

# A Step Back in Time

By Bobbie Sue Shelton-Lonas



Ennis Wallace and John Ross- Meeting of the Sons of the American Revolution - Lt. Andrew Crockett Chapter.

In only a few days, America will be celebrating Independence Day, commonly known as the Fourth of July celebrations. This holiday commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, declaring independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain. Today, the Fourth of July is associated with fireworks, parades, barbecues, picnics, family reunions and many other events. Not only should we celebrate on this day, we should also reflect on the American Revolution and its history that enable us to be able to celebrate.

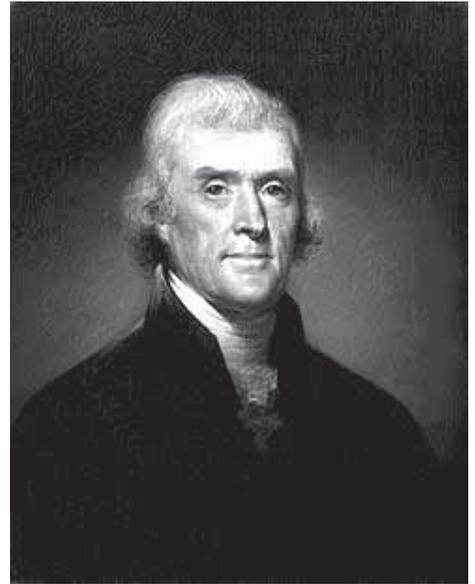
The United States Declaration of Independence is a statement adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, which announced that the thirteen American colonies, then at war with Great Britain, were now independent states, and no longer a part of the British Empire. Written primarily by Thomas Jefferson, the Declaration is a formal explanation of why Congress had voted on July 2 to declare independence from Great Britain, more than a year after the outbreak of the American

# Happy Birthday America

Revolutionary War. The birthday of the United States of America, Independence Day is celebrated on July 4th, the day the wording of the Declaration was approved by Congress.

Historians have long disputed whether Congress actually signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, even though Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and Benjamin Franklin all later wrote that they had signed it on that day.

The Declaration justified the independence of the United States by listing colonial grievances against King George III, and by asserting certain natural rights, including a right of revolution. According to history, having served its original purpose in announcing independence, the text of the Declaration was initially ignored after the American Revolution. Its stature grew over the years, particularly the second sentence, and an important statement of individual human rights: "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 sentence has been called one of the best-known sentences in the English language and the most potent and consequential words in American history.



Thomas Jefferson

In a remarkable coincidence, both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, the only signers of the Declaration of Independence, later to serve as Presidents of the United States, died on the same day. July 4th 1826, which was the 50th anniversary of the Declaration. Although, not a signer of the Declaration of Independence, James Monroe, the fifth President of the United States, died on July 4, 1831. Calvin Coolidge, the thirtieth President, was born on July 4, 1872, and thus was the only President to be born on Independence Day.

Some of the early observances of Independence Day:

1777, thirteen gunshots were fired, once at morning and again as evening fell, on July 4 in Bristol, Rhode Island. Philadelphia celebrated the first anniversary in a manner a modern American would find quite familiar; an official dinner for the Continental Congress, toasts, 13-gun salutes, speeches, prayers, music, parades, troop reviews and fireworks. Ships were decked with red, white and blue.

1778, General George Washington marked July 4 with a double ration of rum for his soldiers and an artillery salute. Across the Atlantic Ocean, Ambassadors John Adams and Benjamin Franklin held a dinner for their fellow Americans in Paris, France.

1779, July 4 fell on a Sunday. The holiday was celebrated on Monday, July 5th.

1781, the Massachusetts General Court became the first state legislature to recognize July 4 as a state celebration.

1791, the first recorded use of the name "Independence Day" occurred.

1870, the U. S. Congress made Independence Day an unpaid holiday for federal employees.

1938, Congress changed Independence Day to a paid federal holiday.

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The May meeting of the Lt. Andrew Crockett Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution of Franklin, included an interesting, educational and scenic trip to the Flat Creek area of Williamson County.

Members and guests gathered at the overlook at Pull-Tight Hill on Sunday afternoon, May 15th, 2011. Ennis Wallace and John Ross, who was dressed in Scottish attire, gave very informative talks on the history of the area which overlooks part of the Laban Hartley 1200-acre Revolutionary grant. The group toured the area which included Moses Steel Cemetery where six Revolutionary soldiers are buried. It is believed that there are sixteen total Revolutionary soldiers buried near Flat Creek and surrounding area.

The group then traveled to the Flat Creek Community Center where the Sons of the American Revolution conducted their meeting. The meeting was called to order by David L. Eagan, President. After the greetings and opening remarks, Ennis Wallace presented a very informative program on "Southeast Williamson County Patriots of the American Revolution".

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On July 4th 2011, fly your flags and celebrate the 235th birthday of America and remember we're able to celebrate this holiday due to the sacrifice of many who fought for our freedom, not only during the American Revolution War but all wars since. Happy Birthday America!

