

structed me to give. Had the post been to go a day later we might have been at liberty to communicate this whole matter.

July 2. I have kept open my letter till this morning but nothing more new. Adieu.

---

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE <sup>1</sup>

	July 4, 1776.	
FIRST DRAFT	REPORTED DRAFT	ENGROSSED COPY
A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America in general Congress assembled.	A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA in General Congress assembled.	In Congress, July 4, 1776. The Unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America.

<sup>1</sup> The text in the first column is from a copy in the handwriting of John Adams, now in the Adams papers at Quincy, for which I am indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Charles Francis Adams and Mr. Theodore F. Dwight. From a comparison of it with the facsimile of Jefferson's rough draft, it is evident that it represents the first phrasing of the paper. The text in the second column is approximately that reported by the committee to Congress, and is taken from Jefferson's rough draft reproduced herein in facsimile from the original in the Department of State. The text in the third column is from the engrossed copy of the Declaration of Independence, also in the Department of State. Another MSS. copy in Jefferson's writing, slightly altered in wording, was inserted by him in his Autobiography, and is printed, *ante*, 1, 35. This is in the Department of State, as is likewise a copy in his handwriting made for Madison in 1783, which is reproduced in facsimile in the *Madison Papers*, vol. iii. Between July 4th-10th, Jefferson made copies of the Declaration, indicating his phrasing and that adopted by the Congress, and sent them to R. H. Lee, Wythe, Page, Pendleton, and Mazzei, and probably others. Lee gave his copy to the American Philosophical Society, where it now is. Those of Wythe, Page, and Pendleton have never been heard of. Mazzei

When in the Course of human Events it becomes necessary for a People to advance from that Subordination, in which they have hitherto remained and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the equal and independent 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 impell them to the Change.

We hold these Truths to be self evident; that all Men are created equal and independent; that from that equal Creation they derive Rights

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 inherent & inalienable

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 inalienable

gave his to the Countess de Tessie of France, and it has not been traced. A copy in Jefferson's writing is now owned by Dr. Thomas Addis Emmett, and a fragment of another is in the possession of Mrs. Washburn of Boston. Thus at least five copies and a fragment of a sixth are still extant.—*Cf. ante*, vol. i., 35.

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 <sup>one</sup> people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to ~~assume among the powers of the earth the same station to which the laws of nature & 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~~ <sup>the</sup> separation.~~ <sup>separate and equal.</sup>

We hold these truths to be <sup>self-evident,</sup> that all men are created equal, & independent; that <sup>they are endowed by their creator with ~~unalienable~~</sup> ~~unalienable~~ rights, that among <sup>these</sup> ~~these~~ are ~~life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness;~~ <sup>life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness;</sup> that to secure these <sup>rights</sup> ~~rights~~, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government ~~shall~~ becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles & organising its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness. prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light & transient causes: and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed but when a long train of abuses & usurpations [began at a distinguished period, &] pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to ~~reduce~~ <sup>bring</sup> reduce them ~~to absolute despotism,~~ <sup>to ~~absolute despotism,~~</sup> it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government & to provide new guards for their future security such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies, & such is now the necessity which constrains them to <sup>alter</sup> ~~change~~ their former systems of government the history of <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ present <sup>King of Great Britain</sup> ~~is a history of~~ <sup>repeated</sup> ~~injuries and usurpations,~~ <sup>appears no solitary fact</sup> ~~among which, ~~to~~ ~~contradict~~ the uniform tenor of the rest, ~~all of which~~ <sup>but all</sup> ~~have~~ <sup>having</sup> in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states to prove this let facts be submitted to a candid world, [for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet unswerving by falsehood]~~

Dr. Franklin handwriting

Mr Adams handwriting

inherent and unalienable; among which are the Preservation of Life, and Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness; that to secure these Ends, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the governed; that whenever any form of Government, shall become 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 change for light and

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; that whenever 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 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

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. — That whenever 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 accord-

transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shown, that Mankind are more disposed to Suffer, while Evils are Sufferable, than to right themselves, by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, begun at a distinguish'd Period, and pursuing invariably, the same object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Power, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity, which constrains them to expunge their former

mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations begun at a distinguished period and pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to expunge their former systems of government. The history of the present king of Great Britain is

ingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great

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 & pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained and when so suspended, he has <sup>utterly</sup> neglected ~~to~~ to attend to them.

