1870 Wellesley Female Seminary chartered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
1873 name changed to Wellesley College
1875 College opens on September 8 with 314 students. The President (Ada Howard) and almost all of the faculty were women.
1877 tradition of Tree Day begins; each class at Wellesley plants a class tree
1878-79 Schools of Music and Art open
1878 Students' Aid Society formed to assist students with College expenses
1879 first commencement, 18 students graduate
1880 Alumnae Association founded
1880 preparatory department discontinued
1881 Henry Fowle Durant, founder of Wellesley College, dies
1882 Alice Freeman [age 27] becomes President
1886 Eliot becomes the first cooperative house (house where students could work to earn part of their fees)
1887 first African-American graduate, Harriet Rice
1888 Helen Shafer becomes President after Alice Freeman married George Herbert Palmer, Professor of Philosophy at Harvard, (December 1887) and resigns. Miss Shafer promoted first major curricular reform
1888-89 first international student, Kin Kato from Japan
1888 The Courant, the first of a succession of student newspapers begins publication
1889 Legenda, the yearbook, begins publication
1891 Mary Whiton Calkins establishes one of first psychology laboratories in country at Wellesley
1894 Julia Irvine becomes President. She liberalizes some student rules, ends domestic work, makes chapel attendance voluntary.
1894 first alumnas trustees elected to the Board of Trustees
1895 tradition of hoop rolling begins
1895 "America the Beautiful" by Katharine Lee Bates, Class of 1880 and member of the Department of English Literature, first published
1896 Art and Music cease to be schools, become departments
1899 Caroline Hazard becomes President and embarks on a building program to enhance Wellesley's facilities
1901 student government association formed
1905 Phi Beta Kappa, Eta Chapter of Massachusetts, installed at Wellesley
1911 Ellen Pendleton, Class of 1886, becomes President. Miss Pendleton served longer than any other Wellesley President, 25 years.
1914 College Hall burns, March 17
1917 Pauline Durant, cofounder of Wellesley College, dies
1922 honors program begins
1923 Alumnae Hall, the long-awaited student/alumni building opens
1926-27  first junior year abroad [in 1980's Wellesley greatly expands study abroad programs]
1928  all students must take a general exam on their major field of study
1936  Mildred McAfee becomes President
1936  Class of 1938 inaugurates a new tradition, Junior Show [an original musical by members of the Junior class]
1938  Chapter of Sigma Xi Society installed at Wellesley
1942-46  Mildred McAfee was given a leave of absence from the College Presidency to lead the WAVES [Women's Reserve of U.S. Navy]. While she was on leave the College was run by Marie Haffenreffer, senior alumnae trustee, Ella Keats Whiting, Dean of the College, and Lucy Wilson, Dean of Students.
1943  Washington Internship program begins [in the 1970's other internship opportunities were added]
1943-44  four groups of the Navy Supply Corps live and train on campus
1945  Mildred McAfee received the Distinguished Service Medal and marries Rev. Douglas Horton
1946  Emily Greene Balch, who taught economics and sociology 1896-1919, is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize
1949  Margaret Clapp, Pulitzer Prize winning historian of the Class of 1930, becomes President
1950  interdepartmental major first offered
1952  with the completion of the "new dorms," Bates, and Freeman, all students could be housed on campus--freshmen (and occasionally sophomores) no longer had to live in "the vil"
1958  Jewett Arts Center, designed by Paul Rudolph, opens
1966  Ruth Adams becomes President
1968  curriculum revised to eliminate required English and Bible courses, and the General Exam
1968  cross-registration program with M.I.T. begins. This was the first of a number of exchange arrangements available to students.
1969  Continuing Education program begins
1970  students may design their own majors
1971  Wellesley decides to remain single sex school
1972  Barbara Newell becomes President
1972  Slater International Center opens
1974  Center for Research on Women opens
1981  Nannerl Keohane, Class of 1961, becomes President
1981  Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies opens
1983  required writing program for Freshmen reinstated
1984  Interdisciplinary cluster program for first year students begins
1989  taking a multicultural course becomes a requirement
1990  Barbara Bush, First Lady USA and Raisa Gorbachev, First Lady, USSR, are commencement speakers
1993  Diana Chapman Walsh, Class of 1966, becomes President
1993  Davis Museum and Cultural Center opens
1997  Ruhlman Conference—a day when students present their work—begins
1997  major curriculum revision [new distribution fields created and quantitative reasoning requirement added]
1999  Trustees approve a master plan for the development of the campus
1999  summer school offered for first time