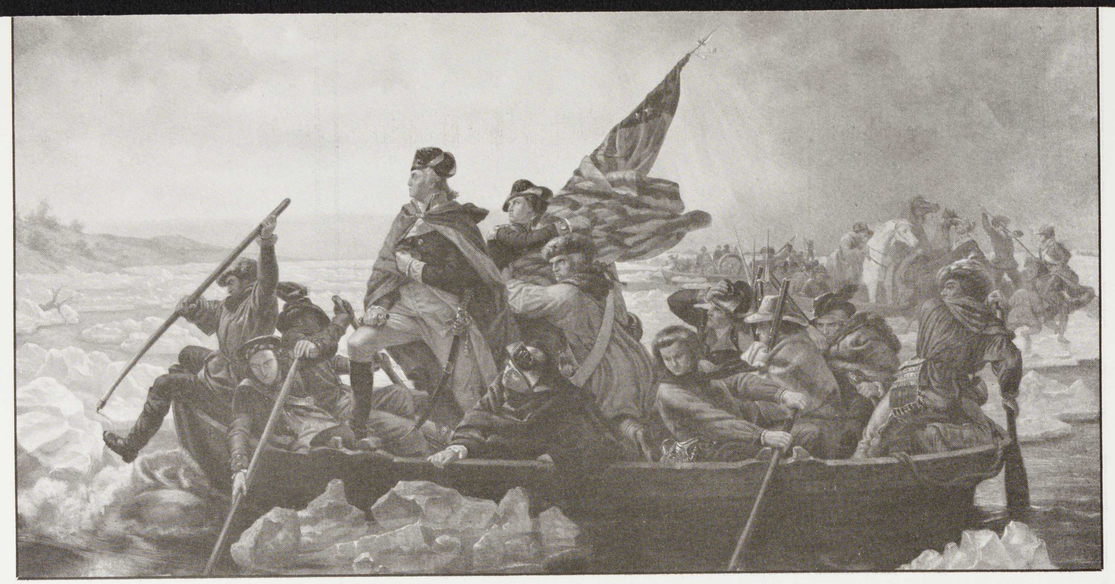


Washington Crossing the Delaware (detail) by Emanuel Gottleib Leutze (1816-1868). Courtesy Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Americana

Every American thinks of the 4th of July as the highlight of the year for remembering this nation's greatness, yet the months of May and June contain some of our most cherished historical events.

One May 20th, 1775, the representatives of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina signed a declaration of independence from the English. It wasn't until a messenger from the Continental Congress told them that the signing of the national declaration had been postponed, that they realized they had "jumped the gun." Not to be denied their rights, they, nevertheless, held their document to be valid and ever since have celebrated this day as their own "4th of July."

One of America's best-loved paintings, *Washington Crossing the Delaware* was done by an obscure, itinerant painter named Emanuel Leutze, whose birth on May 24th, 1816 is celebrated each year. Brought to America as just a boy, he was painting by the time he was fifteen years old, and produced some of America's favorite artwork, such as *Washington Rallying the Troops at Monmouth* and *Columbus Before the Queen*.

It is most suitable that the artist of some of America's most patriotic works should have been born in the same month that celebrates the ultimate sacrifice of those who died in battle — Memorial Day — which is observed on May 25th, this year.

"I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death." So said Patrick Henry, born May 29th, 1736, at a meeting of the Continental Congress as they made preparations for the war of independence.

May 29th is also the birthdate of two other great Americans: John F. Kennedy born 1917, who was tragically struck down during his term as 35th President of the United States; and Bob Hope, who allows the U.S.O., an organization with which he is intrinsically involved, to celebrate his birthday to bring worldwide attention to their good works.

On the night of June 3rd and 4th, Jack Jouett's 45 mile ride to warn Virginia Governor Thomas Jefferson of the coming British forces, allowed the legislature to escape unharmed. Each year in the Charlottesville area this ride is remembered and Jouett's grand effort honored.

The week of June 14th-20th is Flag Week, the purpose of which is to honor Mary Pickersgill, maker of the 15 star-15 stripe flag which during the war of 1812 inspired Frances Scott Key to write "The Star Spangled Banner."

