

Why we celebrate Independence Day on July 4th

July 2, 2019



The Continental Congress declared its independence from Great Britain on July 2, 1776. If that date raises an eyebrow, it should. Independence Day in the United States has long been celebrated on July 4th, which would seem to be two days late. But upon closer examination, it seems Americans are not really celebrating their independence two days later than they should be. According to the National Constitution Center, the Continental Congress approved a resolution declaring its independence from Great Britain on July 2. However, a document still needed to be drafted to explain the decision to the general public. Such a document was already in the works, but it took two days for the men of Congress to agree on a final version. The resulting document, known as the Declaration of Independence, was sent to John Dunlap, an Irish printer who served under George Washington during the American Revolutionary War, who subsequently printed roughly 200 broadsides. Still, the Declaration of Independence was not read to the public until July 8, 1776, when Colonel John Nixon did so in Philadelphia on what is now known as Independence Square. It was nearly a month later, on August 2, 1776, when most members of the Continental Congress actually signed the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia