



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

What Really Happened ON FIRST INDEPENDENCE DAY



THOMAS JEFFERSON

FROM much that historians have written about the Fourth of July, 1776, an erroneous idea of the happenings of that great day has become a common heritage of the people of our land. Many an American considers it a part of a patriotic duty to muse upon the imaginative picture entitled "The First Fourth of July," which some historical writer has painted upon his vision.

In fancy he sees Independence hall in Philadelphia and the Continental congress with its ruffled shirts, long cloth coats, knee pants, silk stockings and low shoes sitting with dignity, but listening spellbound to a wonderfully strange and entirely new document called "The Declaration of Independence."

In fancy he even hears the popular acclaim of "That is just what we all say!" and "It is well worded, Mr. Jefferson." Then the mind pictures the various delegates to congress hastening forward, eager for the honor of fixing their signatures to a sheepskin document.

The scene changes to the ringing of the great liberty bell, to the assembling of the people at Philadelphia who applauded the reading of this bill of rights and to the final closing of the day with every man, woman and child in Philadelphia happy because he is no longer a British subject, having become a free American in a single day.

Such a vision pictures a heroic scene; but the true record of events does not affirm that these so-called happenings took place on that memorable day. By blotting out the imperfect details of the picture the Fourth of July is in no way robbed of any of its glory.

An authentic account of what transpired at that time changes the meaning of the Fourth of July from one day to about sixty in which the whole history of our national liberty is told and the heroic heart-throbs of the sorely tried colonists are keenly felt.

The day itself properly symbolizes the liberty for which the patriots of that time stood ready to sacrifice their lives in order to launch the United States as a national craft which should be anchored by no weight of foreign despotism.

It was a time of danger when brother, friend and neighbor became estranged by reason of political opinion. Some colonists still loved the mother country with true English pride, while others were so embittered by the injustice of the sovereign across the seas that they willingly gave their all to the cause of the people of the new land.

During the latter part of 1774 George Washington himself wrote that no thinking man among the colonists wanted to separate from England, and Franklin ridiculed the idea.

During the early days of the revolution the bluecoats never dreamed of separating from the beloved land of their ancestors. In fact, such a course would have been condemned by Americans themselves as treason. Jefferson declared that prior to April 19, 1775, he had heard no whisper of the disposition of anyone to stand from under the governmental power of Great Britain.

The inevitable, however, came with the spring of 1776, when local assemblies began formal discussion regarding the liberty of colonists. These legislative bodies possessed but little power, but they did a great part in crystallizing the sentiment for independence in many quarters and forcing those opposed to the idea to declare their inimical attitude.

The good work of these small legislative bodies was reflected and magnified as soon as the delegates were sent to the Continental congress. Then the spirit of liberty permeated the very atmosphere of the national assembly and many an individual received the courage to align himself with the new cause.

If, June 7, 1776, there had been an "extra paper" to have informed the public of the latest political news one might have read the flaring headlines "Richard Henry Lee of Virginia the Man of the Hour," for it was he who on that day started the Fourth of July. It was this southerner who introduced the first declaration of independence in congress declaring the American people free.

Good judgment dictated the caution of omitting John Adams' name from the minutes, as the second to that motion, yet the fact is known today, when there is no army of redcoats waiting to seize patriots as rebels.

Too much praise cannot be given to the introduction of Lee's resolution, yet it was to the credit of the Continental congress that action was not forced upon such an important measure at that time. It could not have succeeded until all objections had been silenced, all fears of England's success allayed, until all were conscientiously convinced that the cause of liberty was just. It was imperative that all should look the Goddess of Liberty squarely in the face with a devotion to follow where she should lead.

As no agreement could be reached on June 7 the resolution was laid over until the next day, when it was again postponed for consideration until July 1.

In order that the cause of liberty should not be retarded during this wait, congress at that



INDEPENDENCE HALL



JOHN ADAMS

time appointed a committee of five to prepare a declaration of independence of the same purport as Lee's resolution, in the hope that the new doctrine would be unanimously accepted when the matter should be again taken up in July.

Policy demanded that a southerner should be chosen to write the declaration in order to increase the probability of its unanimous adoption. Logically, Jefferson was the man to carry this work through, for the mastery style of his pen was well known. With such coworkers, though, it cannot be supposed that he alone was the author of the resolution; for the responsibility had been assigned to all five jointly, and the counsel and advice of all were necessary.

However, the credit of the phraseology is given to Jefferson, while John Adams is said to have given close attention to the revision and the amending of the resolution. The entire committee helped perfect the documents by making it the subject of critical analysis. In allowing the Declaration of Independence to be ready before its assembly on June 28 congress preceded its schedule.

Satisfied that all were acquainted with its contents, the legislature then laid the bill on the table until it should come up for discussion by congress sitting as a committee of the whole.

By trial vote July 1 only nine colonies voted as favorable to the resolution.

Final legislative action was therefore deferred until the next day. That, July 2, was probably the most memorable of all dates of our national history. During the stormy debate at that time the declaration was both attacked and commended.

When the vote of the day was taken it was found that the declaration had been unanimously indorsed by all of the thirteen colonies.

The vote in favor of the declaration was not sufficient to make the adoption of the new resolution complete, for the next day congress sat as a committee of the whole to consider the bill. At that time slight alterations were made, certain clauses censuring England were omitted and others regarding slave trade were left out, while other amendments were added.

On July 4 congress assembled again and immediately resolved itself into a committee for the consideration of the Declaration of Independence.

When John Hancock, as president of the congress, resumed the chair, Mr. Harrison, great-grandfather of our former president of the United States, reported that his committee had agreed to the declaration, which they desired him to report.

What followed this announcement is largely a matter of surmise, despite the fact that the debate lasted all through the warm day, when delegates either talked or listened swathed in heavy, close-fitting stocks.

If it had not been for a seemingly trivial incident the debates of that day might probably have

lasted over until the next, and so July 5 would have become the birthday instead of July 4.

Toward evening the discomfort of the assembly was increased on account of the swarms of flies which came from a nearby livery stable into the hall of legislature. These pests were so audacious in assaults upon the statesmen that Jefferson said their annoyance helped bring the matter to a conclusion, and Harrison reported the declaration to congress as accepted, though in the minutes of that day the declaration was at first left out on account of the vengeance of England.

Today Independence hall, in the old state house in Philadelphia, remains about as it was on that July 4, and so far as the setting of the stage the drama is complete, but the drama itself is left for us to supply.

All that we have left of the record of that memorable day is the text of the Declaration of Independence, and as that represents what all brave American colonists were ready to lay down their lives for and what should be handed down to us and guarded as courageously as it had been won, the Fourth of July has amply served its purpose and deserved its one monument, "The Spirit of Liberty for All."

Whether or not the Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776, by any but Hancock, as president of the Continental congress, and Thompson, as secretary, is a matter of doubt, for the journal entry records "signed by order of and in behalf of congress." Jefferson himself made conflicting statements regarding this question.

Some contend that the delegates met informally on the morning of July 5 and signed the document. Whether or not the signatures were affixed on July 4, congress' act was official on that day that Jefferson's Declaration of Independence was declared acceptable to every colony. And so it resolved that copies should be sent throughout the new-formed republic.

The general assemblies, conventions, councils, committees of safety and the commanding officers of the Continental army had to be informed of the independence of the United States. These copies were signed by Hancock and Thompson. The Congressional Record of July 19 shows that a resolution was introduced in the national assembly to the effect that the declaration should be engrossed on parchment and presented for the signature of every member on August 2.

This fact, therefore, serves as authority that the parchment copy signed on that day in August, after it had been compared with the fair copy and the latter destroyed, is the copy of the Declaration of Independence which was considered for so many years the original draft of the great bill of rights of the American people. It is said that even this signing was entered into with "fear and trembling."

Satisfied that the signed parchment was a lasting evidence of the birth of the new nation, congress took no further official action regarding the instruments itself until January, 1777.

By that time the new republic began to feel its strength, and congress decided to promulgate the names of the signers of the Declaration of Independence by ordering that printed copies of the document should be made, with the names of the signers added.

Mary Katharine Goddard, a woman who carried on the printing business on Broadside, Baltimore, probably never heard of woman's rights, yet it so happened that it became her right to print these copies of the American bill of rights.

From these copies numerous others were soon made, until before long every home boasted at least one copy of the original document which gave life to our republic.