June 14th is also the U.S. Army's birthday. Founded by a congressional resolution in 1775, it was the first branch of the American military.

June 14th is also Flag Day which is the anniversary of the resolution made by the Continental Congress in 1777 by John Adams, "That the flag of the thirteen United States shall be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, and that the union be thirteen stars, white on a blue field, representing a new constellation." □

SPACE ART

An exhibition of eighteen paintings by noted space artist, Chesley Bonestell, will be on display in the lobby of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum through 1981. Each painting exemplifies the graphic realism and haunting beauty for which Bonestell's work is known.

In the early 1950s, Bonestell began a long-term collaboration with rocket pioneer Wernher von Braun and space writer Willy Ley, illustrating books and articles they had written. Von Braun later wrote, "Chesley Bonestell's pictures . . . are far more than reproductions of beautiful, ethereal paintings of Worlds Beyond. They represent the most accurate portrayal of those faraway heavenly bodies that modern science can offer."

The series of books and articles produced by this team gave the general public its first realistic taste of outer space and man's exploration of it.

Born in 1888, Bonestell began drawing at the age of five. Astronomy was introduced into his paintings at age 17 after a trip to the Lick Observatory in San Jose, California. Bonestell was so impressed by his first view of Saturn through the telescope that he painted a picture of the ringed planet as soon as he returned home.

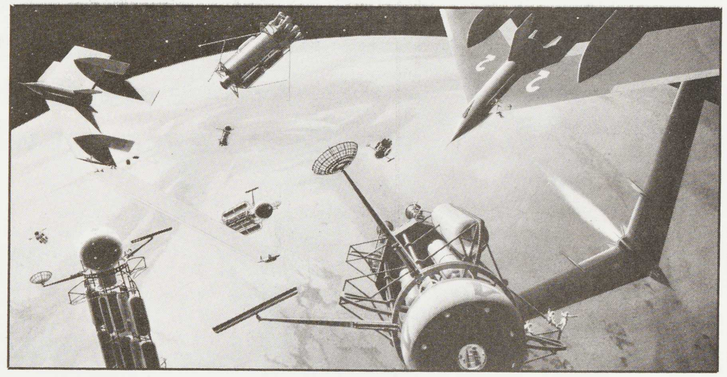
Trained at Columbia University as an architect, Bonestell worked on such projects as the Supreme Court Building in Washington, DC, the Chrysler [illegible]d other large buildings in [illegible]-town Manhattan and San [illegible]ncisco's Golden Gate Bridge.

In 1938, he moved to Hollywood to become a special effects artist for some of the major motion picture studios. His scenic backdrops can be seen in the film classics, *Citizen Kane*, *The War of the Worlds* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, among others.

Bonestell's illustrations have also appeared in dozens of magazines, including *Colliers* and *Life*.

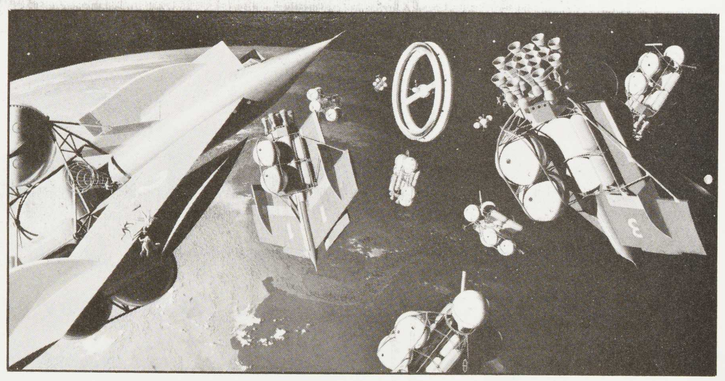
Today the 92-year-old Bonestell lives in Carmel, California, where he continues to paint daily. □

— *Courtesy Smithsonian*



Photos courtesy Smithsonian Institution

Manned Mission to Mars (1953) by Chesley Bonestell. On loan from the collection of Frederick I. Ordway III at the Alabama Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville.



Arrival At Mars Orbit (1953) by Chesley Bonestell. On loan from the collection of Frederick I. Ordway III at the Alabama Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville.