

Celebrate
NATIONAL AMERICAN
History *and* Founders Month



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Election Day in America

Election Day is when Americans are asked to select their government officials. It's also an opportunity to appreciate our democratic heritage. The right to vote is one of our country's most cherished and important freedoms. The Declaration of Independence proclaimed that "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed" and condemned the monarchy for denying the rights of representation. The U.S. Constitution also includes four amendments (15th, 19th, 24th and 26th) ensuring the right to vote. The struggle for all Americans to have this right lasted many years, but responsibility can be fulfilled on one day. As Thomas Jefferson said, "We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate." The importance of the right to vote is reflected in the recent establishment of *National American History and Founders Month*.



So this Election Day 2018 let's all do our civic duty and honor our country's democratic history.

Did you know...

The first American presidential election was held from Monday, December 15, 1788, to Saturday, January 10, 1789. Voter turnout was particularly low in the first election with only 43,782 votes. There were no popular votes in Connecticut, Georgia, New Jersey, and South Carolina. New York's legislature was deadlocked, while neither North Carolina nor Rhode Island had ratified the Constitution yet.

Election Day, as we know it, was enacted by Congress in 1845. Before that states could hold elections whenever they wanted within a 34-day period before the first Wednesday in December. Congress wanted to prevent early voting results or last-minute voters from influencing election outcomes. The first Tuesday after the first Monday of November was selected because most Americans were farmers at the time. November was chosen because both spring planting and fall harvesting would be complete, and it would be before winter set in. Tuesday was selected because many people traveled up to vote and allowed for a two-day travel window. Sundays were spent in church and Wednesdays were market days.



The 243rd Marine Corps Birthday

On November 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress established the Continental Marines (precursor to the U.S. Marine Corps). And Tun Tavern in Philadelphia is regarded as the birthplace of the Corps because it was the location where the first Marines enlisted under Commandant Samuel Nicholas.

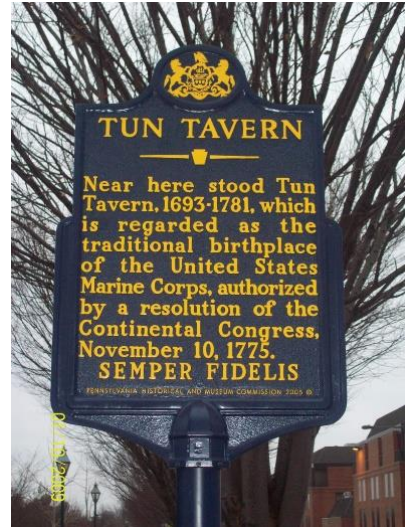
It may be a fun coincidence that a group founded in a tavern celebrates it celebrates its birthday every year with a traditional ball. The first formal ball was held on November 10, 1925 in Philadelphia with many statesman and dignitaries in attendance. Prior to the Ball, Commandant Gen. John Lejeune unveiled a memorial plaque at Tun Tavern. Over the years the annual Birthday Ball has grown. In 1952, Commandant Gen. Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr. formalized the cake-cutting ceremony and other observances. The third verse of the Marines' Hymn is often recited as a toast. Traditionally, the first slice of cake is handed to the oldest Marine present, who passes it to the youngest Marine present. The cake cutting ceremony has been performed since 1956. That's a lot of candles!

While the Marine Corps Birthday Ball is a time of celebration, the day also is a commemoration for Marines to honor their brothers in arms, particularly their fellow Devil Dogs who gave their lives for our freedom.

Did you know...

When the Revolutionary War ended in 1783, the Continental Navy and Marines were disestablished. The Marines Corps was re-established on July 11, 1798 by President John Adams. For some time, the official birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps was celebrated on July 11th.

Happy Birthday U.S. Marine Corps! Semper Fidelis!



Veteran's Day

To us in America the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service, and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of nations.

President Woodrow Wilson
On the first Armistice Day observation, 11/11/19

Many Americans are proud to honor those who served their country on Veterans Day. Yet there is much many of us probably do not know about this cherished American holiday. The first is that Veterans Day began as Armistice Day, as President Wilson referred in his statement. Armistice Day, as it is still celebrated in many countries, marks when the major hostilities of World War I were formally ended when the Armistice with Germany went into effect...at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918.



In fact, the United States observed Armistice Day for several decades. In 1945, World War II veteran Raymond Weeks, thought it was time to expand Armistice Day to celebrate all veterans. Gen. Dwight Eisenhower supported the idea of National Veterans Day and Weeks led the first national celebration in 1947 in his home state of Alabama. In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower officially changed the name of the holiday from Armistice Day to Veterans Day. Having earned the moniker as the "Father of Veterans Day", President Reagan honored Weeks at the White House with the Presidential Citizenship Medal in 1982

Veterans and all Americans continue to celebrate this special holiday in their own ways. There are speeches, patriotic celebrations, parades and more. The most iconic is the annual ceremony Arlington National Cemetery which features the President Of The United States places a wreath on the Tomb Of The Unknown Soldier. Honoring those who served is also reflected in the recent establishment of *National American History and Founders Month*.

Although Veterans Day has changed over time and is celebrated in many ways, it is still an opportunity for us to be, as President Wilson said, "filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service, and with gratitude for the victory."

Did you know...

The day which we celebrate Veterans Day wasn't always November 11th? In 1968, the Uniform Holidays Bill passed by Congress moved the celebration of Veterans Day to the fourth Monday in October. The law went into effect in 1971, but in 1975 President Gerald Ford returned Veterans Day to November 11, due to the important historical significance of the date.

How the Declaration of Independence was Heard Around the World

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

This phrase written by Thomas Jefferson in 1776 has been called “the most potent and consequential words in American history.” But how did the word get out that the American colonies were now the United States of America?

After Congress approved the final wording of the Declaration on July 4, a handwritten copy was sent to the printing shop of John Dunlap. Overnight, Dunlap printed some 200 broadsides for distribution. The first formal public readings of the document took place on July 8th, in the yard of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Trenton, New Jersey, and Easton, Pennsylvania. The *Pennsylvania Evening Post* had the honor of being the first newspaper to publish it on July 6th.

John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, wrote letters that accompanied the Dunlap broadside, calling on the states to proclaim the Declaration “in such a Manner, that the People may be universally informed of it.” Massachusetts directed that the Declaration be read aloud after Sunday services in churches. Virginia and Maryland had it read to the gatherings of people at county court days. Hancock instructed Gen. George Washington to read it to his troops in New York. He did so before several brigades of the Continental Army, with the British in view on nearby Staten Island and on ships in the harbor. After hearing the Declaration, crowds in many cities tore down and destroyed signs or statues representing royal authority.



British officials in North America sent copies of the Declaration to Great Britain and British newspapers published it in August. Copies of the Declaration reached Florence and Warsaw by mid-September. A German translation appeared in Switzerland by October. The first copy of the Declaration sent to France got lost, and the second copy arrived only in November 1776. Over the next several month and years, the Declaration would make its way around the world, translated into local languages. Today the Declaration is honored during *National American History and Founders Month*.

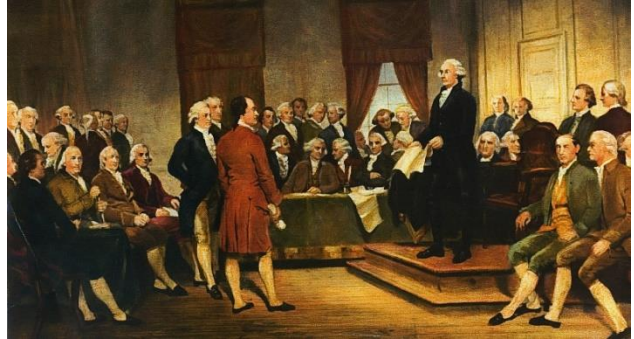


Did you know...

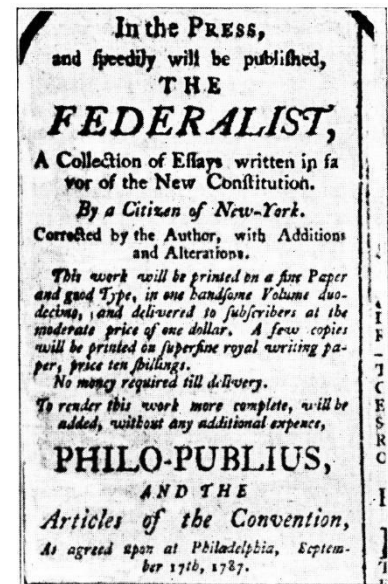
A German translation of the Declaration was published in Philadelphia by July 9?

The U.S. Constitution – The Bumpy Road Towards Democracy

America's first Constitution, the Articles of Confederation were ratified in 1781. The national government of a single legislature, the Congress of the Confederation, could govern foreign affairs, conduct war and regulate currency, but had no authority to force the states for money or troops. Victory over the British in 1783 proved that a stronger central government was going to be necessary to create a stable nation. In 1786, Alexander Hamilton called for a constitutional convention to discuss the matter. Congress invited all 13 states to meet in Philadelphia. All but Rhode Island arrived in May 1787. Not everyone favored a stronger central government.



After intense discussions, the framers agreed on three branches of government with the corresponding checks and balances. But it took much debate and negotiations to sort out many key parts of the government. The Connecticut Compromise, for example, resolved the issue of equal and proportionate representation with a bicameral legislature – a House and a Senate. The Constitution still had to be ratified by 9 out of 13 states. It was going to take some convincing. So Alexander Hamilton, with James Madison and John Jay, wrote a series of 85 essays known as the Federalist Papers to persuade people to ratify the Constitution. Detailing how the new government would work, the essays (published under the pseudonym Publius – Latin for “public”), started to appear in newspapers across the country in the fall of 1787.



