Declarations of Independence

"MECKLENBURG COUNTY COURT-HOUSE, WITH DECLARATION IN OUTLINE"

INDEPENDENCE HALL, PHILADELPHIA

By JOHN DICKINSON SHERMAN.

THERE is of course but one Declaration of Independence—the Declaration of Independence we celebrate on the Fourth of July. It makes no difference that Richard Henry Lee's resolution "That these united colonies are and of right ought to be, free and independent states," was introduced in congress June 7, 1776; that it was adopted July 2, and that the document itself was not made public until July 5, and was not signed by the members of congress until August 2. It was on July 4, 1776, that the vote on the Declaration itself was taken, and the document ordered "authenticated and printed." So the Fourth of July it is—and ever shall be.

Nevertheless, there are other Declarations, and some of them come pretty near being Declarations of Independence, except that they were not adopted by congress. The truth is that independence was in the air for some time before July 4, 1776. The leaders preferred to say that they were "petitioners in arms," even after Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill, and many of them doubtless had no determination for independence. But the people in many localities were ripe for independence. So it is not to be wondered that some of them made declarations.

One of the earliest of these Declarations was that of the people of Mendon, Mass., March 1, 1773. It speaks for itself, and here it is:

"That all men have naturally an equal right to life, liberty and property.

"That all just and lawful government must originate in the free consent of the people.

"That the good, happiness and safety of the people is the great end of civil government.

"That a principle of self preservation, being duly planted by the God of Nature in every human breast, it is necessary, not only to the well being of the individual, but also to the order of the universe, as attraction and cohesion are to the preservation of material bodies and the order of the natural world.

"That a voluntary renunciation of any power or privileges included in or necessarily connected with a principle of self preservation is manifestly acting counter to the will of the great Author of Nature, the Supreme Legislator; that a right to liberty and property is absolutely inalienable.

"That the claim of the parliament of Great Britain to the power of legislation for the colonies in all cases whatsoever is abhorrent to the spirit and genius of the British Constitution, to the letter of our Charter and to the most obvious principles of reason and to the essential natural rights given us by God Almighty; and, finally,

"That the introduction of standing armies in a free country in time of peace, without the consent of the people, is a violation of their rights as free men."

Then there is the Declaration of the people of Hanna's Town, May 16, 1775. On that day the men of that portion of the colony of Pennsylvania lying west of Laurel Mountain and embraced in the present limits of the county of Westmoreland, then, and for long afterwards claimed by Virginia to be within the limits of Augusta county, in the Old Dominion, assembled at Hanna's Town, then the seat of justice, to take counsel on the situation. The first two paragraphs of the document adopted are as follows:

"At a general meeting of the inhabitants of Westmoreland county, held at Hanna's Town on May 16, 1775, for taking into consideration the very alarming situation of the country occasioned by the dispute with Great Britain, resolved unanimously, that the parliament of Great Britain by several late acts has declared the inhabitants of Massachusetts Bay to be in rebellion; and the ministry, by endeavoring to enforce said acts, has attempted to reduce the said inhabitants to a more wretched state of slavery than ever before existed in any country; not content with thus violating their constitutional and chartered privileges, they would strip them of their rights of humanity, exposing their lives to the wanton and unpunishable sport of a licentious soldiery and depriving them of the very means of subsistence.

"Resolved, unanimously, That there is no reason to doubt but the same system of tyranny and oppression will, should it meet with success in Massachusetts, be extended to other parts of America; it is therefore become the indispensable duty of every American, of every man who has any love for his country, or any bowels for posterity, by every means which God has put in his power, to resist and oppose the execution of it; that for us we will be ready to oppose it with our lives and fortunes. And the better to enable us to accomplish it we will immediately form ourselves into a military body to consist of companies, to be made up out of the several townships under the following association, which is declared to be the Association of Westmoreland County."

And, finally, there is the famous so-called "Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence," adopted at Charlotte, Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, May 20, 1775, of which the first three resolutions are as follows:

"Resolved, That whosoever directly or indirectly, abetted, or in any way, form or manner, countenanced the unchartered and dangerous invasion of our rights, as claimed by Great Britain, is an enemy to this country, to America and to the inherent and inalienable rights of man.

"Resolved, That we, the citizens of Mecklenburg county, do hereby dissolve the political bonds which have connected us to the mother country, and hereby absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British crown, and abjure all political connection, contract or association with that nation, who has wantonly trampled on our rights and inhumanly shed the blood of American patriots at Lexington.

"Resolved, That we do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people, and of right ought to be a sovereign and self-governing association, under the control of no power other than that of our God and the general government of the congress; to the maintenance of which independence we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual co-operation, our lives, our fortunes, and our most sacred honor."

