

# 1937 in the United States

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Events from the year **1937 in the United States**.

## Contents

- 1 Incumbents
  - 1.1 Federal Government
  - 1.2 Governors
  - 1.3 Lieutenant Governors
- 2 Events
  - 2.1 January–March
  - 2.2 April–June
  - 2.3 July–September
  - 2.4 October–December
  - 2.5 Undated
  - 2.6 Ongoing
- 3 Births
- 4 Deaths
- 5 See also
- 6 References
- 7 External links



President Roosevelt at the Grand Coulee Dam in Washington, 1937

## Incumbents

### Federal Government

- President: Franklin D. Roosevelt (D-New York)
- Vice President: John Nance Garner (D-Texas)
- Chief Justice: Charles Evans Hughes (New York)
- Speaker of the House of Representatives: William B. Bankhead (D-Alabama)
- Senate Majority Leader: Joseph Taylor Robinson (D-Arkansas) (until July 14), Alben W. Barkley (D-Kentucky) (starting July 22)
- Congress: 74th (until January 3), 75th (starting January 3)

## Governors and Lieutenant Governors

### Governors

- Governor of Alabama: Bibb Graves (Democratic)
- Governor of Arizona: Benjamin Baker Moeur (Democratic) (until January 4), Rawghlie Clement Stanford (Democratic) (starting January 4)
- Governor of Arkansas: Junius Marion Futrell (Democratic) (until January 12), Carl Edward Bailey (Democratic) (starting January 12)
- Governor of California: Frank Merriam (Republican)
- Governor of Colorado:
  - until January 1: Edwin C. Johnson (Democratic)
  - January 1-January 12: Ray Herbert Talbot (Democratic)
  - starting January 12: Teller Ammons (Democratic)
- Governor of Connecticut: Wilbur Lucius Cross (Democratic)
- Governor of Delaware: C. Douglass Buck (Republican) (until January 19), Richard C. McMullen (Democratic) (starting January 19)
- Governor of Florida: David Sholtz (Democratic) (until January 5), Fred P. Cone (Democratic) (starting January 5)
- Governor of Georgia: Eugene Talmadge (Democratic) (until January 12), Eurith D. Rivers (Democratic) (starting January 12)
- Governor of Idaho: C. Ben Ross (Democratic) (until January 4), Barzilla W. Clark (Democratic) (starting January 4)
- Governor of Illinois: Henry Horner (Democratic)
- Governor of Indiana: Paul V. McNutt (Democratic) (until January 11), M. Clifford Townsend (Democratic) (starting January 11)
- Governor of Iowa: Clyde L. Herring (Democratic) (until January 14), Nelson G. Kraschel (Democratic) (starting January 14)
- Governor of Kansas: Alfred M. Landon (Republican) (until January 11), Walter A. Huxman (Democratic) (starting January 11)
- Governor of Kentucky: Happy Chandler (Democratic)
- Governor of Louisiana: Richard W. Leche (Democratic)
- Governor of Maine: Louis J. Brann (Democratic) (until January 6), Lewis O. Barrows (Republican) (starting January 6)
- Governor of Maryland: Harry W. Nice (Republican)
- Governor of Massachusetts: James Michael Curley (Democratic) (until January 7), Charles F. Hurley (Democratic) (starting January 7)
- Governor of Michigan: Frank Fitzgerald (Republican) (until January 1), Frank Murphy (Democratic) (starting January 1)
- Governor of Minnesota: Hjalmar Petersen (Farmer-Labor) (until January 4), Elmer A. Benson (Farmer-Labor) (starting January 4)
- Governor of Mississippi: Hugh L. White (Democratic)
- Governor of Missouri: Guy Brasfield Park (Democratic) (until January 11), Lloyd C. Stark (Democratic) (starting January 11)
- Governor of Montana: Elmer Holt (Democratic) (until January 4), Roy E. Ayers (Democratic) (starting January 4)
- Governor of Nebraska: Robert Leroy Cochran (Democratic)
- Governor of Nevada: Richard Kirman, Sr. (Democratic)
- Governor of New Hampshire: Styles Bridges (Republican) (until January 7), Francis P. Murphy (Republican) (starting January 7)
- Governor of New Jersey: Harold G. Hoffman (Republican)
- Governor of New Mexico: Clyde Tingley (Democratic)
- Governor of New York: Herbert H. Lehman (Democratic)
- Governor of North Carolina: John C. B. Ehringhaus (Democratic) (until January 7), Clyde R. Hoey (Democratic) (starting January 7)
- Governor of North Dakota: Walter Welford (Republican) (until January 6), William Langer (Republican) (starting January 6)
- Governor of Ohio: Martin L. Davey (Democratic)
- Governor of Oklahoma: Ernest W. Marland (Democratic)
- Governor of Oregon: Charles H. Martin (Democratic)
- Governor of Pennsylvania: George Howard Earle III (Democratic)
- Governor of Rhode Island: Theodore Francis Green (Democratic) (until January 5), Robert E. Quinn (Democratic) (starting January 2)
- Governor of South Carolina: Olin D. Johnston (Democratic)
- Governor of South Dakota: Tom Berry (Democratic) (until January 5), Leslie Jensen (Republican) (starting January 5)
- Governor of Tennessee: Harry Hill McAlister (Democratic) (until January 15), Gordon Browning (Democratic) (starting January 15)
- Governor of Texas: James Allred (Democratic)
- Governor of Utah: Henry H. Blood (Democratic)
- Governor of Vermont: Charles M. Smith (Republican) (until January 7), George David Aiken (Republican) (starting January 7)
- Governor of Virginia: George C. Peery (Democratic)

