

INDEPENDENCE

National Historical Park Project ☆ *Pennsylvania*

Independence



NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK PROJECT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Douglas McKay, Secretary

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, Conrad L. Wirth, Director

Scene of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, the meeting place of the Continental Congress and of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, and the seat of Government of the United States from 1790 to 1800

"THE UNITED STATES was created in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776, when the Continental Congress voted the final form of the Declaration of Independence. The United States was perpetuated on September 17, 1787, when the Federal Convention completed its work on the Constitution and referred it, through Congress, to the individual states for ratification. Both these great decisions were made in the same chamber in what is now called Independence Hall, but was then the Pennsylvania State House. It would still be merely the old State House if independence had not been achieved and if the Constitution had not been ratified and put into effect. The noble building, so venerable to later ages, might not even have survived, but might have been swept away in the surging growth of a modern city. In that case, a few students of history would sometimes remember the site as the stage of those lost causes. Instead, Pennsylvania's State House has become Independence Hall for the entire United States. Nor is that all. On account of the Declaration of Independence, it is a shrine honored wherever the rights of men are honored. On account of the Constitution, it is a shrine cherished wherever the principles of self-government on a federal scale are cherished."—CARL VAN DOREN.

The National Park System, of which the Independence National Historical Park Project is a unit, is dedicated to the conservation of America's scenic, scientific, and historic heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.

The Building of Independence Hall

INDEPENDENCE HALL was originally the State House for the Province of Pennsylvania. Prior to its construction the Provincial Assembly had no official building for its meetings, but was compelled "to hire a house annually." In order to meet the needs of the Provincial Government, funds were appropriated for the construction of a State House in 1729. The next year the committee of the Assembly, having selected the south side of Chestnut Street between Fifth and Sixth Streets as a site, began to purchase the necessary land. Although the Assembly may have contemplated buying all of the land which finally became Independence Square, the Province did not secure all of the property south to Walnut Street until the 1760's. After considerable delay, construction was commenced in the spring of 1732 when ground was broken for the present building.

Edmund Woolley, master carpenter, and Andrew Hamilton, lawyer, planned the building and supervised its construction. Designed in the dignity of the Georgian period, Independence Hall, with its wings, has long been considered one of the most beautiful administrative buildings of the Colonial period. Its construction required more than 25 years. Delays originating from various causes, and the alterations needed to fit the building as the capitol of the Province, prevented its completion until the 1750's.

North Front of State House, c. 1776. Engraved by J. Rogers after Peale's Painting. Courtesy of Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



The Liberty Bell

It was not until the 1740's that the Assembly authorized the erection of the tower on the south side of Independence Hall "to contain a staircase, with a suitable place therein for hanging a bell." In 1751, the bell for the State House was ordered from England. The famous "Proclaim Liberty" inscription was intended as a fiftieth anniversary memorial to William Penn's Charter of Privileges of 1701, and the bell received its present name from this inscription. Although designed as a memorial, the association of the Liberty Bell with the most significant events of the American Revolution has led to the belief that the inscription foretold these later happenings.

The bell arrived in Philadelphia in 1752, but was cracked while being tested. John Pass and Charles Stow, Jr., "two ingenious workmen" of Philadelphia, recast the bell. The tone was not satisfactory, and it was cast again by Pass and Stow in 1753. Today, the visitor looks upon the bell from this third casting of the original metal.

As the official bell of the Pennsylvania State House, the Liberty Bell was intended to be rung on public occasions, such as the times of meetings of the Assembly and of the courts of justice.

For many years the bell fulfilled its routine duties. During the Revolution, when the British Army occupied Philadelphia in 1777, the bell

was removed to Allentown where it was hidden for almost a year. It was returned to Philadelphia after the departure of the British.

After the Revolution the bell was tolled at the deaths of the heroes of the war and the leading citizens of the Nation. It is the tradition that the bell was cracked in 1835 while being tolled on the occasion of the death of Chief Justice Marshall, the great interpreter of the Federal Constitution. Although efforts were made to restore its tone, they were unsuccessful.

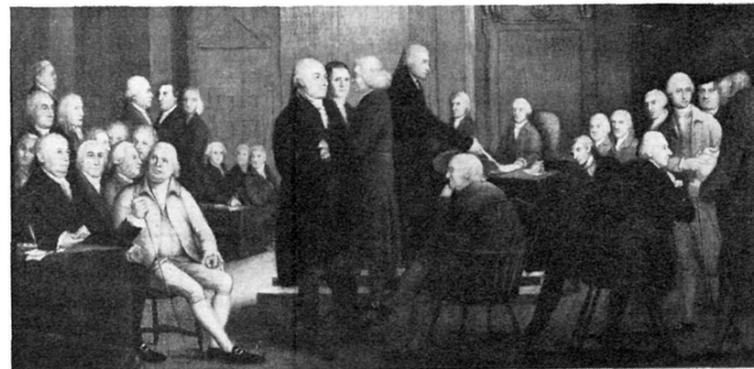
Now located in Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell is the most venerated symbol of patriotism in America and its reputation as an emblem of liberty is world-wide.

The Declaration of Independence

As opposition towards England's colonial policy developed in the American colonies, Philadelphia, the metropolis of the English colonies in America, naturally became the center of government. In Carpenters' Hall, which is still standing near Independence Square, the First Continental Congress met in September 1774 to protest against the American policies of Great Britain.

In May 1775, the Second Continental Congress met in the Pennsylvania State House (Independence Hall) and moved from protest to resistance. In view of the fact that warfare had broken out in Massachusetts, the Congress in the following month chose George Wash-

The Congress Voting Independence, 1776. Painted by Robert Edge Pine and Edward Savage. Courtesy of Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



ington to be General and Commander in Chief of the Army; and he gave his acceptance to the Congress in Independence Hall. While Washington organized the army, the Continental Congress organized the Revolutionary government. On July 4, 1776, the document known as the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Congress in Independence Hall. This document, largely written by Thomas Jefferson, is the finest statement of democratic principles in history, and stands today as the basis of the free government of the United States.

Following the Declaration of Independence came the long hard years of war. Philadelphia was occupied by the British for the winter of 1778 while Washington's army kept watch at Valley Forge. After the departure of the British, Philadelphia again became the seat of government. On November 3, 1781, the Congress officially received the news of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, Va., and was presented with the captured colors. This event signified the end of the long war. American independence had been won.

The Constitutional Convention, 1787

The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union were drafted while the war was in progress, and were agreed to by the thirteenth State and went into effect in the last year of the war. Under the Articles, the Congress met in various towns, only about half the time in Philadelphia. But Philadelphia remained the metropolis of the United States and here in Independence Hall, in the summer of 1787, the Federal Convention sat to draft the Constitution which was to make the weak confederation into a strong Federal state. Washington, the hero of the new nation, was President of the Convention. The other 54 delegates, including men of the caliber of James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and Benjamin Franklin, were the leading minds of the new nation. The Convention convened on May 25 and labored during 4 months of a hot summer. The meetings, held in the same chamber in which the Declaration of In-

dependence had been adopted, were conducted in the strictest secrecy. No other room in America has ever been the scene of such political courage and wisdom. The result of their labors was the Constitution of the United States, which, with amendments, has continued as the law of the land.

Philadelphia, the Capital, 1790-1800

Just prior to Philadelphia's becoming the capital, Independence Hall acquired two new neighbors of destiny—the City Hall on the east and the County Court Building on the west. These fulfilled the original plan of a city governmental center as conceived by Andrew Hamilton. About the same time, the American Philosophical Society, the oldest learned society in the United States, was granted a lot in the Square. Its building, Philosophical Hall, completed in 1789 and the only privately owned building in the Square, harmonizes in its architectural design with the other structures.

The Federal Government under the new Constitution first met in New York where Federal Hall Memorial National Historic Site now stands; then, in 1790, it came to Philadelphia for 10 years. Congress sat in the new County Court House (now known as Congress Hall) and the United States Supreme Court in the new City Hall (now known as the Supreme Court Building). In Congress Hall, George Washington was inaugurated for his second term as President. John Adams, his successor, was also inaugurated here. Meanwhile, few cases were presented to the Supreme Court for decision, but some were quite important. During this period, therefore, the governments of the Commonwealth and the Nation were both centered in the Independence Hall group of buildings. With the close of the century, however, both capitals were taken from Philadelphia. In 1799, the State Government was removed to Lancaster and later to Harrisburg, and in the following year the Federal Government left Philadelphia for the new capital at Washington, D. C.



Congress Hall.

Subsequent History

With Philadelphia no longer the capital either of the United States or of Pennsylvania, the Supreme Court Building reverted to its original purpose as a City Hall, and Congress Hall was used as the County Court House.

In 1802, Independence Hall entered into a new phase of its history. Charles Willson Peale, the eminent artist, was granted permission to use most of the building for his famous museum. The museum remained there until Peale's death in 1826, and his paintings, purchased by the city of Philadelphia, form the basis of the present collection of portraits of Revolutionary heroes still in Independence Hall.

In 1818, the city of Philadelphia purchased Independence Hall from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania—a financial and spiritual investment unequalled in the history of American cities. A later proposal to sell the Square fortunately came to nothing, and the city still holds the formal deed executed in 1816. Since then, Philadelphia has protected it and has performed an inestimable service in preserving the Independence Hall group for posterity. Recently, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has undertaken a notable project to acquire lands to the north of the Square which, when completed, will greatly enhance the entire setting of this superlative area.

Independence National Historical Park Project

Independence National Historical Park Project was authorized by act of Congress in 1948 upon the recommendation of the Philadelphia National Shrines Park Commission. The purpose of the project is to provide for Federal participation in the preservation and commemoration of Independence Hall, Carpenters' Hall, Christ Church, and surrounding historic sites and buildings in Philadelphia. This participation takes the form of cooperative agreements with three bodies which own major structures and the acquisition of additional significant sites and buildings east of Independence Square. The entire undertaking is guided by an Advisory Commission of distinguished citizens.

Points of Interest in the Project

Many of the significant historic sites in Independence National Historical Park Project are within easy walking distance of Independence Square. The map in this leaflet will aid the visitor in making a tour of these sites. Buildings open to the public are noted.

The **Second Bank of the United States** is east of Fifth Street, on the south side of Chestnut Street. The building, considered one of the finest examples of Greek revival architecture in the United States, was erected between 1819 and 1824 to house the second Bank of the United States. After a bitter controversy between President Jackson and the Whigs over national banking policies, the bank closed in 1836 following expiration of its charter. From 1845 to 1934 the building was the Philadelphia Custom House. Now owned by the Federal Government, but exhibited and maintained by the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, the building is open to the public.

St. Mary's Church is on the west side of South Fourth Street, between Locust and Spruce Streets. Established in 1763, St. Mary's was the principal Catholic Church in Philadelphia during the Colonial and Revolutionary periods.

The church graveyard contains the tombs of Thomas FitzSimons, a signer of the Constitution of the United States; Commodore John Barry, often called "The Father of the American Navy"; and other early notables. Visitors to the church and graveyard are welcome.

The **Dilworth-Todd-Moylan House** is located on the northeast corner of Fourth and Walnut Streets. The building was erected prior to 1787 by Jonathan Dilworth and purchased in 1791 by John Todd, Jr. Mr. Todd was an attorney and the first husband of Dolly Payne, who later married James Madison. From 1796 to 1810, the building was the home of Gen. Stephen Moylan, a prominent officer of the American Revolution.

The **Bishop White House** is at No. 309 Walnut Street, a few doors east of the Moylan House. The building was the home of the Right Reverend William White, "The Father of the American Protestant Episcopal Church," until his death in 1836.

The **Philadelphia (Merchants') Exchange** is on the northeast corner of Third and Walnut Streets. Built between 1832 and 1834, the beauty of the architecture of this building is noteworthy. The Merchants' Exchange housed the Philadelphia Stock Exchange for many years.

The **First Bank of the United States** is on the west side of South Third Street, between Walnut and Chestnut Streets, opposite the Philadelphia Exchange. Erected in 1795, it is probably the oldest banking building in the United States. The building later became the bank of Stephen Girard, merchant, banker, and philanthropist.

Carpenters' Hall is on the south side of Chestnut Street, west of Third Street, at No. 320. The Hall, built in 1770, was erected as the guild hall of the Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia, organized in 1724. Here, in 1774, the First Continental Congress met. The building is open to the public. A cooperative agreement was made in 1950 between the Carpenters' Company and the Department of the Interior for the preservation of the Hall.

Franklin Court, the site of Benjamin Franklin's home, is located on Orianna Street. The court is entered on the north side of Chestnut Street, opposite Carpenters' Hall. Franklin's house was built on this site in 1765, and here the great statesman and sage died in 1790. The house was torn down about 20 years after his death.

Christ Church is on the west side of Second Street, north of Market Street. The church, built between 1727 and 1754, is considered one of the finest of the Colonial churches and its preservation is assured by a cooperative agreement made in 1950 between the Department of the Interior and the Corporation of Christ Church. Many famous persons, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Robert Morris, attended services in the church. Buried in the churchyard and in the **Christ Church cemetery**, at the southeast corner of Fifth and Arch Streets, are seven signers of the Declaration of Independence. The graves of Benjamin Franklin and his wife are in the cemetery.

