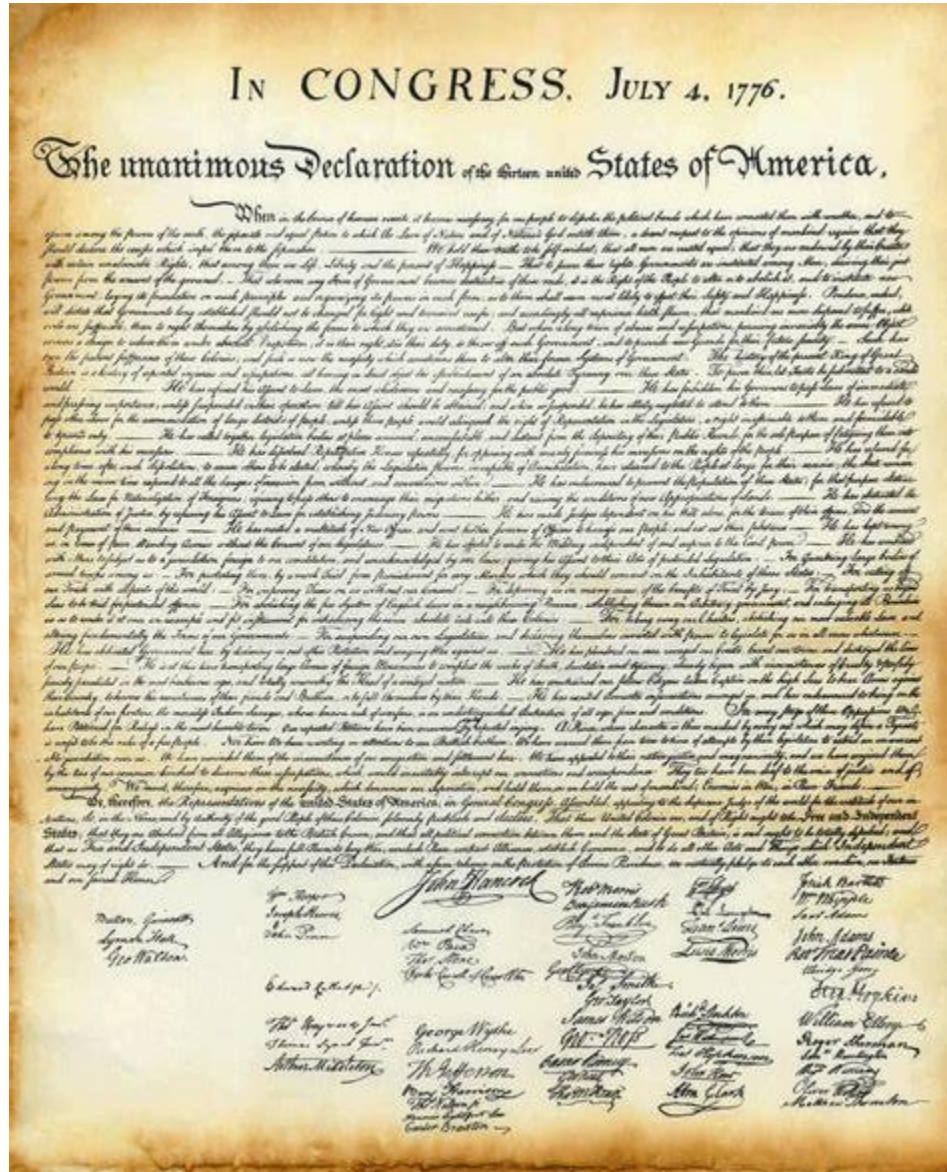


Ode for Independence Day 2021

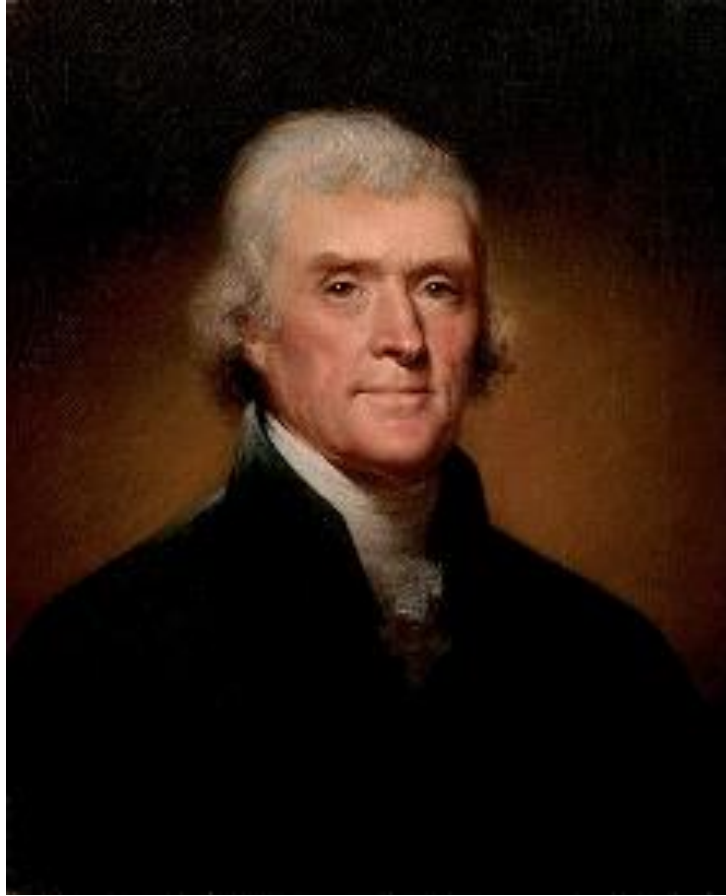
# The Constitution of the United States of America

The finest document on governance ever penned by human hand



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**“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.”**



**Thomas Jefferson**

As President John F. Kennedy said nearly two centuries later,

"I think this is the most extraordinary collection of talent, of human knowledge, that has ever been gathered at the White House - with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone.

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It is said that Thomas Jefferson was a gentleman of 32 who could calculate an eclipse, survey an estate, tie an artery, plan an edifice, try a cause, break a horse, and dance the minuet.

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**Pell Mell, or how Jefferson slammed the door on aristocracy**

[https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/11/pell-mell/306312/?utm\\_source=join1440&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/11/pell-mell/306312/?utm_source=join1440&utm_medium=email)

Here is author, Tom Wolfe's (the Right Stuff) tip of his hat to Thomas Jefferson.

*You really want to read it*

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## The Committee of Five

**John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin  
Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston**

After the Committee of Five presented their document, the resolution was tabled while Congress as a whole prepared to vote. The Resolution of Independence was adopted on July 2, 1776 with twelve affirmative votes and one abstention, and the colonies officially severed political ties with Great Britain. When two days later the announcement was finalized, July 4<sup>th</sup> has since been recognized as Independence Day



*John Trumbull's famous 1818 painting is often identified as a depiction of the signing of the Declaration, but it actually shows the drafting committee presenting its work to the Congress*

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## That Ragged Old Flag



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYZgbgJdvc0>

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## **Our National Anthem: Ready for Singing**

### **I**

Oh, say, can you see? By the dawn's early light  
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming;  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming.  
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there:  
Oh, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave?  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

### **II**

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,  
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,  
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,  
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?  
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,  
In fully glory reflected now shines in the stream:  
'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh, long may it wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

### **III**

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore  
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion  
A home and a country should leave us no more?  
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution!  
No refuge could save the hireling and slave  
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave:

And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

**IV**

Oh, thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  
Between their loved home and the war's desolation!  
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land  
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!

Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,  
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust":  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1wLtAXDgqg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bIMBiOD8HIE>

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**Ralph Waldo Emerson: Concord Hymn**



Emerson wrote the Concord Hymn for the 1837 dedication of a monument commemorating the Battle of Concord, the second and, because of the poem, likely the most famous in the series of skirmishes on April 19, 1775, marking the outbreak of the American Revolution.



*The Minute Man statue by Daniel Chester French*

As was the case with many others, my grade school classmates recited the poem in unison each April 19th, aware that we were the inheritors of a great gift from our forebears. I believe it still today, and hope there are those in our grammar schools who are taught of the intrepidity and sacrifice of those 'embattled farmers, and what it has meant to those for whom 'consent' has become the basis for governance.

### **Concord Hymn**

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,  
Here once the embattled farmers stood,  
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;  
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;  
And Time the ruined bridge has swept  
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,  
We set today a votive stone;  
That memory may their deed redeem,  
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare,  
To die, and leave their children free,  
Bid Time and Nature gently spare  
The shaft we raise to them and thee.

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## Some Americana

### **Saving the World One Close Shave at a Time**

There are still a few of us left who remember long distance drives across seemingly endless western deserts with the only relief from terminal boredom the little bits of poetry from the friendly folks at *Burma Shave*. I still have a can of their bristle softener tucked away somewhere in a souvenir box, its CFCs long since exhausted, awaiting the arrival of extra-T's who might wish to invest in intergalactic signage to wile away their light-year voyages.

Here are several to help you through the pandemic:

A man, a miss,  
A car a curve.  
He kissed the miss,  
And missed the curve.  
*Burma Shave*

Don't stick your elbow  
Out so far  
It may go home  
In another car  
*Burma shave*

She kissed the hairbrush  
By mistake  
She thought it was  
Her husband Jake.  
*Burma shave*

Don't lose your head  
To gain a minute  
You need your head  
Your brains are in it.  
*Burma shave*

Drove too long  
Driver snoozing  
What happened next  
Is not amusing.

*Burma shave*

Brother speeder  
Let's rehearse  
All together  
Good morning, nurse.

*Burma shave*

Trains don't wander  
All over the map  
'Cause nobody sits  
In the engineer's lap.

*Burma shave*

Spring Has sprung  
The grass has riz  
Where last year's  
Careless driver is

*Burma Shave*

Around the curve  
Lickety-split  
Beautiful car  
Wasn't it?

*Burma shave*

No matter the price  
No matter how new  
The best safety device  
In the car is you.

*Burma shave*

A guy who drives  
A car wide open  
Is not thinkin'  
He's just hopin'.

*Burma shave*

Poo poo Harvard



Poo poo Yale  
I got my education thru the mail  
*Burma shave*

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## **Grand Canyon Suite; On the Trail by Ferdi Grofe**



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6\\_7DA1G6tVs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_7DA1G6tVs)

Grofé is best known for his composition of the Grand Canyon Suite (1931), a work regarded highly enough to be recorded for RCA Victor with the NBC Symphony conducted by Arturo Toscanini (in Carnegie Hall in 1945, with the composer present).

Grofe divided the work into five sections: "Sunrise," the "Painted Desert," "On the Trail," "Sunset" and "Cloudburst." The last movement he conceived during his honeymoon in Minnesota.

In 1958, Walt Disney released a live-action, short subject film of the Grand Canyon using the Grand Canyon Suite music. The thirty-minute Technicolor and CinemaScope film, entitled Grand Canyon (1958 film), used no actors or dialogue, simply shots of the Grand Canyon itself and several animals around the area, all shown with Grofé's music accompanying the visuals. The short won an Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Subject, and was shown as a featurette accompanying Disney's 1959 Sleeping Beauty.

Today, the "Grand Canyon Suite's" third movement, "On the Trail," can be heard playing as the Disneyland Railroad passes the Grand Canyon sections of the "Grand Circle Tour" of Disneyland.

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## **Admiral McRaven on How to Change the World**

Here is his commencement address to University of Texas graduating class



<https://youtu.be/TBuIGBCF9jc?t=136>

"Know that life is not fair and that you will fail often, but if take you take some risks, step up when the times are toughest, face down the bullies, lift up the downtrodden and never, ever give up—if you do these things--then the next generation and the generations that follow will live in a world far better than the one we have today and what started here will indeed have changed the world...for the better."

*I'm sorry for a bit of editorializing, but don't you wish this was the message being flashed to our students by their teachers? JT*

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## **Kate Smith introduces God Bless America**



My squadron mate, Holly Clayson sent the following note, and yes the Ode presented her singing it back in April 2020, but I think it's even more appropriate today.

Included is a short article on Kate Smith and an attachment of Kate singing her signature song.

Frank Sinatra considered Kate Smith the best singer of her time, and said that when he and a million other guys first heard her sing "God Bless America" on the radio, they all pretended to have dust in their eyes as they wiped away a tear or two.

Here are the facts.... The link at the bottom will take you to a video showing the very first public singing of "[God Bless America](#)". Before you watch it, you should know the story behind the first public showing of the song.

