

## The Declaration of Independence

The significant aspect of the **Declaration of Independence** is that it changed the American “rebellion” against Great Britain into a “revolution.” From April 19, 1775 until July 2, 1776 the war was being fought so the colonists could regain their rights as Englishmen that had been taken away by the British from 1763-1775. On July 2, 1776 the Second Continental Congress approved the resolution by Richard Henry Lee from Virginia 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 .....” This was truly a revolutionary statement. John Adams felt that July 2 would be the day that would be “solemnized with Pomp and Parade with shows, games, sports, bonfires and illuminations from one end of this Continent to the other .....”

July 4 is the day that has been chosen as our “independence” day. That was the day that the Second Continental Congress approved but did not sign the Declaration of Independence mostly written by Thomas Jefferson. History has had a lot to do with the sanctity of July 4. It was on that day that the news of the Louisiana Purchase arrived in Washington, Henry David Thoreau arrived at Walden Pond and President Abraham Lincoln learned of the Union victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg. However, the one incredible event that happened to ordain July 4 as something significant were the deaths of both Thomas Jefferson and John Adams on July 4, 1826 only hours apart from each other.

The Declaration of Independence is on public display at the **National Archives** in Washington, D.C.



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