

# They're *ALL* Different

- Official text
- Each copy
- Timing of copy
- Who owned it / Who owns it now
- Commonly cited:
  - small errors, punctuation, and capitalization
- Today, we'll focus on Jefferson's handwritten "clean copy" to Richard Henry Lee

# Timeline

- June 7
- June 11
- June 21
- June 28
- July 1
- July 2
- July 3 & 4
  - July 4
- July 5 (and onward)
  - July 5?
- July 6
- July 8
  - Two happenings
- After July 19
- August 2
- 1777 copies

# Timeline

- June 7 – Richard Henry Lee – move to vote on a formal declaration
- June 11 - Committee of Five designated
  - Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Livingston, and Sherman (only non-APS Member was Sherman)
- June 21 – Jefferson’s first draft after committee off to Franklin and Adams
- June 28 – Committee’s first draft submitted
- July 1 – Debate on Lee’s resolution and copies submitted before congress begins
- July 2 – Congressmen vote on resolution, passed that day
- July 3 & 4 – debate continues of wording of the Declaration
  - July 4 – text approved and finalized
- July 5 (and onward) - Dunlap printings or broadsides
  - Dunlap parchment oddity
- July 6 – first unofficial printing in the *Pennsylvania Evening Post*
  - Towne, the printer, used less capitalization and he punctuated the second sentence differently
- July 8 – public readings commence & “clean copies”
  - John Nixon used a platform created by the APS in 1769
  - Jefferson produces “clean copies” after all of the edits to send to colleagues
- After July 19 – “Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America”
- August 2 – Matlack engrossed parchment copy w/ two corrected errors (NARA copy)
- 1777 copies – names added to publicly available copies

## **Declaration Timeline**

### *Extended Information*

**June 7** – Richard Henry Lee – move to vote on a formal declaration

- Lee brought forth a resolution on June 7th, 1776, demanding three things: a declaration of independence from Great Britain, a move to begin forming alliances with foreign allies, and the need to create a “plan of confederation.”
- Congress decides to delay voting on the resolution until a Declaration can be drafted

**June 11** - Committee of Five designated

- Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Livingston, and Sherman (only non-APS Member was Sherman)

**June 21** – Jefferson’s first draft after committee formed goes off to Franklin and Adams

**June 28** – Committee’s first draft submitted to Congress

**July 1** – Debate on Lee’s resolution and the copies submitted before congress begins

**July 2** – Congressmen vote on resolution, passed that day

**July 3 & 4** – debate continues of wording of the Declaration

- July 4 – text approved and finalized

**July 5** (and onward) - Dunlap printings or broadsides

- On July 4th, 1776, a copy of the completed document was brought to the printing shop of John Dunlap on Market Street in Philadelphia. Overnight, Dunlap printed a stack of copies of the document and delivered them to the state house.
  - Though it is unknown how many copies Dunlap printed that day, fewer than 25 survive today. One of those paper copies was acquired by the American Philosophical Society in 1901 in an exchange with the Library of Congress.
- In mid-July, Dunlap also printed a small number of copies of the Declaration on vellum, or parchment made from calfskin.
  - It’s unclear why Dunlap decided to make these additional copies, but it might have been because he, suspecting the historical significance of the document, wanted to create copies on more durable material.
  - The vellum copy owned by the APS was originally obtained by APS Member David Rittenhouse, who was a friend of Dunlap’s. It was passed down in Rittenhouse’s family, eventually coming into the possession of James Means, a physician, who donated it to the APS in 1828.

**July 6** – first unofficial printing in the Pennsylvania Evening Post

- Benjamin Towne, a printer, used less capitalization and he punctuated the second sentence differently

- Towne published a tri-weekly newspaper called the *Pennsylvania Evening Post*. On July 2nd, 1776, he printed an announcement reading "This day the CONTINENTAL CONGRESS declared the UNITED COLONIES FREE and INDEPENDENT STATES."
- In the next few days, Towne was able to obtain a copy of the document, and printed a copy of it in the July 6th edition of his newspaper, before John Dunlap was able to publish the text in his own paper, the *Pennsylvania Packet*.
- Towne's was the first newspaper to print the document, though other papers soon followed suit. Most Americans would have first read the document in this format.

**July 8** – public readings commence & “clean copies”

- In 1769, John Nixon read the Declaration of Independence aloud in the State House Yard in Philadelphia. He stood on a platform that had been built by the American Philosophical Society for David Rittenhouse to stand on while observing the Transit of Venus.
- Jefferson produces “clean copies” after all of the edits to send to colleagues

**After July 19** – “Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America”

- Printed copies of the document before July 19th began with the title “A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America in General Congress Assembled”

**August 2** – “Official Copy” - Matlack engrossed parchment copy with two corrected errors

- The “official copy”—a signed and engrossed version—of the Declaration of Independence (the one featured in the feature film *National Treasure*) is currently housed in the National Archives.
- The document was engrossed by Timothy Matlack. This copy was completed by August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1776, and delegates began signing the document that day and this continued over the next several months. Thomas McKean was the last signer.

**1777 copies** – names added to publicly available copies