republic of Texas declares its independence from Mexico.  
William B. Travis, leader of the Texas independence movement, dies during the siege of the Alamo.  
The "gag rule" is imposed in the House of Representatives, prohibiting debate or discussion regarding the abolition of slavery.  
The Whig Party, dedicated to opposing the political philosophies of Andrew Jackson, participates in its first national election.  
Vice President Martin Van Buren, Andrew Jackson's handpicked successor, wins the presidency.
- 1837: The Panic of 1837 is caused by rampant inflation and a lack of hard currency in circulation.
- 1840: French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville completes his treatise on the American government and politics, *Democracy in America*.
- 1841: William Henry Harrison dies of pneumonia one month after his inauguration as president, making him the first president to die in office.  
John Tyler succeeds William Henry Harrison as president. Within five months, Tyler's Whig cabinet resigns in protest of Tyler's Democratic policies.
- 1844: Little-known candidate James K. Polk defeats Whig Henry Clay in the presidential election.
- 1845: Journalist John L. O'Sullivan of the *Democratic Review* coins the term "Manifest Destiny" with regard to the nation's westward expansion.  
*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* is published.
- 1848: The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends the Mexican-American War.  
Women's rights activists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organize the Seneca Falls Convention, which serves as the birthplace of the American women's suffrage movement.  
War hero Zachary Taylor defeats Lewis Cass in the presidential election.
- 1849: Henry David Thoreau's treatise on civil disobedience is published under the name "Resistance to Civil Government."
- 1850: Vice President Millard Fillmore assumes presidency after Zachary Taylor dies of gastroenteritis.  
In order to facilitate California's statehood, a series of laws, collectively known as the Compromise of 1850, is passed to appease both north and south and maintain the balance of power.
- 1852: Abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is published, galvanizing the U.S. antislavery movement.  
Democratic candidate Franklin Pierce decisively defeats Whig Winfield Scott in the presidential election.
- 1854: The Kansas-Nebraska Act allows residents of Kansas and Nebraska to decide by popular vote whether slavery will be allowed in their territories.  
The Republican Party forms in response to the Kansas-Nebraska Act.
- 1856: Representative Preston Brooks beats Senator Charles Sumner unconscious in the Senate chamber after Sumner insults one of Brooks's relatives, Senator Andrew Butler, during an antislavery speech.

- Democrat James Buchanan defeats Republican John C. Fremont in the presidential election.
- 1857: The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, which invalidates the Missouri Compromise and maintains that slaves are not U.S. citizens and therefore do not have the right to sue in court.
- A variety of factors—the end of the Crimean War, the failure of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company, and the sinking of the merchant ship *Central America*—spark the Panic of 1857.
- 1860: The Democratic Party splinters in opposition to Republican Abraham Lincoln, presenting two presidential candidates—southerner John C. Breckenridge and northerner Stephen A. Douglas.
- Abraham Lincoln wins the presidential election. By the time of his inauguration, seven states have seceded from the Union in protest.
- 1861: Seceding states South Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi establish the Confederate States of America.
- Confederate troops attack Fort Sumter, commencing hostilities in the Civil War.
- The first U.S. income tax is passed to help pay for the Civil War.
- 1863: Riots and racial lynching break out in New York City in opposition to the Civil War draft.
- 1864: Congress passes the National Banking Act to raise money to help fund the Union Army during the Civil War.
- 1865: General Robert E. Lee surrenders the Army of Northern Virginia, marking the end of major hostilities in the American Civil War.
- Vice President Andrew Johnson succeeds Abraham Lincoln after Lincoln's assassination by John Wilkes Booth.
- The Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery in the United States, is ratified.
- 1866: The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Ex parte Milligan*, ruling that civilians cannot be tried by military courts.
- 1867: The United States purchases Alaska from Russia.
- 1868: President Andrew Johnson is impeached by Congress over the dismissal of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. The attempt to remove him from office fails by a single vote.
- The Fourteenth Amendment, granting freed slaves U.S. citizenship and overturning a key ruling of *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, is ratified.
- Civil War hero Ulysses S. Grant wins the presidential election by a landslide.
- 1870: The Fifteenth Amendment, granting freed male slaves the right to vote, is ratified.
- 1872: In an act of civil disobedience in support of women's suffrage, Susan B. Anthony is arrested for attempting to cast a ballot in the presidential election.
- 1873: The Comstock Act, a piece of federal anti-obscenity legislation, bans the delivery of contraceptives or "lewd and/or lascivious books" across state lines or by the U.S. Postal Service.
- 1874: Blanche Bruce becomes the first African-American elected to serve a full term in the U.S. Senate.
- 1876: Chief Sitting Bull leads the Sioux to victory over the forces of General George Armstrong Custer in the Battle of Little Bighorn.
- 1877: The contested 1876 election between Rutherford B. Hayes and Samuel Tilden is resolved in Hayes's favor, with an informal compromise that ends Reconstruction in the South.
- President Rutherford B. Hayes sends troops to break up a multistate railroad strike.
- 1880: Republican James A. Garfield wins the presidential election.
- 1881: James A. Garfield is assassinated by a disappointed office-seeker. Chester A. Arthur succeeds Garfield, whose death draws attention to the evils of the so-called spoils system.
- 1882: The Chinese Exclusion Act, a law restricting immigration from China and denying citizenship to Chinese residents in the United States, becomes law.
- 1883: The Civil Service Commission is established to oversee government hiring based on merit rather than the spoils system.
- The U.S. Supreme Court rules that the Civil Rights Act of 1875 is unconstitutional, curtailing federal enforcement of the Fourteenth Amendment.

