

Congress proceeded the same day to consider the declaration of Independence, which had been reported & laid on the table the Friday preceding, and on Monday referred to a committee of the whole. The prolixious idea that we had friends in England worth keeping terms with still haunted the minds of many. for this reason those passages which conveyed censures on the people of England were struck out lest they should give them offence. The clause too reprobatory the enslaving the inhabitants of Africa was struck out in complaisance to S. Carolina & Georgia, who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves, & who on the contrary still wished to continue it. our Northern brethren also, I believe, felt a little tender under those censures; for tho' their people have very few slaves themselves, yet they had been pretty considerable carriers of them to others. The debates having taken up the greater parts of the 2^d. 3^d. & 4th. days of July, were, in the evening of the last, closed; the decla-

nation was reported by the committee, agreed to by the house, & signed by every member except our Dickenson. as the sentiments of men are known not only by what they receive but what they reject also, I will state the form of the declaration as originally reported. The parts struck out by Congress shall be distinguished by a black line drawn under them, & those inserted by them shall be placed in the margin or in a concurrent column.

A Declaration by the representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, & to assume among the powers of the earth the separate & equal station to which the laws of nature & nature's god entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

^ certain

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with unalienable & inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles & organising its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness. prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light & transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils

are sufferable, than to right themselves
by abolishing the forms to which they are
accustomed, but when a long train of
abuses & usurpations begin at a diston-
-quished period and pursuing invari-
ably the same object, evinces a design
to reduce them under absolute despo-
-tion, it is their right, it is their duty
to throw off such government, & to provide
new guards for their future security. such
has been the patient sufferance of these
colonies, & such is now the necessity, which
constrains them to [repeal] their for-
mer systems of government. the history
of the present king of Great Britain is a
history of [unremitted] injuries & usur-
-pations [among which appears no solitary
fact to contradict the uniform tenor of the
rest but all have] in direct object the
establishment of an absolute tyranny
over these states, to prove this let facts
be submitted to a candid world [for the
truth of which we pledge a faith not un-
-sullied by falsehood]

alter

repeated

all having

he has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome & necessary for the public good.

he has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate & pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; & when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

he has refused to pass other laws for the accomodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them, & formidable to tyrants only.

he has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, & distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

he has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, and continually for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

he has refused for a long time after such dissolutions to cause others to be elected, whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise, the state remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without & convulsions within.

he has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, & raising the conditions of new appropriations of land.

he has suffered the administration of justice totally to cease in some of these states, refusing his assent to laws

obstructive

by

for establishing judiciary powers.

he has made ~~the~~ judges dependant on his will alone for the tenure of their offices, & the amount & payment of their salaries.

he has erected a multitude of new offices [by a self assumed power] and sent hither swarms of new officers to harass our people & eat out their substance.

he has kept among us in times of peace standing armies [ships of war] without the consent of our legislatures.

he has affected to render the military independant of & superior to the civil power.

he has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution & unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; for protecting them by a mock trial from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these

~~cohabitation~~ ~~the~~ ~~representation~~
~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~rationally~~ ~~for~~
~~oppress~~ states; for cutting off our
trade with all parts of the world;
for imposing taxes on us without our
consent; for depriving us of the bene- ^{in many cases}
fits of trial by jury; for transporting
us beyond seas to be tried for pretend-
ed offences; for abolishing the free
system of English laws in a neighbor-
ing province establishing therein an
arbitrary government, & enlarging
it's boundaries, to as to render it at
once an example & fit instrument
for introducing the same absolute rule
into these States; for taking away our ^{colonies}
charters, abolishing our most valuable
laws, & altering fundamentally the
forms of ^{our} governments; for suspending
our own legislatures, & declaring them-
selves invested with power to legislate
for us in all cases whatsoever.

he has abdicated government here

by declaring us
out of his protection &
waging war against us.

