



## CELEBRATING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Selections from American newspapers, July-October 1776

- **NEW HAMPSHIRE.** Portsmouth, July 20. The day before yesterday . . . the Independent Company under Col. Sherburne, and the Light Infantry Company under Col. Langdon, were drawn up on the parade [grounds] in their uniforms, when the Declaration of Independence from the Grand Continental Congress was read in the hearing of a numerous and respectable audience. The pleasing countenances [facial expressions] of the many patriots present spoke a hearty concurrence in this interesting measure, which was confirmed by three huzzas and all conducted in peace and good order.  
\_\_\_Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet, 5 August 1776
- **MASSACHUSETTS.** Boston, July 25. On Monday last, a number of patriotic gentlemen of this town, animated with a love of their country and to show their approbation [approval] of the measures lately taken by the Grand Council of America, assembled on the green near the Liberty Pole where, after having displayed the colors of the Thirteen Confederate Colonies of America, the bells were set a-ringing and the drums a-beating, after which the Declaration of Independency of the United States was read to a large and respectable body (among whom were the Selectmen and Committee of Correspondence) assembled on the occasion, who testified their approbation by repeated huzzas, firing of musketry and cannon, bonfires, and other demonstrations of joy. When the arms<sup>1</sup> of that Tyrant in Britain, George the III, of execrable memory, which in former reigns decorated — but of late disgraced the Court House in this town — were committed to the flames and consumed to ashes, after which a select company of the Sons of Freedom repaired to the Tavern, lately known the sign of the King's Arms, which odious signature of despotism was taken down by order of the people, which was cheerfully complied with by the Innkeeper, where the following toasts were drunk — and the Evening spent with joy on the commencement of the happy era. [List of toasts; see p. 3]. The greatest decency and good order was observed, and at a suitable time each man returned to his respective home.  
\_\_\_The Massachusetts Spy: Or, American Oracle of Liberty, 24 July 1776
- **RHODE ISLAND.** Newport, July 22. Last Saturday the Hon. the General Assembly of this state, being then sitting at the Statehouse in this town, at twelve o'clock, the brigade stationed here under the command of the Colonels William Richmond and Christopher Lippitt, Esqrs., marched from headquarters and drew up in two columns on each side [of] the parade [grounds] before the Statehouse door. His honor the Governor and members of Assembly then marched through and received the compliments of the brigade, after which the Secretary read, at the head of the brigade, a resolve of the Assembly concurring with the Congress in the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration itself was then read. Next thirteen cannon were discharged at Fort Liberty. The brigade then drew up and fired in thirteen divisions, from east to west, agreeable to the number and situation of the United States. The Declaration was received with joy and applause by all ranks. The whole was conducted with great solemnity and decorum.  
\_\_\_The Pennsylvania Evening Post, 1 August 1776

■ **NEW YORK.** New York City, July 15. On Wednesday the Congress's Declaration of the Independence of the United States of America was read at the Head of each Brigade of the Continental Army posted in and near this City, and everywhere received with the utmost Demonstrations of Joy.

The Same Evening the Equestrian statue of George III, erected in the Year 1770, was thrown from its Pedestal and broken in Pieces, and we hear the Lead wherewith this monument was made is to be run into Bullets.

In Pursuance of the Declaration for Independency, a general Goal [jail] delivery with respect to Debtors took place here on Wednesday.<sup>2</sup>

— *Connecticut Journal*, 17 July 1776

■ **NEW JERSEY.** Trenton, July 8. The declaration of Independence was this day proclaimed here, together with the new constitution of the colony of late established<sup>3</sup> . . . The people are now convinced of what we ought long since to have known, that our enemies have left us no middle way between perfect freedom and abject slavery.

In the Field we hope, as well in Council,<sup>4</sup> the inhabitants of New Jersey will be found ever ready to support the Freedom and Independence of America.

— *The Pennsylvania Packet*, 15 July 1776

■ **PENNSYLVANIA.** Philadelphia, July 10. On Monday last at twelve o'clock the Declaration of INDEPENDENCE was proclaimed at the State-House in this city, in the presence of many thousand spectators, who testified their approbation by repeated acclamations.

— *Connecticut Journal*, 17 July 1776

■ **MARYLAND.** Baltimore, July 30. Yesterday, by order of the Committee of this town, the declaration of Independency of the United States of America was read at the Court House to a numerous and respectable body of Militia and the company of Artillery, and other principal inhabitants of this town and county, which was received with general applause and heart-felt satisfaction. And at night the town was illuminated<sup>5</sup> and, at the same time, the Effigy<sup>6</sup> of our late King was carted through the town and committed to the flames amidst the acclamations of many hundreds. — The just reward of a Tyrant.

