

The United States of
AMERICA
@250



Presented by the North Georgia News, Towns County Herald & West Printing

An enduring, ever-evolving symbol of *freedom*

The American flag has been recognized across the globe as a symbol of freedom for centuries. The Stars and Stripes is recognizable to billions of people worldwide, but the flag has undergone many changes since the United States gained its independence from Great Britain. According to the National Flag Foundation, the national flag of the United States has been revised 27 times since American colonists fought for and won independence from British rule. Of course, many of those changes occurred when a new state or new states were added to the union. Each time a new state joined the union, the flag would have to be adjusted with the addition of an extra star. The 1777 flag included a star for each of the 13 colonies that eventually became one of the initial 13 states, but the modern flag now features 50 stars as representative of the 50 states. Though the flag certainly underwent many changes since the nation's inception, the NFF notes the current flag has remained unchanged since 1960, when the 50-star version was officially adopted on July 4 in recognition of Hawaii becoming the fiftieth state in 1959.



1776-2026: Celebrating 250 Years and Counting

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Towns County Herald
editor@nganews.com

Semiquincentennial. Clocking in at 18 letters, it's a big word with even bigger significance to the United States of America, the Land of the Free and Home of the Brave now for 250 years.

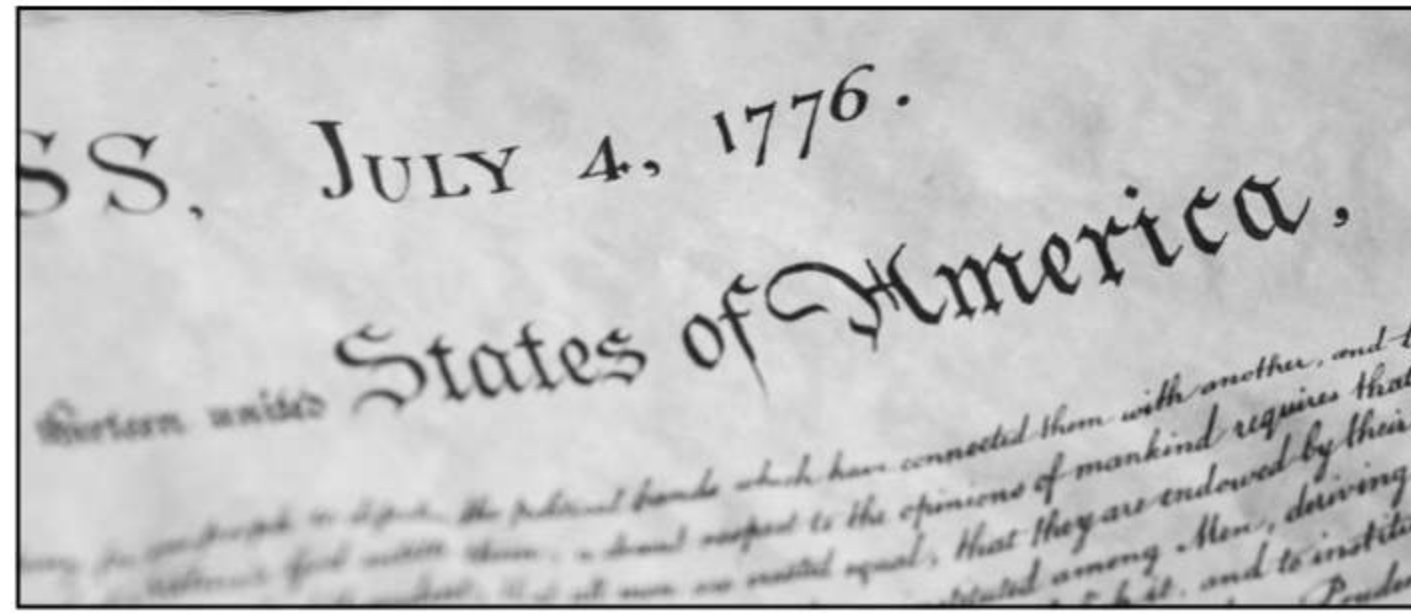
Commemorating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence by America's Founding Fathers on July 4, 1776, the mere fact of the semiquincentennial and its abundant patriotic celebrations provides a clear answer to the question implied by President George Washington at his First Inaugural Address in 1789.

Speaking to the First United States Congress, Washington posited that "the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the Republican model of Government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people."

Two-hundred and fifty years on from the beginning, has that experiment succeeded? With the grace of God, whom Thomas Jefferson rightly declared as the source of mankind's "unalienable Rights," the answer is a resounding "YES!"

But the answer is also: that depends on us.

As noted in the Preamble to the U.S.



Constitution, the American experiment is an ongoing process "to form a more perfect Union." In other words, the work is never done, which holds as true for Americans in 2026 as it did for our Founding Fathers.

