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THE STORY OF THE  
**DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**

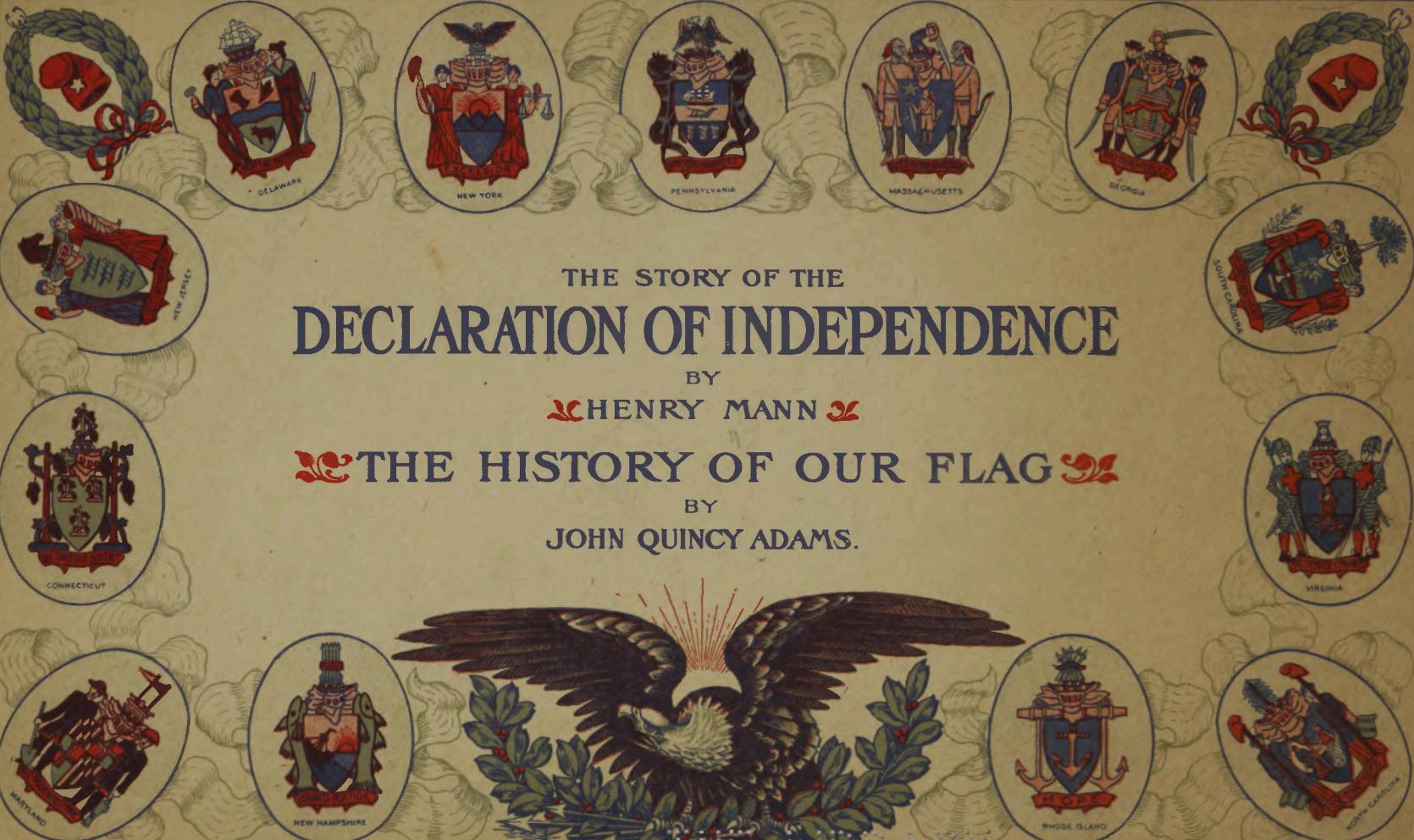
BY

**HENRY MANN**

**THE HISTORY OF OUR FLAG**

BY

**JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.**



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## THE FAMOUS WEBSTER-ADAMS

IN his celebrated discourse at Faneuil Hall, Boston, in commemoration of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, August 2, 1826, Daniel Webster quoted the arguments, which might have been used against independence, and then declared that Mr. Adams would have made the following reply, which has become famous as one of Webster's greatest utterances:

"Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this vote. It is true, indeed, that in the beginning we aimed not at independence. But there's a Divinity which shapes our ends. The injustice of England has driven us to arms; and, blinded to her own interest for our good, she has obstinately persisted, till independence is now within our grasp. We have but to reach forth to it, and it is ours. Why, then, should we defer the Declaration? Is any man so weak as now to hope for a reconciliation with England, which shall leave either safety to the country and its liberties, or safety to his own life and his own honor? Are not you, sir, who sit in that chair, is not he, our venerable colleague near you, are you not both already the proscribed and predestined objects of punishment and of vengeance? Cut off from all hope of royal clemency, what are you, what can you be, while the power of England remains, but outlaws?

"If we postpone independence, do we mean to carry on, or to give up, the war? Do we mean to submit to the measures of Parliament, Boston Port Bill and all? Do we mean to submit, and consent that we ourselves shall be ground to powder, and our country and its rights trodden down in the dust? I know we do not mean to submit. We never shall submit. Do we intend to violate that most solemn obligation ever entered into by men, that plighting, before God, of our sacred honor to Washington, when, putting him forth to incur the dangers of war, as well as the political hazards of the times, we promised to adhere to him, in every extremity, with our fortunes and our lives? I know there is not a man here, who would not rather see a general conflagration sweep over the land, or an earthquake sink it, than one jot

or tittle of that plighted faith fall to the ground. For myself, having, twelve months ago, in this place, moved you, that George Washington be appointed commander of the forces raised, or to be raised, for defence of American liberty, may my right hand forget her cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I hesitate or waver in the support I give him.

"The war, then, must go on. We must fight it through. And if the war must go on, why put off longer the Declaration of Independence? That measure will strengthen us. It will give us character abroad. The nations will then treat with us, which they never can do while we acknowledge ourselves subjects, in arms against our sovereign. Nay, I maintain that England herself will sooner treat for peace with us on the footing of independence, than consent, by repealing her acts, to acknowledge that her whole conduct towards us has been a course of injustice and oppression. Her pride will be less wounded by submitting to that course of things which now predestinates our independence, than by yielding the points in controversy to her rebellious subjects. The former she would regard as the result of fortune; the latter she would feel as her own deep disgrace. Why, then, why, then, sir, do we not as soon as possible change this from a civil to a national war? And since we must fight it through, why not put ourselves in a state to enjoy all the benefits of victory, if we gain the victory?

"If we fail, it can be no worse for us. But we shall not fail. The cause will raise up armies; the cause will create navies. The people, the people, if we are true to them, will carry us, and will carry themselves, gloriously, through this struggle. I care not how fickle other people have been found. I know the people of these colonies, and I know that resistance to British aggression is deep and settled in their hearts and cannot be eradicated. Every colony, indeed, has expressed its willingness to follow, if we but take the lead. Sir, the Declaration will inspire the people with increased courage. Instead of a long and bloody war for the restoration of privileges, for redress of grievances, for chartered immunities, held under a British king, set before them the glorious object of entire inde-

## SPEECH

pendence, and it will breathe into them anew the breath of life. Read this Declaration at the head of the army; every sword will be drawn from its scabbard, and the solemn vow uttered, to maintain it, or to perish on the bed of honor. Publish it from the pulpit; religion will approve it, and the love of religious liberty will cling round it, resolved to stand with it, or fall with it. Send it to the public halls; proclaim it there; let them hear it who heard the first roar of the enemy's cannon; let them see it who saw their brothers and their sons fall on the field of Bunker Hill, and in the streets of Lexington and Concord, and the very walls will cry out in its support.

