4TH OF JULY

235th Independence Day of the United States of America

The Daily Star SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT July 4, 2011

Barack Obama
President of the United States of America

Fourth of July facts

ON this day in 1776, the Declaration of Independence was approved by the Continental Congress, setting the 13 colonies on the road to freedom as a sovereign nation. As always, this most American of holidays will be marked by parades, fireworks and backyard barbecues across the country.

2.5 million: In July 1776, the estimated number of people living in the newly independent nation.

311.7 million: The estimated population of the U.S. on this July Fourth.

Flags

$3.2 million: In 2010, the dollar value of U.S. imports of American flags. The vast majority of this amount ($2.8 million) was for U.S. flags made in China.

$486,026: Dollar value of U.S. flags exported in 2010. Mexico was the leading customer, purchasing $256,407 worth.

$302.7 million: Annual dollar value of shipments of fabricated flags, banners and similar emblems by the nation's manufacturers, according to the latest published economic census data.

Fireworks

$190.7 million: The value of fireworks imported from China in 2010, representing the bulk of all U.S. fireworks imported ($197.3 million). U.S. exports of fireworks, by comparison, came to just $37.0 million in 2010, with Japan purchasing more than any other country ($6.3 million):Patriotic-Sounding Place Names

Thirty-one places have "liberty" in their names. The most populous one as of April 1, 2010, is Liberty, Missouri (29,149). Iowa, with four, has more of these places than any other state: Libertyville, New Liberty, North Liberty and West Liberty.

Thirty-five places have "eagle" in their names.

Eleven places have "independence" in their names.

Nine places have "freedom" in their names.

One place has "patriot" in its name: Patriot, Indiana.

Five places have "America" in their names.

The British are coming!

$98.3 billion: Dollar value of trade last year between the United States and the United Kingdom, making the British,

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MESSAGE FROM CHARGE D'AFFAIRES

JULY 4, 2011, marks the 235th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America. Each year on this day, Americans honor and celebrate the courageous action that our nation's Founders took so long ago--publicly declaring our independence as a free nation. With that brave and profound decision, the Founders demonstrated their love for liberty and proved that they were willing to fight and die for freedom.

Throughout our nation's history, Americans have been committed in their efforts to build a country of liberty, peace and opportunity for all. The United States is dedicated to the belief that all men and women are created equal and that we are endowed with certain rights, including the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. July 4 -- Independence Day -- is a time for people around the world, not just Americans, to reflect on the value of freedom.

As we celebrate this day, we reach out to the countries to which we are connected by both heritage and friendship. Bangladesh is one of these countries. Our relationship has grown and deepened over the years from one based on development assistance to a richer partnership that includes significant bilateral trade and investment and cooperation in promoting global peace and security. The growing community of Americans of Bangladeshi origin enriches our heritage and deepens our friendship with Bangladesh.

Today is a day for celebration and pride in the United States. We hope that Bangladeshis here and around the world will join Americans this July 4 in celebrating our friendship, our achievements and our common ideals of democracy.

Nicholas Dean
Charge D'Affaires
Embassy of the United States of America in Dhaka

American identity: Ideas, not ethnicity

MICHAEL JAY FRIEDMAN

In 2000, 28.2% of people living in the New York metropolitan area were foreign born. -- U.S. Census Bureau

Since the United States was founded in the 18th century, Americans have defined themselves not by their racial, religious, and ethnic identity, but by their common values and belief in individual freedom.

IN 1782, barely six years after the United States of America declared its nationhood, Benjamin Franklin offered certain "Information to Those Who Would Remove to America." Among the constellation of outsized historical actors Americans came to know as their "founding fathers," Franklin was in many ways the most typically American: If George Washington was inapproachably august, Thomas Jefferson bookish, and John Adams dour, it was Franklin -- that practical inventor, resourceful businessman, and ever-busy civic catalyst -- who best understood that his countrymen were, as the historian Walter McDougall would later call them, a nation of hustlers. In such a land, Franklin instructed the would-be immigrant:

People do not inquire concerning a Stranger, What is he? but, What can he do? If he has any useful Art, he is welcome; and if he exercises it, and behaves well, he will be respected by all that know him.

