

THE CAMBRIA SOMERSET PRO-LIFE MESSENGER

Citizens Concerned for Human Life JULY 2026 Volume 1 Issue 2

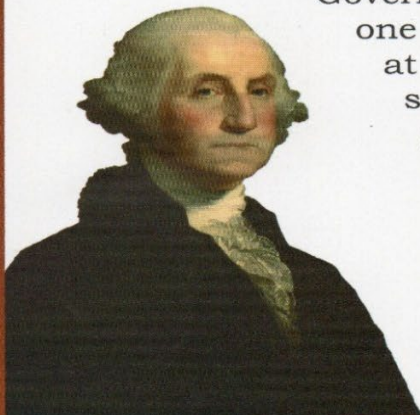


HAPPY 250th
ANNIVERSARY!
U S A

Washington's Prayer for America

JUNE 8, 1783

I now make it my earnest prayer, that God would have the United States in His holy protection, that He would incline the hearts of the Citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to Government, to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for their brethren who have served in the Field, and finally, that He would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all, to do Justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that Charity, humility and pacific temper of mind, which were the Characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed Religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy Nation. Amen.



A Sincere Prayer of George Washington



O eternal and everlasting God, I presume to present myself this morning before thy Divine majesty, beseeching thee to accept of my humble and hearty thanks, that it hath pleased thy great goodness to keep and preserve me the night past from all the dangers poor mortals are subject to, and has given me sweet and pleasant sleep, whereby I find my body refreshed and comforted for performing the duties of this day, in which I beseech thee to defend me from all perils of body and soul.

Direct my thoughts, words and work. Wash away my sins in the immaculate blood of the Lamb, and purge my heart by the Holy Spirit, from the dross of my natural corruption, that I may with more freedom of mind and liberty of will serve thee, the everlasting God, in righteousness and holiness this day, and all the days of my life.

*Increase my faith in the sweet promises of the Gospel. Give me repentance from dead works. Pardon my wanderings, and direct my thoughts unto thyself, the God of my salvation. Teach me how to live in thy fear, labor in thy service, and ever to run in the ways of thy commandments. Make me always watchful over my heart, that neither the terrors of conscience, the loathing of holy duties, the love of sin, nor an unwillingness to depart this life, may cast me into a spiritual slumber. But daily frame me more and more into the likeness of thy son Jesus Christ, that living in thy fear, and dying in thy favor, I may in thy appointed time attain the resurrection of the just unto eternal life. Bless my family, friends and kindred, unite us all in praising and glorifying thee in all our works begun, continued, and ended, when we shall come to make our last account before thee blessed Saviour, who hath taught us to pray,
Our Father.*

Our Annual Luncheon has SPRUNG into SPRING!

by Dennis Ryniak

On Saturday afternoon, April 18th, 2026, the Citizens Concerned for Human Life, Cambria-Somerset Chapter, held their Annual Membership Appreciation Luncheon. The event was at the St. Michael Church Hall in St. Michael, PA.

This year we were once again honored to host a Presentation developed by the Altoona- Johnstown Diocese Respect Life Committee. The Presentation was made by Jerry Murray, who also serves as chairman of the Committee. I can honestly say that Mr. Murray was extremely well received by everyone present. I believe that they enjoyed having him there as much as he enjoyed being there. He later told me that he really enjoyed the dialogue with the group. There were a lot of questions and open discussions. And obviously, this was proven to be a very productive event.

The Respect Life Committee has a mission to promote pregnancy support and provide education to the faithful. The Abortion Presentation covers five key components and lasts about 50 minutes. This includes a PowerPoint presentation with pictures and video. This is ideal for Christian and Parochial High Schools, Campus Ministries, churches and service groups. And has already been presented to protestant denominations in the area. Whether Catholic or Protestant, we should all agree on the need to provide pregnancy support. Everyone should consider supporting a pregnancy center that provides alternatives to abortion. Now is the time to begin your work and defend the Pre-born Children!

