



Independence

The Park in Pictures

INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

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. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless suspended in their Operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inestimable to them, and formidable to Tyrants only.

He has called together Legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the Depository of their public Records, for the sole Purpose of fatiguing them into Compliance with his Measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly Firmness his Invasions on the Rights of the People.

He has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without, and Convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the Population of these States; for that Purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their Migrations hither, and raising the Conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their Offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries.

He has erected a Multitude of new Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their Substance.

He has kept among us, in Times of Peace, Standing Armies, without the Consent of our Legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a Jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For quartering large Bodies of Armed Troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries, so as to render it at once an Example and fit Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People.

He is, at this Time, transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the Works of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Executioners of their Friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes and Conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated Injury. A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the Ruler of a free People.

Now have we been wanting in Attentions to our British Brethren. We have warned them from Time to Time of Attempts by their Legislature to extend an unwarrantable Jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our Emigration and Settlement here. We have appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the Ties of our common Kindred to disavow these Usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our Connections and Correspondence. They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Conspanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the Necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of Mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace, Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in GENERAL CONGRESS, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly Publish and Declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great-Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which INDEPENDENT STATES may of right do. 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.

Signed by ORDER and in BEHALF of the CONGRESS,

JOHN HANCOCK, PRESIDENT.

ATTEST.
CHARLES THOMSON, SECRETARY.

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*Text by the interpretive staff of Independence NHP.
Special thanks to Renee Albertoli.*

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The principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence still inspire and challenge Americans today. Set in type by John Dunlap on July 4, 1776, this broadside is one of fewer than 30 copies to survive from the original printing.

Road to Revolution

Large, cosmopolitan, tolerant, centrally located along the East Coast, politically conservative yet seething with an undercurrent of rebellious spirit – this was the Philadelphia of the 1770s. This was the setting in which American independence would finally be officially proclaimed to the world.



William Penn Statue and Welcome Park

William Penn, the city's founder, was a Quaker who insisted that tolerance be a part of Philadelphia life. He encouraged diverse groups of immigrants to come to his planned city of carefully plotted streets and unusually free government. On this firm foundation, Philadelphia grew to become the largest city in British North America. Welcome Park, located on the site of Penn's urban home, commemorates these contributions.





