

5 INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Fact 1:

Many believe that the Declaration of Independence was signed on 4 July 1776. However, this isn't true. The document was not signed until 2 August 1776. The fourth of July is the day the Declaration of Independence was approved and officially adopted by the Second Continental Congress. As a result, this day is celebrated in America as Independence Day.

Fact 2:

A five-person committee was appointed by the Second Continental Congress to write the Declaration of Independence. The members included Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Robert Livingston and Roger Sherman. However, not all five members of the committee signed the Declaration. Robert Livingston felt it was too soon to declare independence from Britain. Therefore, he abstained from voting for independence on 2 July 1776 and did not sign the Declaration of Independence.

Fact 3:

The copy of the Declaration of Independence that was read and approved by the Second Continental Congress on 4 July 1776, was not the same copy the delegates signed on 2 August 1776. On 9 July, Congress ordered that an 'engrossed' copy of the Declaration be made. Engrossing is the process of writing an official document on parchment in a large, clear hand. Timothy Matlack, an assistant to the Secretary of Congress, wrote the formal copy that was signed by most of the delegates on 2 August. This copy currently resides at the National Archives in Washington, DC, USA.

Fact 4:

The Declaration of Independence was first read in public on 8 July 1776, in Philadelphia, USA. It has been said that the citizens were summoned to the State House Yard by the ringing of the famous Liberty Bell, so they could hear Colonel John Nixon read the Declaration for the first time. However, many historians believe it was not the Liberty Bell that was used. It is thought that the steeple housing the bell was in poor condition, making it unusable.

Fact 5:

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, two of the authors of the Declaration of Independence, both died on 4 July 1826. This date marked the 50th anniversary of the approval of the Declaration. Jefferson was 83 years old, while Adams was 90. Because they both died on such a memorable day, many Americans have questioned whether their deaths were somehow planned.