

# 1938 in the United States

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Events from the year **1938 in the United States**.

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## 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: Alben W. Barkley (D-Kentucky)
- Congress: 75th

## Governors and Lieutenant Governors

### Governors

- Governor of Alabama: Bibb Graves (Democratic)
- Governor of Arizona: Rawghlie Clement Stanford (Democratic)
- Governor of Arkansas: Carl Edward Bailey (Democratic)
- Governor of California: Frank Merriam (Republican)
- Governor of Colorado: Teller Ammons (Democratic)
- Governor of Connecticut: Wilbur Lucius Cross (Democratic)
- Governor of Delaware: Richard C. McMullen (Democratic)
- Governor of Florida: Fred P. Cone (Democratic)
- Governor of Georgia: Eurith D. Rivers (Democratic)
- Governor of Idaho: Barzilla W. Clark (Democratic)
- Governor of Illinois: Henry Horner (Democratic)
- Governor of Indiana: M. Clifford Townsend (Democratic)
- Governor of Iowa: Nelson G. Kraschel (Democratic)
- Governor of Kansas: Walter A. Huxman (Democratic)
- Governor of Kentucky: Happy Chandler (Democratic)
- Governor of Louisiana: Richard W. Leche (Democratic)
- Governor of Maine: Lewis O. Barrows (Republican)
- Governor of Maryland: Harry W. Nice (Republican)
- Governor of Massachusetts: Charles F. Hurley (Democratic)
- Governor of Michigan: Frank Murphy (Democratic)
- Governor of Minnesota: Elmer A. Benson (Farmer-Labor)
- Governor of Mississippi: Hugh L. White (Democratic)
- Governor of Missouri: Lloyd C. Stark (Democratic)
- Governor of Montana: Roy E. Ayers (Democratic)
- Governor of Nebraska: Robert Leroy Cochran (Democratic)
- Governor of Nevada: Richard Kirman, Sr. (Democratic)
- Governor of New Hampshire: Francis P. Murphy (Republican)
- Governor of New Jersey: Harold G. Hoffman (Republican) (until January 18), A. Harry Moore (Democratic) (starting January 18)
- Governor of New Mexico: Clyde Tingley (Democratic)
- Governor of New York: Herbert H. Lehman (Democratic)
- Governor of North Carolina: Clyde R. Hoey (Democratic)
- Governor of North Dakota: William Langer (Republican)
- 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: Robert E. Quinn (Democratic)
- Governor of South Carolina: Olin D. Johnston (Democratic)
- Governor of South Dakota: Leslie Jensen (Republican)
- Governor of Tennessee: Gordon Browning (Democratic)
- Governor of Texas: James Allred (Democratic)
- Governor of Utah: Henry H. Blood (Democratic)
- Governor of Vermont: George David Aiken (Republican)
- Governor of Virginia: George C. Peery (Democratic) (until January 15), James H. Price (Democratic) (starting January 15)
- Governor of Washington: Clarence D. Martin (Democratic)
- Governor of West Virginia: Homer A. Holt (Democratic)
- Governor of Wisconsin: Philip La Follette (Wisconsin Progressive)
- Governor of Wyoming: Leslie A. Miller (Democratic)

### Lieutenant Governors

- Lieutenant Governor of Alabama: Thomas E. Knight (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Arkansas: Robert L. Bailey (political party unknown)
- Lieutenant Governor of California: George J. Hatfield (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Colorado: Frank J. Hayes (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut: T. Frank Hayes (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Delaware: Edward W. Cooch (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Idaho: Charles C. Gossett (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Illinois: John H. Stelle (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Indiana: Henry F. Schricker (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Iowa: John K. Valentine (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Kansas: William M. Lindsay (Democratic)

- Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky: Keen Johnson (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana: Earl K. Long (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts: Francis E. Kelly (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Michigan: Leo J. Nowicki (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota: Gottfrid Lindsten (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Mississippi: Jacob Buehler Snider (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Missouri: Frank Gaines Harris (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Montana: Hugh R. Adair (political party unknown)
- Lieutenant Governor of Nebraska: Walter H. Jurgensen (Democratic) (until November 8), Nate M. Parsons (Democratic) (starting November 8)
- Lieutenant Governor of Nevada: Fred S. Alward (political party unknown)
- Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico: Hiram M. Dow (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of New York: M. William Bray (Democratic) (until end of December 31)
- Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina: Wilkins P. Horton (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of North Dakota: Thorstein H. H. Thoresen (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Ohio: Paul P. Yoder (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Oklahoma: James E. Berry (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania: Thomas Kennedy (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Rhode Island: Raymond E. Jordan (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina: Joseph Emile Harley (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of South Dakota: Donald McMurchie (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Tennessee: Bryan Pope (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Texas: Walter Frank Woodul (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Vermont: William H. Wills (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Virginia: James H. Price (Democratic) (until January 15), Saxon W. Holt (Democratic) (starting January 15)
- Lieutenant Governor of Washington: Victor A. Meyers (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin: vacant (until May 16), Herman L. Ekern (Progressive) (starting May 16)