he has refused to pass other laws for the accomodation of large districts of people unless those people would relinquish the right of representation <sup>in the legislature</sup>, a right inestimable to them & formidable to tyrants only:

he has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable & distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

he has dissolved Representative houses repeatedly <sup>[& continually]</sup> for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people:

~~he has refused~~ <sup>to</sup> he has refused for a long <sup>time after such Representations</sup> ~~space of time~~, to cause others to be elected whereby the legislative powers incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise, the state remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without & convulsions within:

he has endeavored to prevent the population of these states, for that purpose, obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, & raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

he has <sup>obstructed</sup> suffered the administration of justice <sup>[totally to cease in some of these states]</sup> refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers:

he has made <sup>[our]</sup> judges dependant on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices <sup>the</sup> & payment and amount of their salaries.

he has erected a multitude of new offices <sup>[by a self-assumed power]</sup> & sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people & eat out their substance:

he has kept among us in times of peace, standing armies <sup>[& ships of war]</sup> <sup>without the consent of our</sup> legislatures,

he has affected to render the military independent of & superior to the civil power:

he has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their <sup>acts of</sup> pretended ~~acts~~ of legislation, for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us;

for protecting them by a mock trial from punishment for any murders <sup>which</sup> they should commit on the inhabitants of these states;

for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world;

for imposing taxes on us without our consent;

for depriving us <sup>in many cases</sup> 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 borders, in order to render it a complete & permanent instrument for introducing the same abuses into this country.

Systems of Government. The History of his present Majesty, is a History of unremitting Injuries and Usurpations, among which no one Fact stands Single or Solitary to contradict the uniform Tenor of the rest, all of which have in direct object, the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be Submitted to a candid World, for the Truth of which We pledge a Faith, as yet unsullied by falsehood.

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 suspended in

a history of unremitting injuries and usurpations, among which appears no solitary fact to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest; but 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, for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet unsullied by falsehood.

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 suspended in their

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 suspended in

their operation, till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended he has neglected utterly to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large Districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inestimable to them and formidable to Tyrants only.

He has dissolved Representative Houses, repeatedly, and continually,

operation till his assent should be obtained, and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people unless those people would relinquish the right of representation, in the legislature, a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative houses repeatedly and continually

their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and, when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly for opposing with



for opposing with  
manly Firmness his  
Invasions on the  
Rights of the  
People.

He has refused,  
for a long Space of  
Time after such  
Dissolutions, to  
cause others to be  
elected, whereby  
the legislative  
Powers, incapable  
of annihilation,  
have returned  
to the People  
at large for their  
Exercise, the state  
remaining in the  
mean Time, ex-  
posed to all the  
Dangers of Inva-  
sion, from without,  
and Convulsions  
within—

He has endeav-  
oured to prevent  
the Population of  
these States; for  
that purpose ob-  
structing the Laws  
for naturalization  
of foreigners; refus-  
ing to pass others  
to encourage their  
Migrations hither;  
and raising the

for opposing with  
manly firmness his  
invasions on the  
right of the people:

He has refused  
for a long time after  
such dissolutions to  
cause others to be  
elected whereby the  
legislative powers  
incapable of an-  
nihilation, have  
returned to the peo-  
ple at large for their  
exercise, the state  
remaining in the  
mean time exposed  
to all the dangers  
of invasion from  
without and con-  
vulsions within:

He has endeav-  
oured to prevent the  
population of these  
states, for that pur-  
pose obstructing  
the laws for nat-  
uralization of for-  
eigners; refusing  
to pass others to  
encourage their  
migrations hither;  
and raising the

manly firmness his  
invasions on the  
rights of the peo-  
ple.

He has refused  
for a long time after  
such dissolutions  
to cause others to  
be elected, whereby  
the Legislative  
powers, incapable  
of Annihilation  
have returned to  
the People at large  
for their exercise,  
the State remain-  
ing, in the mean-  
time, exposed to  
all the dangers of  
invasion from with-  
out, and convul-  
sions within.

