

AUGUST 1776-2026 AMERICA 250

THIS MONTH IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Aug. 1, 1774

The British begin implementing the Intolerable Acts, including closure of Boston Harbor, accelerating the American rebellion.

Aug. 20, 1866

In a proclamation, President Andrew Johnson declares the Civil War over, following the resolution of an insurrection in Texas.

Aug. 5, 1884

Grand Master of Masons in the state of New York William Brodie lays the cornerstone of the Statue of Liberty's pedestal.

Aug. 15, 1914

The Panama Canal opens, revolutionizing global shipping and expanding America's commercial and naval power.

Aug. 25, 1916

President Woodrow Wilson signs an act establishing the National Park Service.

Aug. 2, 1923

Amid rumors of corruption in the departments of the Interior, Justice and the Veterans Bureau, President Warren G. Harding dies of a stroke at age 58.

Aug. 25, 1932

Amelia Earhart completes her non-stop transcontinental flight across the United States.

Aug. 9, 1944

Smokey Bear debuts as the mascot for the U.S. Forest Service.

Aug. 16, 1954

The first issue of Sports Illustrated is published. Milwaukee Braves third baseman Eddie Mathews is on the cover.

Aug. 1, 1962

The official release date for "Amazing Fantasy" No. 15, the comic book that introduces Spider-Man. The book hits newsstands in June.

Aug. 7, 1964

Passing of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution grants President Lyndon B. Johnson broad authority to expand the Vietnam War without a formal declaration of war.

Aug. 27, 1964

Walt Disney releases the original "Mary Poppins."

Aug. 6, 1965

The Voting Rights Act is signed into law, protecting minority voting rights across the South.

Aug. 16, 1977

Elvis Presley dies of a heart attack at age 42.

Aug. 24, 1989

All-time hits leader Pete Rose is banned from Major League Baseball for gambling on the sport.

Aug. 24, 1992

Hurricane Andrew strikes Florida. One of the most powerful storms in history. It transforms disaster preparedness and building codes.

Aug. 30, 1993

The Late Show with David Letterman debuts on CBS.

Aug. 13, 2016

Swimmer Michael Phelps wins his 23rd and final Olympic gold medal in the 4x100 medley relay.

NUCLEAR ENDING TO WORLD WAR II

On Aug. 6, 1945, the United States used the greatest weapon the world had ever seen when the B-29 bomber Enola Gay dropped "Little Boy," an atomic bomb, on Hiroshima, Japan, at approximately 8:15 a.m.

According to the National Archives, the city was alive with morning activity when the bomb detonated in a blinding explosion. As many as 70,000 people were killed instantly.

President Harry S. Truman threatened future bombings if Japan did not surrender unconditionally.

Three days later, on Aug. 9, another 35,000 to 40,000 people died instantly when the U.S. dropped "Fat Man," its second nuclear weapon, on the city of Nagasaki.

The precise death toll for both bombings is unknown, but at least 100,000 people died directly from the bombs and another 100,000 died from radiation exposure in the hours and decades later, according to the National Archives.

The second bombing swiftly ended the war, with the Japanese



The Associated Press file photo

San Franciscans are shown celebrating the Japanese surrender, known as V-J Day, on Aug. 14, 1945.

accepting the terms of surrender just five days later, on Aug. 14, 1945, and V-J Day (Victory in

Japan Day) was celebrated in the streets across America. While historians debate the

decision to use the bombs, the American people overwhelmingly supported the decision in 1945.

BY THE NUMBERS: HURRICANE KATRINA



The Associated Press file photo

From Aug. 28-31, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made multiple landfalls on the Gulf Coast, weakened then intensified and became the costliest and one of the most deadly hurricanes in U.S. history. The loss of life and property damage were intensified by the inability of some to evacuate and breaks in the levee separating New Orleans from Lake Pontchartrain.

1,833

Number of people killed in the storm

\$108B

Amount of damages caused in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and the Florida panhandle, in 2005 dollars, the costliest U.S. hurricane in history.

80%

Percentage of New Orleans that was underwater Aug. 31 after the levee system failed

7.4 inches

Rain in Philip, Florida, over 48 hours, the most recorded during Katrina.

