

around the year

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE SEASONS AND THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

INDEPENDENCE DAY

by Mark Twain

AN EXCERPT FROM MARK TWAIN'S *SPEECHES* (1907)

The American Society in London, July 4, 1907—Our Fourth of July which we honor so much, and which we love so much, and which we take so much pride in, is an English institution, not an American one, and it comes of a great ancestry. The first Fourth of July in that noble genealogy dates back seven centuries lacking eight years. That is the day of the Great Charter—the Magna Charta—which was born at Runnymede in the next to the last year of King John, and portions of the liberties secured thus by those hardy Barons from that reluctant King John are a part of our Declaration of Independence, of our Fourth of July, of our American liberties. And the second of those Fourths of July was not born until four centuries later, in Charles the First's time, in the Bill of Rights, and that is ours, that is part of our liberties. The next one was still English, in New England,

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From the Editor's Desk

July 1, 2016

Dear Readers:

I've never considered myself to be a very patriotic person. Certainly, I am grateful to have been born in the United States, and especially at the end of the twentieth century. Some of my forefathers (and fore-mothers) arrived on this soil more than a century before the Declaration of Independence was signed. I am *definitely* an American. Although flag-waving has never been my thing, this year I feel myself drawn to the anniversary of my country's birth in a way I haven't experienced before.

Perhaps my newfound interest in my homeland stems from it being America's 240th birthday this year. Taking the long view, this nation is in its infancy, and that is probably a good thing: There is still much work to be done. **Frederick Douglass** expressed a similar opinion in an address to a group of abolitionists in 1852. Despite the eventual death of the chattel slavery into which he was born, so much of what Douglass said then still holds true today (see page 5).



Mark Twain also made remarks about our **Independence Day** to an audience in London more than a century ago (starting on page one). What could have been an awkward moment (the Brits were overthrown by us Yanks, after all) was handled with delicacy, and a bit of humor, and our "Fourth of July" gains new meaning when held up in the light of past events. We should expect nothing less than this truly unique opinion piece from such an esteemed writer.

While America's birthday may seem to steal the show in July, bringing both the levity of fireworks and the gravity of the historical past, let us not forget what else the month has to offer. In July we observe the feasts of **two apostles: Thomas and James**; we also commemorate **St. Mary Magdalene**, whose memorial in the Roman Catholic church was very recently upgraded to a feast by Pope Francis. I'll be celebrating my patron **Saint Ann** on July 26th, her feast day and my **Name Day** (see page 6).

A berry-picking inspiration post is slated for later in July—be sure to subscribe to our mailing list (AroundTheYear.org/subscribe) so you'll always know when new content is posted!

Kelli Ann Wilson, Editor
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Coming to *around the year* in August:

The Feast of the Transfiguration, pressing flowers, & more!



Fourth of July Parade by A.C. Howland (1886)

where they established that principle which remains with us to this day, and will continue to remain with us—no taxation without representation. That is always going to stand, and that the English Colonies in New England gave us.

The Fourth of July, and the one which you are celebrating now, born in Philadelphia on the 4th of July, 1776—that is English, too. It is not American. Those were English colonists, subjects of King George III., Englishmen at heart, who protested against the oppressions of the Home Government. Though they proposed to cure those oppressions and remove them, still remaining under the Crown, they were not intending a revolution. The revolution was brought about by circumstances which they could not control. The Declaration of Independence was written by a British subject, every name signed to it was the name of a British subject. There was not

the name of a single American attached to the Declaration of Independence—in fact, there was not an American in the country in that day except the Indians out on the plains. They were Englishmen, all Englishmen—Americans did not begin until seven years later, when that Fourth of July had become seven years old, and then the American Republic was established. Since then, there have been Americans. So you see what we owe to England in the matter of liberties.

We have, however, one Fourth of July which is absolutely our own, and that is that great proclamation issued forty years ago by that great American to whom Sir Mortimer Durand paid that just and beautiful tribute—Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's proclamation, which not only set the black slaves free, but set the white man free also. The owner was set free from the burden and offence, that sad condition of things where he was

in so many instances a master and owner of slaves when he did not want to be. That proclamation set them all free. But even in this matter England suggested it, for England had set her slaves free thirty years before, and we followed her example. We always followed her example, whether it was good or bad.

And it was an English judge that issued that other great proclamation, and established that great principle that, when a slave, let him belong to whom he may, and let him come whence he may, sets his foot upon English soil, his fetters by that act fall away and he is a free man before the world. We followed the example of 1833, and we freed our slaves as I have said.

