

Civil Liberties Occasions Calendar

A compendium of dates of interest to civil libertarians and historians of civil liberties, including events that occurred here and abroad; also focusing on the record of many “firsts” by women and Blacks in the U.S. and elsewhere.

January

- 1 1863 *Pres Abraham Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation*
- 1892 *Ellis Island immigrant station opens in NY harbor*
- 1963 *Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers his famous "I have a dream" speech*
- 15 *annual Martin Luther King or Humanitarian Day*
- 18 1966 *Robert P Weaver, first black cabinet member in US history is nominated by President Lyndon B. Johnson*
- 19 1830 *Haynes-Webster debate in U.S. Senate on whether a state could nullify a Federal law*
- 21 1884 *Birthday of Roger Baldwin, founder of ACLU*
- 1908 *Sullivan ordinance (NYC), making it illegal for women to smoke in public and levying a \$5 to \$25 fine and up to 10 days in jail for infractions*
- 22 1973 *ROE v WADE anniversary*
- 23 1849 *Elizabeth Blackwell becomes first woman to graduate from medical school in U.S. (Geneva, NY)*
- 24 1916 *Federal income tax ruled constitutional by U.S. Supreme Court*
- 30 1798 *First brawl in U.S. House of Representatives between Matthew Lyon of VT and Roger Griswold of CT*
- 31 1865 *Thirteenth amendment, abolishing slavery, proposed by Congress*

February

February is Black History Month

- 1 *annual National Freedom Day, by Presidential proclamation of 1/25/49, the anniversary of President Lincoln's approval of the 13th amendment, abolishing slavery*
- 1956 *Autherine Lucy becomes first black student admitted to University of Alabama*
- 1960 *Four black college students sit down at an all-white lunch counter in Woolworth's, Greensboro, NC. Soon similar sit-ins followed in other cities in 9 states.*
- 7 1795 *Adoption of 11th amendment, curbing powers of federal judiciary in relation to states. Reaffirmed sovereignty of states by prohibiting suits against them*

- 9 1950 *U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy begins 4-year "witch hunt" by charging in a speech in Wheeling, WV, that the State Dept. is riddled with communists*
- 12 1909 *Founding of NAACP, America's oldest civil rights organization in NYC*
- 17 1964 *"One man, one vote" decision of U.S. Supreme Court, ruling that congressional districts must be roughly equal in population*
- 18 1972 *California Supreme Court ends capital punishment, calling it "cruel and unusual punishment"*
- 19 1942 *FDR executive order #9066 places about 110,000 Japanese-Americans in concentration camps. About 2/3 of them are American citizens*
- 21 1860 *Lucy B. Hobbs becomes first black woman to graduate from dental school, Ohio College of Dental Surgery, Cincinnati*
- 24 1803 *U.S. Supreme Court rules in Marbury v. Madison that the Court is the final interpreter of constitutional issues*
- 25 1870 *Hiram R. Revels, first Black senator, sworn in to fill out unexpired term of Mississippian Jefferson Davis*
- 27 1951 *Ratification of 22nd amendment limiting tenure of US president to two terms*

March

March is national Women's History Month

- 1 1781 *Articles of Confederation become effective as a governing document*
- 1803 *Ohio becomes 19th state*
- 1961 *JFK establishes Peace Corps*
- Death Penalty Abolition Day*
- 3 1991 *Videotaped beating of Rodney G. King in LA by four white police officers*
- 4 1789 *U.S. Constitution goes into effect when MD becomes 13th state to sign*
- 1933 *Frances Perkins becomes first woman appointed to President's Cabinet by FDR, as Sec. of Labor*
- 7 1965 *Civil rights demonstrators in attempted march on Montgomery AL confronted in Selma, AL by state troopers who use clubs and tear gas to break up demonstration*
- 8 *Annual International Women's Day*
- 13 1925 *Tennessee passes law against teaching evolution in schools*
- 14 1743 *First Town Meeting in America, Faneuil Hall, Boston*
- 16 1827 *Black Press Day Anniversary of the founding of the Freedom Journal, first Black newspaper in the U.S.*
- 17 1910 *Birth of Bayard Rustin, African-American pacifist and civil rights leader. Died August 24, 1987.*
- 20 1853 *Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin published for first time in book form*
- 21 1965 *Selma, AL to Montgomery AL civil rights march begins, led by Martin Luther King, Jr.*
- 1972 *U.S. Supreme Court rules that states cannot require one-year residency for voting eligibility*

