

July Fourth, 1776

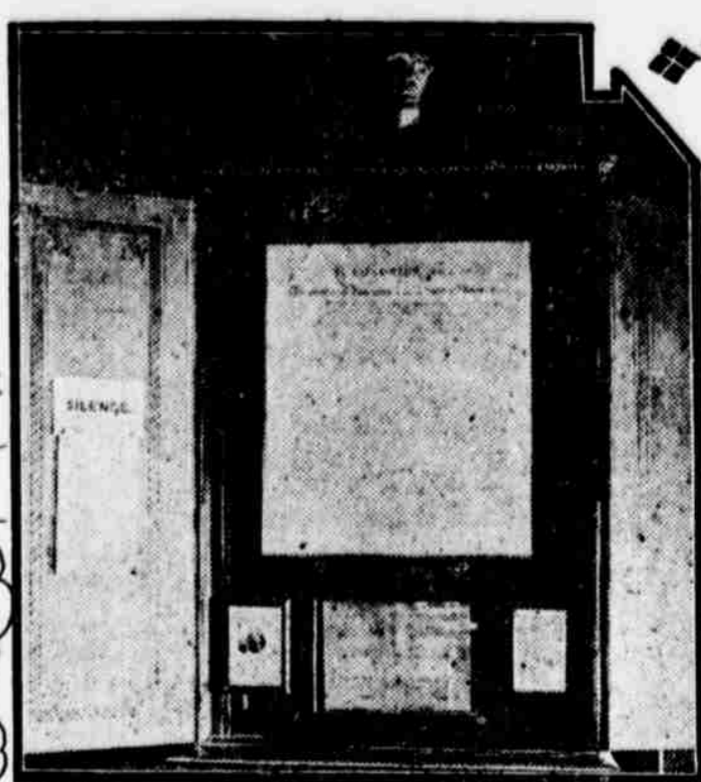
By Edward B. Clark



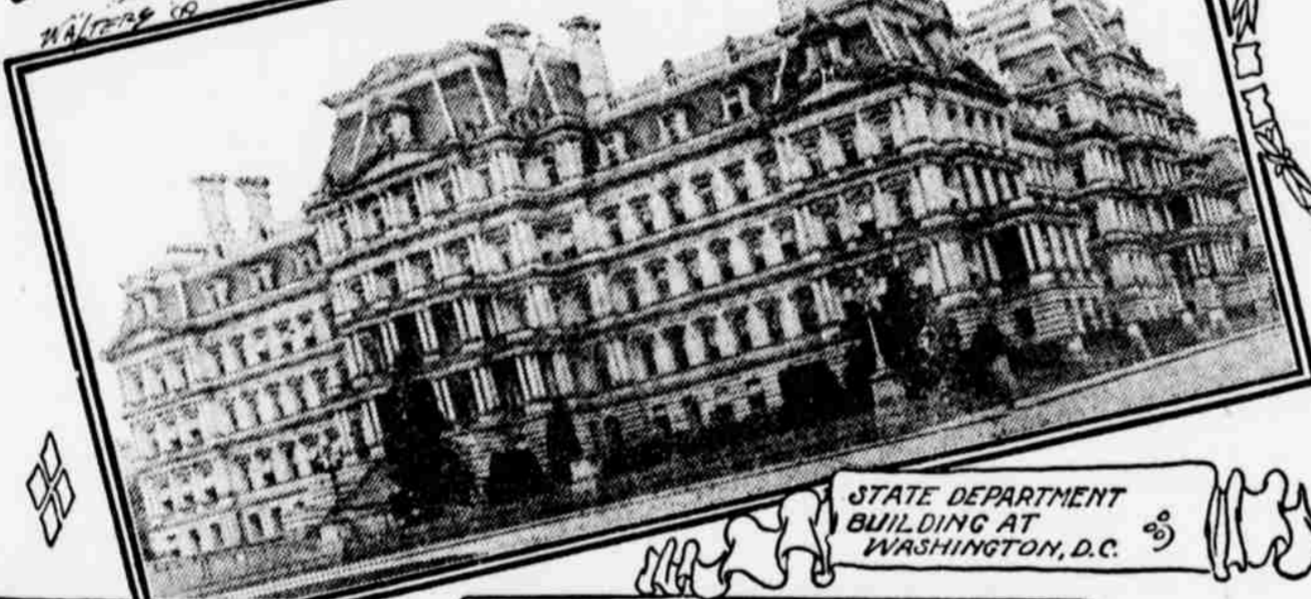
WASHINGTON. — There was unveiled in the nation's capital recently a statue of the Rev. John Witherspoon, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. More and more attention is being given throughout the country to the memories of the men who signed the liberty document. Not long ago there was held in Washington a convention of the descendants of the signers. It is expected that as the result of the labors of this hereditary organization there will be gathered together for preservation in one safe place all the things that are attainable which had intimate association with the men who on the 4th of July, 1776, took their lives and their pens in hand.