The Mecklenburg convention was called for May 19. Its original purpose was to pronounce the annulment of all laws and commissions in consequence of the king's address of February declaring the colonies in a state of rebellion; and to make provision for a temporary form of government "until instructions from the provincial congress regulating the jurisprudence of the province shall provide otherwise, or the legislative body of Great Britain resigns its unjust and arbitrary pretensions with respect to America." In this expectation an elaborate set of resolutions had been prepared.

Discussion of these resolutions was interrupted by the arrival of a courier with the news of Lexington. The convention reassembled in a fury of patriotism. It seethed and debated until well into the morning of May 20, when the quoted paragraphs were adopted as a preliminary to the regular business of the convention. It must be admitted that the Mecklenburgers did a good job. They organized a provisional central government. They sequestered all public and county taxes and all quit rents to the crown and declared traitors all persons who should accept new commissions from the crown or exercise old commissions. And they formed nine military companies for action when the time should come.

Curiously enough, this Mecklenburg Declaration did not become generally known till 1819, forty-four years later, and then through publication in the Raleigh Register. Its publication caused an enormous stir, and began a controversy that may be said to be yet going on, inasmuch as some historians still refuse to accept the genuineness of the document. In 1819 Jefferson and John Adams were both old and testy. Adams said, in so many words, that Jefferson evidently had plagiarized. Jefferson angrily retorted that in his belief the document was spurious.

The controversy over the genuineness of the Mecklenburg Declaration immediately became fast and furious. North Carolina finally took a hand in it, and in 1831 its legislature appointed a committee of investigation. This committee reported that the document was genuine. Accordingly, May 20th was made a state holiday, which is celebrated as the "Anniversary of the Signing of the Mecklenburg Declaration." In 1898 in Charlotte, was dedicated a monument in commemoration of the signing of the Mecklenburg Declaration.

The historians have been busy all these years, and little by little the case of the Mecklenburgers has been built up, until now it is generally accepted.

The contract of government signed in 1620 in the cabin of the Mayflower in Massachusetts Bay may be said in a sense to be the first Declaration of Independence, out of which grew the Declaration of Independence of 1776.

Bats Breed in Cave

In a mountain near Montalban, Luzon, Philippine islands, there is a large cavern, with many branching chambers, and a central dome 200 feet in height, perforating the mountain top, from which, in December last, an American officer saw issue a solid column of bats, which flew rapidly, in a straight line, for 15 minutes, disappearing over a mountain range in the direction of Manila, without a single bat having left the column, says the Christian Science Monitor. American engineers stationed there told the officer that the flight of the bats had occurred at practically the same time each day during two years. From other sources it was learned that the phenomenon had been observed for at least 30 years.

Indian Anesthetic.

While Indians have no anesthetics, properly speaking, their constant use of "cocoa" creates insensibility. They always apply this plant to wounds, bruises and contusions for healing purposes, and, as it certainly tends to deaden pain if not to eliminate it, they unconsciously employ an anesthetic. It is extremely difficult to obtain information from Indians regarding trephining, either merely because of their dislike of white men and their dread of interference and punishment, or because they associate "magic" with the practice and therefore think it must be protected by profound secrecy.

Keokuk Dam Largest in World.

The Keokuk dam at Keokuk, Ia., the largest power dam in the world, is located at the foot of the Des Moines rapids. The rapids are about 12 miles long, and have a fall of 24 feet. There are 30 turbines and electric generators, which produce a total of over 300,000 horsepower. The high power transmission lines run to various cities in the Mississippi valley, furnishing industries with power created by the Father of Waters. The cost figure was $27,000,000.

Brightening the Home

A coat of stain with two coats of varnish, after the old finish has been removed, will do wonders to any old article of furniture. Or paint and enamel with a dainty design stenciled on a bedroom suite will make it a thing of beauty. What could be prettier than a bedroom set stained in walnut, a light gray wall for a background, with pink drapes, white curtains, old rose and white rag rugs with a little touch of very pale blue here and there; or a bedroom suite stained in oak with a cream or ivory background, with either blue and yellow cretonne over-drapes or brown and cream drapes, ivory curtains and a brown and tan rag rug?

Providence Will Not Do All.

As a general rule Providence seldom vouchsafes to mortals any more than just that degree of encouragement which suffices to keep them at a reasonably full exertion of their powers.—Hawthorne.

