



THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

MAY 10 1775



RESOURCE INFORMATION

STANDARDS:

- 2010 Alabama Social Studies Course of Study
 - 5.8
 - 10.3
 - 12.2
- 2025 Alabama Social Studies Course of Study
 - 4.5b
 - 6.7b
 - 10.1
 - 12.2

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High School Activities Coming Soon

THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

On May 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The colonies were at the beginning of a war with England for their independence. Many delegates were traveling to Philadelphia when the first shots were fired at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775.

The Second Continental Congress had big issues to tackle during this meeting. The first orders of business were to establish the Continental Army and to elect George Washington as the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. Once that was done, the delegates began tackling the issues of whether or not they wanted to actually separate from England. Even though the delegates were angry, many did not want to split from Mother England, so they drafted the Olive Branch Petition. This document laid out ways for England and America to reconcile if America was given a vote in Parliament. Taxation without representation was not a war cry about the taxes themselves, but about the fact that the colonists had no say in the British Parliament. The Olive Branch Petition was the last shot at a peaceful end to the rising tensions between America and England. King George III refused to hear the petition and the delegates knew that it was time to move forward.

Richard Henry Lee, a delegate from Virginia, presented the Lee Resolution in June of 1776. His thoughts can be summarized in one quote, "Resolved, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states..." The delegates were still not quite ready to take the large step into independence, but they were ready to get serious about the idea. The Committee of Five was formed to draft a declaration of independence. Thomas Jefferson, Virginia; John Adams, Massachusetts; Benjamin Franklin, Pennsylvania; Roger Sherman, Connecticut; and Robert Livingston, New York were on the committee, but Jefferson did most of the work on the draft. The final draft was presented and edited on July 2, 1776. The final vote on July 4th led to the passing of the Declaration of Independence without the signatures. Fifty of the delegates signed the document on August 2, 1776 with the other 5 signing it throughout 1777.

The Second Continental Congress continued to be the default government for the colonies as the war raged on and into the early years of our democratic republic. They made war decisions, sent delegates to discuss peace and alliances, and secured loans for the struggling country during the war. This Congress stayed in power until February of 1781. On March 1, 1781, the Confederation Congress would take over and begin to build the country we now know.



FOURTH THROUGH SIXTH GRADE

MAY 10 1775



Name: _____

THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

1. When did the Second Continental Congress first meet?

- A. April 19, 1775
- B. May 10, 1775
- C. July 4, 1776
- D. March 1, 1781

2. What major event had just happened before the Congress met?

- A. The signing of the Declaration of Independence
- B. The battles of Lexington and Concord
- C. The Boston Tea Party
- D. The end of the Revolutionary War

3. What was one of the first things the Second Continental Congress did?

- A. Write the Constitution
- B. Form the Continental Army
- C. End the war
- D. Vote for independence

4. Who was chosen as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army?

- A. Benjamin Franklin
- B. George Washington
- C. Thomas Jefferson
- D. John Adams

5. What was the Olive Branch Petition?

- A. A letter asking King George to give up the colonies
- B. A final attempt at peace with England
- C. A list of battle strategies
- D. A plan to move the capital

Name: _____

THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

6. Why were the colonists upset about "taxation without representation"?

- A. They didn't want to pay any taxes
- B. They were taxed more than people in England
- C. They had no say in British Parliament
- D. The taxes were too confusing

7. What was the purpose of the Lee Resolution?

- A. To end the war
- B. To send troops to England
- C. To declare the colonies as free and independent
- D. To return to English rule

8. Who did most of the writing for the Declaration of Independence?

- A. John Adams
- B. Benjamin Franklin
- C. Thomas Jefferson
- D. Robert Livingston

9. When was the Declaration of Independence officially passed?

- A. May 10, 1775
- B. July 2, 1776
- C. July 4, 1776
- D. August 2, 1776

10. What happened after the Second Continental Congress ended?

- A. The Revolutionary War ended
- B. The Confederation Congress took over
- C. The colonies rejoined England
- D. George Washington became king

Name: _____

THE OLIVE BRANCH PETITION ACTIVITY

Directions: You are a delegate at the Second Continental Congress in 1775. Write a respectful letter to King George III asking for peace and fair treatment for the colonies. Here's an example to get you started.

TEMPLATE:

Date: _____

Dear King George III,

My name is _____, and I am a delegate from the colony of _____. I am writing to you because

_____ (Explain why you and the other colonists are upset.) We love our country, but we feel that

_____ (Talk about your feelings toward England and what is unfair.) One big issue is

_____. (Explain a major complaint, like taxes or no vote in Parliament.) We would like to stay part of England if

_____ (Say what you hope the King will change.) This letter is a peaceful request. We hope you will listen and give the colonies a voice.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)

THE OLIVE BRANCH PETITION ACTIVITY

Sincerely,

Name: _____

THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS COMIC

Directions:

- Read the passage carefully.
- Choose 6 key scenes to include in your comic.
- In each panel, draw the scene, add dialogue or narration, and label important people or places.
- Use the Comic Planning Sheet to brainstorm before drawing the final comic.

Box #	Characters	Event	Dialogue

Name: _____

THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS COMIC



TENTH THROUGH TWELFTH
GRADE

MAY 10 1775



THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

Grade Level: 9th-12th Grade (U.S. History or Civics)

Time: One 45-60 minute class with possibility of working on extension project a second day

Objectives:

- Students will be able to:
 - Understand the significance of the Second Continental Congress.
 - Analyze primary source documents to explore colonial perspectives.
 - Reflect on the legacy of the Congress 250 years later.

Essential Questions:

- Why was the Second Continental Congress a turning point in American history?
- How did the Congress balance revolution and diplomacy?
- In what ways does the legacy of the Congress still affect the U.S. government today?

Materials:

- Printed copies of the Olive Branch Petition and the Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms. (at the end of the lesson plan)
- Whiteboard for class discussions.
- Paper or digital devices for student reflections.

LESSON PLAN

Warm-Up (5-10 min)

- Display the prompt:
 - "If you were part of a group resisting a powerful empire, what would you want your leaders to do first?"
- Have students journal responses or discuss briefly in pairs.

Mini-Lecture & Discussion (15 min)

- Provide an overview of the Second Continental Congress:
 - Convened on May 10, 1775, in Philadelphia.
 - Managed the colonial war effort and moved toward independence.
 - Adopted the Declaration of Independence in 1776.
 - Issued the Olive Branch Petition and the Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms.
- Discuss the challenges faced by the Congress and its significance in American history.

Primary Source Activity (20 mins):

- Divide students into small groups and assign each group one of the two documents:
 - Olive Branch Petition: A final attempt at reconciliation with Britain.
 - Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms: Justification for armed resistance.
- Provide guiding questions for analysis:
 - Who wrote this document?
 - What is the tone of the document?
 - What reasons do the authors give for their actions?
 - How do these documents reflect the mood of the colonies at the time?
- Have groups share their findings with the class.

Wrap-Up Reflection (5-10 mins):

- Writing Prompt:
 - "250 years later, why does the Second Continental Congress still matter?"
 - Students can write a paragraph or record a short audio/video clip reflecting on the legacy of the Congress.

Extension:

- Assign students to design a commemorative poster or social media post for the 250th anniversary, highlighting one key accomplishment of the Congress.

THE OLIVE BRANCH PETITION

Olive Branch Petition (July 5, 1775):

Approved by the Continental Congress on July 5, 1775

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty. Most Gracious Sovereign,

We your Majesty's faithful subjects of the colonies of New-hampshire, Massachussetts-bay, Rhode island and Providence plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, the counties of New Castle, Kent and Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina, in behalf of ourselves and the inhabitants of these colonies, who have deputed us to represent them in general Congress, entreat your Majesty's gracious attention to this our humble petition.

The union between our Mother Country and these colonies, and the energy of mild and just government, produced benefits so remarkably important, and afforded such an assurance of their permanency and increase, that the wonder and envy of other Nations were excited, while they beheld Great Britain riseing to a power the most extraordinary the world had ever known.

Her rivals observing, that there was no probability of this happy connection being broken by civil dissentions, and apprehending its future effects, if left any longer undisturbed, resolved to prevent her receiving such continual and formidable accessions of wealth and strength, by checking the growth of these settlements from which they were to be derived.

In the prosecution of this attempt events so unfavourable to the design took place, that every friend to the interests of Great Britain and these colonies entertained pleasing and reasonable expectations of seeing an additional force and extention immediately given to the operations of the union hitherto experienced, by an enlargement of the dominions of the Crown, and the removal of ancient and warlike enemies to a greater distance.

