

Personal Freedom

1210

Roger Allyn Lee/SuperStock



- Issued in 1950, The Diner's Club is the first general purpose credit card. By 1996, there are over 119 million credit card holders and about 1,390,000 ATM terminals in the U.S.

1376

- The Factory Act of 1833 states children under age nine may not work in the textile industry, ages 9-13 may work nine hours per day, and ages 13-18 may work 12 hours per day. Today's 10th to 12th grader works an average of 19 hours a week.

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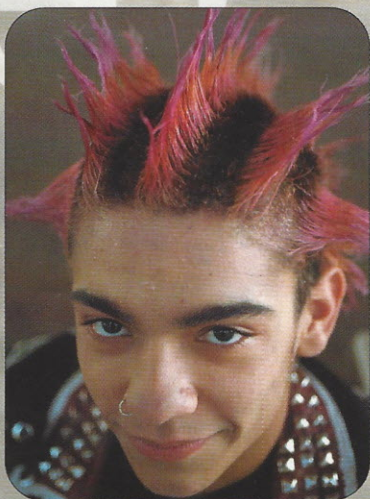
Dean Wong/Corbis



- The earliest African slave arrives in the U.S. in 1509, followed by 10-15 million Africans in the largest forced migration in history. People from around the world now come willingly, with almost one million immigrants entering the U.S. in 1996 alone.

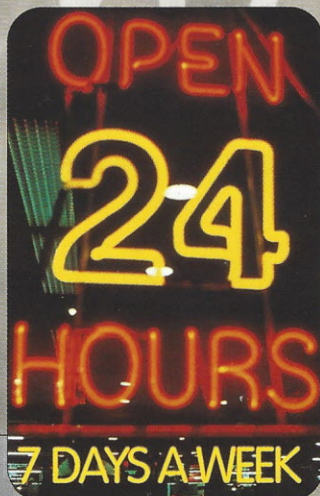
1500

Sandy Felsenthal/© Corbis



- Julius Caesar creates a calendar with April 1 as the first day of the year. In 1582, a new calendar is devised with January 1 as New Year's Day. Those who continue to celebrate New Year's Day on April 1 are considered fools, hence April Fool's Day.

Colour Australia



1697

- In 1675, Massachusetts law prohibits men from wearing long hair. Russia taxes men with beards in 1698. Hairstyle is a personal choice today.

1753



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1899

- Women first gain the right to vote in New Zealand in 1893, with American women gaining the right in 1920. The voting-age population of the U.S. today is over 193 million.

- A 1721 Connecticut law states people may not leave home on Sunday except for church or an emergency. Many stores are now open 24 hours, 7 days a week.



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- In the 1400s, books are symbols of prestige and are considered treasures due to small print runs. People trade vineyards and herds of cattle for one book. Today, the average teenager spends four hours a week reading for fun.

2000