Please consider planning to schedule a Pro-Life Presentation at your School, Church, Organization or Religious Education Program, **Today!**

CALL (814) 207-9110 OR USE THE NEW WEBSITE:

<https://dajprolife.org>

You can also find additional information on our Website:

<https://prolifecambriasomerset.org>

It may be possible to reverse the abortion pill if you act quickly to make the hotline call now! *You can change your mind.* There is help available even after you've taken the first abortion pill.

Make the call now! YOU WON'T REGRET IT.

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by a live person 24/7! 1-877-558-0333

www.AbortionPillReversal.com

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THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Official acts that the colonists considered infringements upon their rights had previously led to the Stamp Act Congress in 1765 and to the First Continental Congress in 1774. Although, they were predominantly conservative assemblies they did not pursue nor demand independence. The only progress made by the First Continental Congress literally came to nothing and as a result discontent grew. The armed skirmishes at Lexington and Concord in 1775, quickly developed into the American Revolution. It was not until the Second Continental Congress of Philadelphia when they followed the leadership of John Hancock, John Adams, and Samuel Adams, that they demanded independence.

Following the campaign of 1775 at Boston, which had been highly satisfactory to the Americans, the success of the last petition from Congress to the king was the last hope of a reconciliation. In May of 1776, intelligence was received that the King of England with the support of Parliament, was determined to subdue the “American Rebels” because they were carrying on a rebellious war for the establishment of an independent empire. The king’s measures included prohibiting all commerce with the colonies, and sending forty-two thousand soldiers over to subjugate America; of these, twenty-five thousand were to be English, and seventeen thousand Hessian mercenaries that were hired to fight on behalf of the king. The employment of these foreign mercenaries was a great offense to the Americans and only proved to strengthen the disposition to declare independence.

A measure was brought forward on the 7th of June, 1776, by Richard Henry Lee, one of the delegates from Virginia. He submitted a resolution that declared the colonies independent.

LEE RESOLUTION

June 7, 1776

Resolved, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britian is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.

That it is expedient forthwith to take the most effectual measures for forming foreign Alliances.

That a plan of confederation be prepared and transmitted to the respective Colonies for their consideration and approbation.

On the 8th, the resolution was debated in committee of the whole house, and adopted on the 10th by a bare majority. It was postponed in the house until the 1st of July, so that greater unanimity could be obtained among the members. During this interval, measures were taken to procure the assent of all the colonies. On the appointed day, all assented to the measure except Pennsylvania and Delaware. The committee whom were instructed to prepare a declaration of independence, appointed as a sub-committee, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Although, the original draft made by Jefferson was reported by the committee to the house without alteration; it was in the house where several amendments were made before it would receive the sanction of Congress. In radio celebrity Paul Harvey’s commentary on the subject, he stated, “Jefferson finished a draft of the document in seventeen days. Congress adopted it in July. And so much is familiar history.” But however, even Paul Harvey was apparently unaware of “the rest of the story.”

Jefferson’s little known “original rough draft” shows that the 33 year-old desired wording in which he condemned slavery as evil. It is important to note that, like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson was a slaveowner, initially by inheritance and later by both purchase and marriage. Both Washington and Jefferson longed to get clear of the ownership of slaves. And it was Jefferson who longed to find a way to end what he called the “moral depravity” of slavery throughout the entire land in which the American colonists lived. A land that they were now at war to control. In accusing King George III of tyrannical actions, including his consistent vetoing of the colonies’ attempted anti-slavery laws, Jefferson wrote a 168-word section in which he strongly condemned slavery as evil. The Declaration’s “Committee of Five” approved it, but the full Congress voted to delete it. Sadly however, in order to secure unanimous approval by all of the thirteen colonies, those 168 potent words had to be removed. The “Committee of Five,” consisted of John Adams, Roger Sherman, Benjamin Franklin, Robert R. Livingston and Thomas Jefferson who was the chief writer. (cont. on pg. 12)

“If we are to guard against ignorance and remain free, it is the responsibility of every American to be informed.”