Benjamin Franklin summed this idea up nicely when, in answering a bystander's question about what form of government delegates had created during the Constitutional Convention of 1787, he replied: "A republic, if you can keep it."

And Franklin's challenge persists to this day.

If the citizens of the United States wish to keep the vibrant Red, White & Blue of Old Glory flying for generations to come, Americans everywhere must tirelessly com-

mit to the timeless values centered on "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" that first birthed this nation and have continued to sustain it through tremendous adversity over the last 250 years.

America has been tested time and time again, most notably in conflict and tragedy. From the Revolutionary War that started it all to other times of national trial, among them the blood-soaked Civil War, globe-changing World Wars, the distrustful Vietnam era, a prolonged Cold War, the Islamic terror of Sept. 11, 2001, and the subsequent military actions to prevent such murderous attacks in the future – to date, the United States has always come through the fire.

Only time will tell whether America

will prevail to celebrate another 250 years, but the foundation is strong, built on the staggering sacrifices of countless brave military members then and now, and the millions of people celebrating the semiquincentennial today seem willing and able to carry out our founding vision.

Several of those Independence Day celebrations are happening locally, so take your pick or visit as many as possible this weekend. By joining with our fellow Americans to commemorate this incredible anniversary, we will be shoring up the civic fabric symbolized in our American Flag.

On Saturday, July 4, the Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter Sons of the American Revolution, with assistance from Joshua's Warriors, is holding a once-in-a-lifetime 250th Anniversary Parade, set to roll through Downtown Blairsville at 10 a.m.

Fireworks and festivities will be held at both Meeks Park in Union County and the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds in Towns County on the Fourth of July, and in various other venues all over the mountains.

And don't forget about the patriotic boat parades, the long-running Lake Nottely Boat Parade as well as the 4th of July Boat Parade on Lake Chatuge.

For other local events, check out the websites for the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and the Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce.

Happy 250th Birthday, America!

The City of Blairsville is proud to join communities across our nation in celebrating 250 years of freedom, opportunity, and the American spirit.

As we honor our country's rich history, we also look forward to a bright future for Blairsville built on service, community, and patriotism.



★ *From all of us at City Hall, thank you for allowing us to serve this wonderful community*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



A nation gets a name

September 9, 1776, may not be the first date Americans think of when pondering their nation's history, but it's a significant day nonetheless. According to the National Constitution Center, on September 9, 1776, the Second Continental Congress adopted a new name for a collective of colonies that had been referred to as the "United Colonies." The name chosen on that day in late summer 1776, the United States of America, has endured. While the opening sentence of the Declaration of Independence, which was issued on July 4, 1776, refers to the "thirteen united States of America," it was a little more than two months later when the Congress passed a series of resolutions, including one in which it replaced "United Colonies" with "United States" as the fledgling nation's new name.



Happy Birthday, America

and enjoy the
July 4th weekend.
everyone!



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Fun Facts

about some of the colonies that formed the U.S.



It's been 250 years since the 13 colonies joined to form the United States of America, but those 13 territories continue to feature prominently throughout the country each and every day. That's because the 13 stripes on the American flag represent the original 13 colonies.

The American flag serves as a visible reminder of the 13 colonies, and that's not the only interesting fact about the territories that would become the United States of America.



There was a constitution that predates the United States Constitution.

ConnecticutHistory.org notes that the Connecticut Colony had a framework for government by the mid-seventeenth century not unlike the one that would be spelled out in the U.S. Constitution. The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut were adopted in 1639 and are considered the first written constitution in America. Roger Ludlow of Windsor is believed to have drafted the Fundamental Orders, which consisted of a preamble and 11 orders (or laws) and mirrored trading company charters common at the time. Notably, the Orders did not reference the authority of the crown.



A debt sparked the founding of Pennsylvania.

After the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660, Charles II of England took the throne. Money was tight at the time, so Sir William Penn, a British admiral, funded the rebuilding of the Royal Navy out of his own pocket. Charles II was petitioned for repayment by Sir William's son, also named William Penn, twenty years later. But the younger Penn, who had become a Quaker by this point, requested land in lieu of funds, with a goal toward establishing a place where religious tolerance was rule. The king granted the younger Penn's request in 1681, and decreed that the territory granted to Penn be named after his father. Thus, Pennsylvania got its name.



Colonial New Jersey was home to a notable rift in a famous family.

Benjamin Franklin was among the most renowned and recognizable of the Founding Fathers of the United States, and his commitment to the ideals of the burgeoning nation did not waver even when

the conflict that became the American Revolutionary War divided his family. William Franklin was a son Benjamin fathered outside his common-law marriage to Deborah Read. Though William was raised by his father and Read, father and son did not see eye-to-eye on every issue, including the war. William, in fact, served as the thirteenth and final Colonial Governor of New Jersey, and remained a steadfast loyalist throughout the conflict. The prospects of victory were looking dim for loyalists by 1781, and William departed for England in 1782, never to return to New Jersey or the infant nation it became a part of. Curiously, William's own son from an extra-marital relationship, William Temple Franklin, sided with his grandfather during the conflict, and even served Benjamin Franklin while the latter negotiated a pivotal alliance between America and France.



