

Timeline for 16th and 17th Century Turning Points in U.S. History

In 1497, Italian navigator, Amerigo Vespucci, claimed to have sailed along the eastern coast of North America. Ten years later, German mapmaker, Martin Waldseemuller, believed Vespucci was the first European to reach the New World and suggested that the land be named *America* in Vespucci's honor. Soon, this name was used throughout Europe.

Whether Vespucci's claim was real or not, with the opening of the 16th century, America's history would never be the same. From that point on, Europe looked with deadly earnestness on the new world and its wealth in gold, silver, furs and raw materials. But most of all, Europe looked upon the new world as a place to colonize.

1. **1502 – Christopher Columbus makes his final voyage to the New World**
2. **1513 – Juan Ponce de León lands on the shores of Florida and explores the coast and some of the interior**
3. 1519 – Alonso Alvarez de Pineda claims Texas for Spain
4. 1537 – Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca returns to Spain and writes *La Relación*, recounting his wanderings on the North American continent and describing the flora, fauna, and inhabitants
5. **1539 – Hernando de Soto lands in Florida and begins exploring the present-day southeastern US**
6. **1541 – Francisco Vasques de Coronado sets out to reach Quivira, thought to be the legendary Cities of Gold, in present day Kansas**
7. 1542 – Juan Rodríguez de Cabrillo, a Portuguese sailor commissioned by the Spanish discovers the harbor at present-day San Diego, California
8. 1564 – Spanish missionaries introduce grapes to California
9. **1565 – Don Pedro Menendez de Aviles Founds St Augustine**
10. 1573 – The Franciscan order establishes missions from Saint Augustine, Florida to North Carolina
11. **1585 – Sir Walter Raleigh establishes the first Roanoke colony in Virginia**
 - The colony is abandoned in 1586
12. **1587 – Sir Walter Raleigh establishes a second colony at Roanoke in Virginia**
 - The first English child is born in North America and christened Virginia Dare
 - Roanoke colony mysteriously vanishes sometime between 1587 and 1590
13. 1590 – Juan de Fuca navigates the straits bearing his name between present day Washington and British Columbia
14. **1598 – Juan de Oñate begins the colonization of New Mexico and introduces livestock breeding to the American Southwest**
15. **1607 – The first English colony Jamestown is founded in Virginia**
16. **1608 – Santa Fe, New Mexico is founded**
17. 1608 – French Explorer Samuel de Champlain explores New York
18. 1609 – English explorer Henry Hudson discovers the Hudson River in New York
19. 1612 – Colonial planter, John Rolfe, brings tobacco to Virginia

20. **1614 – Pocahontas Marries John Rolfe**
21. **1614 - The Dutch claim present day New York and name it New Netherlands**
22. **1619 – First black slaves are sold at Jamestown**
23. **1619 – Virginia founds first colonial legislative assembly, the House of Burgesses**
24. **1620 – Pilgrims land at Plymouth Rock and establish Plymouth Plantation**
25. **1621 – Wampanoag Indians, Squanto and Massasoit, teach Pilgrims how to survive in the New World**
26. 1622 – Powhatan Confederacy tries to expel English colonists from Virginia in the first Anglo-Powhatan War
27. 1624 – Dutch establish colonists at New Netherlands in present day New York
28. 1626 – Dutch Colonial Governor, Peter Minuit, buys Manhattan Island from the Indians and founds New Amsterdam in present day New York
29. **1629 – John Winthrop is elected the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony**
 - 1630 – Puritans establish the Massachusetts Bay Colony at present day Boston
 - 1631 – Massachusetts becomes a commonwealth
30. 1632 – 2nd Lord Baltimore, Cecilius Calvert, establishes Maryland colony
31. 1634 – French trapper and explorer Jean Nicolet establishes a small trading post at present day Green Bay, Wisconsin
32. 1636 – English settlements are established in Rhode Island and Connecticut
33. 1636 – Pequot war begins between Pequot Indians and Puritans
34. 1636 – Harvard University is founded in Massachusetts
35. 1644 – Rhode Island receives a royal charter and becomes a colony
36. 1644 – Second Anglo-Powhatan War ends Indian resistance to English settlement in Virginia
37. 1663 – Connecticut receives a royal charter and becomes a colony
38. 1663 – Carolina colony is established
39. 1664 – New Amsterdam is captured by the English
 - 1664 – Charles II gives New Amsterdam to his brother James, the Duke of York
 - 1675 – New Amsterdam is rechristened New York
 - 1685 – New York becomes a royal colony
 - 1685 – New Jersey separates from New York to become its own colony
40. **1673 – Marquette and Joliet Explore Great Lakes and Mississippi River**
41. **1675 – Metacom launches King Philip's War to drive colonists out of New England**
42. 1679 – New Hampshire separates from Massachusetts and is given a royal charter as a separate colony
43. **1680 – A Pueblo Indian named Popé leads a rebellion that forces Spanish colonists and Christianized Indians out of northern New Mexico southward toward El Paso, Texas**
 - Release of wild horses will lead to nomadic Plains Indian warrior culture
44. **1681 – William Penn establishes Pennsylvania colony**
 - 1682 – The Duke of York sells William Penn Delaware

- 1701 – Delaware becomes separate colony in 1701
45. **1682 – LaSalle Claims Louisiana Territory for France**
 46. 1690 – The first permanent Spanish settlement, San Francisco de los Tejas, is established in Texas, near the Nueces River
 47. 1691 – Texas is made a separate Spanish province with Don Domingo de Terán as its governor
 48. 1691 – Jesuit missionary Eusebio Kino establishes Spanish presence in Arizona for the first time
 49. 1692 – Salem witch trials are held
 50. **1699 – Colonial population is 275,000**