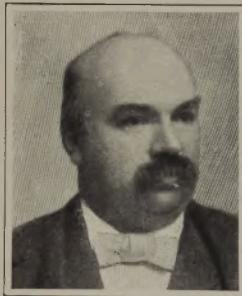
"Sir, I know the uncertainty of human affairs, but I see, I see clearly, through this day's business. You and I, indeed, may rue it. We may not live to the time when this Declaration shall be made good. We may die; die colonists; die slaves; die, it may be, ignominiously and on the scaffold. Be it so. Be it so. If it be the pleasure of heaven that my country shall require the poor offering of my life, the victim shall be ready at the appointed hour of sacrifice, come when that hour may. But while I do live, let me have a country, or at least the hope of a country, and that a free country.

"But whatever may be our fate, be assured, be assured that this Declaration will stand. It may cost treasure, and it may cost blood; but it will stand, and it will richly compensate for both. Through the thick gloom of the present, I see the brightness of the future, as the sun in heaven. We shall make this a glorious, an immortal day. When we are in our graves, our children will honor it. They will celebrate it with thanksgiving, with festivity, with bonfires, and illuminations. On its annual return they will shed tears, copious, gushing tears, not of subjection and slavery, not of agony and distress, but of exultation, of gratitude, and of joy. Sir, before God, I believe the hour is come. My judgment approves this measure, and my whole heart is in it. All that I have, and all that I am, and all that I hope, in this life, I am now ready here to stake upon it; and I leave off as I began, that live or die, survive or perish, I am for the Declaration. It is my living sentiment, and by the blessing of God it shall be my dying sentiment, Independence, now, and INDEPENDENCE FOR EVER."

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E.H. July 2, 1903

## THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENT



HENRY MANN

Academy of Sciences. The report states that the document has suffered very seriously from the rough treatment to which it was exposed in the earlier years of the Republic, folding and rolling having creased and broken the parchment. The wet press copying operation to which it was subjected about 1820, for the purpose of producing a facsimile copy, removed a large portion of the ink, and subsequent exposure to the action of light, for more than thirty years, while the instrument was on exhibition, has resulted in the fading of the ink, particularly of the signatures. It is gratifying, however, to learn that no evidence of mould, or other disintegrating agents, can be discovered upon the parchment by microscopic examination, or any evidence that disintegration is now in progress.

The Declaration has never been on exhibition at any of

THE Declaration of Independence, the Magna Charta of the English-speaking race, that document of which Professor Tucker has rightly said, that "it is consecrated in the affections of Americans, and praise may seem as superficial as censure may be unavailing," has been removed forever from the people's reverential gaze. This action has been taken by the Department of State, in consequence of a report made by a committee of the National

the Great Fairs since the Centennial Exposition. It was returned to the Department of State in 1877, and since then has never been out of the Department Building. For more than a year past it has not been on exhibition even in the Department. For the last nine years the Declaration has been kept flat in a frame between two sheets of glass, in a drawer of a steel case, and seldom exposed to light and air, and hereafter it will be kept in the dark, and as dry as possible, and never placed on exhibition.

\* \* \*

It is a fitting time, therefore, to present to the public a brief and popular narrative of the events which provoked Americans to sever the ties which bound them to Great Britain, and of the proceedings which attended the adoption



READING THE DECLARATION, JULY 8, 1776



COMMITTEE SUBMITTING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

From the famous Trumbull painting



From the famous historical painting by Dumaresq.

SIGNING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



GEORGE WYTHE

colony for which they were destined. The foregoing Act was followed by another, providing penalties for attempted violations of the customs' laws. In this statute no mention was made of the plantations, and its general tenor indicated that it was intended to apply to England only, providing, as it did, for the searching of houses and dwellings for smuggled goods, by virtue of a writ of assistance from His Majesty's Court of

Exchequer. Under William the Third, who was as arbitrary a monarch toward the colonies as the second James had been, the statute was made directly applicable to the plantation trade, with the provision that "the like assistance shall be given to the said officers in the execution of their office, as by the last-mentioned Act is provided for the officers in England." It was on the question whether such a writ could be issued from a colonial court, that James Otis made the famous speech in which he arraigned the commercial policy of England, stripped the veil of reform from the bust of the Stadholder-King, and awakened the colonists to a throbbing sense of English oppression and of American wrongs—the oration which, in the language of John Adams, who heard it, "breathed into this nation the breath of life."

The Acts of Navigation and of Trade were not the dead letters that some superficial writers and readers have seen fit to term them. It is true that obedience was reluctant and slow, that Massachusetts denounced, and for a long



OLD LIBERTY BELL

of the Declaration. The immediate causes of separation are set forth in the Declaration itself, but the genesis of independence is to be found in the early history of the American settlements, and of the legislation in the parent country bearing upon colonial trade. "If any man," said John Adams, "wishes to investigate thoroughly the causes, feelings, and principles of the Revolution, he must study the Act of Navigation, and the Acts of Trade, as a philosopher, a politician and a philanthropist."

Loyal to the British crown, long after it had forfeited all right to their allegiance, the American colonists, almost up to the year when independence was declared, had no thought of separation from the mother country. Even in Massachusetts, always impatient of dictation from court and king, there was very little public expression of disloyalty. Looking over Massachusetts' newspapers in the decade which preceded independence, I have been surprised to note the adulatory language used regarding the sovereign of Great Britain. It is clear that only the gravest injustice could have provoked the Americans to take arms against England, and that but for the madness which possessed George the Third and his advisers, the colonies would have remained a part of the British empire. It



BENJAMIN RUSH



WM. WHIPPLE

would be wrong, however, to blame only the king and his ministers for the acts which drove America to fight for independence. The British crown had the general support of the British nation in its selfish and tyrannical course. The ruling classes of England looked upon their American colonies simply as resources from which the mother country might become enriched, and in this respect the policy of Great Britain was not different from that of Spain.

It was not for the sake of the colonists that England assisted them in driving the French from America, but with the wholly selfish aim of building up the trade and commerce of Great Britain. The wars against Holland, which resulted in the subjection to the British crown of New Netherland (now New York), and other colonial possessions of that industrious people, and which compelled the fleets of the United Provinces to acknowledge British supremacy on the high seas, were in the line of commercial aggrandizement, and

the Navigation Act transferred to England a large share of the Dutch carrying trade, and enriched English shipowners with an utterly selfish indifference to the welfare of English colonies. When the colonists, their western bounds no longer threatened by civilized foes, their plantations flourishing, and their seaport towns



RICHARD HENRY LEE

wealthy with the profits of a commerce carried on in contempt of imperial restrictions, asserted that they were entitled to all the rights of freeborn Englishmen, and to the same commercial and industrial independence enjoyed by loyal subjects in England, they were surprised to learn that Parliament and the English people regarded them not as freemen, but as tributaries. Year after year the Americans protested against the wrongs imposed on them, but still they remained true to the power which sought to reduce them to a bondage unworthy of their British lineage. John Adams is authority for the statement that "there always existed in the colonies a desire of independence of Parliament in the articles of internal taxation and internal policy, and a very general, if not universal opinion, that they were constitutionally entitled to it, and as general a determination to maintain and defend it. But there never

existed a desire of independence of the Crown, or of general regulations of commerce for the equal and impartial benefit of all parts of the empire."

