

# 4th of July Trivia Fun

Here are the answers to the 2008 trivia questions.

For each question the Google search query is given. Below that you will find a URL returned from the search. This is generally the first, or among the top returns. If there is a quote in the text below not attributed to another source, it is from the cited URL.

1. George Washington was inaugurated as first president of the United States in this the first capital of our nation. **Answer: New York**

**Google search:** George Washington inauguration

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/washingtoninaug.htm>

“The Constitution of the United States was ratified by the states in June 1788. In February of the following year the new nation's Electoral College selected George Washington to be its first President. On April 16, 1789 Washington began the journey from his home at Mount Vernon to New York, then the nation's capital, where he would be inaugurated.”

In the early history of our country, there was great debate over how to address the President. Some proposed *His Excellency, George Washington*, feeling that to do otherwise would be a signal to the community of nations that our president was something less in stature than the kings and queens of Europe. The crux of the revolution, however, was against monarchy, so in the end the simple *Mr. President* was adopted. The following quote from *Joseph J. Ellis, (His Excellency George Washington, Alfred A. Knopf NY 2004; p185)* describes the high esteem (almost saintly adoration) the citizens of the nation held their newly elected leader.

*"Washington's weeklong trip from Mount Vernon to New York became one prolonged coronation ceremony. It began with crowds of more than ten thousand celebrants cheering him amid cannon salutes and poetic tributes at Baltimore and Wilmington. Outside Philadelphia he was obliged to mount a white horse so that the twenty thousand spectators could see him as he crossed the Schuylkill. Charles Wilson Peale had designed an arch of triumph over the bridge, and his daughter Angelical lowered a laurel crown upon Washington's head as he passed under the arch. At Trenton a chorus of white-robed girls tossed flowers from their baskets in his path while singing a tribute to 'The Defender of the Mothers, The Protectors of the Daughters.' "*

2. What two presidents of the US died on exactly the same day in the same year?

**Answer: John Adams and Thomas Jefferson**

**Google search:** United States presidents death dates

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_United\\_States\\_Presidents\\_by\\_date\\_of\\_death](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_States_Presidents_by_date_of_death)

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams died within 5 ½ hours of each other on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1826, the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence! Both Adams and Jefferson (along with Benjamin Franklin) were members of the drafting committee for the Declaration of Independence. While Jefferson is often cited as the author, Adams felt that he had contributed as much to the document as Jefferson. There was a life-long tension between the two patriots. Adams succeeded George Washington as the second President of the United States. In those days the runner-up (Jefferson received 68 electoral votes to John Adams' 71) was given the position as Vice President. The two were politically opposite. Adams was a Federalist who envisioned a strong federal

government while Jefferson was a “Democratic-Republican” espousing strong states rights. John Adams was defeated in his bid for a second term, and Thomas Jefferson became the only Vice President to beat a sitting President in an election. As brothers of the Revolution, both Adams and Jefferson were passionate about their emerging country, yet they were rivals. In their later life both ex-presidents had extensive correspondence and began to see more clearly the other’s position. On his death bed, Adams in a final tribute to his revolutionary brother is reported to have said, “*Thomas Jefferson survives.*” The reality was that Thomas Jefferson had died five and one half hours earlier!

3. The Declaration of Independence was approved by the Second Continental Congress on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1776, but it was not signed until all 13 colonies approved the document. On what date did John Hancock president of the Congress begin the signing of the document?

**Answer: No one is sure!**

**Google search:** john hancock signed declaration

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Hancock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Hancock)



“Congress approved the wording of the Declaration on July 4 and then sent it to the printer. Whether Hancock or anyone else signed the document that was sent to the printer is unknown, because that document is lost, presumably destroyed in the printing process. The printer produced the first published version of the Declaration, the widely distributed Dunlap broadside, and Hancock, as President of Congress, was the only congressman whose name appeared on it. Hancock's name was printed, not signed, on the Dunlap broadside: his famous signature appears on a different document—a sheet of parchment that was engrossed (carefully handwritten) sometime after July 19 and signed on August 2 by Hancock and those delegates present. This is the copy of the Declaration of Independence on display at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.” (quote from wikipedia source above).

4. What three patriots served on the committee that picked the bald eagle to appear on the national seal?

**Answer: Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson**

**Google search:** bald eagle national seal

<http://www.baldeagleinfo.com/eagle/eagle9.html>



After the thirteen colonies declared their independence from Great Britain, the Second Continental Congress decided the emerging nation needed an official seal. So Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson were appointed as a committee to design a Seal of the United States of America. However, the only portion of the design accepted by the congress was the statement *E pluribus unum* (*Out of many, one*), attributed to Thomas Jefferson.

“Six years and two committees later, in May of 1782, the brother of a Philadelphia naturalist provided a drawing showing an eagle displayed as the symbol of “supreme power and authority.” Congress liked the drawing, so before the end of 1782, an eagle holding a bundle of arrows in one talon and an olive branch in the other was accepted as the seal. The image was completed with a shield of red and white stripes covering the breast of the bird; a crest above the eagle's head, with a cluster of thirteen stars surrounded by bright rays going out to a ring of clouds; and a

banner, held by the eagle in its bill, bearing the words *E pluribus unum*. Yet it was not until 1787 that the American bald eagle was officially adopted as the emblem of the United States.”

