

## A SNAPSHOT OF THE HISTORY OF THE BAHAMAS

### A TIMELINE

#### 1400's - 1800's

- (1492) Christopher Columbus made first landing in Bahamas
- (1625) French settlers tried unsuccessfully to colonize what was created as a barony of The Bahamas
- (1647) English, Bermudan religious refugees established first European settlement in Bahamas.
- (1666) Colonization of New Providence Island began
- (1670) King Charles II of England granted Six Lords Proprietors of South Carolina the Bahama Islands
- (1695) The City of Charles Towne was established on New Providence in honour of King Charles II, later renamed Nassau in honour of King William III, formerly Prince of Orange-Nassau.
- (1697) Fort Nassau was built on the site currently occupied by the British Colonial Hilton Hotel on Bay Street.
- (1717) Bahamas became British crown colony and Captain Woodes Rogers was named first Royal Governor.
- (1729) The Bahamas House of Assembly officially meets for the first time.
- (1741) Construction began on Fort Montagu at the eastern entrance of Nassau Harbour.
- (1742) Construction of Fort Montagu completed.
- (1776) Bahamas invaded as 8 American Colonial warships captured Forts Nassau and Montagu.
- (1778) The Bahamas invaded a second time by the Americans
- (1783) In Treaty of Paris, Spain ceded Bahamas to Britain.
- (1789) Main portion of Fort Charlotte overlooking the west entrance to Nassau Harbour completed.
- (1793) Fort Fincastle was constructed in New Providence.
- (1805) The Bahamas Parliament met for the first time at its current location on Bay and Parliament
- (1834) Slaves emancipated
- (1838) Slavery in the British Empire was fully abolished.
- (1861-65) American Civil War brought great wealth to Nassau, a major supply base for the confederacy. Nassau's first resort, the Royal Victoria Hotel was constructed.
- (1892) First submarine telegraph cable laid between Cable Beach in Nassau and Jupiter Florida.
- (1898) The Hotel and Steam Ship Service Act established Nassau as a winter tourism destination.

#### 1900's

- (1914) John Ernest Williamson shot the first undersea motion picture in The Bahamas.
- (1920) The US prohibition brought another economic boom to The Bahamas where liquor was plentiful and legal.
- (1930's) Ernest Hemingway, Zane Grey and John Steinbeck lived and worked in The Bahamas.
- (1940) An Agreement between the UK and US resulted in the establishment of bases in Grand Bahama, Eleuthera, San Salvador and Mayaguana.
- (1940-45) Duke of Windsor served as governor of Bahamas. This boosted tourism.
- (1942) The Burma Road riots took place in protest against the unequal treatment of Bahamian workers at the Winsor air Field construction site (now the Lynden Pindling International Airport)
- (1942-45) Nassau became the Royal Airforce Training Base and western bastion of an 'air bridge' to ferry aircraft to war zones.
- (1943-65) Called "The Contract," more 30,000 Bahamians became migrant farm workers in the US.
- (1950) US granted military test range, tracking station for guided missiles in Bahamas by Britain
- (1955) The Hawksbill Creek Agreement established Freeport as free trade area, stimulated tourism, and attracted offshore banking.
- (1957) The Suffrogettes became official as Mary Ingraham was voted as the president.
- (1958) The general strike took place in protest against inequality of Bahamian workers.
- (1962) Universal Suffrage granted as Bahamian women voted for the first time.
- (1964) Internal autonomy granted to Bahamas
- (1965) Black Tuesday as Sir Lynden threw Mace out of the window of Parliament in protest of gerrymandering.
- (1967) Mjority Rule Day as Lynden Pindling became prime minister; Centrist Progressive Liberal Party(PLP) won by a mjority of one and governed for 25 consecutive years.
- (1969) Constitution revised where the colony of the Bahama Islands became the Commonwealth of The Bahamas
- (1972) Britain began negotiations for Bahamas independence
- (1973) Bahamas became independent. Sir Milo B. Butler became first Bahamian Governor General.
- (1983) Sir Lynden Pindling knighted by Queen Elizabeth II
- (1986) Tourism expenditure topped the \$1 billion mark for the first time in history.
- (1990) The era of the mega resorts is ushered in with the opening of the Crystal Palace Resort.
- (1992) Prime Minister Lynden Pindling defeated by Hubert Ingraham, ended 25 years of Pindling

rule.

- **(1995)** Atlantis Resorts officially opens as Nassau celebrated its tricentennial. (Renamed on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1695).
- The Bahamas won a silver medal in the women's 4x100 relay in the Atlanta olympic games.
- **(1996)** Bahamas government reinstated death penalty for murder
- **(1997)** The Honorable Rome Italia Johnson became first female speaker of the House. Container Port opens in Freeport at a cost of \$78 million.
- **(1998)** Hurricane George killed one; Atlantis resort scheduled to be completed on Paradise Island; two convicted murderers hanged. 1,202 room Royal Towers at Atlantis and 100,000 entertainment complex officially opens.
- **(1999)** Securities Industry Act came into effect, paving the way for BISX. In Sept, Hurricane Floyd hit The Bahamas causing severe damage.