Rent was cheap in New Hampshire by the mid-eighteenth century.

The colony of New Hampshire was so sparsely populated by the end of the French and Indian War in 1762 that Governor Benning Wentworth came up with a unique way to entice people to move to what's now known as the Granite State. According to History.com, Wentworth recruited settlers by offering one-acre lots that required annual rental payments of just a single ear of Indian corn payable on December 25.

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THE FIFTY STATES

Test your knowledge of United States geography by filling in the map.



Camels have a unique place in American history

Jefferson Davis's name is inextricably linked to the American Civil War, during which the politician who represented Mississippi in the United States Senate served as president of the Confederate States. But Davis's influence on the United States predated the nation's civil war, and he even played a notable role in one of the more unique events in American military history.

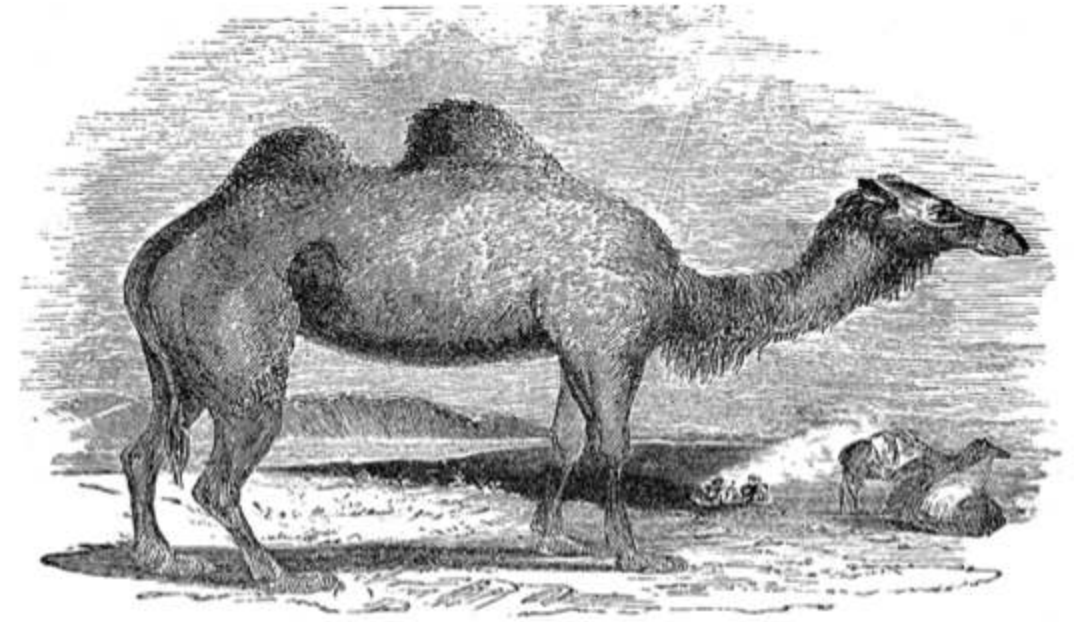
While serving as Secretary of War in 1855, Davis ordered Brevet Major Henry C. Wayne to arrange for the importation of camels to be used for military purposes. Davis had urged Congress to establish a United States Army Camel Corps for years, and even formally introduced measures to establish such a unit in the early 1850s, efforts that ultimately proved unsuccessful.

Though few might associate camels with the United States, Davis's campaign to bring camels into the American military fold was

not as eccentric as it might seem in modern times. According to the Army University Press, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, which officially ended the Mexican-American War upon its signing in 1848, added more than half a million square miles of land to the United States, a significant portion of which included desert lands in what is now the American southwest.

The discovery of gold in California around this same time also increased traffic in this new region of the country, which remained dangerous even after the signing of the treaty. Advocates of a camel corps insisted the animals would allow the U.S. Army, tasked with keeping the region safe, to do their job more effectively.

Though the camel experiment ultimately failed due to a number of variables, it remains a unique and lesser known event in American military history.




Union County Historical Society Celebrates

250 Years of Independence

Happy Birthday America!

See you at the Parade!

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Notable facts about the *land of the free*

The United States of America is often characterized as “the land of the free,” a characterization that serves as a feather in the cap of the nation that will celebrate its two hundred and fiftieth anniversary in 2026. Upon hearing the phrase “land of the free,” it’s understandable if thoughts immediately go to protected rights like freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of the press. But what about the “land” in the land of free? As Americans prepare to celebrate their nation’s semiquincentennial, recognition of various geographical features of the land of the free can underscore why the United States of America is such a unique place to call home.