At the conclusion therefore of the late war, the most glorious and advantagious that ever had been carried on by British arms, your loyal colonists having contributed to its success, by such repeated and strenuous exertions, as frequently procured them the distinguished approbation of your Majesty, of the late king, and of Parliament, doubted not but that they should be permitted with the rest of the empire, to share in the blessings of peace and the emoluments of victory and conquest. While these recent and honorable acknowledgments of their merits remained on record in the journals and acts of the august legislature the Parliament, undefaced by the imputation or even the suspicion of any offence, they were alarmed by a new system of Statutes and regulations adopted for the administration of the colonies, that filled their minds with the most painful fears and jealousies; and to their

THE OLIVE BRANCH PETITION

inexpressible astonishment perceived the dangers of a foreign quarrel quickly succeeded by domestic dangers, in their judgment of a more dreadful kind. Nor were their anxieties alleviated by any tendency in this system to promote the welfare of the Mother Country. For 'tho its effects were more immediately felt by them, yet its influence appeared to be injurious to the commerce and prosperity of Great Britain.

We shall decline the ungrateful task of describing the irksome variety of artifices practised by many of your Majestys ministers, the delusive pretences, fruitless terrors, and unavailing severities, that have from time to time been dealt out by them, in their attempts to execute this impolitic plan, or of tracing thro' a series of years past the progress of the unhappy differences between Great Britain and these colonies which have flowed from this fatal source.

Your Majestys ministers persevering in their measures and proceeding to open hostilities for enforcing them, have compelled us to arm in our own defence, and have engaged us in a controversy so peculiarly abhorrent to the affection of your still faithful colonists, that when we consider whom we must oppose in this contest, and if it continues, what may be the consequences, our own particular misfortunes are accounted by us, only as parts of our distress.

Knowing, to what violent resentments and incurable animosities, civil discords are apt to exasperate and inflame the contending parties, we think ourselves required by indispensable obligations to Almighty God, to your Majesty, to our fellow subjects, and to ourselves, immediately to use all the means in our power not incompatible with our safety, for stopping the further effusion of blood, and for averting the impending calamities that threaten the British Empire.

Thus called upon to address your Majesty on affairs of such moment to America, and probably to all your dominions, we are earnestly desirous of performing this office with the utmost deference for your Majesty; and we therefore pray, that your royal magnanimity and benevolence may make the most favourable construction of our expressions on so uncommon an occasion. Could we represent in their full force the sentiments that agitate the minds of us your dutiful subjects, we are persuaded, your Majesty would ascribe any seeming deviation from reverence, and our language, and even in our conduct, not to any reprehensible intention but to the impossibility or reconciling the usual appearances of respect with a just attention to our own preservation against those artful and cruel enemies, who abuse your royal confidence and authority for the purpose of effecting our destruction.

THE OLIVE BRANCH PETITION

Attached to your Majestys person, family and government with all the devotion that principle and affection can inspire, connected with Great Britain by the strongest ties that can unite societies, and deploring every event that tends in any degree to weaken them, we solemnly assure your Majesty, that we not only most ardently desire the former harmony between her and these colonies may be restored but that a concord may be established between them upon so firm a basis, as to perpetuate its blessings uninterrupted by any future dissensions to succeeding generations in both countries, and to transmit your Majestys name to posterity adorned with that signal and lasting glory that has attended the memory of those illustrious personages, whose virtues and abilities have extricated states from dangerous convulsions, and by securing happiness to others, have erected the most noble and durable monuments to their own fame.

We beg leave further to assure your Majesty that notwithstanding the sufferings of your loyal colonists during the course of the present controversy, our breasts retain too tender a regard for the kingdom from which we derive our origin to request such a reconciliation as might in any manner be inconsistent with her dignity or her welfare. These, related as we are to her, honor and duty, as well as inclination induce us to support and advance; and the apprehensions that now oppress our hearts with unspeakable grief, being once removed, your Majesty will find your faithful subjects on this continent ready and willing at all times, as they ever have been with their lives and fortunes to assert and maintain the rights and interests of your Majesty and of our Mother Country.