Peyton Randolph

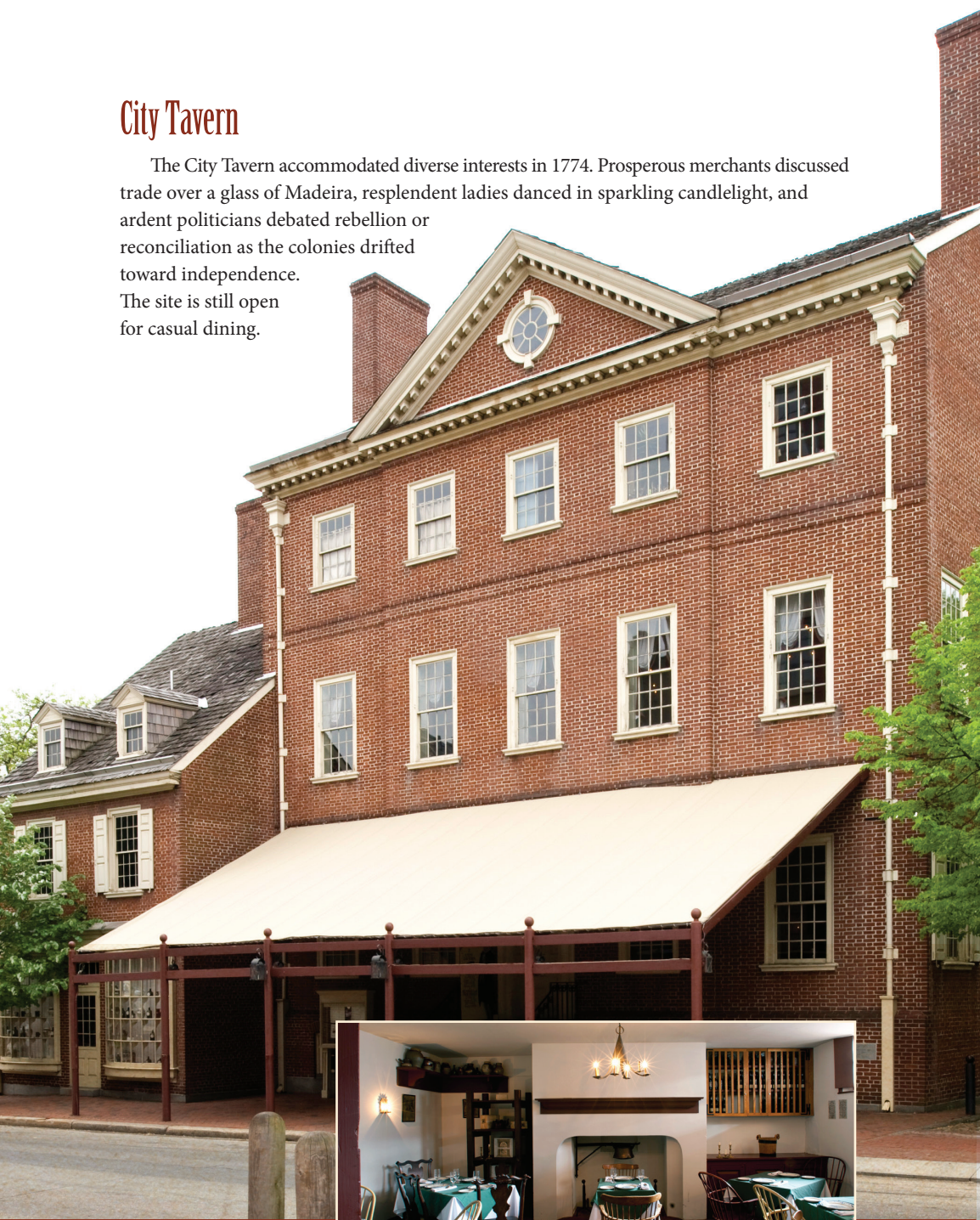
Charles Thomson

Carpenters' Hall

In 1774, the First Continental Congress met in Carpenters' Hall. The carpenters were among the city's "radicals" hoping for independence. The Congress' secretary, Charles Thomson, was also a radical, but most delegates, like President Peyton Randolph, favored moderation. Carpenters' Hall is still owned and operated by The Carpenters' Company today.

City Tavern

The City Tavern accommodated diverse interests in 1774. Prosperous merchants discussed trade over a glass of Madeira, resplendent ladies danced in sparkling candlelight, and ardent politicians debated rebellion or reconciliation as the colonies drifted toward independence. The site is still open for casual dining.



Independence Hall

The State House, known today as Independence Hall, housed Pennsylvania's colonial government. Here, Benjamin Franklin and other legislators regularly put into practice the concept of self-government, crafting laws to govern Pennsylvania. Debates over independence took place here in 1776, as well as the arguments that created the U.S. Constitution in 1787. Generations since have gathered in and around this building to test the meaning of the words "We the People".



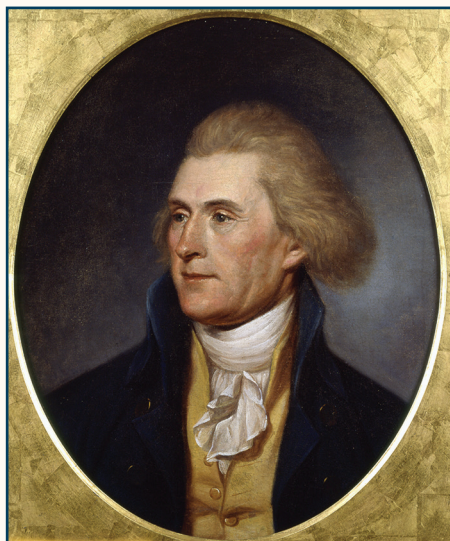


Assembly Room

“Resolved, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown... .” The men of the Second Continental Congress debated and approved Richard Henry Lee’s forceful resolution for independence in this room. Here, they managed the war effort but also planned for an eventual peace, creating new rules of government. Years later, as the nation faced an impending civil war, Abraham Lincoln stood in this room and praised the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence. Following his assassination, Lincoln’s body lay in repose in the Assembly Room.

