

4TH OF JULY



The Daily Star

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

July 4, 2004

Celebrating the Fourth of July

After the American Revolution, towering bonfires were lit the night before the Fourth and bells, guns and cannons broke the morning

MARIAN I. DOYLE

There once was a time in America when the year was marked by two eagerly awaited high festivals -- Christmas and Independence Day. Asked to pick which was best, even children might have chosen the Fourth. From country to city it was a day of fluttering flags, passionate emotions, and bombastic pleasures commemorating a freedom so recently won it was not yet taken for granted.

A first description of how this anniversary of our nation's birth was to be honored came in a July 4, 1777, notice from Thomas Wharton of the Philadelphia Committee of Safety to the city justices. The true friends of Liberty, he told them, had expressed a desire to hold public rejoicings and illuminations. A fireworks, therefore, had been ordered for the town common and the aid of two hundred soldiers was being requested to restrain the ardor of those who imbibed a bit too patriotically.

After the war, the average American found the cost of imported European fireworks much too high. Not until after 1816 and the start of a home industry would fireworks once more become a common feature of the celebration. But towering bonfires were lit the night before and bells, guns, and cannons broke the morning. Liberty poles were raised and capped. Children hung Benedict Arnold in effigy until the memory of his treachery faded. Graying veterans reminisced while overseeing heroic reenactments of their town's great battles, and, as it was said, made the eagle scream.

The 1820s became a time of huge Independence Day banquets accompanied by orations and a

multitude of toasts. Thirty-two were proposed at the 1828 gathering of the Armstrong Guards in Kittanning, Pennsylvania: The day we celebrate. Sacred to liberty and the rights of man. Four cheers! ... The surviving officers and soldiers of the Army of the Revolution. Three cheers! ... The President ... The Governor ... The Fair Sex ... The Pennsylvania canal! One German immigrant was moved by the fervor of the movement to call out his own toast -- Freiheit und JS! our genuge! a mix of German and English that translated as "Liberty and plenty of flour!" It was roundly applauded. Also drawing applause was a final toast to the Jacksonites on the other side of the river! Partisan politics had found its way into the country's great anniversary, and the divisions of an election year had sent the "Jacksonites" of Kittanning to hold their celebration on the opposite side of the Allegheny River from the "Adamites."

Large-scale public spectacle was added to city festivities in the 1830s. A typical Fourth of July in New York City began with the roar of cannons and the unfurling of flags, pennants, and streamers from the masts of hundreds of ships around the harbor. Banners waved as far as the eye could see in streets thronged with people. Children in plumed hats flourished tin swords and pranced happily to marching music punctuated by blasts of artillery fire from the military exhibition park.

With darkness came the glimmer of a thousand lamps along avenues of booths selling gimcracks, ginger beer, and nearly every digestion-threatening delicacy known to man. Clusters of small explosions from strings of firecrackers heightened anticipation that turned to cheers when an illuminated balloon rose gleaming gold in the sky and a rocket

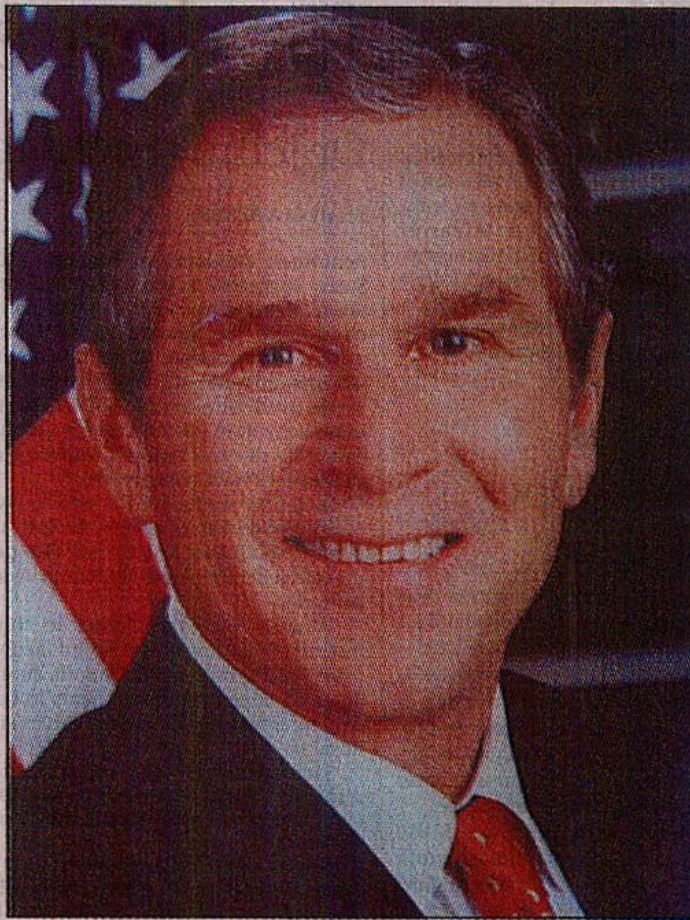
exploded in silver above it. Fiery serpents followed, twisting through the air, fountains of fire showered down; and streams of light eclipsed the stars until, with a shuddering bombardment of sound, the show ended for another year.