The time was 1940. America was still in a terrible economic depression, Hitler was taking over Europe and Americans were afraid we would have to go to war. It was a time of hardship and worry for most Americans.

This was the era just before TV, when radio shows were huge, and American families sat around their radios in the evenings, listening to their favorite entertainers, and no entertainer of that era was bigger than Kate Smith.

Kate was also large; plus size, as we now say, and the popular phrase still used today is in deference to her, "It ain't over till the fat lady sings".

Kate Smith might not have made it big in the age of TV, but with her voice coming over the radio, she was the biggest star of her time. Kate was also patriotic. It hurt her to see Americans so depressed and afraid of what the next day would bring. She had hope for America, and faith in her fellow Americans.

She wanted to do something to cheer them up, so she went to the famous American song-writer, Irving Berlin (who also wrote "White Christmas") and asked him to write a song that would make Americans feel good again about their country. When she described what she was looking for, he said he had just the song for her. He went to his files and found a song that he had written, but never published, 22 years before - way back in 1917. He gave it to her and she worked on it with her studio orchestra.

She and Irving Berlin were not sure how the song would be received by the public, but both agreed they would not take any profits from God Bless America. Any profits would go to the Boy Scouts of America. Over the years, the Boy Scouts have received millions of dollars in royalties from this song.

This video starts out with Kate Smith coming into the radio studio with the orchestra and an audience. She introduces the new song for the very first time and starts singing. After the first couple verses, with her voice in the background still singing, scenes are shown from the 1940 movie, "You're In the Army Now." At the 4:20 mark of the video you see a young actor in the movie, sitting in an office, reading a paper; it's Ronald Reagan.

To this day, God Bless America stirs our patriotic feelings and pride in our country. Back in 1940, when Kate Smith went looking for a song to raise the spirits of her fellow Americans, I doubt whether she realized just how successful the results would be for her fellow Americans during those years of hardship and worry..... And for many generations of Americans to follow.

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*Today the excesses of political correctness have stretched all the way to Yankee Stadium and Philadelphia's Wells Fargo Center where both the Yankees and the NHL Flyers have banned Kate Smith's recording of Irving Berlin's classic "God Bless America." The issue has to do with other tunes she sang back in the day, but that's a different story.*

Anyway, please enjoy the original performance.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/TnQDW-NMaRs?rel=0>

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## **Travis Mills: Own Your Attitude**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSytAgtLqVw>

If this doesn't make your day, nothing, not even taking on Dirty Harry ever will. We tend to overuse the term 'hero' but not here. Remember his name, because he's the real deal...also Cpl. Todd Nicely, the 'dumb Marine' who welcomed him to the club and told him he'd be fine.

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## **America the Beautiful**

By Katherine Lee Bates



O beautiful for spacious skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain!

America! America!  
God shed His grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet  
Whose stern impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare for freedom beat  
Across the wilderness.

America! America!  
God mend thine ev'ry flaw,  
Confirm thy soul in self-control,  
Thy liberty in law.

O beautiful for heroes proved  
In liberating strife,  
Who more than self their country loved,  
And mercy more than life.

America! America!  
May God thy gold refine  
Till all success be nobleness,  
And ev'ry gain divine.

*O beautiful for patriot dream  
That sees beyond the years  
Thine alabaster cities gleam  
Undimmed by human tears.*

America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmP9LvHgcaA>

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## **Martin Luther King's Dream**



*Photos and text from Wikipedia*

Martin Luther King, Jr will be remembered for his non-violent protests against segregation and this, his "I have a Dream" speech.

We hold ourselves as the bastion of *'inclusive diversity,'* a notion that has fallen on hard times in this past year. Some suggest it's an impossible task, but ask yourself, "If we fail in our efforts, who will take up the cudgel in our stead, and what does this herald for the future?"

If we are satisfied saying, "Well we're trying," or "Look at those other nations in which xenophobia is policy," we will fail, and with that failure, in the words of William Manchester, we will leave as our legacy, "*A World Lit Only by Fire.*"

"King's words are more relevant in today's turgid times than when he spoke them. What I'd like you to consider as you read his address is that this isn't about *us* or *them*, rather about *'all us all.'*"

## I Have a Dream

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. \*\*We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only."\*\* We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And



some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."<sup>2</sup>

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle

together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, From every mountainside, let freedom ring!