- 22 1893 *First Women's Collegiate Basketball Game, Smith College. Northampton MA.*
- 1972 *ERA (27th amendment) sent to states for ratification*
- 25 1807 *British Parliament abolishes slave trade*
- 1965 *Martin Luther King, Jr. completes civil rights march from Selma, AL to state capital, Montgomery, AL leading 25,000 marchers*
- 28 1979 *Huge nuclear power plant accident at Three Mile Island, PA*
- 29 1973 *Last American troops leave Vietnam*
- 30 1870 *15th amendment ratified, guaranteeing right to vote regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude*
- 31 1870 *Thomas Peterson-Mundy becomes first black man to vote in America, one day after ratification of 15th amendment*

April

- 1 1977 *Senate follows House in adopting stringent code of ethics requiring full disclosure and limits on outside income*
- 3 1944 *U.S. Supreme court rules Blacks eligible to vote in primaries in Texas*
- 1961 *23rd amendment gives residents of D.C. right to vote in Presidential elections*
- 4 1968 *Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., age 39. Commemorated as Victims of Violence Holy Day*
- 5 1792 *George Washington casts first Presidential veto, rejecting a Congressional measure for apportioning representatives among the states*
- 1856 *Birth of Booker T(aliaferro) Washington, U.S. Black writer and educator, died 1915*
- 6 1789 *U.S. Senate is formally organized, after achieving a quorum*
- 8 1887 *Susanna M. Salter becomes first woman elected mayor in U.S., in Argonia, KS*
- 1913 *Seventeenth amendment proposed, requiring direct popular election of Senators*
- 9 1865 *Confederate surrender at Appomattox ends Civil War*
- 11 1947 *Jackie Robinson becomes first Black major league baseball player*
- 1968 *LBJ signs Civil Rights Act of 1968 protecting civil rights workers, expanding rights of Native Americans, and instituting anti-discrimination measures in housing*
- 12 1861 *Beginning of Civil War with firing on Fort Sumter by Confederate forces*
- 1983 *Harold Washington elected Chicago's first Black mayor*
- 14 1865 *Abraham Lincoln assassinated; died next day*
- 15 1984 *six KKK and three Nazi party members acquitted of civil rights violations in killing of 5 Communists Workers' Party members in Greensboro, SC*
- 20 1971 *U.S. Supreme Court upholds use of busing to achieve racial desegregation in public schools*
- 21 1649 *Maryland Assembly passes Maryland Toleration Act providing freedom of worship for all Christians*
- 1992 *Convicted murderer Robert Alton Harris becomes first person executed by state of CA in 25 years*

- 22 *Annual Earth Day: "Give Earth a Chance", begun 1970*
- 29 1992 *Beginning of LA riots after failure to convict four white police officers in videotaped beating of Rodney G. King*