In December 1787 and January 1788, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia and Connecticut quickly ratified the Constitution. Massachusetts, wanting more protection of basic political rights, including speech, religion, and press, ratified the Constitution in February once it was assured that amendments would be immediately introduced. In 1788, Maryland, South Carolina, and New Hampshire ratified. With 9 states ratifying, the Constitution became legal on June 21, 1788, allowing a new government to start the following year when George Washington was inaugurated as President on April 30, 1789. The remaining states ratified over the next two years (Rhode Island was the last in May 1790). The Founding Fathers are celebrated for their vision, but few may have seen the Constitution being the oldest written and codified national constitution still in effect.

Did you know...

That George Washington was the first to sign the Constitution, but he initially didn't even want to attend the Constitutional Convention? He was busy managing Mount Vernon, suffered from rheumatism and worried that the convention wouldn't be successful.

The Bill of Rights – A Vision of Individual Liberty

“A bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth.”

Thomas Jefferson

Every American should know that the Bill of Rights are the first ten amendments of the U.S. Constitution. But many may not remember the tumultuous circumstances under which they were created or why they still matter today.

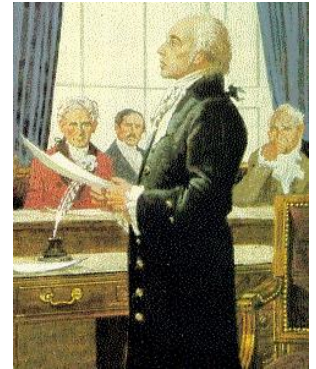
Did you know...

The Bill of Rights were a result of opposition to the Constitution?

Fearing vast federal power without protection of individual rights, many Constitutional Convention delegates hesitated to support the document. Proposals to include several rights guarantees were rejected (including liberty of the press and a ban on quartering soldiers in private homes that were later included). The framers believed that the Constitution protected liberty primarily through its division of powers that prevented oppressive majorities and the abuse of power. But guarantees to protect individual rights had to be made to ratify the Constitution.

The biggest opponent to the Bill of Rights became its principal architect?

James Madison is credited with writing the amendments, but he was initially skeptical of its value. He believed unlimited Congressional veto over state laws and a joint executive-judicial council that could veto federal laws would have similar effect. He soon realized that a declaration of rights was both educational and a way for future Americans to rally against government oppression. Borrowing from Thomas Jefferson, he added that the judiciary would help be guardians of individual rights against the other branches.



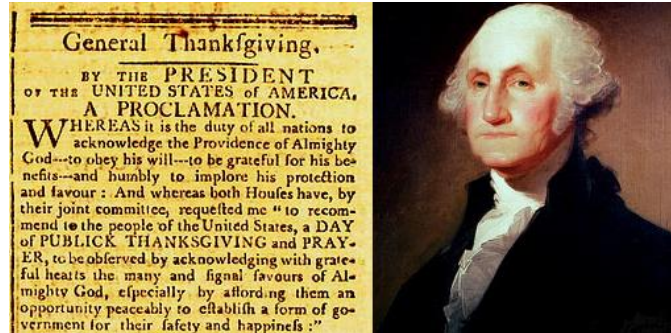
It was feared the Bill of Rights would reduce liberty?

Some in Congress argued that all the listed rights inherently belonged to citizens, and the Constitution didn't give Congress power to take them away. Others worried that all rights not specifically listed could be infringed upon. The Ninth Amendment was introduced to address this concern, that "The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage other rights retained by the people." Going forward, the Ninth Amendment would be used in court cases as justification for giving a broad and liberty-protective reading to the specifically enumerated rights.

Of all of America's founding documents, the Bill of Rights may be the most visionary. Several amendments, notably the first and second, arguably provide the greatest protections against oppression. While initially guaranteeing certain individual liberties, the Bill of Rights set precedence for further amendments that expanded and protected the inalienable and Constitutional rights of all Americans.

Thanksgiving Day – An American History

The American Thanksgiving holiday is steeped in family traditions, gratitude, and even a little preparation for holiday shopping. But the day that we celebrate Thanksgiving is also steeped in American history. The ships that brought the Pilgrims also brought their traditions, including days of fasting and giving thanks. The English settlers who arrived in Charles City County, Virginia in 1619, for example, were required by their charter to celebrate the day of their arrival annually as a day of thanksgiving to God. Over the next several decades, autumn thanksgiving festivals followed the harvest, which lasted up to three days and were held anytime between mid-September and the end of November. Thanksgiving proclamations were made mostly by church leaders and later by state leaders until the American Revolution. During that time, both royal governors and revolutionary leaders (including the Continental Congress) made their own thanksgiving decrees favorable to their causes. The first nationwide thanksgiving was celebrated on November 26, 1789 as proclaimed by President George Washington.



Despite the first official observance, Thanksgiving was celebrated on various dates across the states until the beginning of the 19th century, but the last Thursday in November had become customary. It wasn't until 1863, during the Civil War, that President Abraham Lincoln called for the thanksgiving in all states to be observed on that final Thursday. And similar to the political climate during the Revolution, Lincoln called for the success of the Union and the military in the war. The nationwide Thanksgiving was finally realized after Reconstruction in the 1870s.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt had no intention of changing Thanksgiving, but in 1933 retailers began lobbying for a change. That year November had five Thursdays and they argued moving the holiday up a week would be good for both business and jobs for the Christmas season. Roosevelt didn't agree and declined the request. However, another five-Thursday November occurred in 1939 and this time Roosevelt agreed, signing a presidential proclamation moving Thanksgiving to the next to last Thursday on October 31, 1939. Many Americans disapproved of the move and the reasons why, including some governors who kept the old date. To mandate the new national Thanksgiving date, Roosevelt signed a joint resolution of Congress on December 26, 1941.



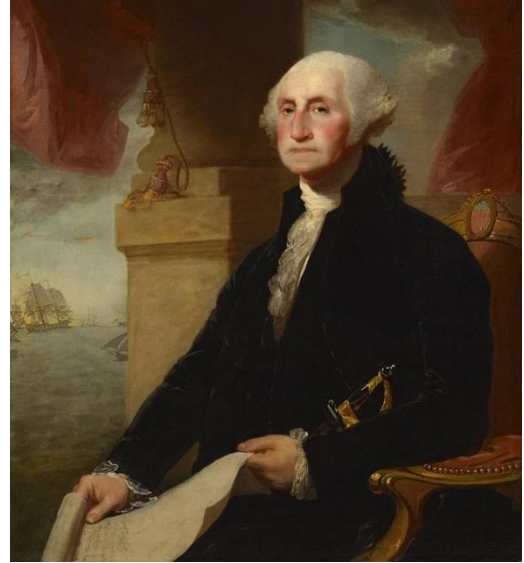
Did you know...

Sarah Josepha Hale, an influential magazine editor and author, petitioned for a national Thanksgiving holiday for nearly 40 years in the 19th century? She was also the author of the classic nursery rhyme "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

George Washington – A Patriotic Legacy

George Washington's life and legacy has inspired generations of Americans, while contributing to our Nation's success.

Fortitude was one of Washington's early lessons. His father's death when Washington was 11 prevented him from the education in England that his brothers received. Washington's mother also objected to his appointment in the Royal Navy at age 15. He secured a job as surveyor of Culpepper County at age 17. When Washington's older brother died, he became head of the family at age 20. Washington followed in his late brother's steps to become a district adjutant, putting him on the path to a military career. A young Washington could have sulked about missed opportunities and entitlements. Instead, he made the best of his situation and proved himself with every challenge.



Washington was a man of character who embraced integrity. The winter of 1777-1778 at Valley Forge was hard for Washington's army. Over 2500 died from the harsh conditions and many men deserted. Denying Washington's request for money to supply his troops, Congress instructed him to resort to an old military practice, like the Red Coats were doing: take what they needed from the citizens. Washington refused to use force to get his supplies and would punish any soldier caught stealing. He knew this would undermine public support for the fledgling cause, but that his army had to set an example about the rule of the law for the new country. Washington understood the need to establish public confidence in the new government and to demonstrate that political leaders could act virtuously.

Washington also recognized the importance of precedent. President Washington's focus continued to be unifying the nation and establishing a national government. Already financially secure Washington initially declined the sizable salary that was offered, but realized that might seem like the office was only attainable by the wealthy. He rebuked efforts to have a majestic title or take any mantle of kingship, exalted prince or 'ruler' before settling on "Mr. President". Other notable precedents included refusing to run for a third term, appointing a cabinet, and delivering an inaugural address.

Washington knew that he alone wouldn't determine the fate of the young nation. That responsibility belonged to the people of the United States of America. Washington explained, "that it is in their choice, and depends upon their conduct, whether they will be respectable and prosperous, or contemptible and miserable as a Nation." These words written on June 8, 1783 are just as true today. And it's a choice our country must continue to make.

Did you know...

When King George III reportedly asked his American painter, Benjamin West, what Washington would do after winning independence, West replied, "They say he will return to his farm." King George replied, "If he does that, he will be the greatest man in the world."

“Friction by Design” – The Separation of Powers

“The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elected, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.”

James Madison, *The Federalist Papers*

It’s one of the basics of American governance and civics education. What are the three branches of government? Hopefully everyone answered the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The legislative branch enacts laws and appropriates money to operate the government. The executive branch administers public policy enacted and funded by the legislative branch. The judicial branch interprets the constitution and laws, applying their interpretations to cases brought before it.



The separation of powers has many purposes. Politically, it prevents autocracy and provides “checks and balances” across the government. Practically, it helps to reduce inefficiencies with each branch having specific duties (although some responsibilities overlap and some inefficiencies check power among branches.) Not all powers are exclusive or explicitly assigned, with the Executive and Legislative sharing responsibilities in areas such as foreign affairs, military operations, and trade. What the Founding Fathers created was a “friction by design” that allows American government to evolve with time and issues challenging the nation.

Did you know....

