

Independence Day--July 4th

Independence Day commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence 241 years ago on July 4, 1776. The Continental Congress declared that the thirteen American colonies regarded themselves as a new nation, the United States of American, and were no longer part of the British Empire. From 1776 to the present day, July 4th has been celebrated as the birth of American independence, with festivities ranging from fireworks, parades concerts and family gatherings.

During the American Revolution, the legal separation of the Thirteen Colonies from Great Britain in 1776 actually occurred on July 2, when the Second Continental Congress voted to approve a resolution of independence that had been proposed in June by Richard Henry Lee of Virginia declaring the United States independent from Great Britain's rule. After voting for independence, Congress turned its attention to the Declaration of Independence, a statement justifying the break from Great Britain, Congress appointed a *Committee of Five*, with Thomas Jefferson at its principal author. Other members of the Committee included John Adams of Massachusetts, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania and Robert P. Livingston of New York. On July 2nd, the Continental Congress voted for independence in a near-unanimous vote (the New York delegation abstained, but later voted affirmatively). On July 4th, the Continental congress formally adopted the Declaration of Independence.

Following the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence, festivities including concerts, bonfires, parades and firing of cannons and muskets followed in celebration. Philadelphia held the first annual commemoration of independence on July 4, 1777, while Congress was still occupied with the Revolutionary War.

After the War of 1812, in which the United States once again faced Great Britain, patriotic July 4th celebrations become more widespread. In 1870, the U.S. Congress made July 4th a federal holiday. The most common symbol of the holiday is the American Flag, and a common musical accompaniment is the national anthem of the United States, "*The Star-Spangled Banner*".

Regardless of how you spend your Independence Day, at a parade, barbecue, picnic, concert, baseball game and or a family gathering, remember the reason behind this holiday. Many of our ancestors fought or gave aid during the war.

This is a day to be proud American and celebrate our country's rich history. Enjoy your 4th of July!

Yours in Patriotism,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Michael Tomme Sr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a distinct "Sr." at the end.

J. Michael Tomme, Sr.
President General, 2016-2017
National Society Sons of the American Revolution