May

- 2 *National Law Day*
- 4 1970 *Kent State Ohio National Guardsmen open fire on 1000 Kent State students, killing four and wounding eight others*
- 1925 *John Scopes arrested in TN for teaching evolution*
- 1930 *Yorkshire woman Amy Johnson begins first successful solo flight by a woman from England to Australia*
- 6 1882 *Congress passes, over veto of President Arthur, the Chinese Exclusion Act which bars Chinese immigrants from the U.S. for ten years*
- 12 1970 *U.S. Senate votes unanimously to confirm Harry A. Blackmun as a Supreme Court justice*
- 1978 *U.S. Commerce Dept. announces that hurricanes will no longer be named only with names of women*
- 16 1868 *U.S. Senate fails to impeach Pres. Andrew Johnson*
- 1975 *Japanese climber, Junko Tabei, becomes the first woman to reach the summit of Mt. Everest*
- 1988 *The U.S. Supreme Court rules that police can search discarded garbage without a warrant*
- 17 1954 *U.S. Supreme Court decides that segregated school facilities are inherently unequal in Brown v. Board of Education (Topeka, KS)*
- 19 1921 *Congress passes Emergency Quota Act, establishing national quotas for immigrants*
- 1925 *Birth of Malcolm X, Black nationalist and civil rights activist. Fatally shot February 21, 1965, in NYC*
- 1992 *Twenty-seventh Amendment, prohibiting Congress from giving itself mid-term pay raises, goes into effect*
- 20 1932 *Amelia Earhart becomes first woman to fly the Atlantic solo (Newfoundland to Ireland)*
- 1961 *White mob attacks busload of Freedom Riders in Montgomery AL.*
- 23 1900 *Wm. H. Carney wins Congressional Medal of Honor, first Black so honored, for service with 54th Mass. Colored Infantry*
- 27 1818 *Birth of Amelia Bloomer, American social reformer and civil rights advocate. Died 12/30/1894.*
- 1935 *U.S. Supreme Court rules National Industrial Recovery Act unconstitutional*
- 28 1863 *First Black regiment from North leaves Boston to fight in Civil War*
- 31 1913 *17th amendment ratified, providing for direct election of Senators*

June

June is Gay and Lesbian History Month and Gay and Lesbian Book Month

- 2 1924 *Congress grants U.S. citizenship to all American Indians*
- 3 1972 *Ordination of Sally Priesand, first woman rabbi in U.S., Cincinnati, OH*

- 4 1989 *Tiananmen Square massacre*
- 8 1953 *U.S. Supreme Court rules that restaurants in D.C. cannot refuse to serve blacks*
 1994 *Beginning of first National African-American Leadership Summit, convened by NAACP*
- 11 1880 *Birth of Jeanette Rankin, first woman elected to Congress.*
- 13 1966 *Miranda v. Arizona decision by U.S. Supreme Court, ruling that criminal suspects must be informed of their constitutional rights before they are questioned by police*
- 14 1943 *U.S. Supreme Court, after admitting error in earlier Jehovah's Witness case, rules that school children cannot be compelled to salute U.S. flag if it conflicts with their religious beliefs (WV v. Barnette)*
 1967 *President Lyndon Johnson nominates Thurgood Marshall as first Black Supreme Court Justice*
- 18 1873 *Susan B. Anthony, American suffragette, fined \$100 for trying to vote in 1872 presidential election*
- 20 1895 *Caroline Baldwin becomes first woman to earn a Doctor of Science degree, Cornell Univ., Ithaca, NY*
 1983 *First American woman in space, Dr. Sally Ride*
 1964 *Murder of Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and James Chaney, volunteers who had gone to MS. to help enfranchise Blacks in the South*
- 22 1633 *Galileo forced to recant Copernican theory*
- 25 1962 *U.S. Supreme Court declares prayer in the public schools unconstitutional (Engel v. Vitale)*
- 28 1969 *Stonewall Rebellion in Greenwich Village, NYC, launches modern lesbian and gay liberation movement*
 1978 *U.S. Supreme Court rules U. Cal.Med. School must admit Allan P.Bakke, a white man who had charged "reverse discrimination" in admissions policy*
- 29 1972 *Supreme Court rules that capital punishment, as it was being applied, could violate the 8th amendment*
 1992 *Supreme Court rules unanimously that hate-crime laws banning cross burning, etc. violate free speech rights*
 1992 *Supreme Court decision in Planned Parenthood v. Casey imposes new restrictions on abortion*
- 30 1971 *Ratification of 26th amendment making 18 the minimum age for voting*

July

- 2 1908 *Birth of Thurgood Marshall, first Black Supreme Court Justice. Died 1/24/93.*
 1964 *President Johnson signs Voting Rights Act of 1964*
- 6 1961 *Cecil F.Poole, first Black U.S. attorney sworn in for Northern District of California*
- 10 1925 *Scopes trial begins in Dayton, TN, with Scopes accused of teaching evolution in a public school. Opposing lawyers were Clarence Darrow and Wm.Jennings Bryan. (See July 21, 1925)*
- 12 1984 *Geraldine Ferraro is chosen by presidential candidate Walter Mondale as first woman ever to run for vice-president on a major party ticket*

