



American Independence Day....Our Day



July 4, 2022  by [Thomas Lemmer](#)

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The *Fourth of July* is the most common, and date specific reference to a momentous historical event. The declaration of American independence by thirteen British colonies. Even now, American Independence Day is our day. I mean that both for all of us as Americans, and for **Secure 1776**.

When I was setting up my consulting firm and website, I did so out of concern for both my profession and for my nation. Within our national borders, no profession is more directly related to securing the blessings of liberty than the one whose members have sworn an [oath](#) to the [United](#)

[States Constitution](#), and in that act, committed themselves, at the risk of their own lives, to enforcing the law, seeking public safety, and defending individual liberty. The courage, commitment, and unity displayed on July 4th, 1776 should, to this very day, be passionately honored, celebrated, and advanced by all Americans. For those concerned about justice, equality, liberty, and public safety, American Independence Day, should provide encouragement and renewed commitment to the principles on which the nation was founded. At **Secure 1776**, we still believe that all people are [endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights](#), and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The Declaration of Independence

The [Declaration of Independence](#) is in a sense our nation's birth certificate. But, it also had the potential to be a death warrant for each of the 56 representatives who signed the document on behalf the American people. The declaration carried with it great risk for all those who dared to defy the king. A successful outcome from the declaration's publication was far from certain, and consequences for its signers were far more likely. The signers declared to world and the British king:

"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. –

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, – That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

In concluding the document, the signers also declared, “*we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.*” Of the 56 signers of the declaration, in 1974, commentator [Paul Harvey](#) famously [provided](#) a broadcast summary of their sacrifices. Nine died of wounds or of the war’s hardships. Five were captured by the British and tortured. Twelve had their homes looted and destroyed. All of the surviving signers were poorer at the conclusion of the war. Beyond the signers, an estimated 25,000 American soldiers either [died in battle or from disease](#) while serving in the continental army. Nearly all of those within America suffered economic hardships, many losing their homes.

Americans today continue to reap the benefits from the courage and commitment displayed by the

signers, soldiers, and active supporters who gained American independence. The struggle and suffering endured to build a nation committed to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness demands acknowledgement and merits our continued celebration.

American Independence and *E Pluribus Unum*

From the earliest days of the American Revolution, the founders had adopted a Latin phrase as a symbolic motto – *E Pluribus Unum* – meaning *out of many, one*. While America would become a single nation, its origins were built from thirteen separate colonies. As the revolution unfolded seeking to end British rule, the motto helped to accentuate both a need and desire for unity in the cause of liberty. More than any other nation, America from its very beginnings was founded on an idea rather than a single ancestry. After the revolution, the motto continued to symbolize the advance of one nation, as new immigrants came from across the globe seeking a new birth of freedom. Historian [Victor Davis Hanson](#) observed: *“The United States steadily evolved to define Americans by their shared values, not by their superficial appearance.”* For generations, America was described as a great [melting pot](#) of cultures, where new immigrant populations assimilated into the nation as a diverse, yet a

distinctly unique, single American population. Such gave even deeper meaning to the phrase, *e pluribus unum*.

But, when considering their own identity, many Americans today are slow, if at all, to self-identify as being an American. Claims of ancestral heritage are common: “*I’m Irish*,” or Polish, Jamaican, German, Mexican, Navajo, Chinese, Filipino, Greek, Italian, Puerto Rican, Lithuanian, Colombian, Jewish, Indonesian, Palestinian, Danish, Nigerian, Vietnamese or some other. Such is the case even though, the individual’s family has for generations lived here in America, and their full family ancestry is actually a combination of many distant heritages. While many Americans may be quick to attach themselves to some other heritage, when they travel internationally, they are just as quickly identified, by the peoples living elsewhere around the world, as being Americans. Sometimes it is strangers who more quickly see who we are.

When I was a child, even for those who were quick to identify by distant heritages, on July Fourth, the entire community celebrated being American. Among those who could be seen proudly celebrating being Americans were newer citizens who had fled communist and fascist dictatorships. Such open

community celebration has long been good for this nation – and its people. Sadly, decades of divisive politics have undermined the unifying appreciation for America’s Independence Day. In places like Chicago, while each year the city plays host to a long list of independence day parades, which celebrate many countries around the world, the city does not host a parade dedicated to America’s own founding.

