

JULY - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Thurgood Marshall

Thurgood Marshall, born on July 2, 1908, in Baltimore, Maryland, was the first African-American to serve as a United States Supreme Court Justice. He graduated from Howard University Law School in 1933 and became a highly successful attorney. One of his most notable victories was the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, which he argued before the Supreme Court in 1954. The court's decision in that case declared it unconstitutional to racially segregate American public schools. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Marshall successfully argued many other cases before the Supreme Court, achieving recognition as one of the nation's top lawyers and a significant advocate for social change. He was nominated for the United States Supreme Court by President Lyndon B. Johnson, and his appointment was confirmed by the Senate on August 30, 1967. Marshall held that position until 1991.

2. Independence Day - July 4th

Independence Day commemorates the birthday of the United States of America and the adoption of its Declaration of Independence from Great Britain on July 4, 1776. This declaration document remains one of the nation's most cherished symbols of liberty. It was drafted by Thomas Jefferson and is regarded by most as his crowning achievement. July 4th is a federal holiday and is celebrated annually with many time-honored and patriotic traditions, such as picnics, parades, flag waving, and fireworks.

3. Alice in Wonderland

Alice in Wonderland was written by Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson under the pen name Lewis Carroll. It grew from a story he made up on July 4, 1862, while on a rowing trip with the family of Henry Liddell, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University and Dean of Christ Church. Dodgson was trying to entertain Liddell's three young daughters when he first spun his tale. Liddell's middle daughter was named Alice. The story featured a bored little girl with the same name who went looking for adventure. Alice and her sisters loved the story, and Alice asked Dodgson to write it down for her, which he began to do the very next day. His first hand-written version of the story was presented to Alice Liddell on November 26, 1864. At that time, it was called Alice's Adventures Under Ground. Carroll further developed the tale, prepared it for publication, and changed the name to Alice in Wonderland.

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4. Sylvester Graham and the Graham Cracker

Sylvester Graham was born on July 5, 1794, in West Suffield, Connecticut. He was an American dietary reformer who developed the Graham diet, which consisted mainly of fresh fruits and vegetables and whole wheat and high fiber foods. In 1829, he created Graham bread, a recipe that contained unsifted flour and no chemical additives. Graham believed that firm bread made of coarsely ground whole wheat flour was more nutritious and offered greater health benefits. Graham also invented the Graham cracker as a staple of his dietary plan. It became an enduring part of American cuisine and is still quite popular today, providing a healthier snack option for both children and adults.

5. John Paul Jones

John Paul Jones was born on July 6, 1747, in Scotland. He is famous for being a naval hero during the American Revolutionary War and is credited with many successful campaigns against British warships along the Atlantic coast. Jones began his sea career at age twelve as an apprentice to John Younger, a Scottish merchant shipper. He became a ship master at age 21. In 1775, Jones joined his older brother William in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Shortly after settling in North America, he left for Philadelphia to volunteer his services in the newly-founded Continental Navy. As the American navy and marines were being formally established, there was a great demand for experienced and skilled ship's officers and captains. Upon the recommendation of Richard Henry Lee, Jones was assigned a vessel. One of his most noteworthy battles took place while he commanded the *Bonhomme Richard*. His crew intercepted a British merchant fleet. The fleet's escort ship, the *Serapis*, had them outgunned and demanded their surrender. Jones responded with his now famous statement, "I have not yet begun to fight!" In the end, it was the *Serapis* that surrendered following a fierce battle. Jones was the first man to be assigned the rank of 1st Lieutenant in the Continental Navy on December 7, 1775, onboard the *Alfred*. He retired to France in 1790.