- Governor of Washington: Clarence D. Martin (Democratic)
- Governor of West Virginia: Herman G. Kump (Democratic) (until January 18), Homer A. Holt (Democratic) (starting January 18)

## Lieutenant Governors

- Lieutenant Governor of Alabama: Thomas E. Knight (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Arkansas: William Lee Cazort (Democratic) (until month and day unknown), Robert L. Bailey (political party unknown) (starting month and day unknown)
- Lieutenant Governor of California: George J. Hatfield (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Colorado: Raymond Herbert Talbot (Democratic) (until January 1), Frank J. Hayes (Democratic) (starting January 1)
- Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut: T. Frank Hayes (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Delaware: Roy F. Corley (Republican) (until January 19), Edward W. Cooch (Democratic) (starting January 19)
- Lieutenant Governor of Idaho: G. P. Mix (Democratic) (until January 3), Charles C. Gossett (Democratic) (starting January 3)
- Lieutenant Governor of Illinois: Thomas Donovan (Democratic) (until January 4), John H. Stelle (Democratic) (starting January 4)
- Lieutenant Governor of Indiana: M. Clifford Townsend (Democratic) (until January 11), Henry F. Schricker (Democratic) (starting January 11)
- Lieutenant Governor of Iowa: Nelson G. Kraschel (Democratic) (until January 14), John K. Valentine (Democratic) (starting January 14)
- Lieutenant Governor of Kansas: Charles W. Thompson (Republican) (until month and day unknown), William M. Lindsay (Democratic) (starting month and day unknown)
- Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky: Keen Johnson (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana: Earl K. Long (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts: Joseph L. Hurley (Democratic) (until January 7), Francis E. Kelly (Democratic) (starting January 7)
- Lieutenant Governor of Michigan:
  - until January 1: Thomas Read (Democratic)
  - January 1-January 5: vacant
  - starting January 5: Leo J. Nowicki (Democratic)
- Governor of Wisconsin: Philip La Follette (Wisconsin Progressive)
- Governor of Wyoming: Leslie A. Miller (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota: William B. Richardson (Republican) (until January 4), Gottfrid Lindsten (Republican) (starting January 4)
- Lieutenant Governor of Mississippi: Jacob Buehler Snider (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Missouri: Frank Gaines Harris (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Montana: William P. Pilgeram (political party unknown) (until month and day unknown), Hugh R. Adair (political party unknown) (starting month and day unknown)
- Lieutenant Governor of Nebraska: Walter H. Jurgensen (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Nevada: Fred S. Alward (political party unknown)
- Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico: Louis Cabeza de Baca (Democratic) (until January 1), Hiram M. Dow (Democratic) (starting January 1)
- Lieutenant Governor of New York: M. William Bray (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina: Alexander H. Graham (Democratic) (until January 7), Wilkins P. Horton (Democratic) (starting January 7)
- Lieutenant Governor of North Dakota: vacant (until January 6), Thorstein H. H. Thoresen (Republican) (starting January 6)
- Lieutenant Governor of Ohio: Harold G. Mosier (Democratic) (until January 11), Paul P. Yoder (Democratic) (starting January 11)
- Lieutenant Governor of Oklahoma: James E. Berry (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania: Thomas Kennedy (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Rhode Island: Robert E. Quinn (Democratic) (until January 5), Raymond E. Jordan (Democratic) (starting January 5)
- Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina: Joseph Emile Harley (Democratic)