Franklin's remark was grounded in first-hand observation: As early as 1750, German immigrants outnumbered

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Rosa Parks: Mother of the civil rights movement

One woman's defiance sparked a political movement

KENNETH M. HARE

ROSA McCauley Parks is known today as the "mother of the civil rights movement" because her arrest for refusing to give up her bus seat sparked the pivotal Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott. She didn't set out to make history when she left her job as a seamstress to board a bus on the afternoon of December 1, 1955. She was tired, and she just wanted to go home. Still, when the bus driver asked her to move toward the back of the bus so that a white man could sit, she couldn't bring herself to do it.

"I didn't get on the bus with the intention of being arrested," she said later. "I got on the bus with the intention of going home."

While she did not know her act would set in motion a 381-day bus boycott, she knew one thing. Her own personal bus boycott began that day.

The arrest and brief jailing of Rosa Parks, a woman highly respected in the black community, and the boycott that followed led to a U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation on city buses. The boycott also raised to national prominence a youthful, little-known minister named Martin Luther King Jr. Under his leadership, the boycott set a pattern for nonviolent, community-based protest that became a successful strategy in the civil rights movement.

There were many forces in Rosa Parks's early life that helped forge her quiet activism. She was born Rosa Louise McCauley on February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Alabama. Her childhood revolved around a small church where her uncle was the pastor. There she developed both a strong faith and a sense of racial pride. She also was strongly influenced by her grandparents, especially her grandfather. He responded to the family's fears of the violent, racist, secret society known as the Ku Klux Klan by keeping a loaded double-barreled shotgun nearby. While the very real possibility of Klan violence never materialized for her immediate family, her grandfather's defiant attitude helped mold her thinking.

When she turned 11, Rosa was sent to a school for girls in Montgomery that had an all-black student body and an all-white teaching staff. At the school, Parks learned "to believe we could do what we wanted in life." She also learned from the teachers that not all white people were bigots.

It was there she met Johnnie Carr, and the two girls started a friendship that would last a lifetime. Carr said of her friend's childhood: "I was noisy and talkative, but she was very quiet, and always stayed out of trouble. But whatever she did, she always put herself completely into it. But she was so quiet you would never have believed she would get to the point of being arrested."

Parks wanted to be a teacher, but had to drop out of school to care for her ailing mother. When she was 18, she fell in love with barber Raymond Parks and they later married. During part of the Second World War, she worked at the racially desegregated Maxwell Field (now Maxwell Air Force Base) in Montgomery. She later attributed her indignation toward the segregated Montgomery transportation system to the contrast with the integrated on-base transportation she had experienced.

After the Supreme Court ruled in her favor, Rosa Parks sat at the front of the bus.

After the bus boycott ended successfully in 1956, Parks continued working for civil rights. On several occasions she joined King to support his efforts. The following year, Parks moved north, to Detroit, Michigan, where she worked for Congressmen John Conyers, who often joked that he had more people visit his office to meet his staff assistant than to meet him.

Parks was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1993. She was presented the Medal of Freedom Award by President Bill Clinton in 1996 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 1999. The Southern Christian Leadership Council established an annual Rosa Parks Freedom Award.

After her death on October 24, 2005, Congress approved a resolution allowing her body to lie in honor in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. She was the 31st person, the first woman, and only the second black person to be accorded that honor since the practice began in 1852.

Rosa Parks was always modest about her role in the civil rights movement, giving credit to a higher power for her decision not to give up her seat. "I was fortunate God provided me with the strength I needed at the precise time conditions were ripe for change. I am thankful to him every day that he gave me the strength not to move."

This article is excerpted from the book Free At Last: The U.S. Civil Rights Movement, published by the Bureau of International Information Programs. View the entire book (PDF, 3.6 MB).

American identity: Ideas, not ethnicity

Immigrants sworn in as citizens in Phoenix, Arizona, in 2007 (© AP Images)

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English stock in his home colony of Pennsylvania. The newcomers were perceived as industrious and law-abiding. Skillful farmers, they improved the land and stimulated economic growth. In 1790, when Congress set the first national standard for naturalized citizenship, it required no ethnic or religious test, no literacy test, no property requirement — just two years residence, good character, and an oath to uphold the Constitution.

