

Glorious Fourth

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did not tell his daughter that some patriots threw rocks through the windows of several houses that were not illuminated, but several of his contemporaries recorded that fact.

A Philadelphia editor summed up the celebration: "Thus may the Fourth of July, that glorious and ever memorable day, be celebrated through America by the sons of freedom from age to age, till time shall be no more." That was the origin of that enduring appellation, the "Glorious Fourth."

After the Revolution and the adoption of the Constitution, the July 4 celebration grew and spread. Many disbanded soldiers went west and occupied land in or near small settlements, and they gathered on Independence Day to discuss their part in the struggle for freedom. In 1788, Philadelphia, then the new nation's capital staged one of the longest and most enduringly talked-about Independence Day parades in American history. Called "the Great Federal Procession," it was only a part of the celebration, which honoured both the signing of the Declaration and adoption of the Constitution.

As the years passed, celebration of the Glorious Fourth spread through every state and territory. By 1810, there were elaborate observances in all the major cities. That year the official celebration in Boston, held in the morning at the Old South Meeting House, was preceded by a huge military parade from the statehouse through the main streets of the city. The address was delivered by Boston's noted Reverend William Ellery Channing. In the afternoon, a second parade was staged by the Bunker Hill Association and the Young Republicans, followed by a dinner served to 600 persons in Faneuil Hall. That evening on the common, a great fireworks display was

viewed by more than 10,000.

Glorious Fourth celebrations throughout the nation largely embraced the same general events — parades, gun salutes, bands, speeches, patriotic songs, ball games, dinners and picnics, and fireworks displays — but from time to time and place to place, unusual features were enjoyed. In rural areas, watermelon-eating and pie-eating contests, potato-sack races and greased-pig-catching competitions were popular. In some towns, children paraded on decorated bicycles and adults raced bicycles; in a few areas of the West, rodeo exhibitions and competitions were the big attraction. In all communities it was considered a great honour to be chosen as the main speaker of the day; each year, Daniel Webster left whatever duties he was occupied with at the time in Washington, DC, and hurried back to his hometown, Salisbury, New Hampshire, to deliver a two-hour oration.

The town of Litz, in eastern Pennsylvania, developed a particularly beautiful manner of observing the Fourth. Each winter the residents made thousands of tall candles in tin molds and saved them until the following July to illumine Litz Spring Park on the evening of the Fourth after the afternoon Baby Parade. In that parade many young children, all dressed in patriotic costumes, rode around the park on small, decorated floats. As darkness approached, boys lit the candles, many of which were set afloat, and songs and speeches and "playing in the Park in candlelight" continued into the night.

On July 4, 1826, exactly 50 years after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, both Thomas Jefferson, the chief designer of the document, and John Adams, the man who was so confident that it would forever be celebrated, died. Jefferson, at his Virginia home, Monticello, died a few hours before Adams, in Quincy,

Massachusetts. Adams was reported to have exclaimed, just before he died, "Thomas Jefferson still survives". The deaths of these survivors of the signers, said a Boston resident, turned the patriotic observance "into a sad time of mourning as well as of independence celebration; it was a strange, mystifying mixture that affected us all summer."

The Grand Centennial

The Glorious Fourth had a splendid birthday party in Philadelphia during the 1876 Centennial Exposition. The exposition itself, which opened on May 20 and ran for six months, had a record attendance of nearly ten million, and, with its many cultural and educational exhibits spread over 465 acres (188ha) at Fairmount Park, it served to broaden the viewpoint of Americans in many ways.

There were other large celebrations around the country on the centennial of the Declaration, but most were patterned more for enjoyment than education, and several had unique features. One, at neighbouring settlements in Southern California in which all houses and businesses were decorated with greenery, was claimed to be the longest parade ever staged. The marchers included veterans of the Mexican War, people of many nationalities, and members of every organization in the territory. Decorated floats carried girls representing Liberty, Peace, Columbia and Plenty.

In Windsor, Connecticut, at a large public meeting some days before the 1876 Fourth, the town gratefully accepted the offer of residents of the "Rainbow and Poquonock section of Windsor" to provide a "grand centennial picnic to be held on the Broad Street green." A public invitation was issued to "all inhabitants of Windsor, irrespective of colour, age, condition or peculiarity of political and religious opinions." The host citizens busied themselves renting tents and tables and arranging

for music, bell ringing, cannon firing and fireworks. Women from many sections of Windsor joined in to prepare food.

