

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
America



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America



JULY 4th



Independence Day also known as 4th of July is the birthday of the United States of America. It is celebrated on July 4th each year in the United States. It is the anniversary of the day on which the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress - July 4, 1776. The day they announced to the world that the 13 colonies no longer belonged to Great Britain. Independence Day was first observed in Philadelphia on July 8, 1776.

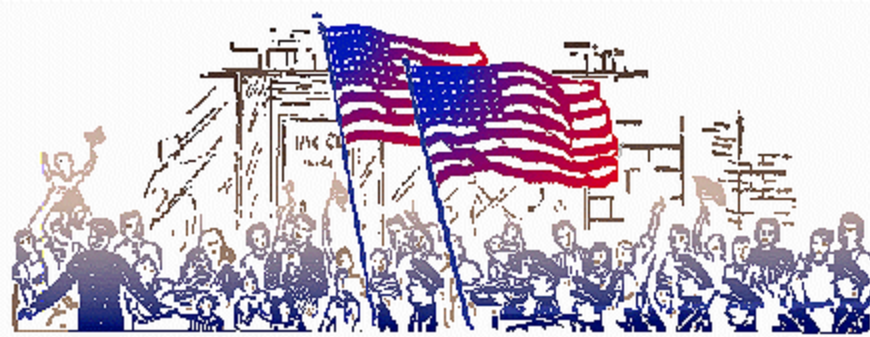


On July 4, 1777, the night sky of Philadelphia lit up with the blaze of bonfires. Candles illuminated the windows of houses and public buildings. Church bells rang out loud, and cannons were shot from ships breaking the silence. The city was celebrating the first anniversary of the founding of the United States.



The Fourth of July soon became the main patriotic holiday of the entire country. Veterans of the Revolutionary War made a tradition of gathering on the Fourth to remember their victory. In towns and cities, the American flag flew; shops displayed red, white, and blue decorations; and people marched in parades that were followed by public readings of the Declaration of Independence. In 1941, Congress declared July 4 a federal legal holiday.





The 13 Colonies were

- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Georgia
- Maryland
- Massachusetts Bay
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New York
- North Carolina
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Virginia



In America, there are several symbols that represent our freedom. Our flag is probably

our most important symbol. Here is a look at what they mean and the history.



Betsy Ross and Our Flag

The first flag representing the United States was sanctioned by George Washington using colors from The British Kings Colours. It was called the Grand Union flag.

Soon, it was decided that a new flag was needed to represent America, and it was decided to be red, white, and blue, with stars and stripes representing the colonies. It is said that George Washington, Robert

Morris, and George Ross (Betsy Ross's late husband's uncle) came to Ross's home and asked her to sew the new flag. Originally, George Washington had wanted 6-pointed stars on the flag, but Betsy Ross demonstrated how to cut a 5-pointed star in a single snip, and the committee was so impressed that they allowed Betsy Ross to sew our new American flag, using the 5-pointed star.



OUR FLAG

On June 14, 1777, at Philadelphia, the Marine Committee of the Second Continental Congress offered the resolution which resulted in the adoption of the Flag of the United States. As new states were admitted

it became evident that the number of stripes in the flag would have to be limited.

Congress ordered that after July 4, 1818, the flag should have thirteen stripes, symbolizing the thirteen original states, that the union would have twenty stars, and that a new star should be added on the July 4th following admission of a new state. The permanent arrangement of the stars is not designated, and no star is specifically identified with any state. Since 1912, following the admission of a new state, the new design has been announced by executive order. The original resolution read: "Resolved: that the flag of the United States be made of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."





According to the Department of State, red stands for hardiness and courage, white is the symbol of purity and innocence, and blue is the color of vigilance, perseverance, and justice.



The Pledge of Alligiance

I pledge alligiance to the flag
 of the United States of America
 and to the Republic for which it stands.
 One nation under God,
 indivisible,
 with liberty and justice for all.



History of the Pledge of Allegiance

The original Pledge of Allegiance was written by Francis Bellamy. It was first given wide publicity through the official program of the National Public Schools Celebration of Columbus Day which was printed in The Youth's Companion of September 8, 1892, and at the same time sent out in leaflet form to schools throughout the country. School children first recited the Pledge of Allegiance this way:

"I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands one Nation indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all."

"The flag of the United States" replaced the words "my Flag" in 1923 because some

foreign-born people might have in mind the flag of the country of their birth instead of the United States flag. A year later, "of America" was added after "United States."

No form of the Pledge received official recognition by Congress until June 22, 1942, when the Pledge was formally included in the U.S. Flag Code. The official name of The Pledge of Allegiance was adopted in 1945. The last change in language came on Flag Day 1954, when Congress passed a law, which added the words "under God" after "one nation."

