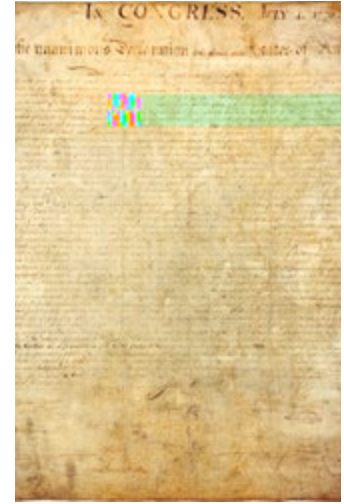


INDEPENDENCE DECLARED!



By our politics editor
July 5, 1776

HISTORY WAS made yesterday when the Continental Congress approved the Declaration of Independence from Britain. This momentous event marks the birth of an independent United States of America.

Massachusetts was one of 12 American colonies to approve the declaration in Philadelphia. Only New York declined to vote. The pro-independence delegation from Massachusetts included lawyer John Adams, second cousin Samuel Adams, lawyer Robert

Treat Paine, and Elbridge Gerry, a member of a wealthy merchant family. Businessman John Hancock served as president of the Congress.

Britain is certain to view this as an act of treason. As a result, the names of these “Founding

the colonies have finally united against Britain. Rejecting its government’s attempts to tax them, the colonies have come to regard the Revolutionary War as a struggle for liberty and freedom.

The declaration, whose principal author is Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, has been highly praised.

One passage reads: “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.” But Anti-slavery language has been removed—to the relief of some delegates, mainly from the South.

The declaration also makes the case against King George III and his “absolute tyranny,” over the American colonies. “He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection, and waging war against us.” John Adams predicts the declaration will forever be celebrated in America.

THE DECLARATION of Independence claims that “all men are created equal.” It expounds on the harmful actions of the King, and details the reasons for a formal separation from Britain. In one seldom-cited passage, Indigenous people are not considered equal, but as violent savages: “He (the King) has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and 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, and conditions.”