



PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY JUDAH DELANO.

TERMS: \$2 50 per annum, payable in advance; or \$3 if not paid within six months.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America.

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; 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.

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 utterly neglected to attend to them.

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 manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

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, and raising 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 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 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 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, by declaring us 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 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, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

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.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and 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, and conditions.

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 attention 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 pleaded them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They, too, have been deaf to the voice of justice and consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind,—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 rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name and by the 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 connexion between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and 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.

- New Hampshire: Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, Matthew Thornton. Massachusetts Bay: John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry. Rhode Island: Stephen Hopkins, William Ellery. Connecticut: Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott. New York: William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Francis Lewis, Lewis Morris. New Jersey: Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, Francis Hopkinson, John Hart, Abraham Clark. Pennsylvania: Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, John Morton, George Clymer. James Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson, George Ross. Delaware: Caesar Rodney, George Reed, Thomas McKean. Maryland: Samuel Chase, William Paca, Thomas Stone, Charles Carroll, of Carrollton. Virginia: George Wythe, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Nelson, jun., Francis Lightfoot Lee, Carter Braxton. North Carolina: William Hooper, Joseph Hughes, John Penn. South Carolina: Edward Rutledge, Thomas Heyward, jun., Thomas Lynch, jun., Arthur Middleton. Georgia: Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton.

Elections take place, during the present year, in the following order:

Table with columns for month and state: July, Louisiana; August, Rhode Island, N. Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Vermont, Maine, S. Carolina; October, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, Georgia, Arkansas, New Jersey, Delaware, New York, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi.

* In the States marked with a star, members of Congress are to be elected.

MECKLENBURG DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

FROM THE SOUTHERN LITERARY MESSENGER.

THE QUESTION SETTLED. When in the year 1819, it was first announced to the American public, by the editor of the Raleigh Register, that the people of Mecklenburg, in North Carolina, had actually declared themselves independent of Great Britain in May, 1775, the fact was deemed highly improbable by many, and among others, by Mr. Jefferson, because, according to the best contemporary accounts, independence had not yet become the aim, or even the wish of the colonies; and because, also, it was thought that an act so much in advance of public opinion would scarcely have escaped notice and honorable mention, when their early suggestion came to be subsequently adopted.

Mr. Jefferson having, in his correspondence with his friend Mr. Adams, expressed the opinion that the paper published as the "Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence" was not genuine, the Legislature of North Carolina, soon after the publication of that correspondence, authorized the Governor of the State to collect and publish evidence to establish its authenticity. This was accordingly done; and it appeared by the document thus given to the public, that resolutions of the character alleged had been adopted by the people of Mecklenburg in May, 1775; that the copy which had been published had been found in manuscript among the papers of General Davie; and that their authenticity was confirmed by the recollections of several respectable contemporary witnesses.

Before the publication of this testimony, there had been a very prevalent tradition in North Carolina that some resolutions had been adopted in Mecklenburg in 1775, of an unusually bold character, and the proclamation of the royal Governor, which had been preserved in Almon's Remembrancer, expressly referred to those resolutions, among various other "seditious and treasonable acts," in the Province of North Carolina. While the Governor's pamphlet proved the tradition to have been well founded, it did not entirely remove the difficulty. The close coincidence between some passages in the Mecklenburg paper and the Declaration of National Independence of the 4th of July, 1776, was too remarkable to be attributed to accident, and some were therefore inclined to doubt the genuineness of the particular resolutions, rather than believe that Mr. Jefferson had been guilty of a plagiarism from a paper of such humble pretensions, or, being guilty, should have escaped detection by his contemporaries. On the other hand, the latter alternative was eagerly seized by Mr. Jefferson's enemies, and their wishes no doubt contributed to bias their judgments, and inclined them to the belief that the paper was genuine, and that Mr. Jefferson had been its copyist. This question is now put to rest, thanks to the antiquarian researches of Mr. Peter Force, of Washington. He has been fortunate enough to procure a newspaper, printed in 1775, which contains a copy of the Mecklenburg resolutions, and which have a claim to authenticity that the written copy found among the papers of General Davie cannot boast, however supported by the distant and fallible recollections of the best-intentioned witnesses.

To enable the reader to see the disagreement between the two copies, they are here placed in juxtaposition. The printed copy is dated May 31, and is published in a paper dated July 12, 1775; and the written copy, May 20.

CHARLOTTE TOWN, MECKLENBURG COUNTY, May 31, 1775.