Though their celebration would be far less spectacular, country folk of the time looked forward just as fervently to Independence Day as their sophisticated city cousins. Spring and summer had been spent plowing, planting, and hoeing, and soon there would be haying. But for one glorious festival day there was the Fourth, when families from all the neighboring farms gathered at a favorite picnic grove to enjoy a holiday from wearying responsibility. Children had their popcorn and firecrackers. Grownups had their catching-up to do after long weeks or months of isolation. Speeches made up in patriotic zeal for what they lacked in polish. There were food and whiskey and games and dancing to the tunes of a fiddle. After dark there would be a bonfire and maybe a skyrocket or two before the drowsy ride home.

Those who lived in a village or town in the 1830s could expect a day of dizzying activity that from a child's point of view was nearly magic. Every boy with gunpowder in his veins got up before dawn to hear the chorus of ordnance, bells, and voices that greeted the sun. He fretted his way through a breakfast he was too excited to eat, then drilled his younger brothers and sisters in military maneuvers until it was time to leave.

The entire town soon emptied into the streets that had been watered the night before to keep down the dust. Women set out feasts on tables under massive tents. Men busily checked arrangements,

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George W Bush Jr
President of the United States of America

Home of the brave

Independence Day is a good time to examine who we are and how we got here

BO NILES

After nearly 30 years I take my neighborhood almost for granted, but on the rare occasion when I sit down and think about it, I find the place pretty amazing. On any given day within a few blocks of where I live, I can encounter people who represent more than two dozen nationalities or ethnic groups, men and women who have

relocated to this country and to this city from enormous distances and vastly different cultures. I conduct my weekly errands at the Lebanese grocery, the Korean greengrocer, the Greek florist, the Chinese laundry, the French baker, the Indian tailor, the Israeli dry cleaner, the Japanese fish store, the Puerto Rican bodega. Our neighborhood is bracketed by a Russian Orthodox Church and a newly erected mosque. At noon,

when the neighborhood schools let out for lunch, students prattle away in French and Italian, which is not surprising when you realize that the French Lycee and Scuola Italiana back up to each other, only one block away from the kids' favorite Sicilian pizza hangout. All of these people have come -- as my ancestors once did -- to create a better life for themselves and their families in a NewWorld.

Because I have lived in this utterly familiar place for more than half my life, I have almost forgotten what it must be like to pick up and leave everything behind to make a fresh start in an all-too-unfamiliar, unknown place. I say almost, because my family did exactly that back in 1958 when I had just turned 14. We picked up, left everything behind, and moved to Italy. But we went only for a sojourn, not for a

lifetime. What we did was an adventure, and, one might add, an indulgence because we went for the music. My pianist-composer father had inherited some money, so my parents knew we would be comfortably set for a year or so. What we might have anticipated, but couldn't fully imagine ahead of time, was what it would be like to live as foreigners in another land. Finding a

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MESSAGE

TODAY, July 4, 2004, marks the 228th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, a document that was the culmination of years of debate. Our Founders took an immense risk on July 4th 1776, transforming their revolutionary hopes and ideals into action. Their choice was not an easy one, and only reluctantly did they sign the Declaration of Independence, knowing full well liberty would not come without a struggle. The Founders, however, saw the potential rewards were worth the risk. They bravely staked their reputations on the principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Independence Day is a time for people around the world, not just Americans, to reflect on the value of freedom.

We in U.S. Embassy Dhaka believe that the world is a better place because of the courage of

the Founding Fathers. Their foresight and dedication to democracy gave us the opportunity to serve as diplomats of one great democracy to another.

Bangladesh and the United States have a strong and continuing relationship, which we expect to strengthen further with time. Trade and commerce are the roots of our prosperous relationship, but are not the only contact we have with one another. The people of both Bangladesh and the United States are connected by many fundamental beliefs: a belief in the rights of the individual, a faith in the rights of free speech, freedom of religion and free press, and a dedication to the fundamental principles of democracy. In today's world such partnership is to be applauded. America proudly stands with Bangladesh in a mutual dedication to the ideals of

freedom and liberty.

Today is a day for celebration and pride in the United States as well as in Bangladesh. We hope Bangladeshis will join Americans around the world in celebrating our friendship and achievements on July 4.



Harry K. Thomas Jr
Ambassador of the United States of America to Bangladesh

Celebrating 228 years of American Independence

4 July 2004



We the People



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University of New Castle, USA

709, Woodside Avenue, Wilmington, New Castle, Delaware, USA
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Best Wishes

228th INDEPENDENT DAY OF UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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HOUSE# 67, ROAD# 5/A, DHANMONDI, DHAKA-1209

TEL: 9670775, 9673376, 0189-248846, 0171-064092

EMAIL: info@unccbd.com

ADMISSION
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