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NEWSLETTER

The 250th Anniversary of America

We Proudly Celebrate this Anniversary- Warts and All©

Evelyn E. Zuckerman, Editor **Summer 2026** **Vol. 25** **Number 3**

This American 250th Anniversary Issue:

In this Summer 2026 NVL Newsletter, as we celebrate America's 250 Anniversary, I Dr. William D. Hardy, Jr., know that I am one of the luckiest Americans in the world, because I was born in America, Caucasian, male, from second generation immigrants from Scotland and France, in New Jersey, just a few months after the beginning of the Second World War. As I write this Newsletter on July 4th 2026, I have lived 86 years, 3 months and 5 days or 34.5% of the time that America has existed. After the war I saw my 3 uncles return alive and have productive lives. I remember celebrating V-E day for the end of the war in my neighborhood banging pots and pans for hours. I remember getting the polio vaccine and being able to again go to swimming pools. Although my family probably would not have been able to send me to college, I was lucky enough to throw a football well and our Teaneck High School team won our league championship. This enabled me to get a full football scholarship to The George Washington University and then on to the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. I have greatly enjoyed my veterinary career for the past 60 years.

Only in America!

The 13 British Colonies:

In the 1500-1700s, many western European countries, the British, Dutch, Spanish, Norwegians and others, with strong navies, established colonies in many undeveloped parts of the western world.



The 13 British colonies were on the east coast which meant that our indigenous peoples were in the lands to the west.



Flag of British America (1707–1775)



Flag of the United Colonies (1775–1777)

The British saw the rich fertile areas of America, the Caribbean isles and Central and South America as desirable sites for colonies. The British managed their American colonies with no local governmental representation, and excessive taxes of all kinds. In 1625 the population of the colonies was 1,980 and grew to 2,400,000 by 1775[1]. By 1774 the ethnic composition was 48.7% English, 20% African, 7.8% Scots-Irish, 6.9% German, and 6.6% Scottish. The colonies became increasingly divided between Patriots, opposed to British rule, and Loyalists who supported Britain.

The single person most identified as a Founding Father of the United States is George Washington, commanding general in the American Revolution and the nation's first president. Other notable important patriots are Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Dr. Benjamin Rush. Most of the Founding Fathers had ancestry traceable back to England.

After the Declaration of Independence, the colonies sent a letter to King George III declaring their independence which began the Revolutionary war.[1] We defeated the British, chiefly with the help of France. Even that early in our existence, we saw the importance of having common defense alliances associated with Europe.

Thus, America began by the 13 British Colonies, breaking away from the tyranny of the British Crown by declaring themselves independent (Declaration of Independence), and by winning a vicious war (The Revolutionary War).[2] Some of the most famous 35 words ever written were in the Declaration of Independence:[1] **"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."**

The Declaration of Independence is the founding document of the United States. On July 4, 1776, it was adopted unanimously by the Second Continental Congress, who were convened at the Pennsylvania State House, later renamed Independence Hall, in Philadelphia. The delegates became known as the nation's Founding Fathers. The Declaration explained why the colonies regarded themselves as sovereign states, no longer subject to British colonial rule, mainly due to the imposition of various British taxes without representation. After losing the American colonies, Britian still had control of Canada, Newfoundland, Bermuda, Jamaica, Bahamas, Nova Scotia and the islands in the West Indies.



Independence Hall- Philadelphia

By Captain Albert E. Theberge, NOAA Corps (ret.) - NOAA Photo Library: amer0024, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17995457

The Capital was established temporarily in Philadelphia at that time but moved to the permanent Capital in Washington, DC in November 1800 after the government buildings had been constructed.