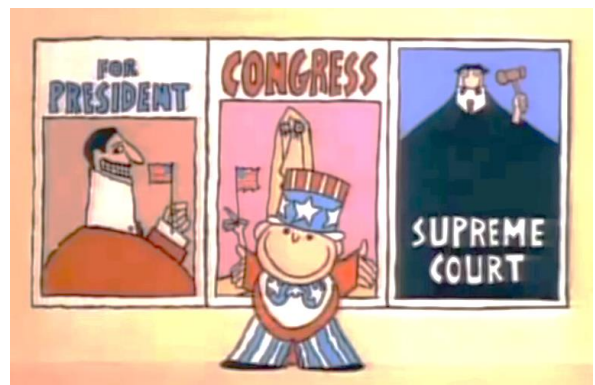
There was a form representative government in the American colonies? Colonial governors were appointed by the British government, but members of the colonial legislatures were chosen by the colonists. As a result, this separation of power was considered as a basic element of liberty.

Did you know....

The U.S. Constitution was greatly inspired by a Frenchman? The 18th century political philosopher Charles-Louis de Secondat – aka Montesquieu – coined the term “trias politica” (separation of powers) and distinguished political authority between legislative, executive and judicial powers.

Did you know...

School House Rock, the iconic short-form animated educational shorts from the 1970s and 80s, ran a 12-episode series on American civics (including the separation of powers) called “America Rock”? Most of the episodes coincided with the American Bicentennial.



Our Civic Duty

It is one of the most famous opening lines: “We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States.” While many Americans think of their basic rights when reading this, the Constitution uniquely assigns the responsibility for sustaining our country to its citizens...their civic duties.

Over the years, civic duties have come to mean many things. On a local level, it may include PTAs, volunteering, or holding office. On larger scales, Americans have organized to secure civil rights, act on climate change, or provide safety and welfare when natural disasters strike. According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services at the Department of Homeland Security, the civic responsibilities that all citizens should exercise and respect are:

- Support and defend the Constitution.
- Stay informed of the issues affecting your community.
- Participate in the democratic process.
- Respect and obey federal, state, and local laws.
- Respect the rights, beliefs, and opinions of others.
- Participate in your local community.
- Pay income and other taxes.
- Serve on a jury when called upon.
- Defend the country if the need arises.

As former President John F. Kennedy explained, “Democracy is never a final achievement. It is a call to an untiring effort.” Unfortunately, many Americans do not make a full effort to fulfill their civic duties. In the 2016 presidential election, only 56% of the American voting-age population cast a ballot. According to recent studies, one in five Americans do not know from what country the United States won its independence and only 32% of Americans surveyed were able to correctly name all three branches of government.

Both our democracy and our duties require effort. As another former President, George W. Bush, emphasized, “We are bound by ideals that teach us what it means to be citizens. Every child must be taught these ideals. Every citizen must uphold them. I ask you to be citizens. Citizens, not spectators. Citizens, not subjects. Responsible citizens building communities of service and a nation of character.”

That is our civic duty.



Crossing the Delaware - Washington's Big Gamble

The story of Washington's Christmas 1776 crossing the Delaware is one of the most famous in American history. Imagine having declared independence from the British empire and pushing them out of Boston, only months later to find yourself pushed out of New York City by the Redcoats and trying to regroup in New Jersey in winter. That was the situation Gen. George Washington faced in December 1776. His Continental Army troops were strained from expiring enlistments, desertions, and poor morale. Washington has been considering making some kind of bold move for a while and his luck was about to change. So what made the victory at Trenton possible?



Motivation – *Common Sense* author Thomas Paine published a new pamphlet entitled *American Crisis* featuring the stirring line, “These are the times that try men's souls; the summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it *now*, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.” Washington ordered it read to all of his troops and morale greatly improved.

Reinforcements – Troops and militiamen serving under Gens. Lee, Gates, and Col. Cadwalader arrived in Washington's camp. With these reinforcements and local volunteers, Washington now boasted 6,000 troops fit for duty. Large portions were assigned to guard ferries and supplies in Pennsylvania, while some were to remain behind to guard the sick and wounded. That left 2,400 men to take into battle. Provisions, including much-needed blankets, also arrived.

Hubris – After pushing the Continentals into New Jersey, the British were happy return to New York for the winter, so generals could regroup, re-supply, and strategize for the upcoming campaign season in the spring. They left mainly Hessian troops in New Jersey who manned small outposts in and around Trenton. British Gen. Grant didn't give much credence to intelligence that Washington was looking to attack north of the river. He commanded Hessian Col. Johann Rall to be vigilant, but Rall dismissed the threat saying, “Let them come... Why defenses? We will go at them with the bayonet.”

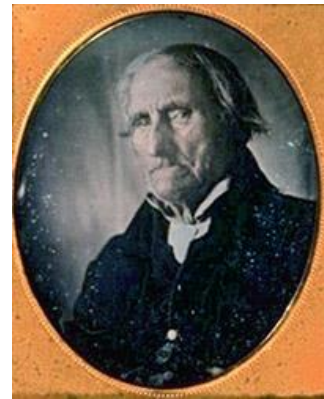
Homefield advantage – Washington's plan of attack included three different crossings of the Delaware River in a logistically challenging and dangerous operation. Two crossings were called off due to the conditions from the growing “nor'easter.” But in Washington's favor was the large number of experienced watermen to be found at the crossing site, especially experienced watermen from the Philadelphia area familiar with the exact stretch of river who had congregated in the area and were able to make the perilous nighttime crossing. Militia from the surrounding counties in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, with the assistance of the Pennsylvania Navy, were able to gather many boats and other water craft, as well.

All of these factors certainly helped. Washington's fatigued and cold troops had to march miles through the increasingly dangerous night storm to just reach the crossing site before they could even board the boats. As a result, the plan was already delayed over three hours before the crossing even began. But Washington's gamble worked. Three crossings between Christmas and New Year's yielded 1,000 prisoners, muskets, powder, and artillery. On January 2 and 3, 1777 Washington's army defeated British reinforcements under Lord Cornwallis.

The victory was celebrated by soldiers and Americans alike. The winning gamble renewed enthusiasm for the war. Yet without Washington's bravery and providence, the story may have ended differently.

Did you know...

Conrad Heyer, one of the soldiers who made the crossing, lived long enough to be photographed? Taken around 1852, Heyer would have been almost 100 years old and is believed to have the earliest birth date of anyone who has ever been photographed.



Notable Events in America's Founding

Winter isn't typically known for American history milestones. Between Washington crossing the Delaware and President's Day, most people may not be able to easily recall any other events. As January comes to a close, it may be interesting to point out how important this month was to America's founding.

Key events:

January 1, 1776 - George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, which is known today as America's first national flag.

January 10, 1776 – Thomas Paine published [*Common Sense*](#), a pamphlet that advocated independence and helped unify American citizens. Selling over 500,000 copies in America and Europe, the pamphlet directly influenced Revolutionary leaders and the authors of the Declaration of Independence.

January 4, 1790 - President George Washington delivered the first State of the Union address. This speech set a precedence that all Presidents have continued to this day.

Notable Birthdays:

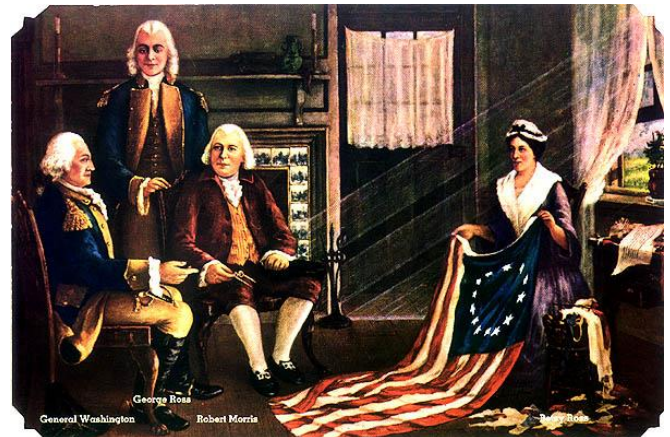
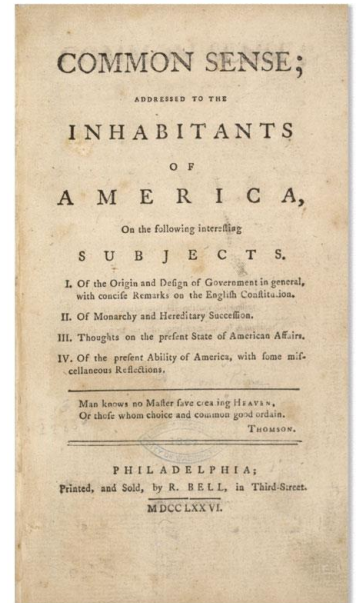
January 1, 1752 - Betsy Ross was the seamstress credited with helping to originate and [sew the Stars and Stripes](#) flag of America in 1776.

January 12, 1737 - [John Hancock is best known for his prominent signature as the](#) first signer of the Declaration of Independence. He was also president of the Second Continental Congress in 1775 and the first elected governor of Massachusetts.

January 17, 1706 – Benjamin Franklin was a printer, author, publisher, philosopher, scientist, diplomat, and philanthropist. And as a Founding Father, he happened to sign both the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

January 21, 1738 – Ethan Allen was a Revolutionary hero who led the capture of Fort Ticonderoga in New York without bloodshed in 1775, securing much needed supplies and ammunition.

January 29, 1737 - [Thomas Paine](#) served in the Continental Army, but is better known as the inspirational author of *Common Sense* and other influential pamphlets. He wrote the immortal words “These are the times that try men's souls” in *The Crisis* series.



Presidents' Day

Every February, the United States celebrates Presidents' Day to honor all who have been elected to our nation's highest office. Presidents' Day began in the 1880s with celebrations of Washington's birthday. The Uniform Monday Holiday Bill passed by Congress in 1968 moved the holiday to the first Monday in February.

But did you know...

That it's still officially called Washington's Birthday by the federal government? During debate on the Uniform Monday Holiday Bill, a proposal was made to rename President's Day in honor both Washington (February 22) and Abraham Lincoln (February 12), but it was rejected. After 1971, Presidents' Day became the commonly accepted name, due in part to retailers' use of that name to promote sales and proximity to Lincoln's birthday.