- 1884: Grover Cleveland becomes the first Democrat to win the presidency since the Civil War.
- 1887: The Interstate Commerce Commission is established to prevent unfair business practices by railroad companies.
- 1888: Benjamin Harrison defeats Democratic incumbent Grover Cleveland, despite trailing Cleveland in the popular vote.
- 1890: The first federal immigration station is established at Ellis Island in New York Harbor.  
The Sherman Antitrust Act becomes law.
- 1892: Grover Cleveland becomes the first president to win nonconsecutive terms of office, defeating incumbent Benjamin Harrison.
- 1893: The stock market crash known as the Panic of 1893 sends the nation into an economic depression.
- 1894: Jacob S. Coxey leads a march on Washington by unemployed laborers and farmers, who came to be known as “Coxey’s Army.”  
Grover Cleveland dispatches troops to suppress the Pullman strike in Chicago.
- 1896: The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which permitted laws that provided for “separate, but equal” facilities for African-Americans.  
Republican William McKinley defeats William Jennings Bryan in the presidential election.
- 1898: The explosion of the USS *Maine* in Havana harbor triggers the four-month Spanish American War.
- 1901: The Socialist Party of America is founded.  
President William McKinley is assassinated at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. Vice President Theodore Roosevelt succeeds McKinley.
- 1902: President Theodore Roosevelt announces his corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, proclaiming the United States’ right to military intervention in Latin America as “the exercise of an international police power.”
- 1903: President Theodore Roosevelt announces the Square Deal, his platform of social and economic reforms.  
After a U.S.-backed revolution grants Panama independence from Colombia, Panama agrees to the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty with the United States, giving the United States control of the Panama Canal Zone in perpetuity.
- 1904: Incumbent Theodore Roosevelt defeats Democratic candidate Alton B. Parker in the presidential election.
- 1905: W. E. B. Du Bois and other African-American leaders found the Niagara Movement to pursue an aggressive civil rights agenda.
- 1906: Theodore Roosevelt is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating peace between Japan and Russia.
- 1908: The Department of Justice’s Bureau of Investigation, later renamed the Federal Bureau of Investigation, is established to enforce federal law.  
William Howard Taft defeats Democratic candidate William Jennings Bryan in the presidential election.
- 1909: The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is founded.
- 1912: Theodore Roosevelt is denied the Republican nomination and runs for reelection as a third-party candidate, establishing the National Progressive Party, also known as the Bull Moose Party.  
Democratic candidate Woodrow Wilson wins the presidential election with only 41 percent of the popular vote, as Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft split Republican support.
- 1913: The Seventeenth Amendment to the constitution is ratified, requiring direct election of senators and members of Congress.  
Alice Paul and Lucy Burns establish the National Woman’s Party, dedicated to the passage of a women’s suffrage amendment to the federal constitution.
- 1914: World War I begins in Europe.  
The Federal Trade Commission is established to regulate trusts and to prevent deceptive trade practices.
- 1916: Incumbent Woodrow Wilson wins reelection over Republican Charles Evans Hughes.
- 1917: The United States enters World War I after months of German attacks on American ships.
- 1918: The global influenza epidemic reaches the United States, killing 195,000 Americans.

1919: The Eighteenth Amendment is ratified, starting the Prohibition period in the United States.

The League of Nations is formed by the Treaty of Versailles, which ends World War I.

1920: The Nineteenth Amendment, granting women the right to vote, is ratified.

Warren G. Harding defeats James M. Cox in the presidential election.

1921: Former President William Howard Taft is named chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

1923: Vice President Calvin Coolidge becomes president after Warren G. Harding's dies from a sudden illness.

1924: Robert M. La Follette abandons the Republican Party to run for president on the ticket of the new Progressive Party.

Republican incumbent Calvin Coolidge wins the presidential election.

1925: The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Gitlow v. New York*, which extends the protections of the Bill of Rights to the states.

1928: Herbert Hoover wins a landslide presidential victory over New York Governor Alfred E. Smith.

1929: The Black Tuesday stock market crash triggers the Great Depression.

1930: Drought begins in the southeast and spreads over the Great Plains, leading to the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.

1931: The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Near v. Minnesota*, ruling that the government cannot prevent publication of materials by the press.

1932: Approximately twenty thousand World War I veterans march in Washington, D.C., seeking early payment on a cash bonus the government was scheduled to pay them in 1945.

New York Governor Franklin Roosevelt defeats Republican incumbent Herbert Hoover in the presidential election.

The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Powell v. Alabama*, establishing the right to counsel in criminal cases.

1933: Frances Perkins is appointed secretary of labor, becoming the first woman to hold a cabinet-level post.

Prohibition ends with the ratification of the Twenty-First Amendment.

1934: The Federal Communications Commission is established to regulate wire and radio communications.

1935: The Works Progress Administration is established to relieve high unemployment during the Great Depression.

The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States*, invalidating portions of the National Industrial Recovery Act.

The Social Security Administration is created.

1936: Incumbent President Franklin Roosevelt wins reelection by a landslide over Alfred M. Landon.

1937: President Franklin Roosevelt threatens to pack the Supreme Court with new appointees to counteract the court's resistance to the New Deal.

Hugo Black is appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court by Franklin Roosevelt.

1938: The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) is formed.

1940: Franklin Roosevelt becomes the first president to be elected to office three times, defeating Wendell Willkie.

1941: A Japanese attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii brings the United States into World War II.

1942: President Franklin Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, granting the military the authority to begin the internment of Japanese Americans.

1944: The GI Bill of Rights passes through Congress, providing education, job training, and home loan assistance for American soldiers returning from World War II.

Franklin Roosevelt is elected to his fourth consecutive term as president, defeating Republican Thomas Dewey.

The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Korematsu v. United States*, which upholds the military's authority to intern Japanese Americans.

1945: President Franklin Roosevelt dies of natural causes and is succeeded by Vice President Harry Truman.

President Harry Truman orders atomic bombs to be dropped on the Japanese

cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan surrenders, ending World War II.

The Senate ratifies the United Nations charter.

1946: Eleanor Roosevelt becomes the first chairperson of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

The Employment Act of 1946 is passed amid fears that the return of American soldiers from abroad will cause an economic depression.

1947: The Central Intelligence Agency is created by the National Security Act of 1947.

1948: Executive Order 9981 bans discrimination in the armed forces.

Incumbent Harry Truman defeats Thomas Dewey in the presidential election.

1950: Alger Hiss is found guilty of perjury after having allegedly provided classified documents to *Time* magazine editor Whittaker Chambers.

Senator Joseph McCarthy announces in Wheeling, West Virginia, that he is in possession of a list of communist infiltrators in the U.S. State Department, beginning the period of anticommunist hysteria known as McCarthyism.

North Korea invades South Korea, igniting the Korean War.

1952: General Dwight D. Eisenhower defeats Democratic nominee Adlai Stevenson in the presidential election.

1953: Julius and Ethel Rosenberg are executed for their role in passing nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union.

The Korean War Armistice Agreement is reached, ending the Korean War.

Earl Warren is appointed Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

George C. Marshall receives the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in the European Recovery Program, also known as the Marshall Plan.

1954: The U.S. Supreme Court decides the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, requiring the desegregation of public schools.

1955: Rosa Parks is arrested for failing to surrender her seat to a white man on a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama, igniting a series of boycotts and protests.

1956: William Brennan is appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

South Vietnam, with military support from the United States, declares independence, setting the stage for the Vietnam War.

Incumbent President Dwight D. Eisenhower wins reelection, again defeating Adlai Stevenson.

1958: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is created.

Fidel Castro leads a successful revolution against U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar in Cuba.

