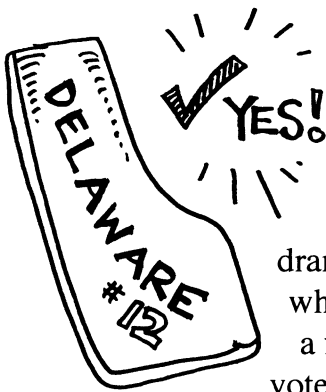




## Signing of the Declaration of Independence

**B**y July 2nd, there were but three delegations in doubt and ten in favor. Because two delegates representing Pennsylvania left, Pennsylvania was able to vote yes for the resolution. The number in favor now increased to eleven, New York still abstaining.

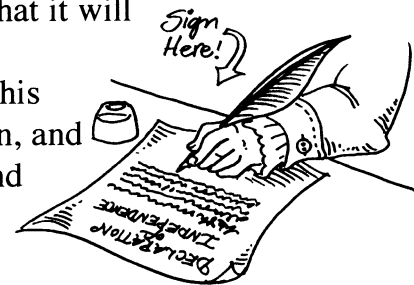


The 12th colony of little Delaware provided a dramatic episode which resulted in a favorable vote. Casar

Rodney had returned home from the convention earlier to deal with a Loyalist uprising, leaving two delegates at the convention—one for the Resolution and one against. An express rider was then dispatched to get him to come back. Casar Rodney left on Monday and rode eighty miles by night and day in the rain and thunder. He arrived the next day in time to break the Delaware tie.

New York gave their support on July 9th, and on July 15th, word of this reached Congress making it

unanimous for all 13 colonies. During the convention, the following letter was written by John Adams to his beloved wife, Abigail: July 3rd, 1776—“The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epochal in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations, as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward, forevermore. You will think me transported with enthusiasm, but I am not. I am well aware of the toil, and blood, and treasure, that it will cost us to maintain this declaration, and support and defend these



States. Yet, through all the gloom, I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory. I can see that the end is more than worth all



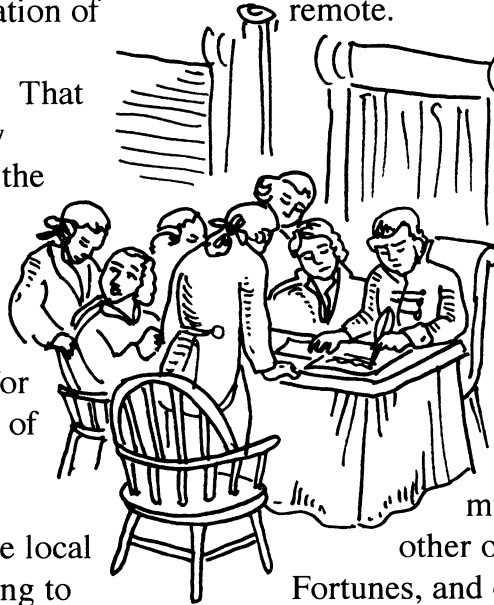
the means, and that posterity will triumph in the day's transaction, even though we should rue it, which I trust in God we shall not."

On July 2nd the Declaration of Independence was introduced and debated. That same morning Secretary Thomson had found on the Speakers table a threatening note to the speaker: "You have gone too far. Take care. A plot is framed for your destruction and all of you will be destroyed."

Could it have been some local Loyalists who were trying to stop the independence movement? If so, their attempt was in vain for the delegates held their ground and voted for independence on July 2. For the next two days they refined the Declaration of Independence and approved it on July 4, 1776.

Under a cloud of uncertainty, 56 men

signed their names to the Declaration of Independence. It represented the promise of freedom—but only if they were successful in winning the war, which at that time seemed very remote.



In signing the Declaration of Independence they had endorsed these words: "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."

Years later, John Q. Adams, son of John Adams [a signer of the Declaration], wrote: "Posterity! You will never know how much it cost the present generation to preserve your freedoms. I hope you will make good use of it."

### Suggestions for Study

- Who was Casear Rodney and what important decision did he make that helped secure the signing of the Declaration of Independence?
- Were there any consequences to him for this decision?
- Mr. John Adams wrote a special letter to his wife regarding the signing of the Declaration. What statement did he make? Let's talk about it.
- Who was John Quincy Adams and what did he write regarding the signers of the Declaration and us today?