

# The Declaration of Independence

Visiting Committee Book Seminar  
Session 5: Reading the Declaration

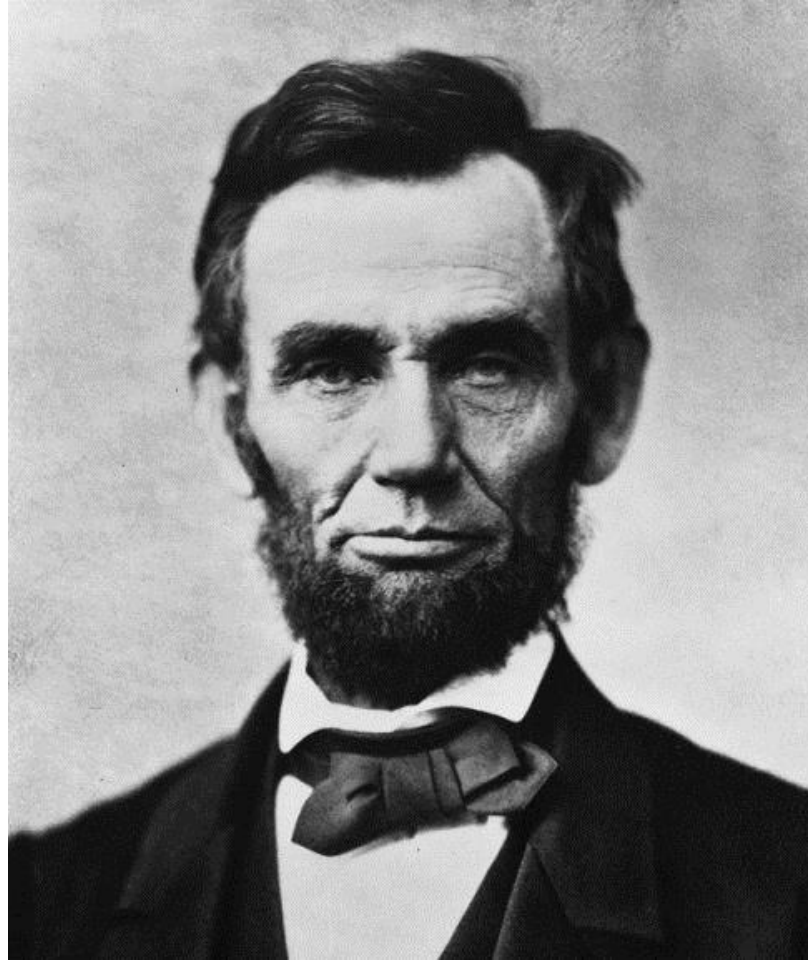
“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.”

--Declaration of Independence



**Martin Luther King, Jr. (March on Washington, 1963):**

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men -- yes, black men as well as white men -- would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned.



**Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, 1863:**

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Liberty Further  
Extended: Or  
Free thoughts on the  
illegality of Slave-keeping;  
Wherein those arguments that  
are used in its vindication  
are plainly confuted.  
Together with an humble  
Address to such as are  
concerned in the practise.

By Lemuel Haynes.

We hold these truths to be self-  
evident, that all men are created  
equal, that they are endowed with  
by their Creator with certain  
unalienable rights, that among these  
are life, liberty, and the pursuit  
of happiness. — Congress.



Lemuel Haynes' "Liberty Further Extended" (1776), with epigraph from the Declaration of Independence. Houghton Library, Harvard University.



your descendants must endure, from an established arbitrary power."

Declaration of independence in Congress, 4th July, 1776.

"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*."

Declaration of rights of Pennsylvania, July 15, 1776.

"THAT *all men* are born *equally free and independent*, and have certain natural inherent, and *unalienable rights*, among which are, the enjoying and defending *life and liberty*, acquiring, possessing and protecting *property*, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety."

Declaration of rights of Massachusetts, Sep. 1, 1779.

"*All men* are born

callous toward negroes, and the *miserics* which, by their *arbitrary power*, they wantonly inflict.

If these solemn *truths*, uttered at such an awful crisis, are *self-evident*: unless we can shew that the African race are not *men*, words can hardly express the amazement which naturally arises on reflecting, that the very people who make these pompous declarations are slave-holders, and, by their legislative conduct, tell us, that these blessings were only meant to be the *rights of whitemen* not of *all men*: and would seem to verify the observation of an eminent writer; "When men talk of liberty, they mean their own liberty, and seldom suffer their thoughts on that point to stray to their neighbours."

David Cooper,  
*A Serious Address to the Rulers of America on the Inconsistency of their Conduct Respecting Slavery* (Trenton, N.J., 1783)

THE  
CONSTITUTION  
OF THE LIBRARY  
NEW-JERSEY  
SOCIETY,

FOR PROMOTING THE  
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY:

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED,

EXTRACTS FROM A  
LAW OF NEW-JERSEY,

Passed the 2d *March*, 1786, and

SUPPLEMENT TO THE SAME,

Passed the 26th *November*, 1788.

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“ 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*.”

*Declaration of Independence.*

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BURLINGTON,  
PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY, BY  
ISAAC NEALE,

M,DCC,XCIII.



## Declarations of Independence, 1776-1825

1776 United States	1821 Honduras
1790 Flanders	1821 Mexico
1804 Haiti	1821 Nicaragua
1810 Colombia	1821 Coast Rica
1811 Venezuela	1821 Panama
1811 New Granada	1821 Dominican Republic
1813 Mexico	1822 Brazil
1816 Argentina	1822 Hellenic Republic
1818 Chile	1823 Nicaragua
1818 Venezuela	1823 United Provinces of Central America
1821 Peru	
1821 Guatemala	1825 Bolivia
1821 El Salvador	1825 Uruguay

Source: David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (forthcoming, 2007)



## Alternative Declarations of Independence, 1826-1876

- 1829 Working Men's Declaration of Independence
- 1834 Declaration ... of the Trades' Union of Boston
- 1836 Anti-Monopolist Declaration
- 1844 Declaration of Independence of the Producing  
from the Non-Producing Class
- 1848 Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions,  
Women's Rights Convention
- 1876 Negro Declaration of Independence
- 1876 Declaration of Independence,  
by the Workingmen's Party
- 1876 Declaration of Rights for Women,  
by the National Woman Suffrage Association

Source: Philip S. Foner, ed., *We, the Other People* (1976)

“We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights”  
against the undue influences of other classes of society, prudence, as well as the claims of self defense, dictates the organization of a party...

George Henry Evans  
Working Men's Declaration of Independence  
1829

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men **and women** are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness...

Elizabeth Cady Stanton  
Declaration of Sentiments  
Seneca Falls, 1848



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 them is life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

The general words above quoted would seem to embrace the whole human family, and if they were used in a similar instrument at this day would be so understood. But it is too clear for dispute that the enslaved African race were not intended to be included, and formed no part of the people who framed and adopted this declaration, for if the language, as understood in that day, would embrace them, the conduct of the distinguished men who framed the Declaration of Independence would have been utterly and flagrantly inconsistent with the principles they asserted, and instead of the sympathy of mankind to which they so confidently appealed, they would have deserved and received universal rebuke and reprobation.

--Chief Justice Roger Taney, *Dred Scott vs. Sandford* (1857)

# Go all to whom

those to whom shall come, as the under signed, the name of the several States first mentioned, in and for the Congress of the United States of America, in a request of the several States first mentioned, of November, in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy seven, and in their said Year, and Declaration of their said request, to obtain articles of Confederation and perpetual Union between the States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, in the Words following, viz. *Articles of Confederation and perpetual Union between the States first mentioned, in and for the Congress of the United States of America, in and for the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy seven.*

**Article I.** The said States hereby unite themselves into the United States of America.

**Article II.** Each State shall retain its sovereignty, freedom and independence, and every Power, Jurisdiction and right, which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled.

**Article III.** The said States hereby severally enter into a firm League of Friendship with each other, for their common Defense, the Security of their Liberties, and their mutual and general Welfare, binding themselves to assist each other, against all Force opposed to, or attacks made upon them, or any of them, in support of their said League, and in any other just and equitable Cases.

