

## The History of Rome's Honor America Days Celebration in Rome, NY

The Chamber was established in 1912, and for more than 100 years the community has celebrated every August with parades, concerts, pageants, picnics, barbeques, church suppers, and more. The celebration was originally known as Fort Stanwix Days.

The largest Fort Stanwix Days celebration took place in 1927, with other large celebrations in 1976 and 1977. These events celebrated the 150th and 200th anniversaries of the siege of Fort Stanwix in 1777, and the nation's bicentennial in 1976. The siege of the Fort began on August 3, 1777 when the British sent their first surrender demands to the Fort, and would continue through the next 21 days. These local celebrations continue to this day, but by a different name: Honor America Days.

The Honor America Days Parade is held in the morning and later in the evening at Fort Stanwix National Monument the Honor America Days Pops Concert takes place, followed by the ringing of church bells, cannon fire, and fireworks. Rooted in history and a sense of civic pride, the celebration is enthusiastically embraced by the public and funded primarily by business men and women – members of the Rome Chamber of Commerce – who contribute thousands of dollars annually to promote patriotism, pride, and the quality of life we enjoy in Rome. In 1984 when the celebration was first known as Honor America Days, the parade and concert were held on the second Saturday in August. This was consistent and within the 21-day time frame of the siege. Organizers soon decided to move the parade and concert to the Saturday before August 3, which is the last Saturday in July, and now the traditional kick-off of Honor America Days, thereby drawing attention to Rome and the other events organized by many local groups and organizations.

The events held in late July and throughout August are well-established and have strong ties with the original period of Fort Stanwix Days and the important role of the Fort during the American Revolution. Rome is home to a significant battle that turned the tide of the war. With regard to the siege, Fort Stanwix is also known as *the fort that never surrendered*.

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