Thomas Jefferson

George Washington: A Man of Faith

Dennis Ryniak

Upon proclamation to the regiments that hostilities had ceased, Washington ordered that all chaplains were to publicly “render thanks to almighty God for all his mercies.” He personally thanked God and in one such statement, the general said, “I attribute all glory to that Supreme Being...” Washington believed that the Being whom he had often and respectfully called divine Providence was directing the formation of the new country. He and many in his era commonly addressed God with reverence by using titles such as: Divine Author, Grand Architect, All-wise Creator, and the Almighty and Merciful Sovereign of the Universe. George Washington consistently honored and gave glory to that one Being. The One whom prayers had been lifted for his merciful guidance and sustaining strength for America.

With the war ended, the army was carefully disbanded and soldiers of all ranks returned to their towns and homes to recover and rebuild. On December 23, 1783, Washington resigned as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army by turning in his commission to Congress. Once again, he returned to the rolling fields of his beloved Mount Vernon. Even as he worked to rebuild his farms, he would soon help knit the US Constitution. And help create a system of government that would unite and secure America’s independent states. The retirement from public life that both he and his wife so earnestly desired was not to be foreseeable in his future. He could not ignore the admiration of the American people for his brave labors during the war now behind him and the demands of a new government ahead.

Five years after the end of the war in the early spring of 1789, a government official arrived at Washington’s home to deliver the result of a vote that would change the former general’s life and legacy forever. George Washington had been unanimously elected to an office he did not want, had not sought and could not avoid. The President of the United States of America. The now 57- year-old war hero stepped into a horse drawn carriage with the enormous weight of the undefined job that lie ahead. After a journey lasting seven days he had finally reached New York Harbor at America’s first capital city.

On April 30th 1789, the former general became the first person ever to take the oath of office as President of the United States. He was inaugurated on the outdoor balcony of Federal Hall at two o’clock in the afternoon. He held one hand over his heart and the other over an open copy of the Holy Bible. Historical records show that after he pledged to protect and defend the new nation’s Constitution, Washington bowed and reverently kissed the Scriptures. Immediately following his public inauguration, he addressed both houses of Congress in the Senate chamber. And he humbly gave a profound tribute to God as his first official act, with his fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe. He went on to say that the invisible providential hand of God led every step that allowed the advancement to the character of an independent nation.

After an additional two weeks, on May 28th, the President was finally joined by his wife Martha, America’s “Lady Washington,” and the two grandchildren whom they had been raising for the past eight years. The new president and his family would now reside at 3 Cherry Street in a rented three-story brick house that would serve as the first presidential mansion of the United States. Now less than two months following his inauguration, in mid-June and unknown to virtually all of America, President Washington lay in his bed chamber. He had been over-come by a painful and life threatening affliction. He had a severely infected malignant tumor; a carbuncle located on his left upper thigh. This would require excruciating surgery since the first surgical procedure using anesthesia would not occur for more than 50 years in the future. Two attending physicians, 47 year old Samuel Bard, with assistance from his 73 year old father, himself a renowned physician, worked diligently to incise and remove the troublesome tumor. A full month later, the President was still mostly bedridden from the deadly ordeal. With his workload limited, the President began his slow recovery from the painful surgery. He was reminded of his mortality as a result of the deadly infection and fever that so recently attacked his aging body.

Following his deadly infection, Washington grew in his concern for the post-war spiritual condition of the people who now populated this young nation. He was apparently inspired to help turn the hearts and minds of the people to the soul saving message of their Creator, the gospel of Jesus Christ. One of the ways that this God honoring man promoted this message was to silently subscribe to, and as a result, aide and endorse a unique study Bible produced by John Brown. Average Americans were hungry for Bibles. The 1792 New York

“Where there is no law, there is no liberty.”

Benjamin Rush

publication of Brown's Self-Interpreting Study Bible as a highly respected work set a standard. It was the first in the US to incorporate a rich combination of features.

