



## My Day in History

A Birthday Project  
Connecting Students with the  
*Today In History* Feature  
of the Library of Congress Website

<http://www.loc.gov>



Adapted from "American Memory and Me Student Worksheet"  
Barat Education Foundation AAM  
October 2005

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## Directions

1. Go to <http://www.loc.gov/> and click the Today in History link to access this part of the American Memory section at the Library of Congress website.
2. Click the **archives** button.
3. Under option 2, use the drop-down menu to select your birth date (month and day) and then click the **go** button.
4. Review the information and browse the American Memory site by clicking the links on the page (remember to use your web browser's **Back** button to return to the main Today in History page).
5. Answer the questions in Part I and Part II of the American Memory & Me Student Worksheet.



What types of primary sources did you find?  
(Circle ALL that you found.)

**Photos**

**News articles**

**Video files**

**Audio files**

**Journal writings**

**Advertisements**

**Maps Sheet music**

**Other?** \_\_\_\_\_

Choose one event that is really interesting to you. Describe what it might have looked like and sounded like to be present when this event was happening.

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Click a link to a picture from one of the events listed on the Today in History page for your birthday. Take a close look at the picture and describe AT LEAST two interesting details that you discovered. Copy the picture and save it.

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Now write about the event, using the picture as the central theme. Describe the event in at least five sentences, answering the following questions with lots of detail.

- What title could you give the event?
- Where did the event happen?
- When did the event happen?
- What happened at the event?

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## My Day in History Student Worksheet – Part II

In Part II, you'll learn that YOU are part of the American memory, too.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I was born on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(month) (day) (year)

I am now \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

I was born in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(city) (state) (country)

In the space below describe a contribution you have made to America. Examples include Girl/Boy scouts, singing for a retirement home, helping out elderly people with chores, or cleaning up your community on Earth Day.

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## My Day in History Student Newspaper

Create a newspaper about you and your special day in history.

### Directions:

1. Go to [http://aam.waynesburg.edu/powerpoint/newspaper\\_template.ppt](http://aam.waynesburg.edu/powerpoint/newspaper_template.ppt) to access the newspaper template. Save a copy of the template or print it out.
2. Paste the historical picture that you saved from the Today in History page into the appropriate section of the template.
3. Edit the story of the event you chose in Part I and paste the story into the appropriate section of the template.
4. Paste your personal photo into the appropriate section of the template.
5. Edit your personal story from Part II and paste the story into the appropriate section of the template (see examples on next page). (To write as the newspaper reporter you will need to substitute words like "he" or "she" for "I," and "him" or "her" for "me.")
6. Add your story to the classroom newspaper. You can learn interesting things about people in the newspaper! You might want to write several stories for the class paper or create one of your own!

## **Examples of Student Newspaper Articles**

### **Jim Smith Redesigns Education System**

Jim Smith was born on July 12, 1994 in Binghamton, New York. He was a restless and distracted student throughout the eighth grade. He hated tests. After completing high school and college, Jim decided to become a really cool teacher and make school much more fun. During his life, he helped to redesign the American education system to have fewer tests and more projects. Jim's students loved school and were very successful.

### **Caroline Jones Provides Companions to Millions**

Caroline Jones was born on July 6, 1996 in Chicago, Illinois. She was a great kid who did well in school. She loved teddy bears, and thought that all children needed teddy bears to be happy. When Caroline was seven, she started to work with her friends to collect teddies and give them away. She worked on the project her whole life. Caroline gave away over one million teddy bears, making American children in need very happy.

## Example Today in History Page

### Today in History

The Library of Congress > American Memory Home

### Today in History: September 8

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### The Galveston Storm



#### [Water Front, Galveston, Texas.](#)

1910.

#### [Taking the Long View, 1851-1991](#)

On **September 8**, 1900, hurricane winds of at least 120 miles per hour ripped across the Texas coastline of the Gulf of Mexico, killing over 5000 people and decimating the city of Galveston. During the eighteen hour storm, tidal waves swept through sea-level streets, destroying homes and buildings and wiping out electricity, roads, and communication systems. As news of the disaster spread, supplies, including tents for the nearly 8000 homeless, poured into Galveston from across the nation.



#### [Seawall and Beach, Galveston, Texas.](#)

circa 1910-1920.