Originally, the pledge was said with the right hand in the so-called "Bellamy Salute," with the right hand resting first outward from the chest, then the arm extending out from the body. Once Hitler came to power in Europe, some Americans were concerned that this position of the arm and hand resembled the Nazi or Fascist salute. In 1942 Congress also established the current practice of rendering the pledge with the right hand over the heart.

The Flag Code specifies that any future changes to the pledge would have to be with the consent of the President.

(The above article on the history of the Pledge of Allegiance was written by [American Legion](#))



AMERICA

The song "America" is sung across America as one of the National Anthems. It was written by Reverend Samuel Francis Smith in 1832. It was first used at a children's fourth of July picnic in Boston. Lowell Mason discovered the tune in a collection of German melodies and recommended it to Rev. Smith. The music to "America" is the same as that of the British national anthem, "God Save the Queen." It is said that Henry Carey put the melody into its present form.

Words are:

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the Pilgrims' pride,
From every mountainside
Let Freedom ring.

My native country, thee
Land of the noble free--
Thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills;
My heart with rapture thrills
Like that above.

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

FUN FACT

"America The Beautiful" was written as a poem by Wellesley College professor Katherine Lee Bates in the year 1893. After riding to the top of Colorado's Pike Peak she was inspired by the "spacious skies" and "purple mountain majesties". Her poem was later set to music.

National Anthem

Read about "The Star Spangled Banner" by clicking National Anthem above.



The Liberty Bell



The Liberty Bell represents America's freedom. The Liberty Bell is located at the Liberty Bell Pavilion on Market Street between 5th and 6th Streets in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was cast in London and was made of 70% copper, 25% tin, and small amounts of lead, zinc, arsenic, gold and silver. Written on the bell are the words, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof". The Liberty Bell cracked the first time it was rung. It was repaired in 1846, and cracked again. The bell has not been rung since.

FUN FACT

Every 4th of July the Liberty Bell is tapped - not actually rung.



The Eagle

In 1787, the newly formed United States adopted as its emblem a bald Eagle with wings that are outspread. The Eagle is shown with a shield on its breast, an olive branch in one foot, and a sheaf of arrows in the other foot. When the Eagle is placed on the American coat-of-arms it carries a scroll in its beak bearing the Latin words *E Pluribus Unum*, meaning one out of many.

FUN FACT

The first Eagle on an American coin appeared on a Massachusetts penny in 1776.



The Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence is a document written by our Founding Fathers declaring America's independence. A committee of five men, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston were appointed to write the document. The first draft of the Declaration was written by Jefferson, in seclusion. He spent several days writing it. John Adams was the first person to revise the document, followed by Benjamin Franklin, and finally by the full Congressional Committee.

It was altered a total of 47 times before independence was declared. Independence was declared on July 2, 1776, and 39 more revisions to the document followed. John Hancock was the first signer of the Declaration of Independence, on July 4, 1776. The Declaration of Independence is on display at the National Archives.

President Jefferson wrote
in the [Declaration of Independence](#):

"We hold these truths to be self-evident;
that all men are created equal..."

"Resolved, That these United Colonies are,
and of right ought to be, free and
independent States, that they are absolved
from all allegiance to the British Crown,
and that all political connection between
them and the State of Great Britain is, and
other to be, totally dissolved."

Thomas Jefferson, was the 3rd President
of the United States of America,
from 1801 to 1809. Congress had appointed
5 men to prepare this proclamation, and
Jefferson was the greatest contributor of
the words contained in the document, and
described the [Declaration of Independence](#) as
"An expression of the American mind."

Thomas Jefferson

It was a declaration of independence for the
colonies of the 13 States, in America,
from Great Britain and was adopted on
July 4, 1776 by the Second Continental Congress,
when John Hancock, who was the President of
the Congress, accepted and signed it.
All the men who signed the document,
knew that they had placed themselves
in grave danger, but were willing to risk
their lives for what they believed.

Jefferson used many of the ideas from John Locke who was an English Philosopher who argued against the philosophy that human beings were born with certain ideas. He believed that the mind was blank and only through experience, a person would begin to enter ideas. He was totally against the divine right of kings and argued that governments depended on the consent of the governed. The main ideas brought forth were that all men were created equal; that man had natural rights which were granted by God; that government could only have so much power in the lives of the people, and could only be governed by the agreement of the people; and the right of the people to rebel against a government which wanted to impose dictatorship or tyranny to its people.

Thomas Jefferson was born in 1743 and died in 1826. His picture is on the \$20 dollar bill, the \$2 dollar bill and the nickel. He is considered to have been one of our greatest Presidents. He wrote these words on his own gravestone: "Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, of the statute of Virginia for religious freedom, and father of the University of Virginia."



