

# Presidential Documents

**Title 3—****Proclamation 7233 of October 5, 1999****The President****German-American Day, 1999****By the President of the United States of America****A Proclamation**

Throughout America's history, we have drawn strength from the diversity of our people. Men and women from many different countries and cultures have arrived here, determined to forge a new life in a new land, and their talents have contributed to our national life. Germans were among the earliest ethnic groups to emigrate to America, arriving at William Penn's invitation more than 300 years ago. Whether motivated by the pursuit of religious liberty, intellectual freedom, or economic opportunity, the millions of Germans who have made their home in America have played an important part in advancing the peace and prosperity that our country enjoys today.

The achievements of notable German Americans have enriched every aspect of our society. The leadership of statesmen such as President Eisenhower and Henry Kissinger helped guide our Nation securely through the difficult Cold War years. The military acumen of German Americans has benefited us—from the Revolutionary War, when Baron Friedrich von Steuben's training programs brought discipline and organization to the Continental Army, to the Gulf War, when General Norman Schwarzkopf helped lead our troops to victory over Saddam Hussein. Prominent authors H. L. Mencken and Theodore Dreiser have enlightened our literary tradition, while inventors George Westinghouse and Charles Steinmetz have fueled our technological advancement. The world of American sports has been energized by outstanding athletes of German descent, providing a showcase for the talents of such greats as Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig.

But by focusing on the achievements of prominent individuals, we risk understating the overall importance of the German heritage to our Nation's strength and development. Today, nearly one-quarter of all Americans can trace their ancestry to Germany, just as our English language finds its roots in the Germanic tongues of centuries past. German Americans honor the traditions of their lineage in the way they live, reflecting the sense of personal honor and strong work ethic passed down to them by their forebears.

As Americans seek to become a more united people, we must not forget our roots, for they remind us of who we are and of what we have to share with others. German-American Day offers us an invaluable opportunity not only to honor the contributions of German Americans, but also to celebrate the close relationship that we enjoy today with our German friends across the Atlantic. Next month, we will join them in commemorating the 10th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall—a symbolic triumph of democracy and self-determination. As we look back on half a century of joint accomplishments with Germany that reflect our shared respect for the rule of law, human rights, and social justice, we can look ahead to a new era of cooperation, whether working together to restore peace to the war-torn Balkans or assisting the former Eastern Bloc nations on their own road to democratization and economic recovery.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Wednesday, October 6, 1999, as German-American Day. I encourage all Americans to applaud

the important contributions made to our country by our millions of citizens of German descent and to celebrate our close ties to the people of Germany.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William J. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "W" and "C".

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