This day the committee met, and passed the following resolves:

Whereas, by an address presented to his Majesty by both Houses of Parliament, in February last, the American colonies are declared to be in a state of actual rebellion, we conceive that all laws and commissions conferred by, or derived from, the authority of the King of Parliament, are annulled and vacated, and the former civil constitution of these colonies, for the present, wholly suspended. To provide in some degree for the exigencies of this county, in the present alarming period, we deem it proper and necessary to pass the following resolves, viz:

- 1. That all commissions, civil and military, heretofore granted by the Crown, to be exercised in these colonies, are null and void, and the constitution of each particular colony, wholly suspended. 2. That the provincial congress of each province, under the direction of the great continental Congress, is invested with all the legislative and executive powers within their respective provinces; and that no other legislative and executive power does or can exist, at this time, in any of these colonies.

As all former laws are now wholly suspended in this province, and the congress have not yet provided others, we judge it necessary, for the better preservation of good order, to form certain rules and regulations for the internal government of this county, until laws shall be provided for us by congress.

That the inhabitants of this county do meet on a certain day appointed by this committee, and, having formed themselves into nine companies, viz: eight in the county and one in the town of Charlotte, do choose a colonel and other military officers, who shall hold and exercise their several powers by virtue of this choice, and independent of the Crown of Great Britain and former constitution of this province.

That it is further decreed that all, each, and every military officer in this county, is hereby reinstated in his former command and authority, he acting conformably to these regulations. And that every member present of this delegation shall henceforth be a civil officer, viz: a justice of the peace, in the character of a committee-man, to issue process, hear and determine all matters of controversy, according to said adopted laws; and to preserve peace, union, and harmony in said county; and to use every exertion to spread the love of country and fire of freedom throughout America, until a more general and organized government be established in this province.

The production of a printed copy of these resolutions, in a paper published six weeks after they were passed, thus furnishing that highest testimony of their existence which the skeptical called for, and which has so well justified a part of their doubts, may be considered now to have established the following points, beyond room for cavil or doubt:

First. The people of the county of Mecklenburg, in North Carolina, did, as early as May, 1775, pass patriotic resolutions, which showed then a determined spirit of resistance to oppression, and which procured for them the honor of being denounced as traitors by a royal governor.

Secondly. They were not so much in advance of their countrymen in the other provinces and in their own, as the resolutions previously published seemed to imply; for they do not speak of dissolving the political bands which had connected them with the British Government, but merely propose a temporary or provisional government so long as they were declared in a state of rebellion. Both in the preamble and in the three first resolutions, they regard the British authority as merely "suspended," not annihilated. The last resolution is merely a consummation of their purpose previously declared.

Thirdly and lastly. This genuine copy completely acquits Mr. Jefferson of the improbable charge of plagiarism, which party zealots first industriously propagated, and careless reasoners too readily admitted. It does not contain a single expression or phrase which is to be found in the Declaration of Independence adopted by Congress. The spurious copy contained several, which are here printed in italics, and which from the first led many to doubt its authenticity.

The questions to which these Mecklenburg resolutions have given rise, and which may be ascribed partly to the interest with which we view whatsoever is in any way connected with the Revolution, and partly to the avidity with which party vindictiveness finds aliment in every thing, may thus be considered to be permanently settled. Requiescat in pace.

INVESTIGATOR.

DECLARATION OF THE VESTRY OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, EDENTON, (N. C.) JUNE 19, 1776.

[The following is correctly copied from the Minutes of the Vestry of St. Paul's Church, by a gentleman of this place, and communicated for publication in the Sentinel.]

We, the subscribers, professing our allegiance to the King, and acknowledging the constitutional executive power of Government, do solemnly profess, testify, and declare, that we do absolutely believe that neither the Parliament of Great Britain nor any member or constituent branch thereof, has a right to impose taxes upon the Colonies to regulate the internal policy thereof; that all attempts by fraud or force to establish and exercise such claims and powers are violations of the peace and security of the People, and ought to be resisted to the utmost; and that the People of this Province singly and collectively are bound by the acts and regulations of the Continental and the Provincial Congress, because in both they are freely represented by persons chosen by themselves; and we do solemnly and sincerely promise and engage, under the sanction of virtue, honor, and the sacred love of liberty and our country, to maintain and support all and every the acts, resolutions, and regulations of the said Continental and Provincial Congresses to the utmost of our power and ability.

In testimony whereof, we have hereunto set our hands, this 19th of June, 1776.

- RICHARD HOSKINS, DAVID RICE, AARON HILL, PATRICK WALTON, WILLIAM HINTON, THOS. G. BONNER, WILLIAM BOYD, THOMAS BENEDEY, JACOB HUNTER, JOHN BEASLY, WILLIAM BENNETT, WILLIAM ROBERTS.