1000 Leif Ericson sails to the east coast of North America.
1492 OCTOBER 12. Christopher Columbus lands in the Bahamas.
1607 Colonizers establish first permanent English settlement at Jamestown, Virginia.
1619 JULY 30. House of Burgesses, America’s first elected legislature, meets at Jamestown.
1620 Mayflower Compact establishes government by majority will in the Massachusetts settlement of Plymouth.
1636 OCTOBER 28. America’s first college, Harvard, is founded at Cambridge, Massachusetts.
1647 Massachusetts School of Law lays foundation for free public education.
1754 French and Indian War begins. At war’s end in 1763, France cedes Canada and upper Ohio valley to Britain.
1774 SEPTEMBER 5. First Continental Congress opens in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, “to consult upon the present unhappy state of the colonies.”
1775 APRIL 19. First shots of American war for independence are fired at Lexington, Massachusetts.
1776 JULY 4. The 13 colonies declare Independence from Britain.
1778 FEBRUARY 6. France enters into a military alliance with the United States.
1781 OCTOBER 17. General Cornwallis surrenders British army at Yorktown, Virginia, to combined Franco-American forces, under command of George Washington.
1786 AUGUST 15. Shays’ Rebellion of debt-ridden farmers begins after Massachusetts legislature adjourns without heeding their petitions.
1787 MAY 25. Constitutional Convention meets in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to revise Articles of Confederation, the compact among states governing the newly independent nation. New Constitution is adopted by delegates on September 17.
1789 FEBRUARY 4. George Washington is elected first president.
1791 First 10 amendments, the Bill of Rights, are added to the U.S. Constitution.
1793 Eli Whitney invents cotton gin to separate seeds from cotton.
1794 Congress passes first postal service law.
1800 Thomas Jefferson is elected third president.
1803 Supreme Court, in Marbury v. Madison, asserts right to declare laws unconstitutional.
* Purchase of Louisiana Territory from France doubles U.S. land area.
1804 Lewis and Clark expedition starts exploring the northwest territories of the Louisiana Purchase.
1807 Robert Fulton makes first successful steamboat trip.
1812 War of 1812 against Britain begins. U.S. wins series of naval battles but fails in attempts to invade Canada. British burn Capitol and White House in August 1814.
1818 United States and Great Britain agree on unfortified border between Canada and United States.
1819 United States buys Florida from Spain.
1820 MAY 3. Missouri Compromise passes Congress. Maine enters Union as free state. Slavery allowed in Missouri but prohibited west of Mississippi River and north of 36° 30’ latitude.
1823 Monroe Doctrine asserts opposition to future colonization of American republics by European nations.
1825 Erie Canal opens connecting Great Lakes to Hudson River and Atlantic Ocean.
1828 Andrew Jackson is elected 7th president.
* First U.S. passenger railroad is begun.
* Noah Webster publishes American Dictionary of the English Language.
1833 Hussey reaper, followed by McCormick reaper in 1834, revolutionizes harvesting of grain crops.
1836 Texas wins independence from Mexico; is admitted as a state to the Union in 1845.
1839 Charles Goodyear discovers process for vulcanization of rubber.
1844 Samuel F.B. Morse sends first telegraph message from Washington, D.C., to Baltimore, Maryland.
1846 Mexican War begins. Treaty signed in 1848 cedes American Southwest and California to the U.S.
1851 Herman Melville publishes Moby Dick.
1854 Republican Party formed in Wisconsin.
* Kansas-Nebraska Act voids Missouri Compromise, leaves issue of slavery in territories to settlers.
1855 Walt Whitman publishes Leaves of Grass.
1857 MARCH 7. Dred Scott decision by the Supreme Court holds that Congress cannot bar slavery from territories, nor can black slaves be citizens.
1860 Abraham Lincoln is elected 16th president.
* DECEMBER 20. South Carolina, rapidly followed by six other southern states, secedes from Union in reaction to election of Lincoln, who opposes extension of slavery into western territories. These seven southern states organize the Confederate States of America.
1861 APRIL 12. First guns are fired in Civil War at Union installation at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, over question of southern states’ right to secede from the Union.
1862 Law establishes land-grant colleges in each state for benefit of agriculture and the mechanical arts.
2023 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2020 Election results first American to accept a Nobel Prize for Economics.
2019 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2018 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2017 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2016 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2015 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2014 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2013 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2012 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2011 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2010 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2009 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2008 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2007 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2006 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2005 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2004 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2003 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2002 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2001 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
2000 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1999 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1998 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1997 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1996 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1995 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1994 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1993 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1992 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1991 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1990 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1989 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1988 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1987 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1986 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1985 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1984 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1983 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1982 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1981 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1980 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1979 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1978 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1977 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1976 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1975 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1974 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1973 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1972 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1971 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1970 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1969 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1968 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1967 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1966 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1965 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1964 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1963 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1962 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1961 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1960 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1959 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1958 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1957 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1956 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1955 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1954 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1953 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1952 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1951 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1950 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1949 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1948 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1947 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1946 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1945 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1944 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1943 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1942 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1941 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1940 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1939 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1938 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1937 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1936 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1935 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1934 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1933 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1932 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1931 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1930 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1929 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1928 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1927 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1926 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1925 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1924 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1923 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1922 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1921 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1920 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1919 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1918 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1917 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1916 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1915 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1914 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1913 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1912 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1911 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1910 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1909 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1908 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1907 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1906 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1905 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1904 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1903 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1902 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1901 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1900 President Donald J. Trump is elected.
1945 APRIL 12. Roosevelt dies of cerebral hemorrhage. He is succeeded as president by Vice President Harry S. Truman. 
* MAY 7. Nazi forces surrender, ending war in Europe. 
* JUNE 26. United Nations Charter is signed by United States and 49 other nations in San Francisco, California. 
* AUGUST 6. Atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima and, three days later, on Nagasaki in Japan. 
* AUGUST 15. Japan surrenders, ending war in Asia.