Benjamin Franklin was a dissenter to using the Bald Eagle. Instead, Franklin proposed the American Turkey.

“I wish that the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country, he is a bird of bad moral character, he does not get his living honestly, you may have seen him perched on some dead tree, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the labor of the fishing-hawk, and when that diligent bird has at length taken a fish, and is bearing it to its nest for the support of his mate and young ones, the bald eagle pursues him and takes it from him.... Besides he is a rank coward; the little kingbird, not bigger than a sparrow attacks him boldly and drives him out of the district. He is therefore by no means a proper emblem for the brave and honest. . . of America. . . . For a truth, the turkey is in comparison a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America . . . a bird of courage, and would not hesitate to attack a grenadier of the British guards, who should presume to invade his farmyard with a red coat on.”

5. This founding brother was born on the island of Nevis in the West Indies. His father abandoned the family and his mother died when he was eleven years old. This patriot and his fifteen year-old brother lived alone. At age sixteen, this patriot sailed alone to America. With no formal education, he was admitted to Kings College (later to become Columbia University). During the Revolutionary period, this young man became an aide-de-camp to General George Washington. Later when Washington was inaugurated as our first president, this patriot became the first Secretary of the Treasury. Who was this patriot?

**Answer: Alexander Hamilton**

**Google Search:** secretaries treasury

<http://www.ustreas.gov/education/history/secretaries/>

A great reference to read *is Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow (Penguin Books, 2004). Alexander Hamilton’s mother Rachel had been married before she met James Hamilton, Alexander’s father. The first marriage faltered and Rachel’s husband had her incarcerated (In those days a husband could have this done to his wife without a trial). After being released from prison, Rachel fled. She met James Hamilton, but was unable to marry him because her divorce granted under Danish law prohibited remarrying. As a result Alexander was considered an illegitimate child and was barred from attending public school. Like Benjamin Franklin, Hamilton was largely self taught. Hamilton’s father abandoned the family and his mother died. Alexander and his brother became wards of Peter Llytton, his thirty-two year old half-cousin. To add to the incredible story of misfortune, Peter committed suicide. To support himself (age 12) Hamilton began clerking at Beekman and Cruger, a mercantile house. By age 15 he was in charge. How could anyone overcome such odds! This young man sailed to America at age 16, enrolled in a school to bolster his fundamentals, was admitted to what was to become Columbia University, and rose to become one of the most powerful men in the newly-born United States.

6. This president was the first not to come from the nation’s “east coast elite”. A long-time pillar of Washington society described the inauguration in a letter to a friend: “The President, [was] literally nearly pressed to death and almost suffocated and torn to pieces by the people... Cut glass and china to the amount of several thousand dollars had been broken in the struggle to get the refreshments...Ladies fainted, men were seen with

bloody noses and such a scene of confusion took place as is impossible to describe.”

Who was he?

**Answer: Andrew Jackson**

**Google Search:** Ladies fainted, men were seen with bloody noses

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/jacksoninauguration.htm>

“It was one of the foulest presidential campaigns in American history. The race for the White House in 1828 pitted incumbent John Quincy Adams against Andrew Jackson, hero of the Battle of New Orleans.” (War of 1812) “This was the second time that Jackson and Adams had faced one another for the presidency. The beginning of the 1828 campaign revealed little difference between the two candidates on the major political issues of the day - maintaining protective tariffs and encouraging national improvement. It became obvious that the race would be a personality contest and that Jackson had the clear lead. Faced with this reality, the Adams camp injected scandal into their campaign... The campaign descended into a mud-slinging contest.”

In the Wikipedea account of the inaguration:

“Jackson invited the public to attend the White House ball honoring his first inauguration. Many poor people, instead of dressing for the occasion, came to the inaugural ball in their homemade clothes. The crowd became so large that Jackson's guards could not hold them out of the White House. The White House became so crowded with people that dishes and decorative pieces in the White House began to break. Some people stood on good chairs in muddied boots just to get a look at the President. The crowd had become so raucous that the attendants poured punch in tubs and put it on the White House lawn to lure people out of the White House. This was the first time that a President invited the public to attend the inaugural ball.”

7. This Vice President of the United States killed a former Secretary of the Treasury in a duel on the banks of the Hudson River in Weehawken, New Jersey. Who was he?

