

The Story of Independence Day in the U.S.A.

More than two hundred years ago, England had thirteen colonies in America. The colonies made England rich. Many people from England came to live in the colonies. People came from other countries too.

England made laws for the colonies. England collected taxes from the colonies. England sent soldiers to the colonies.

The people in the colonies in 1775 did not like the laws. They did not like the taxes. They did not like the English soldiers in their land. They did not like the English king.

The American colonists would not pay some taxes. They broke some of the laws.

The king wanted to punish the Americans. He sent more soldiers. The soldiers killed some Americans.

The Americans began to fight against England.

In 1776, the American colonists had a big meeting in Philadelphia. They decided to fight for independence from England. They asked Thomas Jefferson to write a Declaration of Independence.

The words Thomas Jefferson wrote are now very famous

We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In the name of the good people of these colonies...we declare that these United Colonies are, and of the right ought to be free and Independent States...And for the support of this declaration...we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

It was very dangerous to sign this declaration. If England won the war, the signers would lose everything, even their lives.

John Hancock was the president of the meeting. He was the first one to sign the Declaration of Independence. He wrote name in big letters to show he was not afraid.

Fifty-five other men signed it too. This was on July Fourth, 1776. Now the fight against England became a war for independence.

George Washington was the general of the American army. It was a very difficult war. The Americans lost many battles in the first years.

At last they got help from France. The war continued until 1781. The British army surrendered to Washington at Yorkton, Virginia. In 1783, Britain signed the Peace of Paris. The United States was now truly independent.