Thomas Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson was only 33 in 1776, yet as a Virginian with a reputation for eloquence, he was entrusted with a crucial role in establishing independence – he had to justify a revolution to the world.



Thomas Jefferson

Declaration House

Thomas Jefferson rented rooms in a home a block away from the Pennsylvania State House. Here he drafted a declaration expressing the political ideas of the enlightenment philosophers. Jefferson finished this timeless defense of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” in little more than two weeks.



Syng Inkstand

August 2, 1776 was a solemn day. With the stroke of a pen, men pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to the cause of revolution when they signed the Declaration of Independence. On display in the West Wing of Independence Hall is the American-made silver inkstand of Philip Syng, believed to be the one used by the signers.



Supreme Court Chamber of Independence Hall

Stirred into action by the reading of the Declaration of Independence in the State House yard, members of the militia stormed into Pennsylvania's Supreme Court Chamber. In a treasonous act of defiance, they tore down the royal coat of arms and later burned it. The coat of arms of Pennsylvania, painted in 1785, hangs above the judges' bench today.





Long Gallery of Independence Hall and Peale's Museum

From September 1777 to June 1778, British forces occupied Philadelphia. The Long Gallery, previously the site of dinners and receptions hosted by Pennsylvania's governor, became a hospital for wounded American prisoners of war. In the early 19th century, Charles Willson Peale kept his museum here filled with natural history specimens, paintings, inventions, and curiosities.

Committee of the Assembly Chamber (Inside Independence Hall)

Used in the 18th century for meetings and as a storeroom for military goods, this room housed the Marshal's office in the 19th century. Accused fugitive slaves were held here prior to trial, right above the room where the Declaration of Independence was signed.



Washington Square

The remains of American and British soldiers, poor citizens, and yellow fever victims rest below this tranquil landscape. The square served the living as well. Free and enslaved Africans socialized here, and the city later landscaped the grounds as a public park. The block was named Washington Square in 1825. Within the square is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the American Revolution. Erected in 1954, the monument honors some 2,000 soldiers buried here, having died of injuries or illness during the war and British occupation of Philadelphia.



Creating a New Nation

Victory on the battlefield was no guarantee of enlightened government. A crucial test was yet to be faced. Could revolutionaries who knew what they didn't want, agree on what they did want? The Articles of Confederation, with their weak central government, were a logical first attempt at self-government. But as dissatisfaction mounted, many began to search for new ways to implement the American political dream. A movement emerged which led back to Philadelphia. In the same room used to approve the Declaration of Independence, a Constitutional Convention convened to create, once again, a design for self-government.

Rising Sun Chair

Symbolic of that convention is the chair used by the president

of the convention, George Washington. The chair's current name originates in a famous anecdote attributed to Benjamin Franklin. Musing about the convention's deliberations, Franklin told those around him that he had "the happiness to know" the carving as "a rising and not a setting sun."



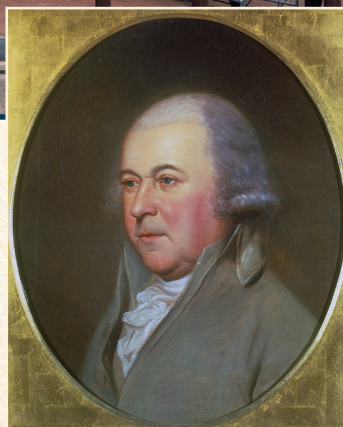
Congress Hall

Philadelphia served as the nation's capital from 1790 to 1800, with all three branches of the federal government meeting within a block. For 10 years, issues of national consequence – the economy, defense, slavery, and foreign relations – took center stage in Congress Hall. The Congress took some great strides forward in establishing a firm foundation for the nation, but they had some missteps along the way. By the time the capital moved to Washington, D.C. in 1800, the legislative branch had become a dominant force in American government.



