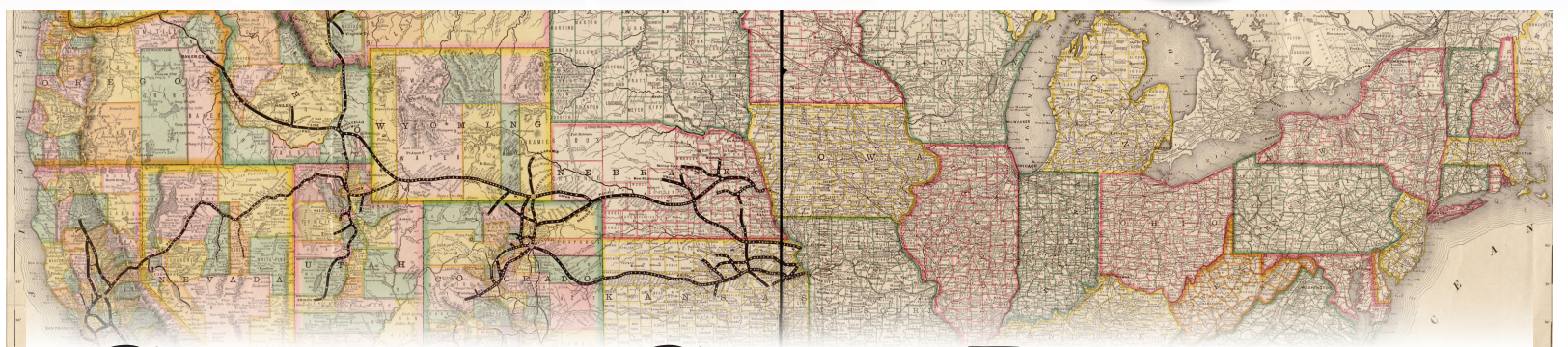


MAY 1776-2026 AMERICA 250

THIS MONTH IN AMERICAN HISTORY

- May 10, 1775**
Second Continental Congress convenes, establishing unified colonial leadership and, a few months later, creating the Continental Army.
- May 10, 1775**
Colonists capture Fort Ticonderoga, N.Y., in first offensive victory of the war.
- May 12, 1780**
The Fall of Charleston, one of the worst American defeats of the Revolutionary War.
- May 14, 1804**
Lewis and Clark depart on an expedition, opening the American West to exploration and expansion.
- May 28, 1830**
U.S. signs Indian Removal Act which leads to the Trail of Tears and forces relocation of Native Americans.
- May 24, 1844**
Samuel F.B. Morse sends the first telegraph message, revolutionizing communication.
- May 13, 1846**
America declares war on Mexico, which eventually leads to U.S. expansion west.
- May 6, 1863**
Gen. Robert E. Lee's forces, at their peak, claim victory at the Battle of Chancellorsville, Va.
- May 18, 1896**
Plessy vs. Ferguson decision legalizes segregation under "separate but equal."
- May 1, 1931**
Empire State Building dedicated.
- May 17, 1954**
Brown vs. Board of Education ends legal school segregation, a cornerstone in the Civil Rights movement.
- May 1, 1960**
Francis Powers is shot down while piloting a U-2 spy plane and attempting to photograph Soviet Union military sites. The U.S. initially tries to cover up the espionage, but the USSR reveals it has captured Powers. The event greatly increases Cold War tensions.
- May 4, 1970**
Four college students killed and nine wounded by the Ohio National Guard at Kent State during anti-Vietnam War rally.
- May 25, 1977**
"Star Wars" debuts, launching one of America's most iconic entertainment franchises.
- May 1, 2000**
U.S. President Bill Clinton orders the release of full global positioning system signals to civilians, revolutionizing navigation.
- May 1, 2003**
End of major combat operations in Iraq is announced by President George W. Bush, but the move triggers a period of U.S. occupancy in the country and intensified insurgency.
- May 2, 2011**
Al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden is killed by U.S. forces in Pakistan, a major victory in the War on Terror.



COAST-TO-COAST RAILROAD UNLOCKS ALL OF AMERICA

CNHI News

The process of connecting the eastern U.S. railroads to the west coast began in 1863. A series of events led to what would become the Transcontinental Railroad, according to the Library of Congress. Asa Whitney was one of the early prominent Americans pushing for a connected railroad. In 1849, he published his idea for a Chicago-to-California rail line. In 1852, Theodore Judah, chief engineer at Sacramento Valley Railroad sought a route through the Sierra Nevada. In 1856, he presented his plan to Congress. In 1862, Congress passed

the Pacific Railroad Act, authorizing the Central Pacific Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad. Thousands of Chinese workers were instrumental in building the railroad but pay and treatment was not the same for them as for white workers, according to the Library of Congress. Ultimately, thousands of Chinese laborers died building the railroad. The lines were completely connected and opened for traffic on May 10, 1869. Central Pacific Railroad President Leland Stanford drove a ceremonial gold last spike during a commemoration at Promontory Summit in Utah.



