

July 4 - Independence Day



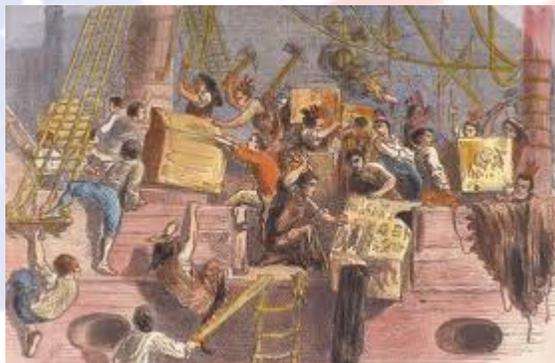
As we get ready to have our picnics, BBQ's, parties and fireworks we should also take the time to reflect back to July 4, 1776. We were not a country yet, we were just 13 British Colonies under the strict rule of King George III. (Who reigned from 25 October 1760 - 29 January 1820. He was not the monarch and King of The United Kingdom of Great Britain, but separately King of Ireland. When Great Britain and Ireland become united in 1801, he became King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.)



The American Colonists were a proud and independent lot, who had carved out towns, farms and businesses in this 'new land' with the freedom to worship as chose (or chose not to), without any interference from the Crown.



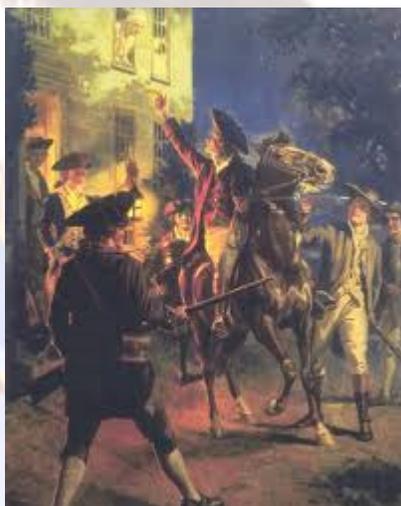
Meanwhile, the British Empire was looking to collect goods and funds from all of its colonies to finance its own goals, no matter what the cost to any of its subjects.



Here in the American Colonies, we choose to stand against this onslaught of self-serving rules, regulations, taxes, fines and fees ... A few brave souls organized against the Crown, which was the largest and strongest military of the time!



These people had stiff competition, as some colonists did not wish to be independent of the Crown and were willing to slave away to keep all of the Crown's so-called 'perks'. The American colonists knew that if they declared their independence that they would be charged with treason and put to death as traitors.



Yet they met and did so anyway and because of that we are here today as the Republic of the United States of American. Comprised of independent, sovereign states with the freedom and liberties to worship, make money, speak, read and just plain live (pursuit of happiness) as we please without fear.



On April 19, 1775 in Middlesex County, Province of Massachusetts Bay, within the towns of Lexington, Concord, Lincoln, Menotomy (present-day Arlington), and Cambridge, near Boston; the first military engagement of the American Revolution was fought. That's right the Battle of Lexington and Concord and it is often called "*the shot heard round the world*".



About 700 British Army regulars, under Lieutenant Colonel Francis Smith, were given secret orders to capture and destroy military supplies (guns and ammunition) that were reportedly stored by the Massachusetts militia at Concord. Through effective intelligence gathering, Patriot colonials had received word weeks before the expedition that their supplies might be at risk and had moved most of them to other locations. They also received details about British plans on the night before the battle and were able to rapidly notify the area militias of the enemy movement.



The first shots were fired just as the sun was rising at Lexington. The militia were outnumbered and fell back, and the regulars proceeded on to Concord, where they searched for the supplies. At the

North Bridge in Concord, approximately 500 militiamen fought and defeated three companies of the King's troops. The outnumbered regulars fell back from the minutemen after a pitched battle in open territory.



More militiamen arrived soon thereafter and inflicted heavy damage on the regulars as they marched back towards Boston. Upon returning to Lexington, Smith's expedition was rescued by reinforcements under Brigadier General Hugh Percy. The combined force, now of about 1,700 men, marched back to Boston under heavy fire in a 'tactical' withdrawal and eventually reached the safety of Charlestown. The accumulated militias blockaded the narrow land accesses to Charlestown and Boston, starting the Siege of Boston.



So on this July 4, instead of just stuffing our faces and sloshing drink, let's thank these brave and persistent souls for our country, with its hard won freedoms and liberties. For without them, we would be nothing. Let's also remember that it takes constant vigilance to keep them!



http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html

Declaration of Independence

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 harrass 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 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 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.

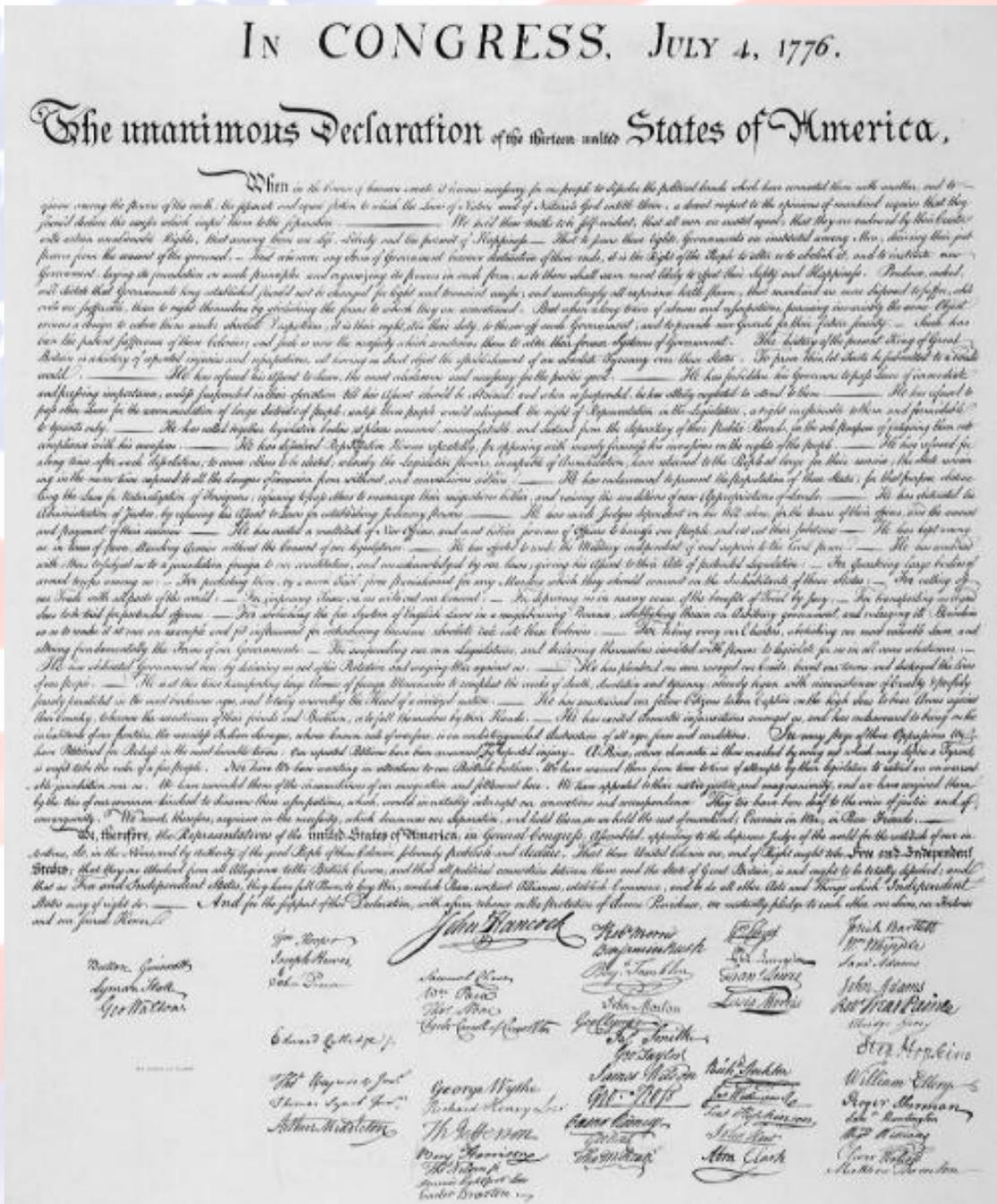
In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish 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.

The 56 signatures on the Declaration appear in the positions indicated:

Georgia:	North Carolina:	Massachusetts:	Pennsylvania:	New York:	New Hampshire:
Button Gwinnett	William Hooper	John Hancock	Robert Morris	William Floyd	Josiah Bartlett
Lyman Hall	Joseph Hewes	Maryland:	Benjamin Rush	Philip Livingston	William Whipple
George Walton	John Penn	Samuel Chase	Benjamin Franklin	Francis Lewis	Massachusetts:
	South Carolina:	William Paca	John Morton	Lewis Morris	Samuel Adams
	Edward Rutledge	Thomas Stone	George Clymer	New Jersey:	John Adams
	Thomas Heyward, Jr.	Charles Carroll of Carrollton	James Smith	Richard Stockton	Robert Treat Paine
	Thomas Lynch, Jr.	Virginia:	George Taylor	John Witherspoon	Elbridge Gerry
	Arthur Middleton	George Wythe	James Wilson	Francis Hopkinson	Rhode Island:
		Richard Henry Lee	George Ross	John Hart	Stephen Hopkins
		Thomas Jefferson	Delaware:	Abraham Clark	William Ellery
		Benjamin Harrison	Caesar Rodney		Connecticut:
		Thomas Nelson, Jr.	George Read		Roger Sherman
		Francis Lightfoot Lee	Thomas McKean		Samuel Huntington
		Carter Braxton			William Williams
					Oliver Wolcott
					New Hampshire:
					Matthew Thornton



This image of the Declaration is taken from the engraving made by printer William J. Stone in 1823.

“Well, Doctor, what have we got—a Republic or a Monarchy?”
“A Republic, if you can keep it.”

Benjamin Franklin

The response is attributed to BENJAMIN FRANKLIN—at the close of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, when queried as he left Independence Hall on the final day of deliberation—in the notes of Dr. James McHenry, one of Maryland’s delegates to the Convention.

McHenry’s notes were first published in *The American Historical Review*, vol. 11, 1906, and the anecdote on p. 618 reads: “A lady asked Dr. Franklin Well Doctor what have we got a republic or a monarchy. A republican replied the Doctor if you can keep it.” When McHenry’s notes were included in *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, ed. Max Farrand, vol. 3, appendix A, p. 85 (1911, reprinted 1934), a footnote stated that the date this anecdote was written is uncertain.

The American's Creed

**I believe in the United States of America
as a Government of the People,
By the People,
For the People;
Whose just powers are derived
from the Consent of the Governed;
A Democracy in a Republic
A Sovereign Nation of Many Sovereign States;
A Perfect Union,
One and Inseparable;
Established upon those Principles of Freedom,
Equality,
Justice,
and Humanity
For which American Patriots
Sacrificed their lives and Fortunes.**

**I Therefore
Believe it is my duty to my Country
To Love It;
To Support its Constitution;
To Obey its Laws;
To Respect its Flag;
And to Defend it against all enemies.**