- Lieutenant Governor of South Dakota: Robert Peterson (Democratic) (until January 5), Donald McMurchie (Republican) (starting January 5)
- Lieutenant Governor of Tennessee: Bryan Pope (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Texas: Walter Frank Woodul (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Vermont: George D. Aiken (Republican) (until January 7), William H. Wills (Republican) (starting January 7)
- Lieutenant Governor of Virginia: James H. Price (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Washington: Victor A. Meyers (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin:
  - until January 4: vacant
  - January 4-October 16: Henry A. Gunderson (Progressive)
  - starting October 16: vacant

## Events

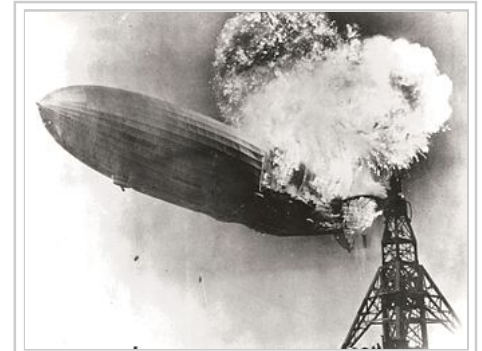
### January–March

- January 11 – The first issue of *Look* magazine goes on sale.
- January 12 – Adventurer and filmmaker Martin Johnson, of Martin and Osa Johnson fame, is killed along with four others in the crash of Western Air Express Flight 7 in mountainous terrain near Saugus, California.
- January 19 – Howard Hughes sets a new record by flying from Los Angeles to New York City in 7 hours, 28 minutes and 25 seconds.
- January 20 – Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes swears in Franklin D. Roosevelt for a second term. This is the first time Inauguration Day in the United States occurs on this date, in response to the ratification in 1933 of the 20th amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Inauguration has occurred on January 20 ever since.
- January 26 – Michigan celebrates its Centennial Anniversary of statehood.
- January 31 – The Ohio River floods.
- February 5 – President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposes a plan to enlarge the Supreme Court of the United States.
- February 11 – A sit-down strike ends when General Motors recognizes the United Automobile Workers Union.
- March 2 – The Steel Workers Organizing Committee, precursor to United Steelworkers, signs a collective bargaining agreement with U.S. Steel.
- March 26 – William Henry Hastie becomes the first African-American appointed to a federal judgeship.
- March – The first issue of the comic book *Detective Comics* is published in the United States. Twenty-seven issues later, *Detective Comics* introduces Batman. The comic goes on to become the longest continually published comic magazine in American history; it is still published as of 2011.
- March 17 – The Atherton Report (private investigator Edwin Atherton's report detailing vice and police corruption in San Francisco) is released.
- March 18
  - In the worst school disaster in American history in terms of lives lost, the New London School in New London, Texas suffers a catastrophic natural gas explosion, killing in excess of 295 students and teachers.
  - Mother Frances Hospital opens in Tyler, Texas in response to the New London School explosion.
- March 26 – In Crystal City, Texas, spinach growers erect a statue of the cartoon character Popeye.

### April–June

- April 12 – *NLRB v. Jones & Laughlin Steel*: The Supreme Court of the United States rules that the National Labor Relations Act is constitutional.

- April 17 – The animated short *Porky's Duck Hunt*, directed by Tex Avery for the Looney Tunes series, featuring the debut of Daffy Duck, is released.
- May – 7 million unemployed in the USA.
- May 6 – Hindenburg disaster: The German airship Hindenburg bursts into flame when mooring to a mast in Lakehurst, New Jersey.
- May 7 – An enquiry begins into the Hindenburg disaster.
- May 27 – In California, the Golden Gate Bridge opens to pedestrian traffic, creating a vital link between San Francisco and Marin County. The next day, President Franklin D. Roosevelt pushes a button in Washington, D.C., signaling the start of vehicle traffic over the Golden Gate Bridge.
- May 30 - Labor strike at US Steel in Chicago; crackdown.<sup>[1]</sup>
- June 14 – Pennsylvania becomes the first (and only) of the United States to celebrate Flag Day officially as a state holiday.



