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THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, AN EXPRESSION OF AMERICAN IDEALS

On July 4th of this year, the United States celebrates the 170th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress at a session in Philadelphia. The historic document, marking the birth of a new nation, sets forth the fundamental principles of good government and declared the independence of the thirteen colonies of Great Britain in North America. The declaration was written in accordance with a resolution introduced in the Congress on June 7, 1776 by Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, acting under instructions from the convention of his State. Four days later, the Congress appointed Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, John Adams of Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, and Robert R. Livingston of New York as a committee to draft a declaration. Jefferson wrote the original draft. The Declaration was reported to Congress on June 28, 1776. Lee's famous resolution was approved on July 2, and broke the tie which connected the colonies with Britain. Two days later, July 4, 1776, the Congress adopted the Declaration, which was signed by 56 delegates representing the thirteen colonies. The historic parchment is on public display in a shrine in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., capital of the United States.

Independence Hall in Philadelphia, where the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. Today, the Hall is a national shrine, housing the Liberty Bell and other relics of the Revolutionary War period.

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