That Washington's Birthday, February 22, can never occur on the public holiday? The holiday is observed on the third Monday in February, which cannot occur any later than February 21.

That even though Presidents' Day is a federal holiday, each state is free to call it what they choose and how to celebrate?

That the highest office in the country could have been called something other than President? Other suggested titles included "His Elective Majesty", "His Mightiness", and even "His Highness, the President of the United States of America and the Protector of their Liberties". In the end, it was decided against a monarchical name or anything lavish for the new country of "we the people."

That George Washington was the only president unanimously elected? All of the state representatives voted for him.

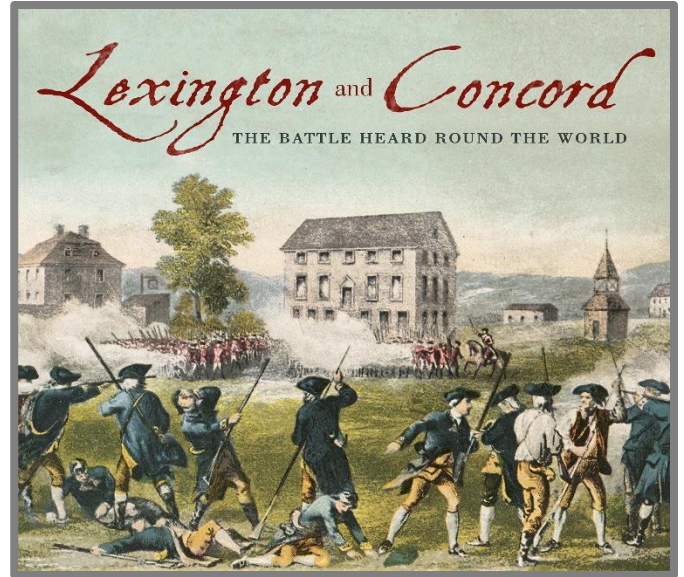
That James Madison and George Washington are the only presidents who signed the Constitution?

That three Presidential founding fathers died on July 4th? John Adams died on the same day as Thomas Jefferson, July 4th, 1826. This day was also the 50th anniversary of the approval of the Declaration of Independence! James Monroe was the 5th president, but the 3rd to die on the 4th of July.

Battles of Lexington and Concord

Many events triggered revolutionary sentiments in the American colonies. In the decade before Independence was declared, Great Britain had imposed several tax acts, including the Sugar, Stamp, and Townsend Acts. After the Boston Massacre and Boston Tea Party, King George III's shut down Boston's harbor and increased military presence. By February 1775, British Parliament declared that Massachusetts was in open rebellion.

The revolution gained serious momentum in April 1775 when it was discovered that the British planned to march on Concord to seize weapons and powder. Two couriers, silversmith Paul Revere and tanner William Dawes, were dispatched to alert residents and revolutionary leaders John Hancock and Samuel Adams.



Some 700 Redcoats first arrived in Lexington in the early hours of April 19th. They were met by a small militia in the town green. The militia were ordered by the British to throw down their weapons at the same time their own commander ordered them to disperse. Shots rang out in the confusion, leading to several deaths. The British soldiers moved on to Concord later that morning. When they realized most of the arms were gone (alertly relocated), the Redcoats decided to burn what was left. Thinking the town was to be torched, 400 militiamen converged on Concord's North Bridge that was being defended by British troops. The British fired first, but fell back when the militiamen returned fire. It was the "shot heard 'round the world."

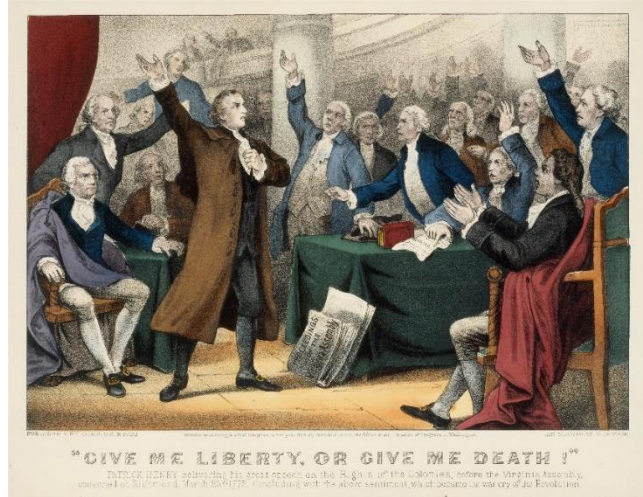
The British troops retreated to Concord and prepared to make the 18-mile journey back to Boston. Their trip turned into an ambush as 2000 thousand militiamen attacked the British column from behind trees, buildings and stone walls. Fleeing Redcoats met a brigade of fresh reinforcements in Lexington, but Colonists pursued the British through Arlington and Cambridge. The British eventually reached safety in Charlestown Neck. The amassed militias then blockaded the narrow land accesses to Charlestown and Boston, thus starting the Siege of Boston. The Revolutionary War had now begun.

Did you know...

The origins of the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution can be linked to the Battles of Lexington and Concord? Many early colonial constitutions mentioned the right to bear arms for defensive purpose, in particular for frontier families. Wary of the power standing armies could exert, colonists would also train together with their own weapons for local defense in groups called militia. As revolutionary sentiment grew, the British sought to confiscate colonists' weapons to prevent their use in any acts of rebellion. The Red Coats march on Lexington and Concord was one such effort, thwarted by groups of Massachusetts militia.

Fighting Words!

“We the people.” “Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” In the course of human events, words have been powerful and pivotal. The American Revolution was no exception. News of taxes, skirmishes, and other events influenced the colonists’, but certain speeches stood out. Whether they were quoted accurately or paraphrased for dramatic impact, there is no question that certain fighting words helped the American cause. Here are just a few.



1765 - Patrick Henry's Provocation

Patrick Henry attacked Parliament's authority to tax the colonists in a speech delivered to the House of Burgesses. Henry noted that “Caesar had his Brutus — Charles the First, His Cromwell — And George the Third...” but was interrupted by legislators yelling out “Treason!” Unflappable, Henry concluded “...may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it.” By suggesting that George III risked Julius Caesar's fate, Henry's words defending American liberty were widely reported in newspapers.

1775 - Patrick Henry's Defiance

Convinced that war with Great Britain was inevitable, Henry defended strong resolutions for equipping the Virginia militia to fight against the British. This time, Henry's fiery speech included the famous words, “I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”

1776 – Benjamin Franklin's Prescient Wit

The signing of the Declaration of Independence was one of the most important moments in American history. For the signers, however, one stroke of their pen put their lives at immediate risk. Unified by cause and consequence, Benjamin Franklin pronounced “We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.”

1776 – Nathan Hale's Patriotic Last Words

Gen. George Washington was desperate to learn the location of the imminent British invasion of Manhattan. He needed a spy behind enemy lines and a 21 year-old soldier named Nathan Hale was the only volunteer. Hale was captured, interrogated and sentenced to hang. From the galley, Hale is to have said “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.”

1779 - John Paul Jones's Tenacity

The U.S. battleship the *Bonhomme Richard* was getting the worst of its battle with the British vessel HMS *Serapis* off the English coast. When *Serapis*'s captain called out for the American surrender, Jones reportedly yelled back, “I have not yet begun to fight!”

Did you know...

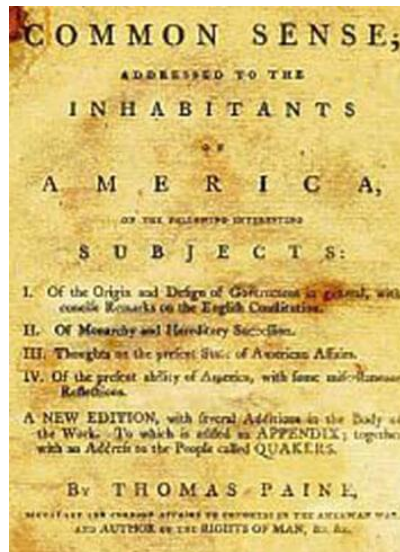
Nathan Hale's actual words were reported to be, "I am so satisfied with the cause in which I have engaged that my only regret is that I have not more lives than one to offer in its service."

John Paul Jones' famous phrase was likely ascribed to him decades later by his first officer and history. Jones is recorded by a contemporary Scottish newspaper to have said "I may sink, but I'll be damned if I strike." To "strike the colours" meant to take down the ship's flag to signify surrender. In the end, the British surrendered after a grenade exploded below *Serapis*' decks.

The Greatest Op-Ed Ever Written?

Influencing public opinion in print media is nothing new. But when was the last time an Op-Ed changed the course of history? In the case of the United States, that would have been January 1776.

Thomas Paine was an English-born sailor and teacher. He had been involved in local and church leadership roles, before advocating better pay and working conditions in pamphlets in London. A friend introduced Paine to Benjamin Franklin who suggested he come to America and wrote him a letter of recommendation. Paine arrived in Philadelphia in 1774 and soon found work as a magazine writer and editor, focusing on workers' rights, abolition, and a burgeoning topic – American liberty. Although there were rumblings of discord and revolution, most colonists still considered themselves to be Brits. Most colonists still needed to be swayed toward independence.



Originally published anonymously, Paine argued the case for American independence in a 47-page pamphlet called *Common Sense*. Divided into four parts, the first half dealt with the perils English governance and King George III while the second half presented a compelling case for an American nation. Originally passed around and read aloud in taverns, *Common Sense* went on to sell 500,000 copies – unfathomable at the time. (The entire population was less than 2.5 million people.) One of Paine's most persuasive passages was:

“Europe, and not England, is the parent country of America. This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from *every part* of Europe. Hither they have fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster; and it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home, pursues their descendants still.”