It is true, then, that all our Fourths of July, and we have five of them, England gave to us, except that one that I have mentioned—the Emancipation Proclamation, and, lest we forget, let us all remember that we owe these things to England.

Let us be able to say to Old England, this great-hearted, venerable old mother of the race, you gave us our Fourths of July that we love and that we honor and revere, you gave us the Declaration of Independence, which is the Charter of our rights, you, the venerable Mother of Liberties, the Protector of Anglo-Saxon Freedom—you gave us these things, and we do most honestly thank you for them.

—M.T.



July in Washington by Robert Lowell (1964)

The stiff spokes of this wheel
touch the sore spots of the earth.

On the Potomac, swan-white
power launches keep breasting the sulphurous wave.

Otters slide and dive and slick back their hair,
raccoons clean their meat in the creek.

On the circles, green statues ride like South American
liberators above the breeding vegetation—

prongs and spearheads of some equatorial
backland that will inherit the globe.

The elect, the elected . . . they come here bright as dimes,
and die dishevelled and soft.

We cannot name their names, or number their dates—
circle on circle, like rings on a tree—

but we wish the river had another shore,
some further range of delectable mountains,

distant hills powdered blue as a girl's eyelid.
It seems the least little shove would land us there,

that only the slightest repugnance of our bodies
we no longer control could drag us back.

Some Quotes about July

"Many public-school children seem to know only two dates:
1492 and 4th of July; and as a rule they don't know what
happened on either occasion."

—Mark Twain

"Blessed be the Lord for the beauty of summer and spring, for
the air, the water, the verdure, and the song of birds."

—Carl von Linnæus



WHAT TO THE SLAVE IS THE FOURTH OF JULY?

The following is an excerpt from a speech given by Frederick Douglass to a group of New York abolitionists on July 5, 1852. Though the topic of Douglass's speech was emancipation, his words still ring true today, as our nation works to ensure liberty and justice for all of her citizens.

It is the birthday of your National Independence, and of your political freedom. This, to you, is what the Passover was to the emancipated people of God. It carries your minds back to the day, and to the act of your great deliverance; and to the signs, and to the wonders, associated with that act, and that day. This celebration also marks the beginning of another year of your national life. I am glad, fellow-citizens, that your nation is so young. Three score years and ten is the allotted time for individual men; but nations number their years by thousands. According to this fact, you are, even now, only in the beginning of your national career, still lingering in the period of childhood. I repeat, I am glad this is so. There is hope in the thought, and hope is much needed, under the dark clouds which lower above the horizon. The eye of the reformer is met with angry flashes, portending

disastrous times; but his heart may well beat lighter at the thought that America is young, and that she is still in the impressible stage of her existence. May he not hope that high lessons of wisdom, of justice and of truth, will yet give direction to her destiny? Were the nation older, the patriot's heart might be sadder, and the reformer's brow heavier. Its future might be shrouded in gloom, and the hope of its prophets go out in sorrow. There is consolation in the thought that America is young. Great streams are not easily turned from channels, worn deep in the course of ages. They may sometimes rise in quiet and stately majesty, and inundate the land, refreshing and fertilizing the earth with their mysterious properties. They may also rise in wrath and fury, and bear away, on their angry waves, the accumulated wealth of years of toil and hardship. They, however, gradually flow back to the same old channel, and flow on as serenely as ever. But, while the river may not be turned aside, it may dry up, and leave nothing behind but the withered branch, and the unsightly rock, to howl in the abyss-sweeping wind, the sad tale of departed glory. As with rivers so with nations.

My business, if I have any here to-day, is with the present. The accepted time with God and his cause is the ever-living now.

*Trust no future, however pleasant,
Let the dead past bury its dead;
Act, act in the living present,
Heart within, and God overhead.*

We have to do with the past only as we can make it useful to the present and to the future. To all inspiring motives, to noble deeds which can be gained from the past, we are welcome. But now is the time, the important time. Your fathers have lived, died, and have done their work, and have done much of it well. You live and must die, and you must do your work.

*God speed the hour, the glorious hour,
When none on earth
Shall exercise a lordly power,
Nor in a tyrant's presence cower;
But all to manhood's stature tower,
By equal birth!
That hour will come, to each, to all
And from his prison-house, the thrall
Go forth.*

—F.D.

Find a link to the full text of Douglass's speech at: www.AroundTheYear.org/independence-day

Image: *Slaves Waiting for Sale: Richmond, Virginia* by Eyre Crowe (based on a sketch from 1853)



CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF SAINT ANN

While the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity sometimes disagree on who to venerate (and when), there is near total agreement on the subject when it comes to the mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Although neither of Mary's parents are mentioned in the canonical gospels, they are named as Joachim and Anna (also called Anne or Ann) by the author of the apocryphal Gospel of James, written about 145 A.D.