Bibles of this era provided a list of subscribers which was normally bound either before Genesis or after Revelation, at the choice of the purchaser. This not only documents a list of subscriptions for many prominent Americans, but the list also includes a wide variety of everyday citizens. Many of the features included cross-references, introduction sections, special charts, tables, maps, commentary and much more providing a multiple layer of study tools to inspire readers of all backgrounds.

By subscribing to the New York printing of Brown's Bible, the President knew he would be publicly attaching his own highly respected name and reputation to this uniquely crafted work, with his name appearing at the top of the subscribers list. Washington hoped to inspire all Americans to read and yield to the authority of God's written word. President Washington knew that his subscription would serve, at minimum, as a strong implied endorsement to most Americans.

L I S T
OF THE NAMES OF THE SUBSCRIBERS TO THE
AMERICAN EDITION OF
BROWN'S FAMILY BIBLE.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, Esq. PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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| <p style="text-align: center;">A</p> <p>Mr. Abijah Abbot, grocer, New-York
James Abeel, ditto
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William Allen, gunsmith, ditto
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Thomas Bartow, East Chester
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John Danville

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT

Welcome to all who receive and read this Newsletter. As we are aware, our beloved Country is now celebrating its 250th year of its founding. Let us take a brief look back into the history of our nation, and recognize some of the causes that brought about **The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America.**

“When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.”

“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;...”

Take notice that “Life” is stated first and is the fundamental right! Without “Life” the individual person has no other rights. The words; *unalienable and given by their Creator*; make it clear that our fore-fathers declared the “Right to Life” is given by God and that right can not be taken away by anyone including any legislative assembly, court or country. The violation of the colonist’s rights brought about the Revolutionary War. We have today in our society, the blatant violation of the fundamental *Right to Life* of the *Pre-born Child*. This is caused by the legalization of *abortion* under the false pretense of a woman’s *Reproductive Rights!* False because; no woman is the *creator of her child!* God is the *Creator!* No person has the *right* to take another person’s life as stated in the fifth commandment; Thou shalt not kill. And as science has proven that life, *human life*, begins at the moment of fertilization. Therefore, laws permitting *abortion* are illegal in each and every state of our union; because such laws violate the opening statement of the declaration of independence.

If we are to continue to be that *Great Nation Under God*, that was founded by our fore-fathers 250 years ago, we must end the division and hatred that is brought about by the false ideology of *abortion on demand!* *ABORTION for any reason*, is evil! It takes the life of a pre-born person and enslaves women. Keeping them in the realm of a world that often uses “*legal abortion*” to abuse women. Abortion deprives the woman of the joy of bringing new life into the world. Even if the mother can not raise or care for the child herself, she will have the peace of mind knowing that she gave birth. Allowing that child to live and have the opportunity to be adopted and live a good and happy life.

Let us celebrate our Country’s 250th Birthday by coming together as one people. Celebrating the “Gift of Life” given to each of us by a loving Providential God by rejecting the *abortion mentality* and all of its false claims. Let us end all abortions and acclaim God as the *Creator and Lover of all human life, born and pre-born!* And thus, upholding and recognizing the unalienable “*Right to Life.*”

May God bless you and your loved ones abundantly!

Ann E. Poole, Chapter President

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2026 | 6:30PM HERSHEY LODGE & CONVENTION CENTER • 325 UNIVERSITY DRIVE, HERSHEY, PA

2026
Celebrate Life!
BANQUET

FEATURING
CLAY TRAVIS
Best-selling Author, Radio Talk Show Host of
America's Largest Radio Show and FOX News Contributor

PENNSYLVANIA
PRO-LIFE
FEDERATION

BENEFITS THE WORK OF THE PENNSYLVANIA PRO-LIFE FEDERATION EDUCATION FUND

The banner features a background image of a large crowd at a banquet. On the right side, there is a portrait of Clay Travis, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt. The text is overlaid on the image in various colors and fonts, including white, red, and yellow.