In 1972, iconic film actor John Wayne recorded an album of patriot messages and songs. Concerned about divisions among the American people, Wayne included a poem entitled, “*The Hyphen*.” Through the reading of the poem, he provided the nation with a reminder on the power, potential, and risk of a hyphenated population. He said in part:

*A hyphen is a line that’s small; It can be a bridge or be
a wall.*

*A bridge can save you lots of time; A wall you always
have to climb.*

*The road to liberty lies true. The Hyphen’s use is up to
you.*

Used as a bridge, it can span; All the differences of Man.
Being free in mind and soul; Should be our most important
goal.

If you use The Hyphen as a wall, You’ll make your life
mean...and small.

*An American is a special breed, Whose people came
to her in need.*

*They came to her that they might find, A world where
they'd have peace of mind,*

*Where men are equal...and something more– Stand
taller than they stood before.*

John Wayne – *"The Hyphen,"* 1972

John Wayne was an international celebrity, and the roles he portrayed in his films had a cultural impact. When he died in 1979, many international newspapers reported, that *"John Wayne, American"* had died at age 72.

A Declaration Seeking Domestic Tranquility

In 2016, Professor Hanson described the American experience, which advanced the notion of one nation from many cultures, as an exception in the history nations. He then also spoke with concern on the rise of the hyphen and the decline of an *"ethos of e pluribus unum."* Given the extent to which America is comprised of a multiracial and multicultural population, domestic tranquility relies on the American people being a nation committed to shared values. Absent shared values, [Hanson has cautioned](#) that the world history of *"state multiculturalism is one of discord, violence, chaos,*

and implosion.” As we consider the rising discord in America, and the rise in demands for what I have described as *“tragedy-free policing, or else,”* we would be wise to seek a renewal of unifying strength.

Places where people are one with each other tend to have less strife and a greater sense of community. We know as well that police-community relations are essential in building safer and stronger communities overall. Places where the police and the larger community are one are also places where both public safety and individual liberty can flourish. The American people share a responsibility to safeguard the institutions that are essential to maintaining the blessings of liberty. When the police are separated from the community, lawlessness quickly rises, Without question, lawless places are inevitably violent ones where life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are all placed at risk.

A renewal of the unifying values that are within the American ideal can be found in the shared values embodied in the celebration of American Independence Day. The community is right to expect constitutional policing that is both respectful of civil liberties and provides public safety. Such is deep within the American ideal that rejects both tyranny and anarchy. Our shared national heritage that

encompasses this ideal is worthy of celebration – and our active support as a community in maintaining the reality of this ideal is essential.

Passionately Celebrate American Independence Day

Those who know me know that that when I have been asked about my own ancestry – usually weakly worded as “*what are you*” – I have always responded that I am an American with a capital “A.” I have never denied that I am a believer in Jesus Christ, and I have and can only be saved by the grace of God. So too, I have never denied that I am an American, who claims no other national heritage. I seek to preserve the America that was founded on the ideals of individual rights and responsibilities under the banner of liberty. One nation, under God.

I understand how many are strongly tied to their extended family ancestry, and I ask only that they take care with how they see the hyphen that identifies them both with that heritage and this country. Particularly on July Fourth, I ask that they see their hyphen as a bridge that honors the American within them. We need this to be so, if we hope to see less lawlessness and violence, and more peace between us and across our American community.

In the words written and sung in the wake of 9/11 by
[Aaron Tippin](#):

*“Well if you ask me where I come from
Here’s what I tell everyone
I was born by God’s dear grace
In an extraordinary place
Where the stars and stripes and the eagle fly.”*

The name **Secure 1776** was chosen as a reflection of the oath that American law enforcement officers take, swearing to defend the United States Constitution and the constitution of their home state. I have instructed that constitutional policing is among the core elements essential to advancing both public safety and liberty. The primary mission of America’s law enforcement officers is public safety, and they seek to perpetually **Secure** the unalienable rights declared in **1776**. On this Fourth of July, **Secure 1776** celebrates them as well.

Happy American Independence Day.

Thomas Lemmer is a consultant, researcher, analyst, author, and instructor. He has been active in the field of public safety for over 40 years. He has extensive experience as a state-certified law enforcement officer, including within key supervisory and police executive roles. Lemmer served for more than 34 years with the Chicago Police Department

(CPD), rising to the rank of deputy chief. Lemmer is the founder of Secure 1776, a public safety professional resource, that is dedicate to helping foster enhanced public safety – particularly in the field of law enforcement. This article originally appeared at [Secure 1776](#).

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