

The times of the colonies

1607: English colons settled (*s'installèrent*) in Jamestown, **Virginia**, and started to produce **tobacco**, exported to England. **Pocahontas**, an Indian princess, assisted them, married an English settler and traveled to London where she died.

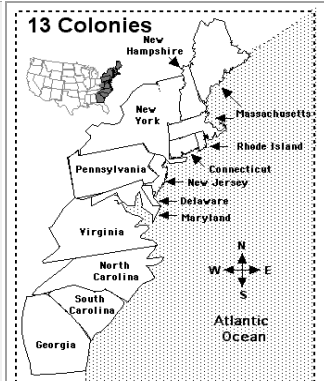
1620: English Protestant Puritans, better known as the **Pilgrims** (*Pélerins*), sailed (*voguèrent*) to America on the **Mayflower** and established the Plymouth colony in present-day **Massachusetts**. They were escaping the **religious persecutions** of the **Established Church of England**. The Native-Americans helped them survive and they celebrated together the first **Thanks-giving**.



Mayflower

17th century, 18th century: A wave of **migration** brought 4 million people to America, essentially from **Great Britain** and also from other European countries. Their goals were to make profits through **trade** or to escape religious or political **persecutions** at home. Hundreds of thousands **Africans** were also forced to become **slaves** in America through the **triangular trade** between the three continents.

The first settlements became **thirteen** colonies: (from north to south) New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia.



The American Revolution

From the **1760s**, the American colons started to feel that the British authorities did not give them all their rights, especially that the colons paid taxes but did not elect Members of Parliament. They denounced this as “**Taxation without representation**”.

In **1773**, a group of American settlers dumped a cargo of tea from a British ship into the Boston harbor, to protest against British taxes. This is known as the **Boston Tea Party**.



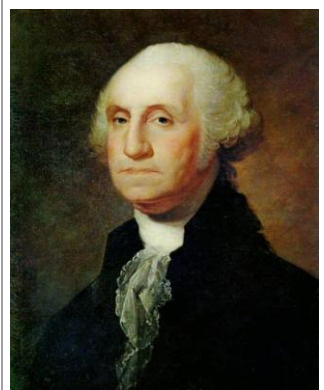
Boston Tea Party

1775: beginning of the **American Revolutionary War** or **American War of Independence**. American revolutionaries started to oppose armed resistance to the British governors.

1776, July 4th: a **Declaration of Independence**, written primarily by **Thomas Jefferson**, was signed, transforming the thirteen British colonies into United States of America. It also expressed American ideals: “*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that **all men are created equal**, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain **unalienable Rights**, that among these are **Life, Liberty** and the **Pursuit of Happiness**.*”

1781: The American Continental army, headed by General **George Washington** and helped by French troops led by Lafayette, defeated the British troops in Yorktown, Virginia.

1783: The Treaty of Paris put an official end to the war, giving formal **independence** to the United States of America.



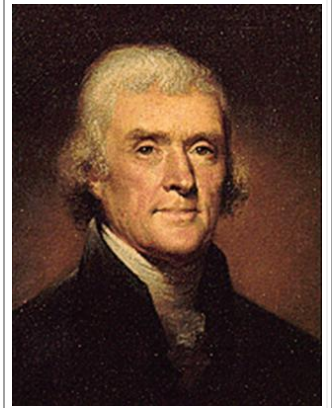
George Washington

1787: A **Constitution** was adopted by the Constitutional Convention in **Philadelphia**, Pennsylvania, and later ratified by conventions in each state:

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

1791: The first ten amendments, known as the **Bill of Rights**, came into effect. Their main proponent was **Thomas Jefferson**. The goal was to protect the basic principles of human liberty, which were not mentioned in the constitution.

First Amendment *"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the **freedom of speech**, or of the **press**; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."*



Thomas Jefferson

The end of slavery

1787: Slavery was **prohibited** in the territories **north of the Ohio River** through the Northwest Ordinance (also known as the Freedom Ordinance) under the Continental Congress.

Refugees from slavery fled (*fuyait*) the South across the Ohio River (extension of the Mason-Dixon line) to the North via the Underground Railroad.

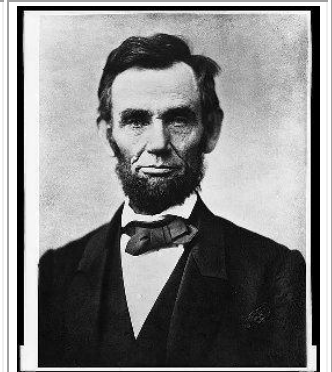
1808: The **importation of slaves** into the United States was **banned**; but not the internal slave trade, nor involvement in the international slave trade externally.