Let's Have "Breakfast!"

Dennis Ryniak

Mark your calendar for Saturday, October 24th, 2026.

Please join us for our 2026 Annual Prayer Breakfast as we prepare to welcome our next Keynote Speaker, Ryan Bomberger. Ryan has a rather unique perspective of the innate nature of Purpose. His biological mother was raped yet courageously rejected the violence of abortion. Ryan was adopted and loved by a diverse family of fifteen.

Today, he is an Emmy® Award-winning Creative Professional who founded The Radiance Foundation. A faith-based, life-affirming, educational nonprofit, along with his amazing wife Bethany. He is a factivist, international public speaker, columnist, educator, and author of two books. He and his wife Bethany also co-authored three ground-breaking children's books.



The nation's oldest civil rights organization sued Ryan and The Radiance Foundation for exercising their First Amendment rights to parody the organization's name. In a national Op-Ed, Ryan called out the NAACP branding it the "National Association for the Abortion of Colored People." With the incredible help of Alliance Defending Freedom, Radiance was victorious after two years in federal court.

As Chief Creative Officer of the Radiance Foundation, Ryan hopes to continue to impact millions to embrace their inherent and equal value and the incredible possibility with which we are all created. Learn more at:

<https://radiancefoundation.org>

The Citizens Concerned for Human Life Annual Pro-Life Breakfast 2026

To be held at the Bishop Carroll High School Cafetorium,

728 Benjamin Franklin Highway, Ebensburg, PA 15931

Doors OPEN at 8:00 A.M.

Program BEGINS at 9:00 A.M.

Watch for the FLYER at <https://prolifecambriasomerset.org>

"Guard with jealous attention the public liberty."

Patrick Henry



In Memorial Remembrance

Pastor Charles T. Kelley
 Thomas Smithmyer
 Dorothy Grigg
 Lucille Hoover
 Mary Baich
 Leonard and Margaret Voytek
 Edna Kontorchik & Simon Kontorchik
 Mary Burke
 Mary Margaret Sekerak

given by Diane and Fred Truscott
 given by Mary Lou Smithmyer
 given by Christi Maliepaard
 given by Joanne Link
 given by Patricia Beilchick
 given by Leonard E. Voytek
 given by Audrey Gresko
 given by John and Ann Poole
 given by Dennis Ryniak



In Honor Of

The Sacred Heart of Jesus
 Waylon Lexington Cash Weaver
 Robert+ and Louise Berkey+
 Aloralei Bell {Birthday}
 Robert+ and Louise Berkey+

given by Joan Kowalski
 given by Rose Ann Weaver
 given by Dave Berkey
 given by Judith Bortel
 given by Berkey Excavating Co.



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NEWSLETTER by Email

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THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES: Prior to the American Revolution, each of the 13 British Colonies had its own flag. On January 2d, 1776, the first flag of the United States was raised at Cambridge, Mass., by George Washington. It was known as the Grand Union flag. The flag consisted of 13 stripes, alternate red and white, with a blue canton bearing the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew. On June 14, 1777, [now known as Flag Day today] Congress enacted a resolution, "that the Flag of the United States be 13 stripes alternate red and white, that the Union be 13 stars white in a blue field representing a new constellation." On January 13, 1794, Vermont and Kentucky having been admitted to the Union, Congress added a stripe and star for each state. At that time there was no further allowance for additional states to be added, the act was later modified. Congress in 1818 enacted that the 13 stripes, denoting the thirteen original colonies, be restored and a star added to the blue field for each state after its admission to the Union. D.



FIRST THANKSGIVING DAY PROCLAMATION

Text of President George Washington’s October 3, 1789, proclamation for a day of thanksgiving:

“By the President of the United States of America, a Proclamation. Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor—and whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint committee requested me to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness. Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be—That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks—for his kind care and protection of the People of this Country previous to their becoming a Nation—for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his Providence which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war—for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed—for the peaceable and rational manner, in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted—for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed; and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us. and[sic] also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions—to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually—to render our national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed—to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord—To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the encrease of science among them and us—and generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.