In the year 1776 lived a woman who was fond of giving curtain lectures to her husband. She was the original Mrs. Caudle, though her name was Mrs. Dickenson, the wife of John Dickenson of Pennsylvania, whose "Letters of a Pennsylvania Farmer" had done much to arouse a spirit of liberty among the people. One night several weeks before the meeting of the continental congress, of which Dickenson was a member, his spouse, speaking from beneath the shadow of her nightcap, said: "Johnny, if you have anything to do with this independence business you'll be hanged, and leave a most excellent widow." John Dickenson spoke against the resolution declaring the colonies to be free and independent.

The great independence debate was held within closed doors, and no record of the speeches was kept, because it was felt that in case of



WHERE THE ORIGINAL DRAFT OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IS PRESERVED



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HISTORIC DESK ON WHICH JEFFERSON WROTE THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



THE STEEL SAFE IN WHICH THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IS PRESERVED

the capture of any one of the members of the body that King George would have him strung up speedily should there be written evidence that he had spoken against the supremacy of the crown. When the Brunswick monarch, however, had been forced to relinquish his grip on the united colonies, some of the delegates told what they had said or what others had said. These fragmentary speeches had never before been gathered together, it is believed. Bits of them appear here and there in revolutionary-day stories. Others are to be found in the correspondence of some of the fathers of the republic, and two others have had their spirit, but not their letter, preserved through one of the almost matchless orations of Webster.

It is a well-known fact that the declaring of the colonies independent was not thought of seriously before the convening of the memorable congress of the spring of 1776. Washington was bitterly opposed to any such declaration until it became a military and civil necessity. Patrick Henry was perhaps the only outspoken advocate of the year when the cutting was actually accomplished, though Benjamin Franklin and Timothy Dwight thought, and sometimes said, that the yoke should be removed. Henry, by the way, in one of his speeches, undoubtedly gave the keynote to which Robert Emmet afterward attuned the last sentence of his speech when condemned to die. As early as 1773 Patrick Henry declared that the colonies should strike for independence, and prophesied that France would not be backward in coming to their aid. The last words of his speech were almost literally a part of the concluding words of Robert Emmet's speech: "Then our country shall take her place among the nations of the earth."

The original declaration of independence was a local affair. Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, at a public meeting held in the town of Charlotte, in August, 1776, declared that "it threw off forever all allegiance to the British crown." It was not long after this that North Carolina instructed its delegates to the continental congress to vote "first, last and always" for the independence of the united colonies. It must be said that many historians doubt the authenticity of the Mecklenburg declaration.

The congress that was to declare America free convened in Philadelphia, and in a general way discussed the matter of throwing off the yoke. Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduced this resolution: "Moved, That these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states, and that all political connection between us and Great Britain is, and ought to be, dissolved."