[Withdrawing his governors & declaring
us out of his allegiance & protection]

he has plundered our seas, ravaged
our coasts, burnt our towns, & destroyed
the lives of our people.

he is at this time transporting large
armies of foreign mercenaries to complete
the works of death, desolation & tyranny
already begun with circumstances of cruelty

scarcely parallel-
ed in the most barba-
rous ages, & wholly
by and perfidy, unworthy the head of a
civilized nation.

he has constrained our fellow citizens
taken captive on the high seas to bear
arms against their country, to become the
executioners of their friends & brethren,
or to fall themselves by their hands.

excited domestic
insurrections among
us, & has

he has endeavored to bring on the inha-
bitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian
savages, whose known rule of warfare is
an undistinguished destruction of all ages,
sexes & conditions [of existence.]

[He has incited reasonable insur-
rections of our fellow-citizens with the
allurements of forfeiture & confiscation
of our property.]

he has waged cruel war against
human nature itself, violating it's

most sacred rights of life & liberty in the
persons of a distant people who never of-
fended them, capturing & carrying them
into slavery in another hemisphere, or
to incur miserable death in their trans-
-portation thither. This piratical warfare,
the oppression of infidel powers, is the
warfare of the Christian King of Great Bri-
-tain. determined to keep open a market
where Men should be bought & sold, he
has prostituted his negative for suppres-
-sing every legislative attempt to prohibit
or to restrain this execrable commerce.
and that this assemblage of horrors might
want no fact of distinguished die he is now
exciting those very people to rise in arms
among us, and to purchase that liberty of
which he has deprived them by murdering
the people on whom he also obtruded them:
thus paying off former crimes committed
against the liberties of one people, with
crimes which he urges them to commit
against the lives of another.]

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injuries. a prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a people [who mean to be free.] ^{a free} future ages will scarcely believe that the hardiness of one man adventured, within the short compass of twelve years only, to lay a foundation so broad & so undisguised for tyranny over a people fostered & fixed in principles of freedom.

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. we have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend [a] jurisdiction over these our states ^{a an unwarlike} we have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration & settlement here ^{us.} [none of which could warrant to change a pretension that these were effected at the expence of our own blood & treasure, unassisted by the wealth or the strength of Great Britain: that in constituting indeed our several forms of

government, we had adopted one com-
-mon King, thereby laying a foundation for
perpetual league & amity with them: but
that submission to their parliament
was no part of our constitution, nor ever
in idea, if history may be credited: and
we appealed to their native justice and
magnanimity, [as well as to] the ties of ^{we have} and we have
our common kindred to disavow these ^{conjured them}
usurpations which [were likely to] inter- ^{would invid}
-rupt our connection and correspondence.
They too have been deaf to the voice of
justice & consanguinity, [and when occa-
-sions have been given them by the re-
-gular course of their laws, of removing
from their councils the disturbers of our
harmony, they have, by their free election,
re-established them in power. at this
very time too they are permitting their
chief magistrate to condemn not only
soldiers of our common blood, but
Scotch & foreign mercenaries to invade
& destroy us. These facts have given
the last stab to a quivering affection,
and manly spirit bids us to renounce

for ever these unfeeling brethren we must endeavor to forget our former love for them, and to hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends. we might have been a free & a great people together, but a communication of grandeur & of freedom it seems is below their dignity. be it so, since they will have it. the road to happiness & to glory is open to us too, we will tread it apart from them, and acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our eternal separation!

we must therefore

hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

We therefore the representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled

appealing to the supreme judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name & by the authority of the good people of these colonies solemnly publish & declare that these United States are & of right ought to be free & independent states, that they are absolved from all allegiance

do in the name & by authority of the good people of these states, reject & renounce all allegiance & subjection to the kings of Great Britain. & all others who may hereafter claim by through, or under them: we utterly dissolve all political connection which may heretofore have subsisted between us, & the people or parliament of

to the British crown, & that all political connection between them & the state of Great Britain is & ought to be totally dissolved;

Great Britain: & we do assert & declare these colonies to be free & independant states

and that as free & independant states they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, & to do all other acts & things which independant states may of right do. and for the support of this declaration, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes & our sacred honor.

with a full
reliance on
protection
divine pro-
-dence

On Friday July 12. The committee appointed to draw the articles of Confederation reported them, & on the 22^d the house resolved themselves into a committee to take them into consideration. on the 30th & 31st of that month & 1st of the ensuing, those articles were debated which determined the proportion or quota of money which each state should furnish to the common treasury & the manner of voting in Congress.