**Article IV.** All Acts of Trade and Commerce between the said States, and intercourse among the People of the said States in this Union, the free Intercourse of such of those States, amongst themselves, and Provisions from Justice accepted, shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of free Citizens in the said States, and the People of each State shall enjoy free Trade and Commerce with each other, and shall enjoy therein all the Privileges of Trade and Commerce, subject to the same Rules, Regulations and Restrictions as the Inhabitants, being respectively provided, that free Trade and Commerce shall not extend to the Importation of any Property imposed into any State, to any other State, in which the Commerce is an Importation, provided also that no Impediment, Duty or Restriction shall be laid by any State, on the Property of the United States, or either of them.

If any Person guilty of a Crime, with treason, Felony, or other high Misdemeanor, in any State, shall flee from Justice, and be found in any of the United States, he shall, upon Demand of the Governor or Executive Power of the State from which he fled, be delivered up, and removed to the State, having Jurisdiction of the offence.

All Debts and Credits shall remain inviolate in each State, the same as in and against the Creditors of the same, and Inhabitants of every other State.

**Article V.** For the more convenient Management of the general Interests of the United States, the People of each State, or a majority appointed in such manner as the Legislature of each State shall direct, to meet in Congress on the first Monday in November, in every Year, with a power reserved to each State, to send its Delegates or any of them, at any time within the Year, and to send others in their stead, for the remainder of the Year.

And that the ratification thereof shall be irrevocably observed by the States respectively, respectively, and that the Union shall be perpetual. *In Witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands in Congress, Done at Philadelphia in the City of Pennsylvania the twenty first day of July in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Seventy eight, and in the first year of the Independence of America.*

- |  |  |  |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |  |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Delaware<br/>         { <i>Richard B. Allen</i><br/> <i>George Read</i></p> | <p>Virginia<br/>         { <i>George Mason</i><br/> <i>James Madison</i></p> | <p>North Carolina<br/>         { <i>Richard Caswell</i><br/> <i>James Oglethorpe</i></p> | <p>South Carolina<br/>         { <i>John Rutledge</i><br/> <i>Charles Cotesworth Pinckney</i></p> | <p>Georgia<br/>         { <i>William B. Ewald</i><br/> <i>George T. Catlett</i></p> | <p>Massachusetts<br/>         { <i>Samuel Adams</i><br/> <i>John Hancock</i></p> | <p>New Hampshire<br/>         { <i>Josiah Bartlett</i><br/> <i>John Stark</i></p> | <p>Rhode Island<br/>         { <i>John Easton</i><br/> <i>Samuel Huntington</i></p> | <p>Pennsylvania<br/>         { <i>Robert Morris</i><br/> <i>George Clymer</i></p> | <p>New York<br/>         { <i>John Jay</i><br/> <i>William Livingston</i></p> | <p>New Jersey<br/>         { <i>Richard Stockton</i><br/> <i>George Taylor</i></p> | <p>Delaware<br/>         { <i>Richard B. Allen</i><br/> <i>George Read</i></p> | <p>Virginia<br/>         { <i>George Mason</i><br/> <i>James Madison</i></p> | <p>North Carolina<br/>         { <i>Richard Caswell</i><br/> <i>James Oglethorpe</i></p> | <p>South Carolina<br/>         { <i>John Rutledge</i><br/> <i>Charles Cotesworth Pinckney</i></p> | <p>Georgia<br/>         { <i>William B. Ewald</i><br/> <i>George T. Catlett</i></p> | <p>Massachusetts<br/>         { <i>Samuel Adams</i><br/> <i>John Hancock</i></p> | <p>New Hampshire<br/>         { <i>Josiah Bartlett</i><br/> <i>John Stark</i></p> | <p>Rhode Island<br/>         { <i>John Easton</i><br/> <i>Samuel Huntington</i></p> | <p>Pennsylvania<br/>         { <i>Robert Morris</i><br/> <i>George Clymer</i></p> | <p>New York<br/>         { <i>John Jay</i><br/> <i>William Livingston</i></p> | <p>New Jersey<br/>         { <i>Richard Stockton</i><br/> <i>George Taylor</i></p> |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|



Treaty of Alliance

The most Christian King and the United States of North America...

Traite d'Alliance eventuelle et Defensive

Le Roi Très Chrétien et les Etats-unis de l'Amerique Septentrionale...

or sooner if possible. In faith whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries...

Si mieux en plutôt, si faire se peut. En foi de quoi les Plenipotentiaires...

Signatures and seals of the plenipotentiaries, including Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee.





