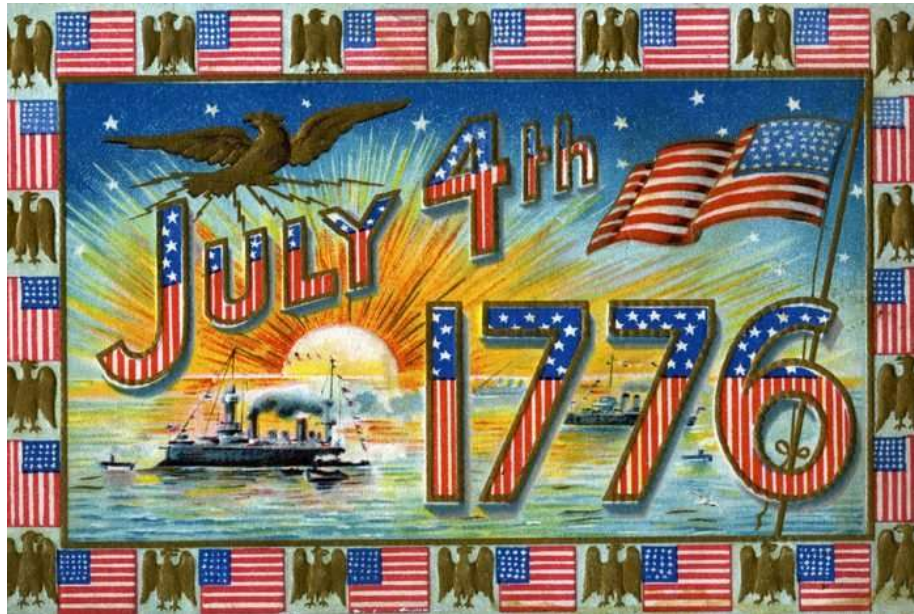


WEKIVA TERRACE

JULY 2022, Volume 76



You may wonder, “Why do we celebrate the 4th of July? What does it mean?” Well, this day is incredibly significant in American history, as it marks the day the United States officially became its own nation.

The Declaration of Independence was adopted on July 4th, 1776—and thus, America was born. American citizens celebrate America’s birthday with festivals, parades, fireworks, barbecues, sparklers, and other festive activities.

WHICH COUNTRY DID WE DECLARE OUR INDEPENDENCE FROM?

America declared its independence from Great Britain. In order to fully understand the significance of Independence Day and what happened in 1776, we need to go back in [history](#) a bit. Before America was its own country, it was comprised of 13 colonies established by Great Britain. The first colony was settled in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. European countries, especially Great Britain, continued to colonize America throughout the 17th century and a good portion of the 18th century.

By 1775, an estimated 2.5 million settlers lived in the 13 colonies: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

WHAT LED THE COLONISTS TO SEEK INDEPENDENCE?

Tensions started brewing when Great Britain began passing legislation that gave it more control within the colonies, especially when it came to taxing the colonists. The Crown was in debt after the French and Indian War, so it started taxing the American colonies to increase revenue. The passage of legislation like the Stamp Act in March 1765, the Townshend Acts in June and July of 1767, and the Tea Act of 1773 forced colonists to pay more money to Great Britain—even though the colonies didn’t have a say in the Crown’s policies. This became known as taxation without representation and quickly became a heated pillar in the foundation of the American Revolution.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED ON JULY 4, 1776?

Fast-forward to a June 1776 Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia. Here, Virginia statesman Richard Henry Lee proposed a motion for the colonies to declare independence from Britain. A committee was formed to draft an official independence document, which became known as the Declaration of Independence. On July 2, 1776, Lee's motion for independence was approved. Two days later, on July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was officially adopted—and America became a free nation. After declaring independence, America continued to fight in the Revolutionary War and officially defeated Great Britain in September 1783.

INTERESTING 4TH OF JULY FACTS EVERY AMERICAN SHOULD KNOW

The history of the 4th of July is fascinating, but there are other interesting 4th of July facts every American should know. Here are six notable ones:

- Some colonists celebrated Independence Day during the summer of 1776 by putting on mock funerals for King George III of England—symbolizing the death of the Crown's rule on America.
 - The first annual commemoration of Independence Day happened on July 4, 1777, in Philadelphia.
- John Adams, a Founding Father and the second [president](#) of the United States, strongly believed Independence Day should be celebrated on July 2nd. He even refused to attend 4th of July events because he felt so strongly about July 2nd being the correct date.
- Adams and Thomas Jefferson, a fellow Founding Father, both died on July 4, 1826. James Monroe, another U.S. president, also died on July 4th, but he passed in 1831.
- Thomas Jefferson was the first president to celebrate Independence Day at the [White House](#), in 1801. The celebration featured horse races, parades, food, and drinks—similar to the 4th of July celebrations we see today.
- Although the 4th of July has been celebrated each year since 1776, it didn't become a federal holiday until 1870. And it didn't become a paid holiday for federal employees until 1941.



FIREWORKS are often used to mark special events and holidays. The only safe way to view fireworks is to attend a professional show. It is important to know that fireworks are not safe in the hands of consumers. Fireworks cause thousands of injuries each year.

A few ideas to get into the patriotic spirit, without fireworks:

1. Use glow sticks, they glow in the dark and are a safe alternative to a sparkler. Fun for all ages.
2. Loud and proud: Noise makers are sure to make a statement. They can be found at local party supply stores or make your own.
3. Outdoor movie night. Set up a screen and projector. Don't forget the bug spray!
4. Red, white and blue silly string... fun for all ages.
5. Make a patriotic craft with the family.
6. Throw a birthday party for the USA, and don't forget the cake.



FACTS

1. More than 10,500 reported fires are started by fireworks annually.
1. Burns account for 44% of the 9,100 injuries treated in emergency rooms seen in the month around July 4.
1. Half of the fireworks injuries seen at emergency rooms were fireworks to the hand, finger, or leg. One-third were to the eye or other parts of the head.
1. Children ages 10-14 had the highest rate of fireworks injury, with more than one-third (36%) of the victims of fireworks injuries under age 15.
1. Sparklers account for roughly one-quarter of emergency room fireworks injuries.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
CPSC 2018 Fireworks Annual Report



Safety and Prevention

Never bring pets to firework displays or leave them locked in cars while you watch.

Secure your home

Plan ahead, and identify ways your pet could escape. Close open windows and doors.

Be present

You can calm your pets better than a pet-sitter or a kennel staff member.

Give your pet a safe space

Give your pet a confined, safe space in the center of your home, such as a spacious closet or a bathroom.



For more safety tips visit:
multcopets.org

