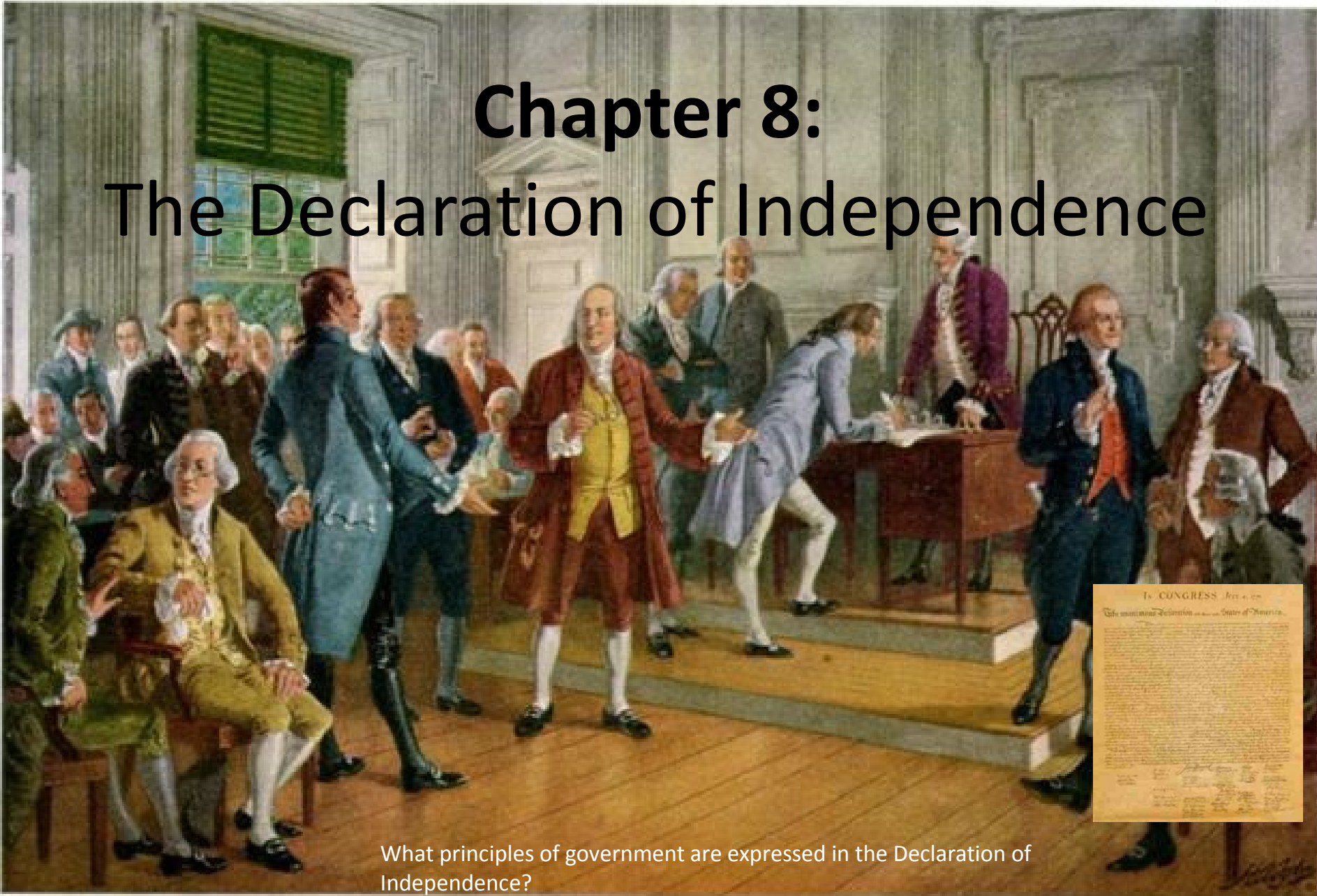
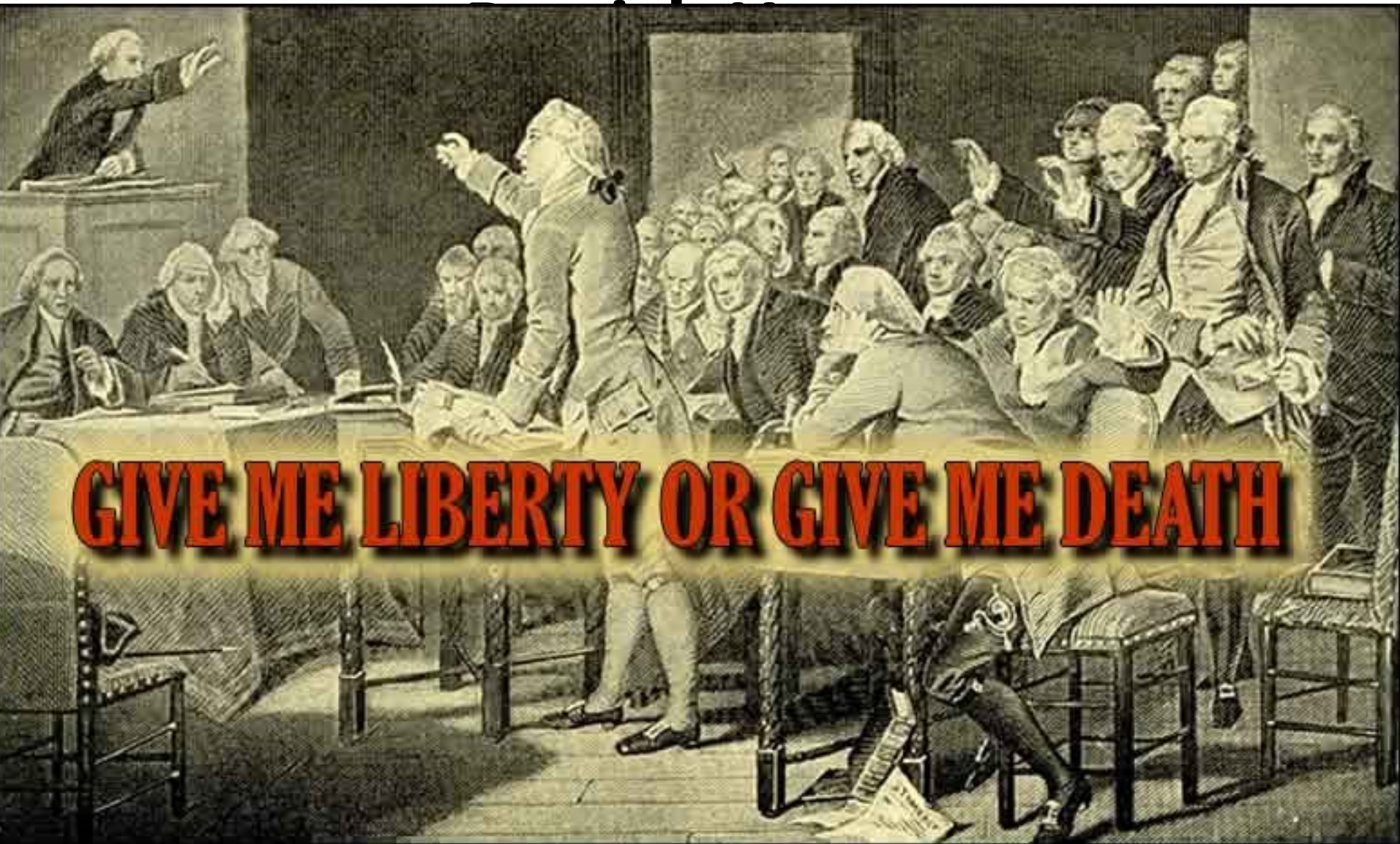


Chapter 8:

The Declaration of Independence



What principles of government are expressed in the Declaration of Independence?



