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American Revolution

1777

New York adopts state constitution

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CITE

The first New York state constitution is formally adopted by the Convention of Representatives of the State of New York, meeting in the upstate town of Kingston, on this day in 1777.

The constitution began by declaring the possibility of reconciliation between Britain and its former American colonies as remote and uncertain, thereby making the creation of a new New York government necessary for the preservation of internal peace, virtue, and good order.

Three governmental branches were created by the new constitution: an executive branch, a judicial branch and a legislative branch. The constitution called for the election of a governor and 24 senators and identified eligible voters as men who were possessed of freeholds of the

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value of one hundred pounds, over and above all debts charged thereon. The constitution also called for the election of 70 assemblymen for 14 declared counties who were to be elected by male inhabitant of full age, who shall have personally resided within one of the counties of this State for six months immediately preceding the day of election... New York also guaranteed the right to trial by jury, which had been eroded under British rule.

Despite the New Yorkers' stalwart efforts to erect a new government, they were an occupied people. The British had taken Brooklyn Heights on August 27, 1776; lower Manhattan fell soon after and was burned on September 21. The rest of New York City and Westchester County came under British control in October of that year.



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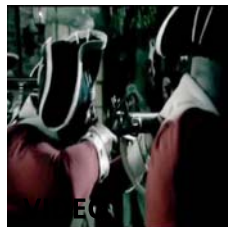
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Lead Story

1980

Castro announces Mariel Boatlift (/this-day-in-history/castro-announces-mariel-boatlift)

On April 20, 1980, the Castro regime announces that all Cubans wishing to emigrate to the U.S. are free to board boats at the port of Mariel west of Havana, launching the Mariel Boatlift. The first of 125,000 Cuban refugees from Mariel reached Florida the next day. The boatlift was precipitated...

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Automotive

2008

Danica Patrick becomes first woman to win Indy race (/this-day-in-history/danica-patrick-becomes-first-woman-to-win-indy-race)

On April 20, 2008, 26-year-old Danica Patrick wins the Indy Japan 300 at Twin Ring Montegi in Montegi, Japan, making her the first female winner in IndyCar racing history. Danica Patrick was born on March 25, 1982, in Beloit, Wisconsin. She became involved in racing as a young girl and as...

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Civil War

1861

Lee resigns from U.S. Army (/this-day-in-history/lee-resigns-from-u-s-army)

Colonel Robert E. Lee resigns from the United States army two days after he was offered

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command of the Union army and three days after his native state, Virginia, seceded from the Union. Lee opposed secession, but he was a loyal son of Virginia. His official resignation was only one sentence,...

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Cold War

1978

Korean Air Lines jet forced down over Soviet Union (/this-day-in-history/korean-air-lines-jet-forced-down-over-soviet-union)

Soviet aircraft force a Korean Air Lines passenger jet to land in the Soviet Union after the jet veers into Russian airspace. Two people were killed and several others injured when the jet made a rough landing on a frozen lake about 300 miles south of Murmansk. The jet was on...

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Crime

1999

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A massacre at Columbine High School (/this-day-in-history/a-massacre-at-columbine-high-school)

Two teenage gunmen kill 13 people in a shooting spree at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. At about 11:20 a.m., Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, dressed in long trench coats, began shooting students outside the school before moving inside to continue their rampage. By the time SWAT team officers finally...

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Disaster
2010

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Massive oil spill begins in Gulf of Mexico (/this-day-in-history/massive-oil-spill-begins-in-gulf-of-mexico)

On this day in 2012, an explosion and fire aboard the Deepwater Horizon oil drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico, approximately 50 miles off the Louisiana coast, kills 11 people and triggers the largest offshore oil spill in American history. The rig had been in the final phases of...

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General Interest

1689

Siege of Londonderry begins (/this-day-in-history/siege-of-londonderry-begins)

James II, the former British king, begins a siege of Londonderry, a Protestant stronghold in Northern Ireland. In 1688, James II, a Catholic, was deposed by his Protestant daughter, Mary, and her husband, William of Orange, in a bloodless coup known as the Glorious Revolution. James fled to France and in...

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1871

Ku Klux Act passed by Congress (/this-day-in-history/ku-klux-act-passed-by-congress)

With passage of the Third Force Act, popularly known as the Ku Klux Act, Congress authorizes President Ulysses S. Grant to declare martial law, impose heavy penalties against terrorist organizations, and use military force to suppress the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Founded in 1865 by a group of Confederate veterans, the...

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1902

Curies isolate radium (/this-day-in-history/curies-isolate-radium)

On April 20, 1902, Marie and Pierre Curie successfully isolate radioactive radium salts from the mineral pitchblende in their laboratory in Paris. In 1898, the Curies discovered the existence of the elements radium and polonium in their research of pitchblende. One year after isolating radium, they would share the 1903...

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1999

Columbine High School massacre (/this-day-in-history/columbine-high-school-massacre)

On this day in 1999, two teenage gunmen kill 13 people in a shooting spree at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, south of Denver. At approximately 11:19 a.m., Dylan Klebold, 18, and Eric Harris, 17, dressed in trench coats, began shooting students outside the school before moving inside to...

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Hollywood

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1926

New sound process for films announced (/this-day-in-history/new-sound-process-for-films-announced)

On this day in 1926, Western Electric, the manufacturing arm of the American Telephone & Telegraph Company (AT&T), and the Warner Brothers film studio officially introduce Vitaphone, a new process that will enable the addition of sound to film. By the mid-1920s, several competing systems had been developed to add sound...

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Literary

1841

First detective story is published (/this-day-in-history/first-detective-story-is-published)

Edgar Allen Poe's story, The Murders in the Rue Morgue, first appears in Graham's Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine. The tale is generally considered to be the first detective story. The story describes the extraordinary "analytical

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power” used by Monsieur C. Auguste Dupin to solve a series of murders in Paris....

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Music

1923

“Mambo King” Tito Puente is born (/this-day-in-history/mambo-king-tito-puente-is-born)

Tito Puente, the bandleader and percussionist who helped popularize Latin dance music and jazz in America, is born on this day in 1923 in New York City. During a career that spanned six decades, the dynamic showman nicknamed “El Rey” (The King), recorded over 100 albums, won five Grammy Awards...

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Old West

1914

Militia slaughters strikers at Ludlow, Colorado (/this-

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Ending a bitter coal-miners' strike, Colorado militiamen attack a tent colony of strikers, killing dozens of men, women, and children. The conflict had begun the previous September. About 11,000 miners in southern Colorado went on strike against the powerful Colorado Fuel & Iron Corporation (CF&I) to protest low pay, dangerous...

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Presidential

1898

McKinley asks for declaration of war with Spain (/this-day-in-history/mckinley-asks-for-declaration-of-war-with-spain)

President William McKinley asks Congress to declare war on Spain on this day in 1898. In 1895, Cuba, located less than 100 miles south of the United States, attempted to overthrow Spanish colonial rule. The rebels received

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financial assistance from private U.S. interests
and used America as a base of...

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Sports

1986

Jordan scores 63 points in playoff game (/this-day-in- history/jordan-scores- 63-points-in-playoff-game)

On April 20, 1986, the Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan scores 63 points in an NBA playoff game against the Boston Celtics, setting a post-season scoring record. Despite Jordan's achievement, the Bulls lost to the Celtics in double overtime, 135-131. Boston swept the three-game series and went on to win the...

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Vietnam War

1970

Nixon announces more troop withdrawals (/this-day-in-history/nixon-announces-more-troop-withdrawals)

In a televised speech, President Nixon pledges to withdraw 150,000 more U.S. troops over the next year “based entirely on the progress” of the Vietnamization program. His program, which had first been announced in June 1969, included three parts. First, the United States would step up its effort to improve...

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1971

“Fragging” on the rise in U.S. units (/this-day-in-history/fragging-on-the-rise-in-u-s-units)

The Pentagon releases figures confirming that fragging incidents are on the rise. In 1970, 209 such incidents caused the deaths of 34 men; in 1969, 96 such incidents cost 34 men their lives.

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Fragging was a slang term used to describe U.S. military personnel tossing of fragmentation hand grenades (hence...

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World War I

1917

Nivelle Offensive ends in failure (/this-day-in-history/nivelle-offensive-ends-in-failure)

On this day in 1917, an ambitious Allied offensive against German troops near the Aisne River in central France, spearheaded by the French commander in chief, Robert Nivelle, ends in dismal failure. Nivelle, who had replaced Joseph Joffre in December 1915 as head of all French forces, had tenaciously argued for...

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World War II

1945

Operation Corncob is

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launched while Hitler celebrates his birthday (/this-day-in-history/operation-corncob-is-launched-while-hitler-celebrates-his-birthday)

On this day in 1945, Allied bombers in Italy begin a three-day attack on the bridges over the rivers Adige and Brenta to cut off German lines of retreat on the peninsula. Meanwhile, Adolf Hitler celebrates his 56th birthday as a Gestapo reign of terror results in the hanging of...

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