Common Sense is credited with unifying citizens and political leaders behind American independence. Later in 1776, Paine published *The American Crisis*, a series of pamphlets written to strengthen American resolve in battles against the British. General George Washington had the pamphlet read aloud to his soldiers for inspiration. The first pamphlet begins with:

“These are the times that try men's souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.”

Did you know....

Paine would serve in the U.S. Army and work for the Committee of Foreign Affairs before returning to England in 1787. In 1791, he released *The Rights of Man* in support of French revolution. He returned to the U.S. in 1802 and died in New York in 1809.

“Ben” There, Done That

Founder Father. Printer. Diplomat. Revolutionary. Kite flyer. We all know the pivotal role Benjamin Franklin played in the American Revolution and founding of our Nation. For example, Franklin is the only one to have signed the Declaration of Independence, the Treaty of Alliance with France, the Treaty of Paris establishing peace with Great Britain, and the U.S. Constitution. He also served as the first Postmaster General of the United States. Few realize that in 1776, Franklin was already 70 years old and had lived an adventurous and fruitful life.



Did you know Ben Franklin was...

An entrepreneur? After many years as a printer's apprentice, Franklin bought the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1729. In addition to printing the newspaper, he often contributed pieces under aliases. His most well-known publication was *Poor Richard's Almanac*. By the 1730s and 40s, Franklin began setting up franchise printing partnerships in other cities. Franklin and his wife Deborah also ran a general store and a book store.

A community organizer? In the 1730s and 40s, he helped launch projects to pave, clean and light Philadelphia's streets. Franklin started the Library Company in 1731, the first subscription library in the country. He also helped start the American Philosophical Society in 1743 and the Pennsylvania Hospital in 1751. All three are still existence today. Also in 1751, Franklin was a driving force behind the founding of a college called the Academy of Philadelphia, known today the University of Pennsylvania.

A fire-fighter? In 1736, he organized Philadelphia's Union Fire Company, the first in the city. He also helped establish the Philadelphia Contribution for Insurance Against Loss by Fire in 1752. He wanted to make sure that people who lost their homes to fire were not wiped out financially. This also is still in business today.

Who Knew?

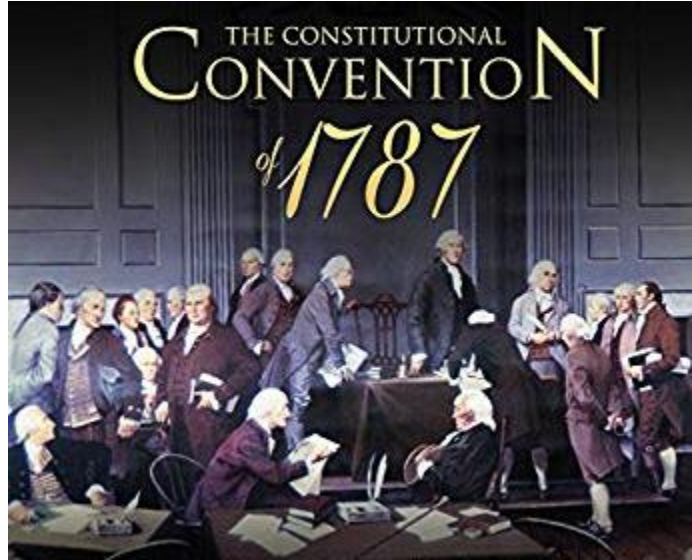
Franklin's famous saying, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," was actually fire-fighting advice.

An inventor? In 1743, he had already invented a heat-efficient stove called the Franklin stove. Among Franklin's other inventions are swim fins, the glass armonica (a musical instrument), bifocals, the flexible urinary catheter, and the Pro/Con list for decision-making. Franklin refused to take out patents on his inventions saying they were intended to help society. Franklin also charted the Gulf Stream, and studied meteorology, causes of the common cold and refrigeration.

The Constitutional Convention

Independence was declared! The Revolutionary War was won! Now what? For the Founding Fathers and the citizens of the new United States of America, it was time to create a new government.

The Articles of Confederation served as the framework for a weak central government starting in 1777. But it was insufficient after the war. For example, states could conduct their own foreign diplomacy. The government couldn't prevent British ships from dumping convicts in American ports. Congress didn't even have the authority to regulate trade or enforce parts of the 1783 Treaty of Paris. When the federal government had to rely on local militia to quell Shay's Rebellion in Massachusetts in 1786 (an uprising against heavy tax burdens and government coercion in tax collection), it was clear that the time for a more powerful national government had come.



The Constitutional Convention convened in Philadelphia between May and September of 1787. The first order of business was electing a president of the Convention (George Washington) and establishing rules, such as the secrecy of the deliberations (James Madison took good notes). The first proposal for the new government was the Virginia Plan. Among its recommendations was for both legislative branches to be appointed by population, which upset the smaller states. In response, the New Jersey Plan limited federal powers and kept the one-vote-per-state representation from the Articles of Confederation, advocating for equal voting power.

It would take several months of negotiations between the delegates to come up with blueprint for a new, stronger (but not too strong) government. The Connecticut Compromise resolved the issue of Congressional representation with the House of Representatives based on population and all states having two Senators. Overall, the new federal government would have expanded powers, such as the executive branch conducting foreign affairs and the legislative branch retaining power to ratify treaties. Congress was also given new powers to regulate currency, the economy, and defense. In September 39 of the 55 Convention delegates voted to adopt the new Constitution; just enough votes to win support from each of the 12 attending state delegations. After the necessary state ratifications, the Constitution became effective on March 4, 1789.

Did you know...

Rhode Island was so distrustful of a powerful federal government that it refused to send delegates to the Convention. This was of little surprise as the state had already earned the nickname "Rogue Island."

Memorial Day

Memorial Day holds a unique place in our country, as a cherished patriotic observance and the unofficial start of summer. While many Americans will celebrate the weekend with cook outs, parades, and getaways, it's important to revisit how this important commemoration began.



The tradition of honoring those who died while serving in the military has ancient roots. Both the Greeks and Romans held annual days of remembrance for loved ones, including soldiers. In Athens, public funerals and processions for fallen soldiers were held after each battle. One of the first known public tributes to war dead was in 431 B.C., for the sacrifice and valor of those killed in the Peloponnesian Wars.

In the United States, the tradition began just after the Civil War. Both Union and Confederate soldiers' graves were decorated sporadically around the country. Three weeks after the surrender of the Confederate Army, on May 1, 1865, over one thousand recently freed slaves, regiments of black Union soldiers, and white citizens of Charleston, South Carolina, entered a former prison camp nearby to consecrate the grounds as a burial site for the Union dead.

Having been inspired by these observances, on May 5, 1868, General John A. Logan, leader of the Northern Civil War veterans, called for a nationwide day of remembrance called Decoration Day to be held on the 30th. That day, more than 27 states held a ceremony. General James Garfield spoke at Arlington National Cemetery, and 5,000 participants decorated the graves of the 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers.

Decoration Day caught on quickly. By 1890 Northern states had made Decoration Day an official state holiday, while Southern states continued to honor their dead on separate days. For the next five decades, the holiday was used to commemorate those killed just in the Civil War. America's entry into World War I expanded the tradition to include those killed in all wars, and took on particular meaning with the Vietnam War. Beginning in 1882 the name gradually changed to Memorial Day and becoming common right after World War II. Memorial Day was observed on May 30 until the Uniform Monday Holiday Act of 1968 moved it to the last Monday in May.

Did you know...

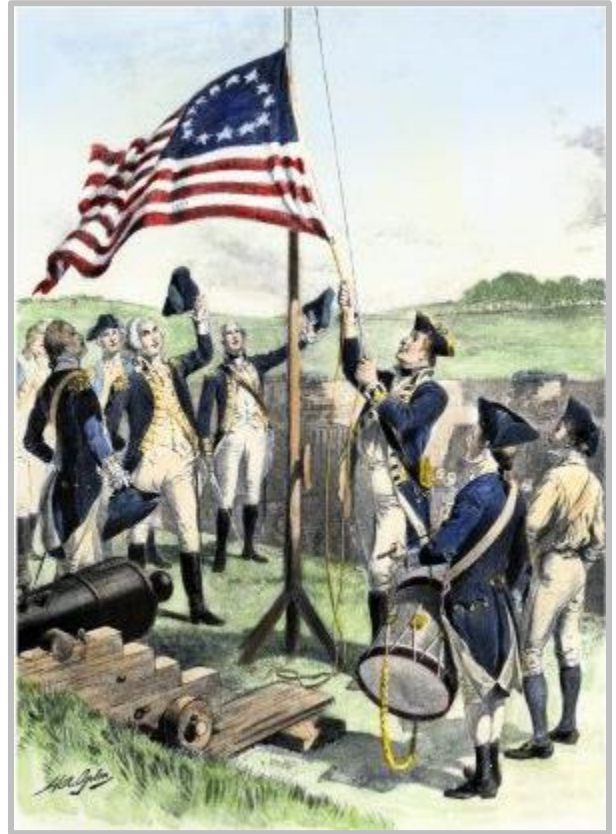
General John Logan chose the date of Decoration Day because it wasn't the anniversary of any particular battle, although some historians believe it was to ensure that flowers across the country would be in full bloom.

Banner Birthday – June 14

It's not often that two significant American milestones share the same commemoration day. In fact, they also happened two years apart.

The Army's Birthday - 1775

Losing the Revolutionary War was already shocking to the British. For the British Army, the sting was even more painful as they had condescendingly viewed the prevailing forces as lowly militia and farmers. The truth was, they weren't completely wrong. Early Colonial troops had been an amateur force of various New England militia companies, mostly farmers who soldiered on a part-time basis. They lacked unified chain of command, and were supported and supplied locally. As confrontations with British troops escalated, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress knew they needed help and asked the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia to assume authority over their "army". On June 14, 1775 the Congress voted to adopt the New England forces, form a committee to draft rules and regulations for an American continental army, and allocated \$2 million to support the troops. Congress further authorized the formation of additional companies of riflemen from other states as Continentals to support the new Army in Boston.



