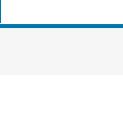


Today in History - June 26

< **June 26** >

Select date



Go

Today's Stories: [On the Boardwalk](#) | [Dominican Republic](#)

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On the Boardwalk

On **June 26**, 1870, the first section of the Atlantic City Boardwalk opened along the New Jersey beach. Dr. Jonathan Pitney and civil engineer Richard Osborne began developing the area on [Absecon Island](#) in the early 1850s. Long before this time, members of the Lenni-Lenape tribe were the first seasonal visitors to enjoy the summer splendor of the island.



[Rolling Chairs on the Boardwalk, Atlantic City, N.J.](#) [between 1905 and 1920]. [Detroit Publishing Company](#), Prints & Photographs Division

Beautiful beaches, fresh sea air, luxurious hotels, fine restaurants, alluring shops, and a connecting railroad line from Camden, New Jersey, drew visitors from all over the world. [Atlantic City](#) soon became a popular summer resort and winter health spa.

Alexander Boardman, a railroad conductor, and Jacob Keim, a hotelier, conceived of the idea of constructing a boardwalk as a means of keeping sand out of the railroad cars and hotels. The city used its tax revenues to build an eight-foot-wide temporary wooden walkway from the beach into town that could be dismantled during the winter.



[In the Good Old Summertime.](#) [Atlantic City, New Jersey] c1905. [Detroit Publishing Company](#), Prints & Photographs Division

The rolling chair, introduced in 1884, was the only vehicle allowed on the boardwalk. The boardwalk was soon extended by an enormous amusement pier, Young's Pier, visible in the background of the photograph above.

Any consideration of the boardwalk demands at least a nod to salt water taffy, a favorite beachside treat. Taffy, a candy made of corn syrup and white sugar is boiled; the confection is pulled and folded, then rolled into a long strip from which shorter (about two-inch-long) strips are cut, wrapped in stick resistant paper, and sold. Along the [Atlantic City Boardwalk](#) folks have purchased the product since at least the early 1880s. In 1925, the Supreme Court ruled that the term "salt water taffy" could not be trademarked, a decision which saved candy manufacturers from paying millions of dollars to John R. Edmiston of Wildwood, New Jersey, who claimed to be the originator of the candy and had applied for registration of the term with the U.S. Patent Office.



[Bathing Beauties, Atlantic City, N.J.](#) [between 1890 and 1910]. [Detroit Publishing Company](#), Prints & Photographs Division

Early bathers wore bathing dresses of wool flannel with stockings, canvas shoes, and large straw hats. The more daring bloomer suits and stockings worn by these bathing beauties did not catch on until 1907. Censors roamed the beaches monitoring bathers' self-exposure and looking for offenders who showed more flesh than the local code allowed.

[Inter-city Beauties, Atlantic City, 1926.](#) Atlantic Foto Service, 1926. [Panoramic Photographs](#), Prints & Photographs Division

Originally titled "Atlantic City's Inter-City Beauty Contest," and traditionally held in Atlantic City since 1921, the Miss America pageant moved to Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2006. The above photograph captures the 1926 contestants vying for the Golden Mermaid trophy.

Learn More

- Search on *Atlantic City* in these collections to find more images of this summer attraction:
 - [Highsmith \(Carol M.\) Archive](#)
 - [Detroit Publishing Company](#)
 - [Panoramic Photographs](#)
 - [Map Collections](#)
 - [Gottscho-Schleisner Collection](#)
- Search on *Atlantic City* in the [Alexander Graham Bell Family Papers at the Library of Congress](#) to find correspondence Bell wrote during a 1901 stay in Atlantic City.
- [Inventing Entertainment: the Early Motion Pictures and Sound Recordings of the Edison Companies](#) contains two panoramic films of a moving boardwalk, or *platform mobile*, a novelty featured at the 1900 Paris Exposition. Search on *boardwalk* to find them.

Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic achieved independence from Spain in 1844. American occupation of the island nation began in 1916, following years of political intervention in the republic. U.S. troops pulled out of the Dominican Republic on **June 26**, 1924.

On the heels of its victory in the [Spanish-American War](#), the U.S. began to take a more active role in the affairs of Caribbean and Latin American nations that it deemed fell within its sphere of influence. The Dominican Republic's proximity to the Panama Canal, then under construction, heightened its strategic importance.

[Plano de la Ysla de Santo Domingo...](#), 1755. [General Maps](#), Geography & Map Division

By the early 1920s, public opinion in the United States began to turn against the occupation of the Dominican Republic and neighboring Haiti. President Woodrow Wilson, who had authorized invasions of both nations, was succeeded in March 1921 by [Warren Harding](#), who had campaigned against the U.S. occupation of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Dominicans elected a new president, Horacio Vásquez Lajara, in March 1924, and national sovereignty was restored upon his July inauguration.

Decades earlier, the U.S. Congress had considered annexing the Dominican Republic. The text of the congressional debate on the issue, as well as the proposed treaty of annexation, and articles from New York City newspapers on the topic can be found in [Annexation of San Domingo](#), an 1870 pamphlet included in [African American Perspectives: Materials Selected from the Rare Book Collection](#). Also available is the text of the Senate debate, published under the title, [San Domingo. Debate in the United States Senate on the Resolutions of Hon. O. P. Morton, Authorizing the Appointment of a Commission to Examine into and Report upon the Condition of the Island](#), ca. 1871.

Learn More

- The [American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1940](#) collection contains the personal account of a Marine ([George F. Gaynor](#)) stationed in Santo Domingo and Santiago in 1924 during the U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic.
- For a brief overview of the history of the Dominican Republic, see [Dominican Republic and Haiti: country studies](#), part of the Library of Congress [Country Studies](#) collection.
- [Search](#) across all collections on *Hispaniola* or *Dominican Republic* to find documents relating to the history of the Dominican Republic. Or, [search](#) specifically within the [George Washington Papers](#) to read several references to eighteenth-century slave insurrections on the island of Hispaniola.
- [Search](#) on *Dominican Republic* in the [Map Collections](#) to view historic and present-day maps of the island nation.
- The collection [Detroit Publishing Company](#) includes fifteen [photographs of Santo Domingo](#), the capital of the Dominican Republic.
- Search [Today in History](#) on *Haiti* to find several features on the Dominican Republic's neighboring country.

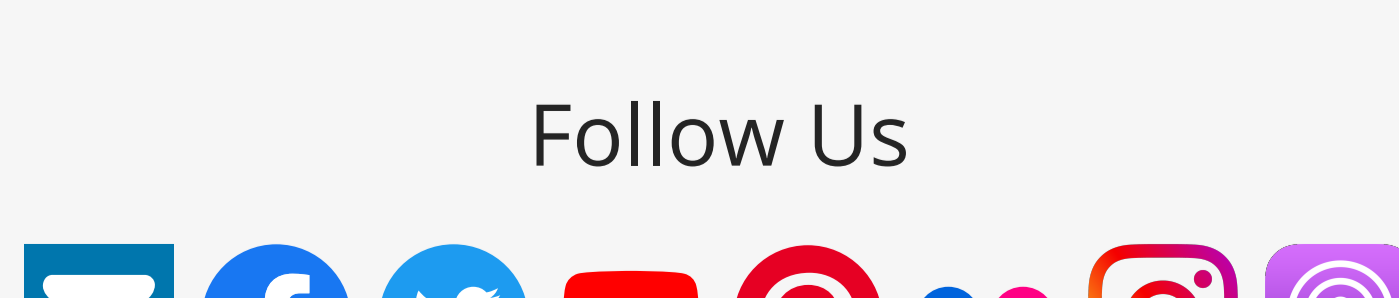
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