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Richard Henry Lee, a delegate from Virginia, put this resolution to a vote before the Continental Congress: "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." This image depicts the Resolution and the 13 Colonies whose representatives would vote on freedom from Great Britain. Image online, courtesy National Archives.

On July 2, 1776, Charles Thompson, Secretary of the Second Continental Congress, penned Lee's resolution, severing the ties with England, and put it to a vote:

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 connexion between them, and the state of Great Britain, is, and ought to be, totally dissolved

All the colonies except New York (which abstained) voted in favor of the resolution. (Follow this link to see the actual results of the vote - look at the lower right side.)

On July 2, 1776, (at "Independence Hall" in Philadelphia), Congress approved the concept: The British colonies would sever all political ties with Great Britain. John Adams (who had strongly argued in favor of the resolution) told his wife Abigail it was the greatest day in the history of the country.

More work had to be done on the Declaration itself to make it acceptable to all the colonies. The committee needed two more days to complete the final draft. (Follow these links to see Jefferson's work-in-progress.) Soon the final version of the Declaration was ready for the delegates' vote. This time, even New York approved.

When it came time for the representatives to sign the document (which actually put them in peril with the Crown), John Hancock (president of the Congress) signed in huge letters. He wanted to be sure the King saw his name. Today, his is the only signature still legible on the original Declaration.

On the 2nd of July, 2010 - 234 years to the day after Congress first voted on the document - Americans learned what Jefferson had tried to obliterate from his Declaration draft. Listing grievances which the people had

Using hyperspectral imaging, preservation scientists at the Library of Congress discovered Jefferson had initially referred to himself, and other Americans, as the King's subjects:

It must have been an interesting moment when Jefferson reflected on what he'd first written, then carefully transformed into a completely different word. Perhaps he realized his Declaration, as a whole, would have the same impact as his simple, but highly significant, edit.

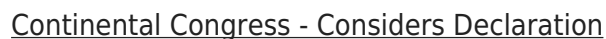
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

Media Stream



View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Charles-Thompson>



Copyprint of oil on canvas, Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

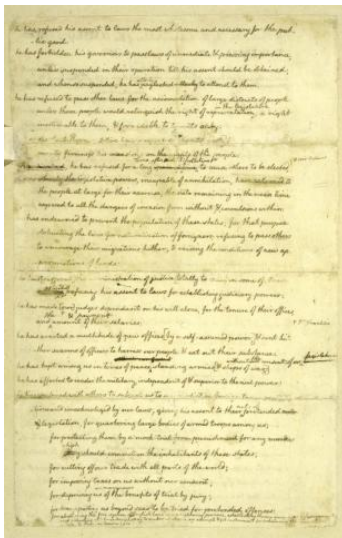
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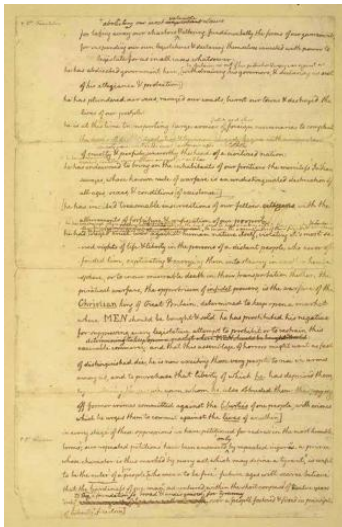


Declaration of Independence - 2nd Page of Manuscript

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress, Treasures, Original Rough Draft, image decp2.

View this asset at:

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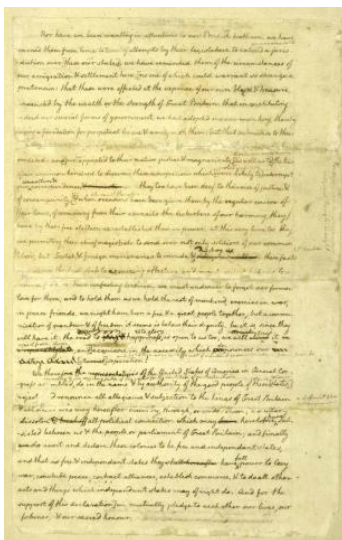


Declaration of Independence, 3rd Page of Manuscript

Library of Congress, Treasures, Original Rough Draft, image decp3.