John Adams

John Adams helped Congress Hall secure a lasting place in history. His inauguration as our second president took place in the House of Representatives. The world watched as power peacefully transferred from one head of state to another, a new process then, but one we now take for granted.



John Adams



House of Representatives

Actions taken in the House Chamber sparked national debate and sometimes outrage. Banking bills led to wider discussions of the interpretation of the Constitution. Rebellion erupted over the tax on whiskey. Free blacks and abolitionists condemned the Fugitive Slave Act. In this climate of divisiveness, political parties were born.

Senate Chamber

Amidst splendid surroundings, the United States Senate grappled with affairs foreign and domestic. Shifting alliances tested the diplomatic skills of the senators as they received news of the French Revolution and ratified the Jay Treaty with Great Britain.



President's House Site

George Washington and John Adams, the nation's first two presidents, took up residence at this site. In what Washington called "the best single house in the city," these two presidents negotiated treaties and presided over often stormy cabinet meetings. The exhibit focuses on the history of slavery in the early republic, and the enslaved in President Washington's household. Martha Washington's enslaved maid, Oney Judge, seized her freedom. Adams, never a slave owner, employed a small staff of servants.



Germantown White House (Deshler-Morris House)

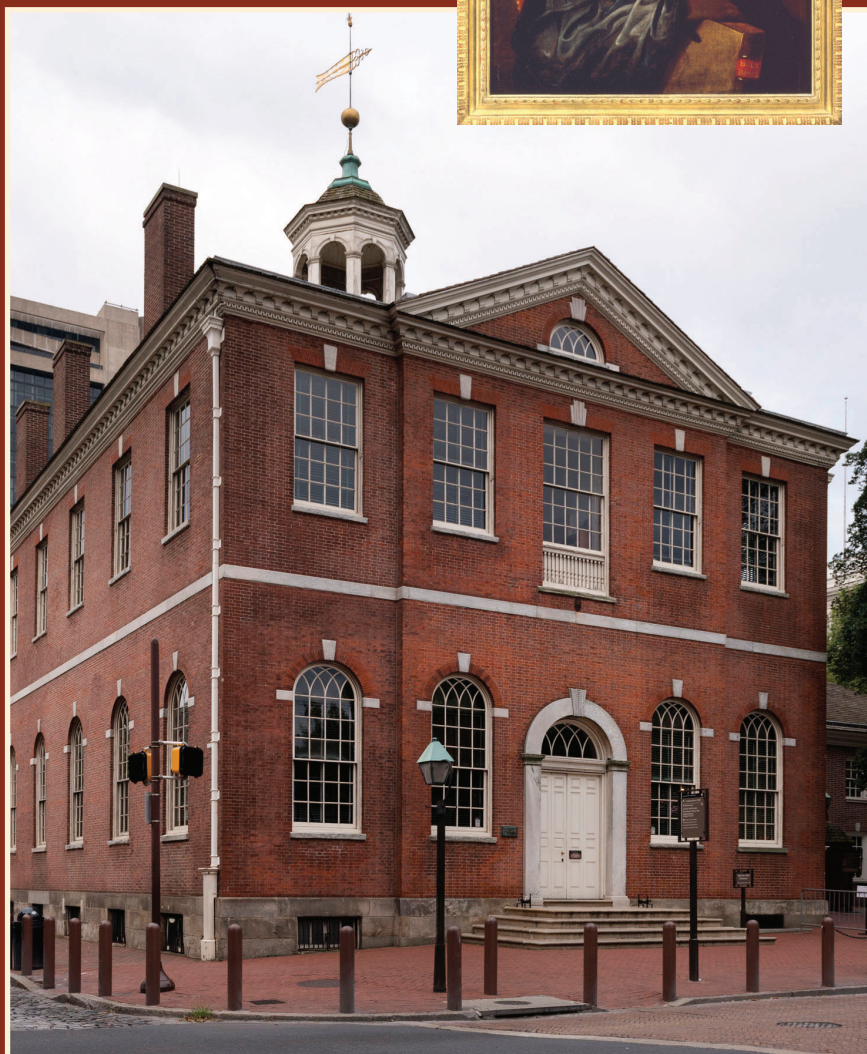
For a few weeks in the fall of 1793, President Washington and his cabinet met in Germantown, six miles from the yellow fever epidemic gripping the city. Here they addressed matters of foreign policy. The following summer, Washington and his family returned to the house to enjoy this “*fine airy place*.”



