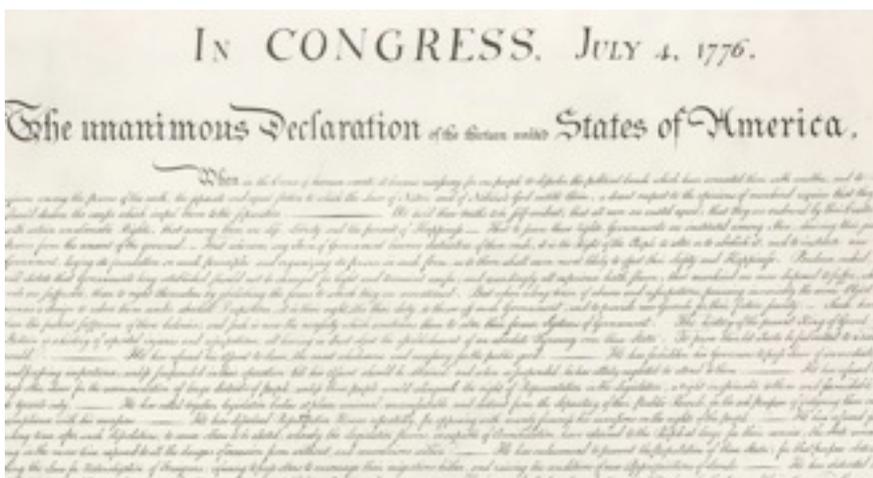


# ACCESS AMERICA

## The Declaration of Independence

*A Brief History of  
"America's Birth Certificate"*



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|------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Also in this issue</b>    |          |
| <b>From the IRC.....</b>     | <b>2</b> |
| <b>July Fellowships.....</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <b>Alumni Spotlight.....</b> | <b>4</b> |
| <b>Calendar.....</b>         | <b>4</b> |

document: the Declaration of Independence.

### Proposing Independence

The clearest call for independence up to the summer of 1776 came in Philadelphia on June 7. On that date in session in the Pennsylvania State House (later Independence Hall), the Continental Congress heard Richard Henry Lee of Virginia read his resolution beginning: "Resolved:

*Continued on PAGE 2*

Nations come into being in many ways. Military rebellion, civil strife, acts of heroism, acts of treachery, a thousand greater and lesser clashes between defenders of the old order and supporters of the new—all these occurrences and more have marked the emergences of new nations, large and small. The

birth of our own nation included them all. That birth was unique, not only in the immensity of its later impact on the course of world history and the growth of democracy, but also because so many of the threads in our national history run back through time to come together in one place, in one time, and in one

### From the Ambassador

On this Independence Day, Americans celebrate 232 years of freedom... freedom to choose not only the direction of our lives, but also the direction of our country. This year, as we do every four years, the American people are engaged in a great act of national renewal. In November, after months of debate, millions of Americans will once again exercise our right to vote.

Through our votes, Americans will signal our hopes, dreams and aspirations for our country. Through our votes, Americans will underscore our commitment to the principles of democracy and freedom on which our nation is founded. Through our votes, Americans will once again renew the United States.

I am honored to serve as Ambassador of the United States to Tunisia, a country whose citizens and government, under the leadership of President Ben Ali, also hold civic participation in high regard. As our countries continue to change and grow through renewal, I am certain we will become yet closer friends.

So, as friends, let us reflect and give thanks for the freedom we enjoy. For when people are free, and enjoy the blessing of democracy, they can renew their country and build a better, brighter future. We look forward to the time when people everywhere enjoy freedom, on the Fourth of July and every day of the year.

—Robert F. Godec

**From the IRC****A Timeline of Independence****1765-1773**

The British Parliament bypasses colonial assemblies and imposes several internal and external taxes on the outraged colonists.

**Dec. 16, 1773**

The colonial response to taxation without representation culminates in the Boston Tea Party. The Sons of Liberty dump 342 chests of tea into Boston harbor.

