

## Looking Back From 2011

It's time once again to have a look back in time and realize just how fast it slips away from us.

Ten years ago – 2001; we were already well into our new century and had experienced our first national election, which saw George W. Bush sworn in as our 43<sup>rd</sup> president; our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at the Colebrook Consolidated School were being born; Colebrook was building a new firehouse in the Forge District and George Wilber ceased producing milk from his once large herd of Brown Swiss cows, ending the era of small farms in what since Colonial times had been the backbone of our economy.

Twenty years ago – 1991; Ronald Reagan became president; Gulf war breaks out as US-led Alliance with sanction of UN invades Kuwait and Iraq, expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait; war begins in Yugoslavia, changing forever the political make-up in the Balkans.

Thirty years ago - 1981; Egyptian president Sadat assassinated by Islamic fundamentalists; first US space shuttle Columbia makes successful flight; Voyager 2 flies by Saturn; the 80s ushered in the era of proliferation of the personal computer, where the average individual could instantly communicate and interact with any other computer in the world.

Forty years ago – 1971; People's Republic of China admitted to UN in place of Taiwan; civil war in Pakistan between East and West Pakistan; East Pakistan becomes the independent nation of Bangladesh; US astronauts continue manned exploration of the moon's surface; US satellite Mariner 9 orbits Mars.

Fifty years ago – 1961; John F. Kennedy elected president; U.S. breaks diplomatic relations with Cuba; Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba by anti-Castro Free Cuban forces supported by USA fails; East Germany builds the Berlin wall. Our flag had 50 stars.

Sixty years ago – 1951; Libya becomes an independent nation; Gen. Mac Arthur relieved of command in Korea for advocating use of atomic weapons; peace treaty signed with Japan; first transistors developed for commercial use; Chrysler introduces power steering for automobiles; transcontinental television broadcasting begins in the USA.

Seventy years ago – 1941; In May, British forces in North Africa are driven back to the Egyptian frontier by German army commanded by Rommel; On December 7<sup>th</sup>, Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor, plunging U.S. into WWII; aerosol spray containers introduced; first Jeeps are produced on designs developed in 1940.

Eighty years ago – 1931; Japanese troops occupy Manchuria; DuPont introduces Freon.

Ninety years ago – 1921; Women have had the right to vote for one year; Irish Free State created within the British Empire. Our flag had 48 stars.

One hundred years ago – 1911; Italo-Turkish war results in Italian victory and annexation of Tripoli from the Ottoman Empire; Amundsen reaches the South Pole. Our flag had 46 stars.

One hundred ten years ago – 1901; Queen Victoria dies after more than 63 years on the British throne; Commonwealth of Australia formed; President McKinley assassinated; Vice-

President Theodore Roosevelt becomes president; Marconi transmits first wireless signals across Atlantic; oil discovered in Texas. Our flag had 45 stars.

One hundred thirty years ago – 1881; James A. Garfield became president; the first summer camp in the U. S. for city children is established at Squam Lake, New Hampshire. Our flag had 38 stars.

One hundred fifty years have passed since Abraham Lincoln was elected president, also in 1861, the U. S. Civil War began; the U. S. flag contained 34 stars.

One hundred seventy years ago – 1841; William Henry Harrison was elected president, although he died in office after having served for one month. He was succeeded by his Vice-President, John Tyler; the Sawyer Cotton Mill in Colebrook River was beginning its first full year of operation, which was to extend to 1890; the first ever picture of the moon was taken. Our flag had 26 stars.

Two hundred ten years ago – 1801; Thomas Jefferson was elected president; 4-tined dinner forks came into common use, before that, they had either 2 or 3 tines. Our flag had 15 stars.

Two hundred thirty years ago – 1781; the War of Independence was winding down to its conclusion. On Sept. 5<sup>th</sup>, the British fleet was forced out of Chesapeake Bay by the French; on Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>, New London, Connecticut was seized and burned by the British under the command of Benedict Arnold; on October 19<sup>th</sup>, Cornwallis surrendered his army at Yorktown, Virginia. Our flag had 13 stars.

And so it goes; the years recede into the past, and only the highlights are remembered by the man in the street. Perhaps the most common occurrence in these ten-year windows is the prevalence of wars. As a species, it seems that we should make greater efforts to avert the causes of these destructive cycles before one overwhelms us.

**Historic Bytes**

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