We therefore beseech your Majesty, that your royal authority and influence may be graciously interposed to procure us releif [sic] from our afflicting fears and jealousies occasioned by the system before mentioned, and to settle peace through every part of your dominions, with all humility submitting to your Majesty's wise consideration, whether it may not be expedient for facilitating those important purposes, that your Majesty be pleased to direct some mode by which the united applications of your faithful colonists to the throne, in pursuance of their common councils, may be improved into a happy and permanent reconciliation; and that in the meantime measures be taken for preventing the further destruction of the lives of your Majesty's subjects; and that such statutes as more immediately distress any of your Majestys colonies be repealed: For by such arrangements as your Majesty's wisdom can form for collecting the united sense of your American people, we are convinced, your Majesty would receive such satisfactory proofs of the disposition of the colonists

THE OLIVE BRANCH PETITION

towards their sovereign and the parent state, that the wished for opportunity would soon be restored to them, of evincing the sincerity of their professions by every testimony of devotion becoming the most dutiful subjects and the most affectionate colonists.

That your Majesty may enjoy a long and prosperous reign, and that your descendants may govern your dominions with honor to themselves and happiness to their subjects is our sincere and fervent prayer.

DECLARATION OF THE CAUSES AND NECESSITY OF TAKING UP ARMS

If it was possible for men, who exercise their reason to believe, that the divine Author of our existence intended a part of the human race to hold an absolute property in, and an unbounded power over others, marked out by his infinite goodness and wisdom, as the objects of a legal domination never rightfully resistible, however severe and oppressive, the inhabitants of these colonies might at least require from the parliament of Great-Britain some evidence, that this dreadful authority over them, has been granted to that body. But a reverence for our Creator, principles of humanity, and the dictates of common sense, must convince all those who reflect upon the subject, that government was instituted to promote the welfare of mankind, and ought to be administered for the attainment of that end. The legislature of Great-Britain, however, stimulated by an inordinate passion for a power not only unjustifiable, but which they know to be peculiarly reprobated by the very constitution of that kingdom, and desparate of success in any mode of contest, where regard should be had to truth, law, or right, have at length, deserting those, attempted to effect their cruel and impolitic purpose of enslaving these colonies by violence, and have thereby rendered it necessary for us to close with their last appeal from reason to arms. – Yet, however blinded that assembly may be, by their intemperate rage for unlimited domination, so to sight justice and the opinion of mankind, we esteem ourselves bound by obligations of respect to the rest of the world, to make known the justice of our cause.

Our forefathers, inhabitants of the island of Great-Britain, left their native land, to seek on these shores a residence for civil and religious freedom. At the expense of their blood, at the hazard of their fortunes, without the least charge to the country from which they removed, by unceasing labour, and an unconquerable spirit, they effected settlements in the distant and inhospitable wilds of America, then filled with numerous and warlike barbarians. -- Societies or governments, vested with perfect legislatures, were formed under charters from the crown, and an harmonious intercourse was established between the colonies and the kingdom from which they derived their origin. The mutual benefits of this union became in a short time so extraordinary, as to excite astonishment. It is universally confessed, that the amazing increase of the wealth, strength, and navigation of the realm, arose from this source; and the minister, who so wisely and successfully directed the measures of Great-Britain in the late war, publicly declared, that these colonies enabled her to triumph over her enemies. --Towards the conclusion of that war, it pleased our sovereign to make a change in his counsels. --

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-- From that fatal movement, the affairs of the British empire began to fall into confusion, and gradually sliding from the summit of glorious prosperity, to which they had been advanced by the virtues and abilities of one man, are at length distracted by the convulsions, that now shake it to its deepest foundations. -- The new ministry finding the brave foes of Britain, though frequently defeated, yet still contending, took up the unfortunate idea of granting them a hasty peace, and then subduing her faithful friends.

These devoted colonies were judged to be in such a state, as to present victories without bloodshed, and all the easy emoluments of statuteable plunder. -- The uninterrupted tenor of their peaceable and respectful behaviour from the beginning of colonization, their dutiful, zealous, and useful services during the war, though so recently and amply acknowledged in the most honourable manner by his majesty, by the late king, and by parliament, could not save them from the meditated innovations.