May 6: Hindenburg disaster

## July–September

- July 2
  - Amelia Earhart and navigator Fred Noonan disappear after taking off from New Guinea during Earhart's attempt to become the first woman to fly around the world.
  - A guard first stands post at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Washington, D.C.; continuous guard has been maintained there ever since.
- July 4 – *The Lost Colony* historical drama is first performed in an outdoor theater in the location where it is set, Roanoke Island, North Carolina.
- July 5 – The canned precooked meat product Spam is introduced by the Hormel company.
- July 22 – New Deal: The United States Senate votes down President Franklin D. Roosevelt's proposal to add more justices to the Supreme Court of the United States.
- July 24 – Alabama drops rape charges against the so-called Scottsboro Boys.
- September 7 – CBS broadcasts a two-and-a-half hour memorial concert nationwide on radio in memory of George Gershwin, live from the Hollywood Bowl. Many celebrities appear, including Oscar Levant, Fred Astaire, Otto Klemperer, Lily Pons, and members of the original cast of *Porgy and Bess*. The concert is recorded and released complete years later in what is excellent sound for its time, on CD. The Los Angeles Philharmonic is the featured orchestra.
- September 18 – African American writer Zora Neale Hurston publishes her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.
- September 26 – Street & Smith launches a half-hour radio program, *The Shadow*, with Orson Welles in the title role.



May 27: The Golden Gate Bridge opens to pedestrian traffic

## October–December

- October 1
  - The Marijuana Tax Act becomes law in the United States.
  - U.S. Supreme Court associate justice Hugo Black, in a nationwide radio broadcast, refutes allegations of past involvement in the Ku Klux Klan.
- October 5 – Roosevelt gives his famous *Quarantine Speech* in Chicago.

- October 15 – Ernest Hemingway's novel *To Have and Have Not* is first published.
- December 12
  - Panay incident: Japanese bombers sink the American gunboat USS *Panay*.
  - Mae West makes a risqué guest appearance on the NBC *Chase and Sanborn Hour* that eventually results in her being banned from radio.
- December 21 – Walt Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the first feature-length animated cartoon with sound, opens and becomes a smash hit.
- December 22 – The Lincoln Tunnel, connecting New York City to Weehawken, New Jersey, under the Hudson River opens to road traffic.
- December 25 – At the age of 70, legendary conductor Arturo Toscanini conducts the NBC Symphony Orchestra on radio for the first time, beginning his successful 17-year tenure with that orchestra. This first concert consists of music by Vivaldi (at a time when he was still seldom played), Mozart, and Brahms. Millions tune in to listen, including U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

## Undated

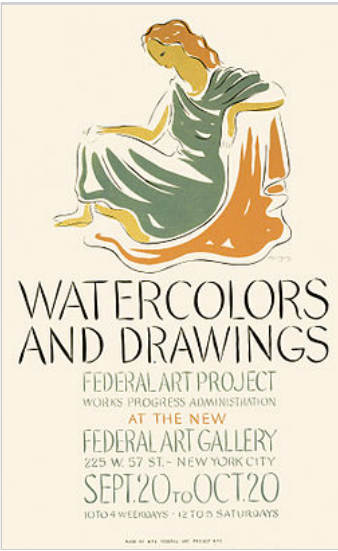
- John Steinbeck's novella of the Great Depression *Of Mice and Men* is published.
- Napoleon Hill's self-help book *Think and Grow Rich* is published.

## Ongoing

- Lochner era (c. 1897–c. 1937)
- New Deal (1933–1938)
- Recession of 1937–1938 (1937–1938)

## Births

- January 4 – Dyan Cannon, actress, director, screenwriter, editor and producer
- January 19 – Fred J. Lincoln, actor, director, producer and screenwriter (died 2013)
- March 16 – William L. Armstrong, U.S. Senator from Colorado from 1979 to 1991
- April 17 – Don Buchla, pioneer of sound synthesizers (died 2016)
- April 22 – Jack Nicholson, actor, film director, producer and writer
- May 8
  - Mike Cuellar, Cuban-American baseball player (died 2010)
  - Dennis DeConcini, U.S. Senator from Arizona from 1977 to 1995
- May 9 – Alison Jolly, primatologist (died 2014)
- May 10 – Jim Hickman, baseball outfielder
- May 15 – Joe Tait, sportscaster
- May 16 – Yvonne Craig, actress and ballet dancer

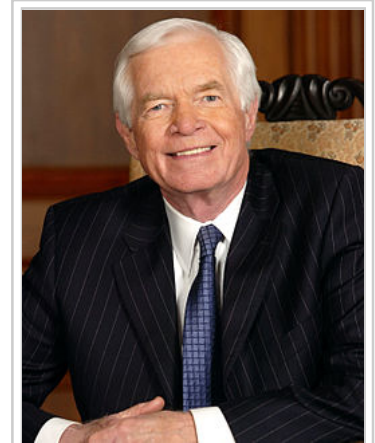


September 20: The Federal Art Project opened a Watercolors and Drawings show at the new Federal Art Gallery, NYC