**Sept. 5, 1774**

Delegates begin meeting for the First Continental Congress and agree to send grievances to King George III.

**April 19, 1775**

Armed conflict between the colonists and British redcoats begins in Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts.

**May 10, 1775**

A Second Continental Congress begins meeting in Philadelphia.

**June 11, 1776**

The Continental Congress appoints a five-man committee, including Thomas Jefferson, to draft a declaration of independence.

**June 28, 1776**

The committee presents the declaration for debate and revision.

**July 4, 1776**

The Continental Congress adopts the Declaration of Independence without dissent.

— *Khaled Ben Bhouzid*

*Continued from PAGE 1*

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.”

When the Second Continental Congress, which was essentially the government of the United States from 1775 to 1788, first met in May 1775, King George III had not replied to the petition for redress of grievances that he had been sent by the First Continental Congress. The Congress gradually took on the responsibilities of a national government. In June 1775 the Congress established the Continental Army as well as a continental currency.

There were still some delegates, however, including those bound by earlier instructions, who wished to pursue the path of reconciliation with Britain. On June 11 consideration of the Lee Resolution was postponed by a vote of seven colonies to five, with New York abstaining. Congress then recessed for 3 weeks.

**Drafting the Declaration**

Before Congress recessed, therefore, a Committee of Five was appointed to draft a statement presenting to the world the colonies' case for independence. The committee consisted of two New England men, John Adams of Massachusetts and Roger Sherman of Connecticut; two men from the Middle Colonies, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania and Robert R. Livingston of New York; and one southerner, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia.

Jefferson wrote that the other

members of the committee “unanimously pressed on myself alone to undertake the draught [sic]. I consented; I drew it; but before I reported it to the committee I communicated it separately to Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams requesting their corrections. I then wrote a fair copy, reported it to the committee, and from them, unaltered to the Congress.”

**Independence Declared**

On July 1, 1776, Congress reconvened. The following day, the Lee Resolution for independence was adopted by 12 of the 13 colonies, New York not voting. Immediately afterward, the Congress began to consider the Declaration. The discussion in Congress resulted in some alterations and deletions, but the basic document remained Jefferson's. The process of revision continued through all of July 3 and into the late morning of July 4. Then, at last, church bells rang out over Philadelphia; the Declaration had been officially adopted.

On July 19 Congress was able to order that the Declaration be “fairly engrossed on parchment, with the title and stile [sic] of ‘The unanimous declaration of the thirteen United States of America,’ and that the same, when engrossed, be signed by every member of Congress.” John Hancock, the President of the Congress, was the first to sign the sheet of parchment measuring 24¼ by 29¾ inches. He used a bold signature centered below the text. In accordance with prevailing custom, the other delegates began to sign at the right below the text, their signatures arranged according to the geographic location of the states they represented. New Hamp-

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shire, the northernmost state, began the list, and Georgia, the southernmost, ended it. Eventually 56 delegates signed, although all were not present on August 2.

Over the next 200 years, the nation whose birth was announced with a Declaration "fairly engrossed on parchment" was to show immense growth in area, population, economic power, and social complexity and a lasting commitment to a testing and strengthening of its democracy.

--U.S. National Archives

### **Become an IRC Member**

The best way to take advantage of the Embassy's collection of feature films, books, journals, and other media is to become a member of the IRC. Simply bring one photo of yourself and one dinar to the IRC to receive your membership card.

### **July Fellowship Opportunities**

#### **Hubert Humphrey Fellowship**

Open to Mid-level professionals interested in a 10-month study and internship opportunity in the United States. Emphasizes the development of management and policy-making expertise, and is available in a wide-range of career fields. Applicants must have at least 5 years of professional experience, and a minimum score of 550 on the TOEFL. For more information contact Ms. Faouzia Ben Kheder at [benkhederf@state.gov](mailto:benkhederf@state.gov), or 71-107-438

**Deadline: July 31**

#### **E-Teacher Scholarship Program**

Online intensive graduate course for English teachers now accepting applications. Participants in these 10-week courses can improve their teaching skills in law and business English, assessment, and more.