1960: Senator John F. Kennedy defeats incumbent Vice President Richard M. Nixon in one of the closest presidential elections of the twentieth century.

1961: The U.S.-supported Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba fails.

The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Mapp v. Ohio*, extending the exclusionary rule to apply to all state prosecutions.

1962: In response to the deployment of Soviet nuclear weapons in Cuba, the United States initiates a naval blockade, a series of events known as the Cuban Missile crisis.

1963: President John F. Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson succeeds Kennedy as president.

1964: The U.S. Supreme Court rules on the case of *New York Times v. Sullivan*, changing the rules regarding what constitutes libel in statements made by the media about public figures.

The Gulf of Tonkin incident leads to escalation of the Vietnam War.

The Food Stamp Act of 1964, part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society" agenda, is approved by Congress.

The Warren Commission issues its final report on the John F. Kennedy assassination.

Incumbent Lyndon B. Johnson defeats Barry Goldwater in a landslide presidential election.

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. receives the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership in the American Civil Rights movement.

The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States*, the first major test of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

1965: Black Muslim leader Malcolm X is assassinated in New York City.

The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Griswold v. Connecticut*, affirming married couples' right to privacy in the bedroom.

Congress creates the Medicaid and Medicare health care programs, furthering President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" agenda.

Ralph Nader publishes *Unsafe at Any Speed: The Designed-In Dangers of the American Automobile*, bringing automotive safety to public attention.

1966: The U.S. Supreme Court case *Miranda v. Arizona* requires that criminal suspects be informed prior to questioning of their right to legal counsel and their right to remain silent.

1967: The Twenty-Fifth Amendment, establishing the procedure for replacing the president or vice president of the United States in the event that either office is unoccupied, is ratified.

The U.S. Department of Transportation is formed, consolidating authority over the national highway system, automotive and airline safety, and other transportation policy issues.

Thurgood Marshall becomes the first African-American justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Black Panther party leader Huey P. Newton is shot in a gun battle with police and charged with manslaughter in the death of a white police officer.

1968: Civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, sparking riots in cities across the United States.

George C. Wallace receives substantial support for his independent run for the presidency but still falls a distant third to Democrat Hubert H. Humphrey and winner Richard M. Nixon.

1969: The U.S. Supreme Court upholds the "fairness doctrine" as constitutional in the case of *Red Lion Broadcasting Co. v. Federal Communications Commission*.

Warren Burger is appointed chief justice of the Supreme Court.

1970: The Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) is signed into law as part of an effort to control organized crime in America.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act is signed into law.

The Clean Air Act of 1970 shifts primary responsibility for air quality control from the states to the federal government.

1971: The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, which finds that public funding of parochial schools violates the separation of church and state.

The U.S. Supreme Court rules that efforts to stop publication of the Pentagon Papers in the *New York Times* violated the First Amendment.

1972: The Equal Rights Amendment, establishing equal rights for women under law, passes through Congress. Over the next decade the amendment will fall three votes short of ratification.

J. Edgar Hoover dies, ending forty-seven years as head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits gender discrimination by institutions of higher education that receive federal funds.

Five men, later revealed to be agents of the Richard M. Nixon administration, are caught attempting to break into the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee at the Watergate Hotel Complex.

The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Furman v. Georgia* severely limits the death penalty's use based on the Eighth Amendment.

1973: The Drug Enforcement Administration is established to consolidate the government's narcotics control efforts.

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* strikes down state laws that restrict women's access to abortions.

1974: The U.S. Supreme Court rules against President Richard M. Nixon's request for "executive privilege," whereby Nixon claimed tape recordings of conversations he had with staffers in the Oval Office should be considered confidential.

Under threat of impeachment due to the Watergate scandal, Richard M. Nixon resigns as president of the United States and is succeeded by Vice President Gerald Ford.

Less than a month after taking office, President Gerald Ford issues a full pardon toward former President Richard M. Nixon, immunizing Nixon from any prosecution in the Watergate scandal.

The Internet is invented by scientists with the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA).

1976: The U.S. Supreme Court upholds limits on donations to political campaigns in *Buckley v. Valeo*.

Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter defeats Republican incumbent Gerald Ford in the presidential election.

1977: The Department of Energy is established by Congress.

1978: The Federal Emergency Management Agency is created by executive order.

Congress passes the Ethics in Government Act, which allows for the appointment of an impartial, nonpartisan independent counsel to investigate and prosecute illegal acts by high-level government officials.