- April 20 – George Takei, actor, director, author, and activist
- June 1 – Morgan Freeman, actor
- June 3 – Solomon P. Ortiz, soldier and politician
- June 7 – Red Grooms, painter and illustrator
- June 11 – David Mumford, mathematician
- June 15 – Waylon Jennings, country singer
- June 18 – Jay Rockefeller, U.S. Senator from West Virginia from 1985 to 2015
- June 26 – Robert Coleman Richardson, experimental physicist, recipient of the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1996 (died 2013)
- July 16 – Richard Bryan, U.S. Senator from Nevada from 1989 to 2001
- July 19 – Bibb Latané, social psychologist
- August 1 – Al D'Amato, U.S. Senator from New York from 1981 to 1999
- August 3 – Roland Burris, U.S. Senator from Illinois from 2009 to 2010
- September 8 – Barbara Frum, radio and television journalist (died 1992)
- September 13 – Don Bluth, animator, film director, producer, writer, production designer, video game designer and animation instructor
- October 31 – Tom Paxton, folk singer-songwriter
- November 9 – Vernon Taylor, rockabilly musician
- November 12
  - Mills Lane, boxer, referee, lawyer, and judge
  - Richard H. Truly, admiral, pilot, and astronaut
- December 3 – John F. Seymour, U.S. Senator from California from 1991 to 1992
- December 7 – Thad Cochran, U.S. Senator from Mississippi from 1978
- December 21 – Jane Fonda, actress and political activist



Senator Thad Cochran, born in 1937, photo circa 2007

## Deaths

- January 1 – John Gresham Machen, Presbyterian theologian (born 1881)
- January 2 – Ross Alexander, actor (born 1907)
- January 13 – Martin Johnson, adventurer and filmmaker (born 1884)
- February 7 – Elihu Root, statesman and diplomat, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1912 (born 1845)
- February 11 – Walter Burley Griffin, architect and town planner (born 1876)
- March 15 – H. P. Lovecraft, horror fiction author (born 1890)
- March 29 – William Edward White, African American baseball player (born 1860)
- April 10 – Ralph Ince, film director (born 1887)
- April 14 – Ned Hanlon, baseball manager (born 1857)
- April 16 – Jay Johnson Morrow, military engineer and politician, 3rd Governor of the Panama Canal Zone (born 1870)
- May 23 – John D. Rockefeller, oil industry business magnate and philanthropist (born 1839)
- June 7 – Jean Harlow, actress and sex symbol (born 1911)
- July 2 – Amelia Earhart, aviator, missing on flight (born 1897)

- July 9 – Oliver Law, labor organizer and Army officer, killed in Spanish Civil War (born 1899)
- July 11 – George Gershwin, popular composer (born 1898)
- July 14 – Joseph Taylor Robinson, politician (born 1872)
- August 11 – Edith Wharton, novelist (born 1862)
- August 27 – Andrew W. Mellon, banker and Secretary of the Treasury (born 1855)
- September 8 – Anna Hempstead Branch, poet (born 1875)
- September 13 – Ellis Parker Butler, humorist (born 1869)
- September 21 – Osgood Perkins, actor (born 1892)
- September 22 – Ruth Roland, actress (born 1892)
- September 26 – Bessie Smith, African American blues singer (born 1894)
- September 29 – Ray Ewry, field athlete (born 1873)
- November 6 – Colin Campbell Cooper, painter (born 1856)
- November 25 – Raymond Stanton Patton, admiral (born 1882)
- December 6 – Florence Griswold, curator (born 1850)
- December 21
  - Ted Healy, vaudeville actor (born 1896)
  - Frank B. Kellogg, United States Secretary of State, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1929 (born 1856)
- December 25 – Newton D. Baker, United States Secretary of War (born 1871)
- December 29 – Don Marquis, poet (born 1878)



Jean Harlow shortly before her death in 1937

## See also

- List of American films of 1937

## References

1. "Riding the Rails: Timeline of the Great Depression". *American Experience*. USA: Public Broadcasting Service. Retrieved 24 August 2016.

## External links

- Media related to 1937 in the United States at Wikimedia Commons

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Categories: 1937 in the United States



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