\* \* \*

A primary cause of the Declaration of Independence was the Act of Navigation, passed in the Cromwell period, which prohibited foreign nations from trading with the plantations in America. This Act was intended to injure the Dutch, and was effective in depriving Holland of a lucrative colonial traffic. Within



CHARLES CARROLL OF  
CARROLLTON



THO. M'KEAN

the decade that elapsed before the re-enactment of this measure under the Restoration, however, the colonial trade had grown with a vigor that aroused jealousy and uneasiness at home, and the Act of Navigation was soon followed, in 1663, by the first of the Acts of Trade, which provided that no supplies should be imported into any colony, except what had been actually shipped in an English port, and carried directly thence to the importing colony. This cut the colonies off from direct trade with any foreign country, and made England the depot for all necessities or

luxuries which the colonies desired, and which they could not obtain in America. Nine years later followed another Act, "for the better securing the plantation trade," which recited that the colonists had, contrary to the express letter of the aforesaid laws, brought into divers parts of Europe great quantities of their growth, productions and manufactures—sugar, tobacco, cotton, wool and dyewoods being particularly enumerated—and that the trade and navigation in those commodities from one plantation to another had been greatly increased, and provided that all colonial commodities should either be shipped to England or Wales before being imported into another colony, or that a customs' duty should be paid on such commodities equivalent to the cost of conveying the same to England, and thence to the



JOSEPH HEWES



time disregarded them, and that colonial commerce flourished in spite of restrictions; but it should be remembered that the prolonged wars in which England was engaged gave rich opportunities for privateering, and that even the customs' duties, though meant to be virtually prohibitory, were not heavy enough to overcome the advantages which the colonists enjoyed. But even if the British Parliament had never attempted to raise a revenue by taxation in the American colonies, it is probable that in time the restrictions on commerce would have led to revolution, unless rescinded. This was the opinion of the shrewd observer, Du Chatelet, who, after France had surrendered her American possessions to Great Britain, said that "they (the chambers of commerce), regard everything in colonial commerce, which does not turn exclusively to the benefit of the kingdom as contrary to the end for which colonies were established,

and as a theft from the State. To practice on these maxims is impossible. The wants of trade are stronger than the laws of trade. The North of America can alone furnish supplies to its South. This is the only point of view under which the cession of Canada can be regarded as a loss for France; but that cession will, one day be amply compensated, if it shall cause in the English colonies the rebellion and the independence which

STEP. HOPKINS



LEWIS MORRIS

become every day more probable and more near." The Acts of Trade, as shown by the articles specially enumerated, bore with greatest severity on the Southern colonies, and fostered in the planters of Virginia and the Carolinas a spirit of resentment against British rule. Men of the type of Washington, and the Lees, were thus prepared to join, heart and hand, when the time came, with their fellow-Americans of the North, in the struggle which ended in American independence.



JOHN PENN

\* \* \*

America, however, was patient under restrictive laws not stringently enforced, and but for the measures initiated by Grenville and Townshend, and approved by the king, the Parliament and the people of England, there would, if the leading American minds of that day were sincere, have been no insurrection in that era against British authority. George the Third is called a tyrant on every recurring Fourth of July, but the nation he ruled was as tyrannical as he, and impartial history cannot condemn the monarch without awarding a greater share of odium to his people, who, sustained by their pronounced opinion and through their chosen representatives, every measure for the destruction of the liberties of these colonies, and who began to listen to the dictates of reason and of humanity only when



THOS. HEYWARD, JR.



JAMES WILSON



GEO. ROSS



WM. PACA



MATTHEW THORNTON



LYMAN HALL

America had become the prison of thousands of England's soldiers, and thousands of others, hired Hessian and kidnapped Briton alike, had been welcomed by American freemen to graves in American soil.

\* \* \*

The next step in provoking the colonists to revolution was the Stamp Act. The object of this enactment was to raise money for the support of British troops, and the payment of salaries to certain public officers in the colonies, who had depended on the colonial treasuries for their compensation. In this there was a threefold invasion of American rights. Taxation without representation was contrary to a principle recognized for centuries in England, vindicated in the Revolution, which cost Charles the First his head, and upheld in America from the very beginning of the settlements. Again, while British troops had been most welcome as allies in battling against the French and the Indians, they were not desired as garrisons to overawe the free people of the colonies, and finally the colonial

officers, whom it was proposed to pay from the royal treasury, would become the masters, instead of the servants of the people—or they would be servants only of the king.

The colonists everywhere protested against the usurping course of the British monarch and legislature. Samuel Adams drew up the instructions to the newly elected representatives of Boston, in the General Court, to use all efforts against the plan of parliamentary taxation. It was declared "that the imposition of duties and taxes by the Parliament of Great Britain upon a people not represented in the House of Commons, is irreconcilable with their rights." A Committee of Correspondence was appointed in Massachusetts to communicate with other colonial assemblies, and the idea of union for the common defence began to take firm hold on the public mind.

No individual influence was more powerful in leading the South to stand side by side with the Northern colonies than that of Patrick Henry, the great orator of Virginia, whose resolutions against the Stamp Act, in the House of



COMMITTEE OF CONTINENTAL CONGRESS DRAFTING THE DECLARATION



GEO. CLYMER



BUTTON GWINNETT



WM. FLOYD

Burgesses, in 1765, declared that "the General Assembly of this colony has the sole right and power to lay taxes and impositions upon the inhabitants of this colony; and that every attempt to vest such power in any person or persons whatsoever, other than the General Assembly aforesaid, has a manifest tendency to destroy British as well as American freedom." This resolution was carried by but a single vote, and after a bitter and fierce debate, in which Patrick Henry uttered, with a voice of thunder, his famous warning to the British king—while cries of "treason" echoed from every part of the House—"Cæsar had his Brutus; Charles the First his Cromwell; and George the Third—(here the voice of the speaker rose, and his eyes kindled with patriotic fire)—may profit by their example! If this be treason, make the most of it!"

\* \* \*

As Americans grew more indignant, the British ministry became more arrogant. Harsher measures were adopted in Parliament, pointing to the military subjection of the



JOHN HART

colonies, and British regulars were sent to enforce the obnoxious laws. The "Boston Massacre" by British soldiery, so aroused the citizens as to compel the withdrawal of the troops to an island in the harbor. King George's ministry, frightened by the prospect of an American war, rescinded all the Townshend duties except that on tea, which the king insisted on retaining as a vindication of England's right to impose the

duty. The burning of the British armed revenue schooner "Gaspee," in Narraganset Bay, and the memorable event known as the "Boston Tea Party," gave proof, however, that the colonists could neither be bribed nor intimidated into surrender of their liberties, and England again resorted to force.