- 19 1848 *First Women's' Rights Convention held in Seneca Falls, New York. Now site of Women's Hall of Fame, dedicated July 21, 1979*
- 20 1969 *First moon landing by Ohioan Neil Armstrong*
- 21 1925 *Scopes trial ends; Scopes found guilty and fined \$100*
- 25 1960 *Woolworth's lunch counters are opened to all (See February 1, 1960)*
- 1963 *U.S., Russia, and Gt. Britain sign test-ban treaty prohibiting nuclear testing in the atmosphere, space or under water*
- 26 1948 *President Harry S. Truman signs order officially integrating U.S. Armed Forces*
- 28 1868 *Ratification of Fourteenth Amendment extending citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in U.S. and promising due process of the law and equal protection of the laws to all citizens*
- 30 1916 *Birth of Anita Faye Hill, law professor, Univ. of Oklahoma. Catapulted to national fame in Oct., 1991, during confirmation hearings for Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas*

August

- 2 1936 *Jesse Owens, great Black athlete, sets new world record for 100 meter run, Olympic Games, Berlin*
- 1939 *Hatch Act passed by Congress forbidding federal Civil Service employees from taking an active part in political campaigns*
- 1983 *U.S. House of Representatives votes to make Martin Luther King's birthday (1/15) a national holiday*
- 4 1735 *John Peter Zenger wins acquittal on libel charges intended to censor his attacks on the Crown. This case established freedom of the press in America*
- 1861 *Congress abolishes flogging in the U.S. Army*
- 6 1890 *New York becomes first state to execute a criminal as Wm. Kemmler is electrocuted for murder in Auburn*
- 1945 *Detonation of first atomic bomb by U.S. over Hiroshima*
- 7 1904 *Birth of Ralph Bunche, Black American diplomat and recipient of Nobel Peace Prize. Died 12/9/71.*
- 9 1974 *Richard Nixon becomes first president ever to resign*
- 14 1935 *FDR signs Social Security Act into law*
- 16 1923 *Carnegie Steel Corp. becomes first to establish eight hour workday for its employees*
- 1947 *Birth of Carol Mosley-Braun, attorney and first Black female elected to U.S. Senate (D-IL)*
- 18 1963 *James Meredith becomes first Black grad of Ole Miss*
- 21 1835 *Nat Turner's Rebellion, largest slave revolt in American history*
- 22 1762 *Ann Franklin becomes America's first newspaper editor (of the Newport, RI, "Mercury")*
- 23 1838 *Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary, S. Hadley, MA, first college for women, graduates its first class*
- 24 1759 *Birth of William Wilberforce, a leader in the fight to abolish slavery in the British Empire*
- 1932 *Amelia Earhart becomes first woman to make nonstop flight across U.S., LA to Newark, in 19+ hours*
- 26 1920 *Nineteenth amendment is ratified giving women the right to vote*

- 28 1963 *"Freedom March" on Washington, D.C. by 200,000 demonstrators as part of demand for civil rights. Now celebrated as "I Have a Dream" Day*
- 1968 *Police and anti-war demonstrators clash in Chicago as Democratic National Convention nominates Humphrey*
- 30 1901 *Birth of Roy Wilkins, American civil rights advocate and Executive Director of the NAACP, 1965-1977*
- 1967 *Senate confirms Thurgood Marshall as first Black Supreme Court Justice*
- 1983 *First black astronaut, Guion S. Buford, Jr., as part of team of 5 on space shuttle, Challenger, blasts off into space from Cape Canaveral*

