



Ben Harrison Camp No. 356

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War - Department of Indiana

Independence Day – July 4, 2018

First observed on July 4, 1777, July 4, 1776 is the momentous American date when John Hancock, the President of the Continental Congress, signed the Declaration of Independence. This declaration of sovereignty was a result of many preceding incidences including the Boston Massacre, Townshend Acts, Boston Tea Party, and Battles of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill between the British and the independent minded Americans.

In the beginning of 1776, Thomas Paine wrote a pamphlet entitled Common Sense encouraging the independence movement. On April 12, North Carolina became the first state to instruct its delegates to move towards independence. Other colonies followed suit helped by the strong encouragement of patriots like James Madison and Patrick Henry. In June, Richard Lee of Virginia offered a resolution to dissolve the political connection with Great Britain but it faced opposition still. Nevertheless, the Continental Congress selected a committee to draft a declaration of independence to support Lee' resolution. The committee consisted of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Livingston, and Roger Sherman. Jefferson was appointed as author.

When the Continental Congress resumed sessions on July 1st, the Declaration of Independence was complete and a test vote was taken. Nine colonies were in favor of the resolution. On July 2, the official Independence vote was taken and twelve colonies supported the notion with New York abstaining. The Declaration of Independence, as written by Jefferson, was approved by Congress on July 4th, 1776. On that same day, it was printed and signed by John Hancock, the President of the Continental Congress, and Charles Thomson, secretary. A few days later, New York cast its vote in favor of the resolution thus making the independence movement unanimous among the thirteen colonies.

On August 2, the Declaration of Independence was signed by Congress with all but seven delegates signing the document. The remaining seven delegates did eventually sign the document as well. (Source: National PI Manual)

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

Jim Floyd
Patriotic Instructor

