

May 25, 2023



## The History of Memorial Day

As many people know, Memorial Day is an American holiday observed on the last Monday of May, and honors the men and women who sacrificed their lives while serving in the U.S. military. But how did this holiday originate?

### The Origins

Did you know that the Civil War claimed more lives than any conflict in U.S. history? This required the establishment of the country's first national cemeteries. In the late 1860s, Americans in various towns and cities began holding tributes to these countless fallen soldiers during the Spring and decorated their graves with flowers. Although it is unclear where exactly this tradition originated, some records indicate that one of the earliest Memorial Day commemorations were organized by a group of formerly enslaved people in Charleston, South Carolina less than a month after the Confederacy surrendered in 1865.

### The Evolution of Decoration Day

On May 5, 1868 General John Logan, leader of an organization for Northern Civil War veterans, called for a nationwide day of remembrance. He stated: "The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land ." Logan declared this day as Decoration Day, and chose May 30th because it wasn't the anniversary of any Civil War battle.

You can go to multiple websites and find hundreds of pages about Memorial Day. What is important is that we take time to remember the men and women who sacrificed their lives for our freedom and be grateful for their service. I am lucky to be a Daughter of the American Revolution and three family lines fought in the Revolutionary War so ... 250 years later ... I should have freedom. Thank you, Allen, Holton and Wray families, for my life today!



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