With the enactment of the Boston Port Bill, closing the port of Boston, King George and his Parliament crossed the Rubicon. America was aflame. The other colonies joined in expressing their sympathy with Massachusetts, and their resolve to stand by her people and share their fate. The First Continental Congress convened in Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia, on the 4th day of September, 1774. The most eminent men in the colonies were now brought together to decide upon action which would affect the liberties of three millions of people. Before proceeding to consider the problems, on the solving of which de-



GEO. READ

pended the future of America, the Congress joined in solemn prayer to God for his blessing on their deliberations. Patrick Henry was the first to speak, and he delivered an address worthy of his fame. He struck the key-note of Union in his declaration, "I am not a Virginian—I am an American!"

Colonel, afterward General Washington, then made the impression which gained for him later the command of the American armies. The Congress drew up a Declaration of Rights, and sent it to the king. The people of Massachusetts formed a Provincial Congress, with John Hancock for President, and began organizing provincial troops and gathering military stores. Virginia continued to keep pace with Massachusetts. At a convention of delegates from the several counties and corporations of Virginia, held in Richmond, March, 1775, Patrick Henry stood resolutely for armed resistance. "Three millions of people," he said, "armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active,



ROBT. MORRIS



INDEPENDENCE HALL IN 1876—PHILADELPHIA

the brave. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retreat from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery. Our chains are forged. Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston. The war is inevitable—and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come! It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen cry peace, peace—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun. The next gale that sweeps from the North will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

The War of the Revolution began at Lexington, and the Second Continental Congress met at Philadelphia on the same day that Fort Ticonderoga was taken. The meeting place of this Congress, which was to declare the American colonies free and independent States, was in the building now known as "Independence Hall," or the Old State House, between Fifth and Sixth Streets, on the south side of Chestnut Street. This building was erected in 1732-35, and in its belfry was hung,

JOHN HANCOCK



THOMAS JEFFERSON

in 1750, the "Liberty Bell," engraved with the prophetic words: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land, to all the inhabitants thereof." The Congress chose for its

President John Hancock, whom the British government wanted to try for treason, assumed direction of the troops encamped at Cambridge, near Boston, and called upon Virginia and the middle colonies for recruits. George Washington was appointed to command the American forces, and the war continued with varying fortune through 1775 and the early part of 1776.

Americans were still far from being unanimous for separation from Great Britain, but the news that King George was buying mercenaries on the continent to use in crushing the colonies, appears to have decided many wavering minds against a sovereign capable of such heartless treatment of his subjects. Independence was

more and more advocated as the only remedy for American wrongs. While the opening of American ports to commerce was being discussed in the Continental Congress in February, 1776, Roger Sherman, of Connecticut, proposed to secure a protective treaty with some foreign power. Benjamin Harrison, of Virginia, said, "We have hobbled on, under a fatal attachment to Great Britain. I feel that attachment as much as any man, but I feel a stronger one for my country." George Wythe, Harrison's col-

WM. WILLIAMS





ABRA. CLARK

league, urged the granting of letters of marque and reprisal, adding: "But before this measure is adopted, it is to be considered in what character we shall treat —as subjects of Great Britain —as rebels? No,

"we must declare ourselves a free people!" He then moved, "That the colonies have a right to contract alliances with foreign powers." "Why, this is independence!" exclaimed one of the hesitating members.

Seven colonies were in favor of considering the motion, but no decisive action resulted.

The strife in the colonies between those who opposed and those who urged entire separation



STATE HOUSE, (REAR VIEW)  
PHILADELPHIA



SAMUEL CHASE

from Great Britain was becoming more acute. It should not be assumed that the opponents of separation were in all instances, or even generally, lacking in patriotism. Many of them had been earnest supporters of American rights against British oppression. The most eminent of these was John Dickinson, of Pennsylvania, whose able writings and speeches had done much to animate the people to a determined stand for their liberties. He had colleagues in the Congress less lofty of motive, who represented the limited proprietary class, which held the reins of authority in Penn-



THOS. STONE



ELBRIDGE GERRY



ARTHUR MIDDLETON

sylvania, and which sought to hold back the overpowering popular tide setting toward independence. New York was also divided, the Tory element there being wealthy and influential; but the sentiment in favor of independence grew irresistible, and those who did not acquiesce were content for the time to remain passive.

In New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina and distant Georgia, timidity, conscientious scruple, and secret and open treason, raised barriers against the American cause, and the Congress, consisting as it did of stable, conservative and substantial men, advanced with caution and hesitation toward the goal which might prove either an abyss of destruction, or a glorious deliverance.

The cause of independence was being continually strengthened by popular appeals. When the royal governor, Sir John Wentworth, fled from New Hampshire, the people of that colony sent to the Congress requesting advice as to what form of government to adopt, and similar applications were received from South Carolina and Virginia. Upon motion of John Adams, the Congress recommended to these colonies to establish governments based on election by the free-men. On the 10th of May, 1776, a resolution introduced by John Adams, was passed, virtually inviting all the colonies to form independent governments. On the 15th of May, a preamble to the foregoing resolution was adopted which de-



JOHN ADAMS

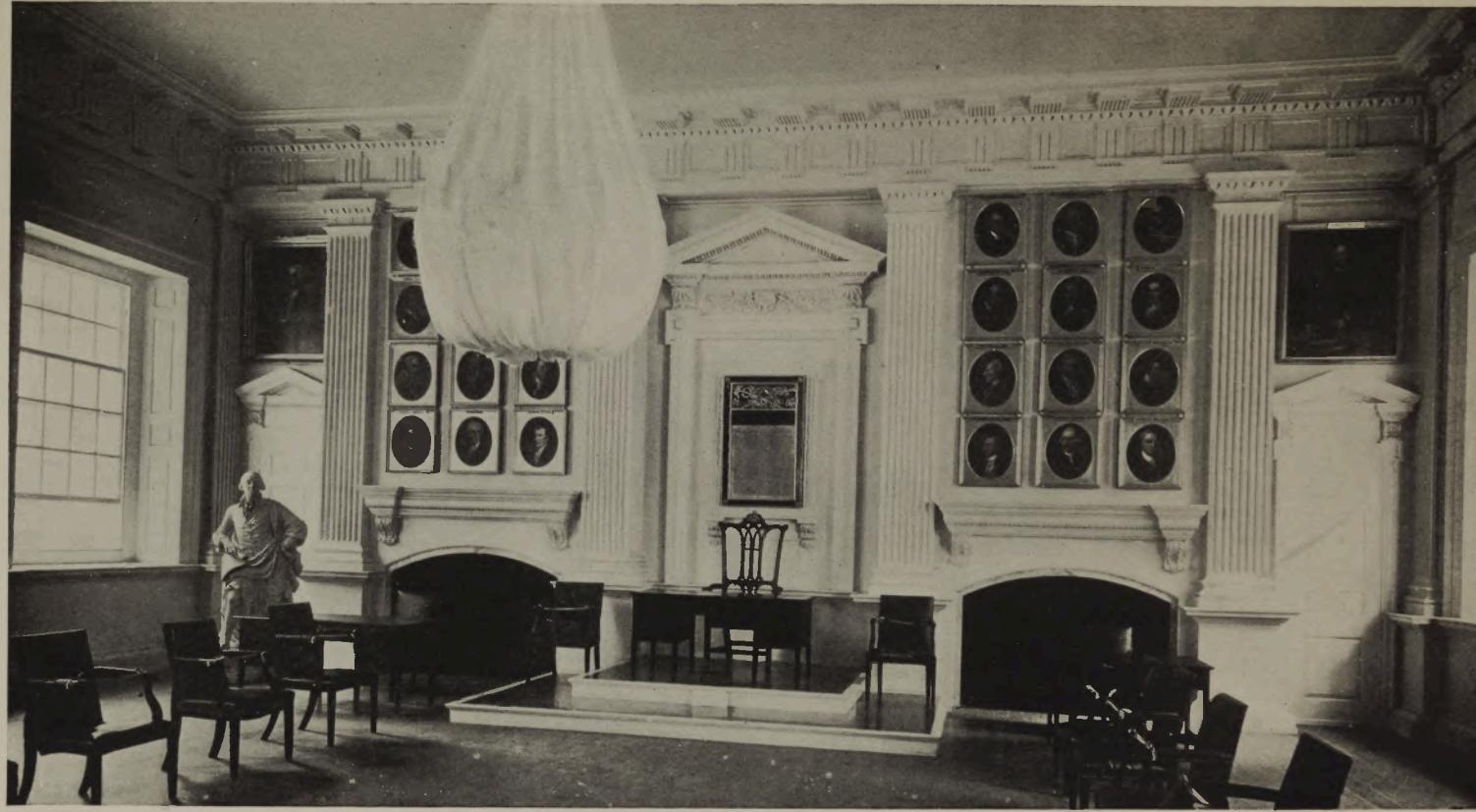
clared that the American people could no longer take oath to support any government deriving its authority from the crown and that all such governments must now be suppressed, since the king had withdrawn his protection from the inhabitants of the united colonies.

