

Significant American History Events 1973--present (excluding Vietnam & Watergate)

Roe v. Wade, 1973. Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional most state statutes restricting abortion. It ruled that a state may not prevent a woman from having an abortion during the first 3 months of pregnancy, and could regulate, but not prohibit abortion during the second trimester. Decision in effect overturned anti-abortion laws in 46 states.

Election of 1976. Democratic Governor Jimmy Carter of Georgia defeated Gerald Ford, who was a colorless and uninspiring campaigner.

Bakke v. Board of Regents, University of California at Davis, 1978. Barred colleges from admitting students solely on the basis of race, but allowed them to include race along with other considerations when deciding which students to admit.

Iranian Hostage Crisis-1978 - a popular uprising forced the Shah to flee Iran and a Muslim and national leader, the Ayatollah Khomeini, established an Islamic Republic based on the Koran. President Carter allowed the Shah to come to the U.S. for medical reasons. Young Iranian militants broke into the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and kept the staff hostage for 444 days, releasing them in January, 1981.

Panama Canal Treaty 1978 - Passed by President Carter, this called for the gradual return of the Panama Canal to the people and government of Panama. It provided for the transfer of canal ownership to Panama in 1999 and guaranteed its neutrality.

Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty-1978: Menachem Begin, Anwar Sadat sign agreement brokered by Pres. Carter. Product of the Camp David Accords, Sadat represented Egypt and Begin represented Israel. Israel returned land to Egypt in exchange for Egyptian recognition. Earned both men the Noble Peace Prize.

Election of 1980: Ronald Reagan, Republican defeated Jimmy Carter, Democrat and John B. Anderson, Independent. The issues were government spending and traditional values.

Reaganomics: Pres. Reagan's theory that if one cuts taxes, it will spur the growth of public spending and improve the economy. It included tax breaks for the rich, "supply-side economics," and "trickle down" theory.

Supply side economics: Reaganomics policy based on the theory that allowing companies the opportunity to make profits, and encouraging investment, will stimulate the economy and lead to higher standards of living for everyone. Argued that tax cuts can be used stimulate economic growth. Move money into the hands of the people and they will invest, thus creating prosperity, it postulated.

Iran-Contra scandal-1985. U.S. policymakers seek to assist anti-communist *contras* in Nicaragua and sell arms to Iran in an attempt to free American hostages held in Lebanon. Oliver North questioned by Congress for illegal activities. Pres. Reagan not tied to any direct wrongdoing

Perestroika (restructuring) and **Glasnost** (openness). Themes associated with Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, who in 1985 attempted to reduce tension with the U.S. in a series of summits with Pres. Reagan. Reform policies led to the breakup of

the Soviet Union and a number of Eastern European nations rejecting communism. In 1989 the Berlin Wall was torn down and Germany was reunified for the first time since 1945.

Operation Desert Storm—1991. Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the U.S.-led coalition bombed Baghdad and routed Saddam Hussein's forces in a 100-hour battle. Pres. Bush, fearing the power vacuum that would result with Saddam's fall, refused to capture Baghdad and Saddam was left in power.

Election of 1992. Gov. Bill Clinton of Arkansas defeated George Bush and Ross Perot after economic pressures caused Pres. Bush to raise taxes. Clinton's campaign focused on economic issues ("It's the economy, stupid!")

Somali intervention, 1992. U.S. troops attempted to provide food relief and stabilize the political situation, but left after a number of soldiers were killed. Because of this setback, the U.S. provided no assistance when over 1 million Rwandans were murdered in 1994.

Yugoslavia intervention. Ethnic strife in Yugoslavia resulted in bloodshed after Bosnia and Croatia declared their independence in 1991. Serbian leader Milosevic urged Serbs in the region to fight other groups. U.S. and NATO forces used air strikes to force Serbia to withdraw from the region of Kosovo in 1999.

NAFTA, 1993—North American Free Trade Agreement reduced tariffs between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico.

Clinton Impeachment Crisis—Investigations by Special Prosecutor Kenneth Starr into Clinton financial improprieties led him in 1998 to interview Monica Lewinsky, a 21-year old White House intern about a sexual affair with the President. Clinton was later impeached by the House for lying to a grand jury, suborning perjury, and leading a cover-up. In January 1999 Clinton was acquitted of all charges by the Senate.

Election of 2000. Vice-president Al Gore defeated Governor George W. Bush of Texas by over 500,000 popular votes, but lost by 300 votes (out of 6 million cast) in Florida, whose 25 electoral votes would prove decisive. In *Bush v. Gore*, the Supreme Court voted 5-4 not to manually recount the ballots and Bush was elected president by the Electoral College.

September 11, 2001—Al Qaeda terrorists financed by Osama Bin Laden led four suicide attacks by planes (two destroying the World Trade Center in New York, one crashing into the Pentagon, and a fourth crashing in Pennsylvania) that killed over 3000 Americans and caused a financial slump.

Afghanistan offensive, October 2001. Air attacks and a U.S. invasion toppled the repressive Taliban regime that had sheltered Bin Laden. The U.S. began a military presence there that continues today.

Iraqi invasion, March 2003. Hoping for regime change in Iraq and contending that the Iraqis were hiding weapons of mass destruction, the U.S. led an air and land invasion of Iraq, despite lack of support from the United Nations or many of the nations in the Desert Storm coalition. After two months, Saddam's regime had collapsed and the U.S. began what appears to be a long, costly occupation of the nation.