## Events

### January–March

- January 3 – The March of Dimes is established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- January 16 – *The Famous 1938 Carnegie Hall Jazz Concert* is recorded live when Benny Goodman and his orchestra become the first jazz musicians to headline a concert at Carnegie Hall in New York City.
- January 22 – Thornton Wilder's play *Our Town* is performed for the first time anywhere in Princeton, New Jersey. It premieres in New York City on February 4.
- January 27 – The Niagara Bridge at Niagara Falls, New York collapses due to an ice jam.
- January 28 – The first ski tow in America begins operation in Vermont.
- March 3 – The Santa Ana River in California spills over its banks during a rainy winter, killing 58 people in Orange County and causing trouble as far inland as Palm Springs.<sup>[1]</sup>

### April–June

- April 18 – First appearance of comic book superhero Superman (as a backup story), in *Action Comics* #1 (cover date June).<sup>[2]</sup>
- April 25 – *Erie Railroad Co. v. Tompkins*: The U.S. Supreme Court overturns a century of federal common law.
- April 28 – The towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott in Massachusetts are disincorporated to make way for the Quabbin Reservoir.
- April 30 – The first cartoon to feature a prototypical Bugs Bunny, *Porky's Hare Hunt*, is released.
- May 17 – *Information Please* debuts on NBC Radio.
- June 22 – Heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis knocks out Max Schmeling in the first round of their rematch at Yankee Stadium in New York City.
- June 23
  - The Civil Aeronautics Act is signed into law, forming the Civil Aeronautics Authority in the U.S.
  - Marineland opens near St. Augustine, Florida.
- June 24 – A 450-metric-ton (496-short-ton) meteorite explodes about 12 miles (19 km) above the earth near Chicora, Pennsylvania.
- June 25 – Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act is signed into law by president Franklin D. Roosevelt

## July–September

- July 3 – The last reunion of the Blue and Gray commemorates the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.
- July 5 – The Non-Intervention Committee reaches an agreement to withdraw all foreign volunteers from the Spanish Civil War. The agreement is respected by most Republican foreign volunteers, notably by those from England and the United States, but is ignored by the governments of Germany and Italy.
- July 18 – Wrong Way Corrigan takes off from New York City, ostensibly heading for California. He lands in Ireland instead.
- August 6 – The Looney Tunes animated short *Porky & Daffy* is released.
- August 18 – The Thousand Islands Bridge, connecting the United States with Canada, is dedicated by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- August 31 – Winston Churchill, still believing France and Britain mean to honor their promises to defend Czechoslovakia against Nazi aggression, suggests in a personal note to Neville Chamberlain that His Majesty's Government may want to set up a broad international alliance including the United States (specifically mentioning U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt as possibly receptive to the idea) and the Soviet Union.
- September 1 – Haggard debuts a new pant concept, "Slacks", as the appropriate pant to wear during a man's "Slack Time."
- September 4 – During the ceremony marking the unveiling of a plaque at Pointe de Grave, France celebrating Franco-American friendship, American Ambassador William Bullitt in a speech states, "France and the United States were united in war and peace", leading to much speculation in the press that if war did break out over Czechoslovakia, then the United States would join the war on the Allied side.
- September 9 – U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt disallows the popular interpretation of Bullitt's speech at a press conference at the White House. Roosevelt states it is "100% wrong" the U.S. would join a "stop-Hitler bloc" under any circumstances, and makes it quite clear that in the event of German aggression against Czechoslovakia, the U.S. would remain neutral.
- September 12 – Hitler makes his much-anticipated closing address at Nuremberg, in which he vehemently attacks the Czech people and President Beneš. American news commentator Hans von Kaltenborn begins his famous marathon of broadcast bulletins over the CBS Radio Network with a summation of Hitler's address.
- September 21 – The New England Hurricane of 1938 strikes Long Island and southern New England, killing over 300 along the Rhode Island shoreline and approximately 600 in total.
- September 22 – Olsen and Johnson's musical comedy revue *Hellzapoppin'* begins its 3-year run on Broadway.

## October–December

- October 10 – The Blue Water Bridge opens, connecting Port Huron, Michigan and Sarnia, Ontario.
- October 16 – Winston Churchill, in a broadcast address to the United States, condemns the Munich Agreement as a defeat and calls upon America and western Europe to prepare for armed resistance against Adolf Hitler.
- October 24 – The minimum wage is established by law in the United States.
- October 30 – Orson Welles's radio adaptation of *The War of the Worlds* is broadcast, causing panic in various parts of the United States.
- October 31 – Great Depression: In an effort to try restore investor confidence, the New York Stock Exchange unveils a 15-point program intended to upgrade protection for the investing public.
- November 1 – Horse Racing: Seabiscuit defeats War Admiral by four lengths in their famous match race at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore, Maryland.
- November 10 – On the eve of Armistice Day, Kate Smith sings Irving Berlin's "God Bless America" for the first time on her weekly radio show.
- December – President Franklin Roosevelt agrees to lend \$25 million to Chiang Kai-shek, cementing the Sino-American relationship and angering the Japanese government.

