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 & 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 inherent & inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, & 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, & to institute new government, laying it's foundation on such principles & organising it's powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness. prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light & 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 & 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 & to provide new guards for their future security. such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies & 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, among which appears no solitary fact to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest, but all of which have 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 & pressing importance,

ARTH. MIDDLETON.
THOS HAYWARD JR.
WM HOOPER.
JAMES WILSON.
SAM. CHASE.
GEO. CLYMER.
CHAS CARROLL.

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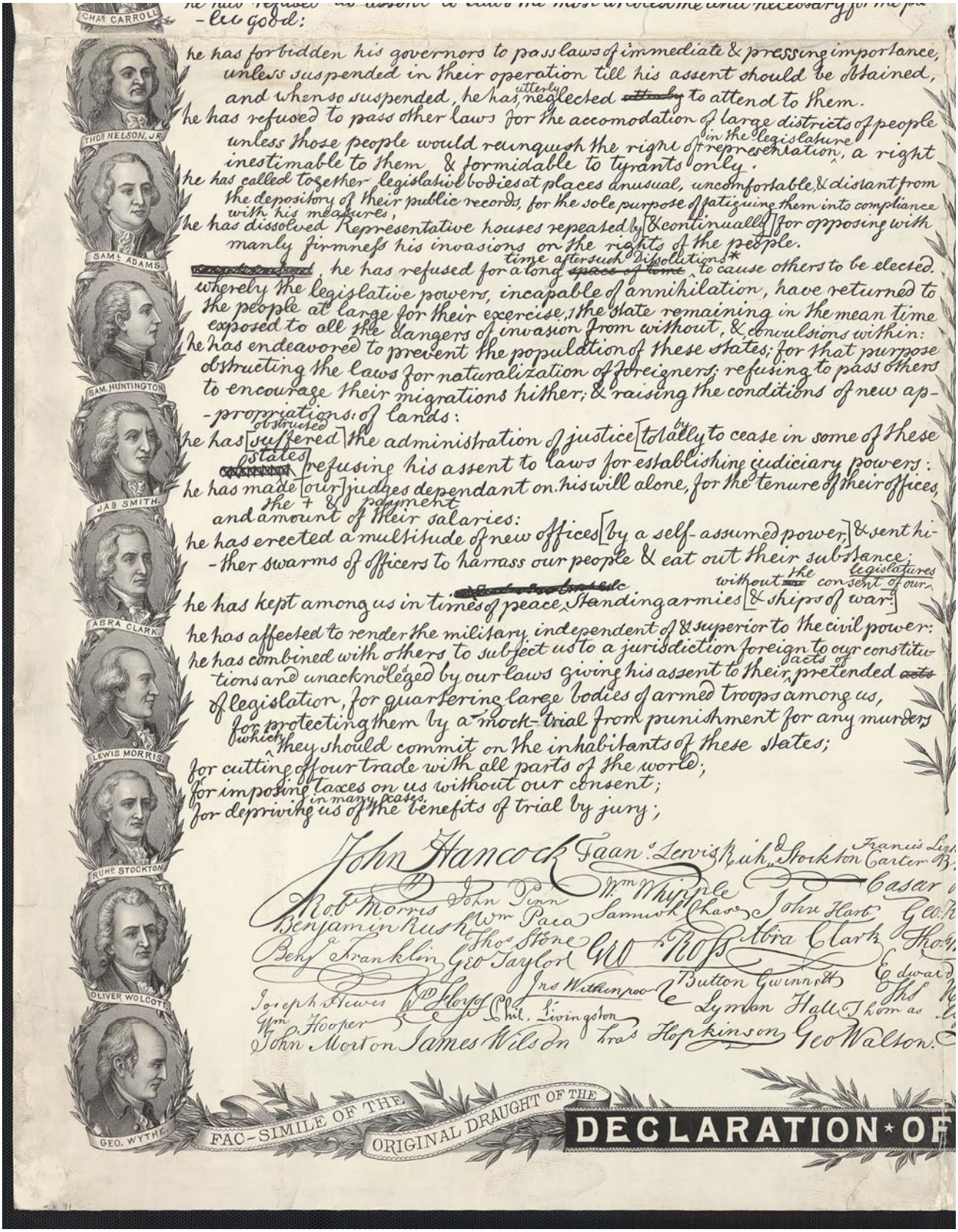
for transporting us beyond seas to be teied for pretenseled offences:
for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province essablishing therein an arbitrary government and enstarging its bourdares so as to render it at once an example & fit instrument for introduceing the same absolute rule into these ~~colonies~~ [States]
† abolishing our most valuable ~~important~~ laws
for taking away our charters, & alsering fundamentally the forms of our governments
for suspending our own legislatures & 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 & waging war against us. withdrawing his governors & declaring us out of his allegiance & protection:]
he has plundered our seas ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns & distroyed the lives of our people:
he is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries Scotch and other to compleat the works of death desolation & tyranny: already begun with circumstances scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages and totally of ~~cruelty~~ & perfidy unworthy the head of a civilized nation.
he has ~~constrained~~ ~~our fellow citizens taken captive~~ excited domestic insurrections amongst us and has
he has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the mercilefs Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, seaes & conditions [of existence:]
he has, incited treasonable insurrections of our fellow-citizens with the allurements of forfeiture & confiscation of our property
he has ~~constrained others taken captive~~ ~~to bear arms against their country~~ ~~to be~~ ~~executioners of their friends & brethren~~ ~~or to fall themselves by their hands~~ ~~to become~~ ~~executioners~~ ~~


