



Every year on the Fourth of July the United States of America celebrates Independence Day. Communities from coast to coast commemorate the day in 1776 when the Continental Congress proclaimed America's freedom from British rule.

Virtually every community in the country has some kind of celebration, but there is no city in the United States that has a closer association with the birth of our nation's freedom than Boston, Massachusetts. It was the colonists of Boston and the surrounding towns who began America's War of Independence.

Independence Day in Boston starts with raising our nation's flag and saluting our troops—both past and present. The British even send a contingent to join the march and show there are no hard feelings. The troops proceed down to the Old Granary Burial Grounds and place wreaths on the gravesites of three men who signed the Declaration of Independence — John Hancock, Samuel Adams and Robert Paine. Then they proceed to the Old State House where the Commanding Captain reads the Declaration of Independence to the citizens assembled below.



After the colonists won the Revolutionary War and felt somewhat secure that there actually might be a United States of America, they made the Fourth of July an official holiday. But amazing as it seems Congress did not declare it a federal holiday until 1941.



It's not that the Federal Government was so busy they didn't have time to declare the Fourth of July a federal holiday. It's the fact that when they declare any day a federal holiday, millions of people who work for the government get the day off at full pay. The Federal Government wanted to wave the flag—they just didn't want to pay for it.

LEN TRAVERS, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth:

*The earliest celebrations were like pick up games. In Boston for instance there was a mock battle that was held on Boston Common. There were fireworks put on by the local militia company and a parade, and some impromptu feasting. And these elements have remained with us right to the present day.*

### I WANT YOU

Every year on Independence Day someone feels the need to get dressed up as Uncle Sam. It goes back to the 1700's when a guy by the name of Samuel Wilson started supplying meat to our newly formed U.S. Army. He stamped his crates "U.S." and somebody who worked for him or for the Federal Government decided that "U.S." stood for "Uncle Sam". Since then it has become a symbol of our Federal Government.

LEN TRAVERS:

*The origins of Uncle Sam probably go back to the image of a character known as Brother Jonathan. You find him personalized as early as the American Revolution, but certainly by the War of 1812. Brother Jonathan is the concoction of mostly British cartoonists who were looking for a way to symbolize America. As time went on, and the United States began to mature Brother Jonathan starts to mature as well, at least in his age. He's still held up as a kind of ruff looking fellow. And it's not until the 1830s, 1840s that the image of Uncle Sam turns more favorable for Americans.*



The picture of Uncle Sam that we are familiar with was created by a political cartoonist who lived in New York City during the mid-1800s. His name was Thomas Nast and not only did he give us our red, white and blue suited icon of America, he was also responsible

## THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WRITTEN BY FRANCIS BELLAMY

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**I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE 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.**

for our bearded Santa Claus, Santa's home in the North Pole, the elephant as the symbol of the Republican Party and the donkey as the symbol of the Democrats.



He gained most of his fame during the years that he worked for *Harper's Weekly Magazine* and is often thought of as America's first great cartoonist.

### LEN TRAVERS:

*The political image of Uncle Sam has often changed with the times. In wartime, American recruitment posters and political cartoons will depict him as a viral 50 year old rolling up his sleeves preparing for battle. Venerable*



*but still very tough. However if people want to make sport with the American Nation or place the United States Government in an embarrassing situation, it's easy to make a rather goofy looking Uncle Sam as well. He was depicted*

*as a rather corpulent fellow in the 1890s and the early 1900s to signify that America was becoming wealthier and more complacent.*

The most recognizable image of Uncle Sam however is in the character of America's parental authority on a World War I recruiting poster by James Montgomery Flagg with the caption "I WANT YOU FOR THE U.S. ARMY!"

### NIGHT AND DAY

Traditionally our Fourth of July celebration is divided into two parts. Part one takes place during the day. It's made up of rather orderly activities—parades, picnics, patriotic speeches and trooping of the colors. The second half takes place at night and is usually marked

by fireworks, bonfires, loud music and the over consumption of fermented and distilled beverages.

The daytime festivities usually start with a parade that shows off whatever people want to show off. After all what's the point of being free and independent if you can't show off your stuff. The parade in our program took place in Gloucester, Massachusetts and what they want to show off are their Horribles. In Gloucester, Massachusetts a Horrible is a costume or skit made by anyone for the purpose of having fun.

Actually, the original idea behind a parade was to show off your military stuff. The word 'parade' comes from an old Spanish word that means "the stopping point" and it described the time when a foreign army occupied a town. The soldiers would march through the streets with all their weapons on display in order to show their strength to the locals. The military aspects of our 4<sup>th</sup> of July parades remind Americans that it was the Revolutionary War that won our nation's independence.



### LEN TRAVERS

*Probably the most recognizable symbol of Independence Day is the America Flag. The Red represented the blood shed in the Revolution to bring this new nation into being. The change from Red to White indicates separation from the mother country. The blue field was the color of the celestial heavens. And each of the stars represents one of the States*

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE FLAG

**1776: FIRST UNOFFICIAL U.S. FLAG WAS USED IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. IT HAD 13 STRIPES, WITH THE UNION JACK IN THE UPPER LEFTHAND CORNER.**

**1777: FIRST OFFICIAL U.S. FLAG WAS APPROVED BY THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS. IT HAD 13 STRIPES AND A CIRCLE OF 13 STARS.**

**1779-1960: THE U.S. FLAG CHANGED 27 TIMES. ONCE TO STANDARDIZE THE PROPORTIONS OF THE FLAG TO A RATIO OF 10:19, ONCE TO STANDARDIZE THE SHADES OF THE COLORS, AND 25 TIMES TO ADD STARS AS THE U.S. ADDED STATES.**

of the Union. The original plan was to keep the flag with 13 stars, no matter how big the Union got. But by the time of the War of 1812, they realized that the idea of adding Stars to the flag helped to confirm the idea of an ever-expandable Federal Republic.

### TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME

Another daytime element in our Fourth of July celebration involves playing or watching a baseball game—which usually starts with the playing of our national anthem, The Star-Spangled Banner.



During World War I, President Wilson declared "The Star Spangled Banner" our unofficial national anthem. It was a time of intense patriotism and the song was played on many public occasions. Harry Frazee, the owner of the Boston Red Sox, brought in a band and started playing the song at the start of each game, and during the 1930s it became our official national anthem. Every baseball club in the country started playing our song.



It's not quite the same as singing the national anthem but eating a hot dog at a baseball game represents a certain level of patriotic behavior, and in fact it was at a baseball

game that the simple frankfurter became the hot dog.

In 1901, The San Francisco Giants were the New York Giants and they played in Manhattan. It was a particularly cold April and the ice cream vendors were not doing well with their ice cream, so they began to sell hot German sausages. The shape of the sausage reminded people of the dachshund dog and so they were called "dachshund sausages". One day a cartoonist for a New York newspaper saw them, liked them, and drew a cartoon which showed a dachshund dog in a roll for his newspaper. He wasn't quite sure how to spell "dachshund" and so he labeled it "hotdog". And that is how the hot dog got its name. Eventually, the hot dog escaped from the ballpark and became a basic part of the American barbeque, especially on the Fourth of July.



For many people, however, a

hot dog without mustard is considered "nude". And even on the Fourth of July with all its emphasis on freedom, public nudity is unacceptable.

People have been making mustard for over 5,000 years and its history in North America goes back at least to the early 1700s, when Spanish priests began settling along the coast of California. As they traveled north they would indicate their path by planting mustard seeds—the bright yellow flowers that came up marked the trail for the missionaries that followed.



Mustard seed itself is tasteless and odorless, but when its mixed with a liquid the intense flavors that we associate with mustard are released. And when mustard is slathered onto a hot dog your tastes buds end up playing the Star Spangled Banner for your mouth.



Like most of our gatherings and celebrations, barbeques illustrate our desire to bring together the opposites in our lives. We like the idea of leaving the structured

environment of our homes and cooking outdoors. The barbeque allows us to feel free and adventurous while at the same time maintaining a nice, safe structure in which we feel secure.

### IT'S NO PICNIC

Barbeques are traditional for the Fourth of July but because the July Fourth celebration is all about independence and freedom so are picnics. Because picnics are about independence and freedom from the traditional dining room. But it's not total freedom. Though you may not see it during the picnic a great deal of work and organization goes in to its preparation.

We think we are escaping to a more natural state, but in fact we are very careful when we select a site for a picnic. We like the sense of being in the wild but we want control of what's going on. Nobody goes into a jungle for a picnic. We don't enjoy a meal if there are real dangers nearby.



What we're really doing is exchanging the discomfort of a more structured indoor dining area for the

discomfort of spiky grass, pointed stones, flying insects and unpredictable weather.

And even if we get out into a natural setting, the first thing we do is mark off our territory with a cloth and add insult to injury by holding down the edges with boundary stones. We draw an imaginary line in the grass and announce, "nature stops here". Sometimes we keep nature at an even greater distance by setting up a table and chairs. We like being close to the earth, but not too close.

### THE COOL TASTE OF FREEDOM

Ice Cream is also an essential part of Independence Day and we have been making it in America since the early 1700's. Our first ice cream parlor opened in 1776, which just happens to be the year the colonies declared independence.



Mere coincidence - I don't think so. Whenever I eat ice cream I have a great sense of freedom, independence, power. I think our early Colonial ice cream parlors were hot beds of political decent.

But most important, they were safe. The British troops never thought to look in ice cream parlors for revolutionaries.

### THE SOUND OF FREEDOM

These days, Boston's Fourth of July celebration is probably the top Independence Day extravaganza in the nation. And the man primarily responsible for it is David Mugar.



When citizens of the newly formed United States of America celebrated the first anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, fireworks were used to mark the event and ever since fireworks have been part of the Fourth of July.

Gunpowder was invented in Asia about a thousand years ago and in the beginning it was used only for fireworks.



The sound of the exploding powder was so loud that people were convinced it would drive off evil spirits. Fireworks became part of any event that

needed a celebration—births, weddings, coronations, the beginning of a New Year, my cousin Dudley picking up a check—all fitting occasions for fireworks. We even had fireworks at George Washington's inauguration.

Boston's fireworks are launched from three barges anchored in the Charles River. They are twice the length of a football field.

In 1776, Thomas Paine, writing about the crisis in America at the time of the Declaration of Independence said that "these are the times that try men's souls and the price of freedom is high." And that is as true today as it was over 200 years ago. The price is still high but worth paying.



Happy Birthday America.

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