



Ben Harrison Camp No. 356

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

Declaration of Independence Signing – August 2, 2018

The **signing of the United States Declaration of Independence** occurred primarily on August 2, 1776 at the Pennsylvania State House, Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The 56 delegates to the Second Continental Congress represented the 13 former colonies which had declared themselves the "United States of America," and they endorsed the Declaration of Independence which the Congress had approved on July 4, 1776. The Declaration proclaimed that the former Thirteen Colonies then at war with Great Britain were now a sovereign, independent nation and thus no longer a part of the British Empire. The signers' names are grouped by state, with the exception of President of the Continental Congress John Hancock; the states are arranged geographically from north to south.

The final draft of the Declaration was approved by the Continental Congress on July 4, although the date of its signing has long been disputed. Most historians have concluded that it was signed on August 2, 1776, nearly a month after its adoption, and not on July 4 as is commonly believed.

In 1884, historian Mellen Chamberlain argued that these entries indicated that the famous signed version of the Declaration had been created following the July 19 resolution, and had not been signed by Congress until August 2. Subsequent research has confirmed that many of the signers had not been present in Congress on July 4, and that some delegates may have added their signatures even after August 2. Both Jefferson and Adams never wavered from their belief that the signing ceremony took place on July 4, yet most historians have accepted the argument which David McCullough articulates in his biography of John Adams: "No such scene, with all the delegates present, ever occurred at Philadelphia."

Legal historian Wilfred Ritz concluded in 1986 that about 34 delegates signed the Declaration on July 4, and that the others signed on or after August 2. (Source: Wikipedia)

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

Jim Floyd
Patriotic Instructor