He has endeav-  
oured to prevent  
the population of  
these States; for  
that purpose ob-  
structing the Laws  
for Naturalization  
of Foreigners; re-  
fusing to pass oth-  
ers to encourage  
their migrations  
hither, and raising

Conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has suffered the Administration of Justice totally to cease in some of these Colonies, refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made our Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their offices, and amount of their Salaries:

He has created a Multitude of new offices by a Self-assumed Power, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our People and eat out their Substance.

He has kept among us, in Times of Peace, Standing Armies and Ships of War.

He has affected

conditions of new appropriations of lands:

He has suffered the administration of justice totally to cease in some of these states, refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers:

He has made judges dependant on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices and the amount and payment of their salaries:

He has erected a multitude of new offices by a self assumed power and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people and eat out their substance:

He has kept among us in times of peace, standing armies and ships of war without the consent of our legislatures:

He has affected

the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected

to render the military, independent of, and Superiour 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 pretended Acts of legislation; for quartering large Bodies of armed Troops among us; for protecting them by a Mock Tryal from Punishment for any Murders they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States; for cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World; for imposing Taxes on us without our Consent; for depriving Us of the Benefits of Trial by Jury; for transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offenses,

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 constitutions and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation, for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; for protecting them by a mock trial from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these 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;

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 armed troops among us:—For protecting them, by a mock Trial from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these 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

for taking away our Charters, 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.

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 example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these colonies; for taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and fundamentally the forms of our governments, for suspending our own legislatures and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever:

Seas to be tried for pretended offences: — For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit 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 Governments: — For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, withdrawing his Governors, and

He has abdicated government here, withdrawing his governors, and

He has abdicated Government here by declaring us out of his Protection,

abolishing our most <sup>valuable</sup> ~~important~~ laws  
 for taking away our charters, <sup>altering</sup> fundamentally the forms of our governments,  
 for suspending our own legislatures & declaring themselves invested with power to  
 legislate for us in all cases whatsoever:  
 he has abdicated government here, [<sup>by declaring us out of his protection & waging war against us</sup>  
<sup>withdrawing his governors, & declaring us out</sup>  
 of his allegiance & protection.]

he has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns & destroyed the  
 lives of our people:

he is at this time transporting large armies of <sup>Scotch and other</sup> foreign mercenaries to complete  
 the works of death, desolation & tyranny already begun with circumstances  
<sup>scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages and totally</sup>  
 of cruelty & perfidy, unworthy the head of a civilized nation  
<sup>he has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian</sup>  
 he has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian  
 savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of  
 all ages, sexes, & conditions [of existence.]

[he has incited treasonable insurrections of our fellow-citizens, with the  
<sup>he has constrained others to fight against the king and to support his agents in their own right</sup>  
<sup>to fight against the king and to support his agents in their own right</sup>  
 he has waged <sup>civil</sup> war against human nature itself, violating it's most sa-  
 cred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people who never of-  
 fended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemi-  
 sphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This  
 piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the  
Christian king of Great Britain debased to keep open a market  
 where MEN should be bought & sold: he has prostituted his negative  
 for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this  
<sup>determining to take upon a market where it should be bought & sold</sup>  
 execrable commerce, and that this assembly of horrors might want no fact  
 of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms  
 amongst, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them,  
 by murdering the people upon whom he also shrouded them: thus paying  
 off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people, with crimes  
 which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.]

in every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble  
 terms, our repeated petitions have been answered <sup>only</sup> by repeated injuries a prince  
 whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit  
 to be the ruler of a <sup>free</sup> people [who mean to be free] future ages will scarce believe  
 that the hardness of one man adventured within the short compass of twelve years  
<sup>to lay a foundation for broad & undisguised, for tyranny</sup>  
 only, ~~to lay a foundation for broad & undisguised, for tyranny~~ over a people fostered & fixed in principles  
 of liberty & freedom.]

declaring us, out of his Allegiance and Protection.

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

He is at this Time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the Works of death, Desolation, and Tyranny, already begun with Circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.

He has endeavoured to bring on the Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare is an undistinguished Destruction of all Ages, Sexes, and

VOL. II.—24.

declaring us out of his allegiance and protection.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns and destroyed the lives of our people:

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy unworthy the head of a civilized nation:

He has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and

and waging war against us:—

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

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has excited domestic insurrection among us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished

Conditions of existence.