Mason-Dixon line

1861: **Abraham Lincoln**, who was against slavery, became President. Consequently, eleven **Southern slave states** declared their **secession** from the United States and formed the **Confederate States of America** (the Confederacy) and fought against the United States (the **Union**). This was the beginning of the **American Civil War**.

1863: Lincoln issued (*publia*) an **Emancipation Proclamation** which proclaimed **freedom for slaves** within the Confederacy as soon as the Union Army arrived, thus abolishing slavery where it still existed.



1865: In April, the **Union** forces **defeated** the **Confederate** army. In December, **slavery** was completely **abolished** with the ratification of the **13th Amendment**. This was the first of three Reconstruction Amendments to the United States Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment (1865) abolished slavery. The Fourteenth Amendment (1868) included the Privileges or Immunities Clause, Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses. The Fifteenth Amendment, (1870) grants **voting rights** regardless of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude".

1865: in December was created the original **Ku Klux Klan** in the immediate aftermath of the American Civil War.



The Frontier and Native Americans

1787: The Northwest Ordinance officially organized the **Northwest Territory** for white settlement. American settlers began colonizing the region. Native American armies first defeated the U.S. army, but then were defeated and Native Americans had to cede modern-day Ohio and part of Indiana to the United States.

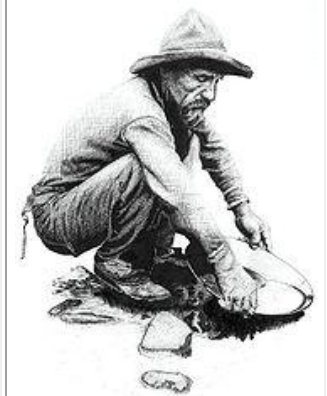
1803: Louisiana Purchase that is to say acquisition by the United States of America of the French territory Louisiana stretching from the Gulf of Mexico in the south to Canada in the north, and from the Mississippi River in the east to the Rocky Mountains in the west, thus doubling the size of the United States. This made possible the **Lewis and Clark Expedition** (1804–1806), which was the first overland expedition undertaken by the United States to the Pacific coast and back.



Louisiana Purchase

1830: Passage of the **Indian Removal Act**, which President Andrew Jackson signed into law. The Removal Act did not order the removal of any American Indians, but it authorized the President to negotiate treaties that would exchange tribal land in the east for western lands that had been acquired in the Louisiana Purchase. Numerous Indian Removal treaties were signed, which led to the relocation of many Native American tribes west of the Mississippi. This culminated in the **Trail of Tears** in the winter of 1838-39, when four thousand Cherokees died of cold and exhaustion (*épuisement*) during their journey from North Carolina to Oklahoma.

1848: Gold Rush to California, attracting gold seekers (*chercheurs d'or*), nicknamed "forty-niners" (as a reference to 1849), to the western state along the California Trail or via the ocean. This was considered as an example of **America's Manifest Destiny**, to overspread (*se répandre sur*) and to possess the whole continent given by Providence.



Gold prospector

1861: The **continental telegraph** is completed between the east and the west coast.

1867–68: William Frederick Cody earned the nickname "**Buffalo Bill**" by killing 4,860 American Bison (commonly known as buffalo) in eight months, thus contributing to the systematic slaughter (*massacre*) of this animal, on which Native Americans depended for their survival.

1869: The **transcontinental railroad** is completed reducing a cross-country trip from about four months to one week.

1876-77: The **Great Sioux War** was conducted by the Lakota under Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse in the Wyoming Territory. One of its famous battles was the **Battle of the Little Bighorn**, in which combined Sioux and Cheyenne forces defeated the 7th Cavalry, led by General Custer.



1890: End of the **Indian Wars** at the **Massacre of Wounded Knee** where some 200 Sioux were killed by the U.S. 7th Cavalry Regiment.

The Rise to World Power

1892: The **Immigrant Station of Ellis Island** opened in New York Harbor, next to the Statue of Liberty, and was to be the place where 12 million immigrants from the Old World would be accepted into the U.S. until 1954. The peak year was 1907 with more than one million immigrants passing through its gates.

1898: The **Spanish–American War** in which the United States victoriously helped indigenous people in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippine archipelago struggle (*se battre*) for independence from the Spanish Empire. The U.S. thus started to extend its influence over Latin America and the Pacific Ocean, becoming a de facto empire.

1917-18: After originally pursuing a policy of **isolationism**, the U.S. entered the **First World War** against Germany, essentially because of the sinking of its merchant ships by German submarines. It strongly contributed to the victory of the Allied forces. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson was very active in the creation of the **League of Nations** (*Société des Nations*), an international organism that the U.S., paradoxically, never joined.

1920: The manufacture, sale, import and export of alcohol were prohibited by the Eighteenth Amendment. This indirectly led to the rise of organized crime as typified by Chicago's Al Capone. The Twenty-first Amendment repealed this "**Prohibition**" in 1933.

