

MUSH! 'TIS A NOISELESS FOURTH

BY WILLARD
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ODA CRACKERS in lieu of cannon crackers; ginger snaps in place of toy cannons; tallow candles as substitutes for Roman candles; dad's dark lantern swathed in mother's discarded red-fannel skirt instead of the red-fire display; sister's powder puff instead of puffs of real smoke from the nozzle of a juvenile 13-inch gun, and positively no shooting stars.

With precautions being handed him from every side, the above is the small boy's vision of the glorious Fourth of July, nineteen hundred and nine.

From Washington, from the state capital, and from the county and city government seats, the word went out weeks ago that the current Independence day celebration was booked as "same." In other words, the ban was placed on all sorts of dangerous methods of paying tribute to the men who affixed their signatures to the sheepskin roll which guarantees our freedom.

In many parts of these United States this same ban has done service for a decade, and has always returned with each Independence day in the attempt to accomplish a sane Fourth of July. But the American small boy is born with noise as his second nature—the healthier the noisier—and the Fourth of July and Christmas morning are the most notable occasions of the year to him.

Each year officials in the big cities of the country scratch from the fireworks dealers' lists certain dangerous explosives, and thus the casualty list is being cut down from year to year, despite the additions of new inventions in cannon crackers and what are known as "night fireworks."

Many communities have shown disposition to make their sane Fourth of July occasion for a public fete at the parks and gathering places, where, as a result of public contributions, fireworks exhibitions are given, much to the enjoyment of the adult members of the place, but less to their offspring, which see fun only in skyrockets, Roman candles, flower-pots, and the like, which are sent heavenward by the touch of a match in their own hands.

But for the small boy, the bore of a sane celebration is the morning and afternoon, when only the smallest firecrackers are permitted. The noiseless variety of tribute to the signers of America's "Magna Charta" consists of oratorical pyrotechnics in the parks, public halls and town meeting-places. In these celebrations the men who have made their marks in the world by word of mouth are the chief participants.

From the day the Declaration of Independence was signed, July 4, 1776, until July 4, 1909, not a year has passed without some one contributing life to the business of celebrating freedom. On July 4, 1776, the first casualty was recorded, when the old bell-ringer of Independence hall, Philadelphia, fell dead from heart disease while ringing out the joyous news to willing ears of the colonial patriots.

Independence day! When is it? The question might very properly be asked of the millions of firecracker-exploding boys and girls who have grown to manhood and womanhood in the past and are now developing into American citizenship, whose faith is complete that independence was first thought of, discussed, declared and won on the Fourth of July.

But it would be more correct to speak of Independence week or month, or even year, than to settle the whole of the glory upon the Fourth itself.

The surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown was October 19, 1781. At least one of the signers of the Declaration, with no thought, however, to be on the safe side, signed the document late in the same year. Col. McKean of Delaware is himself the authority for the statement that he did not sign till 1781. His name does not appear in the first broadside of the Declaration along with 55 other signers.

Jefferson himself, the author of the immortal document, in a paper on the manner of proceeding of the continental congress, with respect to independence, writes:

"The debates having taken up the greater part of the second, third and fourth days of July, were in the evening of the last closed. The Declaration was reported by the committee, agreed to by the house, and signed by every member present, except Mr. Dickinson."

The journal, however, shows that only John Hancock, the president of the congress, signed, attested by Charles Thompson, secretary.

But beyond the fact that the Declaration was not signed on the Fourth, it is also true that after the long month of acrimonious discussion, beginning early in June, the resolution for independence itself was adopted July 2.

The Virginia delegates, led by Richard Henry Lee, who for more than a year had openly advocated independence, instructed by the Virginia convention of May 17, 1776, to vote for absolute freedom, brought forward the resolution on June 7.

Mr. Lee's resolution read "That these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."

John Adams seconded the resolution. It was the north and the south joining hands. Puritan and cavalier shoulder to shoulder for liberty. The debate was on, and Adams became the colossus in its defense.