The Constitution:

Those wishing to develop a US Constitution wanted a republic, a nation without hereditary or unelected rulers, with all power derived from the people in frequent elections. The writing of the American Constitution, in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, was messy as is usual in democracies but it has guided us under laws since our inception. The Constitution is a Federal Presidential Republic system with three branches 1) Chambers- Bicameral (House of Representatives and Senate), 2) Executive- President, and 3) Judiciary (Supreme, Circuit, and District Courts. A Federation- yes, an Electoral College- yes, and was authored by the Philadelphia Confederation. The principles are: 1) Separation of Powers, 2) Individual Rights, 3) Rule of Law, 4) Federalism, 5) Republicanism, 6) Equal Footing, and 7) Tiers of Scrutiny. The branches of government are: Legislative, Executive, Judicial, Sate government and Federal Government.[2]



Our Constitution has become one of the most circulated and influential documents in history. Significantly, unlike in many other countries, it established a separation of church and state. There have been 27 amendments to the Constitution and the first 10 are the Bill of Rights.

The Bill of Rights:

The Constitution: 1st 10 Amendments:

First Amendment: Protects freedoms of speech, religion, press, assembly, and petition.
Second Amendment: Affirms the right to keep and bear arms.
Third Amendment: Prohibits the quartering of soldiers in private homes without consent.
Fourth Amendment: Protects against unreasonable searches and seizures; requires warrants to be judicially sanctioned.
Fifth Amendment: Ensures the right to due process, protects against self-incrimination and double jeopardy.
Sixth Amendment: Guarantees the right to a fair and speedy trial, an impartial jury, and legal counsel.
Seventh Amendment: Preserves the right to a jury trial in civil cases.
Eighth Amendment: Prohibits excessive bail, fines, and cruel and unusual punishment.
Ninth Amendment: Asserts that the enumeration of certain rights in the Constitution does not deny or disparage others retained by the people.
Tenth Amendment: Affirms that powers not delegated to the federal government are reserved for the states or the people.

Problems in the Colonies:

Slavery, women's rights, and diseases, were problems in the colonies.

Slavery: Slavery was legal in the colonies and was important to the export economies of the southern colonies for agricultural labor in the tobacco and cotton fields. The northern colonies tended to use slaves more as servants and farm workers and at the time of independence from Britain the northern colonies were more sympathetic to emancipation of the slaves than the southern colonies. The Atlantic slave trade brought about 12 million African slaves, 2% to the colonies and the rest to other British North American colonies.

The Founding Fathers were divided on the issue of slavery and accommodated it in the colonies. In fact, 41 of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were slave owners. Jefferson owned 600 slaves but in his first writing of the Declaration he inserted that slavery would not be allowed. In the second version, after much discussion this was removed. Washington and Franklin emancipated their slaves as did others. It took an accommodation to the southern colonies to get them to agree to give up their slaves by the three-fifths clause which gave the southern colonies 3/5th of a person for each slave as representation for representatives in the national legislature, the US Congress and, more importantly for the electoral college. The 13th Amendment, ratified in 1865, abolished slavery in the country.

The taking of the indigenous people's lands and our system of slavery were low points for our country but our participation in 2 world wars saved much of the world, from tyrannical countries. We have also conducted less than admiral wars during our history.

Women's Rights: Women were a minority of the colonist's population overall, even though there was no central census among all the colonies. Unmarried women had the same level of rights as single men. Single women could own property, enter contracts, file lawsuits or be subjected to them and make wills. Widows and spinsters had these abilities as well. However, when a woman married under the common law system, they needed their husband's permission to make legal decisions. Although women could not hold office they could legally vote in some states.

It took the feisty suffragist, Susan B. Anthony, to cleverly ask the question on November 5, 1872, "are women persons?" after she illegally cast a vote in a Rochester, NY election. She brought attention to the question women had, does 'all men are created equal' mean everyone?' She was found guilty of that crime, but her actions led to the suffragists eventually getting the vote. The ratification of the 19th Amendment, in 1920, mainly enfranchised white women. Black, indigenous and immigrant women would have to wait decades for that privilege with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. It took America a long time to do the right thing!

Diseases: The diseases that afflicted the early immigrant settlers were a dangerous threat to life. Some of the diseases were new, and treatments were ineffective. Malaria was deadly to many, especially in the Southern colonies. Over one-fourth of the newly arrived Anglican missionaries died within five years in the Carolinas. Mortality was high for infants and small children, especially from smallpox, yellow fever, diphtheria, and malaria. Most sick people went to local healers who used folk remedies. One common treatment was bloodletting since there was no knowledge about germs and infections in the medical practitioners. There was little government control, regulation of medical care, or attention to public health.

The concept of preventing smallpox by variolation was introduced into Colonial America in the early 18th century, by a slave named Onesimus as a form of vaccination by scarifying the skin with smallpox lesions. He introduced his enslaver, Puritan clergyman Cotton Mather, to the principle and procedure of variolation and brought it to Boston. The method spread to other colonies and helped to significantly reduce the cases of smallpox. For this, Onesimus was recognized as one of the top 100 Bostonians of all time. By the 18th century, colonial physicians, following the models in England and Scotland, introduced modern medicine and made some advances in vaccination.

Freedoms in the Colonies:

Religion: Early Americans in all sections of the colonies lived where religion formed a key component of their lives. Protestantism was the predominant religious affiliation in the Thirteen Colonies. There were also a few Catholics in Maryland, as well as Jews but many colonists had no religious affiliations. The Church of England was officially established in most of the South. The Puritan religion was the established religious affiliation in Massachusetts and Connecticut colonies.

Amendments to the Constitution: The fact that we Americans can amend our Constitution is an important aspect as to why America is GREAT, and the envy of the world. Our young country, seeing our mistakes, has the obligation and opportunity to revise, and has been our steadfast inheritance, a bequest of the Constitution, with its famous invocation of "a more perfect union," shows us that we are continuously a work in progress, ever evolving.[3]

Higher Education in the Colonies:

Higher education was available for young men in the northern Colonies, but most students were aspiring Protestant ministers. Nine institutions of higher education were chartered during the colonial era. These colleges, known collectively as the colonial colleges, were New College (**Harvard**), the College of William & Mary, Yale College (**Yale**), the College of New Jersey (**Princeton**), King's College (**Columbia**), the College of Philadelphia (**University of Pennsylvania**), the College of Rhode Island (**Brown**), Queen's College (Rutgers) and **Dartmouth College**. The College of William & Mary and Queen's College later became public institutions, while the other institutions account for seven of the eight private Ivy League universities which still exist.

Except for the College of William and Mary, these institutions were all located in the northern New England and the Middle Colonies. The southern colonies felt that the family had the responsibility of educating their children, copying the common belief in Europe.

The Early Veterinary Schools:

In 1776, General George Washington directed that all Cavalry have farrier support. The late 19th century also marked a tragic event that impacted the course of veterinary medicine in the U.S. In 1872, an outbreak of equine influenza killed up to 554,000 horses and ponies as well as up to hundreds of thousands of mules and donkeys in North America. This was a disaster since horses were used in agriculture, industry and transportation. In 1807, The earliest publicly funded veterinary colleges were Iowa State in 1879 and the University of Pennsylvania in 1883. Dr. Bejamin Rush spoke to the medical students at the University of Pennsylvania on "*The Duty and Advantages of Studying the Disease of Domestic Animals and Remedies Proper to Remove Them*." Dr. Rush also signed the Declaration of Independence. There are presently 33 accredited veterinary schools in the United States.[4]

Make America Great Again:

The electoral slogan "Make America Great Again" is not new for American politics and the use by the current administration is not new. In fact, it was first used by another Republican President, Ronald Reagan, some 45 years ago followed again by a Democratic President, Bill Clinton 33 years ago.

Editorial Comment:

Benjamin Franklin had the largest footprint in the early evolution of America. He helped to write the Declaration of Independence, the 2 versions of the Constitution, was a politician, author, publisher, scientist, helped to discover electricity with the kite and key in a lightning storm experiment and founded the University of Pennsylvania. Since he understood our desire to establish the perfect country, he was purported to say, "Yes a Republic, if you can keep it!"

LET'S HOPE WE CAN!

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