**Answer: Aaron Burr**

**Google Search:** duel weehawken

[R1] <http://duel2004.weehawkenhistory.org/>

Alexander Hamilton had been an activist in the Federalist party since he came to power as the Secretary of the Treasury in the Washington Administration. When Washington retired after two terms (there was no law at the time, but Washington decided it was time for him to go) the newly elected president John Adams decided to keep Washington's cabinet. Hamilton undermined Adams by literally controlling the Adams' cabinet. Adams was frustrated by Hamilton's control of his administration. There is a lot to be said about Adams, but there is simply not enough room to do that here. When Jefferson was elected the third President of the United States, there was a political reversal. Jefferson ran against the strong central power envisioned by Washington, Adams, and Hamilton. In fact, the Jefferson election saw the emergence of political parties. The Electoral College vote in the election of 1800 was Jefferson (73) Aaron Burr (73), John Adams (65), Thomas Pinckney (54), and John Jay (1). The election was thrown into the House of Representatives with each State having one vote. It took 36 ballots over several days, before Jefferson was declared the winner, and Aaron Burr became the vice president. The depth of animosity between Hamilton and Burr was rooted in rivalry. In 1798 Hamilton influenced General George Washington not to appoint Burr as brigadier-general in the Continental Army. Hamilton publicly insulted Burr at a political dinner for the Federalist Party in New York. “It is reported that he voiced a despicable slur upon the name an reputation of Aaron Burr.” All of this boiled over with a challenge by Burr for Hamilton to meet him on the dueling grounds above the Hudson in Weehawken, New Jersey. Dueling was against the law, but both men felt their honor was injured and

Hamilton responded. It is unclear if Hamilton had intended to fire, but Burr fired first and after he was hit Hamilton discharged his pistol into the air, perhaps as a reflex. The duel ended in the mortal wounding of Hamilton (who later died in his home in New York) and the political death of Aaron Burr.

8. What outspoken First Lady said: “Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember all men would be tyrants if they could.”

**Answer: Abigail Adams**

**Google Search:** . Remember all men would be tyrants if they could

<http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/aea/cfm/doc.cfm?id=L17760331aa>

John Adams had a sense that history was being made and he was meticulous with regard to the saving of all correspondence. A wealth of these letters are available from the Massachusetts Historical Society website (<http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/aea/>). The quote was in a letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams March 31, 1776. Abigail was uncharacteristically outspoken for a woman of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In those days women could not own property and, in fact, they were considered property of their husbands. Here is the full quote:

“..and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If perticular care and attention is not paid to the Laidies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.” [misspellings not edited]

Go Abby! Incidentally, history does not count Abigail Adams as a “good speller” and grammarian, though she was eloquent!

9. Because of his influence on the nation’s fundamental laws, this founding brother is referred to as “Father of the Constitution”.

**Answer: James Madison**

**Google Search:** father of constitution

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Madison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Madison)

James Madison along with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay was an author of the Federalist Papers (<http://www.foundingfathers.info/federalistpapers/>). These essays set the foundation for what was to become the Constitution of the United States of America. Eleven years before the Constitutional Convention, Madison helped develop the Constitution for the Commonwealth of Virginia. This served as a model for the constitutions of other states and the U.S. Constitution. In 1789 Madison drafted the Bill of Rights (first ten amendments to the Constitution) that explicitly addresses the freedoms we hold so dear. The separation of Church and State was the first amendment. Within Virginia (as well as other colonial states) people were taxed to support the Anglican Church—The Establishment. In the Virginia Constitution Patrick Henry introduced a bill to change this to require every Virginian be a member of *some* denomination and pay taxes to support it. Both Jefferson and Madison were opposed to this. Jefferson penned the Virginia Statue for Religious Freedom, which in part states: “..no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burdened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.”

10. These two founding brothers were named Ministers Plenipotentiary (meaning with full power to represent the government) to France as they worked to secure the support of Louis XVI for the American Revolution.

**Answer: Benjamin Franklin (9/14/1778 to 5/17/1789) and Thomas Jefferson (3/10/1785 to 9/26/1789)**

**Google Search:** Ministers Plenipotentiary france

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Ambassador\\_to\\_France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Ambassador_to_France)

In her book *A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America*, Pulitzer Prize winning author Stacy Schiff describes the role that seventy year old Benjamin Franklin played in securing the support of France for the independence of the fledgling united colonies. It is hard to imagine how it was possible to interact with Versailles when the only communications between the continents was by wind-driven vessels (which were subjected to seizure by the British on the high seas). There was much confusion and disagreement between the commissioners, which Franklin headed. In 1778, Franklin was given the title Minister Plenipotentiary (meaning with full power to represent the government) to France. He was now free to negotiate with Versailles with the guarantee that he was speaking for the nation. Many persons including John Adams also worked with Franklin in his Paris efforts. In addition to his role as a leader in the fraternity of *Founding Fathers* of this nation, Franklin was recognized as a philosopher and scientist. In 1762, Oxford University awarded Franklin an honorary doctorate for his scientific accomplishments explaining electricity—remember his experiment with lightning? And in 1772, prior to Franklin moving to France, he was elected to the French Academy of Sciences.

Franklin was the darling of Paris. He did not dress the part of an ambassador and he fumbled in his ability to speak French. Yet in the salons of Paris, he was the center of attention. The ladies (both married and unmarried) swooned when he was around. He was beset by requests to sit for artists, and it was chic for the elite of Paris to have a painting of Franklin in their homes. In large measure, the high esteem in which Franklin was held made his mission to secure support of the American cause from Louis XVI successful.

At age 80 after a decade serving his country as Ambassador to France, Franklin resigned and returned to America. His replacement was Thomas Jefferson, now the second Minister Plenipotentiary to France.