

Looking Back

January 1 - 15

What happened on January 1 in history? How about January 2...3... up to 15? With more than 60 illustrated stories, this little book goes back in time to tell us about some of the milestone events that occurred back in history, shaping the world for what it is now.

Jerry Waxman

Looking Back At January 1 - 15

Looking Back At January 1- 15

a history of the first 15 days of the year

by Jerry Waxman

Copyright © 2025 All Rights Reserved

Associated Links

Worldsways - Today In History

<https://worldsways.com/category/today-in-history/>

The World Story: Looking Back You Tube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/Worldsways>

Sababa Pastures - friendly community

<https://communi.com/the-pasture>

January 1

The Emancipation Proclamation: A Landmark in the Fight for Freedom



Emancipation

On January 1, 1863, amid the turmoil of the American Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, a bold executive order that declared the freedom of all enslaved individuals in Confederate states. While the proclamation did not immediately free all enslaved people, it redefined the purpose of the war, aligning the Union's fight with the principles of liberty and justice. By turning the abolition of slavery into a central war aim, it also paved the way for the eventual ratification of the 13th Amendment in 1865. This decree marked a turning point in American history, embodying the enduring struggle for human dignity and equality.

The Emancipation Proclamation, though limited in immediate impact, symbolized a profound commitment to ending slavery and remains a cornerstone in the narrative of civil rights progress.



President Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation

Haiti's Independence: A Revolution for Justice - 1804

On January 1, 1804, Haiti—after a prolonged struggle against French colonial rule—declared its independence, becoming the first Black-majority republic in the world. Under the leadership of figures like Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines, enslaved Africans and freedmen overturned one of the most brutal slave systems of the era. Haiti's victory not only dismantled the institution of slavery within its borders but also sent shockwaves across the Americas and Europe, inspiring enslaved peoples and abolitionists alike. Despite its triumph, Haiti faced economic isolation and political challenges due to its revolutionary stance.



Haiti, the first Black Republic

Haiti's independence remains a testament to the power of resilience and collective action, demonstrating the global impact of a fight for liberty against oppression.

Ending the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the U.S. - 1808

On January 1, 1808, a pivotal federal law came into effect, prohibiting the importation of enslaved people into the United States. While this marked an end to the transatlantic slave trade, it did not abolish slavery itself, which continued to thrive within U.S. borders through domestic trading and exploitation. Nonetheless, this legislative milestone reflected growing resistance to the international slave trade and laid groundwork for further debates about human rights in America.



It became illegal to import slaves

The 1808 ban on importing enslaved individuals marked a step toward ending institutionalized slavery, symbolizing a shift in national conscience and policy.

Ellis Island Opens: Gateway to the American Dream - 1892

On January 1, 1892, the Ellis Island Immigration Station officially opened its doors in New York Harbor. On its first day, the station processed nearly 700 immigrants, heralding the beginning of its legacy as the primary gateway for millions seeking a better life in the United States. Over the next six decades, Ellis Island would process nearly 12 million immigrants, becoming a symbol of hope and opportunity for people from around the world. Its role in shaping the cultural and demographic fabric of America is unparalleled.



Ellis Island

The opening of Ellis Island represents a defining chapter in U.S. history, illustrating the nation's evolution as a land of opportunity for diverse peoples and cultures.

January 2

The Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Standoff, 2016

On January 2, 2016, an armed group led by brothers Ammon and Ryan Bundy occupied the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. This 41-day standoff was triggered by the imprisonment of two ranchers, Dwight and Steven Hammond, who were convicted of setting fires on federal land. The Bundys and their followers demanded the federal government transfer public lands to local control, arguing that such a move would grant residents greater access to resources. The standoff, marked by tense negotiations and national attention, highlighted deep divisions over land use and federal authority in the American West. The event underscored ongoing conflicts between conservation efforts and private land use, illustrating the complexities of resource management in the United States.



Malheur Wildlife Refuge Standoff

Manila Falls to Japanese Forces, 1942

On January 2, 1942, during the early stages of World War II, Japanese forces captured the Philippine capital, Manila. This marked a significant defeat for Allied forces in the Pacific and began a brutal occupation that would last until 1945. The capture of Manila was part of Japan's broader strategy to dominate the Asia-Pacific region and secure resources for its war effort. The occupation subjected the city's residents to severe hardships, including forced labor, widespread violence, and loss of freedom. This pivotal moment underscored the strategic importance of the Philippines and its role in the broader Allied struggle to repel Axis advances in the Pacific.



Less than four weeks after bombing Pearl Harbor, Japanese forces are jubilant, taking over Manila

The Launch of Luna 1, 1959

January 2, 1959, witnessed a groundbreaking moment in space exploration as the Soviet spacecraft Luna 1 became the first human-made object to escape Earth's gravity. Initially aimed at the Moon, Luna 1's trajectory placed it into orbit around the Sun, earning it the nickname "Mechta" or "Dream." This milestone not only showcased the Soviet Union's technological advancements during the Space Race but also paved the way for future interplanetary missions. Luna 1's success highlighted humanity's potential to venture beyond Earth, sparking scientific curiosity and intensifying the Cold War competition between superpowers.



Soviet Space Probe Missed Its Lunar Target And Slipped Into An Orbit Around The Sun

The 55 MPH Speed Limit, 1974

In response to the OPEC oil embargo and the resulting energy crisis, President Richard Nixon signed legislation on January 2, 1974, mandating states to enforce a maximum highway speed limit of 55 miles per hour. The goal was to conserve gasoline by improving vehicle fuel efficiency, a pressing concern during a time of skyrocketing oil prices. While the measure faced resistance from drivers and state governments, it remained in effect until 1987 and was later fully repealed in 1995. The introduction of the 55 mph speed limit symbolized the broader economic and lifestyle adjustments Americans were forced to make during the 1970s energy crisis, reflecting the vulnerability of modern economies to disruptions in global resource supplies.



Federal Speed Limits Began In 1974, abolished in 1987



January 3

1920 - Curse of the Great Bambino

On January 3, 1920, Boston Red Sox owner Harry Frazee finalized one of the most infamous deals in sports history by selling Babe Ruth's contract to the New York Yankees. This transaction not only marked the beginning of the Yankees' dominance in Major League Baseball, leading to 27 World Series championships, but it also ushered in an 86-year-long period of frustration and near-misses for the Red Sox, colloquially known as the "Curse of the Bambino." The curse was finally lifted in 2004 when the Red Sox secured their first World Series title since 1918, an event celebrated by fans as a triumph over decades of misfortune. This singular trade reshaped the dynamics of baseball, creating a rivalry and lore that endures to this day.