Because American identity is, as Franklin understood, grounded in actions and attitudes rather than racial, religious, or ethnic identity. Membership in the national community, as cultural scholar Marc Pachter has written, "demands only the decision to become American."

This communal American identity embraces a pluralism that spans racial, religious, and ethnic divides. It also encompasses a strong civic commitment to individual freedom and to a representative government of limited and clearly defined powers that respects that freedom.

Melting Pot or Salad Bowl?

The American self-image has always harnessed a creative tension between pluralism and assimilation. On the one hand, immigrants traditionally have been expected to immerse themselves in the American "melting pot," a metaphor popularized by the playwright Israel Zangwill's 1908 drama The Melting Pot, in which one character declares:

Understand that America is God's Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming! A fig for your feuds and vendettas! Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American.

Nor were Zangwill's sentiments new ones. As far back as 1782, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, a French immigrant and keen observer of American life, described his new compatriots as:

... a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes ... . What, then, is the American, this new man? He is neither an European nor the descendant of an European; hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. He is an American... leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners....

The melting pot, however, has always existed alongside a competing model, in which each successive immigrant group retains a measure of its distinctiveness and enriches the American whole.

Individualism and Tolerance

If American identity embraces all kinds of people, it also affords them a vast menu of opportunities to make and remake themselves. Americans historically have scorned efforts to trade on "accidents of birth," such as great inherited wealth or social status. Article I of the U.S. Constitution bars the government from granting any title of nobility, and those who cultivate an air of superiority toward their fellow Americans are commonly disparaged for "putting on airs," or worse.

Americans instead respect the "self-made" man or woman, especially where he or she has overcome great obstacles to success.

In the United States, individuals craft their own definitions of success.

Americans hold differing political beliefs, embrace divergent lifestyles, and insist upon broad individual freedoms, but they do so with a remarkable degree of mutual tolerance.

Another key is the powerful guarantees that protect the rights of all Americans from government overreaching. No sooner was the U.S. Constitution ratified than Americans demanded and received the Bill of Rights: 10 constitutional amendments that safeguard basic rights.

There simply is no one picture of a "typical" American. From the powdered-wigged Founding Fathers to the multiracial golf champion Tiger Woods, Americans share a common identity grounded in the freedom consistent always with respecting the freedom of others to live as they choose. The results can bemuse, intrigue, and inspire. Walt Whitman wrote of his nation, "I am large... I contain multitudes."

Abridged

Michael Jay Friedman is a historian and writer in the Bureau of International Information Programs of the U.S. Department of State.

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Fourth of July facts

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our adversary in 1776, our sixth-leading trading partner today.

Fourth of July cookouts

More than 1 in 4 : The chance that the hot dogs and pork sausages consumed on the Fourth of July originated in Iowa. The Hawkeye State was home to 19.0 million hogs and pigs on March 1, 2011. This estimate represents more than one-fourth of the nation's estimated total.

6.8 billion pounds: Total production of cattle and calves in Texas in 2010. Chances are good that the beef hot dogs, steaks and burgers on Americans' backyard grills came from the Lone Star State, which accounted for about one-sixth of the nation's total production. And if the beef did not come from Texas, it very well may have come from Nebraska (4.6 billion pounds) or Kansas (4.1 billion pounds).

Please pass the potato: Potato salad and potato chips are popular food items at Fourth of July barbecues. Approximately half of the nation's spuds were produced in Idaho or Washington State in 2010.

More than three-fourths: Amount of the nation's head lettuce production in 2010 that came from California. This lettuce may end up in a salad or on a burger this Fourth of July.

July 4th has been recognized as Independence Day in the States ever since the country's Founding Fathers signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. To mark the occasion, Americans celebrate with parades, fireworks, concerts and other festive activities.

7 in 10: The chances that the fresh tomatoes in this holiday's salad came from Florida or California, which combined accounted for 71 percent of U.S. fresh market tomato production last year.

81 million: Number of Americans who said they have taken part in a barbecue during the previous year. It's probably safe to assume a lot of these events took place on Independence Day.

