

MARCH 1776-2026 AMERICA 250

THIS MONTH IN AMERICAN HISTORY

-  **March 5, 1770**
British soldiers kills five colonists in the Boston Massacre.
-  **March 31, 1774**
The British pass the Boston Port Act, closing Boston Harbor.
-  **March 23, 1775**
Patrick Henry delivers his "Give Me Liberty" speech.
-  **March 17, 1776**
British army evacuates Boston.
-  **March 1, 1781**
Articles of Confederation are ratified.
-  **March 6, 1836**
Fort Alamo falls to Mexican troops.





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Greenbacks—named for their color—were the first U.S. national currency.

-  **March 10, 1862**
First U.S.-issued paper money is circulated.
-  **March 1, 1872**
Yellowstone National Park established.
-  **March 25, 1911**
Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire.
-  **March 1, 1917**
Zimmermann Telegram publishes in U.S. newspapers helping to shift U.S. public opinion toward entering World War I.


-  **March 31, 1917**
U.S. takes control of Virgin Islands.
-  **March 18, 1925**
The Tri-State Tornado, the deadliest in U.S. history hits Missouri, Indiana and Illinois.


-  **March 1, 1932**
The high-profile kidnapping of Charles Lindbergh Jr. leads to new federal anti-kidnapping law enforcement powers.


-  **March 2, 1955**
Claudette Colvin refuses to give up her bus seat, which along with Rosa Parks' refusal later, challenged bus segregation.

-  **March 1, 1961**
President John F. Kennedy signs an order creating the Peace Corps.

-  **March 7, 1965**
"Bloody Sunday" in Selma, Alabama.

-  **March 31, 1968**
Amid the Vietnam War, President Lyndon B. Johnson announces he will not seek reelection.

-  **March 22, 1972**
Equal Rights Amendment passes both chambers of Congress. Measure not ratified until 2020.

-  **March 28, 1979**
A partial nuclear meltdown at Three Mile Island alters U.S. nuclear and energy policy debates.

-  **March 30, 1981**
President Ronald Reagan is shot.

-  **March 19, 2003**
U.S. begins attack in Iraq to topple Saddam Hussein.

MASSACRE ROILS COLONISTS

Series of events, propaganda birthed revolution

CNHI News

Many colonists in America were already simmering against British Parliament when an angry mob and a group of seven soldiers sparked one of the pivotal moments in American history.

At the end of the Seven Years War in 1763, England had doubled its national debt due to military spending and taxed the North American colonies to increase national income.

Boston leaders, such as James Otis Jr. and Samuel Adams, wanted to control duties on imports to the town without Parliament-imposed taxes.

The fight over taxes and representation led to violent outbreaks in the streets between Bostonians and royal customs officials.

The British sent soldiers to occupy Boston in response to the violence starting in 1768.

The evening of March 5, 1770, was frigid and a light snow covered the streets and walkways, forcing colonists and soldiers indoors for a time.

Colonists, almost as if signaled, took to the streets and, in multiple places throughout Boston, came into conflict with British soldiers.

The greatest conflict was on King Street.

A mob surrounded, surrounded Private Hugh White, who had been standing guard outside the Custom



National Archives

The bloody massacre perpetrated on King Street in Boston on March 5, 1770, by a party of the 29th Regiment is portrayed in this 1770 engraving by Paul Revere. The sensationalized engraving, showing the British as the aggressors against the colonist mob, was used as American propaganda to increase anti-British sentiment.

House. The mob hurled insults and objects at White and the guard called for reinforcements.

The incident escalated, a single shot was fired, then the soldiers fired a volley into the crowd. It prompted the mob to disperse but five colonists were killed.

The Boston Massacre, as it became known, incited many Americans to revolution, aided by propaganda created by Paul Revere portraying the massacre as an act of British aggression.

A few years later, on Dec. 16, 1773,

the Sons of Liberty held the Boston Tea Party, destroying cargo from three ships. The act prompted the British to devise and implement coercive acts.

The first coercive act was the Boston Port Act, passed March 31, 1774, which closed Boston Harbor and united the colonies against British rule.

Nearly a full year later, on March 23, 1775, Patrick Henry delivered a dramatic speech to the Second Virginia Convention, a delegation whose members included Founding Fathers

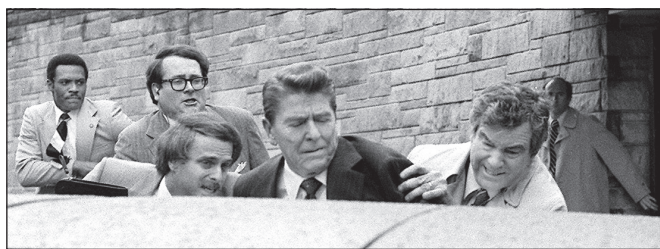
George Washington, Richard Henry Lee and Thomas Jefferson.

The speech defending his call to arms against the British ended with the famous line, "I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

The moment prompted Virginia to arm its militia to defend America against the British.

Less than a month later, the shot heard 'round the world was fired, starting the Battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts, and launching the American Revolution.