The American Flag - 1777

The Continental Army fought for two years without a unified flag. The Grand Union Flag that had been used since December 1775 consisted of 13 alternating red and white stripes with the Union Jack in the upper left corner. Its origins are uncertain, but its prominence was likely due to the ease of sewing white stripes onto the British Red Ensigns. That was not to George Washington's liking, who thought a flag so similar to the enemy's wasn't very empowering. Taking a break from writing the Articles of Confederation, the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution on June 14, 1777 "that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field representing a new constellation."

A Wisconsin teacher named Bernard Cigrand is credited with coming up with the idea in 1885 for an annual flag day to be celebrated across the country every June 14th. The tradition quickly spread and President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the June 14th anniversary of the Flag

Resolution of 1777 as a nationally observed event. The name officially changed to National Flag Day on August 3, 1949.

Did you know...

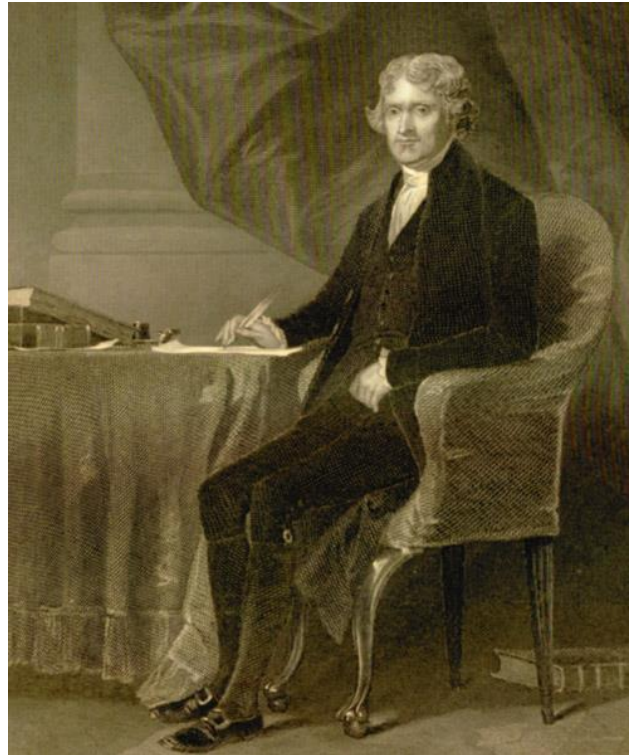
Army General Orders, No. 19 issued on October 31, 1978 officially recognized U.S. Army Birthday?

When the Continental Congress passed the flag resolution, it gave no instructions on the shape or layout of the stars? Some flags had stars scattered on the blue field, while others were arranged in rows or in a circle. Some stars had six points while others had eight.

Thomas Jefferson – A President’s Pen

America’s Founding Fathers were prolific writers, leaving volumes of letters and transcripts for generations of Americans to read. Yet one man’s words may have been the most important.

Thomas Jefferson grew up on his family’s land in central Virginia and studied law under the prominent George Wythe. During this time, Jefferson authored a survey of his many readings under the name *Commonplace Book*. Just two years after completing his studies at William & Mary (the second oldest university after Harvard), Jefferson was elected to Virginia’s House of Burgesses in 1769. Serving for six years while practicing law, Jefferson authored several pieces of legislation and resolutions. Regarding slavery, he would argue that “everyone comes into the world with a right to his own person and using it at his own will ... This is what is called personal liberty, and is given him by the author of nature, because it is necessary for his own sustenance.” After the Intolerable Acts of 1774, he wrote *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*, in which he argued that people have the right to govern themselves, reminding King George III that, “he is no more than the chief officer of the people, appointed by the laws, and circumscribed with definite powers, to assist in working the great machine of government.” He would also write Virginia’s Constitution.



By 1775, the 33-year old Jefferson had earned a strong enough reputation to be a delegate to the Second Continental Congress and appointed to the committee tasked with drafting a declaration of independence. Jefferson was elected chair of the committee, but others initially thought that John Adams should write the document. Shrewdly Adams convinced the committee that Jefferson was the best person as he had the fewest enemies in Congress and was the best writer. Needing only a few of the 17 days he was given, Jefferson drafted the Declaration as a charter of American and universal liberties. It was as if he was destined to write the document, drawing upon his experience as a lawyer, legislature, and patriot. The opening lines seemed to be inevitable:

“When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are

endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Jefferson would go on to be the young country’s second Vice President and third President. Among his notable achievements was the Louisiana Purchase. After he retired to Monticello, Jefferson founded the University of Virginia.

Jefferson died on July 4, 1826, exactly 50 years after his famous words broke America’s ties with England. But Jefferson also assured his last words by writing his own epitaph and designing the obelisk grave marker. He wanted to be known for three accomplishments and, as he directed, “not a word more.” It reads:

Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom, and father of the University of Virginia.
Born April 2, 1743, Died July 4, 1826.

Did you know...

Jefferson was a voracious reader, accumulating almost 6500 volumes in his lifetime. He sold his collection to the government, forming the basis of the Library of Congress.

George Mason – The Forgotten Founder

If you were asked to name a Founding Father from Virginia, George Mason may not be the first, second, or even third person to come to mind. In fact, Mason may be most famously known for refusing to sign the Constitution at the end of the Philadelphia Convention in 1787. Yet Mason's contributions to the cause and country are beyond measure.

When he was born in 1725, Mason was already a fourth-generation American; his great-grandfather a military exile after the English Civil War. As land-owners, Mason inherited many responsibilities, including local political, church, and military positions, although he was notably absent from their proceedings. He detested politics, but his opposition to the Stamp Act and other actions he increasingly found unfair moved him into action and into prominence.



In the battle for independence, Mason's pen would be more effective than any sword he could wield. In 1774, Mason wrote the Fairfax Resolves, which George Washington introduced into the House of Burgesses. The Fairfax Resolves intended to set forth fundamental principles that foreshadowed demands yet to come, including "That people cannot be governed by laws for which they have not given their consent" and "That taxation and representation go hand-in-hand; therefore, without representation the colonists cannot be taxed by the British Parliament."

In 1776, Mason authored both Virginia's Declaration of Rights and Constitution. The former is argued to be the most influential document in American history as it would become the foundation of the Bill of Rights. The Declaration of Independence would echo its opening paragraph, stating "That all men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety." The Declaration's author, fellow Virginian Thomas Jefferson, was a great friend and admirer of Mason's.

Despite his role in establishing the new country, Mason was not keen on a strong central government, fearing similar subjugation as under the British. During the Virginia Ratification Convention, he is reported to have said "I would sooner chop off my right hand than put it to the Constitution as it now stands." Among the issues he raised were federal taxes and a federal judiciary, and drafted potential amendments to the document. While the Constitution's flaws were recognized, the assembly still passed it without alteration. Mason refused to sign and returned home unhappy with the result. His voice had not gone unheard, as the Bill of Rights with many of his ideas was ratified in 1791. After many years of poor health and perhaps with his concerns finally put to rest, Mason died in his home in 1792.

Henry Knox – The Undaunted Patriot

Gumption. All of the Founding Fathers had it. Yet one hero had so much gumption, he moved heaven and earth for the revolutionary cause. Henry Knox's name may not be familiar, like George Washington's, but without him Washington and the United States might not be known at all.

Knox was a native-Bostonian born in 1750 to Irish immigrants. He left school at age nine to help support his family. Knox became a clerk in a bookshop, where the owner allowed him to borrow as many books as we wished. Over the years, Knox taught himself French, military strategy, and math, but earned his street smarts with Boston gangs before joining the local militia. A witness to the Boston Massacre, Knox reportedly tried to diffuse the situation with the British soldiers and testified on their behalf in court. The bookshop he opened in 1771 became popular with the British. In 1774 he married the daughter of a prominent Loyalist family. But Knox was no Loyalist. He joined the Sons of Liberty and was a guard in the events preceding the Boston Tea Party.



The Battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775 changed everything. Knox and his wife fled Boston; his abandoned bookstore looted and destroyed. He joined thousands of patriots amassed in Cambridge. This new militia battled against the British for months under Artemis Ward, who leveraged Knox's engineering knowledge to fortify Boston. Knox also caught George Washington's eye when he took over command of the forces. Meanwhile in upstate New York, cannon stood at the fallen forts Ticonderoga and Crown Point. The origins of the idea to bring the cannon to Boston is uncertain, but Knox under his own initiative and cost went to retrieve them. In a logistical feat, Knox delivered 60 tons of cannon and other armaments to Gen. Washington, hauling them across 300 miles of ice-covered rivers and the snowy Berkshires. The sight of battery over Boston harbor led the British to retreat to Halifax. Knox was 25 years old.

Knox had earned a commission and a place by Washington's side for eight years during the war. Rising from colonel to major general, Knox commanded artillery at Trenton, Monmouth, and Yorktown. As peace approached in 1783, Knox drafted plans to establish a peacetime army, including the creation of naval and army military academies (the latter at West Point). Knox was appointed the first Secretary of War in President Washington's cabinet. He was in charge of relations with Native Americans and pushed for the establishment of a U.S. Navy. Knox retired from public service in 1795 and settled in Maine. He embarked on numerous ventures in real estate, construction, and farming, but ran his business on debt and was rather unpopular in his state. Knox died in 1806. Among his posthumous honors are Fort Knox, Kentucky and Knox Hall at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, home of the U.S. Army Field Artillery School.

Did you know... Knox served as the model for Col. Pyncheon in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*?

John Paul Jones and the Fight of His Life

The legend of John Paul Jones is remarkable. But how did a Scottish immigrant become a hero of the American Revolution and the Father of the American Navy?