John Adams of Massachusetts seconded the motion, but the names of both mover and seconder were omitted from the record, because it was the belief that if the British authorities got hold of them as prisoners they would stretch hemp without a trial. Before the discussion of the resolution congress adjourned and came together again in June, when began the debate, perhaps the most momentous in history, the details of which, save in detached

form, were never preserved. During a part of the proceedings Benjamin Franklin presided. In a letter written 20 years after the debate one of the delegates said that when Benjamin Franklin, after the signing, said: "Now, we must all hang together or we'll all hang separately," Harrison, who had a ready wit, looking at his ample proportions, said: "If they drop us off at a rope's end some of our lightweights will be kicking and suffering long after I'm done for."

During the time of the adjournment, the committee which had been appointed to prepare the declaration of independence chose Jefferson, the youngest of their members, to write the document, on the ground that he was "the best penman" in the lot. Now, the word penman in those days was sometimes used to denote a man who expressed himself well on paper, and not necessarily a man who wrote a good hand. The English of the declaration perhaps shows that the word was used with the former significance, though some of Jefferson's detractors have insisted that Tom Paine wrote the famous document.

The Declaration of Independence was read paragraph by paragraph to the assembled members. As a matter of fact, the most brilliant speakers were opposed to the resolution. Among those so opposed were Dickenson, Robert R. Livingston, James Wilson and Edward Rutledge. It leaked out afterward that most of these men made speeches opposing the severing of the British bonds. Of three of those who spoke in favor of independence it was afterward said: "Jefferson was no speaker; George Wyeth was sensible, but not clear, and Witherspoon was clear, but heavy."

It has always been believed that Richard Henry Lee said, in standing for the absolute independence of his country: "Why still deliberate? Why, sir, do you longer delay? Let this happy day give birth to an American republic. Let her arise, not to devastate and conquer, but to re-establish the reign of peace and law. The eyes of Europe are fixed upon us; she demands of us a living example of freedom that may exhibit a contrast in the felicity of the citizen to the ever-increasing tyranny which desolates her polluted shores. If we are not this day wanting in our duty to our country the names of the American legislators of 1776 will be placed by posterity at the side of Theseus, of Lycurgus, of Romulus, of Numa, of the three Williams of Nassau, and of all those whose memories have been and forever will be dear to virtuous men and good citizens."

Just how Lee's speech leaked out was not known, but it led to a somewhat remarkable scene in the English school of St. Bees. Lee had a son, a mere boy, a pupil in St. Bees. A member of a board of visitors to the institution asked the head master who the boy was. "He is the son of Richard Henry Lee of America," was the answer.

jured, but as ambitious, subjects. "I shudder before this responsibility. It will be on us if, relinquishing the ground on which we have stood so long, and stood so safely, we now proclaim independence and carry on war for that object, while these cities burn, these pleasant fields whiten and bleach with the bones of their owners, and these streams run blood. It will be upon us; it will be upon us if, failing to maintain this unreasonable and ill-judged declaration, a sterner despotism, maintained by military power, shall be established over our posterity, when we ourselves, given up by an exhausted, a harassed and misled people, shall have expiated our rashness and atoned for our presumption on the scaffold."

It is a fairly well established fact that one of the delegates, lacking a prepared speech of his own, quoted from Tom Paine's pamphlet, "Common Sense," which some months before had created a sensation. Tom Paine, as is well known, was an atheist, but that made little difference to the delegate, who was said to be a pious Puritan, when he had a chance to let his feelings go ripping through sentences like these: "It matters very little now what the king of England either says or does; he hath wickedly broken through every moral and human obligation, trampled nature and conscience beneath his feet, and by a steady and constitutional spirit of insolence and cruelty procured for himself a universal hatred. . . . It has been reported that John Witherspoon of Princeton, staunch orthodox Presbyterian, was the man who quoted thus liberally from Tom Paine, atheist. Some years afterward the Scotch domine, it is said, was taken to task for quoting Paine, and reverend John said, if tradition may be believed, that the devil's pitchfork was none too bad a weapon to use in prodding John Bull out of the country."