After Lexington & Concord



Despite Patrick Henry's passionate speech, most colonists remained unsure about separation from Great Britain.

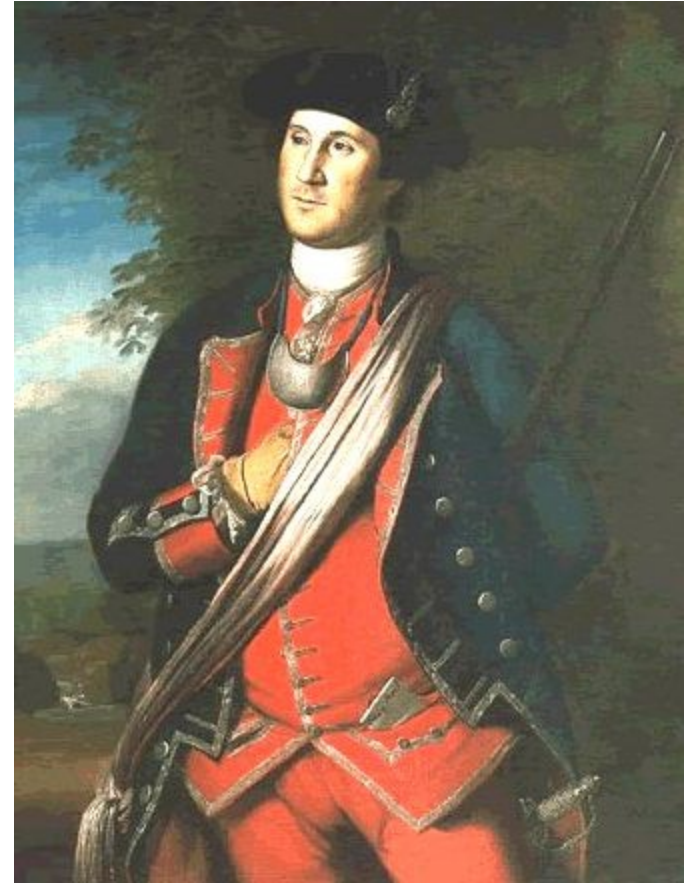
The Continental Army

- **Second Continental Congress** meets to organize an army.
- John Adams envisions a “Continental Army” made up of **troops from all colonies**.
- **George Washington** nominated to lead.



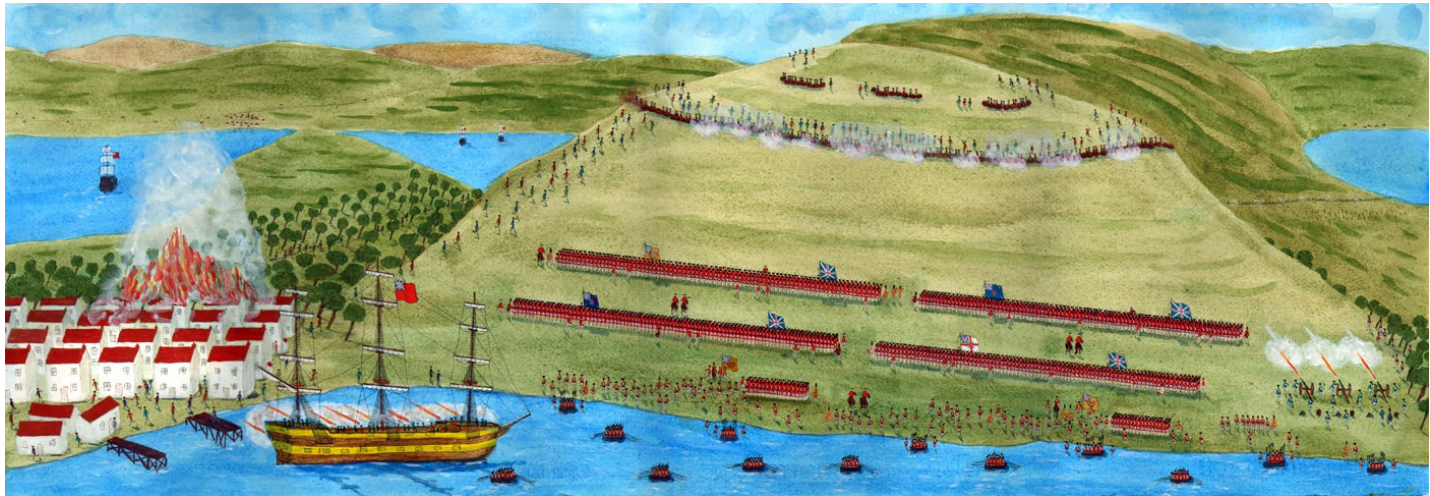
George Washington

- Founding Father
- Patriot
- Chosen as commander-in-chief of Continental Army
- Command experience from French & Indian War



The Battle of Bunker Hill

- Militiamen built a fort on Breed's Hill all through the night of June 16.
- British general Howe saw the fort and ordered attack
- Americans wait until they are as close as possible before firing on them.
- Took the British 3 tries to take the hill.
- Short but very bloody: 1000 British casualties; 500 American

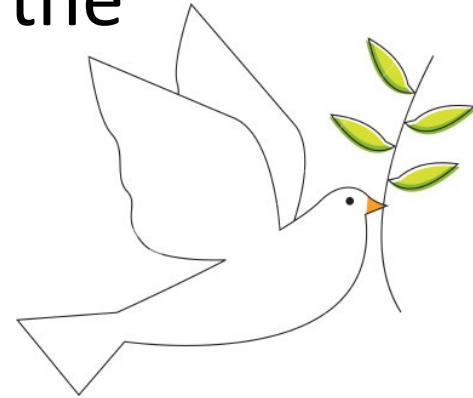


“Don’t fire until you see the whites of their eyes.”



