

Famous Firsts: 1940s

As with every decade, the forties ushered in a number of firsts. Some of these American firsts are listed by year below.

- 1940**
 - Penicillin was used to help cure diseases.
 - Morton Salt was introduced.
 - The first synthetic rubber tires were manufactured.
 - Synthetic tooth fillings were developed.
 - Tiffany's in New York City was the first fully air-conditioned store.
 - The first commercial flights with pressurized cabins were inaugurated.
 - The Jeep made its debut on November 11, 1940.
 - M&Ms® were manufactured for the U.S. Army.
- 1941**
 - The first Superman movie, an animated cartoon, debuted.
 - The first disposable aerosol cans were developed by Lyle Goodhue and W. N. Sullivan.
- 1942**
 - The first all-star bowling tournament was held.
 - The first successful turbo-prop engine was developed.
- 1943**
 - The Slinky® was invented but not sold commercially until 1947.
- 1944**
 - Harvard University mathematician Howard Aiken built the Mark I computer. The 35-ton machine was capable of finding the product of two 11-digit numbers in just three seconds.
- 1945**
 - The first atomic bomb was tested in the New Mexican desert near Alamogordo. The team of scientists was headed by Robert Oppenheimer.
 - Grand Rapids, Michigan began fluoridation of its water supply. It had been discovered that small amounts of fluoride could dramatically reduce tooth decay.
- 1946**
 - ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer) was the first electronic digital computer. Built by Presper Eckert and John W. Mauchly, it filled a 30' x 60' room.
 - The first electric blanket was manufactured.
- 1947**
 - Elmer's Glue-All was introduced.
 - Engineer and inventor Buckminster Fuller built his first geodesic dome. Its unique design encloses the most space, using a given amount of material.
- 1948**
 - The first long-playing (LP) phonograph record was introduced by Columbia Records. It held six times as much music as previous records and helped create the modern recording industry.
 - Bell Laboratories' physicists invented the transistor. Smaller, cheaper, and faster than a vacuum tube, it revolutionized the field of electronics.
 - Edwin Land invented the Polaroid Land® camera. It was the first camera to produce finished prints "instantly" - in this case, 60 seconds. It sold for \$89.75.
 - Holography was invented by Dennis Gabor. The technique created three-dimensional images.
- 1949**
 - Silly Putty® was invented.
 - Physicist Harold Lyons built the first atomic clock. Built for the National Bureau of Standards, the clock was accurate to within a few seconds over fifty years.