This preamble excited a



FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE

strenuous debate between the advocates and the opponents of complete separation, and its adoption amounted to a preliminary declaration of independence. "Now," cried Mr. Adams, when the result was announced, "the Gordian knot is cut!" "Great Britain," he wrote, "has at last driven America to the last step, a complete separation from her, a total, absolute independence, not only of her Parliament, but of her crown." On the same day, in the Virginia Convention, in which sat another future President of the United States, James Madison, resolutions were reported, declaring that "We have no alternative left but an abject submission or total separation," and uttering for the first time fundamental principles afterward embodied in the Declaration of Independence. "All men are by nature equally free," proclaimed the sons of the Old Dominion, "and have inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society they cannot by any compact deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and



STATE HOUSE RESTORED, INDEPENDENCE HALL, PHILADELPHIA



JAS. SMITH

obtaining happiness and safety." "All power is vested in and consequently derived from the people. Magistrates are their trustees and servants, and at all times amenable to them." Washington, from New York, added the powerful influence of his deliberate judgment to the voice of his native State. "A reconciliation with Great Britain," he declared, "is impracticable, and would be in the highest degree detrimental to the true interest of America. Nothing but independence will save us."

On June 7 Richard Henry Lee, acting on instructions from the Virginia Convention, moved, "That these united colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved." Of the debate on this memorable resolution—the soul and essence of the Declaration of Independence—we have not even the outlines. John Adams seconded Lee's motion, and the resolution was postponed until the next morning, the members being enjoined to attend punctually at ten o'clock. When the Congress met at the appointed hour, the resolution was referred to the Committee of the Whole, and Benjamin Harrison, of Virginia, took the chair. The discussion lasted until seven o'clock in the evening,



SAML. HUNTINGTON

when John Hancock, President of the Congress, resumed the chair, and announced that as the committee had come to no decision, they had directed him to ask leave to sit again on Monday, June 10, and the resolution to adjourn over Sunday was carried.

On Monday, the Titans of that struggle dared again the greatest issue the world has known since Calvary. John Dickinson, of Pennsylvania, was undoubtedly the chief opponent of the resolution, and with him, pleading for delay, were Robert R. Livingston, of New York; Edward Rutledge, of South Carolina, and James Wilson, of Pennsylvania. Rutledge and Wilson were afterwards signers of the Declaration. John Adams led the speakers in favor of the resolution, and was ably seconded by Richard Henry Lee, George Wythe, and other advocates of independence, Thomas Jefferson summing up the arguments of both sides. Of the utterances of Adams in the great controversy we have no record, but his thoughts and words are indicated in a letter written at the time, in which he says: "Objects

of the most stupendous magnitude, and measures in which the lives and fortunes of the millions yet unborn are intimately connected, are now before us. We are in the midst of a revolution the most complete, unexpected, and remarkable of any in the history of nations."

PHIL. LIVINGSTON





GEO. TAYLOR

course of the debate that the colonies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and South Carolina were not yet matured for falling from the parent stem, but that they were fast advancing to that state, it was thought prudent to wait awhile for them."

The committee consisted of Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia; John Adams, of Massachusetts; Benjamin Franklin, of Pennsylvania; Roger Sherman, of Connecticut; and Robert R. Livingston, of New York. The absence of Richard Henry Lee from this committee is accounted for on the ground that his wife was ill. There is no doubt, however, that Mr. Lee, while justly esteemed as a patriot and a statesman, did not stand in as favorable a light with the majority of the Con-

The outcome was a compromise. The opponents of action obtained the delay they asked for, while the advocates of immediate separation secured the appointment of a committee to draft a Declaration of Independence, with instructions to report the Declaration and the Lee resolution on the first of July. Jefferson says of the result: "It appearing in the



BENJ. HARRISON

JOSIAH BARTLETT



CARTER BRAXTON



gress as Mr. Jefferson, who combined with a fearless temper and positive convictions the ability to command the friendship even of opponents. This was shown strikingly in his subsequent relations with Washington. Both as chairman of the committee, and because his associates deemed him best qualified for the task, Jefferson was asked to write the Declaration. Jeff-

erson was then living near what is now the corner of Market and Seventh streets, Philadelphia. The paper was written in a room of the second floor, upon a little writing desk three inches high, contrived by Jefferson himself, and which still exists. The original draft, in Jefferson's handwriting, shows only two or three slight alterations in the handwriting of his associates, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, and with these immaterial changes the draft went before the Congress as prepared by Jefferson, and approved by the committee.

Meantime events moved rapidly. Connecticut, on the 14th of June, instructed her delegates to vote for independence. Delaware gave her representatives permission to vote as they might think proper, and



THOS. NELSON, JR.

RICHD. STOCKTON





WM. HOOPER

established a free government in place of proprietary rule. In New York, the people were summoned to elect a convention to pass on the question of independence, and the Provincial Congress of New Jersey sent a delegation solid for independence to the National Congress. On the 18th of June, Pennsylvania spoke for the first time through representatives of all the people in behalf of American freedom, and on June 24th the Congress took another step toward independence, by resolving, "that all persons abiding within any of the United Colonies, and deriving protection from its laws, owe allegiance to such laws, and are members of such colony," and treason was charged upon all members of such united colonies who should be adherent to the King of Great Britain, giving him aid or comfort.

\* \* \*

When the Lee resolution and the accompanying declaration were reported on July 1st, every colony was represented. The debate on the Lee resolution was earnest and prolonged. John Adams, in the language of Jefferson, was "the colossus of that debate," and John Dickinson was his chief antagonist. The speech of Dickinson, revised and published by himself, has been preserved; that of Adams has not, the language attributed by Daniel Webster to Adams being, of course, imaginary. "I had no art or

oratory to exhibit," wrote Adams, about thirty years later, "and could produce nothing but simple reason and plain common sense. I felt myself oppressed by the weight of the subject; and I believe if Demosthenes or Cicero had ever been called to deliberate on so great a question, neither would have relied on his own talents, without a supplication to Minerva, and a sacrifice to Mercury, or the god of Eloquence." Mr. Adams adds that when

the Abbe Reynal afterwards requested him to furnish him with any speeches he had published or delivered, he assured the abbe that he had never published or written a speech in his life made in any public assembly; that he did not wish that any one he had delivered should be preserved in form, excepting the one made upon the question of independence; but of even that speech he had no minutes himself of what he said, and that no part of it had ever been published.