1924: The **American Immigration Act** limited immigration from countries whose immigrants already represented 2% of the total U.S. population. Thus, the massive influx of Europeans was seriously slowed through this system of quotas. What's more, Asians and citizens of India were prohibited from immigrating altogether.

1929: On October 29, also known as **Black Tuesday**, stock prices on Wall Street collapsed. The events in the United States added to a worldwide depression, later called the **Great Depression**, which put millions of people out of work across the world throughout the 1930s.

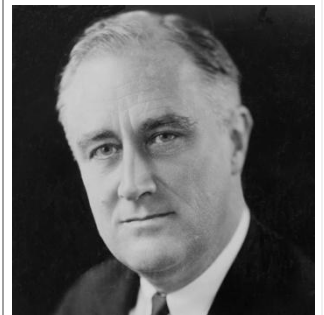
1933: Franklin D. Roosevelt became President, and started a New Deal policy with the goals of what historians call the 3 Rs, of giving **Relief** to the unemployed and badly hurt farmers, **Reform** of business and financial practices, and promoting **Recovery** of the economy during the Great Depression.

1941: **Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor** on December 7. Roosevelt immediately asked for and received a **declaration of war** against **Japan**. **Germany** subsequently declared war on the United States. The nearly total mobilization of the US economy to support the war effort caused a rapid **economic recovery**.

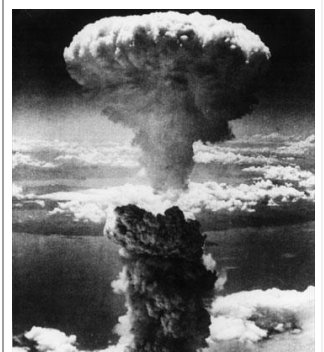
1945: May 8, Allies formally accepted the unconditional **surrender** (*rédition*) of the armed forces of **Nazi Germany** and the end of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich. In mid August 1945, the United States dropped **two nuclear weapons on Japan**. The **Empire of Japan** surrendered and ended World War II.



Ellis Island in 1905



Franklin D. Roosevelt



The Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement

1950-53: The **Korean War** was a military conflict between the Allied forces led by the United States in support of the Republic of Korea against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its communist allies, the Soviet Union, and China. It was the first significant armed conflict of the **Cold War**. It ended with an armistice that has kept Korea divided until today.

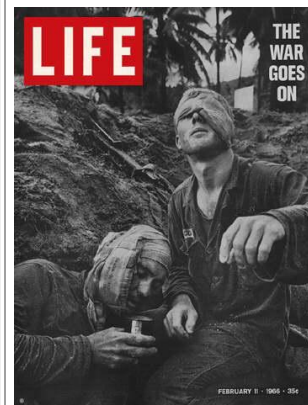
1959-75: The **Vietnam War** was a Cold War military conflict that occurred in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The war was fought between the communist North Vietnam, supported by its communist allies, and the government of South Vietnam, supported by the United States and other anti-communist nations. It ended with the victory of communist North Vietnam, after the withdrawal (*retrait*) of American forces who had suffered the loss of many soldiers. It was considered a defeat by many Americans, and created a **trauma** in the nation, especially as an anti-war movement denounced the U.S. involvement.

1955: **Rosa Parks**, an African American woman, was arrested for refusing to surrender her seat to a white person in a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. This created the **Montgomery Bus Boycott** which intended to oppose the city's policy of racial segregation on its buses. It ended in 1956 when a United States Supreme Court decision declared the Alabama and Montgomery laws requiring segregated buses to be unconstitutional. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, the leader of the movement, became famous nationally.

1964-65: Passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned discrimination in employment practices and public accommodations; the Voting Rights Act of 1965, that restored and protected voting rights. In 1964, **Martin Luther King, Jr** was awarded the **Nobel Prize for Peace**.

In **1966**, after several successes in the South, King and others in the civil rights organizations tried to spread the movement to the **North**, with **Chicago** as its first destination. They denounced the discreet **segregation** between blacks and whites applying for a **house** in select neighborhoods. They organised marches but they met violent reactions, that led some to write that they received a worse reception than they had in the South. King was even hit by a brick during one march. Housing segregation would be banned in 1968 with the **Fair Housing Act**.

1968: King went to **Memphis**, Tennessee in support of the black garbage collectors (*éboueurs*), who had been on strike (*grève*) since March 12 for higher wages and better treatment. In one incident, black street repairmen received pay for two hours when they were sent home because of bad weather, but white employees were paid for the full day. King was shot while he was standing on his motel's second floor balcony. Two months after King's death, escaped convict **James Earl Ray** was captured and confessed to the assassination before recanting (*nier*). The real reasons behind King's assassination remain a mystery.



Arrest of Rosa Parks