— *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet*, 5 August 1776

■ **VIRGINIA.** Williamsburg, August 10. On Monday last, being court day, the Declaration of Independence was publicly proclaimed in the town of Richmond before a large

### PATRIOTIC TOASTS Worcester, Massachusetts

*The Massachusetts Spy*, 24 July 1776

1. Prosperity and perpetuity to the United States of America.
2. The President of the Grand Council of America [John Hancock, Second Continental Congress].
3. The Grand Council of America.
4. His Excellency General Washington.
5. All the Generals in the American Army.
6. Commodore Hopkins.
7. The Officers and Soldiers in the American Army.
8. The Officers and Seamen in the American Navy.
9. The Patriots of America.
10. Every Friend of America.
11. George rejected and Liberty protected.
12. Success to the American Arms.
13. Sore Eyes to all Tories, and a Chestnut Burr for an Eye Stone.
14. Perpetual itching without the benefit of scratching to the Enemies of America.
15. The Council and Representatives of the State of Massachusetts Bay.
16. The Officers and Soldiers in the Massachusetts service.
17. The Memory of the brave General Warren [Joseph Warren, killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill].
18. The Memory of the magnanimous General Montgomery [Richard Montgomery, killed in the attack on Quebec City, Canada, Dec. 1775].
19. Speedy redemption to all the officers and Soldiers who are now Prisoners of war among our Enemies.
20. The State of Massachusetts Bay.
21. The Town of Boston.
22. The Selectmen and Committees of Correspondence for the town of Worcester.
23. May the Enemies of America be laid at her feet.
24. May the Freedom and Independency of America endure till the sun grows dim with age, and this earth returns to Chaos.

<sup>2</sup> I.e., those in jail for unpaid debts were released.

<sup>3</sup> The colonies were in the process of creating state constitutions.

<sup>4</sup> I.e., in battle as well as in the Continental Congress.

<sup>5</sup> Fireworks, candles, etc.

<sup>6</sup> Effigy: usually a fabric or sculpted dummy of an unpopular person, constructed to be destroyed in a public protest.

concourse of respectable freeholders of Henrico County and upwards of 200 of the militia, who assembled on that grand occasion. It was received with universal shouts of joy and re-echoed by three volleys of small arms. The same evening the town was illuminated, and the members of the Committee held a club where many patriotic toasts were drunk. Although there were near 1000 people present, the whole was conducted with the utmost decorum, and the satisfaction visible in every countenance sufficiently evinces their determination to support it with their lives and fortunes.

— *The Pennsylvania Ledger*, 24 August 1776

- **SOUTH CAROLINA.** Charlestown, August 14. On Monday last the declaration of independence was proclaimed here amidst the acclamations of a vast concourse of people.

— *The Virginia Gazette*, 27 September 1776

- **GEORGIA.** Savannah, August 10. A Declaration being received from the Honorable John Hancock, Esq., by which it appeared that the Continental Congress, in the name and by the authority of their constituents, had declared that the United Colonies of North America are, and of right ought to be, Free and Independent States, and absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, his Excellency the President, and the Honorable the Council met in the Council Chamber and read the Declaration. — They then proceeded to the square before the Assembly House and read it likewise to a great concourse of people, when the grenadier and light infantry companies fired a general volley.

After this, they proceeded in the following procession to [the] Liberty Pole: — The grenadiers in front — The Provost Marshal on horseback, with his sword drawn — The Secretary with the Declaration — His Excellency the President — The Honorable the Council and gentlemen attending — Then the light infantry, and the rest of the militia of the town and district of Savannah. At the Liberty Pole they were met by the Georgia battalion who, after the reading of the Declaration, discharged their field pieces and fired in platoons. Upon this, they proceeded to the battery at the Trustees Gardens, where the Declaration was read for the last time, and the cannon of the battery discharged. His Excellency and Council, Col. Lachlan McIntosh, and other gentlemen, with the militia, dined under the cedar trees and cheerfully drank to the United, Free, and Independent States of America.

In the evening the town was illuminated, and there was exhibited a very solemn funeral procession attended by the grenadier and light infantry companies and other militia, with the drums muffled, and fifes, and a greater number of people than ever appeared on any occasion before in this province, when George the Third was interred before the court house in the following manner:

“Forasmuch as George the Third of Great Britain hath most flagrantly violated his coronation oath, and trampled upon the constitution of our country<sup>7</sup> and the sacred rights of mankind, we therefore commit his political existence to the ground, corruption to corruption — tyranny to the grave and oppression to eternal infamy — in sure and certain hope that he will never obtain a resurrection to rule again over these United States of America. But, my friends and fellow citizens, let us not be sorry, as men without hope, for TYRANTS that thus depart. Rather let us remember America is free and independent, that she is and will be, with the blessing of the Almighty, GREAT among the nations of the earth. Let this encourage us in well doing, to fight for our rights and privileges, for our wives and children, for all that is near and dear unto us. May God give us his blessing and let all the people say AMEN.”

— *The Pennsylvania Evening Post*, 8 October 1776

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<sup>7</sup> i.e., the English constitution.