Babe Ruth in Yankees uniform

1777 - Washington's Victory At Princeton

Also on January 3, 1777, General George Washington achieved a decisive victory at the Battle of Princeton during the American Revolutionary War.



General George Washington

Coming on the heels of his daring crossing of the Delaware River and the victory at Trenton, this engagement demonstrated Washington's strategic brilliance and reinvigorated the morale of his troops and the Patriot cause. By outmaneuvering British forces under General Charles Cornwallis, Washington ensured that the Revolution retained momentum during a critical period. This triumph not only solidified his leadership but also helped sustain the fight for American independence.



Victory at Princeton

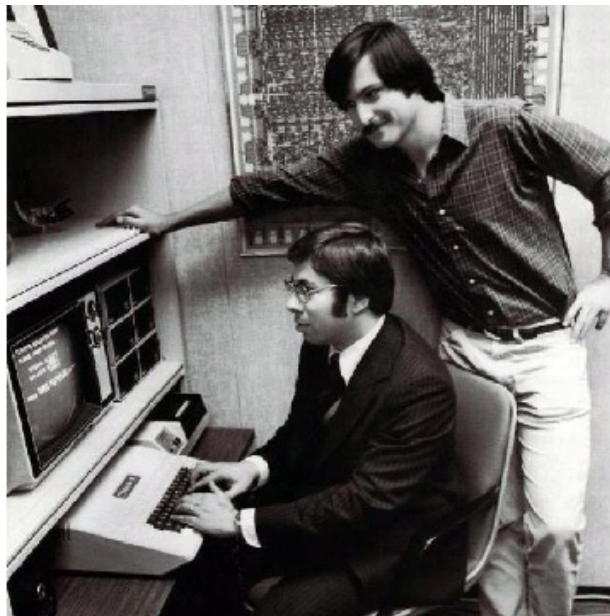
1977 Apple Computer Incorporated

Fast forward to January 3, 1977, in Cupertino, California, where three visionaries—Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak, and Mike Markkula Jr.—incorporated Apple Computer.



Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak

This act marked the formal beginning of what would become one of the most influential technology companies in history. From the humble beginnings of the Apple I to the revolutionary products like the Macintosh, iPhone, and beyond, Apple has continuously pushed the boundaries of innovation, reshaping industries and how people interact with technology. The incorporation of Apple was a seminal moment in the tech revolution, heralding a new era of personal computing and design.



Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak early version of Apple Computer

1990 Noriega Surrenders

Lastly, on January 3, 1990, ousted Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega surrendered to U.S. forces after taking refuge for 10 days in the Vatican's diplomatic mission in Panama City. Noriega's surrender marked the end of Operation Just Cause, a U.S. military intervention aimed at safeguarding American lives, restoring democratic governance, and bringing Noriega to justice on charges of drug trafficking. This event underscored the complexities of U.S.-Panamanian relations and highlighted the broader geopolitical struggles of the era. Noriega's capture and subsequent trial symbolized a significant moment in the U.S.'s anti-drug campaign and its commitment to upholding international law.



Noriega in Custody

See the video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/Worldsways>



LBJ envisioned a Great Society
in his State of the Union address

January 4

1965: President Lyndon B. Johnson's Vision for a "Great Society"

On January 4, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson stood before Congress to deliver a landmark State of the Union address, introducing the ambitious framework of his "Great Society" initiative. This series of domestic programs sought to address the dual challenges of poverty and racial inequality in America. Notable accomplishments of the Great Society included Medicare and Medicaid, federal funding for education, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which aimed to dismantle segregation and protect voting rights for minorities. These policies left a lasting legacy, transforming the social and economic landscape of the United States. Johnson's address was a pivotal moment in American history, marking the federal government's active commitment to social justice and economic equality.



LBJ at home

1999: The Euro Debuts on the World Stage



The New Euro Coin

January 4, 1999, marked the debut of the euro, Europe's unified currency, on the global financial market. Initially adopted by 11 European nations, the euro symbolized a step toward economic and political integration within the European Union. Its strong performance on the first trading day, as it rose against the dollar, signaled confidence in the currency's potential to unify disparate economies under a single monetary policy. Over the decades, the euro has become one of the world's most widely traded and trusted currencies, influencing global financial systems. The euro's launch was a milestone in Europe's pursuit of economic unity and stability.



Nancy Pelosi becomes first Democratic Speaker of the House in 12 Years

2007: Nancy Pelosi Shatters a Historic Glass Ceiling

On January 4, 2007, Nancy Pelosi was elected as the first female Speaker of the United States House of Representatives. Her election symbolized a watershed moment in American politics, as Democrats regained control of Congress after 12 years of Republican dominance. Pelosi's leadership reshaped legislative priorities, emphasizing healthcare reform, energy independence, and economic stability during her tenure. As Speaker, she became one of the most powerful figures in Washington, championing policies that impacted millions of Americans. Pelosi's historic achievement underscored the growing role of women in shaping the political landscape of the United States.



Nancy Pelosi Clapping Sarcastically At SOTU

2010: The Burj Khalifa Redefines Urban Skylines

On January 4, 2010, the Burj Khalifa opened in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, claiming the title of the world's tallest structure. Soaring to 828 meters (2,717 feet), the tower represented a marvel of modern engineering and an emblem of Dubai's aspirations as a global hub. Beyond its architectural splendor, the Burj Khalifa attracted millions of visitors, offering breathtaking views and luxurious accommodations. Its construction was a symbol of Dubai's economic transformation and resilience, particularly following the 2008 global financial crisis. The Burj Khalifa stands as a testament to human ingenuity and the city's ambition to leave an indelible mark on the world stage.



Burj Khalifa

See this video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/Worldsways>

January 5

1933: The Start of an Engineering Marvel

On January 5, 1933, construction officially began on the Golden Gate Bridge, a monumental feat of engineering that would connect San Francisco to Marin County, California. Designed by engineer Joseph Strauss, the bridge faced numerous challenges, including funding struggles during the Great Depression and skepticism about its feasibility. Despite these hurdles, the project moved forward and was completed in May 1937. At the time of its completion, the Golden Gate Bridge boasted the longest suspension span in the world at 4,200 feet and stood as a symbol of human ingenuity and determination. Its iconic orange-red hue was chosen to enhance visibility in San Francisco's frequent fog and remains a globally recognized landmark.