Old City Hall

The Supreme Court, sitting here, struggled to define its role in the new government. Meanwhile, the mayor of Philadelphia coordinated the city's response to the yellow fever epidemic from this building, accepting and recognizing the heroic efforts of the Free African Society led by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones.

Absalom Jones

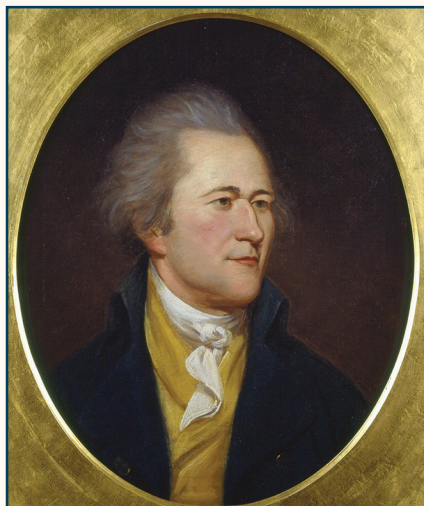


Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial

Polish military engineer Thaddeus Kosciuszko played a significant role in the American victory at Saratoga and the defense of West Point. Inspired by the democratic ideals of the American Revolution, Kosciuszko later led his Polish countrymen in an unsuccessful revolution against the Russian occupation of Poland. He returned to the United States in 1797 to a hero's welcome. Renting a small room in a boarding house, he entertained many visitors. Today, this house serves as the national memorial to an international champion of human dignity and freedom.

Thaddeus Kosciuszko





Alexander Hamilton

First Bank of the United States

Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton vigorously implemented financial independence for the new nation. Hamilton devised a well-rounded program for economic recovery, including a central bank for both government and private depositors.





Museum of the American Philosophical Society

Founded by Benjamin Franklin to “promote useful knowledge,” the American Philosophical Society included among its members notable founders of the republic – Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, and Madison – as well as doctors, artisans, and tradesmen. Philosophical Hall, home to this learned society, sat adjacent to the seat of government in the 1790s.

New Hall Military Museum

Home to the War Department in the 1790s, the museum highlights the history of the Continental Army, Navy, and Marines. The building was constructed by members of the Carpenters’ Company and today houses a memorial that pays tribute to the members of the U.S. Marine Corps who lost their lives during World War II and the Korean and Vietnam conflicts.



Library Hall

Franklin died in 1790, but many of the institutions that he helped create lived on. The Library Company, one of the first subscription libraries, opened its collections to the members of Congress. Franklin's place as a principal founder lives on in the statue that overlooks Independence Square. Today, this reconstructed building houses the research library of the American Philosophical Society.





Second Bank of the United States

Chartered by Congress in 1816, the Second Bank of the United States played a pivotal role in the “bank wars” which pitted President Jackson against powerful bank president Nicholas Biddle. Jackson vetoed the bill to renew the bank’s charter in 1832, and this marvel of Greek Revival architecture later served as a customs house.



“People of Independence” Exhibit

Gaze upon the faces of the “People of Independence” and look into the lives of those who prized order and reason yet lived in a world marked by disease, slavery, and fear of the unknown. Many of these original portraits by Charles Willson Peale once inspired visitors to Peale’s Museum in Independence Hall.



Dolley (Todd) Madison



Todd House

Philadelphia prospered as the capital city, but its inhabitants also knew great suffering. In 1793, yellow fever claimed the lives of more than 4,000 Philadelphians. Dolley Todd lost her husband, John, and a child during the epidemic. She later married a congressman from Virginia, James Madison.



Bishop White House

Admired, respected, and beloved, Bishop William White played a prominent role in the community. The first consecrated bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, William White promoted education, advocated prison reform, and ministered to epidemic victims in his finely appointed home.





Benjamin Franklin



Franklin Court

Benjamin Franklin spent the last five years of his life surrounded by family and friends in Franklin Court. Franklin's home served a succession of tenants after his death – the Portuguese minister to the United States, a female academy, a boarding house, and the African Free School. Franklin's grandchildren demolished the house in 1812 to allow for commercial development and now only the foundations of Franklin's home remain.

Benjamin Franklin Museum

The Benjamin Franklin Museum explores the life and achievements of this multifaceted founding father. Situated underground, the museum displays artifacts and videos highlighting Franklin's years as a printer, politician, philanthropist, family man, and slaveholder; and his subsequent explorations in science and long diplomatic career in Europe.



Market Street Houses

“...we are apt to forget that we are grown old, and building is an amusement,” wrote an aged Benjamin Franklin as he oversaw the construction of three rental homes adjacent to his own home. Franklin’s grandson and tenant, Benjamin Franklin Bache, found the location ideal for his newspaper office. An ardent Jeffersonian Republican, Bache attacked both the Washington and Adams administrations in the *Aurora*.



Printing Press

The press was indeed powerful in the political world of the 18th century. Verbal free-for-alls among the Philadelphia papers occurred regularly. The government responded with a dangerous but fortunately short-lived attempt to control the press via sedition laws.



An Enduring Symbol

An old broken bell, imperfect, yet one of the most powerful symbols of liberty in the world, the Liberty Bell bears a timeless message,

“PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT
ALL THE LAND UNTO
ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF.”

“The Bell rings and I must go among the Grave ones, and talk Politik,” wrote Benjamin Franklin in 1755 about the State House Bell. Ringing out the news from the tower of Independence Hall, the bell gathered people together, sometimes in celebration, sometimes in mourning.

Freedom did not ring for enslaved Africans in America after the Revolutionary War. The contradiction of slavery with this bell’s message of liberty spoke volumes to abolitionists. They adopted the State House Bell as their symbol, naming it the Liberty Bell.





The Liberty Bell cracked irreparably in 1846 while ringing in celebration of George Washington's birthday holiday. It remains forever silent.

The Liberty Bell's imperfections remind us that liberty is an ideal, its promise not easily realized for all. Women's suffrage advocates as well as civil rights leaders found inspiration from the words on this bell. The Liberty Bell's message of liberty continues to ring out to the United States and the world.





Freedom of religion existed in Philadelphia from the time the city was founded. The persecuted from all across Europe settled here and Philadelphia tolerance became a vivid and successful example that would later be copied on a national scale.

Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church

Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church was dedicated in 1700 by Swedish Lutherans. Now Episcopalian, it is the oldest church building in Pennsylvania.

Free Quaker Meeting House

At the time of the revolution, a rift occurred among Philadelphia Quakers. "Free" Quakers supported the revolution while the majority, being pacifists, continued to insist that war could not be condoned.