Tradition tells us that Joachim and Anna were childless into old age and had given up hope of ever producing offspring. An angel appeared to each of them, separately, promising that a child would be born to them. The angel's words were realized when Anna gave birth to a daughter and named her Mary. Only a few of the specifics of Mary's girlhood are included in the Gospel of James but, even without all of the details, we can be sure that Mary's parents were faithful servants of God who brought their daughter up in an environment that would prepare her for the task of bearing the Son of God.

A memorial for Sts. Joachim and Anne

(the Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary) is fixed on July 26th each year in both the Roman Catholic and Anglican calendars, while the Feast of the Dormition (or passing from earthly life) of Righteous Anna is held just one day earlier on July 25th in the calendar of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Having been graciously given the middle name Ann, the 26th of July holds a special significance for me as it is my Name Day, the feast day of the saint for whom I am named. Although not as popular here in the United States, celebrating one's patron saint has deep roots in the history of the church and our shared cultural heritage. Dating from the Middle Ages, the traditions surrounding the observance of namedays look a little different in each area where they are practiced, though they often take a form similar to a birthday party.

St. Ann (the spelling I use) is the patroness of mothers, grandparents, homemakers, and children, among other things. If you are an Anne, Anna, Nancy, or even Lillian, or if you revere St. Ann for spiritual reasons,

here are some ideas for ways to honor her on her special day:

- As the mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Ann was also the grandmother of Jesus. Helping children write letters to their grandparents is a sweet gesture that also has deeper meaning when done on this day.

- St. Ann is traditionally associated with two colors: Red, for love; and green, for rebirth. The home altar or nature table could reflect this color scheme (avoid a "Christmas-y" look by emphasizing the green). Little girls can wear red and green ribbons in their hair—this could also look pretty on grown women.

- A beautifully decorated nameday cake could be just the thing to serve on St. Ann's day. Light green icing with pink or red rose decorations would be lovely. A miniature statue of St. Ann and the Blessed Virgin Mary would be a truly spectacular topper.

—K.W.

Image: *Anna Selbdritt* by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1518)

JULY 2016

(A) Anglican; (R) Roman Catholic

July 3rd: FEAST OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE (A)(R)

July 3rd: Seventh Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 9)

July 6th: Feast of St. Thomas More (A)

July 10th: Eighth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 10)

July 11th: Feast of St. Benedict of Nursia (A)(R)

July 15th: Feast of Sts. Swithun (A) and Bonaventure (A)(R)

July 17th: Ninth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 11)

July 22nd: FEAST OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE (A)(R)

July 23rd: Feast of St. Bridget of Sweden (Birgitta) (A)(R)

July 24th: Tenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 12)

July 25th: FEAST OF ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE (A)(R)

July 26th: Feast of Sts. Joachim & Anna, the Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary (A)(R)

July 29th: Feast of Sts. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (A)(R)

July 31st: Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 13)

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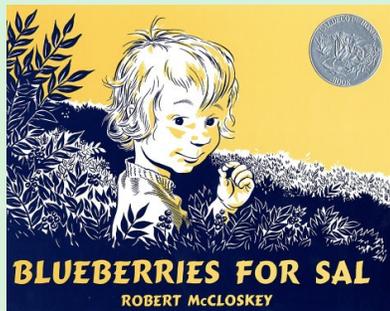


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Recommended Reading

CHILDREN'S BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF JULY



Blueberries for Sal, written and illustrated by Robert McCloskey

From the publisher:

Kuplink, kuplank, kuplunk! Sal and her mother are picking blueberries to can for the winter. But when Sal wanders to the other side of Blueberry

Hill, she discovers a mama bear preparing for her own long winter. Meanwhile Sal's mother is being followed by a small bear with a big appetite for berries! Will each mother go home with the right little one? With its expressive line drawings and charming story, *Blueberries for Sal* has won readers' hearts since its first publication in 1948.

Summer Story (Brambly Hedge), written and illustrated by Jill Barklem

From the publisher:

It was such a hot summer. The sky was deep blue and the sun never faltered. All along Brambly Hedge, the mice did their best to keep cool. Poppy Eyebright sought refuge in the mossy shadows of the mill wheel; Dusty Dogwood took to walking by the banks of the cooling stream. Dusty and Poppy spent more and more time together, so no one was at all surprised when they announced their engagement. They decided on a very unusual setting for the wedding ceremony, but even they didn't realize just how unusual it would prove to be!