Golden Gate Bridge

1896: The Discovery of X-rays

On this date in 1896, an Austrian newspaper reported the groundbreaking discovery by German physicist Wilhelm Röntgen of a mysterious new form of radiation. Röntgen's finding, which he dubbed "X-rays," allowed scientists to peer inside the human body without surgery, revolutionizing medicine and diagnostics. Within weeks of the announcement, doctors and researchers worldwide began experimenting with X-rays, ushering in a new era of medical imaging. This discovery earned Röntgen the inaugural Nobel Prize in Physics in 1901 and laid the foundation for advancements in radiology, cancer treatment, and materials science.



Wilhelm Röntgen discovered a new type of radiation called x-rays

1925: Breaking Political Barriers

On January 5, 1925, Nellie Tayloe Ross made history as she took office as the first female governor in the United States. Elected to complete the term of her late husband, William B. Ross, as governor of Wyoming, she championed progressive causes, including workers' rights, women's suffrage, and child welfare. Although she narrowly lost her re-election bid, Ross continued to break barriers, later serving as the first female director of the U.S. Mint, a position she held for two decades. Her leadership paved the way for greater representation of women in American politics.



Nellie Tayloe Ross takes office as governor of Wyoming

1957: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Cold War

On January 5, 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower addressed Congress to propose what would become known as the Eisenhower Doctrine. In response to growing Soviet influence in the Middle East, Eisenhower pledged military and economic aid to nations resisting Communist aggression. This policy marked a significant escalation of U.S. involvement in the region and reinforced America's commitment to containing Communism during the Cold War. Over the years, the Eisenhower Doctrine influenced American foreign policy and shaped the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East.



Eisenhower Doctrine was designed to stop Communism from spreading to the Middle East

See this video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/Worldsways>

January 6

The Four Freedoms: FDR's Vision for Universal Rights

On January 6, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered his State of the Union address to a nation teetering on the brink of entering World War II. In this historic speech, Roosevelt articulated his vision for a post-war world founded on “Four Freedoms” essential to human dignity and peace.



FDR

“Freedom of speech and expression”, he asserted, is the cornerstone of democracy, allowing individuals to voice their beliefs without fear of reprisal. This principle, central to the American identity, inspired global movements for freedom, including the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Roosevelt’s foresight underscores the enduring power of open dialogue in sustaining free societies.

Equally significant was Roosevelt's call for "freedom of worship", affirming the right of all people to practice their faith—or choose not to—without coercion. At a time when totalitarian regimes sought to suppress religious expression, Roosevelt's declaration was a rallying cry for pluralism and tolerance. This freedom became a pillar of the post-war world, influencing the formation of international agreements protecting religious liberty. The commitment to this ideal reflects the universal desire for spiritual autonomy as a fundamental human right.



freedom of worship

Roosevelt's vision extended beyond political freedoms to include "freedom from want", emphasizing the necessity of economic security for global stability. In an era of widespread poverty exacerbated by the Great Depression, this concept framed access to basic needs—food, shelter, healthcare—as essential for peace. It shaped policies like the Marshall Plan, which aimed to rebuild war-torn economies, and continues to inform global development goals. Freedom from want reminds us that human dignity is intertwined with economic justice.



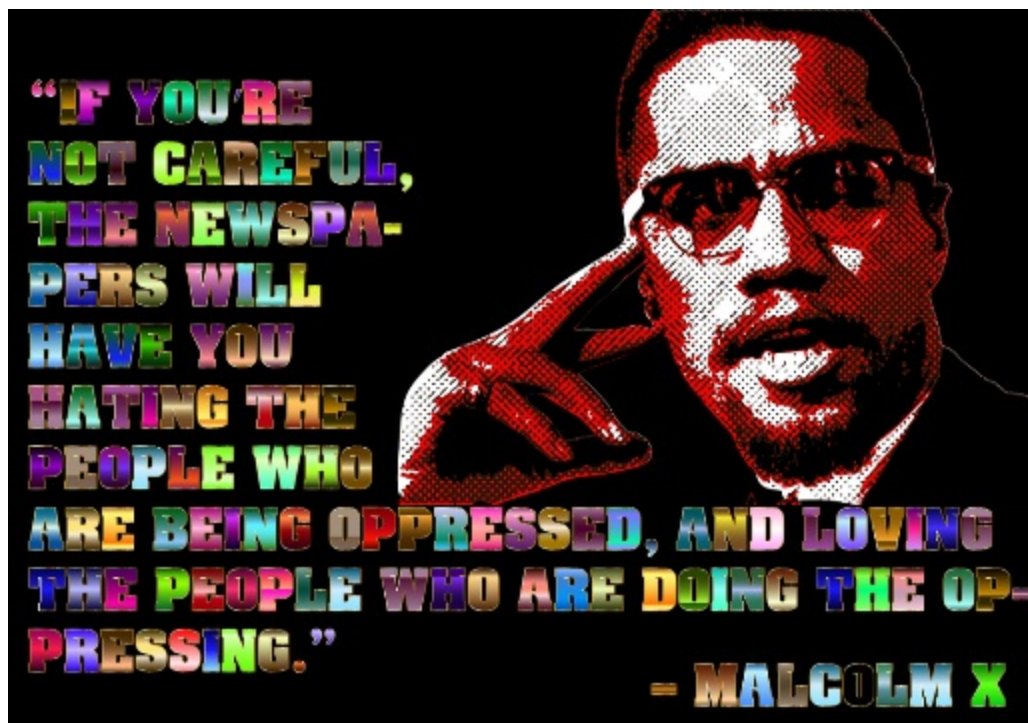
freedom from want

Lastly, Roosevelt championed “freedom from fear,” envisioning a world where nations no longer lived under the shadow of aggression. He sought to eliminate the conditions that lead to war, advocating for disarmament and international cooperation. This ideal became a driving force behind the establishment of the United Nations, which strives to resolve conflicts and uphold peace. Freedom from fear remains a poignant reminder of humanity’s shared responsibility to build a secure and just world.

Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms remain an aspirational framework for global human rights, demonstrating his belief in a world where dignity and justice transcend borders. Each freedom speaks to the enduring challenge of building a world where liberty, tolerance, and security are shared by all.

