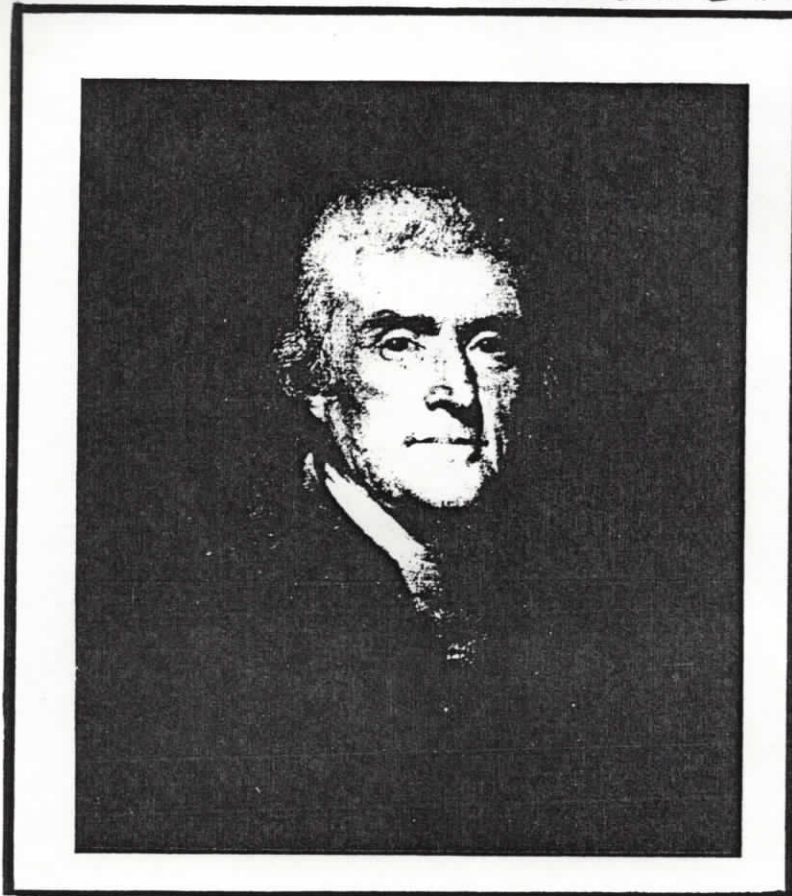


# THE ORIGINAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



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*Thomas  
Jefferson*

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MOST PEOPLE DO NOT REALIZE THAT THERE EXISTS A COMPARISON COPY BETWEEN WHAT THOMAS JEFFERSON SUBMITTED AS HIS IDEA OF WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE "DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE" AND WHAT BECAME THE FINALIZED COPY SO FAMILIAR TODAY. THE ENGROSSED COPY IS THE EDITED COPY. JEFFERSON'S DRAFT IS ON THE LEFT. HE CHARGED THE ENGLISH KING WITH THE PROMOTION OF SLAVERY.

# JEFFERSON'S DRAFT

Compare his unabridged version of the Declaration of Independence with the engrossed copy.

## JEFFERSON'S DRAFT

*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 for 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 *inherent & inalienable* rights, that 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 its foundation on such principles & organising its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their

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## ENGROSSED COPY

[In CONGRESS, July 4, 1776. The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united STATES OF AMERICA,]

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

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## JEFFERSON'S DRAFT

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, *begun at a distinguished period*, & pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism,<sup>1</sup> 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 *expunge* their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain<sup>2</sup> is a history of *unremitting* injuries and usurpations, *among which appears no solitary fact to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest*, but all have in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this let fact be submitted to a candid world, *for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet unsullied by falsehood.*

<sup>1</sup>The words "under absolute Despotism" are in Franklin's handwriting, and are in place of the words "to arbitrary power."

<sup>2</sup>The words "King of Great Britain" were substituted by Adams for "his present majesty."

## ENGROSSED COPY

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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 shown, 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 & 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, & 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 repeatedly & continually for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people:

He has refused for a long time after such Dissolutions<sup>1</sup> 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, & convulsions within:

<sup>1</sup>The words "after such Dissolutions" were suggested by Adams.

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.—

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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 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 appropriations of lands.

He has suffered 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<sup>1</sup> of their salaries:

He has erected a multitude of new offices by a self-assumed power, & sent hither swarms of officers to harrass our people & eat out their substance:

He has kept among us in times of peace standing armies & ships of war without the consent of our legislatures.

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 constitutions 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

<sup>1</sup>The words "and payment" were suggested by Franklin.

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 harrass 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 In-

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, for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences; for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its bounds so as to render it at once an example & fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these colonies; for taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws,<sup>1</sup> and altering 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, *withdrawing his governors*, & declaring us out of his *allegiance & protection*.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns & destroyed the lives of our people:

He is at this time transporting large armies of *Scotch and other* foreign mercenaries to compleat the works of death desolation & tyranny already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

<sup>1</sup> The words "abolishing our most valuable Laws" were added by Franklin.

habitants 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 neighboring 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 compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy [scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally] unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has endeavored 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, & conditions of *existence*.

*He has incited treasonable insurrections of our fellow-citizens with the allurements of forfeiture & confiscation of property.*

He has constrained *others* taken captives on the high seas, to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends & brethren, or to fall themselves by their hand:

*He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating it's most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought and sold. He has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable commerce. And that this*

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 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.

*assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting these very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people upon whom he also obtruded them; thus paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of our people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.*

In every stage of these oppressions "we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms," our repeated petitions have been answered only<sup>1</sup> by repeated injuries. "A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant," is unfit to be the ruler of a people *who mean to be free*. "Future ages will scarce believe that the hardness of one man adventured within the short compass of twelve years only" to build a foundation so broad & undisguised, for tyranny over a people fostered and fixed in principles of 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 a 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*

<sup>1</sup>"Only" added by Franklin.

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.

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 [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 in-

*constituting indeed our several forms of government, we had adopted one common king, thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league and amity with them: but that submission to their parliament was no part of our constitution, nor ever in idea of history may be credited; and we appealed to their native justice & magnanimity, as well as to the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations which were likely to interrupt our connection & correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and 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<sup>1</sup> 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 climb it apart from*

<sup>1</sup>"And destroy us" added by Franklin.

evitably] interrupt our connections and correspondence

They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity.

[We must, therefore] acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we held the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.—

them, and acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our eternal separation.

We therefore the representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled do in the name & by authority of the good people of these states 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.

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.

These important pages are taken from Herbert Friedenwald, Ph.D's book entitled:

"The Declaration of Independence - An Interpretation and An Analysis"  
Published in New York by the Macmillan Co. - London 1904

Lincoln on June 26, 1857, when he spoke of the Declaration of Independence:

"I think the authors of that notable instrument intended to include *all men*, but they did not mean to declare all men equal in *all respects*. They did not mean to say all men were equal in color, size, intellect, moral developments or social capacity. They defined with tolerable distinctness in what they did consider all men created equal—equal in 'certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.' This they said, and this they meant. They did not mean to assert the obvious untruth, that all were then actually enjoying that equality, nor yet, that they were about to confer it immediately upon them. In fact they had no power to confer such a boon. They meant simply to declare the right, so that the enforcement of it might follow as fast as circumstances should permit.

"They meant to set up a standard maxim for free society which should be familiar to all and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colors everywhere."

SECOND AMENDMENT COMMITTEE

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