The tallest mountain in the world is in America.

Climbers who train for years in the hopes of one day making their way up Mount Everest might be surprised to learn the mountain located on the border between Koshi Province, Nepal and the Tibet Autonomous Region is not, in fact, the world’s tallest mountain. While Mount Everest is the highest mountain above sea level, the world’s tallest mountain is Mauna Kea, which is in the Hawaiian islands. According to the American Geography Portal, when measured from its base on the sea floor to its summit, Mauna Kea is more than 32,000 feet tall, topping Mount Everest by a few thousand feet.

Oregon is home to one of the world’s deepest lakes.

With a depth of approximately 1,950 feet, Crater Lake in south-central Oregon is the eleventh deepest lake in the world and the second deepest lake in North America. The National Park Service notes that Crater Lake, fed by rain and snow, is among the most pristine lakes on Earth, making it a popular destination for artists, photographers and sightseers.

Alaska’s location makes it a particularly unique place in the land of the free.

It may surprise no one to learn that Alaska features the northernmost point in all of the United States. But it may raise an eyebrow or two to learn that The Last Frontier contains both the easternmost and westernmost points in the country. The Prime Meridian is an imaginary line that divides the Earth into the eastern and western hemispheres. According to The State of Alaska, the westernmost point in the state, and thus the entire country, is Amatignak Island. Seventy miles away and still in Alaska, but on the other side of the meridian and thus technically in the eastern hemisphere, sits Pochnoi Point on Semisopochnoi Island, which is the easternmost point in the country.

You end up in the “same” place no matter which direction you go when departing Stamford, Connecticut.

Located in southwestern Connecticut, Stamford is in a notably unique geographic location. If you travel due east, due west, due south, or due north when departing Stamford, you will end up entering the same state: New York. This is the only place in all of the United States where traveling along the four compass points will leave you in the same place no matter the direction you choose.

City of Hiawasse

Happy Birthday America!

From Mayor Jay Chastain, Jr.,
Council & Staff of the City of Hiawasse

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★ **BIRTHDAY** ★

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Historic locales *across the* United States

Americans will celebrate the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the United States in 2026. A semiquincentennial is a notable anniversary, and there's been no shortage of noteworthy events throughout United States history. The places where many of those events took place have been preserved by local and national historical societies, and visiting such sites can make for a great way to gain a greater understanding of American history. The National Trust for Historic Preservation® works to maintain and revitalize historic sites, and that boasts a number of benefits. History buffs may insist there's no experience quite like visiting a historic site and feeling an immediate connection to past eras and peoples. And such sites also provide a boost to local economies while helping to establish a shared sense of civic duty and belonging, which ultimately helps to build strong communities. With so much to gain from visiting historic locales, those celebrating 250 years of the United States can visit any of these sites across the country to bolster those celebrations.

• Historic Rural Schoolhouses of Montana, Montana:

The National Trust notes that each of Montana's 56 counties still features at least one rural schoolhouse, many of which are one- or two-room buildings where generations of school-aged children were educated. A visit to one of these schoolhouses provides incredible context to what life in the state of Montana was like in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



• Ellis Island National Monument, New York, New York:

The National Trust reports Ellis Island in New York Harbor accommodated more than 12 million immigrants seeking new opportunities in the United States. Perhaps the most telling figure regarding the influence of Ellis Island concerns how many current Americans can trace their ancestry to immigrants who were processed at this globally recognized landmark. The National Trust estimates that at least 40 percent of Americans have an ancestor processed at Ellis Island.



• Ford Piquette Avenue Plant, Detroit, Michigan:

America has long had a love affair with automobiles, so any tour of historical sites in the United States should include a trip to the Ford Piquette Avenue Plant. The birthplace of the Model T, the Ford Piquette Avenue Plant is among the most significant automotive heritage sites across the globe. The museum features more than 65 rare vehicles and enough original automotive artifacts to impress anyone interested in an industry that helped to reinvent the United States and even the world.

• Blandwood Museum, Greensboro, North Carolina:

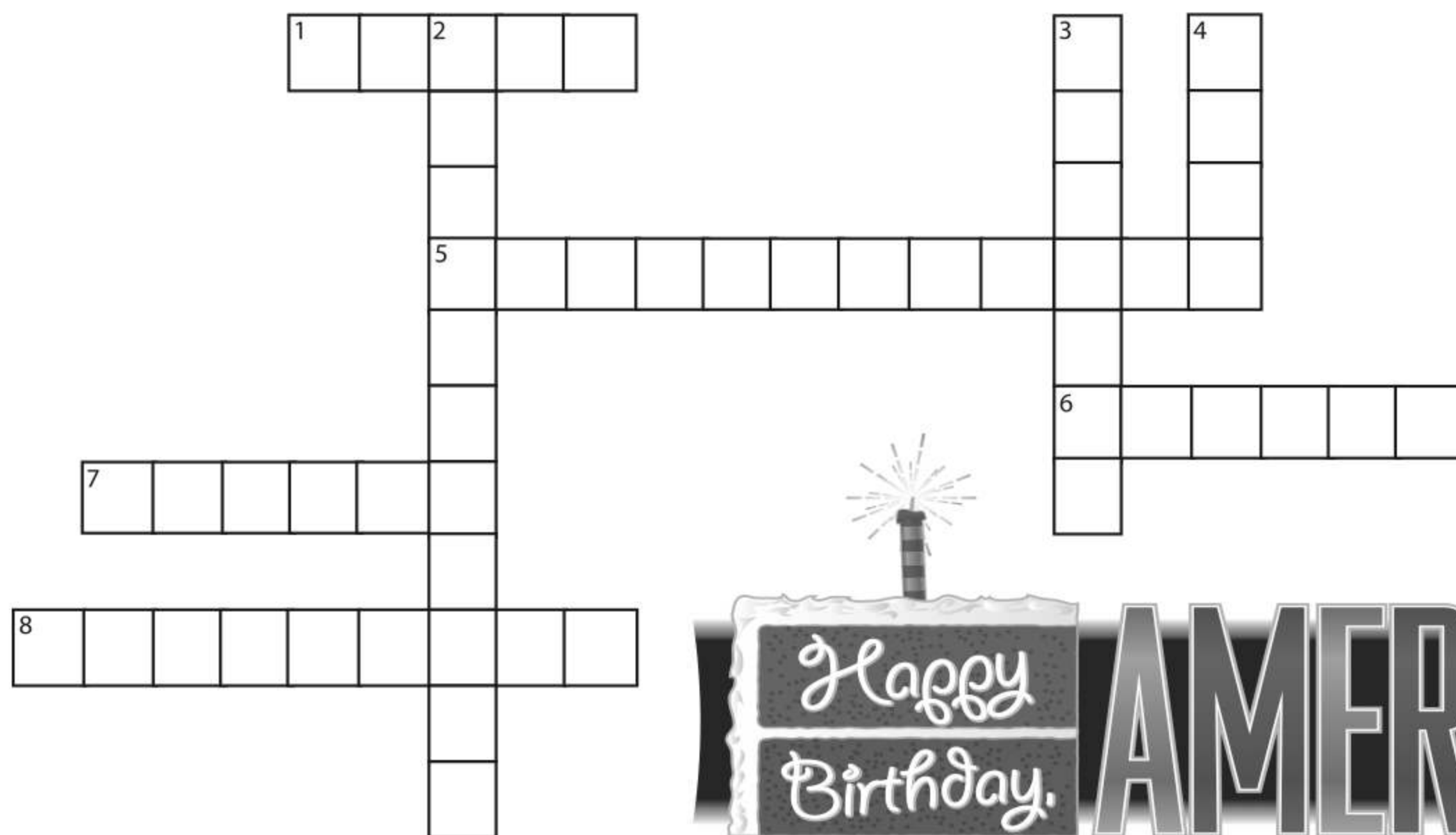
Designed in 1844 by New York architect Alexander Jackson Davis, Blandwood is America's oldest

Italianate-style house and museum. John Motley Morehead was the twenty-ninth governor of North Carolina and owner of the house, which was where North Carolina was surrendered during the Civil War, thus ending the conflict in the state. Human rights activist Dorothea Dix was among the many who visited Blandwood over the years, and Dix convinced Governor Morehead to fund a state hospital for people with mental illness.

• Cozens Ranch Museum, Fraser, Colorado:

History buffs with a passion for the era of the pioneers will want to add Cozens Ranch Museum to their travel bucket list. The Grand County Historical Association notes that former Central City sheriff William Zane Cozens moved to the Fraser Valley with his family in 1874 and soon set to building a residence, among other structures. Countless weary travelers who made it through the Berthoud Pass in the nineteenth century visited Cozens Ranch over the years, making this a must-visit site for those looking to experience a taste of pioneering life during a much romanticized era in American history.