January 6, 2021: An Assault on Democracy

Eighty years after Roosevelt's address, January 6, 2021, became synonymous with one of the gravest challenges to American democracy in modern history. That day, a mob of supporters of then-President Donald Trump, incited by his baseless claims of a stolen election, stormed the United States Capitol. Their intent was to disrupt the certification of Joe Biden's legitimate victory in the 2020 presidential election. The rioters assaulted law enforcement officers, vandalized government property, and forced lawmakers into hiding. Hours later, Congress reconvened to complete the certification, reaffirming the resilience of democratic institutions.



lies and misinformation

In the aftermath, Trump was impeached by the House of Representatives for "incitement of insurrection," marking the first time a U.S. president had been impeached twice. While the Senate trial resulted in acquittal due to insufficient Republican support for conviction, the events underscored the fragility of democratic systems when confronted by misinformation and political extremism. January 6, 2021, serves as a stark reminder of the importance of protecting democratic norms, the rule of law, and the peaceful transfer of power.

See this video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/Worldsways>

January 7

The Charlie Hebdo Attack (2015)

On January 7, 2015, the world watched in horror as masked gunmen launched a brutal attack on the Paris offices of “Charlie Hebdo,” a French satirical newspaper known for its provocative caricatures of religious and political figures. The attackers, citing outrage over the paper’s depiction of the Prophet Muhammad, killed 12 people, including the editor Stéphane Charbonnier and several prominent cartoonists, before fleeing the scene. This act of terrorism sparked global debates about freedom of speech, the boundaries of satire, and the persistent threat of extremism. Two days later, French security forces killed the perpetrators during a standoff. The tragedy marked a turning point in the fight against terrorism in Europe and underscored the enduring tension between freedom of expression and religious sensitivities. It remains a stark reminder of the fragile balance between liberty and security.



Staff of Charlie Hebdo

Galileo's Groundbreaking Observation (1610)

On January 7, 1610, Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei turned his telescope to the night sky and observed four celestial bodies orbiting Jupiter. These would later be known as the Galilean moons: Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto. This discovery was revolutionary, as it provided undeniable evidence that not all celestial objects orbited the Earth, challenging the geocentric model of the universe. Galileo's findings bolstered the Copernican theory, which posited that the planets, including Earth, revolved around the Sun. This moment marked the dawn of modern astronomy, setting the stage for centuries of scientific inquiry into our solar system and beyond. The significance of this observation cannot be overstated, as it shifted humanity's understanding of its place in the cosmos.



Galileo Galilei

Marian Anderson's Historic Performance (1955)

On January 7, 1955, the legendary contralto Marian Anderson made history as the first Black American to perform with the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. Singing the role of Ulrica in Giuseppe Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Anderson broke through racial barriers in one of the world's most prestigious musical institutions. Her performance was not only a testament to her immense talent but also a milestone in the broader struggle for civil rights and racial equality in the arts. Anderson's trailblazing achievement paved the way for countless other Black artists to rise to prominence in classical music and opera. Her success symbolized the power of perseverance and artistry in challenging systemic discrimination.



Marion Anderson at the Met

The Fall of the Khmer Rouge (1979)

On January 7, 1979, Vietnamese forces entered Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, effectively toppling the brutal Khmer Rouge regime. Under the leadership of Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge had orchestrated one of the 20th century's most devastating genocides, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 1.7 million people—nearly a quarter of Cambodia's population. The Vietnamese invasion ended nearly four years of terror and initiated a period of reconstruction for a shattered nation. Although political instability and suffering persisted, the removal of the Khmer Rouge marked a critical turning point in Cambodia's history. This event serves as a stark reminder of the resilience of humanity in the face of unspeakable atrocities.

Looking Back At January 1 - 15



The Cambodian revolutionary armed forces and Vietnamese volunteer soldiers enter Phnom Penh to overthrow the Pol Pot genocidal regime (Photo VNA).

See this video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/Worldsways>

January 8

On January 8, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson delivered a momentous State of the Union address in which he declared an “unconditional war on poverty in America.” This declaration was a cornerstone of his Great Society agenda, aiming to eradicate poverty through initiatives such as Medicare, Medicaid, and economic opportunity programs. Johnson’s war on poverty set the stage for transformative legislation that redefined the federal government’s role in social welfare. This historic address underscored the nation’s commitment to social equity and left a lasting impact on public policy.



Speaking to a joint session of Congress, President Lyndon B Johnson said one of his aims was unconditional war on poverty in America (AP Photo)

Looking Back At January 1 - 15

In 1790, President George Washington delivered the first State of the Union address in New York City, then the capital of the United States. This address marked the formal beginning of a tradition that continues to this day, providing presidents with a platform to outline their legislative agenda and national priorities. Washington's speech emphasized the importance of unity, defense, and economic stability in the fledgling republic. This foundational moment in American history established a precedent for presidential communication that underscores the importance of accountability and vision in governance.



President Washington delivered the first State Of The Union address in New York City

On January 8, 1867, the U.S. House of Representatives joined the Senate in overriding President Andrew Johnson's veto of the District of Columbia Suffrage Act. This landmark legislation granted Black men in the nation's capital the right to vote, a pivotal step during the Reconstruction era. It demonstrated the growing commitment to civil rights in the post-Civil War United States and signaled the beginning of broader suffrage reforms. This action was a powerful assertion of Congressional authority and a significant stride toward racial equality, despite the fierce resistance that lay ahead.



DC Suffrage Act

More recently, on January 8, 2023, Brazil witnessed a shocking parallel to the January 6, 2021, insurrection incited by President Donald Trump in the United States. Supporters of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, refusing to accept his electoral defeat, stormed Congress, the Supreme Court, and the presidential palace in Brasília. This violent uprising occurred just one week after the inauguration of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and highlighted the fragility of democratic institutions in the face of misinformation and populist rhetoric. The events of that day underscored the global challenges of safeguarding democracy in the 21st century.



Bolsonaro supporters storm presidential palace

See this video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/Worldsways>

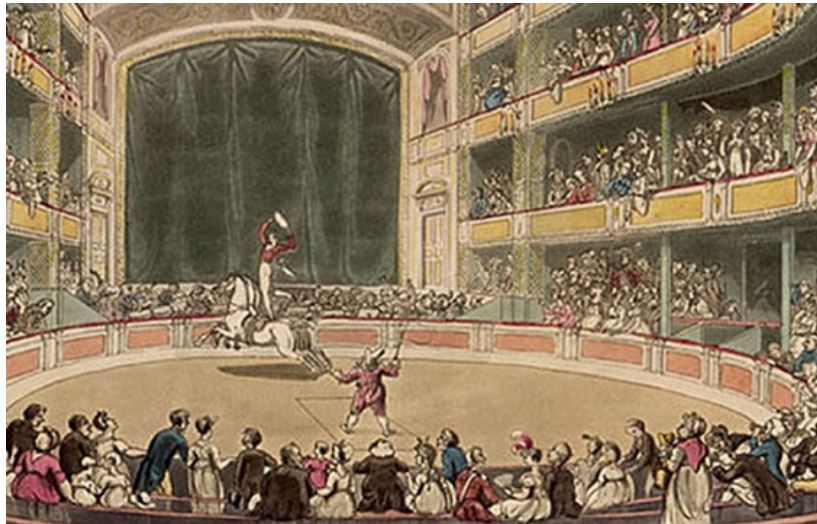
January 9

1768: The Birth of the Modern Circus



Philip Astley, the originator of the modern circus

On January 9, 1768, Philip Astley, an English cavalryman turned entertainer, created what is widely recognized as the first modern circus in London. Astley's innovation was combining equestrian displays with other acts, such as acrobatics and juggling, performed within a circular arena, which improved visibility for audiences. This circular format, along with his diverse performances, laid the foundation for the modern circus and influenced similar shows worldwide. His pioneering vision turned entertainment into a structured art form, and the circus remains a global tradition today.



A horse-mad Englishman created the circus

1493: Columbus Encounters the “Mermaids”



Columbus mistakes manatees for mermaids

On this day in 1493, Christopher Columbus, sailing near what is now the Dominican Republic, reported seeing what he described as “mermaids.” These creatures, however, were not mythical beings but manatees—a marine mammal known for its gentle demeanor and rounded features. Columbus, influenced by folklore, noted that these “mermaids” were not as enchanting as the tales had suggested. This encounter underscores the interplay between myth and discovery during the Age of Exploration, revealing how new worlds challenged old beliefs.



Columbus thought he saw mermaids after 3 months at sea

2005: Mahmoud Abbas Elected Palestinian President

Following the death of longtime leader Yasser Arafat in November 2004, Mahmoud Abbas was elected president of the Palestinian Authority on January 9, 2005. Abbas's election came during a pivotal time, as the region sought a new path for peace amidst ongoing conflict with Israel. Abbas's leadership marked a continuation of Palestinian efforts toward self-determination while navigating complex international relations. This event remains significant for its impact on Middle Eastern geopolitics and the quest for stability in the region.



The PLO declared Abbas the winner

2007: The Revolutionary iPhone Debut



The iphone had everything

In 2007, Steve Jobs, co-founder and CEO of Apple, unveiled the first iPhone at the Macworld Conference in San Francisco. The iPhone, which combined a phone, an iPod, and an internet browser into a single device, revolutionized technology and communication. It marked the beginning of the smartphone era, transforming industries and daily life through its innovative design and functionality. This moment in history exemplifies how visionary technology can reshape society and redefine how humans interact with the world.