### **2000's**

- **(2000)** Sir Lynden Pindling, former prime minister, known as "Father of the nation" died; Sir Randol Fawkes, father of the labour movement also died. The women's 4x100 meter relay team won gold at the Sydney, Australia olympic games.
- **(2001)** R&B singer, actress Aaliyah killed in small plane crash in Bahamas; Dame Ivy Dumont became Bahama's first woman governor-general; and the IRS qualified The Bahamas as a qualified jurisdiction for trade in securities.
- **(2002)** Opposition Liberal Progressive Party, led by the Rt. Hon. Perry Christie, won Parliamentary elections.
- **(2003)** Sir Gerald Cash, second longest serving Governor General died.
- **(2004)** Hurricane Jeane and Frances hit causing widespread damage; Tonique Williams-Darling won gold in the women's 400 m and Debbie Ferguson-McKenzie won bronze in the women's 200 m at the Athens Greece olympic games.
- **(2005)** The government of the People's Republic of China donates \$30 million towards the construction of a new national stadium; Wendy Craig becomes first female governor of the Central Bank.
- **(2006)** Final appeals court ruled mandatory death sentence for murder breached the Bahamian constitution; Canadian Janyne Hodder appointed president of the College of The Bahamas; Governor General Ivy Dumont retired and Arthur Hanna was sworn in as Governor General; Nassau International Airport renamed Lynden Pindling International Airport.
- **(2007)** Former Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham's Free National Movement won parliamentary elections; Bahamas ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.
- **(2008)** The Billion dollar Albany project approved; Nassau Beach hotel closed for Baha Mar expansion; Harrah's Entertainment severs contractual ties with the project.
- **(2009)** Bahamas Senator Pleasant Bridgewater accused of trying to extort money from actor John Travolta after his son's death; Bahamian paramedic charged in alleged scheme to extort \$25 million from John Travolta after son died of seizure.

Charges were eventually dropped. Sir Sidney Poitier awarded the Presidential Medal Of Honor by President Barak Obama. Sir Clement T. Maynard, former minister of Tourism died. Also Roger Carron, renown artist Amos Ferguson and Beryl Hanna, wife of A.D. Hanna died.

- **(2010)** Fugitive Colton Harris-Moore (Barefoot Bandit) crashed landed stolen plane on Great Abaco Island; Colton was eventually arrested and deported to US. Bahamas under tsunami watch after 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti; Exuma's Emerald Bay sold to Sandals; Philanthropist Betty Kelly Kenning died at 85; Bahamas removed from the OECD's "Grey list;" Sir Arthur Foulkes was sworn in as the eight Governor General of The Bahamas; \$2.6 billion contract between Baha Mar Resorts and the Export-Import Bank of China signed; the project promised to create up to 11,000 jobs and add \$1 billion to the economy in its first year. Bahamian tennis star Mark Knowles became only the fifth player in the ATP tour to win 700 games. Lady Edith Turnquest, wife of former governor general Orville Turnquest died. Pauline Davis-Thompson became the first Bahamas' first individual gold medallist in track when she was awarded the gold in the women's 200 meters after Marion Jones was stripped following a positive test for a banned substance.
- **(2011)** Dr. Betsy Vogel-Boze was named president of COB. Parliament approved Baha Mar Heads of Agreement; The Bett K Agencies Ltd. destroyed by fire; first COB President, Dr. Keva Bethel died at 75; Parliament passed the sale of 51% of BTC shares to Cable and Wireless by a vote of 22 to 18; Branville McCartney launches new political party, the Democratic National Alliance; Cultural icon Jackson Burnside died at 62; The new Thomas A. Robinson National Stadium, a gift from the Peoples' Republic of China is handed over to the Bahamas government; Government bans commercial shark fishing; Category 3 Hurricane Irene hits The Bahamas; The Bahamas and the Republic of Cuba signs a maritime borders agreement after 40 years of negotiations; The Pompey Museum and temporary straw market destroyed by fire; new downtown straw market opened; former Governor General Sir Clifford Darling died at 89.
- **(2012)** Rt. Hon. Perry Christie became Prime Minister after PLP won 29 of 38 seats in the general elections held on May 7; Former Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. Hubert Ingraham retires from the House; Atlantis Resort transferred ownership to Brookfield Asset Management; New \$30 million Thomas A. Robinson National Stadium officially opened; Prince Harry visits The Bahamas for 3 days as part of Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee celebrations; Super Value acquires City Market supermarket chain; Last surviving co-founder of the PLP William "Bill" Cartwright died at 89; longest serving Attorney General Paul Adderly died; former Youth and Sports Minister Charles Maynard died; Sports icon Thomas Augustus Robinson died; former MP and Senator Bruce Braynen died; First laproscopic nephrectomy performed at Doctor's Hospital; Team Bahamas wins gold in the men's 4x400 meters relay at the London Olympics; Joint sitting of Parliament to commemorate the 50 anniversary of the Women's Suffrage Movement and their right to vote.
- **(2013)** Non- constitutional Referendum to regulate webshop gaming and a national lottery fails at the polls, a conservatory order was granted by the courts but all appeals have failed; 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Independence Celebrations Committee formed by Prime Minister and co-chaired by Charles Carter and Dr. Nicolette Bethel

and later Dr. Bethel was replaced by Dr. Tracey Thompson; 42<sup>nd</sup> Carifta Games held in The Bahamas for the second time at the National Stadium – Bahamas placed second behind Jamaica with 31 medals; The inaugural Chris Brown Bahamas Invitational Track and Field Classic was held at the National Stadium; first ever College of The Bahamas track and field classic was held at the old stadium; the passing of former longest serving Commissioner of Police Bernard Kenneth Bonamy; aviation accident in Mayaguana during a medical emergency pickup which claimed the lives of three persons.