For more information contact Mr. Sami Saieed at [saaieeds@state.gov](mailto:saaieeds@state.gov) or 71-107-259

**Deadline: August 1**

## **ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**

### **Olfa Souissi**

#### **Fulbright Fellowship program**

**Home in Tunisia :** Tunis.

**Home in U.S.:** Lisle, Illinois( Benedictine University).

**Fondest memory of being in the U.S.:** I cherish every single memory deep in my heart. My Fulbright experience has been so rich of challenges in learning, teaching and social matters every moment during my stay. I loved many new people of all ages and I have been loved by them, too. I have gained friends for life ; we discover each other more and value better ourselves.

**One of the most important things you learned from your experience:** I have learned how to be flexible with people from different backgrounds. I feel myself growing everyday personally, academically and above all professionally.

**Your advice for someone thinking about going on the program:** I strongly encourage anyone who is thinking to take part in the Fulbright program, as a prestigious and noble program, for the candidate will have a unique opportunity to explore himself/herself and improve oneself in

dealing with different people in many academic and professional positions. The Fulbrighter will blossom up his/her talents and feel much more proud of oneself and one's country in the United States of America, which offers many opportunities for a better future.

**What you most miss about the U.S.:** I miss my constant enthusiasm and warm eagerness to share my rich heritage with all the people I know through organizing cultural events, participating in Global Studies fo-



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rums, university clubs that I have initiated or I have taken part in such as Arabic Language Lab, Arabic Language House , Theater Club and many of them.

**Briefly describe your experience :( what activities you did while there, etc):** I have had the honor to initiate Language Lab and Language House at my host institution for all the students and staff members who like to join us to help them master linguistic and cultural backgrounds in the Arabic language. I was also chosen by the theater director to perform the role of Queen Eugea in Euripides' Medea : A Director's Nightmare, a famous Greek play in its origin. I was delighted to be an Arab Panelist presenter in Washington D.C. workshop in December 2008, giving a PowerPoint presentation about "My Involvement on Campus Activities" at Benedictine University. Many thanks to the Institute of International Education and The State of Department.

### **Did you know....**

July is the perfect time to start applying for admission to U.S. universities and scholarship programs for the 2009-2010 school-year. Interested students of all academic levels should visit these web-sites for more information.

U.S. State Department for Visiting Students

[www.educationusa.state.gov](http://www.educationusa.state.gov)

U.S. Embassy, Tunisia

<http://tunisia.usembassy.gov>

## **Calendar**

### **University of Southern Florida Dance Troupe**

*Multi-cultural dance performance featuring salsa, hip-hop, and other styles set to music from around the world.*

**July 25** - El Jem

**July 27** - Monastir

### **August 7 - Ezzahra Cultures in Harmony**

*A joint concert between Cultures in Harmony American and Tunisian music faculty.*

**July 25** - El Jem

**For ticketing information, please contact The American Center at the U.S. Embassy**

### **Summer Film Series: Multiculturalism in the U.S.**

presented at the American Corner at AMIDEAST

**Friday, July 11**

**2:00 PM**

The Last of the Mohicans

**Friday, July 18**

**2:00 PM**

Glory

### **Free English Conversation**

#### **Every Thursday**

American Corner at AMIDEAST  
2:00 PM

*Weekly discussions on topics from films and music to religion. Topics are posted weekly in the American Corner and at AMIDEAST.*

### **Study in the USA Consultations**

**Every Tuesday-Friday**  
AMIDEAST Advising Resource Library  
8:30-3:30 PM

*Browse materials from U.S. universities consult resources on applications and scholarships.*

American Corner at AMIDEAST  
22, Rue Al Amine al Abassi, Cite des Jardins, 1002 tunis-Belvedere, tel. 71-790-563 ext. 106

**The American Corner is Open All Summer Long, 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM**

**Please stop by and visit**



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