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6. National Hot Dog Month and National Picnic Month

July is National Hot Dog Month, according to the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council. The Council estimates that Americans eat over seven billion hot dogs between Memorial Day and Labor Day, with July 4th weekend being the biggest hot dog holiday of the year. Annually, approximately 155 million hot dogs are consumed on July 4th alone. Allegedly, the hot dog got its name from a sports cartoonist named Tad Dorgan. He was at a 1901 baseball game at the Polo Grounds in New York. Vendors began selling hot dachshund sausages in rolls. Dorgan could hear the vendors calling, “Get your dachshund sausages while they’re red hot!” He quickly drew a cartoon of the scene but didn’t know how to spell dachshund in the caption, so he shortened it to “hot dogs” instead, and the name stuck. July is also National Picnic Month and a perfect time to grill a few hot dogs and enjoy some outdoor fun with family and friends.

7. George Eastman

George Eastman was born on July 12, 1854, in the village of Waterville in upstate New York. His family moved to Rochester when he was five years old, and shortly after, his father died unexpectedly, leaving the family with financial challenges. Eastman had to quit school and find employment at the age of fourteen to help pay the bills. He started as a messenger for an insurance company and went on to be a junior clerk at Rochester Savings Bank. At age 24, he planned a trip to Santo Domingo and wanted to take along photographic equipment. He was disappointed to learn that nothing easily portable existed at that time. As a result, Eastman became passionate about photography and sought to develop a simpler process. This eventually led to his invention of the Kodak camera and the first rolled film. It was a long journey through many trials, but his creative genius and hard work empowered him to create the internationally recognized Eastman Kodak Company. He is quoted as saying that he and his company were able “to make the camera as convenient as the pencil.” Eastman revolutionized the camera industry.

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8. John Glenn

John Glenn was born on July 18, 1921, in Cambridge, Ohio. He studied engineering at Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio, and then joined the navy to be trained in aviation at the beginning of World War II. He also served in the Korean War. Following his tour of military duty, Glenn became involved with the space program and was selected as one of the seven original astronauts to work on the Mercury 6 space mission. On February 20, 1962, Glenn boarded his space capsule Friendship 7 and became the first American astronaut to circle the globe. He made three complete orbits that day. Glenn retired from the space program in 1964 and went on to be a highly successful businessman. He pursued an interest in politics and was elected to the United States Senate from Ohio in 1974, where he served until 1998. Another historic moment came for Glenn in 1998 when he returned to orbit as part of the crew of the space shuttle Discovery. At age 77, he became the oldest person to go into space.

9. National Ice Cream Day and National Ice Cream Month

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan designated July as National Ice Cream Month. He also appointed the third Sunday of July each year to be National Ice Cream Day because he recognized that ice cream was extremely popular in the United States. Over 90% of Americans consume it in some form regularly. In fact, more ice cream is eaten in the United States per capita than anywhere else in the world. The observance of National Ice Cream Month and National Ice Cream Day is supported by the International Dairy Foods Association. Not only are these celebrations a great time to enjoy a delicious treat, but they also provide an opportunity to focus educational attention on the dairy industry, dairy farming, and the health benefits of adding dairy products to the daily diet.

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10. Henry Ford

Henry Ford was born on July 30, 1863. He grew up on a prosperous family farm in Dearborn, Michigan. Early in life, Ford showed a great deal of interest in mechanical things but didn't care much for farm work. At age sixteen, he left for Detroit, Michigan, where he worked as an apprentice machinist. Ford went on to become an engineer with the Edison Illuminating Company in Detroit. At this point, he made a conscious decision to dedicate his life to industrial pursuits. His promotion to Chief Engineer in 1893 gave him the opportunity to spend more time on his experiments with internal combustion engines. Ford developed a self-propelled vehicle called the Quadricycle with four bicycle-type wheels that was steered with a tiller like a boat. It had only two speeds and no reverse. With the creation of the Model T in 1908, Ford realized his dream of producing an automobile that was affordable, reliable, and efficient. This vehicle ushered in a new era of personal transportation. The Model T was easy to operate, maintain, and drive on rough roads. It became an overnight sensation. Perhaps Ford's greatest achievement was the development of the assembly line process used to manufacture the cars in his Ford Motor Company. Parts were delivered to the auto workers on a continuously moving conveyor belt, which made vehicle construction more efficient, time-saving, and cost-effective. The introduction of the moving assembly line revolutionized automobile production and influenced the manufacture of numerous other products as well.