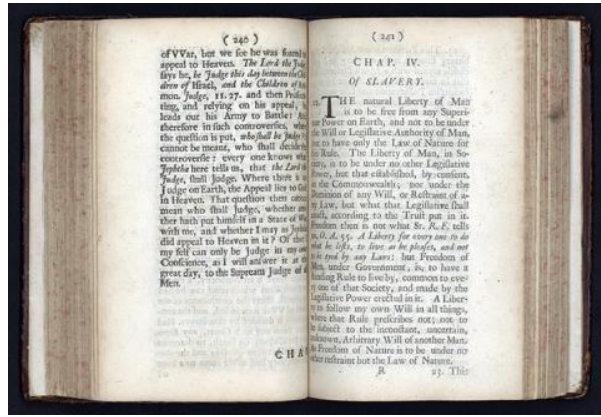


0. DRAFTING THE DECLARATION - Story Preface
1. A DIVINELY ORDAINED FIGHT
2. AMERICAN FIRSTS
- 3. DRAFTING THE DECLARATION**
4. WE ARE FREE!
5. EVIDENCE OF FREEDOM



This image depicts a page from a 1690 edition of John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*. . . *The Latter is an Essay Concerning the True, Original Extent, and the End of Civil Government*. Published in London, by Awnsham Churchill, this Treatise was important to Thomas Jefferson as he drafted the American Colonies' Declaration of Independence.

While Washington and his troops were fighting the war, the Second Continental Congress convened to formally manage affairs on the home front. It wasn't easy. The "federal" system of government had not been created. James Madison had not yet written his famous paper "Federalist No. 10."

Each colony had its own legislature; there was no centralized authority. People disagreed about all kinds of things.

Most of the representatives did agree on one thing, though. The colonies needed to formally declare their independence from George III. But ... how would they do it?

Richard Henry Lee, a representative from Virginia, submitted a resolution on June 11, 1776 which was adopted. The Second Continental Congress would appoint a committee to prepare a Declaration of Independence. Five men were chosen. Thomas Jefferson, a gifted writer from Virginia, would prepare the first draft.

Drawing on his own educated background and his knowledge of John Locke's theory of government, Jefferson penned his initial thoughts. (Follow this link to the only surviving fragment of his preliminary work.) Years later, using the Declaration of Independence as a model, Jefferson would help his friend Lafayette write the French "Declaration of The Rights of Man."

By the time Jefferson had completed a draft (follow this link to the original manuscript) he was willing to share with the committee, the final Declaration of Independence was taking shape. He had to overcome one major hurdle.

Jefferson initially included a scathing indictment of the slave trade. Had it remained in the final draft, a unanimous vote adopting the Declaration could not have happened. The slavery denunciation was cut. The issue would be debated (and fought over) later.

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/DRAFTING-THE-DECLARATION-American-Colonies>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/DRAFTING-THE-DECLARATION-American-Colonies>

Media Stream

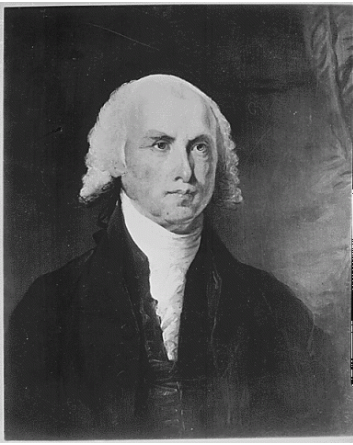


The Second Continental Congress

Online courtesy, the aoc.gov website.

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James Madison

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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Richard Henry Lee - Virginia Representative

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

Quotation from the Library of Congress - "American Memory Collection."