One other historic site in Independence National Historical Park Project is located some distance from Independence Square and cannot be shown on the leaflet map. It is the **Deshler-Morris House**, at 5442 Germantown Avenue, which was the home of President Washington for a short time in 1793 and again in 1794. The house has been restored and refurnished with period pieces. The house and gardens, exhibited by the Germantown Historical Society, acting in cooperation with the National Park Service,

Perspective view of future development recommended by Philadelphia National Shrines Park Commission.



are open to the public with an admission charge of 25 cents for adults and 10 cents for children.

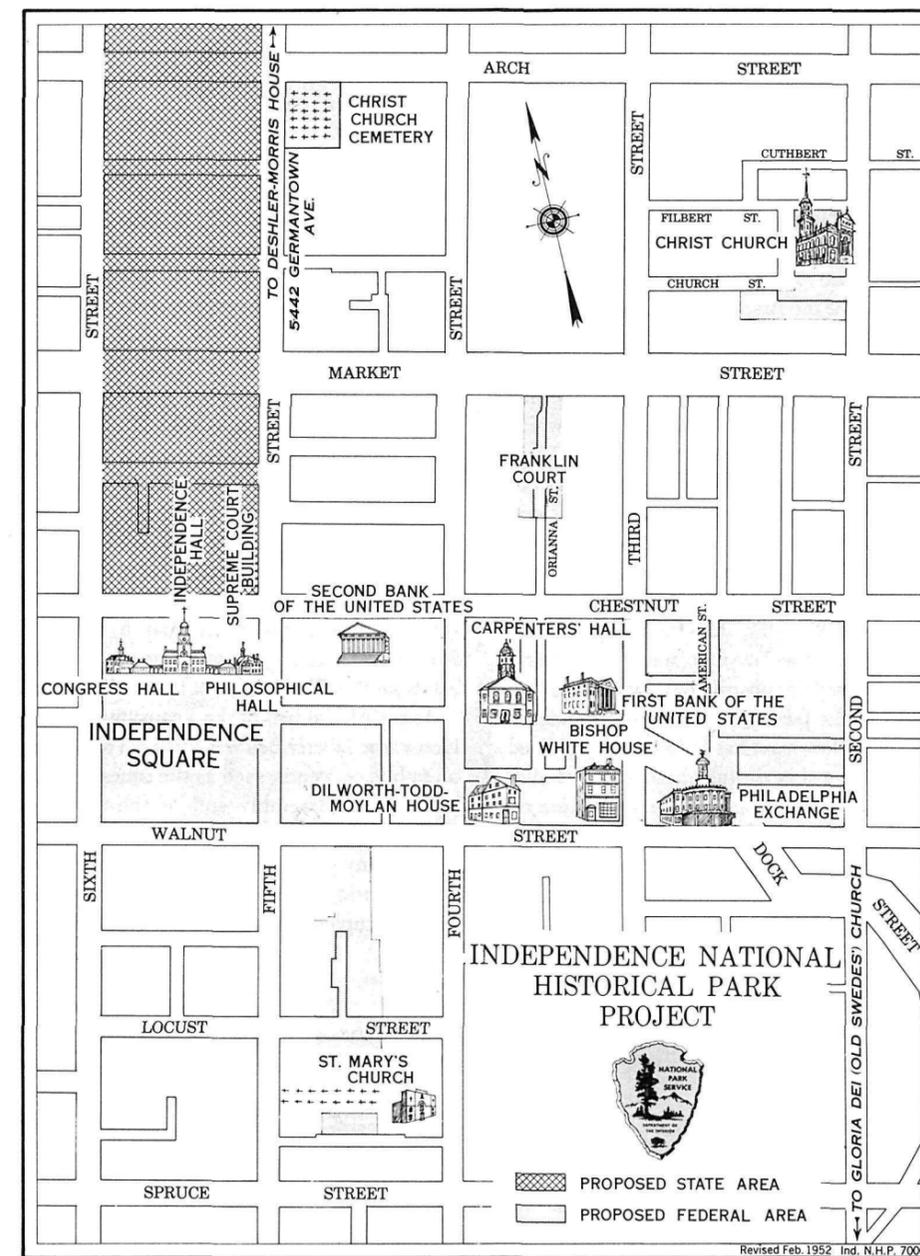
Another historic site well worth a visitor's time is **Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church**, built in 1700, and the oldest church building in Philadelphia. It is located on Swanson Street, near Front and Christian Streets. Christian Street is 9 blocks south of Market Street.