Christ Church

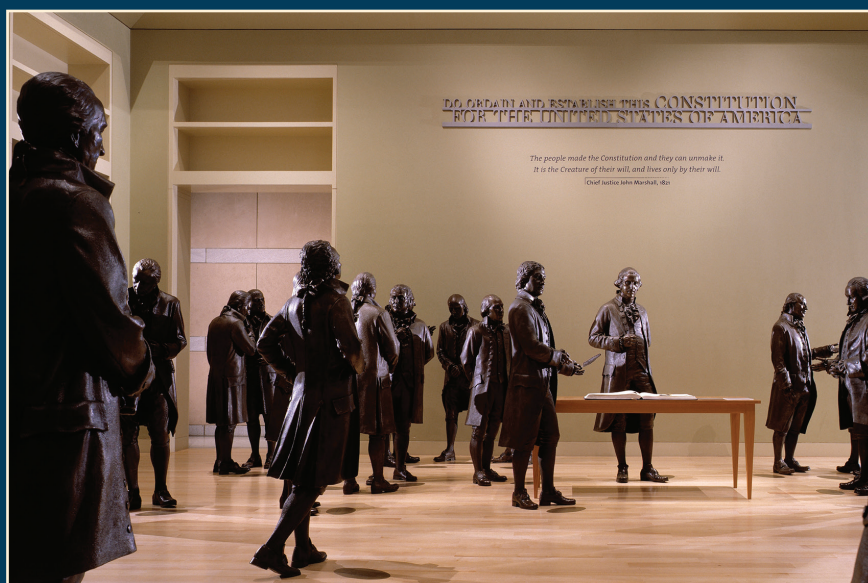
Many consider Christ Church, birthplace of the American Episcopal Church, to be one of the most beautiful 18th century structures in America. Constructed in 1744, the church features elements of classic Georgian architecture, including a Palladian window. George Washington attended services here, as did members of Benjamin Franklin's family.





Independence Visitor Center

Plan your visit here with the assistance of knowledgeable park rangers and the dedicated concierge staff for the city and region.



National Constitution Center

Experience the U.S. Constitution through more than 100 interactive and multimedia exhibits. Bronze life-sized statues in Signers' Hall will transport you to September 17, 1787, when 39 men signed an enduring compact of government beginning with the words "We the People."



Merchants' Exchange Building

Recumbent lions kept watch outside while the Exchange Room inside this 1830s Greek Revival masterpiece hummed with shipping news and business transactions of all kinds. Today, the building serves as the headquarters for Independence National Historical Park.

Thanks to the interpretive staff at Independence NHP.

The following portraits courtesy of Independence NHP unless indicated:

Charles Thomson by Charles Willson Peale, 1781-1782

Peyton Randolph by Charles Willson Peale, c. 1782

Thomas Jefferson by Charles Willson Peale, 1791-1792

Thaddeus Kosciuszko by Julian Rhys, 1897

*Absalom Jones by Raphaele Peale, 1810 (Delaware Art Museum,
Gift of Absalom Jones School)*