The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *City of Philadelphia v. New Jersey*, ruling that a state may not restrict importation of waste from other states.

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* finds that affirmative action by the use of racial quotas is unconstitutional.

1979: A reactor malfunction at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant results in the most serious mishap ever in the U.S. commercial nuclear power industry.

Islamic extremists take sixty-three Americans at the U.S. Embassy in Iran hostage.

1980: Former California Governor Ronald Reagan defeats incumbent Democrat Jimmy Carter in the presidential election.

1981: President Ronald Reagan is shot in an assassination attempt by a mentally disturbed man.

The first cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) are identified in the United States.

Sandra Day O'Connor becomes the first female justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

1982: The federal budget deficit exceeds \$100 billion for the first time in history.

The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Nixon v. Fitzgerald*, which upholds presidential immunity for official actions.

1983: The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Bob Jones University v. United States*, which denies tax-exempt status to private colleges with racially discriminatory practices.

1984: Incumbent President Ronald Reagan wins a landslide electoral victory over former Vice President Walter Mondale.

1986: An independent counsel is appointed to investigate the Iran-Contra scandal.

1987: Alan Greenspan is named head of the Federal Reserve.

The District of Columbia Circuit Court decision in *Meredith Corporation v. FCC* finds that the government could discontinue enforcement of the Fairness Doctrine without legislative intervention.

The U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Cipollone v. Liggett Group, Inc.* that the federally mandated health warning on cigarette packages does not immunize cigarette manufacturers from being sued under state personal-injury laws.

1988: Incumbent Vice President George H. W. Bush wins the presidential election over Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis.

1989: The U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Texas v. Johnson* that burning the American flag is protected as free speech.

The federal government bails out the savings and loan industry at taxpayer expense exceeding \$100 million.

1990: The U.S. Supreme Court decides the case of *Cruzan v. Director, Missouri Department of Health*, upholding the actions of the state of Missouri to maintain life support for a woman in a persistent vegetative state.

The Iraqi military invades and conquers Kuwait, initiating U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf War.

1992: Businessman Ross Perot uses his own fortune to fund his presidential candidacy as an independent. Although Perot does not

win a single electoral vote, he does capture nearly 19 percent of the popular vote.

Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton defeats incumbent George H. W. Bush in the presidential election.

*1994:* The North American Free Trade Agreement, which removes trade barriers among the United States, Canada, and Mexico, is implemented.

Independent counsel is appointed to investigate President Bill Clinton's involvement in the Whitewater real estate venture.

Before the midterm election Republicans propose a slate of reforms they call the "Contract with America"; the Republicans go on to take a majority in the House of Representatives for the first time in forty years.

*1995:* Ross Perot founds the Reform Party in anticipation of a second presidential bid.

A budgetary impasse in Congress causes the federal government to shut down many nonessential services for four weeks.

*1996:* Incumbent President Bill Clinton defeats Republican candidate Bob Dole in an electoral landslide.

*1998:* The impeachment trial of President Bill Clinton ends in acquittal.

*2000:* In one of the closest presidential elections in American history, Texas Governor George W. Bush defeats Vice President Al Gore after the U.S. Supreme Court stops the recounting of votes in Florida.

*2001:* On September 11th, terrorist hijackers fly commercial airliners into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and into the Pentagon, outside Washington, D.C.

The Department of Homeland Security is established in response to the terrorist attacks.

The United States invades Afghanistan after the Taliban government refuses to surrender the persons responsible for planning the attacks.

Congress passes the Patriot Act, granting the government broad powers to investigate and prosecute those suspected of terrorism.

*2003:* The United States invades Iraq, based on false reports that the Iraqi government is producing and stockpiling nuclear weapons.

*2004:* Incumbent George W. Bush defeats Massachusetts Senator John Kerry in the presidential election.

*2005:* The Kyoto Protocol on global warming goes into effect. The treaty, which the United States helped negotiate, is never submitted to the U.S. Congress for ratification.

Hurricane Katrina sweeps across the Gulf Coast, causing great damage in Mississippi and Louisiana, particularly in the city of New Orleans.

House Majority Leader Tom Delay is indicted in Texas of illegal campaign practices.

*2006:* The population of the United States exceeds three hundred million for the first time.

The Democratic Party takes control of both houses of Congress in the midterm elections. Representative Nancy Pelosi becomes the first female Speaker of the House.

Former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein is executed in Iraq for crimes against humanity.

*2007:* Massachusetts becomes first state to enact a universal health coverage plan.