HINCKLEY SHOOTS REAGAN



The Associated Press file photo

U.S. President Ronald Reagan, center, is shown being shoved into the president's limousine by secret service agents after being shot outside a Washington hotel on March 30, 1981.

CNHI News

As President Ronald Reagan left a speaking engagement at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C., with his security detail on March 30, 1981, John Hinckley Jr. began shooting from the crowd.

Jerry Parr and Ray Shaddick, the special agent in charge and his assistant, respectively, pushed Reagan into a limousine. En route to the White House, Parr noticed Reagan bleeding from the mouth and directed the driver to divert to George Washington University Hospital where doctors discovered the president had been shot and operated to remove the bullet.

Hinckley fired six shots. White House Press Secretary James Brady was hit in the head. Another bullet struck Metropolitan Police Officer Thomas Delahanty in the neck. Special Agent Tim McCarthy, who turned to

shield the president, was hit in the abdomen.

A pair of shots ricocheted off the presidential limousine, one of them hitting the president under his left arm. The projectile grazed his rib and narrowly missed his heart.

A sixth shot penetrated a window across the street.

Special Agent Dennis McCarthy lunged across the street within seconds of the first shot and landed on Hinckley as the limousine departed.

Reagan left the hospital after 12 days.

Brady survived but suffered severe brain damage and died 33 years later due to the injuries.

Hinckley was found not guilty due to insanity in June 1982 and placed in a mental institution. His mental illness was deemed in remission after 35 years and he received full-time conditional release in 2016.

Hinckley was fully released from court supervision in 2022

BY THE NUMBERS

TRI-STATE TORNADO



Indiana State Library Archives/National Weather Service

Homes in the McCaw subdivision demolished in Princeton, Indiana.

On March 18, 1925, the deadliest tornado in American history struck southeast Missouri, southern Illinois and southwest Indiana in the days before instant weather alerts and satellite forecasts. Here is the tornado, by the numbers:

695	3 1/2	219	\$16.5M
Number of people killed	Hours twister was on ground	Miles traveled on ground	Total damage caused

THREE MILE ISLAND

On March 28, 1979, equipment failure and operator error led to a partial meltdown of a reactor at the Three Mile Island nuclear station in Pennsylvania, becoming the most serious accident in U.S. nuclear power history. Here it is, by the numbers:

2 million

People in the nearby area exposed to extra radiation. The average dose was equal to a chest x-ray.

40 years

How long the plant's other reactor operated following the accident.

14 and \$1B

Cleanup took 14 years and cost an estimated \$1 billion.

AMERICANS BORN THIS MONTH

- James Madison, March 16, 1751
- Andrew Jackson, March 15, 1767
- Grover Cleveland, March 18, 1837
- Wyatt Earp, March 19, 1848
- Cy Young, March 29, 1867
- Robert Frost, March 26, 1874
- Dr. Seuss, March 2, 1904
- Tennessee Williams, March 26, 1911
- Sam Walton, March 29, 1918
- Chuck Norris, March 10, 1940

- John Lewis, March 21, 1940
- Aretha Franklin, March 25, 1942
- Glenn Close, March 19, 1947
- Bruce Willis, March 19, 1955
- Jon Bon Jovi, March 2, 1962
- Shaquille O'Neal, March 6, 1972
- Peyton Manning, March 24, 1976
- Quentin Tarantino, March 24, 1977
- Lady Gaga, March 28, 1986
- Steph Curry, March 14, 1988

BLOODY SUNDAY IN SELMA, ALABAMA

CNHI News

In a pivotal moment in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, Alabama state troopers violently confronted activists marching from Selma to Montgomery at the Edmund Pettus Bridge on March 7, 1965.

Following the attacks on "Bloody Sunday," President Lyndon B. Johnson addressed the nation, calling for more support for civil rights legislation.



Associated press file photo

State troopers swing billy clubs to break up a civil rights voting march in Selma, Ala., March 7, 1965.

The event led to national outrage and the eventual passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

IMPACT OF TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST FACTORY FIRE

CNHI News

A fire at a lower Manhattan garment factory on March 2, 1911, killed 146 workers and led to sweeping changes to labor laws and workplace safety in America that resonate today.

The Triangle Shirtwaist factory, on the eighth, ninth and 10th floors of the Asch building, was a cramped factory with a workforce of mostly young women who had recently arrived from Europe.

When the rapidly spreading fire broke out, the workers had little time or opportunity to escape. Complicating the attempts to escape were long tables and bulky machines, doors that were locked by managers to prevent theft and the fact the building had only one fire escape, which collapsed during the rescue effort.

Panicked workers were crushed as they struggled with the doors.

Frief over the catastrophe that sent shockwaves through

out New York City turned to anger as causes of the fire and work conditions were exposed.

Urgency to the labor movement and rights for women and immigrant workers were renewed after the tragedy.

Frances Perkins, who became Secretary of Labor under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, witnessed the horror. She later recalled "...something must be done. We've got to turn this into some kind of victory, some kind of constructive action."