It was left, however, for John Adams to make the great speech that brought to the side of those favoring independence all the wavering ones, and strengthened in their position those who stood for the signing of the declaration. What Adams said was given in substance to the world when there was no longer any danger of his being hanged for his utterances. Daniel Webster lent his own eloquence and something of his diction to his interpretation of Adams' discourse, which, on the eventful day, it may be truly said won for the country the declaration of independence.

Adams' powerful and electrifying speech was in part as follows: "It is true, indeed, that in the beginning we aimed not at independence. But there's a divinity which shapes our ends. The injustice of England has driven us to arms, and, blinded to her own interest for our good, she has obstinately persisted till independence is now within our grasp. We have but to reach forth to it and it is ours. Why, then, should we defer the declaration? Is any man so weak as now to hope for a reconciliation with England, which shall leave either safety to the country and its liberties or safety to his own life and his own honor?"

"I know there is not a man here who would not rather see a general conflagration sweep over the land or an earthquake sink it than one jot or tittle of that plighted faith fall to the ground. For myself, having 12 months ago in this place moved you that George Washington be appointed commander of the forces raised or to be raised for defense of American liberty, may my right hand forget her cunning and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I hesitate or waver in the support I give him. . . .

"My judgment approves this measure, and my whole heart is in it. All that I have and all that I am, and all that I hope in this life, I am now ready here to stake upon it. . . . I am for the declaration. It is my living sentiment, and, by the grace of God, shall be my dying sentiment, independence now and independence forever."

The 2d of July is in reality Independence day, for on this date in the year 1776 a majority of the delegates from each colony voted for the declaration. Two days later the document was signed and went into effect, and from that day to this, in fulfillment of John Adams' prophecy, the day has been celebrated "with pomp, parade, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illumination from one end of the continent to the other."



Youth (at a bun emporium)—I say, you know, this milk is sour. Sweet Thing—Well, there's plenty of sugar on the table, ain't there?

Hypothetical.
"Let me," said the stranger at the baseball gate, "ask you a hypothetical question."
"Go ahead."
"Supposing that I had ten cents, and desired to witness an exhibition of the manly sport inside the enclosure, the price being 25 cents; and supposing that I were to approach you for 15 cents necessary to fruition of my hopes, what would you say?"
"That's easy. I'd say: 'Lend me the 10 cents as I have just 15 myself, and am a rabid fan.'"
Thus, after all this subtle eloquence, there was nothing doing.

Laundry work at home would be much more satisfactory if the right Starch were used. In order to get the desired stiffness, it is usually necessary to use so much starch that the beauty and fineness of the fabric is hidden behind a paste of varying thickness, which not only destroys the appearance, but also affects the wearing quality of the goods. This trouble can be entirely overcome by using Defiance Starch, as it can be applied much more thinly because of its greater strength than other makes.

That's a Reason.
"Take off your coat, Herkimer," said the boss, in kindly tones, as he directed the electric fan a little more toward himself.
Herkimer Hoskins blushed furiously.
"Thank you, sir," he said, "but—er—the fact is my wife makes my shirts."

The extraordinary popularity of fine white goods this summer makes the choice of Starch a matter of great importance. Defiance Starch, being free from all injurious chemicals, is the only one which is safe to use on fine fabrics. It great strength as a stiffener makes half the usual quantity of Starch necessary, with the result of perfect finish, equal to that when the goods were new.

Gratitude Poorly Expressed.
An old woman was profuse in her gratitude to a magistrate who had dismissed a charge brought against her.
"I thought you wouldn't be 'ard on me, your worship," she remarked, as she left the dock; "I know 'ow often a kind 'art beats be'ind a ugly face."

Not Noticeable.
Little Mose Lamback—De teacheh done sent me home, mammy, 'cause you didn't wash mah face.
Mrs. Lamback (angrily)—You fool chile, what fo' you done tole her I didn't?—Illustrated Sunday Magazine.

Scoring a Point.
"I thought Jenks had made a mistake in that story, so I just nailed him down."
"Well?"
"And found, as I expected, that he was on the wrong tack."

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