John Paul Jones was born John Paul in southwest Scotland in 1747. At age 13, he was apprenticed to a ship owner and sailed to Barbados and Virginia. At age 16, John Paul went to work on slave ships, but quit in disgust at the trade. In Jamaica he boarded a ship to return to Scotland, but when the ship's master and first mate died of fever during the voyage, John Paul sailed her back home. The grateful ship's owners rewarded John Paul with his first command of a vessel. His next command was the brig *Betsy* in 1772. The crew grew mutinous over pay issues while in Tobago and its ring leader swung a club at John Paul, who then killed the man with his sword. Doubting a fair hearing, John Paul quickly fled, adding the surname Jones. By 1774, John Paul Jones returned to Virginia and found himself among Revolutionary leaders when tensions with England over taxes and self-governance were at a tipping point.



Jones volunteered for service in the new Continental Navy in 1775. He became one of the most successful captains, capturing many prizes, including cargo of 10,000 winter uniforms and equipment that wound up with George Washington and his troops at Valley Forge just days before crossing the Delaware and the surprise attack at Trenton. Jones commanded three ships, even rattling the British by raiding a town on the west coast of England. By the fall of 1779, Jones commanded a fleet of five ships, including his flagship, the *Bonhomme Richard*. Jones anticipated fleets returning to England and decided to attack. On September 22, 1779, a Baltic convoy of 41 ships were spotted off the east coast of England. The two escorting British warships, *Serapis* and *Countess*, took on Jones' *Bonhomme Richard* and *Pallas* near Flamborough Head. The battle raged for hours with Jones' ship taking damage. Jones rammed the *Bonhomme Richard* into the *Serapis* and tied the ships together as fighting continued. The *Serapis*'s captain, called out for the American surrender, but Jones yelled back, "I have not yet begun to fight!"* On the 23rd, the British surrendered after a grenade exploded below *Serapis*' decks. Damaged beyond repair, the *Bonhomme Richard* was sunk. Jones transferred his flag to the *Serapis*, bringing it and another ship to Holland as prizes.

The Battle at Flamborough Head changed the course of the Revolutionary war the way the victory at Yorktown did. A small navy could match and beat the most dominant navy in the world. But John Paul Jones proved that British hubris was no match for the Americans' resilience.

*This famous phrase was likely ascribed to Jones decades later by his first officer and history. Jones is recorded by a contemporary Scottish newspaper to have said "I may sink, but I'll be damned if I strike." To "strike the colours" meant to take down the ship's flag to signify surrender.

John Hancock - Signatory to Independence

One day your witnessing George III's coronation. The next day you're signing your new nation's independence from him. Born in Massachusetts in 1737, John Hancock had an unlikely path to the patriot he's known as today. Orphaned at a young age, he was adopted by a wealthy uncle. After graduating from Harvard at 17, Hancock apprenticed for his uncle, who soon sent his young nephew to London on business, where he watched King George III take the crown. Upon his uncle's death in 1763, Hancock inherited his uncle's lucrative business and considerable wealth.

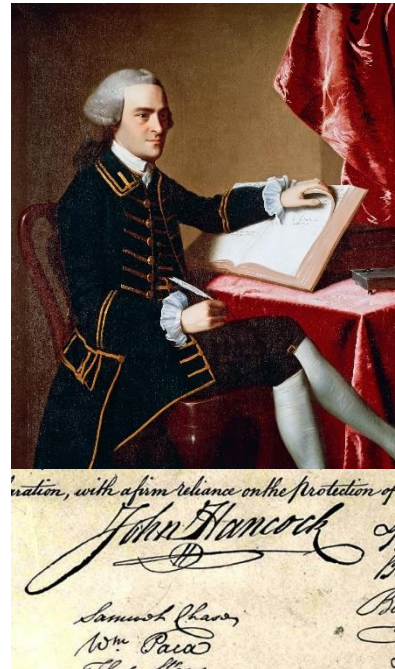
Hancock now found himself in the company of affluent Loyalists as well as Boston's pre-revolutionaries, such as John Adams. He also entered local politics, first winning election as a Boston selectman then to the Boston Assembly. As British Parliament's taxes over the colonies grew, so did anti-British sentiments. Hancock's initial opposition to the taxes were for economic, not political reasons. Hancock's pivotal moment came in 1768 when one of his ships was impounded by British customs officials for alleged tax and cargo violations. But Hancock was well-liked. A group of citizens protested by burning the officials' boat and beating them up. Hancock was also soon on the offensive. In an official speech, he commemorated the Boston Massacre. In 1774, he was elected to the Massachusetts and Continental Congresses. His legislative experience and social standing helped him get elected as President of the Continental Congress in 1776. While his role was primarily of a presiding officer, Hancock helped arrange funds, supplies, and troops for the Continental Army and he chaired the Marine Committee, helping create a small fleet of American frigates for the burgeoning Continental Navy.

As President of the Congress, Hancock was the first to sign the Declaration of Independence in a virtually blank space. The size and audacity lent his name to become synonymous with all signatures. But it also led to many uncorroborated stories of why he signed so large, such as Hancock commenting "The British ministry can read that name without spectacles; let them double their reward," or "I guess King George will be able to read that!" The more likely reason is that Hancock's ornate signature was intended to draw attention to himself. Hancock was known to have a big personality and lavish lifestyle, one that his friend and one-time mentor Samuel Adams even criticized.

Hancock retired from the Continental Congress in 1777 due to health problems. He returned to Massachusetts to help frame its constitution. He was then twice elected as Governor, finally passing away during his second term in 1793.

Did you know...

In 1789, Hancock was a candidate in the first U.S. presidential election, but received only four electoral votes out of a total 138 cast.



The European Heroes of America's Independence

The success of the Revolution was driven by American ideals, but also with some European help. Whether it was a belief in democratic ambitions or desire to weaken their continental rival, assistance from Europe played a pivotal role America gaining its independence from Great Britain. And a few of those men who fought for freedom would be immortalized in stone.

In their plans for a majestic nation's capital, George Washington and Pierre L'Enfant laid out President's Park in 1791. The Park would include the White House and parks to the north (Lafayette Park) and the south (the Ellipse). In addition to serving as a construction staging area for the White House, the Park land had also been used as a racetrack, graveyard, zoo, slave market, and a military camp during the War of 1812. It's also where four bronze sculptures were unveiled to honor these unexpected Revolutionary War heroes.

General Marquis Gilbert de Lafayette

The first statue erected in 1891 is of the French military leader the Marquis de Lafayette, for which the northern park is named. Although wealthy, Lafayette was orphaned, in the Army, and married into one of France's richest families by age 16. As the young officer learned more about the situation in America, to Lafayette arranged to meet Silas Deane, one of the American Commissioners in Paris, to see what he could do. Lafayette arrived in Philadelphia in 1777 to join the revolutionary cause. His wealth afforded him a commission as a Major General and was soon introduced to his commander-in-chief, General George Washington, who would become a lifelong friend. For the next several years, Lafayette loyally served Washington in battle, earning repeated praise from the Continental Congress. Still aiding the American cause after his return to France, Lafayette secured support from the French government and personally purchased a large amount of supplies for his troops in America. The 7000 troops and French navy that Lafayette returned with proved critical in defeating Cornwallis at Yorktown and preventing his escape by sea.



Major General Comte Jean de Rochambeau

Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, the Comte de Rochambeau, was already an accomplished military officer when the American Revolution erupted. Lafayette had managed to convince the French King to support the American cause. In 1780, France gave Rochambeau the rank of Lieutenant General and command of some 7,000 French troops to join the Continental Army under George Washington. The small size of his force made him initially reluctant to lead the expedition. Rochambeau and his troops arrived in Rhode Island, but remained there for a year as not to abandon the nearby French fleet blockaded by the British. Rochambeau finally joined Washington in upstate New York and marched their combined forces to the siege at Yorktown and the



Battle of the Chesapeake. Along with Lafayette's troops, Washington and Rochambeau were able to defeat Cornwallis and secure his surrender. Congress presented Rochambeau with two British cannons in recognition of his service. His statue in Lafayette Park was erected in 1902.

General Tadeusz Kościuszko

Kosciuszko came from a noble, but modest family in Poland. He excelled in his military studies at the Royal Military Academy of Warsaw and became an accomplished engineer. After spending several years studying in France, the young Kosciuszko found Poland in increasing political disarray and his family fortune squandered by his brother. Unable to purchase an officer's commission, Kosciuszko became a tutor to a wealthy family of a provincial governor. He fell in love with the daughter, but their elopement was prevented and Kosciuszko was beaten. He fled to France where he learned of revolution brewing in America. It's said that Kosciuszko was so moved after reading the Declaration of Independence in 1776, that he sought a meeting with Thomas Jefferson in Paris. (The two later became close friends and corresponded for more than 20 years until Kosciuszko's death.) His education and experiences made him sympathetic to the cause, so Kosciuszko offered his services. The Continental Congress appointed him as a colonel of engineers, and he initially worked to build fortifications to protect Philadelphia from British attack. Next in New York, Kosciuszko masterminded an important British defeat at Saratoga and was in charge of the design and construction of military fortifications at West Point. By the end of the war, Kosciuszko had earned the rank of brigadier general and received U.S. citizenship, along with a medal for his service to the Continental Army. His statue was erected in 1910.



Major General Baron Frederich Wilhelm von Steuben

Von Steuben came from a military family and enlisted in the Prussian Army at age 17. After serving with distinction in the Seven Years War and at Frederick the Great's headquarters, he was discharged after the Treaties of Paris in 1763. His experiences as a General Staff member in the Prussian Army gave him a wealth of knowledge beyond those of the British and French armies of the period. His training would eventually bring to the American soldiers the technical knowledge necessary to create an army. After his discharge, von Steuben received his "Baron" title when he became chamberlain at the Petty Court of Hohenzollern-Hechingen. But he remained poor and sought work with Europe's armies. In Paris he met with Silas Deane and Benjamin Franklin after hearing he may find work with the Continental Army. The American Commissioners couldn't offer von Steuben rank or pay, and he initially declined volunteering. But with no other options, he accepted and made his way to America in 1777. Von Steuben reported to General George Washington in Valley Forge in 1778 and was appointed as



the temporary Inspector General to observe the American soldiers, equipment, skills, and living conditions. The Prussian soldier was so dismayed at the state of the Continental Army, that he wrote the *Revolutionary War Drill Manual*, on which he personally trained troops through a translator. Von Steuben next wrote *Regulation for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, which was a standard U.S. military manual until 1814. (He also organized how camps were laid out, so kitchens and latrines weren't next to each other.) Von Steuben next served as General Nathanael Greene's instructor and supply officer and was present at the Battle of Yorktown. Achieving the rank of Major General and receiving U.S. citizenship, Steuben assisted Washington in demobilizing the army in 1783 and in the new country's defense plan. His statue was also erected in 1910.

Did you know...

There is a fifth statue in the middle of Lafayette Park? In 1853, sculptor Clark Mills' equestrian statue of General Andrew Jackson was actually the first statue in the park. It was also the first bronze statue cast in the country, and the first equestrian statue in the world to feature a horse rearing up on its two hind legs.

The Founding Fathers

At first, they were called *loyal servants*. Then they were called *traitors*. Whether they called themselves *revolutionaries* is uncertain, but today the men who led the establishment of our country are called *The Founding Fathers*. The phrase itself arose only a century ago. Warren G. Harding referred to “the Founding Fathers” in a 1916 speech to the Republican National Convention and again in his 1921 inauguration speech. Prior to that, they were simply known as the *Fathers*.



So who are the Founding Fathers? It could be argued that all who stood up for independence in a prominent capacity deserve the title. Those would include the “Framers” and “Signers”. The National Archives defines the Framers as 55 individuals who were delegates to the Constitutional Convention and helped draft the Constitution. Of those 55, only 39 signed the Constitution. While there are no set criteria on who and how many deserve to be a Founding Father, there are typically seven names that stand out: John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington.

John Adams was an early advocate for independence and had a reputation for justice as a lawyer. He was on the committee that drafted the Declaration of Independence, secured French military aid to bolster the Revolutionary forces, promoted the need for a naval force, and negotiated the Treaty of Paris. Adams served as the country’s first Vice President and the second President, being the first to live in the White House.

Benjamin Franklin was significantly older than the other Founders. He was already an established publisher (*Poor Richard’s Almanack*), scientist (electricity, bifocals), and was heavily involved in numerous civics projects in Philadelphia. As revolutionary sentiments rose, Franklin found himself to be the elder statesman. After helping draft the Declaration of Independence, Franklin was one of the American Commissioners in Paris, securing French assistance and negotiating the Treaty of Paris. He also played a pivotal role in the Constitutional Convention. Franklin, ironically, was one of the Founders to have not held an elected or appointed office.

Alexander Hamilton may be the only Founder with his own musical, but his story was quite dramatic. Emigrating from the British West Indies as a teenager, Hamilton’s hustle and intellect helped him quickly rise in prominence. He soon found himself as Washington’s aide-de-camp during the war. After the Constitutional Convention, Hamilton argued for ratification as the primary author of the persuasive *Federalist Papers*. He was appointed the first treasury secretary and pushed to establish a national bank. Hamilton died in a duel with Aaron Burr, his long-time rival and sitting Vice President.

John Jay may not be the first name to come to mind when talking about the Founders, especially since he first thought reconciling with England was better than war with them. Once war became inevitable, Jay chose independence. A lawyer by profession, Jay drafted New York's state constitution and was president of the Continental Congress. During the War, Jay was a diplomat to Spain for three years trying to earn their financial support and alliance (Spain entered the war as a French ally, avoiding a direct alliance with the colonies.) After the war, he joined Franklin and Adams to negotiate the Treaty of Paris. Back in the U.S., Jay served as secretary of foreign affairs under the Articles of Confederation, authored a few of the *Federalist Papers*, became the first chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, and then served as governor of New York.

Thomas Jefferson was a prosperous lawyer in Virginia. He served in the Virginia legislature and as its governor. Early on he believed England lacked authority over the colonies and in the importance of individual rights. A gifted writer, he drafted the Declaration of Independence that reflected these beliefs while serving in the Continental Congress. Jefferson succeeded Franklin as U.S. minister to France, served as secretary of state under Washington and vice president under Adams, before becoming the country's third president. Like several other Founders, Jefferson's views on liberty were contradicted by their ownership of slaves. After leaving office, he retired to his Virginia plantation, Monticello, and helped found the University of Virginia.

James Madison was a close friend of Jefferson's. Like his friend, Madison grew up on a Virginia plantation. Being too sickly for the military, Madison chose a political career, serving in the state legislature. At the Constitutional Convention, he developed the three branches of government plan each with checks on its power, which was largely adopted. For this, Madison is often referred to as the "Father of the Constitution." Madison also co-authored the *Federalist Papers* with Hamilton and was a driving force behind the Bill of Rights. During his political career, he served as a U.S. congressman, as Jefferson's secretary of state, and the fourth president.

George Washington is known as the Father of our Country. Ironically, he served for the British in the French and Indian War. But as the young surveyor became a prosperous farmer, Washington began to resent the various taxes and restrictions being placed on them by the British. The well-regarded Washington was given command of the Continental Army in 1775. Even though he lost more battles than he won, Washington – with the help of the Continental Navy and the French – prevailed. After the war, he led the Constitutional Convention and became the first President of the United States.

There are many more names that rightfully could be – and sometimes are – added to the list of Founding Fathers. It took the bravery and efforts of countless early Americans to establish our nation, and we celebrate them all.

Did you know... the ages of the Founding Fathers on July 4, 1776? Adams – 40. Franklin – 70. Hamilton – 21. Jay – 30. Jefferson – 33. Madison – 25. Washington – 44.

The First Thanksgiving

As Americans prepare to spend this Thanksgiving with friends and family, there are many traditions that will be shared at tables across the country. The origins of Thanksgiving date back to November 1621 when Pilgrims and Wampanoag Indians gathered in Plymouth, Massachusetts for a three-day autumn harvest celebration. However, that “first Thanksgiving” was quite different than the holiday today and with some surprising history.



Did you know...

Some historians argue that the first Thanksgiving was not in Plymouth? In 1565, a Spanish fleet arrived in Florida and established a new settlement at St. Augustin. In commemoration, the 800 Spanish settlers celebrated by sharing a meal with the Timucuan people native to the area.

The first Thanksgiving was a relatively small affair? Only half of the original 102 colonists who arrived on the *Mayflower* survived the journey and first winter in the New World. So only 22 men, four women and over 25 children teenagers were in attendance. In contrast, there were some 90 Wampanoags. Accounts say the Wampanoag had been farming on the other side of the brook from the colony and may have made a diplomatic visit to the Pilgrims.

Among the native Americans were two who spoke English? Samoset was a minor Abenakki tribal leader from Maine who likely learned the language from English fishermen in the Cape Cod area. Samoset made the initial contact with the Pilgrims. Squanto was Patuxet, a band of the Wampanoag. He was among 20 of his tribe who were kidnapped by the English. When Squanto returned to New England, he became a translator for Wampanoag in diplomacy and trade, and showed the Pilgrims how to plant corn and where to fish.

The first Thanksgiving meal barely resembled the ones eaten today? Records show that there was no turkey served. The meal consisted of wild fowl caught by the Pilgrims and deer brought by the Wampanoag. The menu would have also included local seafood, such as mussels, lobster and fish that were plentiful in the area. While pumpkin was likely included, there was no pumpkin pie as there was no butter, wheat flour, or ovens for baking.

The first Thanksgiving was documented? The first account is William Bradford’s journal titled “Of Plymouth Plantation” and the other is a publication written by Edward Winslow called “Mourt’s Relations.”

The first official Thanksgiving was commemorated by George Washington? During the Revolutionary War, General Washington regularly ordered special thanksgiving services for his troops after successful battles, and endorsed efforts by the Continental Congress to do the same.

Months after taking office, President George Washington wrote to James Madison asking for his advice on how to approach the Senate about a day of thanksgiving. In September 1789, a joint resolution was introduced to request the President to recommend such a commemoration. Days later Washington proclaimed the first nationwide thanksgiving to be celebrated on November 26, 1789.

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By the PRESIDENT of the UNITED STATES of AMERICA.

A PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor: And whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the People of the United States, a Day of public Thanksgiving and Prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness."

Now THEREFORE, I do recommend and assign Thursday the twenty-sixth day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States, to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be: That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks for his kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation;—for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his Providence in the course and conclusion of the late war;—for the great degree of tranquility, union and plenty, which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted; for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general, for all the great and various favours which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.

And also, That we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions;—to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties

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Giving Thanks and Recognition of A Shared History

At this time of year, Thanksgiving, Native American Heritage Month, and National American History and Founders Month, gives us the opportunity to reflect on our collective history and give thanks for the country in which we live.

The first Thanksgiving dates back to November 1621 when Pilgrims and Wampanoag Indians gathered in Plymouth, Massachusetts for a three-day autumn harvest celebration. Many Native nations historically celebrated and gave thanks for abundant harvest seasons. In fact, Thanksgiving's holiday tradition of gratitude originates from the Native American philosophy of giving without expecting anything in return. The Wampanoags, for example, taught the newcomers about agriculture, fishing, and hunting.

Settlers' traditions also included days of feasting and giving thanks. Some early English settlers were required by their charter to celebrate the day of their arrival annually as a day of thanksgiving. Over the next several decades, autumn thanksgiving festivals followed the harvest. In September 1789, George Washington issued the first Thanksgiving proclamation, designating November 26, 1789 as the first official thanksgiving. In particular, he called upon Americans to express their gratitude for the successful ratification of the new Constitution. John Adams and James Madison also designated days of thanksgiving during their presidencies.

It took many years for Thanksgiving to become the holiday we celebrate today. Since 2008, the day after Thanksgiving is designated Native American Heritage Day. As November shares the commemorations National American History and Founders Month and Native American Heritage Month, we honor our nation's history, give thanks for our blessings, and have the opportunity to grow as a country for many years to come.