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Dr. Franklin's plan

Years before the United States became a nation, Founding Father Benjamin Franklin had a plan for the kind of country he wanted it to be

STEPHAN A. SCHWARTZ

ON a Sunday in late October 1776, seventy-year-old Benjamin Franklin sailed for France to take up his duties as one of his new nation's commissioners to the Court of Versailles. His signature was on the inflammatory Declaration of Independence, a document he had just helped craft. It would be his task to squeeze from the most autocratic monarch in Europe the money to pay for a democratic revolution. His ultimate success in securing the assistance of the French would culminate with his

An undated picture of a sketch of inventor, scientist and a signer of the U.S. Constitution Benjamin Franklin. (© AP Images)

negotiation of the Treaty of Paris, confirming the existence of the United States.

Franklin came late to the idea of independence, but early to the colonies as a distinct union. Once he had embraced independence, he had passionately held to a clear vision of the kind of country he wanted it to be: a democratic republic whose political power flowed from its citizens. To build such a society he had many years before devised a plan with three simple, practical steps: the creation of "virtuous" citizens, the formation of small groups with a common purpose and commitment to the collective good, and the establishment of networks that grew from these groups.

In 1727 he proposed to a group of friends in Philadelphia that they join together to start what he called the "Junto." It was his first experience with the power of small associations. To create opportunities, he used the junto model again and again, spinning off clones when a small group grew too large. The groups could become a loose network of independent societies. The plan was particularly effective in the creation of fire companies, but he started a city watch and libraries with it as well. On May 14, 1743, Franklin began work on his ultimate junto, the American Philosophical Society.

Back from his long embassy tour in France, in 1787 he was selected to be one of Pennsylvania's delegates to the Constitutional Convention. Immediately upon arriving in Philadelphia for the convention, George Washington paid an official call on Franklin, the only other man of comparable stature in the country. At the convention, Washington and Franklin acted as moderating forces. Washington spoke but once in formal sessions, and Franklin only infrequently. But each, in his own way, worked to see that the convention did not fly apart as the passionate debate over the nation's form of government went on.

Two years later, in 1789, Franklin's health was failing. With wisdom's long vision, he decided to amend his will. He gave to Boston and Philadelphia each "One thousand Pounds Sterling." This money was to be loaned in small sums to "young married Artificers, under the Age of twenty-five Years, as have served an Apprenticeship in the said Town; and faithfully fulfilled the Duties required in their Indentures, so as to obtain a good moral Character from at least two respectable Citizens...." Franklin clearly saw each set of three people -- a young "Artificer" and two "respectable Citizens" -- forming a small group. In this way individuals would join in small groups, strengthening their cities, their states and, ultimately, their nation.

The trusts would live on until dissolved in 1991, still in accordance with Franklin's careful instructions. For 200 years they improved the lives of thousands of young families in Boston and Philadelphia, and they do so still, because the $6.5 million in the trusts when they were dissolved was used to support educational programs for the same people Franklin had originally designed them to serve. His trusts anticipated the modern microlending programs of the famous Grameen Bank and similar efforts.

Franklin died about 11 o'clock Saturday night on April 17, 1790, three months past his 84th birthday. His was the largest funeral that had ever been held in America. It was estimated that 20,000 people witnessed the procession and ceremony.

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Our flag was still there

EDWARDS PARK

EVERY hour it used to appear this ghost from the past. A curtain would fall to reveal it, filling an entire wall of the National Museum of American History's great lobby at the Mall entrance. It was, of course, the huge American flag that flew over Baltimore's Fort McHenry on a hot summer night in 1814. "Was," because this object at hand, the original Star-Spangled Banner, is no longer "still there." The effects of age brought it down -- something the British failed to do 186 years ago.

That giant flag, one of the Smithsonian's proudest treasures, is being cleaned and perked up in a large room about 150 feet away and you can see it happening. Look into the conservation lab, and there's the old flag stretched out as though waiting for the surgeon to scrub up. But it's a team of conservators who do the operating here, sitting beside the fragile fabric, inching carefully around it, examining every flaw. They'll finish in 2002, they say.