CHAS CARROLL
THOS NELSON, JR.
SAML ADAMS
SAM. HUNTINGTON
JAS SMITH
ABRA CLARK
LEWIS MORRIS
RICHD STOCKTON
OLIVER WOLCOTT
GEO. WYTHE
he has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate & 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 accomodation of large districts of people
unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature,
inestimable to them & formidable to tyrants only.
he has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, & 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 repeated by & continually 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,
wherely 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, & convulsions within:
he has endeavored 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; & raising the conditions of new ap-
propriations of lands:
he has obstructed the administration of justice totally to cease in some of these
states refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers:
he has made our judges dependant on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices,
and the amount & payment of their salaries:
he has erected a multitude of new offices by a self-assumed power, & sent hi-
ther swarms of officers to harrass our people & eat out their substance:
he has kept among us in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislatures
& ships of war:
he has affected to render the military independent of & superior to the civil power:
he has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitu-
tions and unacknoleged by our laws giving his assent to their pretended acts
of 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 of the benefits of trial by jury;
in many cases
John Hancock
Josiah Bartlett
Wm Whipple
Saml Adams
John Adams
Robt Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benj Franklin
John Morton
Geo Clymer
Jas Smith
Geo Taylor
James Wilson
Geo Ross
Caesar Rodney
George Read
Thos M:Kean
Wm Floyd
Phil. Livingston
Frans. Lewis
Lewis Morris
Richd Stockton
Jno Witherspoon
Fras Hopkinson
John Hart
Abra Clark
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Carter Braxton
Robt Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benj Franklin
John Morton
Geo Clymer
Jas Smith
Geo Taylor
James Wilson
Geo Ross
Caesar Rodney
George Read
Thos M:Kean
Wm Floyd
Phil. Livingston
Frans. Lewis
Lewis Morris
Richd Stockton
Jno Witherspoon
Fras Hopkinson
John Hart
Abra Clark
Josiah Bartlett
Wm Whipple
Saml Adams
John Adams

of ~~Liberty~~ freedom.

Nor 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 these our states; we have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration & settlement here, no one of which could warrant so strange a pretension: that these were effected at the expence of our own blood & treasure unassisted by the wealth or the strength of Great Britain: that in constituting indeed our several forms of government, we had adopted one common king thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league & amity with them: but that submission to their parliament was no part of our constitution, nor over in idea if history may be credited: and we have appealed to their native justice & magnanimity, as well as to the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations which would inevitably interrupt our connection & correspondence. they too have been deaf to the voice of justice & of consanguinity, & when occasions have been given them by the regular course of their laws of removing from their councils the disturbers of our harmony, they have by their free election re-established them in power. at this very time too they are permitting their chief magistrate to send over not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch & foreign mercenaries to invade & destroy us. these facts have given the last stab to agonizing affection, and manly spirit bids us to renounce for ever these unfeeling brethren. we must endeavor to forget our former love for them, and to hold them as we hold the rest of mankind enemies in war, in peace friends. we might have been a free & a great people together: but a communication of grandeur & of freedom it seems is below their dignity. be it so since they will have it: the road to happiness & to glory is open to us too; we will tread it apart from them, and acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our friends 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 & by authority of the good people of these colonies reject and renounce all allegiance & subjection to the kings of Great Britain & all others who may hereafter claim by, through, or under them; we utterly dissolve all political connection which may heretofore have subsisted between us & the people or parliament of Great Britain; and finally we do assert and declare these colonies to be free and independant states, and that as free & independant states they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce & to do all other acts and things which independant states may of right do. And for the support of this declaration we mutually pledge to each other our lives our fortunes, & our sacred honour.

Lightfoot Lee, Arthur Middleton, Step. Hopkins, Th. Jefferson
Braxton, George Wythe, Benj. Harrison, Th. Nelson jr.
Rodney, Richard Henry Lee, Matthew Thornton, John Adams
Geo. Read, Josiah Bartlett, Roger Sherman
Th. M. Read, Sam. Huntington, William Ellery, Charles Carroll of Carrollton
Sam. Ruthledge, Geo. Clymer, Wm. Williams, Rob. Treat Paine
Edward Rutledge jun., Jas. Smith, Oliver Wolcott, Elbridge Gerry
Thos. Lynch jun., Geo. Taylor, Lewis Morris, Sam. Adams

WM. FLOYD.
WM. PACA.
THOS. STONE.
JOS. HEWES.
THOS. LYNCH JR.
BENJ. HARRISON.
FRANCIS L. LEE.
GEO. ROSS.
JOSH. BARTLETT.
LYMAN HALL.

IN CENERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED 4TH JULY, 1776.

F · INDEPENDENCE

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