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

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In 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed MLK Day into law and 3 years later it was first observed. By the year 2000, all fifty states officially observed the day.

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**You Can Still Rock in America; Night Ranger**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-RMA-1oWISQ>

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## **Apollo 11: Earth, Moon, Spaceship**



*Image Credit: NASA, Apollo 11;  
Restoration - Toby Ord*

After the most famous voyage of modern times, it was time to go home. After proving that humanity has the ability to go beyond the confines of planet Earth, the first humans to walk on another world -- Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin -- flew the ascent stage of their Lunar Module back to meet Michael Collins in the moon-orbiting Command and Service Module.

Pictured here on 1969 July 21 and recently digitally restored, the ascending spaceship was captured by Collins making its approach, with the Moon below, and Earth far in the distance. The smooth, dark area on the lunar surface is Mare Smythii located just below the equator on the extreme eastern edge of the Moon's near side.

It is said of this iconic image that every person but one was in front of the camera.

I was in Vietnam as this was taking place, learning upon returning from a mission that Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin had landed on the moon and then rejoined Michael Collins in the Command Module, six hours and 39 minutes later.

Because we were pretty much cut off from the news and worldwide excitement, I didn't experience the sense of triumph in the achievement at the time. That came later. Now, just a few scant days short of the 52<sup>nd</sup> anniversary, I feel a special satisfaction that I was permitted to live in those unforgettable days of challenge and discovery.

Just for the record, I've felt from his exploits in the Gemini program Buzz Aldrin was the true master of the universe. Thank you sir, for your unparalleled life of achievement

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## Spurs on the Trail to Nationhood



**Boston Massacre**



**Boston Tea Party**



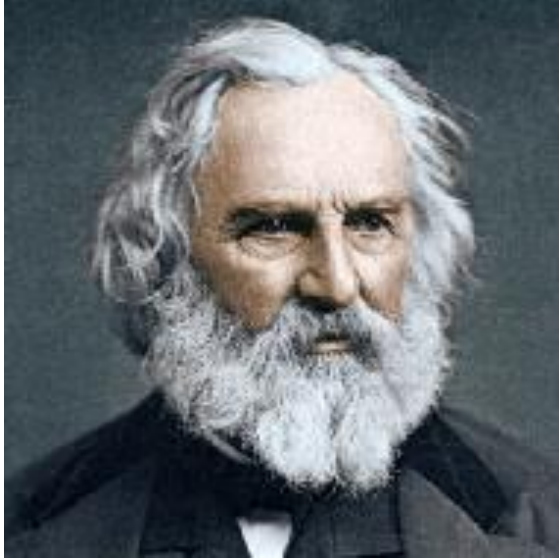
**Red Coats on American Soil**



**Concord Bridge**

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**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow; 1807-1882**



Lowell was an American poet and educator among whose more famous works are Paul Revere's Ride, The Song of Hiawatha, and Evangeline.

In 1839 he published Voices of the Night, which contained the poems "Hymn to the Night, The Psalm of Life, and The Light of the Stars" and achieved immediate popularity. In 1842 his Ballads and Other Poems, containing such favorites as The Wreck of the Hesperus and The Village Blacksmith, swept the nation.

His narrative poem Evangeline (1847), reached almost every literate home in the United States. The 1855 Song of Hiawatha (1855) achieved immediate acceptance.

The Tales of a Wayside Inn, published in 1863, reveals his narrative gift. The first poem, Paul Revere's Ride, became an inseparable part of the American heritage.

### **The Landlord's Tale. Paul Revere's Ride**



Listen, my children, and you shall hear  
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,  
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;  
Hardly a man is now alive  
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march  
By land or sea from the town to-night,  
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch  
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—  
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;  
And I on the opposite shore will be,  
Ready to ride and spread the alarm  
Through every Middlesex village and farm,  
For the country folk to be up and to arm."  
Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar  
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,  
Just as the moon rose over the bay,  
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay  
The Somerset, British man-of-war;  
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar  
Across the moon like a prison bar,  
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified  
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,  
Wanders and watches with eager ears,  
Till in the silence around him he hears  
The muster of men at the barrack door,  
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,  
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,  
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,  
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,  
To the belfry-chamber overhead,  
And startled the pigeons from their perch  
On the sombre rafters, that round him made  
Masses and moving shapes of shade, —  
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,  
To the highest window in the wall,  
Where he paused to listen and look down  
A moment on the roofs of the town,  
And the moonlight flowing over all.  
Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,  
In their night-encampment on the hill,  
Wrapped in silence so deep and still  
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,  
The watchful night-wind, as it went  
Creeping along from tent to tent,