THE STORY OF OUR STATES

By JONATHAN BRACE

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FLORIDA

FLORIDA was considered America's first health resort. It was the search for a mythical Fountain of Perpetual Youth that led Ponce de Leon, the Spanish explorer, to land near the present site of St. Augustine. His rediscovery of Florida in 1513 was on Easter Sunday, hence the name which is from Pascua Florida or Flowery Passover, which is the Spanish for Easter Sunday.

The French were the next settlers, founding a colony on the St. John's river. Spain promptly took action to maintain her ownership of this region and sent over an expedition which erected a fort under the leadership of Menendez at St. Augustine in 1565 and exterminated at Huguenot colony. St. Augustine is the oldest city in the United States. There followed a period of hostility between the English colonists in the Carolinas and the Spanish in Florida. By the treaty of 1763 Spain ceded Florida to England in exchange for Havana, which England had captured a few years previous. It remained an English colony until the last years of the Revolution when Spain recaptured it.

There were two provinces, East and West Florida. As the Spanish ruled Florida with a very loose form of government, this region became the refuge of pirates, smugglers and lawless characters. Such an element together with the unruly Seminole Indians naturally caused a great deal of trouble. To overcome this, President Monroe purchased Florida from Spain in 1819 for $5,000,000 or about eleven cents an acre. It was organized into a territory and in 1845 was admitted to the Union.

In the election of President Hayes Florida played an important part by throwing her votes to the Republican candidate. There were claims of fraud, but Hayes was finally declared elected. Florida has six presidential electors.

Florida is sometimes called the Everglade State on account of the vast swamp land in its southern part. It is also known as the Peninsula State and is the southernmost state of the Union. Its area is 58,666 square miles.

TEXAS

THE ill-fated expedition of Narvaez was responsible for the first interest in Texas. This large expedition was wrecked at the mouth of the Mississippi in 1528. Four members including Cabeza de Vaca were captured by the Indians and spent eight years wandering through the country eventually reaching the Gulf of California. It was their accounts of rich Indian villages which led the Mexican governor to send Coronado to explore this country. He returned after a two years' trip without discovering the reputed riches which he was seeking.

To counteract the aggressions of the French settlements in Louisiana, the Spanish established many missions throughout Texas, the most important being at San Antonio. When the United States acquired the Louisiana Purchase from France they considered that Texas was a part of this territory. Over this question war was nearly precipitated but finally the United States withdrew her claims in exchange for Spain's withdrawal of claims to the Oregon region.

Many Americans began to settle in Texas, among them General Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin. Mexico became alarmed at this rapid increase of American pioneers which threatened to crowd out the Mexican population. Oppressive measures were adopted and caused the Americans to rise in rebellion in 1836. During this uprising occurred the gallant defense of the Alamo by a handful of Americans and their slaughter by the vastly superior numbers of the Mexicans. "Remember the Alamo," became the Texans' slogan. General Houston decisively defeated the Mexican forces at the battle of San Jacinto and the Republic of Texas was launched with Houston as president. The flag contained one star, and from this has come the name the Lone Star State. After considerable opposition from the North, Texas was annexed to the Union and became the twenty-eighth state.

It is the largest state in the Union; its area of 265,896 square miles being greater than that of the combined Atlantic states from Maine to Virginia inclusive. Texas has twenty electoral votes for President, ranking fifth in importance in national politics.

Fallen Fruit.

A great many people are like fallen fruit. They give promise of great things and the first rustle among the branches sends them to the ground. And it is not always in the autumn alone that fruit falls before the time. From the early small fruits of springtime until the last apple in the fall there is a succession of falling fruit. It all looks good enough, but that is only another evidence that you can't tell much by the looks. We all enjoy what is good to the eyes, but it's never safe to lean on appearances.—Grit.

Former Empress Laid To Rest.

Potsdam, Germany.—It was the Germany that has passed which laid Augusta Victoria, former empress, to rest in the Antique temple, surrounded by forest trees faintly showing their new leaves and brightened by the sun of early spring. Old men and women predominated among the mourners. It was the demobilized army and navy and the dethroned rulers of various principalities of the kingdom once forming the German Federation which gathered.

Funeral of the Commander of the American Legion

The body of Col. Frederick W. Galbraith, the national commander of the American Legion, on a gun carriage escorted by boys who served under him in France, passing through the streets of Cincinnati to the cemetery where the coffin was placed in a vault preparatory to burial in Arlington national cemetery. Colonel Galbraith was killed in an automobile accident in Indianapolis.