Library of Congress photo
Locomotives touch noses during the celebration of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. Engineers of the two locomotives each broke a bottle of champagne on the other's engine

V-E DAY: GERMANY SURRENDERS, U.S. EMERGES

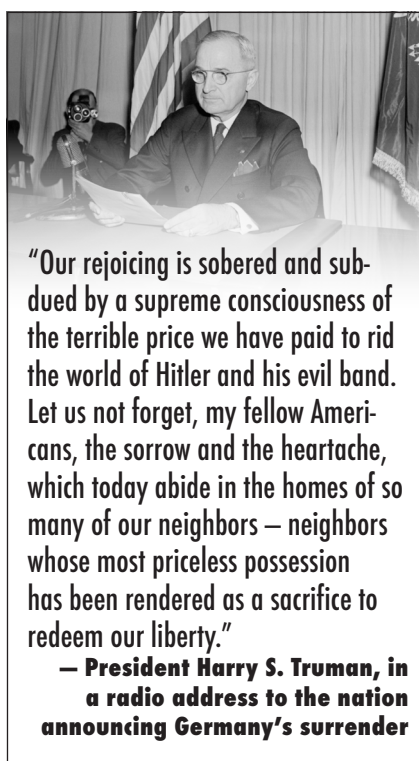


Celebration in Times Square on V-E Day, May 7, 1945.

AP file photo

CNHI News

World War II had raged for almost five years when U.S. and Allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944, to battle the forces of Nazi Germany. Tens of millions of service members and civilians were killed in the war, including 250,000 U.S. troops. Six million Jews were murdered by the Nazis. Within less than a year of the Normandy invasion, Adolf Hitler was dead and the war in Europe was over. On May 7, 1945, Germany officially surrendered, sparking celebration in the streets across the globe. Post-war, America emerged as a new global superpower. Speaking in Fulton, Missouri, alongside U.S. President Harry S. Truman, former U.K. Prime Minister Winston Churchill lauded America for its part in the war and its new place in the world pecking order. "The United States stands at this time at the pinnacle of world power," he said, saying that with the power comes



"Our rejoicing is sobered and subdued by a supreme consciousness of the terrible price we have paid to rid the world of Hitler and his evil band. Let us not forget, my fellow Americans, the sorrow and the heartache, which today abide in the homes of so many of our neighbors — neighbors whose most priceless possession has been rendered as a sacrifice to redeem our liberty."
— President Harry S. Truman, in a radio address to the nation announcing Germany's surrender

"awe-inspiring accountability for the future."

BY THE NUMBERS: MAY DISASTERS

Two of the worst disasters in U.S. history happened in May. On May 31, 1889, a manmade dam broke on a mountain 14 miles above Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and 25 million tons of water flooded the downtown. On May 18, 1980, Mount St. Helens volcano erupted in Washington state, the result of a magnitude 5.1 earthquake beneath it.

JOHNSTOWN, PA., FLOOD



The (Johnstown) Tribune-Democrat

MOUNT ST. HELENS ERUPTS



AP file photo

Casualties

2,200 dead, including 99 entire families and nearly 400 children; 124 women and 198 men were widowed.

57 people dead; 7,000 to 10,000 large animals, including deer, elk, and black bears, alongside millions of fish and countless birds died.

Damage

1,600 homes damaged; 4 square miles of downtown impacted. Cost: \$17 million (equivalent to \$540 million in 2024).

200 homes, 185 miles of highway, 15 miles of railways destroyed or damaged. Cost: \$1.1 billion (\$3.5 billion in 2024).

AMERICANS BORN THIS MONTH

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Ralph Waldo Emerson, May 25, 1803 | Johnny Unitas, May 7, 1933 |
| Walt Whitman, May 31, 1819 | Nora Ephron, May 19, 1941 |
| L. Frank Baum, May 15, 1856 | Bob Dylan, May 24, 1941 |
| Harry S. Truman, May 8, 1884 | Billy Joel, May 9, 1949 |
| Katharine Hepburn, May 12, 1907 | Stevie Wonder, May 13, 1950 |
| John Wayne, May 26, 1907 | George Clooney, May 6, 1961 |
| Studs Terkel, May 16, 1912 | Janet Jackson, May 16, 1966 |
| John F. Kennedy, May 29, 1917 | Tony Hawk, May 12, 1968 |
| Malcolm X, May 19, 1925 | Emmitt Smith, May 15, 1969 |
| Clint Eastwood, May 31, 1930 | Tina Fey, May 18, 1970 |
| Willie Mays, May 6, 1931 | Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, May 2, 1972 |
| James Brown, May 3, 1933 | Mark Zuckerberg, May 14, 1984 |

KENT STATE SHOOTINGS

On May 4, 1970, members of the Ohio National Guard fired into a crowd of Kent State University anti-Vietnam War demonstrators, killing four and wounding nine students. The impact of the shootings was dramatic. The event triggered a nationwide student strike that forced hundreds of colleges and universities to close. H.R. Haldeman, a top aide to President Richard Nixon, suggests the shootings had a direct impact on national politics.

OSAMA BIN LADEN KILLED

Osama bin Laden, leader of al-Qaida, and mastermind behind terrorist attacks on U.S. soil, including the 9/11 attacks, was killed May 2, 2011, when U.S. forces raided his compound in Pakistan. "Bin Laden was not a Muslim leader; he was a mass murderer of Muslims," U.S. President Barack Obama said. "Indeed, al Qaida has slaughtered scores of Muslims in many countries, including our own. So his demise should be welcomed by all who believe in peace and dignity."



Osama bin Laden

BROWN VS. BOARD OF EDUCATION

One of the most consequential Civil Rights movement victories was Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, a Supreme Court decision which determined that separating children in public schools based on race violated the 14th Amendment. The unanimous May 17, 1954 decision, delivered by Justice Earl Warren, overturned the "separate but equal" principle which had been followed since the same court's ruling in Plessy vs. Ferguson nearly 60 years to the day earlier, on May 18, 1896.



IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY...

On May 25, 1977, George Lucas' sci-fi film "Star Wars" released, launching an iconic American franchise. The movie was a blockbuster success and became a global phenomenon.