



It has been 240 years since Ben Franklin, John Adams and the rest of the guys made history in Philly. The travel4seniors.com editor grew up in the city, and Independence Day always had a special meaning. I recall when my Mom took me to visit the Liberty Bell when I was four.

I reached out to feel the rough iron and the famous broken side. In those long-ago days, visitors were allowed to touch the bell. Today, it's enclosed in its own space, and because of all kinds of security visitors can only look at it.

My high school cadet corps marched past Independence Hall in the critical summer of 1942, just months after the start of World War II. A year later, my Navy training platoon marched in the traditional Independence Day parade. Soon to get our wartime sea assignments, the memorable events gave us the patriotic inspiration we needed to face what was ahead.

On later Fourth of July holidays, I took my kids to experience the parades and other events. We always capped off the day to watch evening fireworks over the Girard Avenue Bridge on the Schuylkill River in nearby Fairmount Park.

We now live 3,000 miles away from our hometown, but still treasure the memories of celebrating our nation's freedom. At that special time this year, we'll be there in spirit as Old Philly rocks on Independence Day!

The 2016 Independence Day schedule for Philadelphia is planned to be as equally exciting as it has always been since American patriots first proclaimed liberty in 1776. More than 5,000 participants will step along the familiar Chestnut Street route for the annual event.

They'll include marching bands, holiday floats and military units. This old Navy vet can envision uniformed sailors, soldiers and Marines proudly on parade, just as we did decades ago.

Memories of Pat's Steaks and Gino's hoagies offer the taste of the familiar South Philly submarine sandwiches. On July 4, they'll be given out free to appreciative audience members as entertainment is provided by the Liberty Belles.

Wawa Welcome America happens along the Ben Franklin Parkway. The program will cap the day's events and feature evening celebrity performances. The the day's festivities will end with a spectacular after-dark fireworks display over your travel4seniors.com editor's alma mater, the Philadelphia Museum of Art (BFA, 1951). Sorry we'll miss it this year. Maybe in 2017.