Kids' Criss-Cross Puzzle

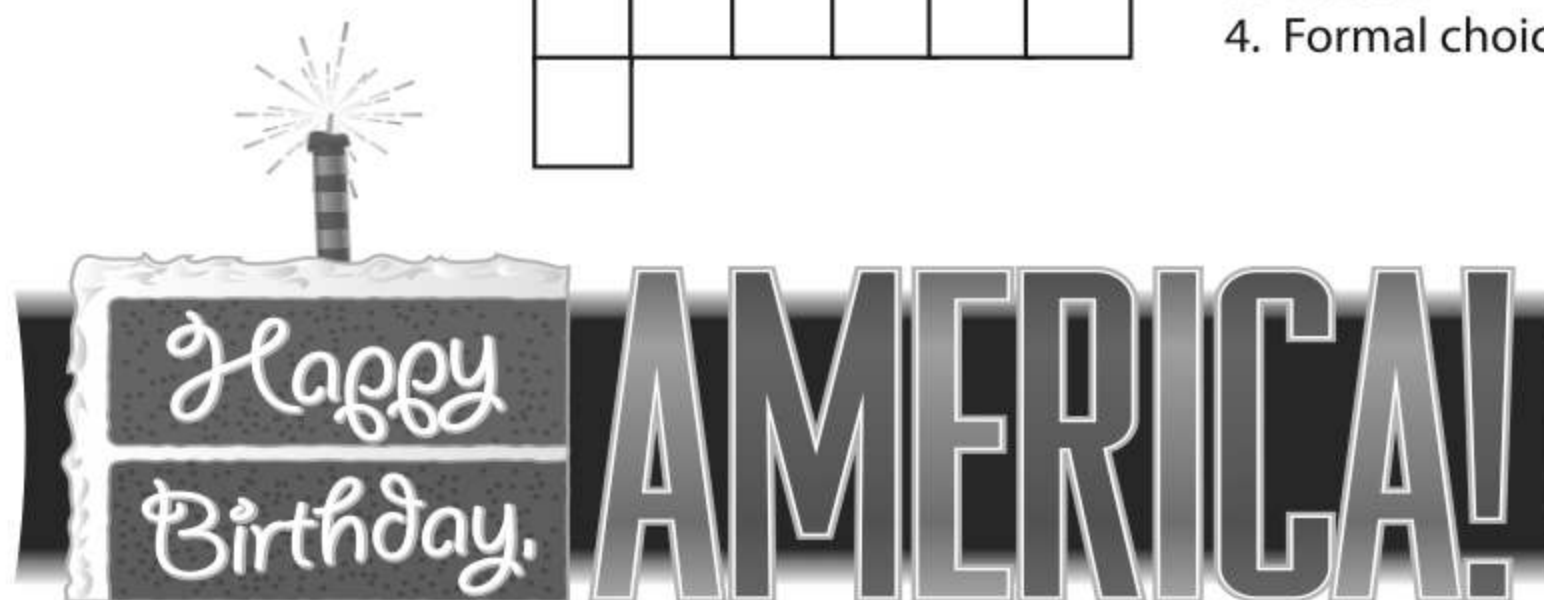


ACROSS

1. Feeling of satisfaction
5. State of being free
6. Privileges or protections
7. Joined together
8. Government by the people

DOWN

2. People
3. Nation
4. Formal choice



Answers on page 19

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How to celebrate and commemorate America's semiquincentennial

Commemorations of America's national history are part of annual celebrations of American independence that take place each year on July 4, which marks the anniversary of the nation's birth. Those celebrations have a reputation for being particularly festive and tend to be capped off by awe-inspiring fireworks displays once the sun sets on the Fourth of July. The liveliness of annual celebrations of American independence figures to be taken up a notch in 2026, when the United States will celebrate its semiquincentennial. Two hundred and fifty years of nationhood warrants a particularly jovial celebration, and there are many ways Americans can commemorate and celebrate the nation on this momentous occasion.

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Support a local historical society.

Local historical societies have played a vital role in preserving United States history, and many of those who work in support of these organizations do so on a volunteer basis. Expressions of support for local historical societies can go a long way toward helping them continue to fulfill their missions. Financial donations, letters to state and local political officials urging increased funding for historical societies, visits to local historical sites, and even volunteering to help organizations fulfill their missions are a handful of ways to ensure these groups can continue to make invaluable contributions to their communities and the nation.



Volunteer with local government.

Pitching in to help local government organizations planning semiquincentennial celebrations is another great way to honor America's two hundred and fiftieth anniversary. The days and weeks surrounding July 4 will likely be filled with anniversary-related events and celebrations, but many communities also plan to commemorate the semiquincentennial throughout 2026, providing plenty of opportunities for volunteers of all ages to lend a hand.

Help digitize archival materials.

The modern world is accustomed to digital files and instant access to information, but the vast majority of records pertaining to American history and accounts of Americans' personal experiences remain preserved on paper. Photos and documents wear down over time, and American archivists face an uphill battle as they work to digitize records for the purpose of long-term preservation. Anyone who wants to lend a hand and help to preserve local and national history can speak with a local library or university librarian about what's being done to digitize historical accounts and records and offer to lend a hand with such efforts. If no such efforts are currently being undertaken in your community, offer to spearhead a digitalization project and recruit others to participate.

Explore the country.

Travel presents another great way to celebrate the nation on its two hundred and fiftieth birthday. The United States is a vast nation with many unique subcultures and local customs, not to mention countless locales that have featured prominently in American history. When planning vacations in 2026, resolve to stay within U.S. borders and seek ways to learn about the nation's history during your travels.



