

STABILIZER®

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IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

[The text of the Declaration of Independence is present but largely obscured by a large, dark, irregular ink blot or shadow in the center of the page.]

This story on the nation's Liberty Bell and the following story on the origin of the feature "Liberty Bell" story are reprinted by popular demand. The STABILIZER is now 62 years young.

Let Freedom Ring

On July 4, 1776 representatives of the British colonies in North America adopted an eloquent statement setting forth the reasons for declaring their independence from Great Britain.

The news of this statement surprised no one. The war against England had already begun. Lexington, Concord, and Breed's Hill were names of well-known battles. Ticonderoga and Crown Point had been seized by Colonial troops. George Washington headed the new army and the spirit of independence was in men's hearts everywhere. Samuel Adams was eloquent in asking "Is not America already independent? Why not then declare it?"

On the actual birthday of our country it was relatively quiet. Contrary to popular belief, the Liberty Bell did not chime out the tidings of independence on that hot July 4, 1776.

On June 7, 1776 Richard Henry Lee of Virginia moved in the Continental Congress that "These United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States". On June 10, Congress voted to name a special committee to draft a declaration supporting Lee's resolution. On the next day, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Livingston and Roger Sherman were named to this committee. Their draft was entitled "A Declaration By the Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled".

The Lee resolution was approved by Congress on July 2. This act became the official declaration of independence. July 4, 1776 marked the adoption of the final draft of the declaration in Independence Hall in Philadelphia. Thomas Jefferson was largely responsible for the draft. The document was signed by John Hancock "by order and in behalf of Congress".

The "new nation" did not hear the words of declaration until July 8 and the unanimous declaration was signed by all delegations to Congress on July 15. The Declaration was then engrossed on parchment and signed by all fifty members of Congress on August 2, 1776.

The Declaration of Independence inspired men from all the colonies because of its simple, sincere and beautiful message. This message has withstood many threats, and is the cornerstone of our freedom and independence. The Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights that followed would not have been possible without the Declaration of Independence.

Perhaps several direct quotes from the document describe this message best.

"When in the course of human events . . . We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness . . . 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."

Throughout these years, and now particularly to all of us, the Liberty Bell symbolized the milestones of young America. It rang in defiance of British tax and trade restrictions and announced the Boston Tea Party. The Bell

pealed for American victories in the Revolution and tolled the death of Washington, Jefferson and other heroes. The prophetic inscription — cast upon the bell twenty-three years before the deed — is most descriptive: "PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND UNTO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF" Leviticus XXV X

The bell came to be made "BY ORDER OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE PROVINCE OF PENNSYLVANIA FOR THE STATE HOUSE PHILADA.", this inscription also being cast on the Bell. The order provided for a bill of exchange to the amount of five hundred pounds Sterling to pay the English moulders.

The new bell was placed in Philadelphia in September 1752 to mark the 50th year of the founding of Pennsylvania. Before it could be hoisted to the tower, it was cracked by a stroke of a clapper during a test. Since it was not possible to get a new bell from England immediately, a second bell was cast in Philadelphia by Pass and Stow, twice. An attempt was made on the first casting to reduce the hardness and brittleness by adding copper to the alloy, but the bell's tone was dull so a third bell was cast. The new bell, American made, was compared to the replacement from England and the American bell was finally approved on June 7, 1753 by the Pennsylvania Legislature.

The American Bell now began its duties, such as calling members to assembly meetings. It rang on February 3, 1757 when the Assembly directed Mr. Franklin to go "home to England" to state grievances. Another day, February 21, 1761, the bell proclaimed George II King of England by divine right.

The Bell was muffled and tolled to oppose the issuing of stamps and to mourn the death of liberty and the symbolic public burial of stamp papers at the Coffee House.

Ever in the service of liberty the Bell called many protest meetings in years referred to by Thomas Paine as "times that try men's souls", including the rejection of the return to England of the ship Polly and her load of taxes.

On April 25, 1775, on the State House Square, many people assembled to hear the news of the Battle of Lexington.

In June 1775, the second Continental Congress was in session hearing endless talk and debate about Virginia's Richard Henry Lee and his Resolution of Independence. However, the leaders of the Congress could not foresee that these days would be so significant for future generations, even though the imperative message and letters stood out on the bronze casting "Proclaim Liberty Throughout All The Land Unto All The Inhabitants Thereof."

The Bell was not rung on July 2, 1776 when the Continental Congress finally acted on Lee's resolution. It did not ring on July 4, 1776 when the committee approved Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence and copies of the great masterpiece were printed for broadcast throughout the Colonies.

On July 8, 1776 the Liberty Bell had its greatest moment as it tolled the formal presentation of the Declaration and the start of a great nation on its incomparable course.

Save for a brief period when the Bell was moved to Allentown, Pennsylvania to prevent capture by the British in 1777, the Liberty Bell was famous as the Independence Bell. For fifty years the Bell proclaimed famous events including Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown in 1781, anniversaries, Washington's birthday and the death of great men.

The 59th anniversary of the Bell's greatest day was fateful, for as the death of Chief Justice John Marshall was tolled, the muffled Bell cracked on July 8, 1835. Despite the crack the Bell was still rung occasionally until 1846. A rejuvenation attempt failed and the Bell was muted and neglected until 1852 when it was moved to the tower room and exhibited in Independence Hall. Little interest was created until 1876, the year of Philadelphia's great Centennial Celebration. It is venerated and visited by thousands. Since 1876 the Bell has never lacked fame or homage.

This Bicentennial year the celebration included a simultaneous nationwide ringing of bells at 2 P.M. July 4, 1976.

Churches, communities, schools, fire departments and individuals were asked to ring the "Liberty Bell". The Bell itself was rung by a small mallet and electronically amplified. Hats off to the "Grand Old Bell". It is a symbol of our American institutions as Old Glory.

Editor's Note: It is very proper to review briefly the history of our Independence and the story of the Liberty Bell during the Bicentennial Celebration. It was the background on the Bell itself that inspired Mr. Charlie Davis, the founder and first Editor of the STABILIZER, to start the series of "Ring the Liberty Bell".

Today we are still "ringing" the Liberty Bell in the STABILIZER, and the next issue will celebrate sixty-two years of publication.

Bob Mattoon, Editor