20 feet

Estimated storm surge along the Alabama and Mississippi border. Katrina is remembered for its storm surge. The highest tide recorded was 11.45 feet at the Mobile State Docks in Alabama.



'I HAVE A DREAM ...'

At the conclusion of the March on Washington on Aug. 28, 1963, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

The lecture mixed portions of King's previous sermons and speeches with statements by other prominent public figures, including Abraham Lincoln.

In one of the most iconic passages from the speech, King spoke about the future for his children:

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

19TH AMENDMENT RATIFIED

Nearly a century and a half after the founding of the United States of America, women's right to vote was protected by the ratification of the 19th Amendment on Aug. 18, 1920.

The Amendment reads:

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

It was called the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, but many courageous women were part of the effort, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Ida B. Wells and Alice Paul.

TO BOLDLY GO ...

NASA's Voyager 2 launched on Aug. 20, 1977. It is the only human-made spacecraft to observe the solar system's four giant planets up close, discovering new moons and rings. After observing Neptune on Aug. 25, 1989, it set course to leave the heliosphere — the part of space affected by the sun's gravity — and enter interstellar space, which it did Nov. 25, 2018. The craft is still operational and traveling through space.

AMERICANS BORN THIS MONTH

- David Crockett, Aug. 17, 1786
- Benjamin Harrison, Aug. 20, 1833
- Herbert Hoover, Aug. 10, 1874
- Louis Armstrong, Aug. 4, 1901
- Lyndon B. Johnson, Aug. 27, 1908
- Lucille Ball, Aug. 6, 1911
- Gene Kelly, Aug. 23, 1912
- Tony Bennett, Aug. 3, 1926
- Neil Armstrong, Aug. 5, 1930
- Robert Redford, Aug. 18, 1936
- Wilt Chamberlain, Aug. 21, 1936
- John McCain, Aug. 29, 1936
- Kenny Rogers, Aug. 21, 1938
- Carl Yastrzemski, Aug. 22, 1939
- Martha Stewart, Aug. 3, 1941
- Steve Martin, Aug. 14, 1945
- Patrick Swayze, Aug. 18, 1952
- Edwin Moses, Aug. 31, 1955
- Magic Johnson, Aug. 14, 1959
- Cal Ripken Jr., Aug. 24, 1960
- Barack Obama, Aug. 4, 1961
- Brett Hull, Aug. 9, 1964
- Viola Davis, Aug. 11, 1965
- River Phoenix, Aug. 23, 1970
- Kobe Bryant, Aug. 23, 1978
- Macaulay Culkin, Aug. 26, 1980

DECLARATION SIGNED

The Declaration of Independence was adopted on July 4, 1776, but it was engrossed on parchment and delegates began signing it on Aug. 2, 1776.

John Hancock, the president of the Congress, signed with a bold signature.

The other delegates, following custom, signed beginning at the right with the signatures arranged by states from northernmost New Hampshire to southernmost Georgia.

Only 50 delegates were present to sign the document, but 56 eventually signed it over the coming months.

RICHARD NIXON RESIGNS

Facing fallout from the Watergate scandal, U.S. President Richard Nixon resigned on Aug. 9, 1974.

Watergate started as a burglary at the Democratic National Committee but turned into a 26-month story of political corruption.

Investigators and grand juries gathered evidence linking Nixon to the attempted wiretapping at the Democratic office.

The event damaged Americans' trust in U.S. politics and the presidency.

Nixon remains the only president to resign from office.



BRITISH BURN WASHINGTON, D.C.

During the War of 1812, the British army invaded Washington, D.C., on Aug. 24, 1814.

Later that day, holding bitter resentment for the Americans' burning of present-day Toronto in 1813, British and Canadian soldiers began burning the city, destroying the White House, Capitol and other federal buildings.

Government officials were forced to flee, including President James Madison and his wife, Dolley. Dolley had already sent a portrait of President George Washington and many other artifacts from the founding of the nation away for safekeeping.

'WIZARD OF OZ'

"The Wizard of Oz" made its world premiere on Aug. 10, 1939, in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

On Aug. 15, it made its official Hollywood debut at Grauman's Chinese Theatre.

The film, considered one of the greatest and most influential of all time, released nationwide on Aug. 25.