September

The last week in September is Banned Books Week

- 1 1878 *First woman telephone operator, Miss Emma Nutt, hired by Telegraph Dispatch Co., of Boston*
- 3 1783 *Treaty of Paris recognizes independence of 13 American colonies*
- 4 1886 *Apache chief, Geronimo, surrenders to U.S. General Nelson Miles in Skeleton City, AZ.*
- 6 1860 *Birth of Jane Addams, American social worker and humanitarian, founder of Hull House, Chicago Shared Nobel Peace Prize, 1931*
- 8 1968 *Saundra Nilliams chosen first Miss Black America*
- 12 1960 *JFK, presidential candidate tells Houston Ministerial Association, "I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute."*
- 14 1883 *Birth of Margaret Sanger, American nurse who led the birth control movement and founded Planned Parenthood Federation of America*
- 1940 *Congress passes Selective Service Act, providing for first peacetime military draft in U.S.*
- 15 1963 *Four children die when a bomb explodes in a Black Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL*
- 17 *Constitution Day, observed by Public Schools through educational activities designed around the history of our Constitution (subject to change if date falls on a weekend)*
- 18 1850 *Congress passes a new Fugitive Slave Law imposing heavy fines on persons who aid a slave's escape or interfere with his/her recovery*
- 20 1906 *Upton Sinclair publishes "The Jungle", his famous novel that exposed the meat packing industry and led to the first pure food laws in the U.S.*
- 22 1981 *Sandra Day O'Connor confirmed as first female Supreme Court Justice by U.S. Senate*
- 24 1755 *Birth of John Marshall, the "great chief justice"*
- 1789 *Congress passes First Judiciary Act, providing for an Attorney General and a Supreme Court*
- 1963 *U.S. ratifies treaty with Gr. Britain and Soviet Union limiting nuclear testing*
- 25 1789 *U.S. Congress proposes 12 amendments to Constitution. Ten ratified by states become Bill of Rights, 1791*
- 1957 *Nine Black students who had been forced to withdraw from Central H.S., Little Rock, AR, are escorted to classes by U.S. Army troops*

- 27 1954 *U.S. Senate Select Committee recommends vote of censure against Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, for "contemptuous conduct and abuse of the committee."*
- 28 1850 *Flogging of sailors in U.S. Navy abolished*
- 1904 *Police arrest a woman in NYC for smoking a cigarette*
- 30 1630 *First execution in U.S. John Billington hanged in Plymouth, MA, for killing John Newcomen*
- 1953 *Earl Warren named Chief Justice of the Supreme Court by President Dwight D. Eisenhower*

October

- 2 1800 *Birth of Nat Turner, Black slave preacher, who led largest slave revolt in American history (1831)*
- 1967 *Thurgood Marshall sworn in as first Black Justice on the Supreme Court*
- 3 1974 *Frank Robinson named manager of Cleveland Indians, first Black manager of a major league team*
- 5 1953 *Earl Warren sworn in as 14th Chief Justice of Supreme Court*
- 7 1897 *Birth of Elijah Muhammad, spiritual leader of Black Muslim movement*
- 1941 *Birth of Jesse Jackson, American civil rights leader*
- 10 1973 *Vice President Spiro Agnew resigns, only 2nd American vice president ever to do so*
- 11 1884 *Birth of Eleanor Roosevelt, UN diplomat, humanitarian and wife of FDR*
- Coming Out Party*
- 16 1859 *John Brown, noted abolitionist, makes his famous raid on the U.S. arsenal at Harper's Ferry, WV*
- 1916 *Margaret Sanger opens world's first birth control clinic in NYC*
- 19 1781 *Cornwallis surrenders at Yorktown, ending Revolutionary War*
- 20 1973 *"Saturday Night Massacre" Nixon fires special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox, setting off nationwide storm of protest*
- 23 1915 *25,000 women march in NYC, demanding right to vote*
- 24 1940 *40-hour work week goes into effect under Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938*
- 26 1919 *Birth of Edward Brooke, first Black Senator since Reconstruction, representing MA, 1967-1979*
- 27 1787 *Federalist Papers begin appearing under signature "Publius", in NY "Index Journal"*
- 28 1886 *Statue of Liberty dedicated in NY harbor by President Grover Cleveland*
- 1983 *U.S. invades island of Grenada for stated purpose of rescuing American students there from Marxist government*
- 29 1940 *Beginning of first peacetime military draft in American history*

November

- 2 1954 *Strom Thurmond becomes only write-in candidate ever elected to U.S. Senate*

