

100 Years Ago

NOTABLE NATIONAL EVENTS

The last known **Carolina parakeet** died in captivity February 21 in

the Cincinnati Zoo. This neotropical parrot had a bright yellow head, reddish orange face, pale beak, and a body with several shades of green feathers. It was the only parrot found in the Midwest. Hunting and disease may have led to their decimation.



The **Standard Time Act** was enacted by Congress on March 19. It established standard time zones across the country. The act also provided for daylight savings time.

General Motors Company, founded in 1908 by William C. Durant, acquired **Chevrolet Motor Car Company** on May 2. The Chevy displaced the Ford in 1929 as the best selling U. S. automobile.

The **Sedition Act of 1918** (actually a set of amendments to the Espionage Act of 1917 and passed May 16) made it illegal to use "disloyal, profane, scurrilous or abusive language" about the government, flag, or armed forces. Talk that showed contempt for the American government during wartime was punishable by imprisonment, generally five to twenty years. The act was passed during World War I and was repealed after the war on December 13, 1920.

In October of 1918, **Alvin Cullum York** (1887-1964), then a corporal, led an attack on a German ma-



Sergeant Alvin York, Library of Congress.

chine gun nest. Six of the other 17 American soldiers in his group were killed and three wounded. York continued the charge, single-handedly killed eight or more Germans, and captured the enemy officer in charge. He and his men confiscated 35 machine guns, killed at least 25 enemy soldiers, and took 132 prisoners. York was immediately promoted to Sergeant and received the Medal of Honor. Tennessean Sergeant York became the epitome of courage under fire.

The **Armistice** was signed on November 11, ending World War I.

As if World War I was not enough of a scourge, the pandemic **Spanish Influenza** killed an estimated 40-50 million people worldwide. October, 1918 was the deadliest month in the U. S. when 195,000 Americans succumbed to the flu and an estimated 500,000 died before it abated. It did not origi-



Spanish flu ward at Walter Reed Hospital. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

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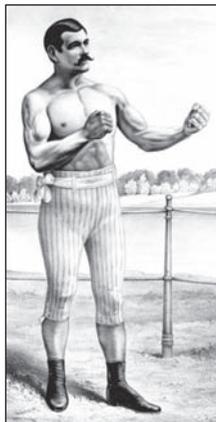
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nate in Spain but was thoroughly covered by Spanish newspapers during the war while the western press was censored from reporting the ravages for morale reasons. The first U. S. case recognized was a mess cook at Camp Funston on Fort Riley, Kansas, who complained of fever, headache, and a sore throat. City governments banned large group meetings— churches canceled services and schools were closed.

Deaths

John L. Sullivan, born October 15, 1858 in Boston, Massachusetts, known as “The Boston Strong Boy,” was the last heavyweight champion of bare-knuckle



boxing and the first heavyweight champion of gloved boxing. He had a record of 40 wins, 1 loss, and 2 draws. Of the wins, 34 were by knockout. Of the loss, it came at the hands of “Gentleman Jim” Corbett. Sullivan died February 2, 1918, in Abington, Massachusetts, at the age of 59 from heart disease. The image of Sullivan is an 1883 Currier and Ives print, courtesy of Library of Congress.

Joyce Kilmer was an American journalist, editor, and poet. His poetry was of a simple style and often celebrated the natural world. His most famous work is

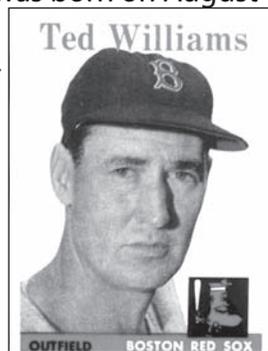


Joyce Kilmer from Library of Congress.

the short poem “Trees,” published in 1914, the first lines familiar to most of us: *I think that I shall never see/A poem as lovely as a tree.* Kilmer enlisted in the New York National Guard in 1917 and went to France with the U. S. 69th Infantry Regiment. During the Second Battle of the Marne on July 30, Kilmer volunteered to go on a scout for a German machine gun nest placement. Kilmer was shot in the head and killed by a sniper.

Births

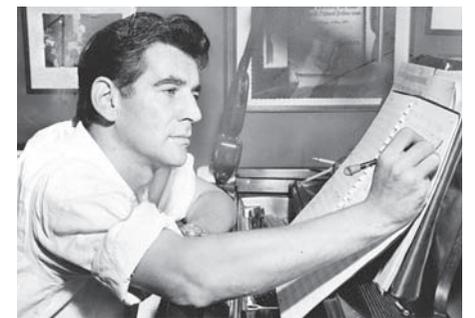
Ted Williams was born on August 30 in San Diego, California. He had a 19-year major league baseball career, all as left fielder for the Boston Red Sox. Not known as a



Ted Williams

great outfielder, he was a great hitter with a career .344 batting average, 521 home runs, and a .482 all-time high on-base percentage.

Leonard Bernstein was born August 25 in Lawrence, Massachusetts. He became musical director and then principal conductor of the New York Philharmonic in 1958. He composed many scores, lectured, and became famous for his televised Young People’s Concert series. His most enduring effort was the musical score for *West Side Story* in 1957.



Leonard Bernstein in 1946. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

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