

Today In History – December 17

Lincoln Herald Staff

Today in History in 1903 the Wright Brothers make their first powered and heavier-than-air flight in the Wright Flyer at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

The On This Day In History archives at "Simple English Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia" contains over 200,000 events, birthdays and deaths from 6,000 years of history. Here is a roundup of a few of them:

December 17 is the 351st day of the year (352nd in leap years) in the Gregorian calendar. There are 14 days remaining until the end of the year.

EVENTS

497 BC - The first Saturnalia festival is first celebrated in Ancient Rome.

546 - Siege of Rome: The Ostrogoths under King Totila plunder Rome, by bribing the Byzantine garrison.

942 – William I of Normandy is assassinated.

1538 – Pope Paul III excommunicates King Henry VIII of England.

1577 - Francis Drake sails from Plymouth on a secret mission to explore the Pacific Ocean coasts of the Americas.

1583 - Cologne War: Forces under Ernest of Bavaria defeat troops under Gebhard Truchsess von Waldburg at the Siege of Godesberg.

1586 - Emperor Go-Yozei of Japan becomes Emperor.

1600 - Marriage of Henry IV of France and Marie de' Medici.

1637 – In Japan, the Shimabara Rebellion led by Amakusa Shigeharu against daimyo Matsukura Shigeharu begins.

1718 – Great Britain declares war on Spain.

1777 - American Revolutionary War: France formally recognizes the United States as an independent country.

1790 – The Aztec calendar stone Piedra del Sol is discovered during building work in Mexico City.

1819 - Simon Bolivar declares the independence of Gran Colombia (present-day Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador) in Angostura, now Ciudad Bolivar, Venezuela.

1830 - Simon Bolivar dies at the age of 47.

1835 - Great Fire of New York City: Fire levels Lower Manhattan.

1837 - A fire rips through the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, Russia, killing 30 guards.

1862 – Ulysses S. Grant issues General Order Number 11, expelling Jews from Tennessee, Mississippi and Kentucky.

1865 – First performance of Franz Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony.

1892 - The first issue of Vogue magazine is published.

1903 – The Wright Brothers make their first powered and heavier-than-air flight in the Wright Flyer at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

1907 – Ugyen Wangchuck becomes the first King of Bhutan.

1909 - Albert I of Belgium becomes King.

1918 - Up to 1,000 demonstrators march on Government House in Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia.

1919 – Uruguay becomes a signatory of the Buenos Aires Convention.

1922 - The last British troops leave the Irish Free State.

1926 – Antanas Smetona becomes President of Lithuania.

1938 - Otto Hahn discovers the nuclear fission of the heavy element uranium, the scientific and technological basis of nuclear energy.

1939 - World War II: Battle of River Plate - The German Navy sinks its own ship Admiral Graf Spee outside Montevideo.

1941 – World War II: Japanese forces land in northern Borneo.

1960 - Haile Selassie is re-installed as Emperor of Ethiopia, after he had previously been removed by a coup, while he was in Brazil, on December 13.

1960 - 1960 Munich Convair 340 crash: 20 people on board the aircraft and 32 on the ground are killed.

1961 – The world's biggest circus tragedy occurs in Niteroi, Brazil when the circus is set on fire by angry workers, killing 323 people.

1967 – Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt goes missing on a diving trip off the state of Victoria. He is declared dead two days later.

1970 – The current flag of Oman comes into use.

1973 – 30 passengers are killed in an attack by Palestinian terrorists at Rome's Leonardo da Vinci Airport.

1981 – Senegal and Gambia form the Senegambia Confederation.

1983 – An IRA bomb at a Harrods Department store in London kills 6 people.

1989 – Fernando Collor de Mello is elected President of Brazil.

1989 – The first full-length episode of The Simpsons airs.

1997 – Oggy and the Cockroaches: The Movie releases in theaters by Warner Bros.

2003 – The Soham murder trial ends with Ian Huntley being found guilty of the murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman near Soham, Cambridgeshire, in 2002.

2004 – Out of health and cultural reasons, Bhutan bans the sale of tobacco.

2005 – King Jigme Singye Wangchuck of Bhutan decides to abdicate the throne.

2010 – Arab Spring: Tunisian fruit seller Mohamed Bouazizi sets himself on fire in an act of protest. He dies as a result of this on January 4, 2011. Shortly after, Tunisia's President, Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali is overthrown, and this starts a series of uprisings across North Africa and the Middle East.

2010 – Murder of Joanna Yeates: Vincent Tabak murders Joanna Yeates at her home in Clifton, Bristol. More than 10 months later, he is sentenced to life imprisonment.

2011 – A typhoon hits the island of Mindanao in the southern Philippines, killing at least 400 people.

2011 - North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il dies. His son, Kim Jong-un, takes over from him.

2014 - US President Barack Obama declares a normalization in US-Cuba relations for the first time in over 50 years, after the release of American Alan Gross, who was held in Cuba since December 2009.

2017 - Sebastian Pinera is elected President of Chile for a second time.

2019 - Fallon Sherrock becomes the first woman to win a match in a World Darts Championship.