

Community Comment – July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
By Jon Sapper  
Why Does Celebrating the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Matter?

Why does celebrating the 4<sup>th</sup> of July matter? After 240 years, what difference does it make? We are a completely different country now.

The Second Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776 following their vote to approve a resolution of independence on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, both future Presidents, were signers to the Declaration and knew that this act might be their death sentence to separate from the British rule. But, the Colonists had enough of this dictatorial pressure and said enough is enough.

They knew Great Britain would not take it lying down and expected the British army to invade this new country. When that did happen, the Colonists were essentially defenseless. They didn't have enough people to put up much of a fight, or arms to stand up against the British army, much less defeat them. Yet, our Founding Fathers signed this Declaration and said what would be in today's jargon, "Bring it on!" As Mr. Boone said, quote, "Against all odds, and even against reason, the Declaration of Independence told the world that these united colonies are, and of right, ought to be free and independent states." End quote. They wanted to be free, to make their own decisions, to govern themselves and not be burdened by an obtrusive, overpowering bureaucracy from far away.

In Philadelphia, the ceremony began with a public reading of the Declaration of Independence followed by the ringing of the Liberty Bell in what is now called Independence Hall. The Coat of Arms of the King of England was taken down. A new nation was born.

John Adams thought that Americans should henceforth celebrate. He wrote a letter to his wife saying, "It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God, Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shew, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forevermore."

Two hundred and forty years later we still heed the words of John Adams. We have fireworks, parades, barbeques, fairs, picnics, concerts, baseball games and yes, even political speeches and ceremonies. Public and private coming together to celebrate the history, traditions, sacrifices and commitments those Founding Fathers made many years ago.

That's why, after 240 years, celebrating the 4<sup>th</sup> of July still matters.

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.