Olive Branch Petition

- Second Continental Congress sends a petition to King George III asking him to end the conflict.
- **Olive tree:** ancient symbol of peace
- King declares colonies are in “*open and avowed rebellion.*” Orders his ministers “*to bring the traitors to justice.*”

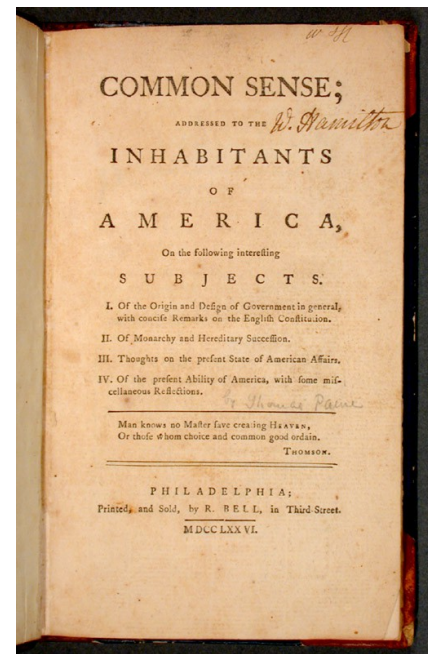


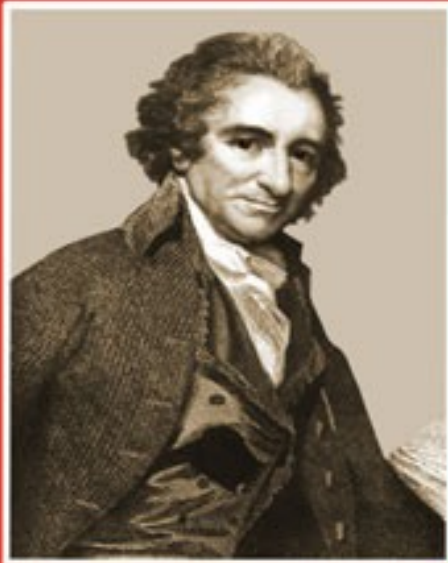


Thomas Paine

- Founding Father
- Published pamphlet entitled ***Common Sense***
- Wrote that “of more worth is one honest man to society, than all the crowned ruffians who ever lived.”
- 120,000 copies printed

Persuaded colonists that independence was sensible and the key to a brighter future.





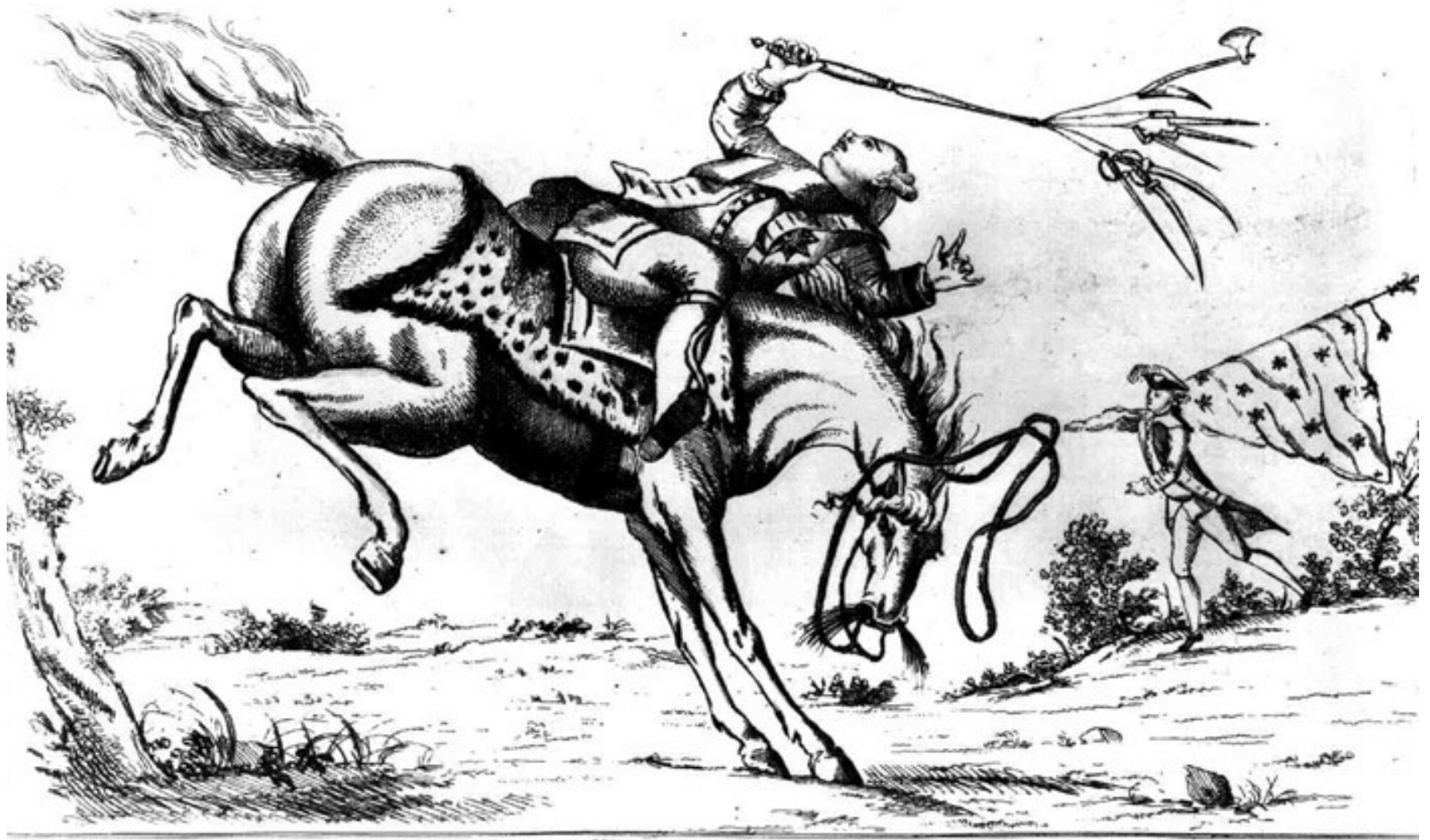
Thomas Paine
1737 - 1809
Founding Father
Author of
Common Sense

www.shop.nobility-tee.com

"Government at its best is a necessary evil, and at its worst, an intolerant one."

"Those who expect to reap the benefits of freedom must undergo the fatigue of supporting it."

"A body of men holding themselves accountable to nobody ought not to be trusted by anybody."



THE HORSE AMERICA, throwing his Master.
Pub. in the Advertiser, Aug. 1, 1770, by H. W. White, Angel Court, Westminster.

What symbols do you see? What does the horse represent? Who is on the horse?

Philadelphia

The Declaration was adopted in a building in Philadelphia now called Independence Hall.



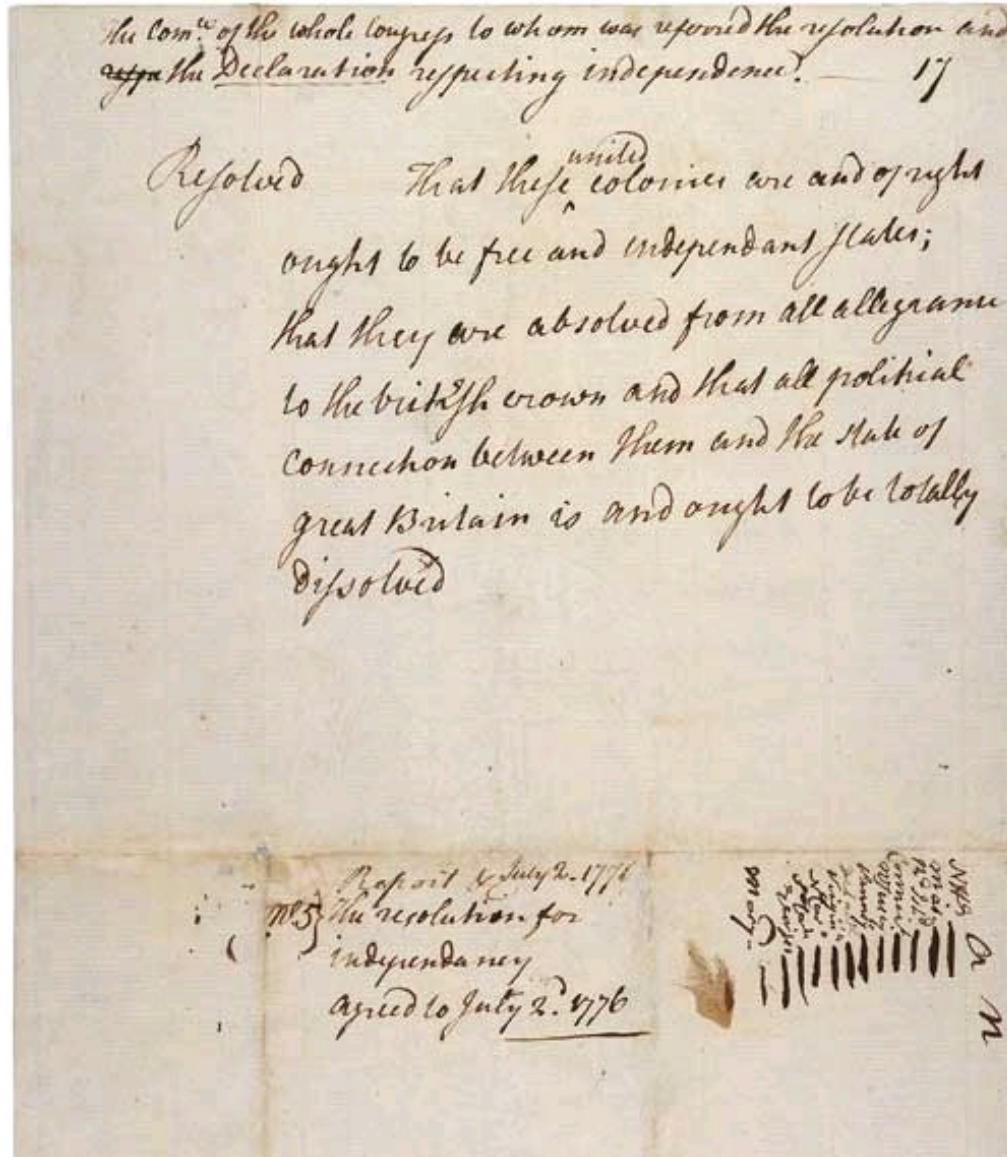


Each of the 13 colonies sent delegates to the Philadelphia meeting.

Many leaders still hoped to reach a compromise with England. But that appeared less and less likely as the months went by.

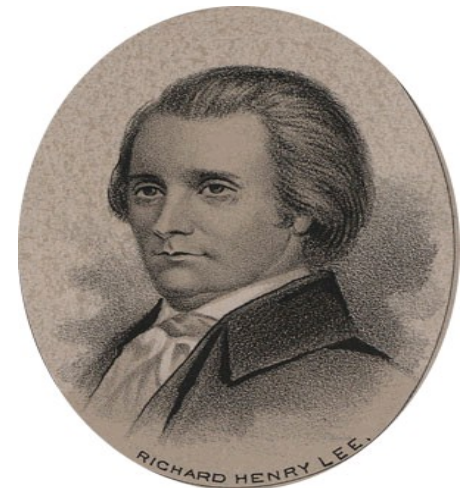
June 7, 1776

– **Richard Henry Lee** proposes independence



Resolved:

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.



The Declaration of Independence



Second Continental Congress appoints committee to write a formal statement of independence.

June 11, 1776 – Committee of Five

Thomas Jefferson

Benjamin Franklin

John Adams

Robert Livingston

Roger Sherman





Benjamin Franklin

- Oldest delegate to Congress
- American celebrity
- Traveled to Britain to try and reconcile the colonies with the British Crown
- Returned in 1775 and took a seat in the Continental Congress
- “We must all hang together, or we will most assuredly hang separately”

Benj. Franklin



John Adams

- One of the most outspoken members of the Continental Congress
- Pushed hard for Independence
- Believed independence would unite the colonies and divide Britain
- Traveled to Europe to gather support for the Revolution after the Declaration was signed

John Adams

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

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for ^{one} people to
~~dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to~~
~~assume among the powers of the earth the position~~ ^{separate and equal} station to
which the laws of nature & of nature's god entitle them, a decent respect
to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes
which impel them to ~~that~~ ^{the} separation.

We hold these truths to be ^{self-evident}, that all men are
created equal & independent, that ^{they are endowed by their creator with} ~~from that equal creation they derive~~
~~certain inalienable rights~~ ^{rights that} are ~~unalienable~~ ^{life liberty & the pursuit of happiness}; that to secure these ^{rights}, ~~governments~~ ^{governments} are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from
the consent of the governed: that whenever any form of government
~~shall~~ becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter
or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying its foundation on
such principles & organising it's powers in such form, as to them shall
seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness. ^{prudence indeed}
will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for
light & transient causes: and accordingly all experience hath shewn that
mankind 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 ^[beginning at a distinguished period]
& pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to ~~reduce~~ ^{reduce}
them to ~~absolute~~ ^{under absolute} ~~obedience~~ ^{dependence}, it is their right, it is their duty, 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 ~~change~~ ^{alter} their former systems of government.
The history of the present ^{the} ~~present~~ ^{King of Great Britain} is a history of ^{repeated} ~~unremitting~~ injuries and
usurpations, among which ^{appears no solitary fact} ~~no single instance~~ to contra-
dict the uniform tenor of the rest, ^{in fact} ~~all 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 equalled by falsehood.

Jefferson's original
draft, with cross-outs
and revisions, still
exists.

It shows how carefully
he looked for just the
right words to express
the new ideas about
government that were
spreading in the
colonies.

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

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for ^{one} people to
dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to
~~assume among the powers of the earth the position to~~ ^{separate and equal} ~~which the laws of nature & of nature's god entitle them, a decent respect~~
to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes
which impel them to ~~that~~ ^{the} separation.

We hold these truths to be ^{self-evident}, that all men are
created equal ~~to independent~~ ^{they are endowed by their creator with} ~~that from that equal creation they derive~~
~~certain~~ ^{unalienable} rights; that among ^{these} ~~these~~ are
life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these ^{rights} ~~ends~~, go-
vernments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from
the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government
~~shall~~ becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter
or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying its foundation on
such principles & organising its powers in such form, as to them shall

The longest part is a list of complaints about the way the British government was treating the colonists.

What it says



It claims King George III was deliberately trying to establish "an absolute Tyranny over these States." It lists many examples that colonial leaders felt were proof of his bad intentions.



The Declaration criticizes the British Parliament as well.

It points out the fact that taxes were put on the colonies by Parliament without the approval of the colonists' own elected assemblies. Colonists considered that an abuse of their rights as Englishmen.



... 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...

able jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, 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; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Wotton Gwinnett
Lyman Hall
Geo. Walton.

John Hooper
Joseph Hewes
John Penn

Edward Rutledge

Thos. Mays
Thomas Lynch
Arthur Middleton

John Hancock
Samuel Chase
Wm. Paca
Thos. Stone
Charles Carroll of Carrollton

George Wythe
Richard Henry Lee
Th. Jefferson
Wm. Harrison
Th. Nelson Jr.
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Carver Braxton

Robt Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benj. Franklin
John Morton
Geo. Clymer
Jas. Smith

Geo. Taylor
James Wilson
Gt. Ross
Casar Rodney
Gt. Mifflin
Thos. McKean

John Jay
John Livingston
Joan' Armitage
Lewis Morris

Rich. Stockton
Jas. Witherspoon
Jas. Claptonson
John Kent
Abra. Clark

Josiah Bartlett
N. Whipple
Lam. Adams
John Adams
Robt Treat Paine
Abbridge Gerry

Step. Hopkins
William Ellery
Roger Sherman
Sam^r Huntington
Wm. Williams
Oliver Wolcott
Matthew Thornton

The really big fireworks of the Declaration are up at the top. Here Jefferson expresses the great principles that made the American Revolution truly revolutionary.

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. — We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind 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 and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, wins a decision to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has

**We hold these truths to be self-evident, that
all men are created equal, that they are
endowed by their Creator with certain
unalienable rights, that among these are
Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.**

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. — He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. — He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation. — He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands. — He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these Oppressions We have petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is not fit to be the ruler of a free People. — Not 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 an unwarrantable

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. — We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind 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 and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has

**That to secure these rights, Governments
are instituted among Men, deriving their just
powers from the consent of the governed.**

us, in times of peace, standing Armies without the Consent of our Legislatures. — He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power. — He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of 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 in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by jury: — For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences: — For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies: — For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: — For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever. — He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. — He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. — He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation. — He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands. — He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these Oppressions We have petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is not fit to be the ruler of a free People. — 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 an unwarranted

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. — We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind 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 and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object wins a decision to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has

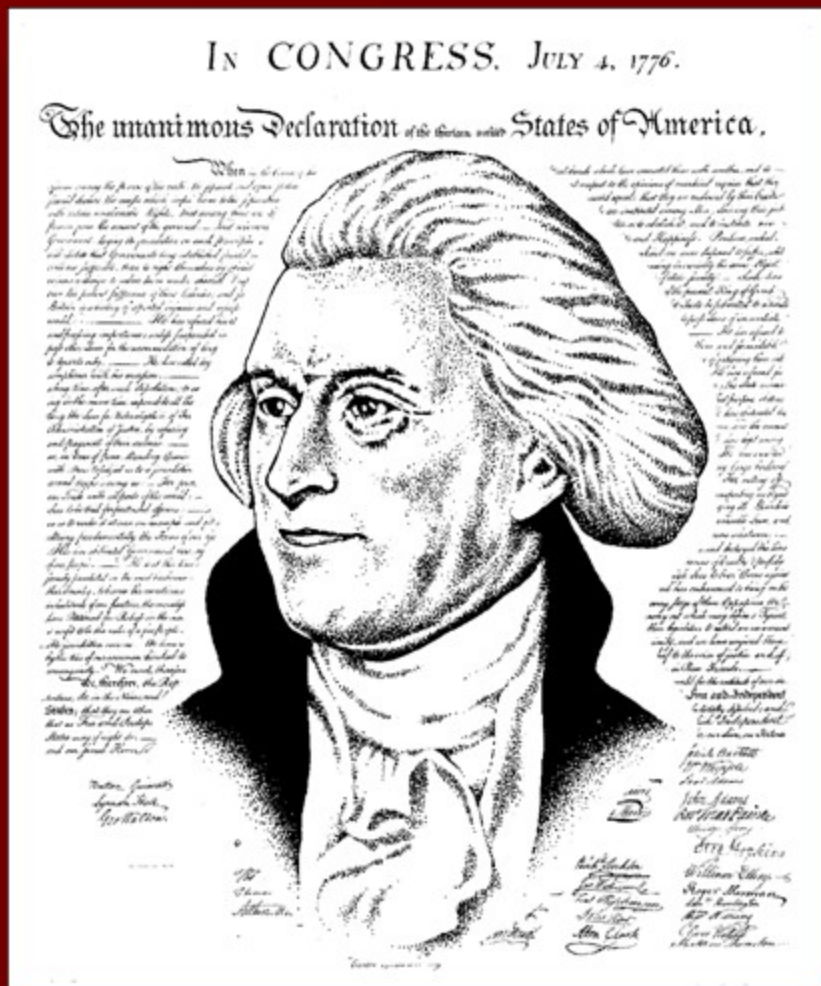
That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government....

our Trade with all parts of the world: — For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent: — For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury: — For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences: — For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies: — For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: — For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever. — He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. — He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. — He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation. — He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands. — He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these Oppressions We have petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is not fit to be the ruler of a free People. — 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 an unwarranted

A revolution of ideas

Others had expressed such ideas before in pamphlets, books, and essays.

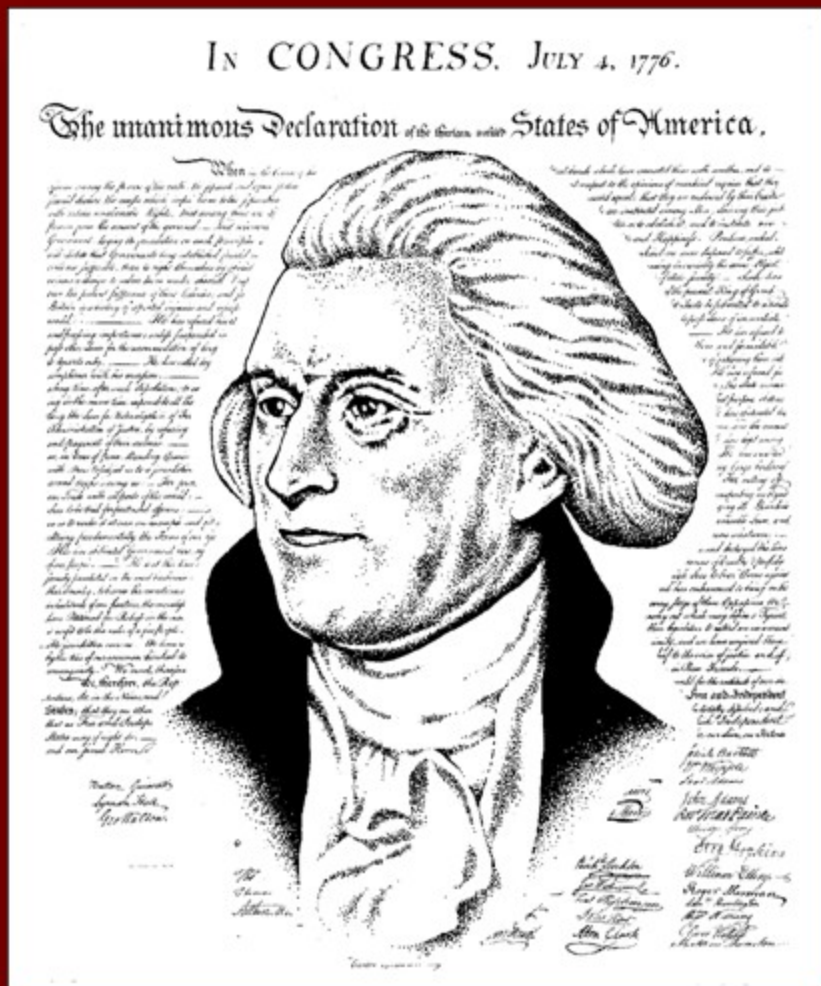
This was different: It was not a book, but a bold statement that America would actually try to put these ideas into action.



A revolution of ideas

Political equality.
Individual rights.
The consent of the governed. The right to change or even abolish an abusive government.

Was the world really ready for principles like these? Was America itself ready?



Natural Rights

*“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain **unalienable Rights**, that among these are **Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.**”*



John Locke
Enlightenment philosopher



- To secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the **consent of the governed**.
- Whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to **alter or to abolish it**, and to institute new Government.



Slavery existed in the colonies, for example. How could that be justified in a nation calling for equality and individual rights?

In fact, Jefferson tried to put a passage in the Declaration criticizing slavery.

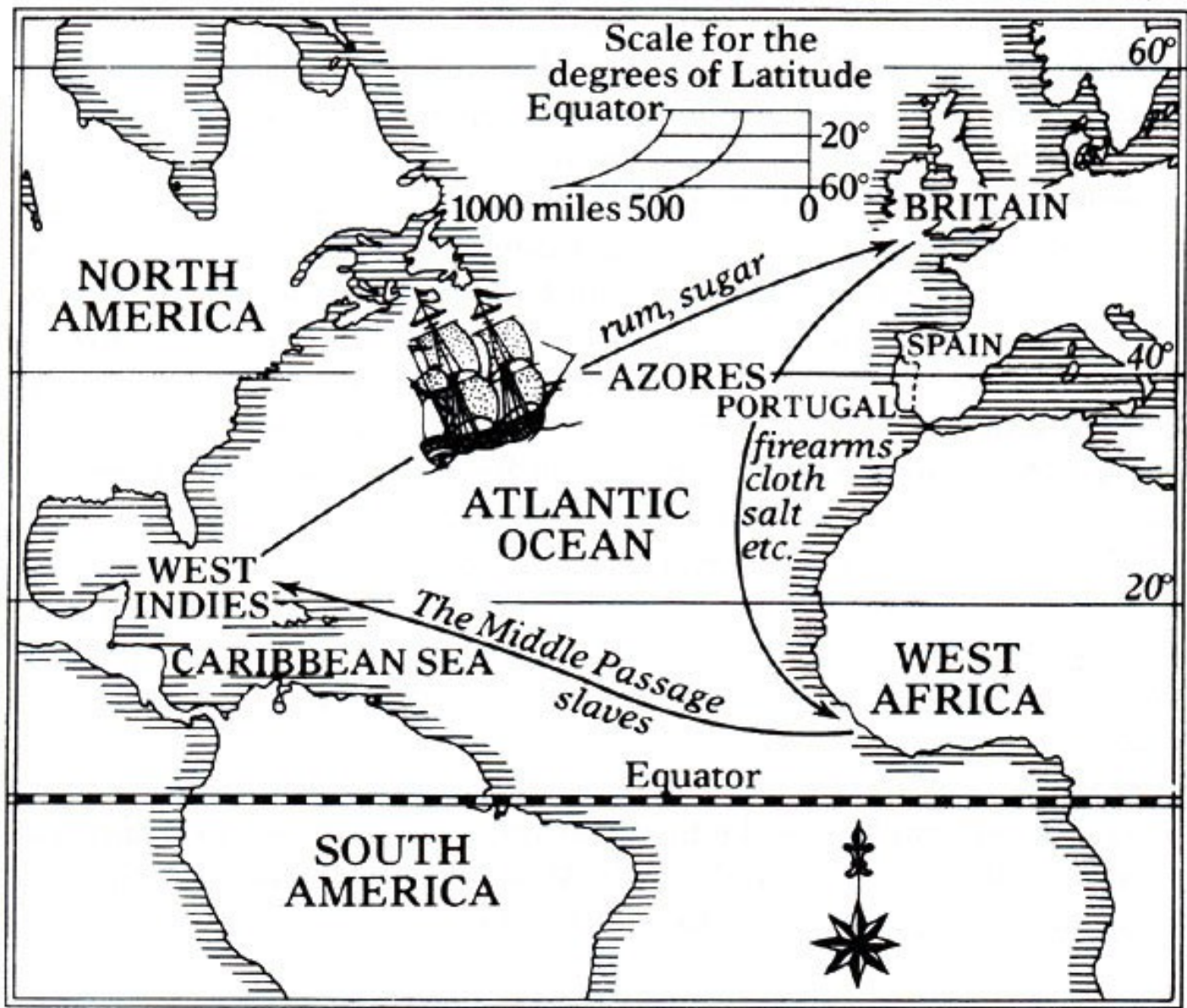
The Slavery Issue

Jefferson's original draft of the declaration charged King George with violating the "sacred rights of life and liberty... of a distant people carrying them into slavery."

North	South
Worried New England merchants (who benefitted from slavery) would be offended.	Feared it might lead to demands to free the slaves.
Felt it unfair to blame the king for all of slavery.	Southern farms depended on slave labor.

The passage was removed.

Slaves would have to wait 87 more years for emancipation.



Triangular Trade



Keep in mind that slavery and other systems of bound labor were common in most parts of the world at that time, and had been for thousands of years.

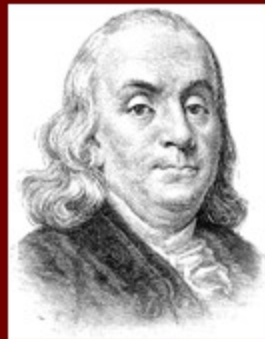
While the Declaration did not take up the issue directly, it did set out in writing the principles of equality and individual rights that would be used later to abolish slavery.

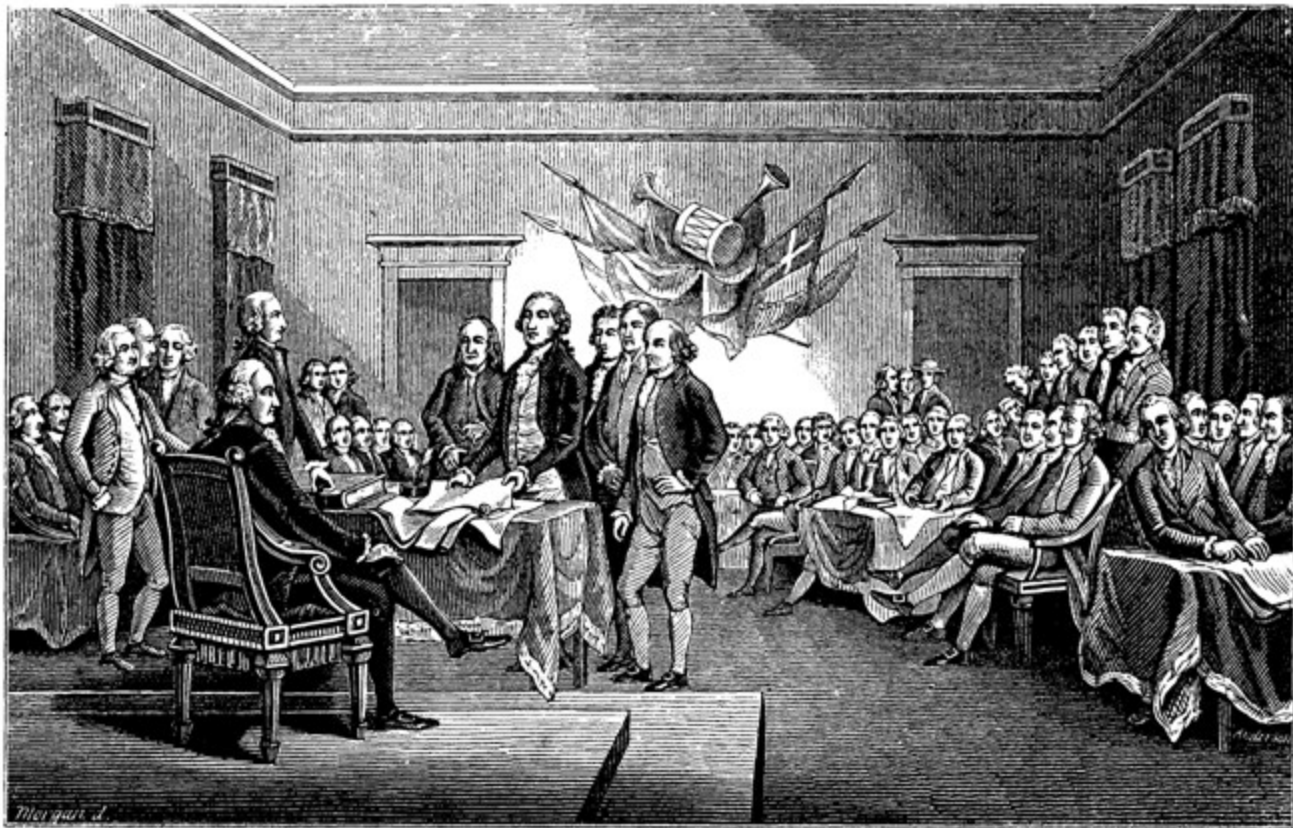


Aside from the slavery issue, America in 1776 was indeed remarkable for its energetic, tolerant, and community minded population.



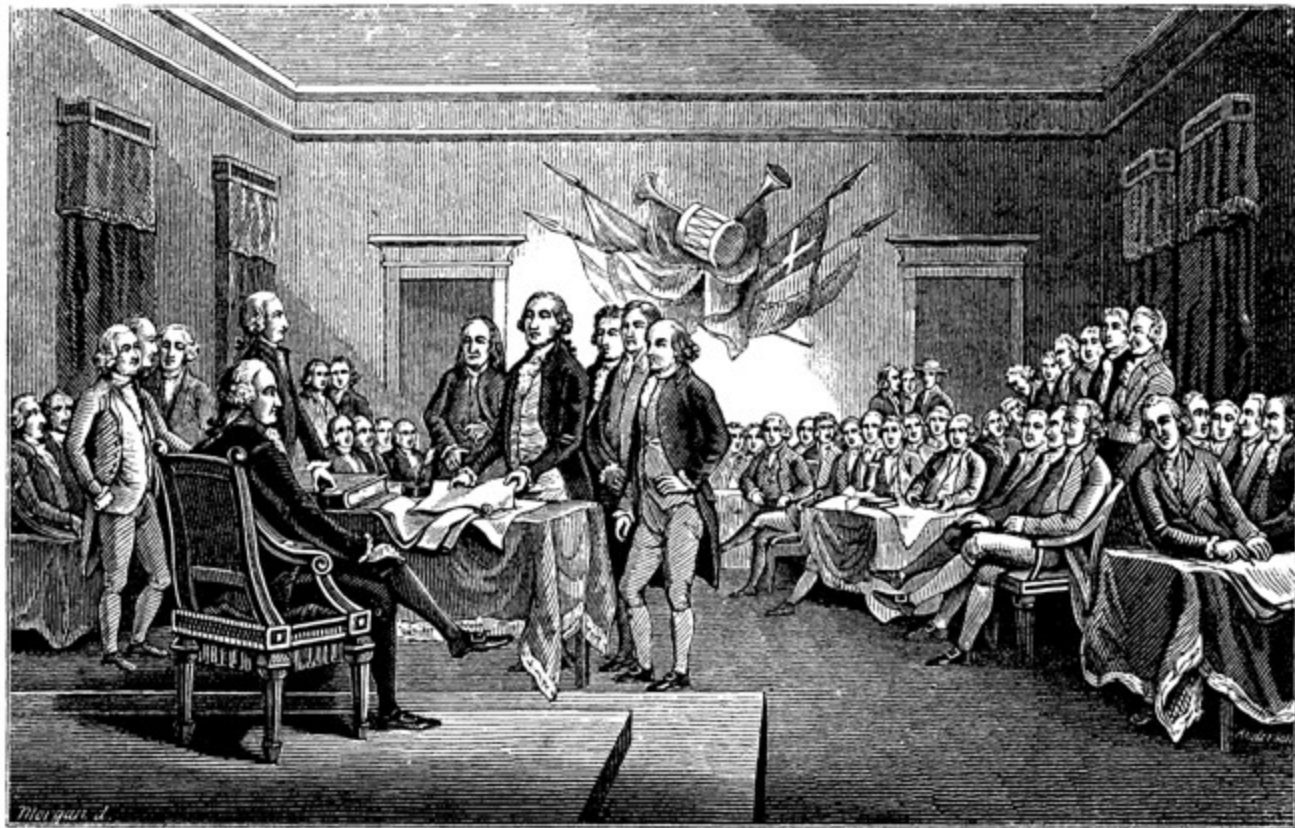
If there was anywhere in the world ready to step forward, it was the land about to be named the United States of America.





SIGNING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

When the official vote for the Declaration of Independence was called on July 4th, not a single colony voted against it.



SIGNING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

John Hancock signed first, as president of the meeting. Most of the other names were added the next month, in August.