\* \* \*

Upon a vote being taken on the same day, the resolution was sustained by nine colonies, or two-thirds of the number voting, and Rutledge, of South Carolina, thereupon requested that the final decision be deferred until the next day, July 2d, when the vote, he suggested, would probably be unanimous. This was agreed to, and on July 2d the debate was resumed, and all the colonies voted for independence, except



GEO. WALTON



ROGER SHERMAN



INTERIOR PHILADELPHIA STATE HOUSE RESTORED—WEST

New York, which was silent, on account of the absence of instructions.

The sentiments of John Adams regarding that memorable vote are vividly expressed under date of July 3d, in one of his letters to his equally patriotic wife, Abigail, which throw such valuable light on the Revolution. "The greatest question," he said, "was decided which ever was debated in America, when I look back to 1761, and run through the series of political events, the chain of causes and effects, I

am surprised at the suddenness, as well as the greatness of this revolution. Britain has been filled with folly, and America with wisdom. It is the will of heaven that the two countries should be sundered forever; it may be the will of heaven that America shall suffer calamities still more wasting and distresses still more dreadful. If this is to be the case, the furnace of affliction produces refinement in States as well as individuals; but I submit all my hope and fears to an

overruling Providence, in which, unfashionable as the faith may be, I firmly believe.

"Had a Declaration of Independence been made seven months ago, we might before this hour have formed alliances with foreign States; we should have mastered Quebec, and been in possession of Canada; but on the other hand the delay has many great advantages attending it. The hopes of reconciliation, which were fondly enter-

tained by multitudes of the honest and well-meaning, though weak and mistaken, have been gradually and at last totally extinguished. Time has been given for the whole people maturely to consider the great question of independence, so that in every colony of the thirteen they have now adopted it as their own act.

"But the day is past. The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epocha in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forevermore.

"You will think me transported with enthusiasm, but I am not. I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost us to maintain this Declaration, and to support and defend these States; yet through all the gloom I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory; that the end is worth all the means; that posterity will triumph in that day's transaction, even though we should rue it, which I trust in God we shall not."

The Declaration, as drafted by Jefferson and approved by the committee was then taken up. In the discussion which



CÆSAR RODNEY



FRANCIS HOPKINSON

followed, the Congress struck out a passage condemning George the Third for encouraging the slave trade. Slavery was not then a sectional issue, as it existed in Northern as well as Southern colonies, and Northern shipowners profited largely by the traffic. Nevertheless, there was a strong sentiment in the colonies against the further introduction of slaves, in which Jefferson evidently shared. It was deemed best however, to omit the subject from the Declaration. Jefferson gave expression to the wounded feelings of the American people in being so unworthily treated by brethren and fellow-citizens—that is, he arraigned the British people for their share in and responsibility for the tyrannical conduct of the king and ministry. The Congress showed prudent regard for the future course of public opinion in Great Britain by excluding this just but exasperating arraignment. No interpolations of importance were made. Jefferson himself took little part in the discussion, although he listened with the gravest anxiety, while Franklin sought to cheer him with humorous and pithy remarks.

Thursday, the Fourth of July, was a warm day, and the members were impatient of the prolonged strain caused by the discussion of so vital an issue. It is stated, on the authority of Jefferson, that the final vote on the Declaration was hastened by swarms of flies which came from a neighboring stable, and caused much discomfort to the members. The official report



EDWARD RUTLEDGE



BENJ. FRANKLIN

is that, "Agreeably to the order of the day, the Congress resolved itself into a committee of the whole, to take into their further consideration the Declaration, and after some time the President resumed the chair, and Mr. Harrison reported that the committee had agreed to a Declaration, which they desired him to report."

Crowds were waiting for the expected vote. Suddenly the Liberty Bell rang the announcement to the waiting multitude, and shouts of gladness greeted the glorious news. The Congress immediately passed an additional resolution, that "Copies of the Declaration be sent to the several assemblies, conventions, and committees or councils of safety, and to the several commanding officers of the Continental troops; that it be proclaimed in each of the United States, and at the head of the army." On July 5th copies, probably in the form of a printed broadside, and bearing the signature of John Hancock, President, and the attesting signature of Charles Thomson, Secretary of the Congress, were transmitted as ordered.

The new Convention of New York met on the 9th of July, and the Declaration of Independence was referred to a committee of which John Jay was chairman. This committee promptly reported resolutions to the effect that the reasoning of the Declaration was cogent and conclusive, and that the Convention should "support it with their fortunes and their lives." These resolutions were adopted,



ROBT. TREAT PAINE

and declared to be the act of the representatives of the State of New York, and the thirteen former colonies were thus arrayed in unbroken front, in asserting and defending American independence.

On July 18th a resolution was secretly adopted by the Congress, directing that the Declaration should be engrossed on parchment, and signed by all the members, and on the 2d of August the signatures were formally appended, in accord

with this resolution. Eventful as was the scene, and grave with peril for all present and for the millions of people whose delegates they were, it was relieved by more than one grim pleasantry, even in the humor of which, however, was evident the stern resolve of those men of British blood who had cut loose forever from the British crown. John Hancock, President of the Congress, one of the foremost statesmen and richest men in America, was first, as he signed, to speak in jesting irony, his defiance of the king, who, if victorious, could confiscate alike his life and his estate. The Congress had been as wise in selecting Hancock for President as in naming Washington for General-in-chief. Sanderson says of Hancock, that "by his long experience as moderator of the town meetings, and presiding officer and speaker of the provincial assemblies during times of great turbulence and commotion, he was eminently qualified, as well by his natural dignity of manners, to preside in the great council of the nation." As

Hancock, with that splendid and clear penmanship which makes his name so conspicuous, appended his signature, he remarked: "John Bull can read that without spectacles." Then he added more gravely: "We must all hang together in this matter." "Yes, indeed," interrupted Franklin, "we must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately." "When it comes to hanging," said Harrison, of Virginia, who was of massive build, as he turned to Gerry, of Massachusetts, of much lighter frame, "I shall have the advantage of you. It will be all over with me before you have done kicking in the air." Charles Carroll, of Maryland, had not been present when the Declaration of Independence was voted for. He was then absent on a vain mission to Canada, with his brother, the Rev. John Carroll, in the hope that the fact of their being Roman Catholics, would influence the French Canadians to cast their lot with the Americans. The mission was unsuccessful, and Carroll returned in time to add his name to the Declaration. "Will you sign the Declaration?" asked the President. "Most willingly," replied Carroll, and with a firm hand he wrote, "Charles Carroll of Carrollton." The last name was appended to the Declaration in November, when Matthew Thornton, a native of Ireland, elected to the Continental Congress from New Hampshire, in September, 1776, was permitted to affix his signature.