A newspaper reported on July 3 that everybody in Windsor was going to pray that night for good weather. The next morning "the sun rose on a cloudless day" that began with cannon fire on Plymouth Meadow and an hour of bell ringing. Broad Street, green and all surrounding buildings were decorated with flags, banners, flowers, and red, white and blue drapery. The several "main events" of the day varied from "a grand cavalcade of fantasies, representing all the characters, hideous and otherwise, that ever existed or were supposed to have existed" to a parade of huge, decorated carriages — one large enough to hold 66 passengers — carrying citizens including 50 young women representing the state and military war veterans. Each event was preceded by music, much of which was vocal, with the audience joining in.

After the official programme, an enormous picnic meal was served in a tent seating a thousand; the remainder of the diners sat in the shade outside. After dinner there were more speeches and more music. The day ended, of course, with fireworks that lasted far into the night.

For over a century following 1776, fireworks were a major part of every Glorious Fourth celebration. Only gradually did the population become aware of how many persons inexperienced in handling fireworks were being killed and injured and how many fires were being started. Nevertheless, the move for "a safe and sane Fourth" did not gain much headway until the Chicago Tribune began to collect statistics and demand a safer way of celebrating. It took a few years for the campaign to be effective, but it did succeed. The loss of life by fireworks fell from 466 in 1903 to 215 in 1909; there were, however, nearly 5,000 injured by fireworks in that period, the majority by giant firecrackers. In 1903, Springfield, Massachusetts, forbade the sale of fireworks entirely, with the result that there were no deaths, injuries or fires on the Fourth. Many states and most communities eventually banned the indiscriminate sale of fireworks, substituting planned displays sponsored by local organizations and handled by experienced persons.

Some old-timers complained that they longed for the "old, freewheeling, exciting, 24 hours of nonstop noise and fire," but nobody paid any attention. Thanks to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, Americans had the right to complain if they chose, and their fellow citizens had a right to ignore those complaints if they considered that the right thing to do. Happy Birthday, America.

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Liberty, liberty — dawn to dusk and beyond

Education in the US

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schooling combined consists of 12 years of classes (not counting kindergarten) which meet for about 10 months a year, five days a week and five hours a day. Almost every elementary school curriculum includes English, mathematics, science, social studies, penmanship, music, art and physical education. Many include classes teaching basic computer skills. Most secondary schools have a "core curriculum" of English, mathematics, science, social studies and physical education as well as a variety of elective subjects.

About 85 per cent of American students are enrolled in public schools, which are supported by state and local taxes. The other 15 per

cent choose to attend private schools, for which their families pay special tuition fees. Four out of five American private schools are run by churches, synagogues or other religious groups.

In addition, schools have for many years received federal aid for special purposes, such as vocational training and school lunches. In 1965 Congress approved a major program of federal support for public schools, and federal aid was extended to private schools for the first time.

After graduating from secondary school a growing number of Americans go on to higher education. The percentage of high school graduates enrolling in public and private colleges, for instance,

Facts in Brief:

School Expenditures (millions of dollars-1988):
\$308,800
* Elementary and Secondary-\$184,800 * Colleges and Universities-\$124,000
Enrollment (millions):
* Elementary-29.4 * High School-16.4 * College-12.5
Public and Private School Enrollment (nursery through college, in millions):
* Public-49.9 * Private-8.5
Number of Public Schools (1986):
* Elementary-60,800 * Secondary-23,400
Public High School Graduates: 2,419,700
Microcomputers in Public Schools (percent): 96.4
* Elementary Schools-96 * Junior High School-98.6
* Senior High Schools-99
Percent High School Graduates Enrolled in College (1986): 54.8
Earned Degrees:
* Bachelor's-987,823 * Master's-288,567 * Doctorate-33,653

has increased from 40.4 per cent in 1960 to 54.8 per cent in 1986. American institutions of higher education include: technical training schools, which offer programs in fields ranging from hairstyling to computer programming; community colleges, which provide two years of semiprofessional training for some students and the first two years of college for others; colleges, offering four-year bachelor degree programs; and universities, which contain one or more colleges and graduate schools offering master's or doctoral degree programs.

The Fourth of July

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waves, the roar of powerboats, the radios in the sand, the hiss of pop-tops being pulled. Not all our deliberate and defiant fun can quite hide the long day's dry American silence. The clouds are high wisps of icy cirrus; it's cold up there. The tops of your feet and tip of your nose hurt from too many ultraviolet rays, and even after a shower, sand keeps trickling down your neck. The grand set-piece finale, with its star-like spinning rockets and undulating red and white stripes and grinning eagle outlined in phosphorus, rather fizzles, even though the Independence Day Observance Committee invested a cool thousand in it and the fireworks contractor (a Japanese company, as it happens) virtually guaranteed success. Like most birthday parties, the Fourth of July makes us a little wary, a touch cranky. We itch to get on with life. Let the summer begin.

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