John Adams by Charles Willson Peale, c. 1791-1794

Alexander Hamilton by Charles Willson Peale, c. 1790-1795

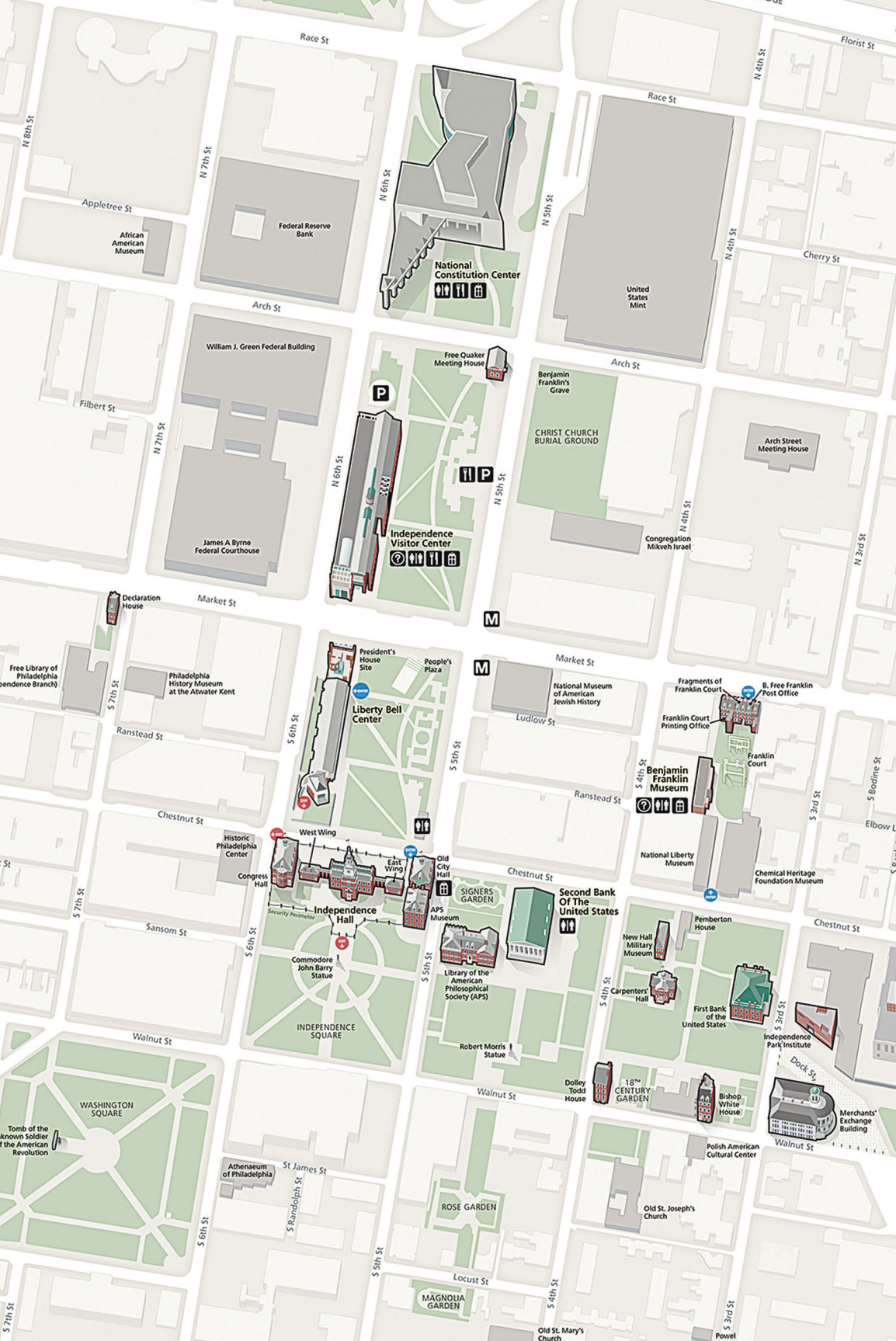
Dolley Madison by James Sharples Senior, 1796-1797

Benjamin Franklin by David Rent Etter after Charles Willson Peale after David Martin, 1835.

*All photographs courtesy of Independence NHP except p. 29 top
by Debbie Boardman, p. 31 courtesy of National Constitution Center.*

Design by Kathy Carbonetti

For more information please visit www.nps.gov/inde



“We hold these
truths to be
self-evident,
that all men are
created
equal...”

Much of the past remains at Independence National Historical Park. You can stand in the shadow of Independence Hall or read the famous inscription on the Liberty Bell. But there is also much to discover that you cannot see or touch. The ideas of liberty and self-government proposed and tested in these halls and on these grounds still echo through our lives today.

People of many social classes, religions, and ethnic backgrounds came to Philadelphia in the 18th century. In this diverse city, a new republic was born. We invite you to follow along the road to revolution and to witness the creation of an enduring framework of government. Peer into a world that struggled with liberty – its contradictions and its promises for the future. Explore the ideas that continue to shape our world. Explore Independence National Historical Park.

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