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SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

HONOR AMERICA DAYS Jun 2010

During the months of June and July we generally see "Old Glory" waving in the breeze more often than usual. June 14th is Flag Day and we expect to see the flag displayed by everyone. July 4th is Independence Day which is another opportunity for us to display the flag as a symbol of our patriotism and pride in our nation. Most of us are unaware that the period between those two occasions is officially "Honor America Days."

Public Law 94-33 effective July 13, 1975 and found in the U.S. Code at 80 Stat 211 establishes the period from Flag Day to the 4th of July as a period to honor America. ". . . there shall be public gatherings and activities at which the people can celebrate and honor their country in an appropriate manner."

Upon reflection one can readily understand why this time period would be singled out to Honor America. The first official flag of the United States was created by Congress on June 14, 1777. This event which provides the foundation for Flag Day took place less than a year after the thirteen colonies issued their Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

The first "Flag Day" was observed on June 14, 1861 at the start of the Civil War by the people of Hartford, Connecticut. Flag Day was celebrated for the first time in public schools on June 14, 1893 at Philadelphia. President Harry S Truman approved a resolution on August 3, 1949 designating June 14 annually as national Flag Day.

But the events of the Civil War add much to our rich American heritage and may very well have influenced those who decided to set aside this special time period for us to Honor America. We should never forget that it was during the days now set aside to Honor America that our ancestors meet at Gettysburg in 1863; that Confederate Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan started the longest cavalry raid in history from Burksville, Kentucky through southern Indiana and Ohio; and that General Grant took Vicksburg.

The Petersburg Campaign started in 1864 during what we now call Honor America Days. Also, in 1864 during this time period, the U.S.S. Kearsage met the C.S.S. Alabama near Cherbourg, France, and the north and south fought at Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia.

The Civil War is filled with numerous battles and events associated with the time frame set aside to Honor America. But, it is the bravery, courage, determination and sacrifices made by individual Americans that still inspire us today. Those heroic qualities of our ancestors displayed so nobly during the Civil War make us "Proud to Be Americans" no matter what time of the year. However, it is reassuring to know that we as a nation care enough to set aside a special time to Honor America.

Holidays and other special days http://suvcw.org/ftp/PI_handbook.pdf
National, Federal and Special holidays – Days the Flag should be Flown

Flag Day – June 14 First observed June 14, 1777

In the United States, Flag Day (more formally, National Flag Day), is celebrated on June 14. It commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States, which happened that day by resolution of the Second Continental Congress in 1777. In 1916, Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation that officially established June 14 as Flag Day; in August 1949, National Flag Day was established by an Act of Congress.

Several men are claimed to have played early instrumental roles in the establishment of a National Flag Day: Perhaps the most fervent claim dates to 1885, when a schoolteacher, Bernard J. Cigrand, reportedly urged the students at the public school in Fredonia, Wisconsin, to observe June 14 as "Flag Birthday." He moved to Chicago to attend dental school, and in June 1886, wrote an article titled "The Fourteenth of June" which was published in the Chicago Argus newspaper. He continued to promote the idea and by June 1894 300,000 children gathered in parks throughout Chicago to celebrate the day.

Another claim is made on behalf of William T. Kerr, a resident of Collier Township, Pennsylvania for a number of years, who founded the American Flag Day Association of Western Pennsylvania in 1888, became that organization's national chairman one year later, and served as such for fifty years. He attended Truman's 1949 signing of the Act of Congress which formally established the holiday.

An older and less cited claim is in Kansas: a cyclopedia of state history, published by Standard Publishing Company (Chicago) in 1912. It credits George Morris of Hartford, Connecticut: To George Morris of Hartford, Conn., is popularly given the credit of suggesting "Flag Day," the occasion being in honor of the adoption of the American flag on June 14, 1777. The city of Hartford observed the day in 1861, carrying out a program of a patriotic order, praying for the success of the Federal arms and the preservation of the Union.

Father's Day – the third Sunday in June

Father's Day, contrary to popular misconception, was not established as a holiday in order to help greeting card manufacturers sell more cards. In fact when a "father's day" was first proposed there were no Father's Day cards! Mrs. John B. Dodd, of Washington, first proposed the idea of a "father's day" in 1909. Mrs. Dodd wanted a special day to honor her father, William Smart. William Smart, a Civil War veteran, was widowed when his wife (Mrs. Dodd's mother) died in childbirth with their sixth child. Mr. Smart was left to raise the newborn and his other five children by himself on a rural farm in eastern Washington State. It was after Mrs. Dodd became an adult that she realized the strength and selflessness her father had shown in raising his children as a single parent.

The first Father's Day was observed on June 19, 1910 in Spokane Washington. At about the same time in various towns and cities across American other people were beginning to celebrate a "father's day." In 1924 President Calvin Coolidge supported the idea of a national Father's Day. Finally in 1966 President Lyndon Johnson signed a presidential proclamation declaring the 3rd Sunday of June as Father's Day. Father's Day has become a day to not only honor your father, but all men who act as a father figure. Stepfathers, uncles, grandfathers, and adult male friends are all honored on Father's Day.