Go: Washington” D.

“Truth will ultimately prevail where pains is taken to bring it to light.”

George Washington

DECLARATION (cont.)

The Declaration of Independence was fully and formally adopted on July 4th, 1776, by representatives of the Thirteen Colonies in North America announcing the separation of those colonies from Great Britain and making them into the United States. It was signed in the State-house, at Philadelphia, in a chamber on the right wing, on the ground floor. A painting commemorating this great event, showing those present in their position at the time the committee presented the document for the approval of congress, had been drawn by American artist colonel Trumbull. The painting was placed in the Capital at Washington in 1819. Those who signed the Declaration representing Pennsylvania were: Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, John Morton, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson and George Ross

The Declaration of Independence was immediately sent to the provinces and proclaimed to the army; and was everywhere received with demonstrations of joy. The colonists were no longer complaining and petitioning with arms to vigorously resist the authority of the king. They were now a people, zealously asserting their independence, and repelling the aggressions of an invading foe. The war was still actively raging in the southern as well as the northern provinces. Various campaigns continued over the next several years in defense of the thirteen United States that were now severed from Great Britain and her tyrannical rule. A new and great nation now emerged before the world. Two of the more well-known campaigns that occurred are Washington's crossing of the Delaware in December of 1776 and the winter of 1777-1778 at Valley Forge. Many other campaigns, battles and skirmishes ensued during this several year period, far too many to be mentioned here.

On October 17th, 1781, at ten o'clock in the morning new batteries were opened and Lord Cornwallis begged for a cessation of hostilities for twenty-four hours. But Washington, in answer to his lordship's letter, refused to suspend hostilities for more than two hours. Commissioners were appointed to craft a document from the rough draft of articles which Washington had proposed to Lord Cornwallis. On the morning of the 19th, the commander-in-chief sent them by letter to his lordship, expressing his expectation that they would be signed by eleven in the morning. The articles were signed on the 19th of October, 1781. The garrison then marched out of the town with colors cased. Thus, paving the way to finally bring a close to the Revolutionary War. Over the next two years, many deliberations took place in both Parliament and Congress to bring a close to the Revolution. On December 4th, 1783, Washington took leave of his officers at Francis's Tavern, and on the 23^d of December, he resigned his commission as commander-in-chief of the American armies and returned to Mount Vernon.

Meanwhile, the various courts of Europe had acknowledged the independence of the United States. Sweden and Denmark in February, Spain in March, and Russia in July. The final Treaty of Peace had been signed at Paris, on the third of September, 1783. David Hartley signed on behalf of King George III. And John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and John Jay, signed on behalf of the United States. The British Crown acknowledged the United States to be free, sovereign, and independent states. The boundaries, rights and possessions thereof were now fully secure for the Americans. With the signing of the Treaty of Peace, the Revolutionary War had now officially closed.

The Declaration of Independence has survived as the most important of all American documents. More than a partisan document, it serves as a justification of the American Revolution presented to the world. Its combination of general principles and an abstract theory of government, have made it one of the most unique political documents of enduring power of the west. Independence Day or July Fourth, commemorates the adoption of the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. Celebration of it began during the American Revolution. It has been the most important patriotic holiday and has traditionally been celebrated with the firing of guns and fireworks; combined with parades, open-air meetings, and patriotic speeches. D

"I am apt to believe that [Independence Day] will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival."

John Adams

"When men yield up the privilege of thinking, the last shadow of liberty quits the horizon."