The signers fully knew the great



WM. ELLERY

risk they incurred, and it may truthfully be said that one of them, Richard Stockton, of New Jersey, died a martyr, as a direct result of his act. His splendid home was destroyed, he was robbed of all his possessions, and being made prisoner by the British, he was treated with such cruelty that he died in 1781. The estates of other signers, wherever they could be reached by the British, were ruthlessly devastated, and several wrote their names in the full knowledge of this loss of fortune that would surely follow. Yet never were the signatures to any important document written more clearly, or with more evidence of calmness and self-control. There is one exception — the tremulous signature of Stephen Hopkins,



WHERE THE FIRST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS MET

of Rhode Island. The explanation is that the aged Hopkins suffered with palsy, and had to support his right hand with the left, while writing.

Robert R. Livingston, one of the committee on the Declaration, was unfortunately prevented from signing by absence on other duties. That committee, it should be stated, included two future Presidents, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, each afterward, if not even then, representing the two great and contending principles which have been carried down in our nation's history from age to age, under various political names, and for which the Republican and Democratic parties now stand. Though differing in many things, Adams and Jefferson



FRANS. LEWIS



JNO. WITHERSPOON



SAM. ADAMS



OLIVER WOLCOTT



THOMAS LYNCH, JR.

were shoulder to shoulder against the enemies of America. And may it ever be thus in the future :

“ Divide as we may in our own native land,  
To the rest of the world we are one.”

The signers of the Declaration kept well their pledge in the anxious years which followed, before England withdrew from the conflict. Benjamin Franklin in diplomacy, and Robert Morris in finance, gave service as vital to the success of the American cause, as Washington in the field. John Adams labored incessantly in the duties assigned to him at home and abroad, and his prudence in the negotiation of preliminaries of peace saved the United States from accepting relations to France which might have imperiled the freedom won by so many sacrifices. Richard Henry Lee showed patriotic foresight equally admirable, in urging that the conditions of peace should

include for America free navigation of the Mississippi River. In statesmanship, in the ranks of war, and in civil life, signers of the Declaration proved themselves worthy of the veneration which has ever been attached to their names. They have long been numbered with the honored dead of the Republic. Their peerless monument is the Nation which they helped to create : their epitaph is the history of our Nation's progress from that Fourth of July in 1776 to its present leading place among the powers of the world. It is hard, from the secure standpoint of to-day, to fitly appreciate the sacrifices and the courage of that little band of Americans, who, from Independence Hall, sent forth their defiance, in the name of eternal right, to the armies and fleets of King George ; but our best tribute to their memory is to follow their example of pure patriotism and unselfish devotion to duty, whatsoever our position in life.

## THE STORY OF THE FLAG

THE first American Flag was adopted by Congress on June 14th, 1777. Our Flag to-day is, strictly speaking, an evolution of the combined flags of the colonists. During that period of great unrest, dating from 1760 to 1775, each of the colonies had its own emblem; one being of red with a white field, with a red cross with a pine tree in the upper square; another, a flag of blue with a white field, with a cross of red thereon, and with a pine tree; another, a white flag with a pine tree as a centre-piece, with the legend: "An appeal to Heaven"; another, a white flag with a Goddess of Liberty thereon with a shield, a Continental soldier as a centre, and a horse unbridled on the right, with the legend, "Conquer or Die"; another, a flag of blue with a crescent in the upper left-hand corner, with the legend, "Liberty," horizontal on the flag; and yet another, a yellow flag, had a rattlesnake coiled in a striking attitude, with the legend, "Don't tread on me." After hostilities commenced at Lexington, these various flags were in themselves in a large degree confusing. Then it was that the Flag Committee, appointed by the Continental Congress (consisting of Benjamin Franklin, Harrison and Lynch), presented the flag known as the Cambridge Flag,



JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

which was raised at Cambridge, Washington's Headquarters, January 1st, 1776. It had thirteen stripes, in alternate red and white, with a field of blue, with the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew placed thereon. The confusion that the distinguished committee hoped to avoid was in a large degree augmented, for when the flag was raised amid loud acclaim by the faithful patriots, some demonstrations were made by the English, just across the Charles River in Boston, who believed that the flag they saw displayed in Cambridge was an emblem of submission. It became apparent to the leading patriots that a truly distinctive emblem had not yet been evolved. While Washington was in New York, May 26th, 1776, he received a peremptory order from the Continental Congress in Philadelphia to visit that city, where he arrived May 28th. Matters of Great military moment were discussed at length. It was on the occasion of this visit of General Washington that a committee of three (Washington, Robert Morris, Chairman of the Secret Committee and the Financier, together with Colonel George Ross), took under consideration the suggestions that had been previously made regarding a distinctive flag. The committee waited upon President John Hancock at his residence, and received from him sufficient English bunting to make a flag. They then proceeded to the home of Betsy Ross (Colonel Ross' niece) at 239 Arch Street, Philadelphia, where General Washington submitted to her the rough sketch of the flag they desired to be made. Its design was thirteen stripes, in alternate red and white, together with thirteen stars in a field of blue, the same being set in circular form. General Washington asked Betsy Ross if she could follow out the design. She replied, "I

will try." A little discussion followed regarding the style of the star to be used, whether it should be six-pointed or five-pointed. It is the belief that General Washington, who was as modest as he was brave, felt disinclined to use the five-pointed star, since it appeared upon his own family coat-of-arms. He further argued that a five-pointed star was more difficult to make; whereupon Betsy Ross replied, "If the stars have any points they are five-pointed, and nothing is easier than to make one of that style." Suiting the action to the word, she took a piece of bunting, and folding it two or three times, with one clip of her scissors she cut a perfect five-pointed star. It was then and there agreed that the five-pointed star, which bore no semblance to the six-pointed English star, should be employed. The size of the flag was eight by twelve feet, which proportions have ever since been adhered to. Three days after their first visit, the committee returned to the house of Betsy Ross. In the sitting room she displayed to them, for the first time, the first American Flag, which was officially adopted by the subsequent Congress, June 14th, 1777.

Before General Washington returned to New York, on June 5th, the creation of the new emblem had been decided upon, the Flag was made, and word was sent to the various posts of the Continental Army requesting them to prepare similar flags as speedily as possible, using the new emblem. This command was given before the official adoption and promulgation of the order, which, in fact, did not take place until August 8th, 1776.

Much speculation has been indulged in relative to the selection of Betsy Ross for this most distinguished and patriotic work. Her husband, John Ross, six months

before the making of the Flag, had given up his life for his country as a Continental soldier; besides, her skill as a needlewoman had long been acknowledged. Her uncle, Colonel George Ross, knew her to be loyal to the colonists' cause, and it was fitting that to such a one the making of the first American Flag should be entrusted. By general consent, and without opposition, therefore, Betsy Ross continued to make flags for the new Republic. A draft was drawn in her favor May 17, 1776, for fourteen pounds, twelve shillings, and two pence, for the Flags for the Fleet in the Delaware River. She continued to make flags for many years.

Much pleasant rivalry has been indulged in regarding the first engagement under the Stars and Stripes. Delaware claimed to be the first to use it during a slight engagement within her statelines, while Fort Stanwix also made a well-substantiated claim. As a matter of authentic history, however, the first battle fought under the American Flag, after the issuance of the order from the Secretary of Congress, was the decisive battle of Saratoga, where Schuyler, Gates and Morgan bent their earnest energies against Burgoyne, and when Benedict Arnold (who afterwards became a traitor), turned the tide of conflict and won for the struggling colonists the greatest battle of the American Revolution, which stands to-day as one of the fifteen decisive battles of the world.

