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Civil War Soldiers who became President of the United States

The American Civil War tore the country apart, and transformed young men from students, farmers, congressmen, etc. to soldiers. Men took up arms and fought for the rights of their land, and the rights of other human beings. Women took care of the home, and served as nurses. Some would go to the battlefields and care for the dying. This tumultuous time in our nation's history lasted for four long years, and left over 700,000

Americans dead. Many emerged from the battlefields as hardened veterans, ready to continue serving their country any way they could. Seven men served their country and President Lincoln in the battlefields, or in other positions during the war. They used the hard earned knowledge from the battlefield to lead the once-again whole United States of America out of the 19th century and into the 20th century.

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.
A DECLARATION
BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
“The Great Anniversary
Festival”

United States Independence

From Philadelphia, on July 3, 1776, John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail about the approval of a resolution of independence the previous day. The following is an excerpt from that letter:



John and Abigail Adams, 1766 (Mass. Historical Society)

“The Second Day of July 1776, will be the most memorable Epocha, 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 commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more.

You will think me transported with Enthusiasm but I am not. -- I am well aware of the Toil and Blood and Treasure, that it will cost Us to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States. -- Yet through all the Gloom I can see the Rays of ravishing Light and Glory. I can see that the End is more than worth all the Means.”

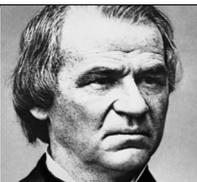
Today, we celebrate our Independence on the 4th of July— the day that the Continental Congress publicly announced the Declaration of Independence, not on the 2nd, when it was approved.

The 16th President Abraham Lincoln held the position Commander-In-Chief throughout the Civil War. The war began in 1861 at the beginning of his first term, and ended in 1865, after his assassination



James Garfield, 20
organized 42nd Ohio Infantry as Lieutenant Colonel; Chief of Staff under Major General Rosecrans; retired as Major General

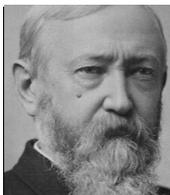
Andrew Johnson, 17
Military Governor of Tenn., rank Brigadier General, appointed by Lincoln



Chester Arthur, 21
Engineer-in-Chief, rank of Quartermaster General in the New York Volunteers; promoted to Brigadier General

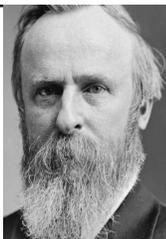


Ulysses Grant, 18
West Point graduate; 21st Illinois Infantry; rank Colonel; rose through the war to Lieutenant General; General-in-Chief of the Armies of the U.S.

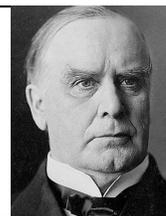


Benjamin Harrison, 23
70th Indiana Infantry Regiment; rank Second Lieutenant; retired as Brigadier General

Rutherford Hayes, 19
Ohio 23rd Volunteers, fought as a Colonel; Brigadier General after Cedar Creek injuries, Brevetted Major General for distinguished services



William McKinley, 25
Ohio 23rd Volunteers; rank Second Lieutenant; served on staff of Colonel Hayes; retired as a Brevet Major



Presidential pictures from Whitehouse.gov

**Frederick Douglass’
1852 Fourth of July Speech**

“This, for the purpose of this celebration, is the 4th of July. It is the birthday of your National Independence, and of your political freedom... it carries your minds back to the day, and the act of your great deliverance.”



Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) was born a slave in Maryland, and escaped to freedom in New York while in his twenties. He was a great orator, and fought for the end of slavery and for equal citizenship. (*nps.gov*)

Frederick Douglass delivered a fiery speech on July 5, 1852,

commemorating the signing of the Declaration of Independence 76 years earlier. The speech was given to an audience of New York abolitionists in Rochester. In his speech, Douglass lauded the founding fathers and those who fought for freedom from tyranny and oppression. Still, he reminded the audience that there were millions in bondage who had not yet achieved the freedoms that were being celebrated on that day.

“...Fellow-citizens; above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are, to-day, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them...”

Douglass’ speech was an exposition of how far the country had come in its relatively short life, and how far it had to go to be a truly ‘free’ county.

“Allow me to say, in conclusion, notwithstanding the dark picture I have this day presented of the state of the nation, I do not despair of this country. ... I, therefore, leave off where I began, with hope.”

Three of Five Founding Father Presidents died on July 4th (and one modern President was born)

John Adams, 2nd President, and Thomas Jefferson, 3rd President, both died on July 4, 1826, the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, which they had signed.

Five years later, James Monroe, 5th President, passed away in New York City. Newspapers remarked that it was an interesting coincidence to have three former presidents die on the same day.

The 30th President, Calvin Coolidge, was born on July 4, 1872, the only president (so far) to be born on Independence Day.

Millard Fillmore and his Union Continentals

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, former President Millard Fillmore (1800-1874) was supportive of the Union and helped his hometown of Buffalo, New York to organize enlistments and financing drives to support the soldiers.

Fillmore also became the new Captain of the Buffalo City Guards, when the young men in the first guard enlisted. Fillmore’s guard was comprised of retired military officers who called themselves the “Union Continentals.” They performed drills in the city and trained to defend Buffalo from a Confederate attack. In 1865, the Union Continentals also guarded Lincoln’s funeral train while it went through Buffalo.

Millard Fillmore supported the Union, but many people were angry with his positions in regard to President Johnson’s Reconstruction policies, and the Compromise of 1850 (which included the Fugitive Slave Act).



Former President, Captain Millard Fillmore, taken 1862. (*Buffalo Historical Society*)

The Story of “Little Trot” Garfield

Eliza Arabella Garfield, born July 3, 1860, was James and Lucretia Garfield’s first child. Named after her grandmothers, little Eliza was nicknamed “Little Trot” after Betsey Trotwood, a character in Charles Dickens’ *David Copperfield*.

Eliza’s father, James A. Garfield, had been elected to the Ohio state senate a year before she was born, and enlisted in the Union Army a month after her first birthday. While her father was away she lived with her mother in Hiram, Ohio. Her father would always make sure to add little notes to her in his letters to her mother. He made sure to keep up with everything in her life, while he was away.

One letter, written to her mother from Winchester, Tennessee, dated August 1, 1863 included:

“Dear little Trot, how much I long to see the little cog[g]er! Kiss her for me and tell her the ‘webbels haven’t hurt papa yet.’ ”

Sadly, little Eliza fell ill with diphtheria and passed away in the evening of December 1, 1863, her father and mother by her side.

She was buried in Hiram, Ohio, with her gravestone reading “Our Little Girl.”



A portrait of Little Trot hangs next to her parents bed in the Winter Bedroom at James A. Garfield NHS.

For more information about James A. Garfield NHS: www.nps.gov/jaga

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