America's semiquincentennial is a big deal, and there's much residents of the United States can do to take an active role in the celebration and commemoration of the nation's history.

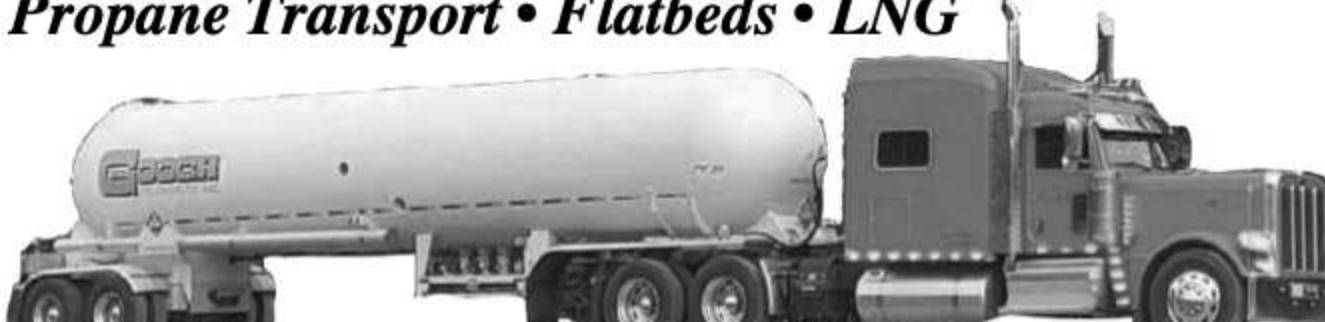

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Did You KNOW?

The Library of Congress is the largest library in the world

An act of the United States Congress approved in 1800 continues to have an impact even today, when it's still paying dividends for lawmakers, librarians, scholars, and the general public. As Congress prepared to move the national government from Philadelphia to Washington in 1800, founding father and then-President of the United States John Adams approved an act allocating \$5,000 for books to be used by Congressmen. Thus marked the beginning of what is now known as the Library of Congress, which has since become the largest library in the world as well as the home of the U.S. Copyright Office. In 1802, President Adams's successor, Thomas Jefferson, made the job of Librarian of Congress a presidential appointment, and it remains so today.

The Library of Congress continually adds to its collection, which currently consists of millions of books in roughly 470 languages.



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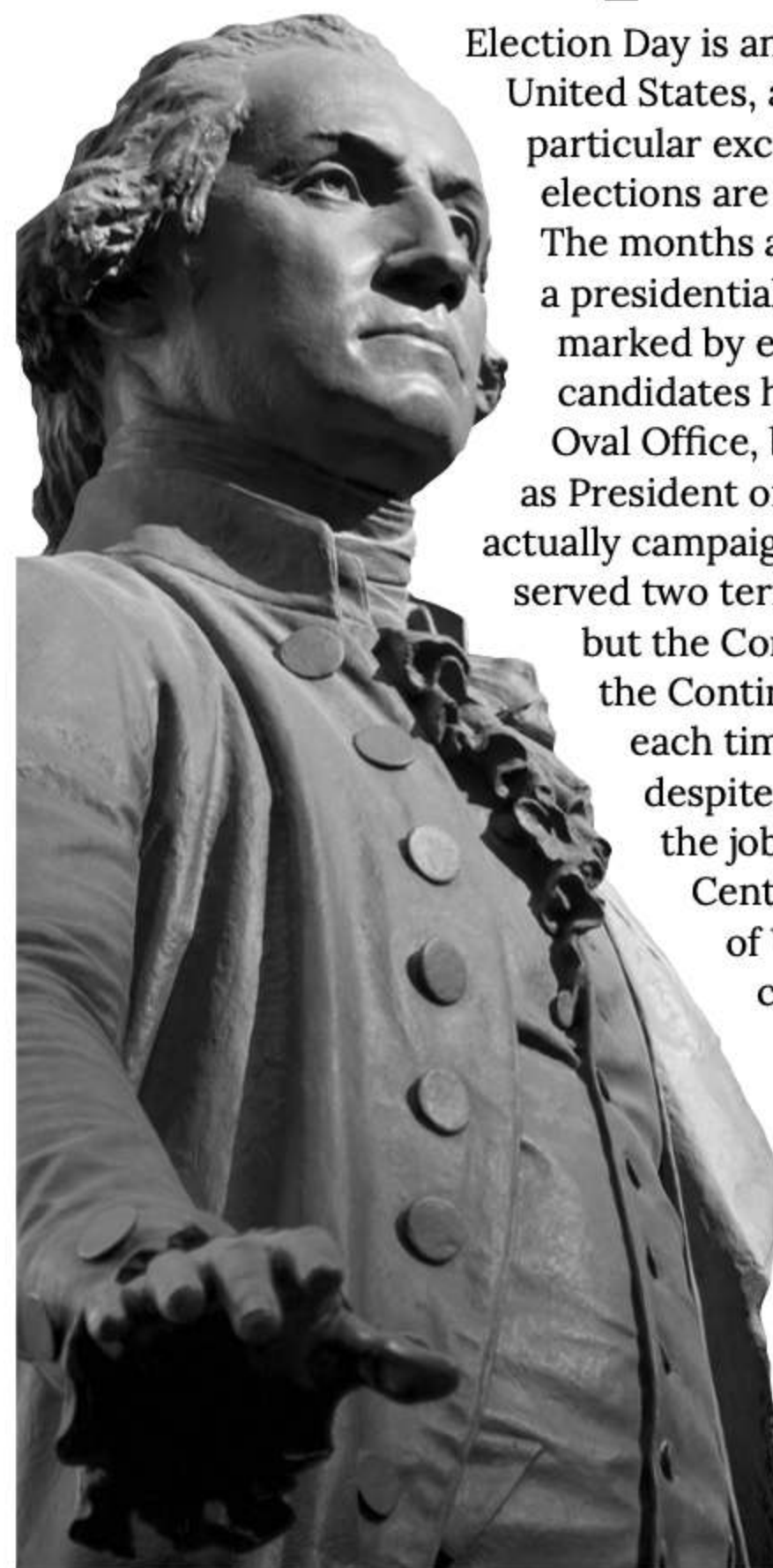
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An era before presidential campaigns