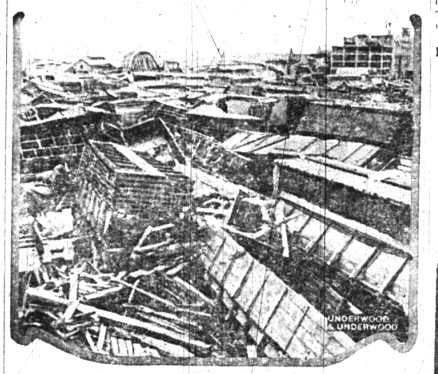
U. of P. Boys in Anti-Volstead Parade

"Anti-Volsteadism" was the slogan of the 3,000 men, representing 51 classes of the University of Pennsylvania, who gathered on the college grounds for their annual Alumni day jollification. Members of the class of 1916, dressed in black costumes and bearing bombs, are here shown marching to the tune of the "dead march" and displaying amusing placards.

SPIRIT OF DOUGHBOY

"The Spirit of the American Doughboy," a statue designed by E. M. Quesney, architect and sculptor of Americus, Ga., has been selected by the national memorial committee of the American Legion for use as its memorial to the American Legion victims of the U. W. W. assailants at Centralia, Wash., Armistice day, 1919. The statue will be embodied also in the Legion's national memorial.

Scene in Pueblo Railroad Yards

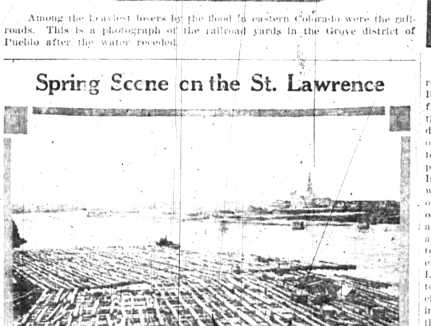


Among the heaviest losers by the flood in eastern Colorado were the railroads. This is a photograph of the railroad yards in the Grove district of Pueblo after the water receded.

ENGINEER MAKES RECORD

John F. Lacey of the Rock Island road, who handles the throttle on the Rocky Mountain Limited fast train from Chicago to Denver, has been on the job as engineer for 40 years and during that time has traveled a total of 2,276,715 miles or a distance equal to 91 times around the earth. His present run is from Chicago to Rock Island, a distance of 181 miles. Lacey will be seventy years of age in August of this year and will retire with one of the largest pensions ever granted an engineer. He is in good health and attributes his vigor and clear eye to the fact that he always drives his engine standing up. Not only has Lacey the greatest number of miles to his record, but he has one of the cleanest records never having been in any accident or suspended during the long term of service.

Spring Scene on the St. Lawrence



Busy spring scene on the St. Lawrence river, one snorting little tug hauling 103 rafts of lumber.

Canada's Lucky Number.

During a recent debate in the Canadian house of commons, Hon. M. W. Rowell said the lucky number in Canadian history was seven. Responsible government was first secured in Canada in 1847. Confederation was completed in 1867, the first colonial conference was held in 1887, the imperial conference in 1907, and the meeting of the imperial war cabinet in 1917, which provided for the calling of the constitutional conference, to be held in June. Hon. Mr. Lemieux asked Mr. Rowell what he thought of 1827. "That was the year of the rebellion," was the answer.

BRIEF INFORMATION

Ceylon produces the world's finest cinnamon.

Edgar Allan Poe received $10 for "The Raven."

In England a football team consists of 15 men.

Most birds eat more than twice their own weight of food every day.

France has a minister for physical education and sport, and he has a seat in the cabinet.

The total value of the table and bed linen in Buckingham palace is estimated at $35,000.

Native wool is used by the Argentine textile mills in the manufacture of practically all their yarns.

Experiments have shown a good, yet cheap, newsprint paper can be made from saw grass, which grows abundantly along the swamps of the Atlantic coast.

All gold found in Tibet belongs to the Lama church.

Ceylon yields more than 1,000,000,000 coconuts a year.

Silkworms like warmth, but cannot stand the hot season.

False teeth of sycamore wood were used by the ancient Greeks.

The first river tunnel constructed in America was completed in Chicago in 1868.

John Stuart Mill, the famous English philosopher, began to learn Greek when he was three, and could read Latin and Greek easily at eight.

Temperance laws recently passed in Uruguay are designed to make that country totally dry by 1925, when the nation will celebrate its centenary.

Brighton, England, has a factory where 600 disabled ex-soldiers are working as diamond cutters, and soon there will be accommodations for 800 more.

Afghans Abstemious.

Young and old Afghans take snuff, but have no particular fondness for wine or spirits. Tobacco raised in the land is inferior in quality; the better sorts are imported from Persia, Russia, India and Egypt. Amir Habibullah Khan always had a good private stock of Havana cigars. Both young and old people take snuff.

They Sometimes Get Cold.

The way of the transgressor is hard, but we never heard one complaining of tender feet.—Boston Transcript.