And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"  
A moment only he feels the spell  
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread  
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;  
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent  
On a shadowy something far away,  
Where the river widens to meet the bay, —  
A line of black that bends and floats  
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,  
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride  
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.  
Now he patted his horse's side,  
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,  
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,  
And turned and tightened his saddle girth;  
But mostly he watched with eager search  
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,  
As it rose above the graves on the hill,  
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.  
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height  
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!  
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,  
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight  
A second lamp in the belfry burns!  
A hurry of hoofs in a village street,  
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,  
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark  
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:  
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,  
The fate of a nation was riding that night;  
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,  
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.  
He has left the village and mounted the steep,  
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,  
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;  
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,  
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,  
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock,  
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.  
He heard the crowing of the cock,

And the barking of the farmer's dog,  
And felt the damp of the river fog,  
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,  
When he galloped into Lexington.  
He saw the gilded weathercock  
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,  
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,  
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,  
As if they already stood aghast  
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,  
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.  
He heard the bleating of the flock,  
And the twitter of birds among the trees,  
And felt the breath of the morning breeze  
Blowing over the meadows brown.  
And one was safe and asleep in his bed  
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,  
Who that day would be lying dead,  
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,  
How the British Regulars fired and fled, —  
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,  
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,  
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,  
Then crossing the fields to emerge again  
Under the trees at the turn of the road,  
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;  
And so through the night went his cry of alarm  
To every Middlesex village and farm, —  
A cry of defiance and not of fear,  
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,  
And a word that shall echo forevermore!  
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,  
Through all our history, to the last,  
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,  
The people will waken and listen to hear  
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,

And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

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## **EDITORIAL...BEWARE...EDITORIAL...BEWARE...EDITORIAL**

### **Some (My) Thoughts on Independence Day 2021**

It has been 245 years since Congress voted to ratify the Declaration of Independence and therefrom three years later, our Constitution. By and large the foundational documents and most of the protections they confer have managed to remain intact despite the nearly continuous attacks they have had to fend off ever since that momentous period.

The success is partly the result of several station-keeping Amendments to the Constitution, the exceptions being the 15<sup>th</sup> (which gave us the Income Tax), 16<sup>th</sup> (the direct election of Senators that sundered states rights and permitted the unopposed growth of central government), and 17<sup>th</sup> (prohibition). The remaining amendments have incorporated societal changes not envisioned by the framers.

But the real basis for its endurance has been the recognition by our citizenry that the Constitution serves as our vital protection against the tyranny of runaway government. Unlike any compacts between governments and the governed--past or present--our sacred documents don't tell people what they can or cannot do, rather ours lay rational restraints on government.

*What a vision our Funders had*

...Except that that vision appears to be in danger of falling victim to ignorance. It is too easy to blame the excessive greed of those flanking either side of the productive middle class, though this greed, admittedly, has a place in the list of challenges. Vastly more important, however, is a general societal ignorance...ignorance of lessons learned by the thousands of generations of peoples held captive by oligarchs controlling the thoughts and desires that proscribed their lives.

The present manifestation of this pernicious disease is embodied the fallacious doctrine of *political correctness*...the substitution of elite-managed agenda at the forfeiture of intellectual honesty and the freedom of people to think and act in their own behalf.

Yes, like all of us today, our founders had feet of clay, plenty of pettiness to match their brilliance...they were after all men of their time. But what they had in super abundance was a clear vision as to the relationship of man to power.

What makes them special is they staked their *lives, fortunes, and sacred honor* on instituting the means for achieving that vision.

It remains to be seen whether we today have the means and especially the will to preserve that vision.

We'd better for without this one constant beacon of liberty, we, along with the entire world, will slide once again into the stench of Dark Age hegemony.

On this day of remembrance and commemoration it would be worthwhile—no scratch that—*it is imperative* we devote the time and effort to confront the dire threats to our nation, then go further: determine and implement solutions.

Example? How about as a starting place the travesty that is our public education system?

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