

Fourth of July: Independence Day

Compiled by Marian G. Rogers, July 2005

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/pubs/tapthepower.htm>

"We... solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States."

A new nation was born with the adoption of the Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776) by the Second Continental Congress. The new nation's citizens were promised liberty, rights, and the pursuit of happiness; thus, a government was established to fulfill that promise and uphold its ideals. America continues to stand as a symbol of democracy and freedom to the rest of the world.

July 4th (Independence Day) was first observed by the rebelling Colonies, but was officially recognized as a holiday by the State of Massachusetts in 1781. The State of Wisconsin officially declared "the fourth day of July" a holiday by Chapter 58, Laws of 1861 (published March 8, 1861). Congress proclaimed Independence Day an official holiday in 1941.

Background

Basic Readings in U.S. Democracy / U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/demo.htm>

"The First Wisconsin 4th of July, Dateline: Madison, Wis., July 4, 1837" / Wisconsin Historical Society, *Odd Wisconsin Archive*.

An excerpt from the memoir of Rosaline Peck.

www.wisconsinhistory.org/odd/archives/000788.asp

"Making Sense of the Fourth of July" / Pauline Maier, Reprinted from *American Heritage*, August 7, 1997.

"On Independence Day, then, Americans celebrate not simply the birth of their nation or the legacy of a few great men. They also commemorate a Declaration of Independence that is their own collective work now and through time."

<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/symbols/sense.htm>

Citizenship; Patriotism

Citizenship, Building a World of Good: A Tool Kit For Schools and Communities / Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1998. (374.33/W7d)

The Great American Citizenship Quiz: Can You Pass Your Own Country's Citizenship Test? / Solomon M. Skolnick, 2005. (374.33/Sk5)

This book will help you discover how much you know about American history. The author has uncovered many stories and facts behind the answers. Includes full text of the Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, U.S. Constitution, Amendments, and Emancipation Proclamation.

Knowledge in a Nutshell on America: Including Little Known Facts on U.S. Presidents / Charles Reichblum, 2001. (353/R27)

This pocket-size book of anecdotes contains dozens of information bits "... about America... Presidential oddities, flag facts, stories behind our patriotic songs, and other Americana." — *back cover*.

"Let Us Rejoice as Human Beings" / Frances Wright, *Essential Speeches*, 2003. (346.11/W93) "Presents a speech by social activist Frances Wright, a Scottish immigrant to America, given at New Harmony, Indiana on Independence Day, July 4, 1828. Her comments on the significance of American independence; Reflections on the meaning of the words 'patriot' and 'patriotism'; Hope for the independence of all mankind." — *abstract*.

How to locate online: www.badgerlink.net > Magazines and Journals (EBSCOhost Web) > MasterFile Premier >

Find: [in text box, type] "*let us rejoice as human beings*" > Search

A Lot to be Thankful For: What Parents Want Children to Learn About America / a report from Public Agenda by Steve Farkas and Jean Johnson, 1998. (374.33/P96)

"Patriotism in America: Is Love of Country Still Strong?" / Congressional Quarterly, Inc., *CQ Researcher*, June 25, 1999. (346.11/C762) Patriotism issues: is it declining, should schools try to instill it, and should the media promote it? Includes key events, quotations, and a bibliography.

Historic Documents

About America: The Constitution of the United States of America with Explanatory Notes / U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/constitution/>

The Articles of Confederation: An Interpretation of the Social-Constitutional History of the American Revolution, 1774-1781 / Merrill Jensen, 1940, 1959. (342.2/J45) This, the third printing, is "... an account of the writing and ratification of the first constitution of the United States..." — *preface*.

The Charters of Freedom: "A New World is At Hand" / U.S. National Archives & Records Administration. Digital images of historic documents and explanatory text. www.archives.gov/national_archives_experience/charters/charters.html

Fourth of July: Independence Day Continued

Documents Illustrative of the Formation of the Union of the American States / U.S. Library of Congress, Legislative Reference Service, 1927. (342.2/X12) A large collection of relevant materials and documents on the origin and development of our constitutional history.

