##### **Chapter 29 : The 1970s: Toward a Conservative America**

##### 1968 **Richard Nixon elected president**

In a remarkable reversal of fortune, Nixon came back from defeats in 1960 and 1962 to win the Republican nomination and the election.

**1969** Stonewall riot leads to gay liberation movement

The Stonewall was a gay bar in New York City where, in the summer of 1969,patrons fought back after being harassed by the police. The resulting rioting marked the emergence of a liberation movement that, like many of the day,moved beyond an older, legalistic approach to civil rights for homosexual men and women.

Vietnam moratorium

Millions of antiwar activists argued for a suspension of business as usual and held rallies against the war on October 15.

American Indian Movement seizes Alcatraz

As a protest against the treatment of native Americans, members of the

American Indian Movement (AIM) took over the deserted island of Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay, offering to buy it from the federal government for the $24 worth of trinkets presumably paid for Manhattan in 1626.

**1970** Nixon orders invasion of Cambodia; renewed antiwar protests

Despite earlier announcements that U.S. ground forces would be withdrawn from Vietnam, American troops invaded Cambodia in search of enemy staging areas. The announcement of this action generated a surge of protest from students and the antiwar movement.

Killings at Kent State and Jackson State

Four students at Ohio's Kent State University, and two at Mississippi's

historically black Jackson State, were killed by National Guardsmen during

protests against the invasion of Cambodia.

##### **Environmental Protection Agency established**

President Nixon established this agency to coordinate the federal government's more aggressive environmental policies.

##### **Earth Day first observed**

Twenty million Americans throughout the country gathered to express their support for environmental preservation

##### 1971 **Pentagon Papers published**

Daniel Ellsberg, a disillusioned Defense Department official, leaked a classified study of America's growing involvement in Vietnam to the New York Times. The documents revealed that the public had often been deliberately misled about government policy.

##### **Nixon suspends Bretton Woods system**

The Bretton Woods agreement of 1944 had used the U.S. dollar to stabilize world currency. In 1971, the system collapsed, allowing the dollar to float with the price of gold.

##### **Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenberg** **institutes busing**

The Supreme Court required the Charlotte-Mecklenberg school district to transport students widely through the district in order to achieve desegregation.

##### 1972 **Revenue sharing begins**

As part of Nixon's efforts to scale back the role of the federal government, states were given block grants of federal money to use as they saw fit.

##### **Watergate break-in; Nixon reelected**

Employees of the Committee to Re-Elect the President (CREEP) broke into the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate apartment complex to install wiretaps on the phones. Their arrest and trial led to the exposure of the questionable activities of the Nixon White House and campaign staffs. Nixon's Democratic opponent, George McGovern, carried only Massachusetts and the District of Columbia, reflecting the further collapse of the Roosevelt coalition.

##### **Congress passes Equal Rights Amendment**

First introduced in 1923, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), banning gender discrimination, finally passed both houses of Congress. After being sent to the states for ratification, it failed by three states.

Nixon visits People's Republic of China

Breaking with the twenty-three-year-old policy of trying to isolate communist China, Nixon began a process of diplomatic recognition that would be completed in 1979.

SALT I Treaty with Soviet Union

Efforts to reduce tensions with the USSR, and to manage the expansion of

superpower nuclear arsenals, were furthered by this agreement.

Christmas bombings of Hanoi and Haiphong

Following an announcement in October that "peace is at hand" in Vietnam,

negotiations deadlocked. Seeking to reassure the South Vietnamese that

American power would help them if the agreements were violated, the U.S. launched the war's most devastating bombing campaigns against Hanoi and Haiphong.

##### 1973 **Spiro Agnew resigns; Gerald Ford appointed vice-president**

Vice-President Agnew was forced to resign after he was indicted for allegedly receiving kickbacks on construction contracts while he was governor of Maryland and vice-president. Under the newly ratified Twenty-fifth Amendment, Congressman Ford was appointed in his place.

##### **Roe v. Wade legalizes abortion**

This Supreme Court ruling declared that states could not prevent women from receiving abortions during the first three months of pregnancy.

Paris Peace Accords

These agreements established a cease-fire in Vietnam, with the U.S. to

withdraw combat troops in exchange for the return of all American prisoners of war held in North Vietnam.

War Powers Act

In an attempt to curb presidential power to wage undeclared war, Congress passed this act requiring the president to report any use of troops within forty-eight hours and to end hostilities within sixty days if Congress did not declare war.

##### 1973-1974 **Arab oil embargo; gas shortages**

The largely Arab Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) refused to sell oil to the United States, Germany, or Japan in retaliation for their support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War. The oil embargo was a shock to the American public, and had a serious impact on the American economy. Long lines at gas stations and limitations on fuel purchases were the signals of an end to U.S. domination of the world economy, the view that was most familiar to individual Americans.

##### 1974 **Nixon resigns; Ford becomes president and pardons Nixon**

To avoid being removed from office by impeachment, the president resigned, elevating Ford to the presidency.

##### 1974-1975 **Busing controversy in Boston**

Court-ordered busing of black high school students into the Irish neighborhood of South Boston led to a series of violent confrontations between black and white students.

**1975** Fall of Saigon

The war in Vietnam continued following the withdrawal of American forces. In April 1975, the South Vietnamese army was defeated and Vietnam was unified under the Hanoi government following the capture of the southern capital at Saigon

##### 1975-1976 **Recession**

A negative balance of trade, deindustrialization, and significantly higher fuel prices contributed to a serious recession in 1975.

##### 1976 **Jimmy Carter elected president**

Running as a Washington outsider, Carter, a Democrat and a former governor of Georgia, defeated Ford for the presidency.

##### 1978 **Carter brokers Camp David accords**

President Carter negotiated a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel by inviting the heads of the two nations to the presidential retreat at Camp David, in Maryland.

##### **Bakke v. University of California** **limits affirmative action**

The Supreme Court ruled that racial factors could be considered in university admissions but that the establishment of racial quotas was illegal.

##### **Love Canal** **crisis begins**

Residents of the Love Canal neighborhood of Niagara Falls, New York, found that their homes had been built on a toxic-waste dump, and that they were becoming sick as a result. The widely publicized discovery, and the neighborhood's subsequent abandonment, contributed to a growing awareness of environmental pollution.

##### 1979 **Second oil crisis**

The fundamentalist Islamic revolution in Iran caused oil prices to soar once again after a brief period of stability in the mid-seventies.

##### **Three Mile Island** **nuclear accident**

The central core of this nuclear power plant near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, came close to a catastrophic meltdown, and led to the evacuation of a hundred thousand nearby residents, even though no radioactive material was ever released into the atmosphere.

##### **Hostages seized** **at American embassy in Teheran, Iran**

Fudamentalist Muslim students took fifty-two U.S. diplomats and staff hostage and held them for 444 days in retaliation for American admission of the deposed shah of Iran into the United States for medical treatment

##### **USSR invades Afghanistan**

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led President Carter to react strongly for fear that the USSR was threatening Middle Eastern oil supplies.

##### 1980 "**Superfund"** **created to clean up chemical pollution**

The Carter administration created this fund to help communities clean up polluted water and ground that had been contaminated by chemical waste.

##### **Ronald Reagan elected president**

Reagan was elected on a platform to restore the United States to prominence as a world power, and on his criticism of Carter's failure to resolve the Iranian hostage crisis.