He has incited treasonable Insurrections of our Fellow Citizens, with the allurements of Forfeiture and Confiscation of our Property.

He has waged cruel War against human Nature itself, violating its most sacred Rights of Life and Liberty in the Persons of a distant People who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into Slavery in another Hemisphere, or to incur miserable Death, in

conditions of existence.

He has incited treasonable insurrections of our fellow-citizens, with the allurements of forfeiture and confiscation of our property:

He has constrained others, taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands:

He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of distant people, who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their

destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

He has constrained our fellow citizens taken Captive on the high Seas, to bear arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

their Transportation thither. This piratical Warfare, the opprobrium of infidel Powers, is the Warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain.

He has prostituted his Negative for Suppressing every legislative Attempt to prohibit or to restrain an execrable Commerce, determined to keep open a Market where Men should be bought and sold, and that this assemblage of Horrors might want no Fact of distinguished Die

He is now exciting those very People to rise in Arms among us, and to purchase their Liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the People upon whom he also obtruded them: thus paying off, former

transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where Men should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce: and that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished dye, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them by murdering the people upon whom he also obtruded them; thus paying off former crime committed against



Crimes committed against the Liberties of one People, with Crimes which he urges them to commit against the Lives of another.

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress, in the most humble Terms; our repeated Petitions have been answered 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 People who mean to be free.— future ages will scarce believe, that the Hardiness of one Man, adventured, within the Short Compass of twelve years only, on so many Acts of Tyranny, without a Mask, over a People, fostered and fixed in the Principles of Liberty.

the liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.

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 injuries. A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a people who mean to be free. Future ages will scarce believe that the hardiness of one man adventured within the short compass of twelve years only, to build a foundation, so broad and undisguised for tyranny over a people fostered and fixed in the principles of freedom.

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 injuries.

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 of attempts by their legislature to extend <sup>an unconstitutional</sup> jurisdiction over [these <sup>us</sup> our states] we have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration & settlement here, [no one of which could warrant so strange a pretension: that these were effected at the expence of our own blood & treasure, unassisted by the wealth or the strength of Great Britain: that in constituting indeed our several forms of government, we had adopted one common king, thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league & amity with them: but that submission to their parliament was no part of our constitution, nor ever in idea if history may be credited: and] we <sup>have</sup> appealed to their native justice & magnanimity <sup>& we have commended them</sup> [as well as to] the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations which <sup>would inevitably</sup> [were likely to] interrupt our <sup>connection &</sup> correspondence ~~connection~~. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice & of consanguinity, [when <sup>we must therefore</sup> occasions have been given them, by the regular course of their laws, of removing from their councils the disturbers of our harmony, they have by their free election re-established them in power. at this very time too they are permitting their chief magistrate to send over not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch & foreign mercenaries to invade & ~~destroy us~~ <sup>destroy us</sup> these facts have given the last stab to agonizing affection, and manly spirit bids us to renounce for ever these unfeeling brethren we must endeavor to forget our former love for them, and to hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends we might have been a free & a great people together, but a communication of grandeur & of freedom it seems is below their dignity be it so since they will have it: the road to <sup>to glory</sup> <sup>& to glory</sup> happiness, is open to us too, we will <sup>manfully tread</sup> ~~obtain~~ it <sup>apart from them</sup> ~~on our own terms~~, and acquiesce in the necessity which <sup>we must therefore</sup> ~~pronounced our~~ <sup>and held them as we hold of</sup> ~~separation~~ <sup>separation</sup> <sup>of a different & then</sup> <sup>solidity in virtue</sup>

We therefore the representatives of the United States of America in General Con-  
-gress assembled, <sup>appealing to the righteous judge of the world for the redress of our wrongs</sup> <sup>colonies</sup> do in the name & by authority of the good people of these [states]  
[reject and renounce all allegiance & subjection to the kings of Great Britain  
Hall others who may hereafter claim by, through, or under them; we utterly  
dissolve & ~~break off~~ <sup>have</sup> all political connection which may <sup>have</sup> heretofore <sup>sub-</sup>  
sisted between us & the people or parliament of Great Britain; and finally  
we do assert and declare these colonies to be free and independant states  
and that as free & independant states they ~~shall have~~ <sup>full</sup> power to levy  
war conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, & to do all other  
acts and things which independant states may of right do and for the  
support of this declaration] we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our  
fortunes, & our sacred honour.