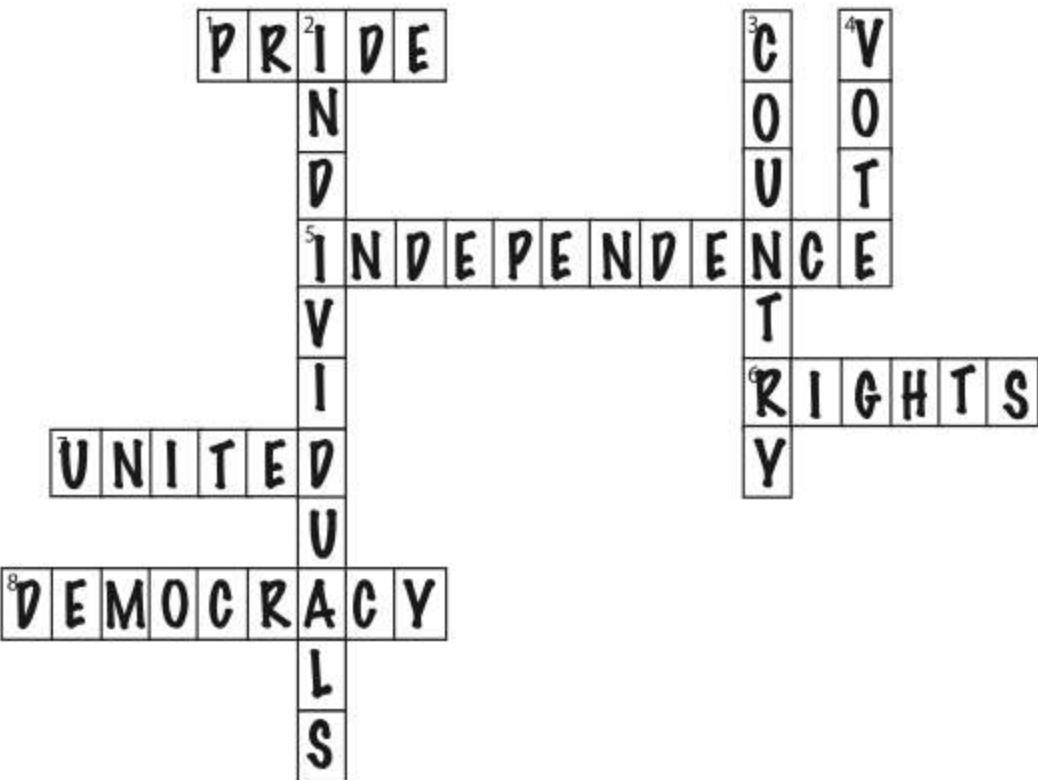
Election Day is an annual event in the United States, and it's one that generates particular excitement when presidential elections are held every four years. The months and even years before a presidential election are typically marked by extensive campaigning by candidates hoping to be voted into the Oval Office, but the first man to serve as President of the United States never actually campaigned. George Washington served two terms as American president, but the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army was chosen each time by the electoral college despite never campaigning for the job. According to the Miller Center at the University of Virginia, the political campaigns modern voters know well did not exist in 1788. Despite the lack of campaigning, Washington was the electoral college's unanimous choice for president in 1789, a feat he repeated in 1792.



Map & Puzzle Answers



Kids' Criss-Cross Puzzle Answers:



Happy **250th** **BIRTHDAY AMERICA**

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