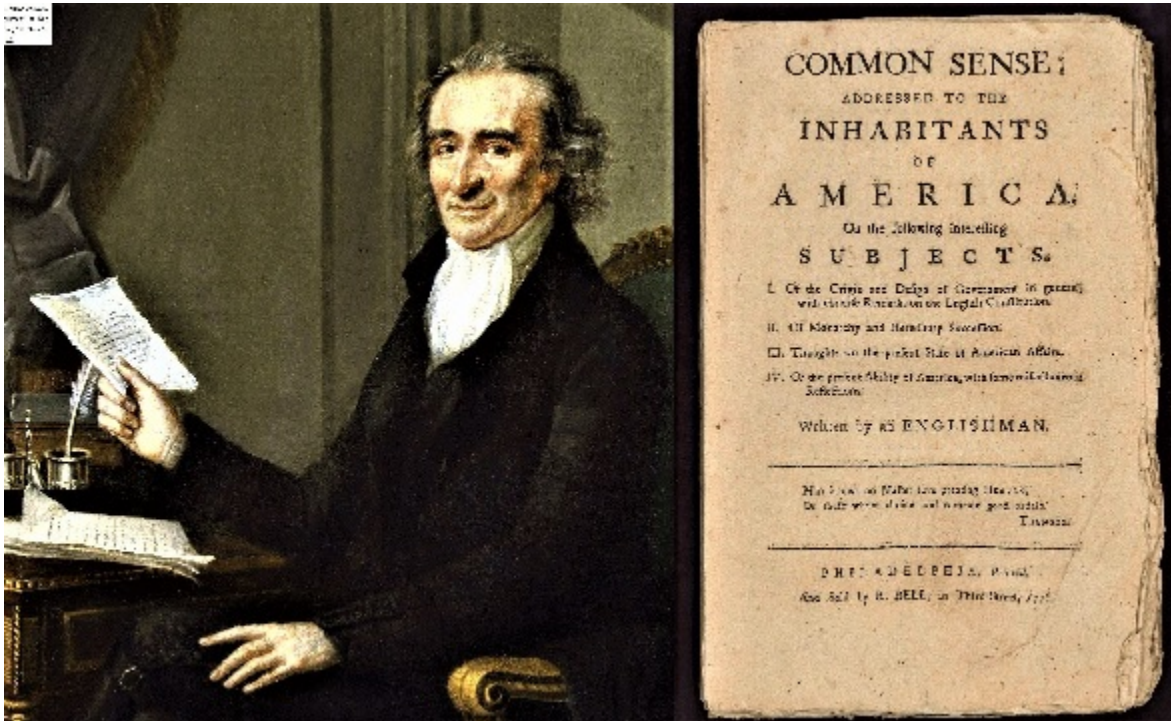
Steve Jobs introduces the iphone

See this video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/Worldsways>

January 10

1776 Thomas Paine's Common Sense

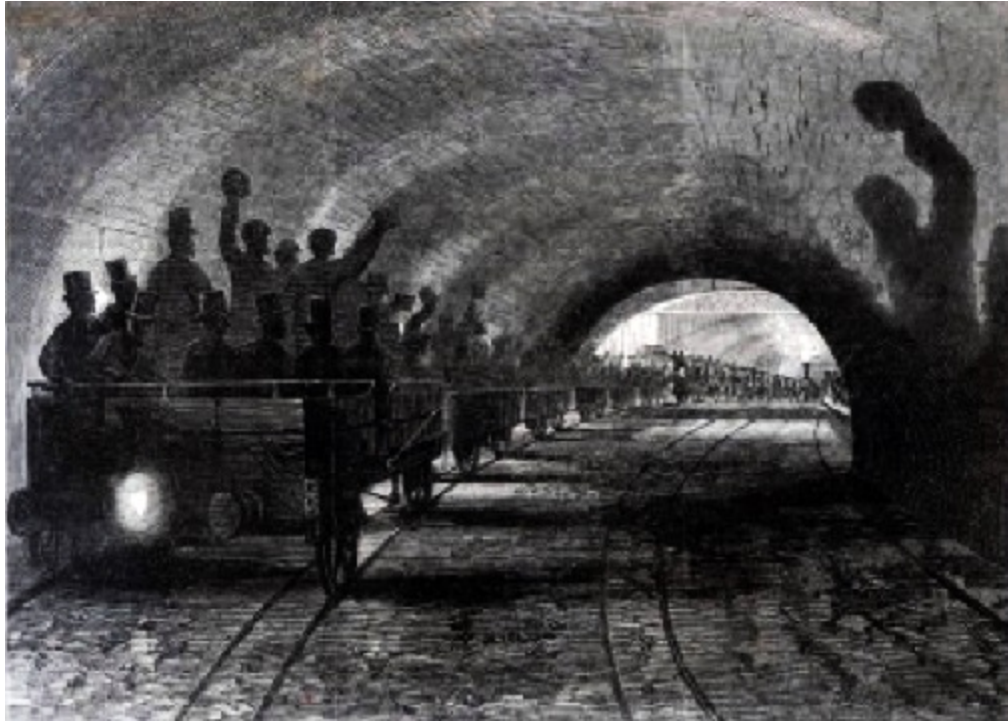
On January 10, 1776, Thomas Paine ignited revolutionary fervor, by anonymously publishing "Common Sense,"



Thomas Paine published Common Sense

a pamphlet that powerfully argued for American independence. Written in plain, persuasive language, it dismantled the legitimacy of British rule and monarchy while rallying colonial citizens toward self-governance. Within months, the pamphlet sold over 100,000 copies, influencing the Declaration of Independence. By capturing the spirit of liberty, *Common Sense* proved pivotal in transforming discontent into unified action, marking a cornerstone in the journey to American independence.

1863 The London Underground



London's Metropolitan Railway

On this day in 1863, the London Underground made its historic debut with the opening of the Metropolitan Railway, the world's first underground passenger line. Stretching between Paddington and Farringdon Street, the line provided a novel solution to London's growing urban congestion. Operated with steam-powered trains, this groundbreaking achievement was not without challenges—early passengers endured smoke-filled tunnels—but it revolutionized urban transport and set the stage for modern subway systems worldwide.

1920 League Of Nations Established



With the Treaty of Versailles, the next step was to create the league of nations

This day in 1920 saw the establishment of the League of Nations, as the Treaty of Versailles officially took effect.



In the US some ridiculed President Wilson about the League of Nations

Created in the aftermath of World War I, the League represented the world's first attempt at a global organization aimed at maintaining peace and preventing future conflicts. Despite its noble mission, the League faced challenges, including the absence of key powers like the United States, and its limited enforcement capabilities undermined its effectiveness. Nonetheless, its legacy informed the creation of the United Nations after World War II, advancing the dream of international cooperation.

1940 Lend-Lease Program



FDR's lend lease program required a lot of work from all



Dr Seuss criticized the Lend Lease Act saying it would get the US involved in war.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed the Lend-Lease Act to Congress, a bold plan to aid Allied nations during World War II without directly involving the United States in combat.

The program allowed the U.S. to supply Britain, and later other Allies, with vital military equipment and resources in exchange for future repayment or return. This strategic move not only bolstered Britain against Nazi Germany but also positioned America as a critical supporter of the Allied cause, paving the way for eventual U.S. entry into the war.

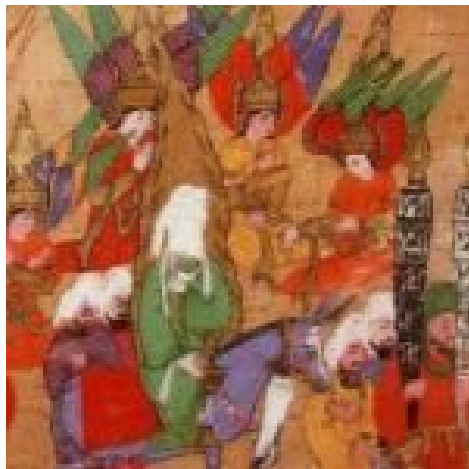
See this video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/Worldsways>

January 11



Before Entering Mecca Muhammad reiterated his order that there should be no bloodshed unless they attacked

January 11, 630 CE: The Conquest of Mecca



Muslims conquer Mecca without bloodshed

Looking Back At January 1 - 15

On this day in 630 CE, the Prophet Muhammad led his followers in a peaceful conquest of Mecca, marking a turning point in the history of Islam. The Quraysh, who had been in conflict with Muhammad and his followers for years, surrendered without bloodshed. This monumental event not only brought Mecca under Islamic control but also solidified the Kaaba as the spiritual center of Islam. The act of forgiveness shown by Muhammad towards the Quraysh set a precedent for reconciliation and unity in Islamic tradition. The conquest of Mecca stands as a pivotal moment in religious history, emphasizing the power of diplomacy and faith.



The Qarmatians took the black stone with them

January 11, 930 CE: The Sacking of Mecca

Three centuries later, in 930 CE, Mecca faced a starkly different event when it was sacked by the Qarmatian leader Abu Tahir al-Jannabi. The Qarmatians, a radical Ismaili sect, shocked the Muslim world by desecrating the holy city during the Hajj pilgrimage. They looted the Kaaba, stealing the revered Black Stone, and polluted the Zamzam Well with the bodies of the slain. This sacrilegious act caused outrage across the Islamic world and led to a prolonged period of instability. The theft of the Black Stone, which was eventually returned, highlighted the deep divisions within the Muslim community of the time. The sacking of Mecca serves as a grim reminder of the dangers of religious and political extremism.



President Theodore Roosevelt utilized the Antiquities Act of 1906 to designate the Grand Canyon as a national monument.