Nor have we been wanting in Attentions to our British Brethren. We have warned them from Time to Time of attempts of their Legislature to extend a Jurisdiction over these our States. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our Emigration and Settlement here, no one of which could warrant so strange a Pretension. That these were effected at the expense of our own Blood and Treasure, unassisted by the Wealth or the Strength of Great Britain; that in constituting indeed, our Several Forms of Government, we had adopted one common King, thereby laying a Foundation for Perpetual League and Amity with them; but

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over these our states. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here, no one of which could warrant so strange a pretension: that these were effected at the expence of our own blood and treasure, unassisted by the wealth or strength of Great Britain: that in constituting indeed our several forms of government, we had adopted a common king, thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league and amity with them: but that submis-

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable 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 connection 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

that Submission to their Parliament, was no Part of our Constitution, nor ever in Idea, if History may be credited; and we appealed to their Nature, Justice and Magnanimity, as well as to the Ties of our common Kindred to disavow these usurpations, which were likely to interrupt our Correspondence and Connection. They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity, and when occasions have been given them by the regular Course of their Laws of removing from their Councils, the Disturbers of our Harmony, they have by their free Election, re-established them in Power. At this very Time too, they are permitting their Chief

sion to their parliament was no part of our constitution nor ever in idea, if history be credited; and we have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, as well as to the ties of our common kindred, to disavow these usurpations which were likely to interrupt our connection and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity, and when occasions have been given them, by the regular course of their laws of removing from their councils the disturbers of our harmony, they have by their free elections re-established them in power. At this very time they are permitting their chief

hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

Magistrate to send over not only soldiers of our common Blood, but Scotch and foreign Mercenaries, to invade and deluge us in Blood. These Facts have given the last Stab to agonizing affection, and manly Spirit bids us to renounce forever these unfeeling Brethren. We must endeavour to forget our former Love for them, and to hold them, as we hold the rest of Mankind, enemies in War, in Peace Friends. We might have been a free and a great People together but a Communication of Grandeur and of Freedom it seems is below their Dignity. Be it so, since they will have it : The Road to Happiness and to Glory is open to us too; we will climb it,

over not only soldiers of our own blood, but Scotch and other foreign mercenaries, to invade and destroy us. These facts have given the last stab to agonizing affections, and manly spirit bids us to renounce ever these unfeeling brethren. We must endeavor to forget our former love for them, to hold them as we hold the rest of mankind enemies in war, in peace friends.

We might have been a free and a great people together; but a communication of grandeur and of freedom it seems, is below their dignity. Be it so, since they will have it: the road to happiness and to glory is open to us too; we will climb it apart from them, and

apart from them, and acquiesce in the Necessity which denounces our eternal Separation.

We therefore the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, do, in the Name, and by the Authority of the good People of these States, reject and renounce all Allegiance and Subjection to the Kings of Great Britain, and all others, who may hereafter claim by, through, or under them; We utterly dissolve and break off, all political Connection which may have heretofore subsisted between us and the People or Parliament of Great Britain, and finally we do assert and declare these Colonies to be free and in-

acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our eternal separation!

We therefore the representatives of the United States in General Congress assembled in the name and by authority of the good people of these states, reject and renounce all allegiance and subjection to the kings of Great Britain and all others who may hereafter claim by, through, or under them; we utterly dissolve all political connection which may heretofore have subsisted between us and the people or parliament of Great Britain, and finally we do assert and declare these colonies to be free and independant

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and

dependent States, and that as free and independent States they shall hereafter have 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, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our Sacred Honour.

states, they 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 we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour.

that as Free and Independent states, they 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 protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

---

TO RICHARD HENRY LEE <sup>1</sup>

PHILADELPHIA, July 8th, 1776.

DEAR SIR,—For news, I refer you to your brother, who writes on that head. I enclose a copy of the Declaration of Independence, as agreed to by the House, and also as originally framed: you will judge whether it is the better of worse for the critics. I shall return to Virginia after the 11th of August. I

<sup>1</sup> From Lee's *Life of R. H. Lee*, i., 275.