

Select Town Declarations April-July 1776

Read the excerpts from these county declarations and answer the questions. Notice they were written before the Continental Congress declared independence on July 2, 1776.

Topsfield, Essex Count, Massachusetts, June 21, 1776

Jump code for The Quill Project – i38810

“Having thus freely spoken our sentiments in respect to independence, &c., we now instruct you, sir, to give the honourable the Continental Congress the Strongest assurance that if, for the safety of the United Colonies, they shall declare *America* to be independent of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*, your constituents will support and defend the measure with their lives and fortunes, to the utmost of their power.

How would you put this in your own words in 1-2 sentences?

Natick, Massachusetts, June 20, 1776

Jump code for The Quill Project - i38809

“...we, the inhabitants of *Natick*, in town-meeting assembled, do hereby declare, agreeable to the tenor of the aforementioned resolve, that, should the honourable Continental Congress declare these *American* Colonies independent of the Kingdom of Great Britain, we will, with our lives and fortunes, join with the other inhabitants of this Colony, and with those of the other Colonies, in supporting them in such measure, which we look upon to be both important and necessary, and which if we may be permitted to suggest our opinion, the sooner it is come into the fewer difficulties we shall have to contend with, and the grand object of peace, liberty, and safety, will be more likely speedily to be restored and established in our once happy land.”

How would you put this in your own words in 2-3 sentences?

Spencer Town, Albany County, New York, June 24, 1776

Jump code for The Quill Project - i36224

“The town of *Spencer-Town*, in the County of *Albany*, and Province of *New-York*, in a full meeting, unanimously agreed, that as soon as the honourable continental Congress should see fit to declare the *American* Colonies independent of *Great Britian*, they would support and defend the same with their lives and fortunes.”

How would you put this in your own words in 1-2 sentences?

Murrayfield, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, June 17, 1776

Jump code for The Quill Project - i38789

“*Voted*, (in a nearly full meeting.) That, under the present circumstances of the Thirteen United Colonies, and the treatment of *Great Britain* towards America, we view it necessary, and are willing, to a man, to be declared an independent State, whenever the honourable Continental Congress shall judge best.”

How would you put this in your own words in 1-2 sentences?

Ashby, Massachusetts, July 1, 1776

Jump code for The Quill Project - i38798

“Agreeable to a Resolve of the late honourable House of Representatives, passed on the 10th of *May* last, the inhabitant of this town being assembled for that purpose, on the 1st day of *July* instant, and unanimously voted as follows, viz:

That should the honourable Congress, for the safety of the Colonies, declare them independent of *Great Britain*, the inhabitants of *Ashby* will solemnly engage with their lives and fortunes to support them in the measure.

How would you put this in your own words in 2-3 sentences?

Prepare for Class Discussion

1. How did some American colonists show Congress they supported breaking away from King George in Great Britain?
2. What do these declarations show about the relationship between the people and their government **representatives**?
3. How do these town declarations show the idea of **consent of the governed**?