January 11, 1908: The Grand Canyon Becomes a National Monument

Fast forward to 1908, when President Theodore Roosevelt utilized the Antiquities Act of 1906 to designate the Grand Canyon as a national monument. Recognizing its unparalleled natural beauty and geological significance, Roosevelt's decision protected the area from exploitation and development. This move laid the groundwork for the Grand Canyon's eventual designation as a national park in 1919. Today, it remains one of the most iconic natural wonders in the world, attracting millions of visitors annually. Roosevelt's visionary act underscores the importance of environmental conservation and the enduring value of preserving natural heritage for future generations.



Trump is impeached a second time

January 11, 2021: Impeachment Proceedings Against Donald Trump

In a more recent historical moment, January 11, 2021, marked the introduction of an article of impeachment against then-President Donald Trump by House Democrats. This followed the violent attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, where a mob sought to disrupt the certification of the 2020 presidential election results. The article charged Trump with “incitement of insurrection,” reflecting the severity of the events and their implications for American democracy. The impeachment proceedings, which ultimately resulted in Trump’s acquittal by the Senate, sparked widespread debate about accountability, the limits of presidential power, and the resilience of democratic institutions. This event continues to shape discussions about governance and the rule of law in the United States.

See this video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/Worldsways>

January 12



A coin from the days of Zeno

January 12, 475: Zeno’s Flight and Basiliscus’s Brief Reign



Zeno, the last Eastern Roman Emperor

On January 12, 475, the Byzantine Emperor Zeno was forced to flee Constantinople amidst a political coup. His trusted general, Basiliscus, seized power and declared himself emperor. Basiliscus's ascension was fraught with difficulties, as his policies and governance alienated many in the Byzantine elite and the military. Zeno, rallying support from loyalists, returned to reclaim the throne in 476, marking the end of Basiliscus's short-lived reign. This event exemplifies the turbulence of Byzantine politics, where loyalty and ambition often dictated the empire's leadership.

January 12, 1554: Bayinnaung's Coronation and His Expansive Empire



Bayinnaung

Looking Back At January 1 - 15

Bayinnaung was crowned King of Burma on January 12, 1554, initiating a reign that would transform



Bayinnaung, King of Burma

Southeast Asia. Known as the “Conqueror of Ten Directions,” Bayinnaung expanded the Toungoo Dynasty into the largest empire in the region’s history, encompassing modern-day Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and parts of Cambodia. His administrative reforms, such as the centralization of power and promotion of Theravāda Buddhism, laid the foundation for lasting cultural and political unity. Bayinnaung’s reign symbolizes the pinnacle of Burmese imperial power and its influence on Southeast Asian history.



Hattie Caraway at her desk

January 12, 1932: Hattie Caraway Breaks Gender Barriers

On this date in 1932, Hattie Caraway made history by becoming the first woman elected to the United



Hattie Caraway, the first woman elected to the United States Senate

States Senate. Initially appointed to fill the vacancy left by her late husband, Caraway surprised the political establishment by winning a special election with grassroots support. Known for her advocacy of New Deal policies and support for working-class Americans, Caraway served in the Senate for nearly 14 years. Her success marked a significant milestone in the fight for women's political representation, inspiring future generations of women to pursue leadership roles.



National Security Council 1976

January 12, 1976: PLO Participation in the United Nations Debate

On January 12, 1976, the United Nations Security Council voted 11-1 to allow the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to participate in a Security Council debate, albeit without voting rights. The United States cast the lone dissenting vote, citing the PLO's involvement in terrorism and concerns about legitimizing its role within the UN. This decision reflected the global tensions of the Cold War era, where the PLO was seen by many as a representative of Palestinian aspirations, while others viewed its methods as a threat to international order. This moment underscored the challenges of balancing diplomatic inclusion with concerns over violence and state sovereignty.



Israeli Aid Was Essential To The Recovery Efforts After The 2010 Earthquake In Haiti

January 12, 2010: The Haitian Earthquake Catastrophe

On January 12, 2010, a catastrophic earthquake with a magnitude of 7.0 struck Haiti, resulting in widespread devastation.



Earthquake in Haiti caused massive destruction

Looking Back At January 1 - 15

The disaster claimed between 220,000 and 300,000 lives and left over 1.5 million people homeless. The epicenter near Port-au-Prince exacerbated the destruction, crippling the nation's infrastructure and economy. Despite international aid efforts, Haiti's recovery was hindered by systemic challenges, including governance issues and limited resources. This tragedy remains a stark reminder of the vulnerability of impoverished nations to natural disasters and the critical importance of global solidarity in crisis response.

See this video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/Worldsways>

January 13



Nika Riots broke out during the racing season

The Nika Riots and the Fragility of Imperial Rule (532 CE)

On January 13, 532 CE, the Nika riots erupted in Constantinople, the vibrant heart of the Byzantine



Nika Riots, when Constantinople Burned

Empire. The unrest began in the Hippodrome, where chariot racing was a cornerstone of public life. Fueled by political dissatisfaction and simmering grievances with Emperor Justinian I, the riots escalated into a full-scale rebellion. Protesters, united under the cries of “Nika” (Victory), burned much of the city and left tens of thousands dead before Justinian’s forces restored order. These riots underscored the precarious balance of power in ancient empires, where public spectacle and political discord could ignite devastating consequences.



William Brydon was the only soldier from his army to survive

The Sole Survivor of a Lost Army (1842)

On January 13, 1842, Dr. William Brydon achieved a grim notoriety as the sole known survivor of the



Dr William Brydon

British retreat from Kabul during the First Anglo-Afghan War. Of the 16,500 soldiers and civilians who attempted to flee through the snow-covered mountains, only Brydon reached the British garrison in Jalalabad, gravely injured and clinging to life. This catastrophic defeat marked a turning point in British imperial history, showcasing the perils of military overreach and the resilience of Afghan resistance. Brydon's survival became an enduring symbol of human endurance amid the chaos of war.



The Treaty of Cahuenga ended the Mexican American War

The Treaty of Cahuenga and the End of Hostilities in California (1847)

On January 13, 1847, the Treaty of Cahuenga brought an end to the Mexican-American War in



Treaty of Cahuenga

California. Signed by U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel John C. Frémont and Mexican General Andrés Bico, the treaty was remarkable for its peaceful terms. Californio forces laid down their arms, and no further bloodshed occurred in the region. This accord demonstrated the potential for diplomacy to resolve conflicts even in the midst of broader military struggles, paving the way for California's transition into U.S. governance.



National Geographic Society founded

The Birth of a Global Institution: The National Geographic Society (1888)

January 13, 1888, witnessed the founding of the National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C., by



National Geographic Society

33 visionaries passionate about science, exploration, and education. What began as a small group of intellectuals evolved into a global institution, renowned for its iconic magazine and contributions to geographic and scientific understanding. By promoting knowledge of the natural world, the Society helped shape modern attitudes toward conservation and global awareness, cementing its place as a beacon of discovery.