PROMINENT PEOPLE

A MODERN PORTIA



To Miss Lucille Pugh, the criminal lawyer of New York, belongs the distinction of being the first of her sex to defend a man accused of murder. This honor Miss Pugh accepts with the same unassuming frankness that characterized her conduct in the defense of Leroy Poindexter, the negro, whom she saved from the electric chair.

Thanks to the skill with which Miss Pugh handled the case the first jury disagreed, and at the second trial she obtained a verdict of manslaughter in the second degree.

When trying her now famous case, Miss Pugh made a remarkable picture. Standing but an inch over five feet, her auburn hair parted at the side and drawn tightly around her shapely head, her brown eyes glancing from the tense face of the accused negro to the jury of twelve white men, her right hand outstretched in an appealing manner toward them, her indicating the prisoner, she subtly sought to force into the minds of her hearers the innocence of the man she was defending. One of the best-known court officials, who has attended for the last twenty years all the notable criminal trials in New York, stated that in his opinion, her defense was the most capable he had ever heard.

HEAD OF ITALY'S NAVY



Prince Louis of Savoy, duke of the Abruzzi, admiral of the fleet of Italy, is known to Americans largely through the American associations of his interesting career. He has made several visits to this country, one of them resulting in a love affair which, after world-wide publicity, left the duke still a bachelor. He is distinguished as an explorer and mountain climber, and at the time of the earthquake which destroyed Messina, as well as last January, when Avezzano and its vicinity were roughly shaken, he was a leader in relief work.

From his earliest youth the duke has made his life one of activity and of service. He entered the navy and came to the United States on board an Italian warship when he was eighteen years old. He became so interested on his first trip here that he returned some five or six years later, and then he came again about ten years ago. On this latter tour of the country it was persistently rumored that he and Miss Katherine Elkins, daughter of the West Virginia senator, were engaged to be married.

The duke of Abruzzi won more renown as an explorer and climber of mountain peaks than in any other of the pursuits to which he had given attention. He ascended Mount Elias, Alaska, made his way to a height of 24,000 feet, the greatest on record, in the Himalayas, and he penetrated far into the recesses of the Uganda district of Africa.

Italy's sea chief is only forty-two years old. He is more like an American business man in appearance than a European naval officer.

OUR NEW SUBMARINE CHIEF



Germany's remarkable development of submarine warfare has aroused the interest and action of every civilized nation, and the United States is not behind others in recognizing its importance. In order to develop the undersea arm of the American navy and to eliminate its present faults, Secretary Daniels has designated Capt. A. W. Grant, one of the highest ranking officers of his grade, to command the Atlantic submarine flotilla and exercise general supervision over that branch of the service. He already has got under way an organized effort to put every unit of the submarine flotilla in first-class condition to perform all of the functions for which it is designed, and much of his time is spent in Washington and at the various shore stations. His powers in the work of construction and development are very large, and he receives every possible assistance from the navy department.

As assistant in this important task, Captain Grant has Commander Yates Stirling, who is considered one of the leading experts on underwater craft and who last winter gave congress and the public some interesting information about the weaknesses of the vessels under his charge.

CONGRESSMAN SEES WASHINGTON

The day after congress adjourned Ed Keating of Colorado entered on what—considering that he is a congressman—was an odd form of vacation. Accompanied by his wife, Keating became a Washington tourist.

"Well, I suppose the first thing we ought to see," suggested the congressman to his wife, "is the capitol." "The wh-a-a-!" "The capitol," repeated Keating. "I've been in it, of course, several hundred times, but have always had something on my mind. Many's the time when I've seen guides pointing out the historic paintings to tourists that I had curiosity to know what they were about, but I always figured that I could just as well wait until I wasn't quite so busy."

So they hired a guide and were shown about the capitol. Then they climbed aboard a big rubber-neck wagon and listened to the megaphone man as he pointed out the homes of the Nation's great men. After that they went up in the Washington monument. Keating had seen it a thousand times or saw it from the window of his hotel room, but never before had he been up close to it.

Oh, they took in everything—the tomb of George Washington at Mount Vernon, the Lee mansion at Arlington, the bureau of engraving—even the pension bureau, because Keating is on the pension committee. Every little while they paused to buy souvenir postcards to send home to friends.