#### [Touring Turn-of-the-Century America](#)

Rebuilding Galveston involved construction of a reinforced concrete seawall and raising the city above sea level. Eight miles long and seventeen feet high, the massive seawall repels Gulf winds and water. Equally impressive, sand from the Gulf of Mexico was used to lift the city far above its previous grade. Ultimately, portions of Galveston lay fifteen feet above former levels. These fortifications continue to help protect the city from hurricane damage.

Galvestonians also transformed the structure of their city government. During reconstruction, a five-man commission replaced the mayor and board of aldermen.

Sue Wise, Assistant Director

An Adventure of the American Mind at Waynesburg College

Initially viewed as an emergency measure, the commission form of government was so efficient that Galveston permanently adopted the scheme. The "Galveston Plan" was widely imitated by other cities and became a benchmark of early twentieth-century municipal reform.



[Galveston Flood, Coney Island, New York,](#)

circa 1910-1920.

[Touring Turn-of-the-Century America](#)

The powerful hurricane's devastating impact on the people of Galveston captured the nation's imagination long after the water subsided and the town was rebuilt. By 1904, the "Galveston Flood" amusement park attraction at New York's Coney Island promised patrons a first-hand glimpse of the "scene of horror." On a stage two-hundred-foot-square, the audience watched a simulation of Galveston's destruction. A 1904 guidebook describes the show:

*Thunder, lightning, the fury of the wind until the maddened waters leap from the depths, rush wildly over the city, carrying death before it, leaving a scene of despair after it—all of which forms an exhibition entirely new in the annals of the European or American stage.*

*History of Coney Island* (New York: Burroughs & Co., 1904.)

**Documenting Disaster for the Public**



[Searching Ruins on Broadway, Galveston, for Dead Bodies,](#)

1900.

[Inventing Entertainment: the Edison Companies](#)

Purchase The Galveston Cyclone series, the *Edison Films Catalog* urged theater owners:

*Procure these films and increase the receipts of your exhibitions. This great disaster which has startled the entire world, has made an indelible impression on the minds of the public, and everyone will be interested in seeing authentic moving pictures of a representative American city almost entirely wiped out by the combined power of water and wind.*

Learn more about Galveston in American Memory:

- [Taking the Long View: Panoramic Photographs, ca. 1851-1991](#) contains many pictures of newly rebuilt Galveston, Texas. Search under *Galveston* to access these photographs. The seawall is prominently featured in many pictures including the "[Second International Pageant of Pulchritude and Eighth Annual Bathing Girl Revue](#)," of 1927.
- Search [American Life Histories, 1936-1940](#) on *Galveston* to find stories such as "[The Blessed Candle](#)," Mrs. Thresia B. Callahan's account of her experiences in Galveston during the Civil War.
- Search the collection [Inventing Entertainment: The Edison Companies](#) on *Galveston* to locate additional films from the The Galveston Cyclone Series, including [Panoramic View of Tremont Hotel, Galveston](#).

## The Quarrymen of Vermont

*Take granite out of Barre, and it would be like taking the Capitol out of Montpelier.*

"[President of the Barre, Vermont Chamber of Commerce](#),"  
circa 1940,  
[American Life Histories, 1936-1940](#)

The American Federation of Labor granted a charter to the granite quarry workers of Barre, Vermont on **September 8**, 1903. To document the lives of workers whose union standards outpaced the nation's, writers from the [Federal Writers' Project](#) interviewed Barre quarrymen in the early 1940s. Many of these interviews are in the American Memory collection [American Life Histories, 1936-1940](#).



[The North End Granite Plants](#),  
Barre, Vermont, 1917.  
[Taking the Long View, 1851-1991](#)

One of the workers' chief concerns was stonecutters' tuberculosis, a deadly condition caused by inhaling airborne granite particles. Labor unions organized to insist employers install dust-removing equipment. One Vermont granite worker explained, the workers were "pretty well resigned to their fate. These stonecutters expect that one day sooner or later they will get [stonecutters' tuberculosis]." Interviewed in an era when workers' rights were very narrowly construed, he recounted:

*The big worry of some of [the quarrymen] is that they'll die before they have made good provision for their families. That's the real reason behind the strikes. They feel that since*

*they're 'marked' men with perhaps less time to provide for their families than the average man, that they are entitled to higher wages. Besides there are certain periods in the year - we call them slack time and dead time - when there is little work to be done. Sometimes only a few men work during these slow weeks; sometimes, none at all.*

**"Granite Worker,"**

Montpelier, Vermont,

Mary Tomasi, interviewer, 1938-1939.

**American Life Histories, 1936-1940**



**Channeling,**

a New England Granite Quarry,  
circa 1908.