Thomas Paine

The Legendary Elizabeth “Betsy” Ross

In 1870 William Canby delivered a speech to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in which he related the story of his grandmother stitching the nation’s first flag. According to the legend, in the summer of 1776, George Washington, Robert Morris, and George Ross visited a Philadelphia upholstery shop with a sketch of a flag with thirteen red and white stripes and thirteen six-pointed stars contained in a small blue square. After examining the design, the seamstress suggested changing the stars to five points rather than six because it would be easier to cut five-pointed stars. The men agreed to the design update and commissioned the flag, which would be adopted as the national flag on June 14, 1777. Canby’s grandmother, Betsy Ross, would soon become a figure of renown as many accepted her as the woman who fashioned the star-spangled banner.

Betsy Ross was born Elizabeth “Betsy” Griscom on January 1, 1752, into a large Quaker family in New Jersey. At three years old, Betsy and her family moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she and her siblings attended a Quaker school. Once she finished primary school, Betsy gained an apprenticeship in an upholstery shop, which is where she met her first husband, John Ross. Because of Ross’s Anglican faith, Betsy’s family shunned the couple after their elopement; however, this marriage would introduce Betsy to future Founding Fathers, such as George Washington, who attended the same church as Betsy.

Betsy and John Ross were both ardent patriots who took active roles in the early days of the American struggle for independence. Betsy would sew tents, clothing, and blankets for American troops, while her husband volunteered with the local militia. Eventually, Betsy would be commissioned to stitch flags, ensigns, and banners for the Pennsylvania Navy. The design of the flag used by the Pennsylvania Navy is likely the inspiration behind the design for the stars and stripes that would eventually represent the new nation.

Today, due to a lack of written records, many historians doubt that Betsy Ross produced the flag as William Canby claimed so many years ago. However, what is known about Betsy is that she dedicated many hours to aiding the American cause during the war and was employed by the United States government to craft flags for over fifty years until her death in 1836. She suffered tragedies during the War for Independence when two of her husbands died in service to the newly formed nation. While Betsy Ross may not have sewn the first flag, she exemplified the virtues of patriotism, tenacity, and devotion that all Americans should emulate.

Catherine Duman



We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The Constitution of the United States

We the People

There was an imperative need for unity among the new states created by the American Revolution. And this also necessitated the need to define the relative powers of the *Continental Congress* and the individual states. In the *Articles of Confederation* that were submitted by committee to the *Second Continental Congress* on July 12, 1776, three key points provoked much argument. After several revisions were made, this constitution, comprised of a preamble and 13 articles, was adopted by Congress on November 15, 1777.

The *Articles of Confederation* soon proved wholly unsatisfactory because of the subordinate position of the central government. Solely dependent upon the states for its funds and for the execution of its decrees, Congress became nothing more than a legislative-executive body attempting to reconcile the policies of the various states. As a result of this weakness, the government commanded little respect and was further diminished by its inability to deal with internal uprising events.

When it became apparent that the government under the *Articles of Confederation* was, in the words of George Washington, “little more than the shadow without the substance.”; the need and desire for a stronger federal government resulted in the Annapolis Convention of 1786 and the Federal CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION of 1787, which drafted the Constitution of the United States. The new Constitution became the document embodying the fundamental principles upon which the American Republic is conducted. Drawn up at the CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION in Philadelphia in 1787, the Constitution was signed on September 17, 1787, and ratified by the required number of states (nine) by June 21, 1788. It superseded the original charter, the ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION, and established a system of government that began to function in 1789.

The Preamble does not confer power, but its first words, “We the People of the United States,” describe the source of the powers conferred by the rest of the Constitution. The first three articles set up the threefold separation of powers, the three branches of government. Article 1 provides for the establishment of Congress composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Article 2 creates the executive branch of government headed by the President, elected, along with the Vice President, for a term of four years. Article 3 provides for a judiciary and defines TREASON.

The constitution has undergone gradual alteration with the growth of the country. The first 10 amendments, which constitute the Bill of Rights, were added within two years of the signing of the federal Constitution. This was done to ensure sufficient guarantees of individual liberties. The Bill of Rights applied only to the federal government. In 1868, following the passage of the FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT, many of the guarantees contained in the Bill of Rights have been extended to the states through the “due process” clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. D.

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