Benjamin West, *Treaty of Paris*, also titled *American Commissioners of the Preliminary Peace Agreement with Great Britain*, 1783–84, Winterthur Museum.



Duplicate.

Criminal Register  
3 Sept. 1763

In the Name of the most  
Holy & undivided Trinity.

I having pleased the divine Pro-  
vidence to dispose the Hearts of the most  
Serene and most Excellent Prince George the  
third, by the Grace of God, King of Great  
Britain, France & Ireland, Defender of  
the Faith, Duke of Brunswick and  
Lunenburg, Arch-treasurer and  
Electer of the Holy Roman Empire, &c.  
and of the United States of America  
to forget all past Misunderstandings and  
Differences that have unhappily interrup-  
ted the good Correspondence and Amity  
which they mutually wish to restore  
to establish such a beneficial and salutary  
intercourse between the two Countries  
upon the Ground of reciprocal Advantage  
and mutual Convenience as may  
and secure the perpetual Peace of Europe

without Difficulty and without requiring  
any Compensation.

Article 10.<sup>th</sup>

The solemn Ratifications of the  
present Treaty expedited in good & due  
Form shall be exchanged between the  
contracting Parties in the Space of  
Six Months or sooner if possible to be  
compute from the Day of the Signature  
of the present Treaty. In Witness  
whereof we the undersigned their Ministers  
Plenipotentiary have in their Name  
and in Virtue of our Full Powers signed  
with our Hands the present Definitive  
Treaty, and caused the Seals of our Arms  
to be affixed thereto.

Done at Paris, this third Day of September, in  
the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty three.

Stanley John Adams.

B. Franklin

John Jay







John Trumbull, *The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776* (1786-1820)  
(20 7/8 x 31 in.) Yale University Art Gallery.



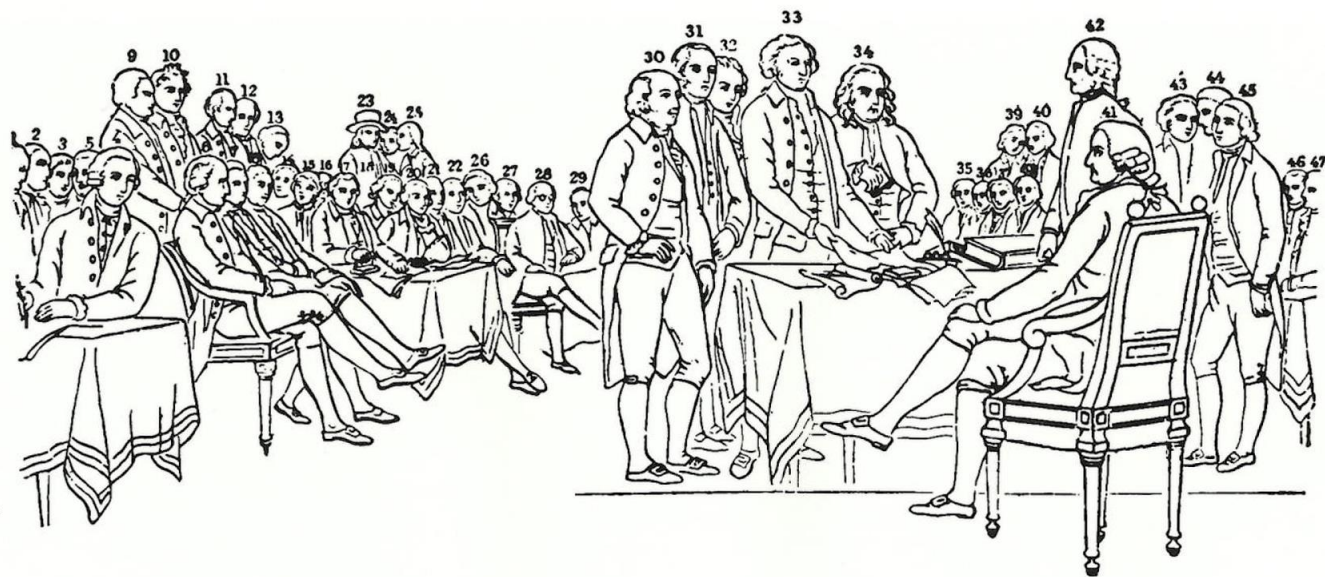


General George Washington Resigning His Commission, December 23, 1783 Oil on canvas 12' x 18'; 1824; placed 1826. U.S. Capitol Rotunda.



# DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

In Congress, at the Independence Hall, Philadelphia, July 4<sup>th</sup> 1776.



1. George Wythe, Virginia
2. William Whipple, New Hampshire
3. Josiah Bartlett, New Hampshire
4. Benjamin Harrison, Virginia
5. Thomas Lynch, South Carolina
6. Richard Henry Lee, Virginia
7. Samuel Adams, Massachusetts
- \*8. George Clinton, New York
9. William Paca, Maryland
10. Samuel Chase, Maryland
11. Lewis Morris, New York
12. William Floyd, New York

13. Arthur Middleton, South Carolina
14. Thomas Heyward, Jr., South Carolina
15. Charles Carroll, Maryland
16. George Walton, Georgia
17. Robert Morris, Pennsylvania
- \*18. Thomas Willing, Pennsylvania
19. Benjamin Rush, Pennsylvania
20. Elbridge Gerry, Massachusetts
21. Robert Treat Paine, Massachusetts
22. Abraham Clark, New Jersey
23. Stephen Hopkins, Rhode Island
24. William Ellery, Rhode Island

25. George Clymer, Pennsylvania
26. William Hooper, North Carolina
27. Joseph Hewes, North Carolina
28. James Willson, Pennsylvania
29. Francis Hopkinson, New Jersey
30. John Adams, Massachusetts
31. Roger Sherman, Connecticut
- \*32. Robert R. Livingston, New York
33. Thomas Jefferson, Virginia
34. Benjamin Franklin, Pennsylvania
35. Richard Stockton, New Jersey
36. Francis Lewis, New York

37. John Witherspoon, New Jersey
38. Samuel Huntington, Connecticut
39. William Williams, Connecticut
40. Oliver Wolcott, Connecticut
41. John Hancock, Massachusetts
- \*42. Charles Thomson, Secretary, Pennsylvania
43. George Read, Delaware
- \*44. John Dickinson, Pennsylvania
45. Edward Rutledge, South Carolina
46. Thomas McKean, Delaware
47. Philip Livingston, New York

There were 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence. The painting portrays only 47. The 5 men whose names are starred were not signers. The portraits of the following 14 signers do not appear in the painting.

- 2 Matthew Thornton, New Hampshire
- 3 John Hart, New Jersey
- 4 John Morton, Pennsylvania
- 5 James Smith, Pennsylvania