## Ongoing

- New Deal (1933–1938)
- Recession of 1937–1938 (1937–1938)
- The Dictionary of Occupational Titles was established. It would run until 1998, when it was replaced with O\*Net OnLine

## Births

- January 2 – Dana Ulery, computer scientist
- January 4 – Eddie Southern, hurdler
- January 14 – Allen Toussaint, R&B musician, songwriter/composer and record producer (died 2015)
- January 18 – Paul G. Kirk, U.S. Senator from Massachusetts from 2009 to 2010
- February 4 – Donald W. Riegle, Jr., U.S. Senator from Michigan from 1976 to 1995
- March 5 – Lynn Margulis, biologist (died 2011)
- March 7 – David Baltimore, biologist, recipient of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1975
- April 3 – John Darley, social psychologist
- April 13 – Frederic Rzewski, composer
- April 23 – Steve Symms, U.S. Senator from Idaho from 1981 to 1993
- April 25 – Roger Boisjoly, rocket engineer (died 2012)
- June 3 – David L. Mills, computer scientist and engineer
- June 7 – Goose Gosoulin, American football player (died 2014)
- June 16 – Joyce Carol Oates, novelist
- June 24 – Lawrence Sanders, crime writer
- July 20 – Natalie Wood, actress (died 1981)
- July 21 – Janet Reno, United States Attorney General from 1993 to 2001 (died 2016)
- August 15 – Stephen Breyer, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the U.S. from 1994
- August 20 – Kanecaster Hodges, Jr., U.S. Senator from Arkansas from 1977 to 1979

- August 21 – Kenny Rogers, country singer
- September 6 – Dennis Oppenheim, artist (died 2011)
- September 8 – Sam Nunn, U.S. Senator from Georgia from 1972 to 1997
- October 6 – Peter F. Donnelly, arts patron, vice-chairman of Americans for the Arts (died 2009)
- October 7 – Mary Ann Glendon, academic lawyer and bioethicist
- October 22 – Christopher Lloyd, actor and entrepreneur
- November 16 – Robert Nozick, philosopher (died 2002)
- November 19 – Ted Turner, entrepreneur
- November 24 – Charles Starkweather, spree killer (died 1959)
- December 23 – Bob Kahn, Internet pioneer
- December 29 – Jon Voight, actor
- Undated – Bruce Langhorne, folk musician (died 2017)

## Deaths

- January 8 – Johnny Gruelle, cartoonist and children's book author (b. 1880)
- February 2 – Frederick William Vanderbilt, railway magnate (b. 1856)
- February 7 – Harvey Firestone, tire manufacturer (b. 1868)
- February 10 – Richard A. Whiting, composer (b. 1890)
- February 18 – David King Udall, politician (b. 1851)
- March 2 – Ben Harney, American composer and pianist (b. 1871)
- March 6 – Walt McDougall, American cartoonist (b. 1858)
- March 13 – Clarence Darrow, American attorney (b. 1857)
- March 21 – Oscar Apfel, American actor and director (b. 1878)
- April 8 – Joe "King" Oliver, American jazz musician (b. 1885)
- May 23 – Frederick Rupple, American painter (b. 1871)
- May 22 – William Glackens, American painter (b. 1870)
- May 26 – John Jacob Abel, American pharmacologist (b. 1857)
- June 26 – James Weldon Johnson, American author, politician, and diplomat (b. 1871)
- July 9 – Benjamin N. Cardozo, United States Supreme Court Justice (b. 1870)
- August 1 – Edmund Charles Tarbell, American artist (b. 1862)
- August 4 – Pearl White, American actress (b. 1889)
- August 16 – Robert Johnson, American blues singer (b. 1911)
- September 15 – Thomas Wolfe, American author (b. 1900)
- September 19 – Pauline Frederick, American stage & screen actress, (b. 1883)
- September 28 – Con Conrad, American composer (b. 1891)
- October 13 – E. C. Segar, American comics artist and creator of Popeye (b. 1894)
- October 27 – Alma Gluck, American soprano (b. 1884)
- October 28 – Fred Kohler, American actor (b. 1888)
- October 30 – Robert Woolsey, American film comedian (b. 1888)

- November 1 – Charles Weeghman, American restaurateur and owner of Chicago Cubs (b. 1874)
- November 4 – Samuel W. Bryant, American admiral (b. 1877)
- December 20 – Annie Armstrong, American missionary leader (b. 1850)

## See also

- List of American films of 1938

## References

1. "A Look Back: Flood of '38 was county's worst natural disaster". Archived from the original on 2009-05-20. Retrieved 2009-05-18.
2. The date is established in court documents released during a legal battle over the rights to the character.

## External links

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