**Touring Turn-of-the-Century America, 1880-1920**



**Barre, Vermont (the Granite City),**

1891.

**Panoramic Maps, 1847-1929**

Each death was mourned by the community of laborers. Interviewer Mary Tomasi recounts the sadness Giacomo Coletti felt on the loss of his friend and fellow stonecutter Pietro:

*Tonight he does not feel the wretched guilt that the news of Pietro's death first brought him. It was Giacomo's glowing letters (22 years ago) of excellent wages paid in America that persuaded Pietro to cross the ocean and learn this granite-cutting trade. These last two nights were an excruciating nightmare of thinking that if Pietro had stayed in the old country perhaps he would not now be lying dead from this stone-cutters' TB. It took Nina and the children to convince him that the 'Dio's will' called Pietro from this world, and he would have been forced to answer had he been in Italy, Africa, or the very ends of the earth.*

**"Giacomo Coletti,"**  
Montpelier, Vermont,  
**American Life Histories, 1936-1940**

Learn more about the stonecutter's life:

- Search **American Life Histories, 1936-1940** on *Barre* or the words *quarry*, *granite*, or *stonecutter* to find interviews like "**A Barre Family.**"
- Search **Taking the Long View, 1851-1991** on *Barre* or the words *quarry* or *granite* to find related images.
- Search the collection **Touring Turn-of-the-Century America, 1880-1920** on *quarry* to find images such as **Loading, a New England Granite Quarry.**

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# Everyday History News

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September 8

Free Complimentary Issue

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## Emily Wise was Born Today:

Emily Wise was born on September 8, 1995. She was the second and last daughter of Jim and Sue Wise. When she was little she made her own sign language to show her family what she needed. Now she enjoys riding ATVs and writing and illustrating her own stories.

## Woman Saves Baby Dolphin from Certain Death

Emily Wise was out at sea and saw a pod of dolphins with a hurt baby dolphin. It had a fish hook stuck in its back. She got the fish hook out and it survived. She named it Baby and he will be in her heart forever.

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## Galveston Devastated by Storm

On September 8, 1900 winds going at least 120 miles per hour blew across the Texas coastline on the Gulf of Mexico. Over 5,000 people were dead. During the 18 hour storm, tidal waves filled sea level streets with water. It destroyed almost everything in its path including homes, buildings, electricity, roads, and communication systems. As news of the disaster spread, supplies, including tents for the 8,000 homeless, came in by the hundreds.

## John Smith becomes President

On September 10, 1608 explorer, writer, and cartographer John Smith became the president of Jamestown. He became leader of the colony and helped the colonists through the winter of 1607 and 1608 which brought disease, starvation, and frequent raids from the Indian villages.

When he was fighting the Turks in Transylvania he was wounded, captured, and sold into slavery. He eventually escaped with help from a Turkish woman that he had fallen in love with. This all happened before he came to America!



## **Alternative and Extension Activities**

- Each student could create an entire newspaper based on events from the month or year of their birth.
- Use the events as part of the daily school announcements. Students could be given the chance to announce on “their day in history.”
- Use large newsprint or poster paper to create a tabletop display board. This could be part of a history fair.
- Add current events to the classroom newspaper.
- Use recording equipment to create a television or radio broadcast.
- Have students write articles about several important events in their lives and create an entire newspaper about them.
- Rewrite history. Write an article that tells how things would be different had a specific event never happened.

## Academic Standards

### Pennsylvania Academic Standards

#### History:

- 8.3.B Identify and evaluate primary documents, material artifacts and historic sites important in US history.
- 8.3.C Evaluate how continuity and change has influenced US history.

#### Language Arts:

- 1.1.G Demonstrate after reading understanding and interpretation of both fiction and nonfiction text, including public documents.
- 1.2.A Read and understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas.
- 1.4.B Write complex informational pieces using precise language and specific detail.
- 1.5.A Write with a sharp, distinct focus.
- 1.5.F Use media for learning purposes.
- 1.8.B Locate information using appropriate sources and strategies.
- 1.8.C Organize, summarize and present the main ideas from research.

### ISTE National Educational Technology Standards for Students

- 3. Technology productivity tools
  - Students use technology tools to enhance learning, increase productivity, and promote creativity.
- 4. Technology communications tools
  - Students use a variety of media and formats to communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences.
- 5. Technology research tools
  - Students use technology to locate, evaluate, and collect information from a variety of sources.