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Declaration of Independence, 4th Page of Manuscript

Library of Congress, Treasures, Original Rough Draft, image decp4.

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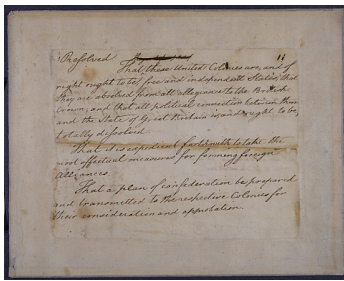


Independence Hall, Philadelphia

Exterior view of Independence Hall, Philadelphia. Engraving, U.S. National Archives image 66-G-1E-6.

Assembly Room, Independence Hall, photo courtesy Dan Smith (under a Creative Commons, Attribution ShareAlike 2.5 License). Online, Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Independence-Hall-Philadelphia>



Resolution to Declare America Independent

Image depicting the Resolution of Richard Henry Lee for Independence, June 7, 1776, online via the U.S. National Archives, Records of the Continental and Confederation Congress and the Constitutional Convention, ARC 301684.

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View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Resolution-to-Declare-America-Independent>



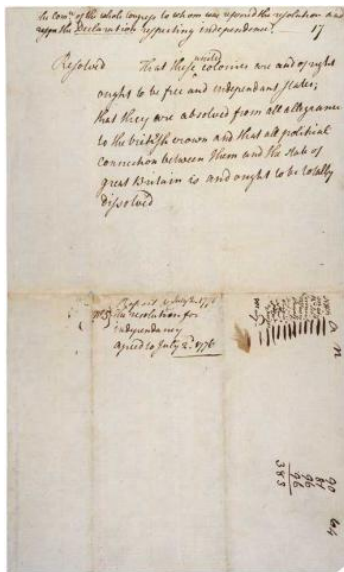
Signing the Declaration of Independence

Images, Library of Congress.

Information and quote, U.S. National Archives: *Did You Know...Independence Day Should Actually Be July 2?* (Press Release June 1, 2005)

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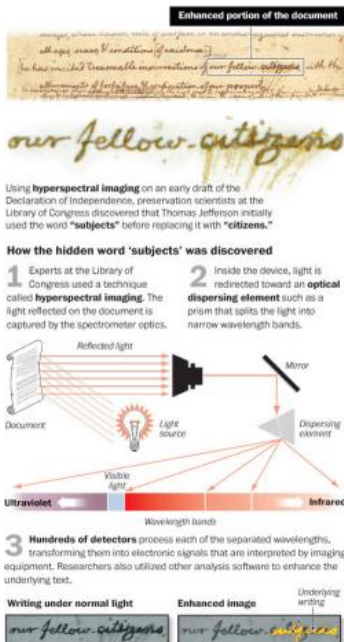


Vote - Declare Independence from Britain

Image, U.S. National Archives.

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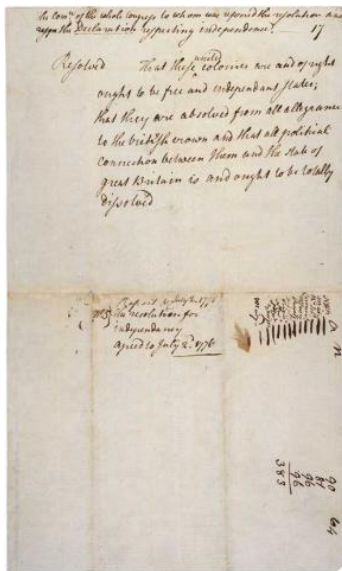


Declaration of Independence - Citizens not Subjects

[Image online](#), courtesy the Library of Congress and Alberto Cuadra, Karen Yourish/*The Washington Post* (July 3, 2010).

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Declaration-of-Independence-Citizens-not-Subjects>



THE VOTE: 13-0

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