- 5 1733 *John Peter Zenger begins publishing the NY "Weekly Journal"*
 1872 *Susan B. Anthony, suffragette, arrested for trying to vote in a Presidential election*
- 7 1867 *Birth of Marie Curie, physicist and co-discoverer of elements radium and plutonium*
 1878 *Birth of Lisa Meitner, Austrian physicist and one of a team of three who first split the uranium atom, 1938*
 1916 *Jeanette Rankin becomes first woman elected to U.S. House of Representatives*
- 9 1918 *Birth of Florence Chadwick, first woman to swim English Channel in both directions, 1950 & 1951*
 1944 *First blue baby operation at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, using a technique pioneered in part by nurse Helen B. Taussig*
- 11 1831 *Nat Turner hanged for his leadership in largest slave revolt in American history*
- 12 1815 *Birth of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, pioneer in American women's rights movement*
 1954 *Closing of Ellis Island immigration station, after processing more than 20 million since 1892*
- 13 1856 *Birth of Louis Brandeis, U.S. Supreme Court justice (1916-39) and early advocate of conservation*
 1956 *U.S. Supreme Court strikes down Alabama's laws calling for racial segregation on public buses*
- 15 1777 *Articles of Confederation adopted by Continental Congress in York, PA*
 1881 *Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions organized by Samuel Gompers. Forerunner of AF of L*
 1920 *First meeting of League of Nations held in Geneva*
 1969 *Peaceful demonstration against Vietnam War staged in Washington, D.C., by 225,000 protesters*
- 17 1734 *John Peter Zenger arrested in NY and charged with libel for defaming George III. His acquittal gained the first victory for freedom of the press in the American colonies*
- 19 1863 *President Abraham Lincoln delivers Gettysburg Address*
- 21 1922 *Rebecca L. Felton of GA sworn in as first U.S. female Senator to fill an unexpired term. Her term ended the next day.*
- 23 1644 *John Milton, the English poet published his great prose work, AreoPagitica, a defense of freedom of the press*
- 24 1947 *The Hollywood 10, screenwriters and officials, cited for contempt of Congress for refusing to say if they were Communists. Later they were blacklisted and imprisoned*

December

- 1 1824 *Electoral College vote results in no Presidential candidate's getting a majority. U.S. House of Representatives later chooses John Quincy Adams*
 1955 *Rosa Parks sits in the front of the bus, kicking off modern civil rights movement*
- 2 1954 *U.S. Senate votes to censure Senator Joseph McCarthy of WI for "contemptuous" conduct and abuse of Senate members*
 1970 *Last state law against teaching evolution in schools is voided by the courts (Mississippi)*
- 5 1933 *Prohibition repealed by 21st Amendment*
 1955 *AFL and CO merge. George Meany is first president.*

- 6 1847 *Abraham Lincoln is seated as Representative in 30th U.S. Congress*
- 1864 *Salmon P. Chase appointed Chief Justice of Supreme Court by President Abraham Lincoln*
- 8 1953 *President Dwight Eisenhower proposes his "atoms for peace" program providing for nations to pool their atomic data & materials for peaceful purposes*
- 9 1958 *Founding of the ultraconservative anticommunist John Birch Society by Robert Welch*
- 10 1805 *Birth of William Lloyd Garrison, American journalist, reformer, and abolitionist*
- 1869 *Territory of Wyoming becomes first state or territory to authorize women to vote and hold office*
- 1931 *Jane Addams, American reformer, becomes first American woman to win Nobel Peace Prize*
- 1980 *Ralph Bunche, American statesman, becomes first Black American to win Nobel Peace Prize*
- 11 1872 *Pinckney B.S Pinchback becomes first Black governor in U.S. history, taking office as acting governor of Louisiana*
- 12 1870 *Joseph H. Rainey of South Carolina becomes first U.S. Black congressman*
- 15 *Annual U.S. Bill of Rights Day, anniversary of ratification by the States*
- 18 1865 *Ratification of 13th amendment, completely outlawing slavery in the U.S.*
- 20 1860 *South Carolina, first state to do so, votes to secede from the Union*
- 24 1866 *Founding of KKK in Pulaski, TN, as a veteran's group*
- 26 1908 *Jack Johnson, first Black heavyweight boxing champ, defeats Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia*
- 29 1890 *Sioux Massacre at Wounded Knee, SD*
- 30 1847 *Birth of John Peter Altgeld, Illinois reformer and governor, 1893-97*