



History of Fourth of July: Beyond 1776

On July 4, 1827, slavery was abolished in New York, following a gradual emancipation law that went into effect in 1799.

On July 5, 1852, Frederick Douglass gave a keynote address at an Independence Day celebration and asked, **"What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"** His speech was a scathing speech in which Douglass stated, *"This Fourth of July is yours, not mine, You may rejoice, I must mourn."*

"I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us."

Click here <https://youtu.be/NBe5qbnkqoM> to watch Frederick Douglass' descendants deliver his 4th of July Speech.

On July 4, 1876, 100 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, members of the National Woman Suffrage Association crashed the Centennial Celebration at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to present the "Declaration of the Rights of Women." [Read more about event](#)

On July 4, 1917, The Voice: A Newspaper for the New Negro — the 1st newspaper of the "New Negro Movement," made its debut at a rally held at the Metropolitan Baptist Church in Harlem. Referring to the massacre of African Americans in St. Louis, Harrison reportedly said, "They are saying a great deal about democracy in Washington now," but, "while they are talking about fighting for freedom and the Stars and Stripes, here at home the whites apply the torch to the Black men's homes, and bullets, clubs and stones to their bodies." [Details of massacre](#)

On July 4, 1963, civil rights demonstrators amassed on Gwynn Oak Amusement Park in Baltimore, Maryland, to protest the park's segregation policy. Hundreds of activists met at Gwynn Oak to protest their refusal to admit African Americans. Nearly 300 people were arrested at the demonstration, including more than 20 clergy — Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant — "the first time that so large a group of clergymen of all three major faiths had participated together in a direct concerted protest against discrimination," the New York Times wrote. [Learn more](#)

Only July 4, 1965, 40 gay and lesbian activists held the first Annual Reminder demonstration in Philadelphia, symbolically held in front of Independence Hall, meant to draw attention to the civil rights still due to the LGBTQ+ community. [Learn more here](#)



On July 4, 1969, leader of the United Farmworkers Cesar Chavez appeared on the cover of Time magazine. At the height of the California Grape Boycott campaign, a union of Filipino and Mexican American farm workers, Chavez was cast as the symbol for Mexican American civil rights. [Full article here:](#)

July is BIPOC Mental Health Month

The theme of Mental Health America's 2023 BIPOC Mental Health campaign is Culture, Community, & Connection. Our lives are deeply intertwined with our environments, and these surroundings impact our mental health and overall wellness. Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) populations are faced with disproportionate amounts of historical trauma and displacement that can challenge their ability to thrive in their environments. However, culture, community, and connection are pillars that support and uplift BIPOC individuals in the face of oppression and systemic racism.

(BIPOC) communities have always been at the forefront of social change. When individuals get together to unite under a common goal, they increase their chances of enacting change that could promote overall wellness, a sense of purpose, and connection.

The links below provide worksheets with helpful questions and prompts to determine needed changes in your community.

[Advocating for Better Community Spaces](#)

[Creating a Community Safety and Connection Plan](#)

The link below includes demographic data about our BIPOC and LGBTQ+ population in the United States and their need for mental health services

<https://mhanational.org/infographic-bipoc-mental-health>