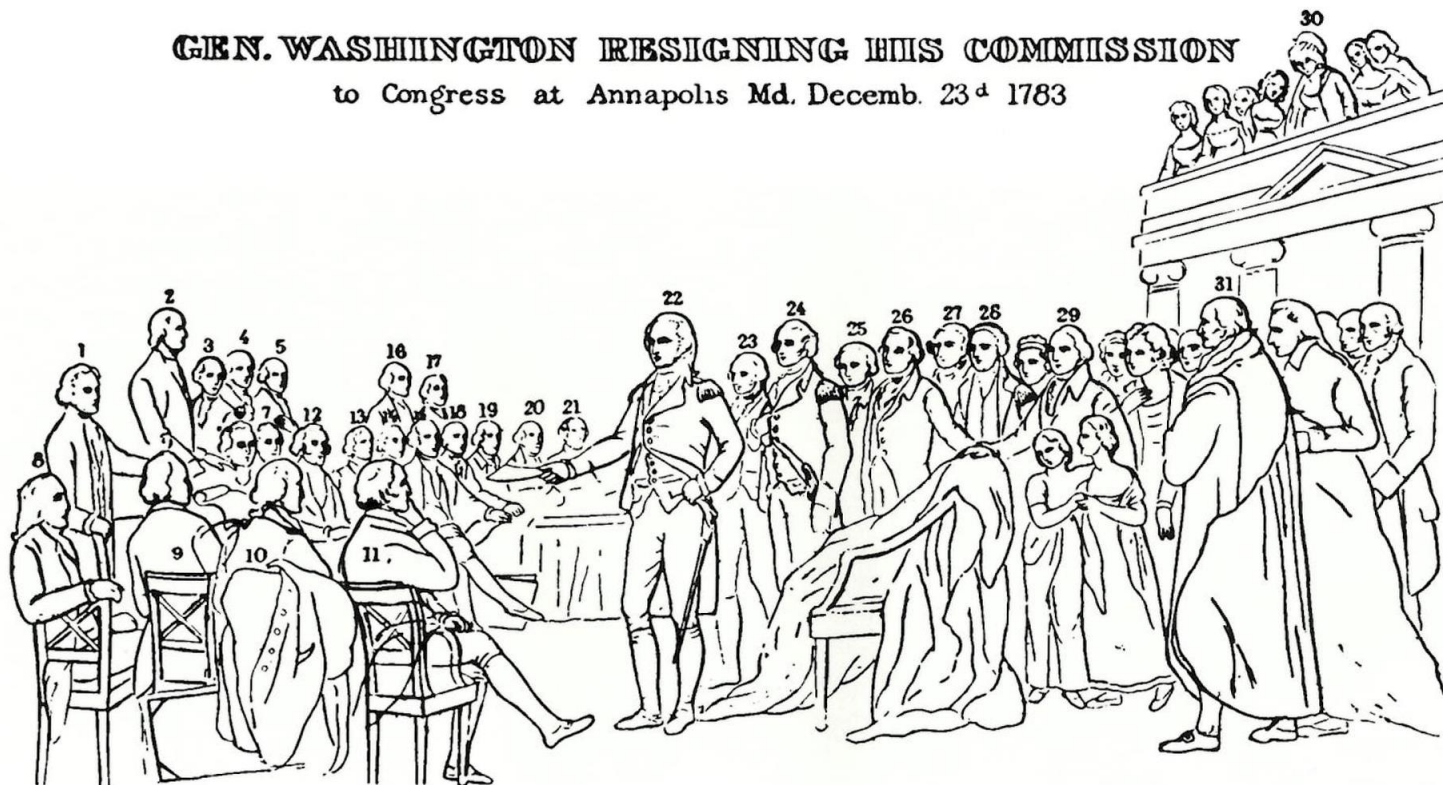
- George Taylor, Pennsylvania  
 George Ross, Pennsylvania  
 Caesar Rodney, Delaware  
 Thomas Stone, Maryland

- Thomas Nelson, Jr., Virginia  
 Francis Lightfoot Lee, Virginia  
 Carter Braxton, Virginia  
 John Penn, North Carolina

- Button Gwinnett, Georgia  
 Lyman Hall, Georgia

# GEN. WASHINGTON RESIGNING HIS COMMISSION

to Congress at Annapolis Md. Decemb. 23<sup>d</sup> 1783



- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1. Thomas Mifflin, Pennsylvania, President Delegate | 9. Richard D. Spaight, North Carolina Delegate | 17. James Madison, Virginia Spectator     | 25. General Smallwood, Maryland Spectator          |
| 2. Charles Thompson, Pennsylvania Secretary         | 10. Benjamin Hawkins, North Carolina Delegate  | 18. William Ellery, Rhode Island Delegate | 26. Gen. Otho Holland Williams, Maryland Spectator |
| 3. Elbridge Gerry, Massachusetts Delegate           | 11. Abiel Foster, New Hampshire Delegate       | 19. J. Townley Chase, Maryland Delegate   | 27. Col. Samuel Smith, Maryland Spectator          |
| 4. Hugh Williamson, North Carolina Delegate         | 12. Thomas Jefferson, Virginia Delegate        | 20. Samuel Hardy, Virginia Delegate       | 28. Col. John E. Howard, Maryland Spectator        |
| 5. Samuel Osgood, Massachusetts Delegate            | 13. Arthur Lee, Virginia Delegate              | 21. Charles Morris, Pennsylvania Delegate | 29. Charles Carroll and two daughters, Maryland    |
| 6. Eleazer McComb, Delaware Delegate                | 14. David Howell, Rhode Island Delegate        | 22. General Washington Aide-de-camp       | 30. Mrs. Washington and her three grandchildren    |
| 7. George Partridge, Massachusetts Delegate         | 15. James Monroe, Virginia Delegate            | 23. Col. Benjamin Walker Aide-de-camp     | 31. Daniel of St. Jenifer, Maryland Spectator      |
| 8. Edward Lloyd, Maryland Delegate                  | 16. Jacob Read, South Carolina Delegate        |   |  |