1946 JULY 4. Philippines given independence by U.S. 
* U.S. representative to U.N. Atomic Energy Commission, Bernard Baruch, presents plans for International Atomic Development Authority to control entire field of atomic energy.

1947 JUNE 5. Secretary of State George C. Marshall proposes aid for economic recovery of war-torn Europe, over the next four years, Congress authorizes some $12,000 million dollars for the Marshall Plan.

1948 NOVEMBER 2. Harry Truman is elected president in an unexpected victory.
* Soviet Union blockades land routes to West Berlin; Allies airlift food, fuel and other supplies to largest German city during 10 months, 16 days of blockade.

1949 United States, Canada and Western European nations form North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to provide mutual military aid if any member is attacked.

1950 JUNE 27. United States and other members of United Nations send troops to fight on behalf of the Republic of Korea against attack by North Korea.

1951 SEPTEMBER 8. Japanese Peace Treaty is signed by 49 nations in San Francisco, California, formally ending the war with Japan.
* DECEMBER 20. First electric power is obtained from nuclear reactor.

1952 Dwight D. Eisenhower's election as president restores Republican Party to office for first time in 20 years.

1953 JULY 27. Armistice to end fighting in Korea is signed following year-long talks.

1954 Anti-polio vaccine is developed by Dr. Jonas Salk. Vaccination of 30 million children in 1955 produces dramatic decreases in polio outbreaks.
* U.S. Supreme Court rules segregation of races in public schools unconstitutional, reversing Plessy v. Ferguson decision (1896).

1955 DECEMBER. Year-long bus boycott begins in Montgomery, Alabama, protesting segregation of city buses: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., emerges as civil rights leader.

1956 President Eisenhower is reelected.


1958 JANUARY 31. United States orbits its first satellite, Explorer I.

1959 APRIL 25. St. Lawrence Seaway opens.

* APRIL 12. U.S. launches first weather satellite, Tinos I.

1961 Peace Corps is established.
* MAY 5. Astronaut Alan B. Shepard, Jr., makes first manned U.S. space flight.

1962 FEBRUARY 20. Astronaut John H. Glenn, Jr., is first American to orbit earth.
* Soviet Union withdraws offensive missiles from Cuba after President Kennedy warns that attack from Cuba on any Western Hemisphere nation would bring full U.S. retaliation.

1963 MAY. Mercury manned space flight program continues with successful earth-orbital flights.

1963 JUNE 1. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights leader and winner of Nobel Peace Prize, is fatally shot in Memphis, Tennessee.

1966 Unmanned Surveyor spacecraft successfully soft-lands on moon.

1967 Three astronauts die in fire during ground test of Apollo spacecraft.
* JULY. Large-scale urban rioting breaks out in ghettos of Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan.


1969 NOVEMBER 2. Richard Nixon is elected 37th president.

* Bureau of Census figures show U.S. population at 203,255,298.