**Remembering When…**

* On July 4th, 1776, the 13 English colonies decided to break away from British Rule. They voted on that day to adopt the Declaration of Independence!
* The original document is badly faded after all these years .
* Luckily, a very good copy was made in the early 1800’s.

**Philadelphia:**

* The declaration was adopted in a building in Philadelphia now called \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hall!
* Colonial leaders were meeting their in 1776 to deal with the growing crisis over British rule of the colonies
* Each of the 13 colonies sent delegates to the Philadelphia meeting.
* Many leaders still hoped to reach a compromise with England. But it appeared less and less likely as the months went by.

**June, 1776**

* In June, the delegates appointed a committee to write a statement in favor of independence.
* Thomas \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a political leader from Virginia, was one of those chosen. He became the main author of the document.
* Jefferson’s original draft, with cross-outs and revisions, still exist.
* It shows how carefully he looked for just the right words to express the new ideas about government that were spreading in the colonies. .

**What is says**

* What did the final document say?
* The longest part is a list of complaints about the way the British Government was treating the colonist.
* It says that King George III was deliberately trying to establish *“An Absolute Tyranny over these states.”* It list many examples that colonial leaders felt were proof of his bad intentions.
* The Declaration criticizes the British Parliament as well.
* *It points out the fact that taxes were put on the colonies by parliament without the approval of the colonists’ own elected assemblies. Colonist considered that an abuse their rights as Englishmen.*

**Independence**

* The line that actually declare the 13 colonies \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Great Britain are at the end of the document.

**What it says…**

* The really big fireworks of the Declaration are up at the top. Here Jefferson expresses the great principles that made the American Revolution truly revolutionary.

**A revolution of Ideas**

* Others had expressed such ideas before in pamphlets, books, and essays.
* This was different: It was not a book but a bold statement that America would actually try to put these ideas into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Political Equality. Individual Rights. The consent of the Governed. The right to change or even abolish an abusive government.

**Other Considerations**

* Slavery existed in the colonies, for example. How that could be justified in a nation calling for equality and individual rights?
* In fact, Jefferson tried to put a passage in the Declaration criticizing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Jefferson’s criticisms of slavery, however, were cut from the final version.
* The delegates decided to avoid the issue, fearing that it might cause one or more of the colonies to vote against the document.
* Keep in mind that slavery and other systems of bound labor were common in most parts of the world at the time, and had been for thousands of years.
* While the Declaration did not take up the issue directly, it did set out in writing the principles of equality and individual rights that would later be used to abolish slavery.
* Aside from the slavery issue, America in 1776 was indeed remarkable for its energetic, tolerant, and community minded population.
* If there was a anywhere in the world ready to step forward, it was the land about to be named the United States of America

**A Final Pledge**

* The very last line of the declaration expresses a pledge by the delegates to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the new nation.
* The words are famous for their solemn dignity.

**Great Expectations**

* No country had ever started grand hopes and promising ideals.
* No country has done so much since that time to make its ideals a reality.

**Independence Day!**

* It is any wonder the fireworks fly every July 04th?
* It is a date honored as the birthday of the United States, and as a start of a new age for mankind.