John Hancock

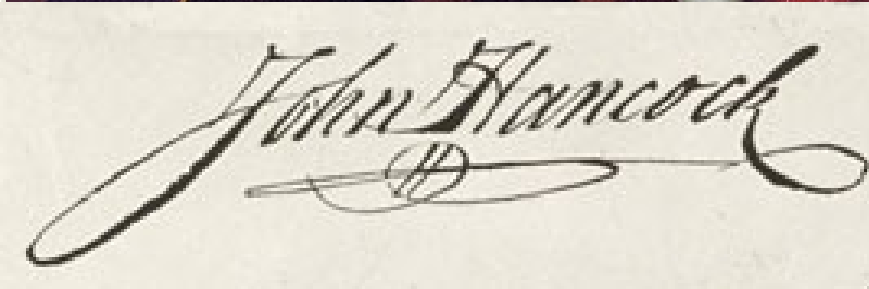
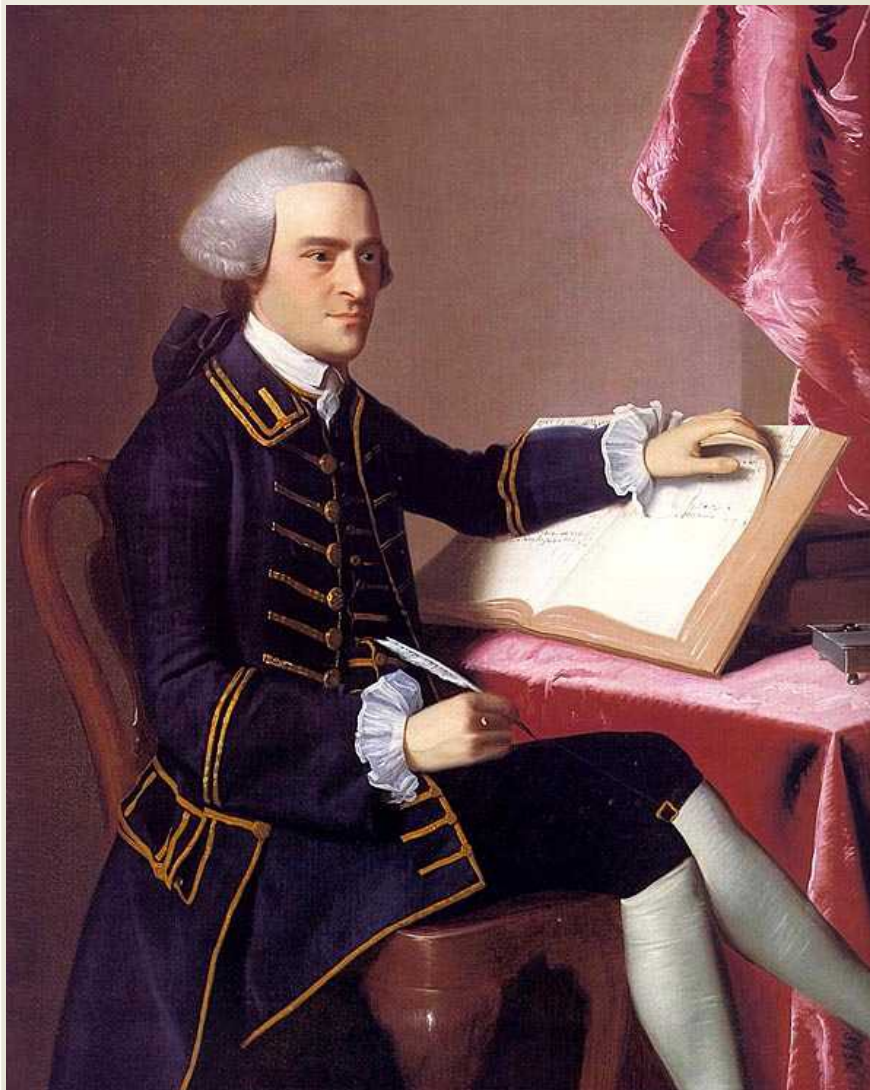
Was the wealthiest merchant in New England

His fortune suffered from the Sugar & Stamp Acts

Elected to be the president of the Continental Congress

Was bitterly disappointed that he was not chosen to lead the military against the British

“I write so that George III may read without his spectacles.”

A large, elegant cursive signature of John Hancock, written in dark ink on a light background.

Here is John
Hancock's name.
Here are the
signatures of the
delegates from
Virginia.

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; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Walter Gwinnett
Lyman Hall
Geo. Walton.

John Hooper
Joseph Hewes
John Penn

Edward Rutledge

Thos. Mays
Thomas Lynch
Arthur Middleton

John Hancock

Samuel Chase
Wm. Paca
Thos. Stone
Charles Carroll of Carrollton

George Wythe
Richard Henry Lee
Th. Jefferson
Wm. Harrison
Th. Nelson Jr.
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Carver Braxton

Robt Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benj. Franklin
John Morton
Geo. Clymer
Jas. Smith

Geo. Taylor
James Wilson
Gt. Ross
Casar Rodney
Thos. Mifflin
Tho. McKean

Samuel B. Loring
John Linn
Lewis Morris

Rich. Stockton
Jas. Witherspoon
Jas. Claptonson
Isaac Kent
Abra. Clark

Josiah Bartlett
M. Whipple
Lars Adams
John Adams
Robt Treat Paine
Abbridge Gerry
Step. Hopkins
William Ellery
Roger Sherman
Sam^r Huntington
M^r Williams
Oliver Wolcott
Matthew Thornton

**And for the support of this Declaration,
with a firm reliance on the protection of
Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to
each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and
our sacred Honor.**

We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind; Enemies in War, in Peace Friends. —
We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, 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; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Walter Gwinnett
Lyman Hall
Geo. Walton.

John Hooper
Joseph Hewes
John Penn

Edward Rutledge

Thos. Mifflin
Thomas Lynch
Arthur Middleton

Samuel Chase
Wm. Paca
Thos. Stone
Charles Carroll of Carrollton

George Wythe
Richard Henry Lee
Th. Jefferson
Benj. Harrison
Th. Nelson Jr.
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Carver Braxton

John Hancock

Robt Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benj. Franklin
John Morton
Geo. Clymer
Jas. Smith

Geo. Taylor
James Wilson
Gt. Ross
Casar Rodney
Gt. Mifflin
Thos. McKean

John Jay
John Livingston
Joan' Lewis
Lewis Morris

Rich. Stockton
Jas. Witherspoon
Jas. Claptonson
John Kent
Abra. Clark

Josiah Bartlett
N. Whipple
Lam. Adams
John Adams
Robt Treat Paine

Abbridge Gerry
Step. Hopkins
William Ellery
Roger Sherman
Sam^r Huntington
M^r Williams
Oliver Wolcott
Matthew Thornton

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. — We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind 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 and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world. — He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. — He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected 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 in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only. — He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and 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, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people. — He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, 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, and convulsions 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, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands. — He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers. — He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries. — He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance. — He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our Legislatures. — He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power. — He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of 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 calling off our Trade with all parts of the world: — For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent: — For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by jury: — For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences: — For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies: — For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: — For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever. — He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. — He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. — He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation. — He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands. — He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these Oppressions we have petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. — Not 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 an unwarrantable

along time, after such depopulations, to cause others to be elided; 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, and convulsions within. — He has endeavoured to prevent the Population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Strangers; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands. — He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers. — He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries. — He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance. — He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our Legislatures. — He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power. — He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation: — For Quarters large bodies of armed troops among us: — For pretending 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 in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by jury: — For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences: — For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies: — For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: — For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with powers to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever. — He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. — He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. — He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation. — He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands. — He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their Legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, 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; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Wotton Gwinnett
Lyman Hall
Geo. Walton.

John Hooper
Joseph Hewes
John Penn

Edward Rutledge.

Thos. Mays
Thomas Lynch Junr.
Arthur Middleton

Samuel Chace
Wm. Paré
Thos. Stone
Charles Carroll of Carrollton

George Wythe
Richard Henry Lee
Th. Jefferson
Wm. Harrison
Th. Nelson Jr.
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Carver Braxton

John Hancock

Robt Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benj. Franklin
John Morton
Geo. Clymer
Saml. Smith

Geo. Taylor
James Wilson
Gt. Ross
Casar Rodney
Gt. Mifflin
Tho. M. Drake

John Jay
Chas. Loring
Joan' Law
Lewis Morris

Rich. Stockton
Jos. Wickham
Lat. Clymer
John Kent
Abra. Clark

Josiah Bartlett
M. Whipple
Law' Adams
John Adams
Robt Treat Paine
Abbridge Gerry

Step. Hopkins
William Ellery
Roger Sherman
Saml^r Huntington
M^r Williams
Oliver Wolcott
Matthew Harrison