

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, April 2, 2018

**Presidential Trivia:** George Washington was a “ladies’ man,” tall, good looking, and very athletic. Before and even after he married Martha Custis in 1759, it is generally believed he had a secret romance with Sally Fairfax, the wife of his neighbor and best friend George William “Will” Fairfax. Sally, while outwardly faithful to her husband, encouraged this relationship with George Washington, and she liked Martha as well. When the Fairfaxes left Virginia and moved permanently to England in 1774, the “affair,” if there had been one, was over. As his country’s first president, Washington was still a favorite of the ladies. A society matron in Philadelphia, then capital of the new republic, especially enjoyed his company. The attractive young wife of the British Ambassador adored President Washington. Martha had long recognized her husband’s appeal to the ladies and had graciously tolerated it. There is no evidence that George was unfaithful to her. He was the only U.S. president elected without opposition, and he was so elected twice. He could have easily made it a third time, but he refused to run, setting an important precedent that lasted until 1940, when Franklin Roosevelt successfully ran for a third term (and was elected for a fourth in 1944).

The White House in the new Federal City on the Potomac was ready for occupancy early in 1800, and the U.S. capital was moved from Philadelphia to Washington. John and Abigail Adams moved in, and it is said that she hung her wash to dry in the East Room. Adams hated the new city, and before his term was over, he moved back to his home in Quincy, Massachusetts. We know that during the months they were there, however, Martha Washington invited Abigail for tea at Mount Vernon, and the two most important women of the early republic apparently enjoyed the occasion.

Although Washington’s first term did not start until April 30 (1789), March 4 was established as Inauguration Day, and Jefferson’s new term was to start on that date in 1801. Fearing the roads from Monticello would be impassable during the winter months, he left his home, only 125 miles away, in November 1800 in a carriage equipped with an odometer he had invented and installed. Stopping the first night at Montpelier, the home of his old friend James Madison, he arrived safely after two more nights on the road.

Our country has had five presidents who were never elected president: John Tyler (10), Millard Fillmore (13), Andrew Johnson (17), Chester Arthur (21), and Gerald Ford (38). Only Ford had his party’s nomination. The shortest time served was William Henry Harrison (one month), and the longest was Franklin Delano Roosevelt (145 months). Only twice have we had a father and son serve: John and John Quincy Adams and George H. W. and George W. Bush. One grandfather/grandson combination was William Henry Harrison and Benjamin Harrison. William Henry’s father, an earlier Benjamin, signed the Declaration of Independence.

One of the greatest bargains in U.S. history was accomplished by President Jefferson, when he bought the Louisiana Territory, extending from New Orleans to the Pacific Northwest, from Napoleon’s France in 1803 for approximately \$3 million. Napoleon needed the money for his military conquests.

Since 1825, James Buchanan is the only Secretary of State who has become president, although several more have tried. In the early years, there were several: Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, and John Quincy Adams. Adams, while Secretary for President Monroe during the “Era of Good Feeling,” drafted the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, which told European Powers to stay out of the Western Hemisphere. The only president to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court was William Howard Taft, who was appointed by President Harding as Chief Justice in 1921 and served until his death in 1930.

Washington’s Federalist Party elected only three presidents: Washington and the two Adamses. Basically, it stood for a strong central government, a national bank, and strong currency, all championed by Alexander Hamilton. The Whigs, led for many years by Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, came into being in the mid 1820s but were successful in electing only two war heroes as president, William Henry Harrison in 1840 and Zachary Taylor in 1848, both of whom died early in their first terms. Clay himself tried three times for the top job. Upon

the deaths of Clay and Webster, both in 1852, the Whig party was finished in this country. The Republican party, founded in Wisconsin in 1854, put forth a mountain man from California, John C. Fremont, as its presidential candidate in 1856, but Abraham Lincoln was the first Republican elected to the presidency in 1860.

Thomas Jefferson headed the opposition to Washington's Federalists. His party's official name was Democratic-Republican, but its followers were soon known as Jeffersonians. By the 1820s, with the Federalists in decline, an "Era of Good Feeling" existed during James Monroe's administration. After that, members of Jefferson's old party were simply called Democrats. Basically, they favored state's rights and a rural economy as opposed to manufacturing. Democrat Andrew Jackson of Tennessee, the hero of the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, became the first president of the U.S. not from Virginia or Massachusetts, when he was elected in 1828.

July 4 is our National Holiday. In addition to the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, two presidents who had been the Declaration's strongest advocates, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, died on the 50th anniversary of the signing, July 4, 1826. The fifth U.S. president, James Monroe, died on July 4, 1831. Calvin Coolidge, 30th president of the U.S., was born on July 4, 1872. George M. Cohan, composer of rousing patriotic songs and musical shows in the early 20th century, was born on July 4, 1878. I have had two personal friends with July 4 birthdays, but neither have been president.