The Flag, in its original form, was soon to wave triumphantly over thirteen sparsely settled colonies, while to-day eighty million loyal Americans stand ready to defend it unto death, while the World recognizes its Stars and Stripes as emblematic of justice and protection to all.



GENERAL WASHINGTON

GEORGE ROSS

ROBERT MORRIS

BETSY ROSS

BIRTH OF OUR NATION'S FLAG

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# Declaration of Independence.

*Fac-simile of the original document in the hand-writing of Thomas Jefferson.*

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A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA, in General Congress assembled.

We hold these truths to be ~~sovereign~~ <sup>self-evident</sup>: That all men are created equal, ~~independent~~; that ~~they are endowed by their creator with equal~~ ~~rights, that~~ ~~among these are~~ ~~life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness~~; that ~~to secure these~~ ~~rights, that~~ ~~it is the~~ ~~right of the people to alter~~ ~~or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying its foundation on~~ ~~such principles & organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall~~ ~~seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness.~~ ~~precedence indeed~~ ~~will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for~~ ~~light & transient causes: and accordingly all experience hath shewn that~~ ~~manhood are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to~~ ~~right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed but~~

when a long train of abuses & usurpations [begun at a distant and D period]  
& pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to ~~subdue~~ reduce  
them ~~to absolute dependence~~, it is their right, to throw off such  
government & to provide new guards for their future security. such has  
been the patient sufferance of these colonies. & such is now the necessity  
which constrains them to ~~abandon~~ their former systems of government.  
the history of ~~the~~ present <sup>King of Great Britain</sup> is a history of [unremitting] injuries and  
usurpations, [among which, ~~for~~ <sup>but all ~~the~~</sup> ~~harm~~ to contra-  
dict the uniform tenor of the rest ~~of which~~ [have] in direct object the  
establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. to prove this, let facts be  
submitted to a candid world [for the truth of which we pledge a faith  
not unworthy of falsehood]

he has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the pub  
lic good:

he has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate & pressing importance,  
unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained,  
and when so suspended, he has neglected utterly to attend to them.  
he has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people  
unless those people would relinquish the right of representation, a right  
inestimable to them. & formidable to tyrants only:  
he has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, & distant from  
the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance  
with his measures,  
he has dissolved Representative houses repeatedly [continually] for opposing with  
mainly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people:  
~~intended~~, he has refused for a long ~~space~~ of time, to cause others to be elected.

whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise, the state remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without & commotions within: he has endeavoured to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, & raising the conditions of new grants.

-proscriptions of lands:

he has [suspended] the administration of justice [totally] to cease in some of these states, preparing his ascent to laws for establishing judiciary powers: he has made [laws] judges dependant on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, the + & payment of their salaries:

he has erected a multitude of new offices [by a self-assumed power] & sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people & eat out their substance: ~~without the consent of our~~ <sup>legislatures</sup> he has kept among us in times of peace, standing armies & ships of war;

he has affected to render the military independent of & superior to the civil power: he has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his ascent to their pretended legislation, for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; for protecting them by a mock-trial from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states;

for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world; for imposing taxes on us without our consent; for depriving us of the benefits of trial by jury;

forран protecting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences: for abolishing the free system of English law in a neighboring province, colonizing them an arbitrary government and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at one and change & transform the same into a

Tabolishing our most ~~valuable~~ laws  
for taking away our charters. Altering fundamentally the forms of our governments,  
for suspending our own legislatures & declaring themselves invested with power to  
legislate for us in all cases whatsoever  
by declining us out of the protection Virginia was granted us  
he has abdicated government here, [Withdrawing his governors & declaring us out  
of his allegiance & protection:]

lives of our people :  
he is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete  
the works of death desolation & tyranny already begun with circumstances  
recently passed in the most barbarous ages and totally  
lacks of honesty & perfectly unworthy the head of a civilized nation.  
had and wanted intentions amiables and has  
but endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the manners & traits  
savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of  
all ages, sexes, & conditions [of existence.]

of distinguished dear, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people upon whom he also thrusted them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.]

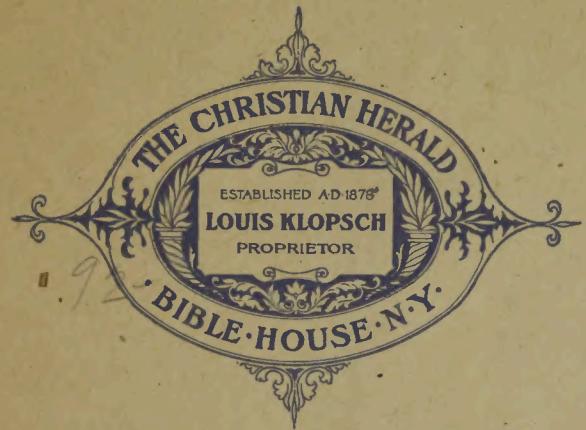
Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren: we have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend a jurisdiction over [these <sup>us</sup> our states], we have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration & settlement here, [no one of which could warrant so strange a pretension: that these were effected at the expence of our own blood & treasure, unassisted by the wealth or the strength of Great Britain: that in constituting indeed our several forms of government, we had adopted one common <sup>long</sup> colony, thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league & amity with them: but that submission to their <sup>colonial</sup> parliament was no part of our constitution, nor ever an idea of history, may be credited: and we have appealed to their native justice & magnanimity [as well as to] the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations which were <sup>indeed</sup> [but] innocent & <sup>more</sup> <sup>merit</sup> <sup>convention & association.</sup> they too have been deaf to the voice of justice & of consanguinity. [When occasions have been given them, by the regular course of

their laws, of removing from their councils the disturbers of our harmony, they have by their free election re-established them in power. at this very time too they are permitting their chief magistrate to send over not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch & foreign mercenaries to invade & ~~subdue~~<sup>1</sup> us. These, &c. have given the last stab to agonizing affection, and manly spirit bids us to no more for ever these unfeeling brethren. we must endeavor to forget our former love for them, and to hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, or peace friends we might have been a few & a great people together; but a course of grandeur & of freedom it seems is beneath their dignity, be it so since they will have it: the road to ~~glory~~<sup>2</sup> & to glory & to happiness is open to us too; we will always it is apparent from them, we must find a ~~de~~<sup>3</sup> & appropriate ~~best~~<sup>4</sup> and acceptable for the necessity which ~~pro~~<sup>5</sup> now urges our ~~rever~~<sup>6</sup> Country. ~~Disraeli~~<sup>7</sup> and told them as who's ~~not~~<sup>8</sup> for not of mankind over us in this present friend.

We therefore the representatives of the United States of America in General Con  
cours  
agreed in the name of the people of these United States to form themselves  
only assembled, do on the name of the good people of these United States,

[Forget and renounce all allegiance & subjection to the King of Great Britain  
all others who may hereafter claim by, through, or under him; we utterly  
desire & break off all political connection which may have heretofore subs  
isted between us & the people or parliament of Great Britain; and finally  
we do assert and declare these colonies to be free and independent states,  
and that as free & independent states they shall forever have power to levy  
war conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, & to do all other  
acts and things which independent states may & ought do. And for the  
support of this declaration, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our  
fortunes, & our sacred honour.

JUN 22 1903





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