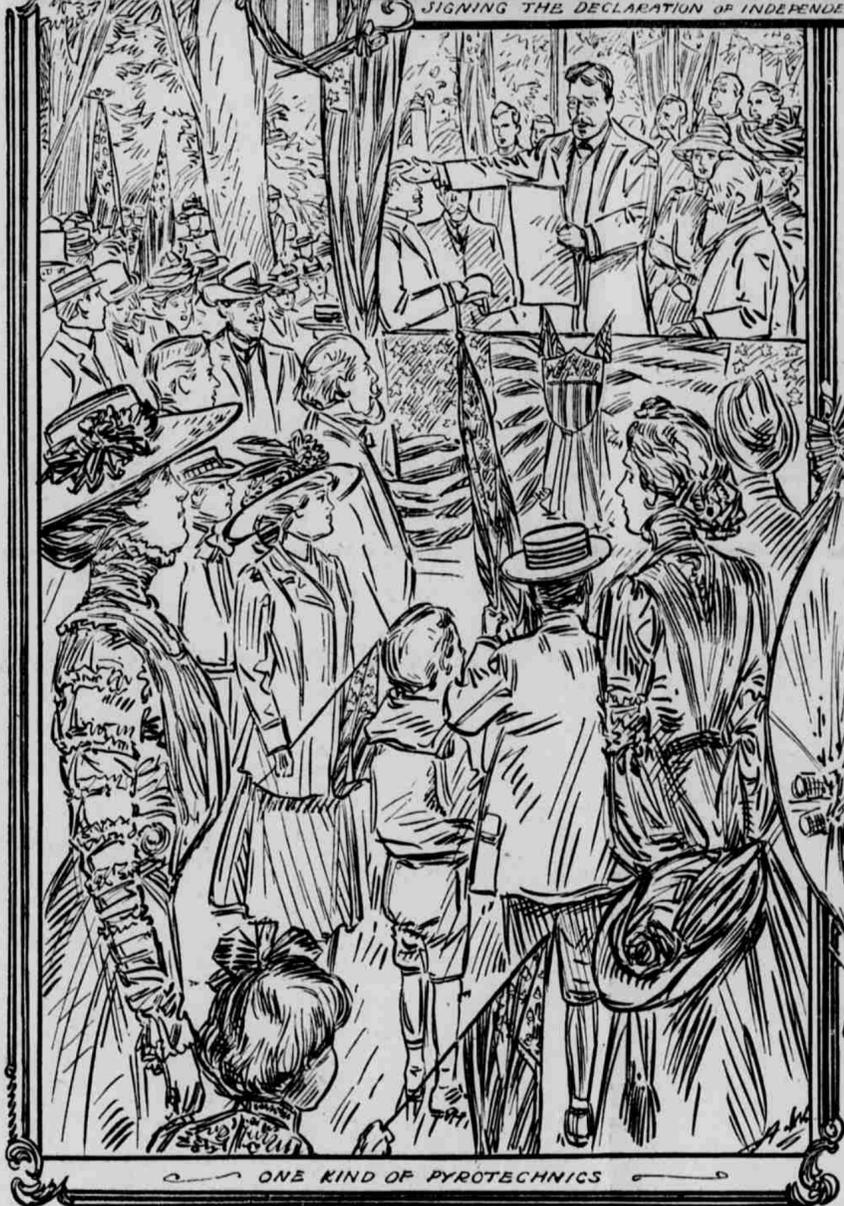
Direct consideration of the question of independence was entered upon, according to the record, on the morning of the 1st of July by the congress voting to resolve itself into a committee of the whole to take into consideration the resolution introduced by Richard Henry Lee, and to refer the draft of the declaration to this committee.

Benjamin Harrison of Virginia was called to the chair, and the whole day the prolonged discussion raged about the question, but at the end the resolution was adopted. The committee of the whole then rose, Hancock resumed the chair, and Harrison reported that the committee had adopted the resolution. It was late, the members were tired and anxious, and the house voted to postpone action on the resolution until the next day, July 2. Then, after a night's rest, the resolution was adopted. Real Independence day is therefore July 2.

But there was the matter of the draft of the Declaration, quite a different matter from the mere resolution.



SIGNING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. PAINTING BY TRUMBULL.



ONE KIND OF PYROTECHNICS

Colonies had voted unanimously July 2. Twelve voted for it on the 4th. On the 9th the New York members, having been instructed by their state to vote in favor of the resolution, did so, thus making the vote unanimous so far as the states were concerned.

Congress, on the 19th of July, ordered the Declaration passed on the

have met that ignominious death. In the assembly was Doctor Zubly, a delegate from Georgia. He was the Benedict Arnold of the congress. It began to be whispered that Zubly was giving away the secrets of executive sessions. Chase of Maryland accused him of his perfidy on the floor. Zubly made an impassioned denial and demanded proof. It was forthcoming, and the guilty delegate fled to Georgia with the intention of apprising the crown governor of his state with what was going on behind the closed doors of congress. Directed to follow the traitor by congress, Mr. Houston, a patriot delegate from the same state, set out to circumvent him. By the time they reached Georgia the crown governor had already been deposed and had taken refuge in an armed British vessel lying in Savannah harbor. Zubly's treachery came to nothing, but it deprived Houston of a chance to immortalize himself by signing, and Georgia was cut down to three signers, Gwinnett, Walton and Hall.

They were a sturdy and interesting group of men who had the temerity to throw off King George, and representative of all kinds of vocations. One was a minister of the Gospel, 24 were lawyers—it was Burke who had said, "You can't subdue a nation of lawyers"—14 were farmers, 4 physicians, 1 manufacturer, 9 merchants, and three other avocations. Their hardihood is shown not less in their longevity. Poor Thomas Lynch of South Carolina was drowned at 30. His health failed after the trying congressional work, and, sailing in 1779 for St. Eustatius, West Indies, hoping there to find a neutral vessel to carry him to France, he was never again heard from. But three of the signers lived to be over 90 years of age, ten over 80, eleven over 70, fourteen over 60, eleven over 50 and six over 44. It was Charles Carroll of

4th, fairly engrossed on parchment with the title and style of "The unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America, and that the same,

Carrollton, who—by six years—survived all the signers. He had been the man who advised the owner of the Peggy Stewart, a tea ship at Annapolis, to burn the vessel, which was done without disguise in broad daylight, and he lived to see his country victorious in the second war with Great Britain, dying in 1832.

The present solicitude for the preservation of the Declaration of Independence with all possible care dates from a period somewhat prior to the World's Columbian exposition, in Chicago, in 1893. It was proposed to transfer the Declaration to Chicago for exhibition, and a steel safe, or "packing case," as it was then termed, was specially constructed to serve as a repository for the document en route and during the period of the fair. While these preparations were in progress the officials of the state department turned the matter over in their minds, and eventually came to the conclusion that it was risky business to have the nation's most honored relic carted about the country, even if the moving was done with all possible care. The president took this view of the matter also, and so it was decided not to allow the Declaration to be transferred to Chicago.

About the opening of the year 1902 John Hay, who was then acting as secretary of state, asked the National Academy of Sciences to carefully investigate the condition of the document and to make suggestions as to ways and means for its preservation. Accordingly, President Agassiz of the National Academy appointed a special committee, consisting of John S. Billings, Ira Remsen and Charles F. Chandler, to confer with Secretary Hay on the subject. Eventually this special committee was given an opportunity to make a careful examination of the precious instrument, with the assistance of Mr. A. H. Allen, then serving as the chief of the bureau of rolls and library of the state department, and also with the aid of Dr. Wilbur M. Gray of the Army Medical Museum.

It was found that the document had suffered very seriously from the very harsh treatment to which it was exposed during the earlier years of the republic. Folding and rolling have creased and broken the parchment. The wet press-copying operation to which it was subjected about 1820, for the purpose of producing a facsimile copy, removed a large portion of the ink. Subsequent exposure to the action of light for more than 20 years while the instrument was placed on exhibition, has resulted in the fading of the ink, particularly in signatures.



THE OLD WAY

JULY FIFTH