-- Parliament was influenced to adopt the pernicious project, and assuming a new power over them, have in the course of eleven years, given such decisive specimens of the spirit and consequences attending this power, as to leave no doubt concerning the effects of acquiescence under it. They have undertaken to give and grant our money without our consent, though we have ever exercised an exclusive right to dispose of our own property; statutes have been passed for extending the jurisdiction of courts of admiralty and vice-admiralty beyond their ancient limits; for depriving us of the accustomed and inestimable privilege of trial by jury, in cases affecting both life and property; for suspending the legislature of one of the colonies; for interdicting all commerce to the capital of another; and for altering fundamentally the form of government established by charter, and secured by acts of its own legislature solemnly confirmed by the crown; for exempting the "murderers" of colonists from legal trial, and in effect, from punishment; for erecting in a neighbouring province, acquired by the joint arms of Great-Britain and America, a despotism dangerous to our very existence; and for quartering soldiers upon the colonists in time of profound peace. It has also been resolved in parliament, that colonists charged with committing certain offences, shall be transported to England to be tried.

But why should we enumerate our injuries in detail? By one statute it is declared, that parliament can "of right make laws to bind us in all cases whatsoever." What is to defend us against so enormous, so unlimited a power? Not a single man of those who assume it, is chosen by us; or is subject to our control or influence; but, on the contrary, they are all of them exempt from the operation of such laws, and an

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American revenue, if not diverted from the ostensible purposes for which it is raised, would actually lighten their own burdens in proportion, as they increase ours. We saw the misery to which such despotism would reduce us. We for ten years incessantly and ineffectually besieged the throne as supplicants; we reasoned, we remonstrated with parliament, in the most mild and decent language.

Administration sensible that we should regard these oppressive measures as freemen ought to do, sent over fleets and armies to enforce them. The indignation of the Americans was roused, it is true; but it was the indignation of a virtuous, loyal, and affectionate people. A Congress of Delegates from the United Colonies was assembled at Philadelphia, on the fifth day of last September. We resolved again to offer an humble and dutiful petition to the King, and also addressed our fellow-subjects of Great-Britain. We have pursued every temperate, every respectful measure; we have even proceeded to break off our commercial intercourse with our fellow-subjects, as the last peaceable admonition, that our attachment to no nation upon earth should supplant our attachment to liberty. -- This, we flattered ourselves, was the ultimate step of the controversy: but subsequent events have shewn, how vain was this hope of finding moderation in our enemies.

Several threatening expressions against the colonies were inserted in his majesty's speech; our petition, tho' we were told it was a decent one, and that his majesty had been pleased to receive it graciously, and to promise laying it before his parliament, was huddled into both houses among a bundle of American papers, and there neglected. The lords and commons in their address, in the month of February, said, that "a rebellion at that time actually existed within the province of Massachusetts-Bay; and that those concerned with it, had been countenanced and encouraged by unlawful combinations and engagements, entered into by his majesty's subjects in several of the other colonies; and therefore they besought his majesty, that he would take the most effectual measures to inforce due obedience to the laws and authority of the supreme legislature." -- Soon after, the commercial intercourse of whole colonies, with foreign countries, and with each other, was cut off by an act of parliament; by another several of them were intirely prohibited from the fisheries in the seas near their coasts, on which they always depended for their sustenance; and large reinforcements of ships and troops were immediately sent over to general Gage.

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Fruitless were all the entreaties, arguments, and eloquence of an illustrious band of the most distinguished peers, and commoners, who nobly and strenuously asserted the justice of our cause, to stay, or even to mitigate the heedless fury with which these accumulated and unexampled outrages were hurried on. -- equally fruitless was the interference of the city of London, of Bristol, and many other respectable towns in our favor. Parliament adopted an insidious manoeuvre calculated to divide us, to establish a perpetual auction of taxations where colony should bid against colony, all of them uninformed what ransom would redeem their lives; and thus to extort from us, at the point of the bayonet, the unknown sums that should be sufficient to gratify, if possible to gratify, ministerial rapacity, with the miserable indulgence left to us of raising, in our own mode, the prescribed tribute. What terms more rigid and humiliating could have been dictated by remorseless victors to conquered enemies? in our circumstances to accept them, would be to deserve them.