An exhibition along the concourse offers enough background to challenge many notions you may have cherished about the glories of the War of 1812. One episode that's hard to forget, much as we'd like to, is the sack of our national capital in 1814. A British landing force put ashore from the Chesapeake Bay, marched inland in the humid heat of August and headed for "Washington City."

We scraped up all the militia we could, and ventured to meet the invaders at the suburb of Bladensburg. At first glimpse of approaching redcoats with bayonets aglitter, most of us scampered home as fast as our weary legs could take us. The battle became known as the Bladensburg Races.

The British were tired too, but they pressed on to Washington, burned the Capitol and many other buildings, and stormed into the White House. Before setting it ablaze, the officers sat down to a sumptuous dinner laid out for President and Mrs. James Madison, who had hastily departed, Dolly Madison clutching Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington.

Though the war was hardly our finest hour, it did have its moments, and that's where the flag now at the Smithsonian made its bow. Leaving Washington smoking, the British troops, flushed with success (and wine), marched toward the Bay to rejoin their fleet and attack the vital seaport of Baltimore. We Americans, humbled but angry, finally rose to the occasion. Capable leaders appeared and strengthened Baltimore's defenses, beefing up Fort McHenry, which guarded the harbor, adding shore batteries. More militia arrived from Pennsylvania and Virginia, and a regiment of regulars showed up.

Earlier, in the second year of the war, Fort McHenry's new commander, Maj. George Armistead, had asked for a suitable flag to fly above it, "so large that the British will have no difficulty in seeing it from a distance." The request was granted, and Mary Pickersgill, who supplemented her widow's mite by making flags for Baltimore ships, started fabricating a standard-sized garrison flag -- 42 by 30 feet, with 15 stars stretching 26 inches across and two-foot stripes -- 15 of them, since the number of stripes didn't revert to the original 13 until 1818.

Now the British were really coming. Glutted with victory, and dead tired, they encamped at Upper Marlborough. On the way to Washington, they'd usurped the manor house of Dr. William Beanes, a feisty 65-year-old, eminent in his profession. Now, as the British reached town again, roistering redcoats disturbed Beanes and his dinner guests. They went out to stop the noise and got the drunk soldiers jailed. For this, the British brass ordered that Beanes be taken prisoner.

Aghast, the doctor's friends set about trying to get him released. A parley with the British command called for a skillful negotiator, able to exert charm yet put generals and admirals firmly in their place ... Aha! Francis Scott Key!

Key was one of those people who knew everybody. By 1814, he was a lawyer and a popular success, with a wealthy wife and a fine home in Georgetown, the rich old neighbor of muddy little Washington. He liked to scribble poetry -- a not unusual diversion two centuries ago. He was a godly man, a pacifist who hated this war yet served as an officer in a Georgetown artillery company. Altogether, this able, likable, well-connected dilettante was the perfect choice for an extremely dicey -- if not impossible -- mission.

Letters were exchanged across the battle lines. Grudgingly, the British agreed to let Key and Col. John Skinner, in charge of prisoner exchange, make their plea if they could meet the British fleet, sailing up the Chesapeake. Key and Skinner hailed the British flagship from their small vessel, were taken aboard and learned that Beanes was in danger of being hanged. Key went to work, pointing out that the doctor had treated wounded British soldiers with the same care and kindness as he had Americans. That won over the British command. Dr. Beanes could go, but he and his rescuers must stay with the fleet until Baltimore went the way of Washington. Under a guard of marines, Key's party ended up in their vessel, towed by the British flagship as it surged up the Bay.

On September 11, the British fleet came together -- 50 vessels, ranging from the 80-gun flagship through 74-gun men-of-war, 38- and 36-gun frigates, to rocket and bomb ships (actually huge rafts). Transports carried "Wellington's Invincibles," the 4,000 or so troops who had so enjoyed themselves in Washington.

Early on the morning of the 12th, the redcoats landed east of Baltimore and charged the massed militia. And this time things fell apart for the British. Two American snipers quickly picked off the British commanding general, and although some militiamen skedaddled, many others stuck it out.

Humid, rainy weather helped the American cause. The Invincibles pulled back and encamped, waiting for the navy to do its stuff. The ships would first have to put out of action that pesky Fort McHenry.

Next morning, in pouring rain, bomb ships opened fire thunderously from about two miles below Fort McHenry -- well out of range of its guns. Mortar bombs, some of 200 pounds, soared high in the air and plunged into the fort to explode in showers of rubble. Key, Skinner and Beanes had a distant view from their small vessel. They made out a flag, limp in the soggy air.

All day the guns bellowed. Newly introduced Congreve rockets screeched toward the fort in hopes of starting fires. When enemy "bomb," or mortar, vessels moved in to score even more hits, the Americans opened up with everything they had and drove the British back.

Night fell. The tremendous bombardment eased off as boatloads of British troops slipped past the fort to attack the city. The Americans spotted the foray, and their guns roared, and again the British had to pull out of range. Desperate to finish off the fort, they redoubled their cannonade, bombs curling high in the night sky, their lit fuses streaking across it, then down to their bright burst. Key, tirelessly watching, realized that the roar of British guns meant the fort still held; by the burst of bombs he could see the flag, still there.

And, in the faintest first light of dawn, at about the time the British command called off its Baltimore campaign, he spotted it. The rain had ceased; a stirring of wind opened it, and he made out the red of the stripes, the blue square. The American flag.

As a poet, Key could be suddenly and deeply moved, and instinctively he'd create rhythmic phrases to describe his feelings. All night, words had tumbled in his head: proudly hailed . . .gallantly streaming . . . bombs bursting in air . . . gave proof . . . Still there! Now he scribbled them on the back of a letter, then later, safely ashore in Baltimore, he wrote out and polished the song.

Of course it had to be a song.

The phrasing of "Defence of Fort McHenry," as he first named it, fitted perfectly an old favorite "To Anacreon in Heaven." This was the song of a popular London gentlemen's club, the Anacreontic Society, honoring an ancient Greek poet who lyricized life's joys. Members devoted themselves to good food, good wine, good cheer. They'd composed a pleasant, lilting tune, and one of the club's presidents had supplied words, a fanciful communication with Anacreon, fun to sing:

To Anacreon, in Heav'n, where he sat in full glee,
A few sons of harmony sent a petition,
That he their inspirer and patron would be;
When this answer arriv'd from the jolly old Grecian --
"Voice, fiddle, and flute,
No longer be mute;
I'll lend ye my name, and inspire ye to boot;
And, besides, I'll instruct ye, like me to intwine
The myrtle of Venus with Bacchus's vine."

The music was a hit in America. A patriotic song, "Adams and Liberty" (later changed to "Jefferson and Liberty"), adopted the tune, which was also used for a song celebrating the naval war against Barbary pirates, early in the 19th century: "When the warrior returns, from the battle afar, To the home and the country he nobly defended . . . ." And who had written that? Francis Scott Key.

"The Star-Spangled Banner" was popular, but not our national anthem. Not until 1931 did Congress grant that status. Before that we'd had do with "My Country 'Tis Of Thee," our version of "God Save the King (Queen)" as an anthem. (Many people still regret that "America the Beautiful" wasn't chosen.) But Key's song, played more slowly than the original song, with a few crashing chords and drumrolls, works well because it deals with our flag.

We Americans don't have a king or queen. We have a flag.

The Smithsonian got this one in 1907, as a loan from Armistead's grandson that turned into a gift.

A strange red V may have been the start of an A for Armistead. Some missing pieces were probably snipped out for souvenirs. They were likely not shot away during the bombardment. In that rain, the flag would have drooped against its mast with little chance of being hit.

In fact, some experts believe that the giant Pickersgill flag wasn't raised at all until that clear morning when Key saw it; another banner had flown in the rain. The impact on Key as the morning breeze finally revealed the enormous emblem of his beloved country -- beaten, scoffed at, but still in the fight -- must have been explosive.

Abridged.

Hundreds of people turn out to watch the annual fourth of July parade make its way down the main street of Capitan, New Mexico. Here, spectators are greeted by the sight of a horse-drawn wagon, symbolizing the pioneer history of the Old West.

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