When the Declaration of Independence was declared, John Adams wrote this historic letter to his wife:

"I am apt to believe that this day will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time

forward forevermore."

FUN FACT

One lucky Philadelphian purchased a \$4.00 picture at a flea market. What they found behind the picture was an original 1776 printing of the Declaration of Independence. It was sold to TV producer Norman Lear for 8.1 million.



STATUE OF LIBERTY



The large copper statue that stands on Liberty Island in New York Harbor is a remembrance of our Nations FREEDOM

France gave the statue to America in 1884 as a symbol of friendship and of the liberty that citizens enjoy under a free form of government. The statues proper name is *Liberty Enlightening the World*.

The statue represents a proud woman, dressed in a loose robe that falls in graceful folds to the top of the pedestal on which the statue stands. The right arm holds a great torch raised high in the air. The left arm grasps a tablet bearing the date of the Declaration of Independence. A crown with huge spikes, like sun rays, rest on her head. At her feet is a broken shackle, which symbolizes the overthrow of tyranny.

The Men Who Signed the



Declaration of Independence

Have you ever wondered what happened to the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence?

Five signers were captured by the British as traitors and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned.

Two lost their sons serving in the Revolutionary Army, another had two sons captured. Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or hardships of the Revolutionary War. They signed and they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

What kind of men were they?

Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists. Eleven were merchants, nine were farmers and large plantation owners; men of means, well educated. But they signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British Navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts, and died in rags.

Thomas McKeam was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

Vandals or soldiers looted the properties of Dillery, Hall, Clymer, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton.

At the battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson, Jr., noted that the British General Cornwallis had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. He quietly urged General George Washington to open fire. The home was destroyed, and Nelson died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months.

John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His fields and his gristmill were laid to waste. For more than a year, he lived in forests and caves, returning home to find his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later, he died from exhaustion and a broken heart.

Norris and Livingston suffered similar fates.

Such were the stories and sacrifices of the American Revolution. These were not wild-eyed, rabble-rousing ruffians. They were soft-spoken men of means and education. They had security, but they valued liberty more.

Standing tall, straight, and unwavering, they pledged: "For the support of this declaration, with firm reliance on the protection of the divine providence, we mutually

pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

They gave you and me a free and independent America. The history books never told you a lot about what happened in the Revolutionary War. We didn't fight just the British. We were British subjects at that time and we fought our own government!

Some of us take these liberties so much for granted, but we shouldn't.

So, take a few minutes while enjoying your 4th of July Holiday and silently thank these patriots. It's not much to ask for the price they paid. Remember: Freedom is never free!

Those who signed were:

JOHN HANCOCK
President of the Continental Congress
1775-1777

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Josiah Bartlett
William Whipple
Matthew Thornton

MASSACHUSETTS BAY

Samuel Adams
John Adams
Robert Treat Paine
Elbridge Gerry

RHODE ISLAND

Stephan Hopkins
William Ellery

CONNECTICUT

Roger Sherman
Samuel Huntington
William Williams
Oliver Wolcott

NEW YORK

William Floyd
Philip Livingston
Francis Lewis

Lewis Morris

NEW JERSEY

Richard Stockton
John Witherspoon
Francis Hopkinson
John Hart
Abraham Clark

DELAWARE

Caesar Rodney
George Read
Thomas M'Kean

MARYLAND

Samuel Chase
William Paca
Thomas Stone
Charles Carrol of Carrollton

VIRGINIA

George Wythe
Richard Henry Lee
Thomas Jefferson
Benjamin Harrison
Thomas Nelson, Jr.
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Carter Braxton

PENNSYLVANIA

Rober Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benjamin Franklin
John Morton
George Clymer
James Smith
George Taylor
James Wilson
George Ross

NORTH CAROLINA

William Hooper
Joseph Hewes
John Penn

SOUTH CAROLINA

Edward Rutledge
Thomas Heyward, Jr.
Thomas Lynch, Jr.
Arthur Middleton

GEORGIA

Button Gwinnett
Lyman Hall
George Walton

It's time we get the word out that patriotism is NOT a sin,
and the Fourth of July has more to it than beer, picnics, and baseball games.



READ MORE OF THE FOLLOWING AT JUST 4 KIDS MAGAZINE.COM ONLINE ISSUE

Page on America's National Anthem
"The Star Spangled Banner"

[Links to Information on the United States Flag](#)

OUR FLAG HISTORY



A wonderful Name the President game.

[The Gettysburg Address](#)
[Thirteen United States of America](#)
[Declaration of Independence](#)

[The Constitution of
United States of America](#)