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 ed on the 4th of July, but, approving of it, they thus signified their approbation.

Note.—The proof of this document, as published above, was read by Mr. Ferdinand Jefferson, the Keeper of the Rolls at the Department of State, at Washington, who compared it with the fac-simile of the original in his custody. He says: “In the fac-simile, as in the original, the whole instrument runs on without a break, but dashes are mostly inserted. I have, in this copy, followed the arrangement of paragraphs adopted in the publication of the Declaration in the newspaper of John Dunlap, and as printed by him for the Congress, which printed copy is inserted in the original Journal of the old Congress. The same paragraphs are also made by the author, in the original draft preserved in the Department of State.”

Page XLV
from the depository of their public Records, for
the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compli-
ance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses re-
peatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his
invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dis-
solutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby
the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihila-
tion, 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
amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the
inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless In-
dian 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 an-
swered only 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 magnanim-
ity, and we have conjured them by the ties of
our common kindred to disavow these usurpa-
tions, which, would inevitably interrupt our
connections and correspondence. They too have
been deaf to the voice of justice and of con-
sanginity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the
necessity, which denounces our Separation, and
hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, En-
imies 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 Peo-
ple of these Colonies, solemnly publish and de-
clare, That these United Colonies are, and of
Right ought to be FREE AND INDEPENDENT
States; that they are Absolved from all Alle-
giance to the British Crown, and that all politi-
cal connection between them and the State of
Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dis-
solved; 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 Inde-
pendent States may of right do. And for the sup-
port of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on
the protection of divine Providence, we mutu-
ally pledge to each other our Lives, our For-
tunes and our sacred Honor.

JOHN HANCOCK.

New Hampshire
Josiah Bartlett,
WM. Whipple,
Matthew Thornton.

Massachusetts Bay
Saml. Adams,
John Adams,
Robt. Treat Paine,
Elbridge Gerry.

Rhode Island
Step. Hopkins,
William Ellery.
The names of the signers are spelt above as in the fac-simile of the original, but the punctuation of them is not always the same; neither do the names of the States appear in the fac-simile of the original. The names of the signers of each State are grouped together in the fac-simile of the original, except the name of Matthew Thornton, which follows that of Oliver Wolcott.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connecticut</th>
<th>Virginia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roger Sherman,</td>
<td>George Wythe,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam’el Huntington,</td>
<td>Thos. Nelson, jr.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. Williams,</td>
<td>Richard Henry Lee,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver Wolcott,</td>
<td>Th. Jefferson,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Benja. Harrison,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. Floyd,</td>
<td>Oliver Wolcott.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil. Livingston,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frans. Lewis,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Morris,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richd. Stockton,</td>
<td>John Hart,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fras. Hopkinson,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RObt. Morris,</td>
<td>George Wythe,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Rush,</td>
<td>Thos. Nelson, jr.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benja. Franklin,</td>
<td>Richard Henry Lee,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Morton,</td>
<td>Th. Jefferson,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geo. Clymer,</td>
<td>Benja. Harrison,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oliver Wolcott.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caesar Rodney,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geo. Read,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Chase,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. Paca,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thos. Stone,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Georgia**
- Button Gwinnett, Geo. Walton, Lyman Hall,

**North Carolina**
- Wm. Hooper, John Penn,

**South Carolina**
- Thos. Heyward, Thomas Lynch, Jr., Jr.,
- Edward Rutledge, Arthur Middleton,

**Delaware**
- Tho. M’Kean,