

FEBRUARY 1776-2026 AMERICA 250

THIS MONTH IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Feb. 4, 1789

Electors cast and Congress counts votes in America's first presidential election. George Washington is the unanimous choice.



National Park Service
The First Bank of the United States.

Feb. 25, 1791

Congress charters the First Bank of the United States — Alexander Hamilton's national bank.

Feb. 20, 1792

The U.S. Postal Service/Postal Act is enacted under Washington's administration.

Feb. 7, 1812

The most powerful in a series of earthquakes destroys New Madrid, Missouri, leading to the first disaster relief in American history.

Feb. 2, 1848

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is signed, ending the war and expanding the United States west to the Pacific Ocean.

Feb. 3, 1870

The 15th Amendment, prohibiting denial of the vote because of race, is ratified.

Feb. 19, 1942

President Franklin Roosevelt signs an executive order authorizing the exclusion and internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Feb. 3, 1959

Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and "The Big Bopper" die in a plane crash in Iowa.

Feb. 1, 1960

The Greensboro Four began a sit-in at a Woolworth's lunch counter in North Carolina, a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights Movement.



National Archives
Astronaut John Glenn photographed in space traveling at 17,500 mph, Feb. 20, 1962.

Feb. 20, 1962

John H. Glenn becomes the first American to orbit Earth.

Feb. 21, 1965

Malcolm X is assassinated while speaking in New York City.

Feb. 26, 1993

A terrorist bombing at the World Trade Center in New York kills six and injures more than a thousand.

Feb. 1, 2003

Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrates on reentry over Texas/Louisiana. All seven astronauts are lost.

U.S. GETS MIRACLE WIN IN 1980

Olympic hockey team upsetting Russia was only Cold War battle

CNHI News

The United States and Russia supported opposing sides in proxy wars during the Cold War from 1947 to 1991 as they vied for political, cultural and economic dominance, but had no direct military engagements.

There was one direct melee that became a pivotal moment in the war, but it played out on ice in front of the world at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York.

The United States' men's hockey team upset the USSR, 4-3, on Feb. 22, 1980.

"It was David vs. Goliath on skates, a scrappy United States team of college players pitted against pitted against the defending four-time gold-medal-winning Soviet Union team made up of professional players," Britannica wrote. "Miraculously the United States pulled off the win."

As the world watched, sports broadcaster Al Michaels uttered one of the most quotable lines in sports history, giving the victory the title it will forever be remembered by, "The Miracle on Ice."

"Do you believe in miracles?" Michaels asks as the clock ticks down in the final seconds, pauses, then with one second left, he responds to himself, "YES!"

Michaels' call alone has been the subject of



Associated Press file photo

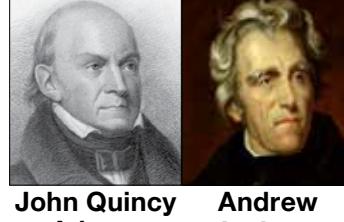
Members of the U.S. hockey team pounces on goalie Jim Craig after a 4-3 victory against the Soviet Union in a medal round match at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, N.Y.

multiple articles and discussions — according to a 2020 New York Post article, he came up with the line on the fly.

The Miracle on Ice has been the subject of several books and was turned into a movie, "Miracle," in 2006.

"The U.S. team's historic upset over the Soviet Union at the Lake Placid 1980 Olympic Winter Games was not just a stunning surprise but also a ray of hope and patriotism for the U.S. as it hosted the Olympics on home ice in New York," Britannica wrote.

BY THE NUMBERS: DEADLOCK BROKEN



John Quincy Adams Andrew Jackson

On Feb. 9, 1825, John Quincy Adams was named president by the U.S. House of Representatives as dictated by the 12th Amendment, breaking a deadlock from the 1824 election.

Andrew Jackson won the popular and electoral college votes but not by a required majority because William H. Crawford and Henry Clay also earned significant votes.

Adams	Jackson
Popular vote 108,740	Popular vote 153,544
Electoral vote 84	Electoral vote 99

U.S. EXPANSION

On Feb. 2, 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, ending the Mexican-American War after nearly two years.

The war started over the United States' annexation of Texas in 1845.

At its conclusion, the war expanded America's boundaries to the Pacific Ocean.

The treaty, granted America the rights to California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona, and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas and Oklahoma.

At the time, Mexico gave up 55% of its territory to the United States, according to the National Archives.

HISTORIC SITE: HEMPHILL, TEXAS



Associated Press file photo

Debris from the space shuttle Columbia streaks across the sky over Tyler, Texas, in this Saturday, Feb. 1, 2003.

CNHI News

When the Space Shuttle Columbia broke up during reentry on Feb. 1, 2003, killing its crew, it left a debris field across parts of Texas and Louisiana.

Recovery centers were set up across much of East Texas, including in Palestine, Corsicana and Hemphill.

Hemphill is now home to the Patricia Huffman Smith Museum "Remembering Columbia."

The museum calls the shuttle recovery efforts "the largest land-based search and recovery effort in human history."



Patricia Huffman Smith Museum photo
The Patricia Huffman Smith Museum "Remembering Columbia" serves as a memorial to the 2003 Space Shuttle Columbia tragedy.

According to the museum, more than 85,000 pieces from the shuttle were recovered, representing 34 percent of the shuttle.

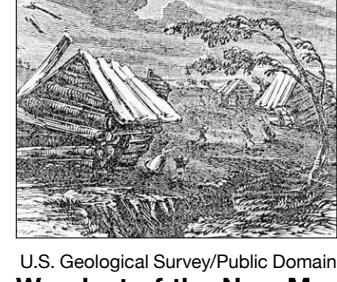
They were reassembled at Kennedy Space Center and aided NASA in a successful return to flight.

The effort by 15,000

personnel covered 23 square miles of waterway and 2.28 million acres of forest and field through ground and air searches, according to Texas A&M University.

The FBI reported it helped locate the remains of all seven crew members.

DID YOU KNOW? DISASTER RELIEF



U.S. Geological Survey/Public Domain
Woodcut of the New Madrid, Missouri, earthquakes by Henry Howe, from "Historical Collections of the Great West," 1854.

A series of earthquakes in Missouri in 1811 and 1812 led to the first U.S. federal disaster aid distribution.

The fourth and most violent quake struck Feb. 7, 1812, destroying New Madrid.

The quake was so powerful it caused the Mississippi River to run backward for hours, according to New Madrid city officials.

The tremors rang church bells in Boston, thousands of miles away, toppled brick walls in Cincinnati and created Reelfoot Lake in Tennessee, city officials said.

Some earthquake fissures were five miles long, city officials said.

On Feb. 17, 1815, Congress approved \$50,000 for the New Madrid Relief Act.

OTHER AMERICANS BORN THIS MONTH

George Washington, Feb. 22, 1732
Abraham Lincoln, Feb. 12, 1809
Susan B. Anthony, Feb. 15, 1820
Thomas Edison, Feb. 11, 1847
Norman Rockwell, Feb. 3, 1894
Babe Ruth, Feb. 6, 1895

Charles Lindbergh, Feb. 4, 1902
John Steinbeck, Feb. 4, 1902
Ronald Reagan, Feb. 5, 1911
Rosa Parks, Feb. 4, 1913
Sidney Poitier, Feb. 20, 1927
Hank Aaron, Feb. 5, 1934

Elizabeth Taylor, Feb. 27, 1932
Mark Spitz, Feb. 10, 1950
John Travolta, Feb. 18, 1954
Steve Jobs, Feb. 24, 1955
Michael Jordan, Feb. 17, 1963
Rihanna, Feb. 20, 1988