



The Commercial Classroom: Independence Day

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This column is offered to help educate agents new to commercial and investment brokerage and serve as a review of basics for existing practitioners.

Independence Day

Independence Day, July 4th – Freedom!

Then after the Declaration of Independence, came the battle to defend and keep our freedom. Freedom has a price.

We are Independent Contractors – free to work at our own pace. With this freedom, and desire for success, comes responsibility and accountability to ourselves. The cost of our freedom is hard work, determination and perseverance. We must work on building our business every day to remain Independent and free!

As we approach the July 4th Holiday, let us reflect upon some of the history of our young Independent Country starting in 1776.

Facts about the Holiday:

The major objection to being ruled by Britain was taxation without representation. The colonists had no say in the decisions of English Parliament.

In May, 1776, after nearly a year of trying to resolve their differences with England, the colonies sent delegates to the Second Continental Congress. Finally, in June, admitting that their efforts were hopeless; a committee was formed to compose the formal Declaration of Independence. Headed by Thomas Jefferson, the committee also included John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Philip Livingston and Roger Sherman. On June 28, 1776, Thomas Jefferson presented the first draft of the declaration to Congress.

Betsy Ross, according to legend, sewed the first American flag in May or June 1776, as commissioned by the Congressional Committee.

The 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence did not sign at the same time, nor did they sign on July 4, 1776. The official event occurred on August 2, 1776, when 50 men signed it.

The names of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were withheld from the public for more

than six months to protect the signers. If independence had not been achieved, the treasonable act of the signers would have, by law, resulted in their deaths.

Thomas McKean was the last to sign in January, 1777.

In America, during the pre-Revolutionary years, colonists would hold annual celebration in honor of the king's birthday. In contrast, after 1776, colonist would celebrate independence by holding mock funerals for King George III, to symbolize the end of the monarchy's hold on America's liberty. Early Independence day festivities also included: concerts, bonfire, parades, and firing of cannons.

Independence Day was first celebrated in Philadelphia on July 8, 1776 while Congress was still occupied with the ongoing war.

The Liberty Bell sounded from the tower of Independence Hall on July 8, 1776, summoning citizens to gather for the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence by Colonel John Nixon.

June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress, looking to promote national pride and unity, adopted the national flag. "Resolved: that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

George Washington issued double rations of rum to all his soldiers to mark the anniversary of independence in 1778.

In 1781, several months before the key American victory at Yorktown, Massachusetts became the first state to make July 4th an official state holiday.

The word patriotism comes from the Latin patria, which means homeland or fatherland.

The first public Fourth of July event at the White House occurred in 1804.

Before cars ruled the roadway, the Fourth of July was traditionally the most miserable day of the year for horses, tormented by all the noise and by the boys and girls who threw firecrackers at them.

The first Independence Day celebration west of the Mississippi occurred at Independence Creek and was celebrated by Lewis and Clark in 1805.

The origin of Uncle Sam probably began in 1812, when Samuel Wilson was a meat packer who provided meat to the US Army. The meat shipments were stamped with the initials U.S. Someone joked that the initials stood for "Uncle Sam". This joke eventually led to the idea of Uncle Sam symbolizing the United States government.

On June 24, 1826, Thomas Jefferson sent a letter to Roger C. Weightman, declining an invitation to

come to Washington, D.C. to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. It was the last letter that Jefferson, who was gravely ill, ever wrote.

Three Presidents died on Independence Day, both Thomas Jefferson and John Adams died on July 4, 1826. President James Monroe died on July 4th, 1831.

Independence Day acquired its unofficial theme song on July 4, 1897, at the Manhattan Beach Music Hall on the eastern end of Coney Island. On that Sunday afternoon, sometime after 4 p.m., John Philip Sousa lifted his baton and cued his band to launch into their latest hit, "The Stars and Stripes Forever." Sousa had not composed it specifically for the holiday, but it has been a marching-band staple on every Fourth of July since 1897.

In 1941, Congress declared 4th of July a federal legal holiday. It is one of the few federal holidays that have not been moved to the nearest Friday or Monday.

Why fireworks on the Fourth of July? Fireworks have been used to celebrate special occasions for sometime, even before the American Revolution. Our founding father's even believed in celebrating our independence with fireworks. In a famous letter John Adams wrote to his wife, he states how the holiday deserves to be celebrated with "illuminations" or fireworks. "The day will be most memorable in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, bonfires and illuminations (fireworks) from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more."

Today, there are over 155 million Hot Dogs consumed on July 4th ; it is the largest day of the year for beer consumption (68 million cases) and over \$600 million is spent on fireworks.

Enjoy your summer!

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