Soon after the intelligence of these proceedings arrived on this continent, general Gage, who in the course of the last year had taken possession of the town of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts-Bay, and still occupied it a garrison, on the 19th day of April, sent out from that place a large detachment of his army, who made an unprovoked assault on the inhabitants of the said province, at the town of Lexington, as appears by the affidavits of a great number of persons, some of whom were officers and soldiers of that detachment, murdered eight of the inhabitants, and wounded many others. From thence the troops proceeded in warlike array to the town of Concord, where they set upon another party of the inhabitants of the same province, killing several and wounding more, until compelled to retreat by the country people suddenly assembled to repel this cruel aggression. Hostilities, thus commenced by the British troops, have been since prosecuted by them without regard to faith or reputation. -- The inhabitants of Boston being confined within that town by the general their governor, and having, in order to procure their dismissal, entered into a treaty with him, it was stipulated that the said inhabitants having deposited their arms with their own magistrate, should have liberty to depart, taking with them their other effects. They accordingly delivered up their arms, but in open violation of honour, in defiance of the obligation of treaties, which even savage nations esteemed sacred, the governor ordered the arms deposited as aforesaid, that they might be preserved for their owners, to be seized by a body of soldiers; detained the greatest part of the inhabitants in the town, and compelled the few who were permitted to retire, to leave their most valuable effects behind.

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By this perfidy wives are separated from their husbands, children from their parents, the aged and the sick from their relations and friends, who wish to attend and comfort them; and those who have been used to live in plenty and even elegance, are reduced to deplorable distress.

The general, further emulating his ministerial masters, by a proclamation bearing date on the 12th day of June, after venting the grossest falsehoods and calumnies against the good people of these colonies, proceeds to "declare them all, either by name or description, to be rebels and traitors, to supersede the course of the common law, and instead thereof to publish and order the use and exercise of the law martial." -- His troops have butchered our countrymen, have wantonly burnt Charlestown, besides a considerable number of houses in other places; our ships and vessels are seized; the necessary supplies of provisions are intercepted, and he is exerting his utmost power to spread destruction and devastation around him.

We have received certain intelligence, that general Carleton[Carleton], the governor of Canada, is instigating the people of that province and the Indians to fall upon us; and we have but too much reason to apprehend, that schemes have been formed to excite domestic enemies against us. In brief, a part of these colonies now feel, and all of them are sure of feeling, as far as the vengeance of administration can inflict them, the complicated calamities of fire, sword and famine. We(2) are reduced to the alternative of chusing an unconditional submission to the tyranny of irritated ministers, or resistance by force. -- The latter is our choice. -- We have counted the cost of this contest, and find nothing so dreadful as voluntary slavery. -- Honour, justice, and humanity, forbid us tamely to surrender that freedom which we received from our gallant ancestors, and which our innocent posterity have a right to receive from us. We cannot endure the infamy and guilt of resigning succeeding generations to that wretchedness which inevitably awaits them, if we basely entail hereditary bondage upon them.

Our cause is just. Our union is perfect. Our internal resources are great, and, if necessary, foreign assistance is undoubtedly attainable. -- We gratefully acknowledge, as signal instances of the Divine favour towards us, that his Providence would not permit us to be called into this severe controversy, until we were grown up to our present strength, had been previously exercised in warlike operation, and possessed of the means of defending ourselves. With hearts fortified with these animating reflections, we most solemnly, before God and the world, declare, that, exerting the utmost energy of those powers, which our beneficent Creator hath

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graciously bestowed upon us, the arms we have been compelled by our enemies to assume, we will, in defiance of every hazard, with unabating firmness and perseverance, employ for the preservation of our liberties; being with one mind resolved to die freemen rather than to live slaves.

Lest this declaration should disquiet the minds of our friends and fellow-subjects in any part of the empire, we assure them that we mean not to dissolve that union which has so long and so happily subsisted between us, and which we sincerely wish to see restored. -- Necessity has not yet driven us into that desperate measure, or induced us to excite any other nation to war against them. -- We have not raised armies with ambitious designs of separating from Great-Britain, and establishing independent states. We fight not for glory or for conquest. We exhibit to mankind the remarkable spectacle of a people attacked by unprovoked enemies, without any imputation or even suspicion of offence. They boast of their privileges and civilization, and yet proffer no milder conditions than servitude or death.

In our own native land, in defence of the freedom that is our birthright, and which we ever enjoyed till the late violation of it -- for the protection of our property, acquired solely by the honest industry of our fore-fathers and ourselves, against violence actually offered, we have taken up arms. We shall lay them down when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed shall be removed, and not before.

With an humble confidence in the mercies of the supreme and impartial Judge and Ruler of the Universe, we most devoutly implore his divine goodness to protect us happily through this great conflict, to dispose our adversaries to reconciliation on reasonable terms, and thereby to relieve the empire from the calamities of civil war.