**Title**  
In congress, July 4, 1776. A Declaration by the representatives of the United States of America, In General Congress assembled ... signed by order and in behalf of the Congress, John Hancock, President. Attest. Charles Thomson, Secretary

**Call Number**  
1977 Folio 13

**Creator**  
United States

**Published/Created Date**  
[1776]

**Rights**  
The use of this image may be subject to the copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) or to site license or other rights management terms and conditions. The person using the image is liable for any infringement.

**Extent of Digitization**  
Complete work digitized.

**Generated**  
2022-05-19 04:00:01 UTC

**Terms of Use**  
https://guides.library.yale.edu/about/policies/access

**View in DL**  
https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/2003775
In Congress, July 4, 1776.

A DECLARATION

BY THE REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

IN GENERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

When in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the Causes which impel them to the Separation.

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness;—That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the governed. When any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shown, that popular Governments are best able to resist frauds, to guide themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing inveterate and fixed Principles of unchangeable Policy, are of such a Nature, that they have ceased to be the Wills of Man, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Safety. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which compels them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless Appended in their Operation to an Assent given to their Assemblies; when soAppended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People, until such Laws would be submitted to their Consideration; when so submitted, he refused to sign them.

He has called together Legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from their Inhabitants, for the sole Purpose of fatiguing them in the Service of his Majesties Enemies.

He has kept among us, in Times of Peace, Standart Armes, without the Consent of our Legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a Jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For quartering large Bodies of Armies among us:

For protecting them, by a Mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they have committed on the Inhabitants of our States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the World:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighboring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries, so as to render it at once an Exemplification and Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Government:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever:

He has abridg'd the Government here, by declaring it out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become Executioners of our Friends, and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of War is Anarchy and Destruction.

In every Stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated Injury. A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the Ruler of a free People.

Nor have we been wanting in Attentions to our British Brethren. We have warned them from Time to Time by Attempts by our Legislatures to extend an unwarrentable Jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our Emigration and Settlement here. We have appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the Ties of our common Kindred to disavow these Usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our Connexions and Correspondence. They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the Necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the British States, Enemies in War, in Peace, Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Redress of our Complaints, to this End, that we, as States, independent of one another, have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the Support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protectors of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

Signed by Order and in Behalf of the Congress,

JOHN HANCOCK, President.

Attest.
CHARLES THOMSON, Secretary.

Philadelphia: Printed by John Dunlap.