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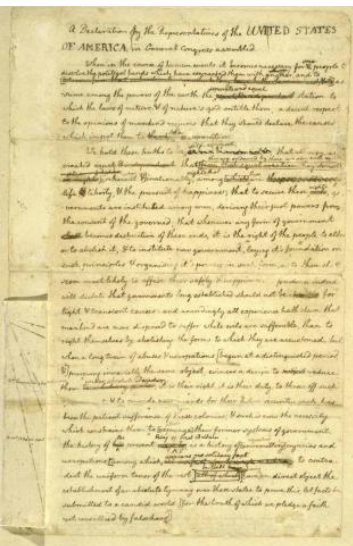


Declaration of Independence Committee

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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Declaration of Independence - Original, 1st Page

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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Jefferson's Initial Thoughts

Image online, courtesy U.S. Library of Congress (LOC) website.

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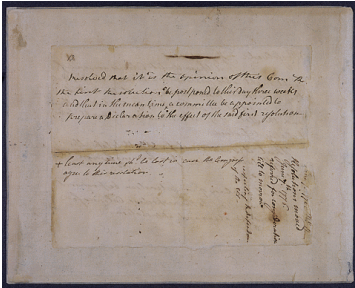


Lafayette: Declaration of the Rights of Man

Image online, courtesy the earlyamerica.com website.

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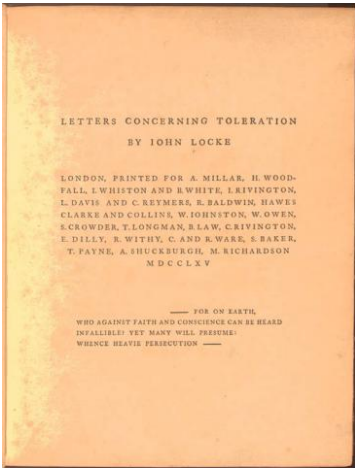


Lee's Resolution to Appoint a Drafting Committee

Image online, courtesy the archives.gov website.

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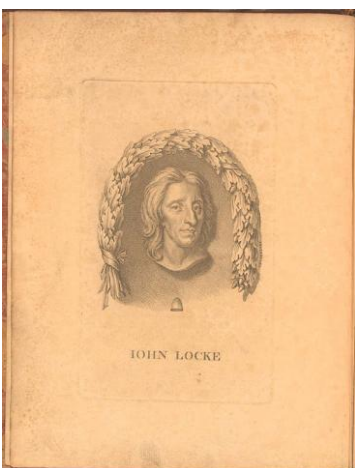


Letters Concerning Toleration - by John Locke

Image online, courtesy the University of York website.

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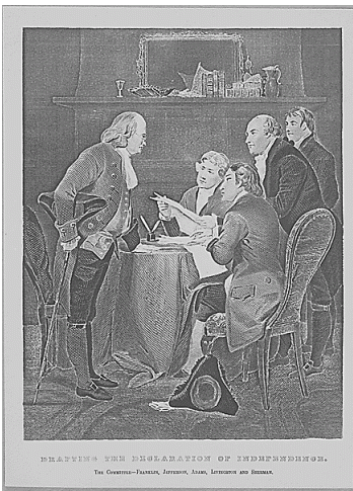
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Print of John Locke

Image online, courtesy the usinfo.org website.

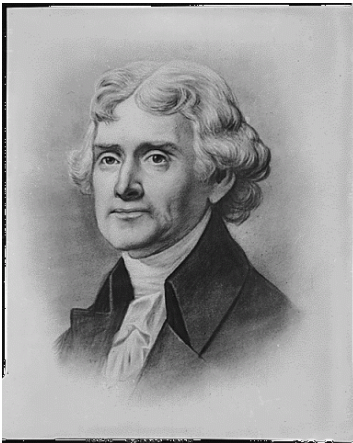
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The Drafting Committee

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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Thomas Jefferson Chosen to Write the First Draft

Image online, courtesy artexpertswebsite.com

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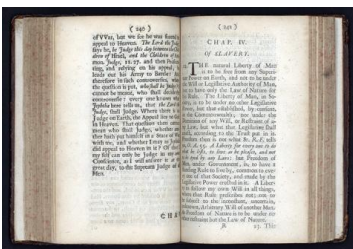


James Madison - Federalist Paper 10

Image online, courtesy National Archives.

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DRAFTING THE DECLARATION

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