Steam-powered ferry service between New York City and Hoboken, NJ, begins on October 11, 1811.

A magnitude 8.3 earthquake (the strongest ever recorded in the continental United States) strikes near New Madrid, MO, temporarily reversing the course of the Mississippi River on February 2, 1812.

British soldiers burn the White House and other government buildings on August 24, 1814.

Francis Scott Key writes "The Star Spangled Banner" while witnessing the September 13-14, 1814, bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor.

The thirteen stars and stripes configuration of the U.S. flag is officially adopted by Congress on April 4, 1818.

The American steamship "Savannah" crosses the Atlantic Ocean in 29 days.

Norwich University, the first private military school, is founded in Vermont on August 6, 1819.

The first installment of Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* appears in the May 1819 edition of *The Sketch Book*.