

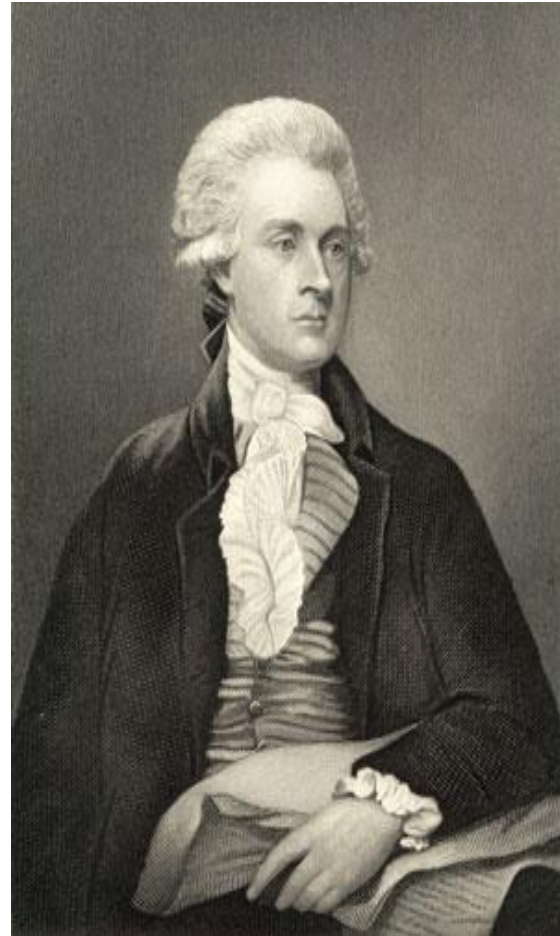
# **The Second Continental Congress**

# The Promise is Kept

- As the First Continental Congress promised in our last unit, *IF* King George III refused their demands the members would get together again.
- **The Second Continental Congress meeting is the meeting that changes the future of our country.**
- *Can anyone remember the date when “the shot heard round the world” started the American Revolution?*  
**The beginning of the American Revolution was on April 18, 1775.**

# Virginia and the Declaration

- On **July 4, 1776**, members of the Continental Congress from **Virginia decided they wanted to create a document to explain their desire for independence.**
  - *Can anyone guess what this “formal document” would be called?*
- The Declaration of Independence



# Declaration of Independence



Thomas Jefferson

- Everyone tried to decide whom they wanted to be in charge of writing down everyone's thoughts onto the Declaration of Independence.
- **Thomas Jefferson**, the youngest member of the Continental Congress (he was 33), **was selected to write and put together a draft.**
- He was quiet, shy, and rarely spoke at any of the meetings.
  - ***So why did they pick HIM?***

# Declaration Writer Acknowledgement

- The Declaration of Independence was drafted by a committee of 5 men including famous Americans, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams.
  - However, **the primary author of the Declaration of Independence is Thomas Jefferson.**
  - Because Thomas Jefferson and John Adams did not get along with each other, Jefferson often worked independently, revising the declaration.
  - **TRIVIA**: Jefferson & Adams were not fans of each other. In fact, they had a running bet.....



# The Jefferson-Adams Bet

- It was common knowledge that Jefferson and Adams often disliked each other.
  - They had a respect for each other's leadership styles, but personally, they didn't get along.
- They both bet each other on who would outlive the other – who would die first.
  - Through the years they wrote each other to keep in touch, seek advice from one another, etc. --- but no, they were never friends.
- **Who won the bet?????**
  - Both men died on the **SAME DAY – July 4, 1826** – exactly 50 years after they wrote the Declaration of Independence.  
And....
  - They died 5 hours apart, but *Jefferson died first. Adams won the bet.* 😊

# The Importance of the Declaration

- The **two** reasons why the Declaration was **important** to get *the right person* to write the Declaration of Independence was because they:
  1. Had to convince the Loyalists and Fence-Sitters to take sides with the Patriots.
  2. Wanted England to *really understand* why they didn't want to be ruled by a king anymore.





# The Declaration of Independence in a Nutshell

- The Declaration of Independence is broken up into four (4) parts:
  - The **Preamble** (an introduction telling the purpose of the document and why it was written)
  - The **Declaration of Human Rights** (the basic ideals of American democracy of equality, and independence from England)
  - The **Grievances Against the King** (the list of abuses committed by King George from the first taxes to the passage of the Intolerable Acts).
  - The **Announcement for Independence from England** (notification to the world that the former British colonies are **free and independent** states and are to be treated as equal nations of the world.



On July 4, 1776  
Americans sent  
King George III the  
***Declaration of  
Independence.***

**REMEMBER:** The  
American  
Revolution began  
***BEFORE*** the  
Declaration of  
Independence was  
even sent to  
England.

**War Started:** April  
18, 1775

**Declaration Sent:**  
July 4, 1776

# The Declaration of Independence and Influences from the Enlightenment

*In Congress, July 4, 1776.*

A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness; that, to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Jefferson begins the Declaration by attempting to legally and philosophically justify the revolution that was already underway. Here Jefferson is saying that, now that the colonists have begun to separate themselves from British rule, it is time to explain why the colonists have taken this course of action.

These passages reveal the influence of the English philosopher John Locke. In *Two Treatises of Government* (1690), Locke argued that if a government does not allow its citizens to enjoy certain rights and freedoms, the people have a right to replace that government.

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*The Declaration of Independence used ideas from the Enlightenment (especially John Locke) to **explain why** Americans were **declaring independence**.*

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