The Federalist Papers: A Collection of Essays Written in Support of the Constitution of the United States / selected and edited by Roy P. Fairfield, 1966, 2nd edition. (342.2/F16)

Eighty-five essays written (October 1787-May 1788) by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay to garner support for the Constitution. The papers are available online at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html>

“The Nation Commemorates Its Bicentennial Anniversary: A Brief Review of the Basic Principles Underlying the Government of the United States of America” / Congressional Digest Corporation, *Congressional Digest*, January 1976. (389.72/C761) This special issue was published on the occasion of the nation’s bicentennial. In addition to the verbatim text of founding documents, this publication contains insight into the nature and experiences of George Washington. Includes a dateline chronology of his career and the text of his farewell address.

The Story of the Constitution / Sol Bloom, 1937, 1986 (342.2/X2) Reissued in 1986 in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the Constitution.

The Nation’s Flag

“Memorial Day and Flag Day” / Marian G. Rogers, Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, *Tap The Power*, May 2005. (LRB/t) (noncirculating) The nation’s flag plays a large part in July 4 celebrations. This bibliography presents print and electronic resources pertaining to the history of the flag and of Flag Day. www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/pubs/ttp/ttp-05-2005.html

The New Constellation: The Story of America As Told Through Its Flags, Which Are the Symbols of Its Civil, Economic, and Religious Freedom / National Flag Foundation, 1977. (342.39/N21a) Published in commemoration of the flag’s 200th anniversary (June 14th, 1977), this publication relates the history of the United States through a description of its various flags from the arrival of the first settlers through the Revolution.

Our Flag / U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, 2003. (H. doc./108th Congress, 1st session; 108-97) (342.39/X7)

A recent Congressional publication about the history of the nation’s flag and the practices and observances set for its display. www.senate.gov/reference/resources/pdf/ourflag.pdf

Quotations

Facts For Features: Fourth of July 2002 / U.S. Census Bureau. Includes quotes and sound bites.

www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2002/cb02ff10.html

A Patriot’s Handbook: Songs, Poems, Stories, and Speeches Celebrating the Land We Love / selected and introduced by Caroline Kennedy, 2003. (Ref./808.8/K38) (noncirculating) An anthology of patriotic literature that tells the story of America – and why this country is a symbol of freedom.

Power Quotes: 4,000 Trenchant Soundbites on Leadership & Liberty, Treason & Triumph, Sacrifice & Scandal, Risk & Rebellion, Weakness & War, and Other Affaires Politiques / Daniel B. Baker, 1992. (Ref./808.8/B17) (noncirculating)

Voices of Democracy: A Handbook for Speakers, Teachers, and Writers / Compiled by Bernard Molohon, 1941. (U.S. Office of Education, Bulletin 1941, no. 8) (Ref./808.8/X3) (noncirculating) Quaint booklet which “... brings together memorable expressions on liberty and democracy by philosophers, statesmen, and writers of all times. It also presents in brief story form memorable episodes in the never-ending struggle for freedom. The selected references suggest sources of additional material on these subjects.” — page v.

Related Web Sites

www.civiced.org/index.php – Center for Civic Education. The Center’s mission is to promote responsible citizenry committed to democratic principles with such programs as: “We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution” and “We the People: Project Citizen”.

www.firstgov.gov/Topics/Independence_Day.shtml – Fourth of July is Independence day, FirstGov.gov

<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/holidays/july4/> – July 4: Celebrating Independence Day in the United States, U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs.

www.thenationalanthemproject.org/ – National Anthem Project; The National Association for Music Education.

www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/ – Presidents of the United States, The White House. Includes color images; biographical text is from *The Presidents of the United States of America* written by Frank Freidel and Hugh S. Sidey.

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/jul04.html> – Today in History : July 4, The Library of Congress American Memory.

www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/sspw/citizen.html – Wisconsin Citizenship Initiative; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.