Service to the Public

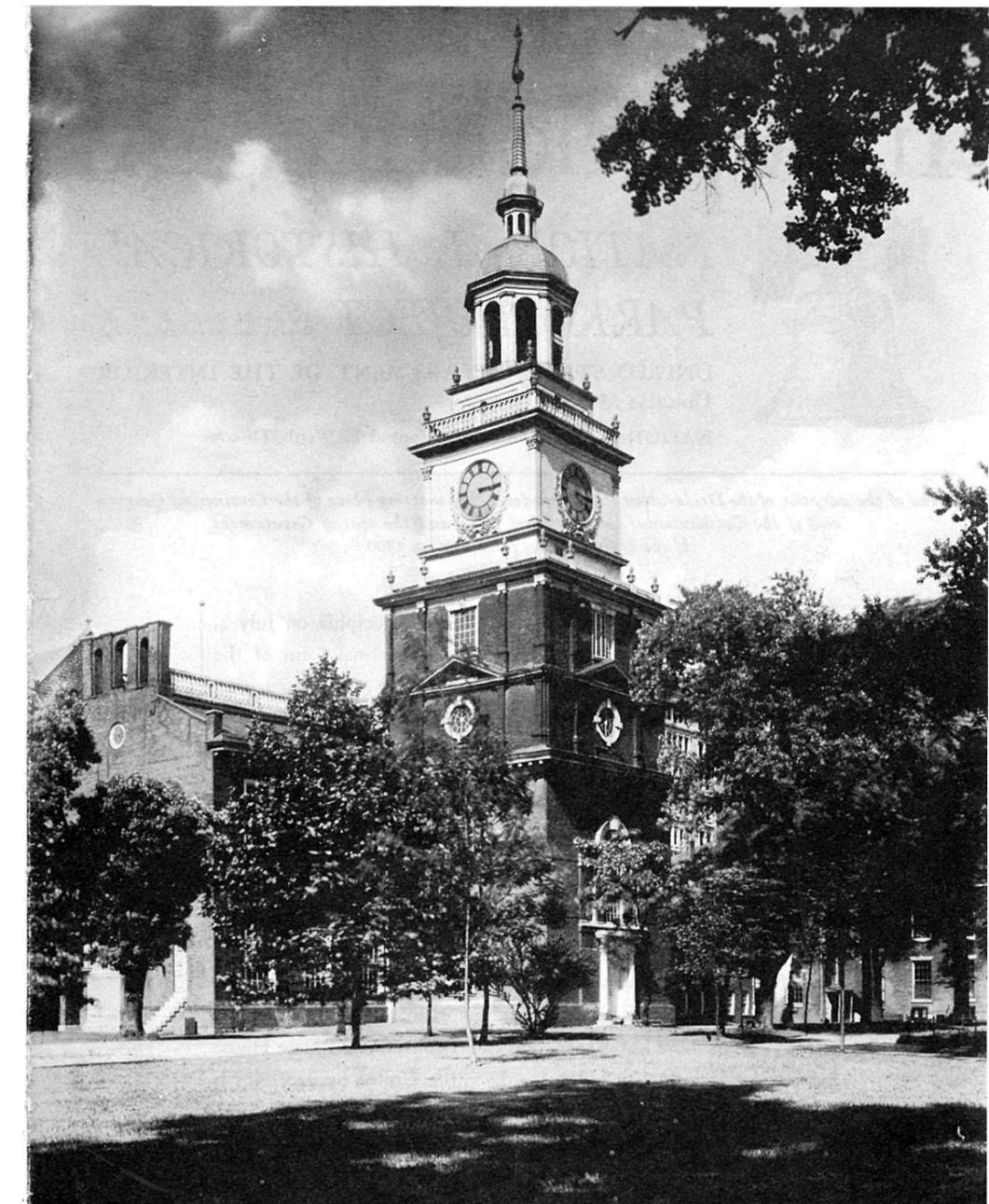
Information and literature relating to Independence National Historical Park Project may be obtained at the information center in the west wing of Independence Hall. Special service is provided for school classes, patriotic societies, and civic groups when arrangements are made with the superintendent in advance.

Administration

Since January 1, 1951, the Independence Hall group of buildings has been administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior as a part of Independence National Historical Park Project. Under the terms of a cooperative agreement made in 1950 between the city of Philadelphia and the Department of the Interior the National Park Service assumed the administration and maintenance of the buildings and Independence Square, with the city retaining ownership of the property. All inquiries concerning the area should be addressed to the Superintendent, Independence National Historical Park Project, Old Custom House, 420 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia 6, Pa.



A 68-page historical handbook relating to Independence National Historical Park Project may be obtained at the area or from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, D. C., for 25 cents.



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