

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.



HEY, LITTLE BUDDIES!

IT'S UNCLE RICK, coming to you from the Little House in the Pasture— where you can hear the birds sing, the cows moo, the horses neigh, and Uncle Rick talk to his little buddies!

We're getting close to one of my favorite times of the year: Independence Day! That's the day, July 4th, when we celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the birth of America. You know, you and I are so blessed to be Americans. We have much more freedom in our country than most people in the world ever know. Our Constitution, especially the Bill of Rights, was established for the purpose of protecting the rights of citizens and limiting the power of government. That's the reason you and I can do and say whatever we choose as long as we don't hurt somebody else by doing so.

The men who started the United States (we call them our Founding Fathers) were English citizens living in North America in the 1700's. They lived in thirteen colonies along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean from New Hampshire in the north to Georgia in the south. The first English colony in America was Jamestown in Virginia. It was established in 1607. The second one was Plymouth in Massachusetts, founded in 1620. That's the one the Pilgrims started.

The other eleven English colonies followed in later years, with Georgia established last in 1733. The people who lived in the colonies came as Englishmen and intended to always be Englishmen. But before long, there was trouble between the colonies and their home country.

King George and the Parliament (sort of like our Congress) started doing things and making laws that weren't fair to the citizens in the American colonies. The King sent soldiers to the colonies and forced the

[Faint background text from the original Declaration of Independence document, including phrases like "When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them..." and the names of the signatories at the bottom.]

colonists to provide them with places to live in their own homes. He allowed American sailors to be kidnapped from their ships and forced to serve on British navy ships against their will. He stopped some of the American courts from punishing criminals and settling arguments between citizens. He imposed taxes on the colonists without letting them have any part in deciding about them. He seized guns and ammunition that the colonists had stored to protect themselves. He even stirred up some of the Indians to attack the colonies!

You've heard about the fights between the Patriots and the British soldiers at Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts. That was in 1775. The British had heard that the colonists had guns stored at Concord and that Patriot leaders, John Hancock and Samuel Adams, were staying at a friend's home in Lexington. So the British sent soldiers out to capture Adams and Hancock and take the arms and ammunition stored at Concord.

But Paul Revere, William Dawes, and other Patriots rode through the countryside, warning everyone that the British were on their way. When the Redcoats arrived at Lexington at daybreak on April 19th, Adams and Hancock had made their escape and the countryside was swarming with Minutemen on their way to stop the British.

Even after these battles, most Americans were still loyal to England and only asked for their rights as Englishmen. But the King wouldn't listen. And when the colonists sent him the Olive Branch Petition asking for peace between the colonies and the mother



Signing of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776



*Independence Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,
where the Declaration of Independence was signed*

The independence of America was built on the truth of the Bible, that all people are equal before God and have rights given by Him that no other man should violate. Most people in the colonies worshiped God and believed in the Bible and most leaders in the colonies were God-fearing men. Also, God had sent a great revival called the Great Awakening in the years before the War of Independence that had brought salvation to many thousands of people under the preaching of George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and other preachers.

So it was that from the early days of the colonial period, when the Pilgrims started the Plymouth colony as a Christian community, until over one hundred fifty years later when

country, he replied that he intended to treat the American colonies like a foreign country to be defeated and controlled by England. The next year, representatives from all the thirteen colonies met in Philadelphia and signed the Declaration of Independence. That Declaration told the world that the colonies no longer belonged to England, but were free and independent states.

The King didn't take that lying down. He sent more English soldiers to fight the Americans and even hired Hessian soldiers from Germany to help. But the Patriots won the War of Independence and a few years later the colonies passed the Constitution, making them one nation—the United States of America.



Minuteman Statue, Lexington, Massachusetts

the Founding Fathers wrote the Declaration of Independence based on our God-given inalienable rights, God was preparing to build a Christian nation based on His principles. And that's why America has worked so well. That's why we have so much freedom and justice in our country. And that's why so many people from other countries come to live in America every year.

God's ways work. I hope you will obey God in your life so that He can make you a happy and profitable servant of His, all your days. And I hope you will always be patriotic and work hard to keep God's ways known and honored in America so that He can bless our country. May America always be the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Have a great Independence Day, and never forget that freedom is a gift from God.

So long, little buddies. God bless you!

Love,

Uncle Rick