Dr Pilailuk Okada, Head of the Thai National Influenza Centre, and her team of microbiologists

The First Confirmed Case of COVID-19 Outside China (2020)



Thailand finds first case of novel Wuhan virus in traveler from China

On January 13, 2020, the Thai Ministry of Public Health confirmed the first recorded case of COVID-19 outside China. This pivotal moment marked the virus's transition from a regional outbreak to a global health emergency. As nations scrambled to respond, the confirmation in Thailand highlighted the interconnected nature of the modern world and the urgent need for international cooperation in combating pandemics. It was a harbinger of the unprecedented challenges to come in the months that followed.

See this video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/Worldsways>

January 14



Looking Back At January 1 - 15

The United States Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris making the U.S. a free and sovereign nation

On January 14, 1784, the United States Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris, formally ending the



The United States Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris with Great Britain, ending the war

American Revolutionary War. This monumental agreement marked the United States' emergence as an independent nation, severing its colonial ties to Great Britain. The treaty—signed on September 3, 1783, by representatives of the United States and King George III—defined the boundaries of the new nation and ensured fishing rights for Americans in Canadian waters. It also established terms for the restitution of property and the release of prisoners. This pivotal moment underscored the enduring importance of diplomacy in shaping the course of nations.



Looking Back At January 1 - 15

A scene from the Battle of Rivoli

On January 14, 1797, the Battle of Rivoli unfolded as a decisive French victory under the command of



War of the First Coalition

Napoleon Bonaparte. This battle, fought in northern Italy during the War of the First Coalition, saw Napoleon's forces outmaneuver and defeat the Austrian army. The triumph at Rivoli was critical, as it solidified French control over northern Italy and demonstrated Napoleon's military genius. This victory not only marked the beginning of the end for the coalition opposing France but also heralded two decades of French hegemony in Italy. The significance of this event lies in its role in reshaping European geopolitics and establishing Napoleon as a formidable leader.



The Summer of Love began with the Human Be In

In 1967, the Human Be-In took place in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, symbolizing the cultural



Directions To Human Be In

revolution of the 1960s. This gathering, attended by thousands of people, brought together leading figures of the counterculture movement, such as Timothy Leary and Allen Ginsberg. The event celebrated personal liberation, communal living, and the exploration of consciousness through music, art, and psychedelics. Often considered the precursor to the Summer of Love, the Human Be-In captured the spirit of a generation questioning traditional societal norms and advocating for peace, love, and equality. This moment remains emblematic of the transformative cultural shifts of the 20th century.



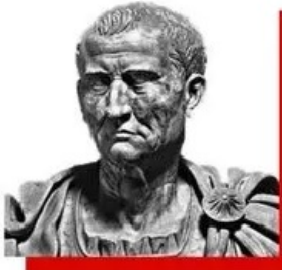
The U.S. Embassy in Yemen was closed because of Al Qaeda threats

On January 14, 2010, Yemen declared open war against the terrorist organization al-Qaeda. This declaration followed a series of escalating attacks and demonstrated Yemen's commitment to combating extremism within its borders. The move came amid growing international pressure and concern over al-Qaeda's activities in the region, including the attempted Christmas Day bombing of a U.S. airliner in 2009. Yemen's decision to openly confront al-Qaeda underscored the global nature of the fight against terrorism and highlighted the complexities of addressing such threats in politically unstable regions. This declaration marked a critical step in Yemen's efforts to restore security and stability.

See this video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/Worldsways>

January 15

YEAR OF THE FOUR EMPERORS



Galba



Otho



Vitellius



Vespasian

Year of the four emperors

The Rise and Fall of Emperor Otho

On January 15, 69 CE, Marcus Salvius Otho declared himself Emperor of Rome, seizing power amidst



Otho statue

Looking Back At January 1 - 15

the tumultuous Year of the Four Emperors—a time of unprecedented political upheaval. His ascent followed the brief rule of Galba, whom Otho conspired against and overthrew. Though his reign was short-lived, lasting only three months, Otho's tenure highlighted the fragility of Roman imperial succession during this chaotic period. His suicide in April 69 marked the end of his rule, but it also demonstrated a rare act of self-sacrifice aimed at preventing further civil war. This moment in Roman history underscores the volatility of leadership in ancient empires and the lengths leaders would go to for perceived stability.



coronation of Queen Elizabeth I

1559 The Coronation of Elizabeth I



Some called her bloody Elizabeth

In 1559, January 15 saw the coronation of Elizabeth I in Westminster Abbey, London. Ascending the throne after the death of her half-sister Mary I, Elizabeth inherited a kingdom deeply divided by religious conflict. Her reign, known as the Elizabethan Era, became one of the most celebrated in English history, marked by the flourishing of the arts, the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, and the establishment of the Protestant Church of England. The coronation of Elizabeth I was not merely a royal ceremony but the dawn of a transformative age that defined England's cultural and political identity.

1889 The Incorporation of Coca-Cola



Coke bottles through the years



Ad for Coca Cola

On January 15, 1889, the Pemberton Medicine Company, the precursor to The Coca-Cola Company, was officially incorporated in Atlanta, Georgia. Originally marketed as a medicinal tonic, Coca-Cola soon evolved into a beloved global beverage. Its journey from a local product to an international symbol of refreshment and American culture reflects the rise of modern consumerism and the power of branding. This incorporation marked the start of a commercial empire that continues to influence global markets today.

The Miracle on the Hudson

On January 15, 2009, US Airways Flight 1549 achieved an extraordinary feat of survival when Captain



Miracle on the Hudson

Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger successfully landed the plane on the Hudson River after a bird strike disabled both engines. The quick-thinking crew and the calm execution of an emergency water landing resulted in the rescue of all 155 passengers and crew. Dubbed “The Miracle on the Hudson,” this incident showcased the importance of rigorous pilot training and emergency preparedness, leaving a legacy of hope and inspiration in modern aviation history.



All passengers and crew survived

Notes

Looking Back At January 1-15

The first volume in the "Looking Back" series, this book scratches the surface of milestone events that have occurred in history in the first fifteen days of the year, January 1 - 15.

From emancipation of slaves in North America, to the "Miracle on the Hudson," this little book is filled with more than 60 stories of events and people who have shaped the world we're in.