

Independence

NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK • PENNSYLVANIA

The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, the foundation of our Nation's Government, were adopted here in Philadelphia. Here the new United States was created, perpetuated, and governed during the difficult formative years between 1774 and 1800.

On September 5, 1774, delegates to the First Continental Congress gathered in Carpenters' Hall in Philadelphia, then the principal city in British North America, to protest England's oppressive colonial policy. The petition they addressed to the King to restore the colonists' rights as Englishmen and their call for a boycott of English goods failed to bring a redress of grievances, and relations with the mother country grew worse. Protest turned to active resistance, and fighting had already broken out in Massachusetts by the time the Second Continental Congress convened on May 10, 1775, in the Assembly Room of the Pennsylvania State House (now Independence Hall).

Within a year the popular demand was not only liberty, but independence. On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted and proclaimed to all that "these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States." This document, drafted by Thomas Jefferson, is one of the greatest statements of democratic principles ever written. It marked the end of British authority in the American colonies and the birth of the United States of America.

The struggle for American independence lasted 8 years and, except for the period when the British occupied Philadelphia, Congress directed the war and organized the government from Independence Hall. Here the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union were adopted and the first French ambassador, Conrad Gérard, was received.

After the war the weakness of the Articles of Confederation, which gave the national government little authority over the individual States, led to the calling of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia to revise the Articles; the meeting resulted in the drafting of a new frame of government to "form a more perfect union." On May 25, 1787, delegates from 12 States gathered in the Assembly Room of Independence Hall. For 4 months, while Washington presided over the secret sessions, the delegates labored to resolve their differences about the nature of the new government. Finally on September 17, 1787, the Constitution of the United States was adopted and signed by the delegates. With amendments, this remains the fundamental law of the land today.

In December 1790, after a brief time in New York, the new Government moved to Philadelphia, which for the next 10 years served as the national capital. Meeting in the new County Court House (now Congress Hall), the Congress

laid the foundations of this new Nation's domestic and foreign policies. Here the first 10 amendments—the Bill of Rights—were added to the Constitution; the Jay Treaty with England was debated and ratified; and three States—Vermont, Kentucky and Tennessee—were admitted to the Union. In the Senate Chamber George Washington took the oath of office for his second term as President, and in the House of Representatives Chamber John Adams, his successor, was inaugurated. The U.S. Supreme Court met in Old City Hall, and, under the first Chief Justice, John Jay, and his successors, John Rutledge and Oliver Ellsworth, established the role of the judiciary in our government.

THE LIBERTY BELL

In 1751 the Pennsylvania Assembly ordered from England a bell for the State House to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Pennsylvania Charter of Privileges, the democratic constitution William Penn granted his colony in 1701. The bell cracked while being tested, and John Pass and John Stow, "two ingenious workmen" of Philadelphia, recast it. Because the tone was not satisfactory, they cast it a second time. It afterwards served as Pennsylvania's official bell on public occasions until 1835, when according to tradition, the bell cracked while tolling for the funeral of Chief Justice John Marshall. This is the bell you see in Independence Hall today.

The Liberty Bell's traditional associations with the events of the American Revolution and its prophetic "Proclaim liberty" inscription have made it the most cherished and revered symbol of American freedom, and an emblem of liberty known throughout the world.

ADMINISTRATION

Independence National Historical Park was authorized by act of Congress in 1948 to assure the preservation of several historic buildings around Independence Hall in the heart of the old city of Philadelphia. By an agreement in 1950 between the City of Philadelphia and the Department of the Interior, the National Park Service administers the Independence Hall group of buildings and Independence Square, but the city retains ownership of the property. A superintendent, whose address is 313 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19106, is in immediate charge.

The park visitor center is in the First Bank of the United States building on South Third St. between Chestnut and Walnut Sts. Visitors may use the parking lot opposite the visitor center. Check with the superintendent for times and services available.

A TOUR OF THE PARK

1. First Bank of the United States, built between 1795 and 1797 as the home of the "government's banker," is probably the oldest bank building in the United States. The bank occupied it until 1811.

2. Philadelphia Exchange was designed by William Strickland and built between 1832 and 1834. It housed the Philadelphia Stock Exchange for many years. Only the exterior has been restored.

3. Bishop White House. Bishop William White, rector of Christ Church and St. Peter's Church, and the first Episcopal Bishop of Pennsylvania, built this house in 1786-87 and lived here until his death in 1836.

4. Todd House, built in 1775, was occupied from 1791 to 1793 by John Todd, Jr., and his wife, Dolley Payne, who later married President James Madison.

5. Carpenters' Hall was built in 1770 by the Carpenters' Company, which still owns and maintains it. The First Continental Congress met here in September 1774.

6. New Hall was originally built by the Carpenters' Company in 1790 and used by the War Department in 1791-92. Now reconstructed, it houses the Marine Corps Memorial Museum.

7. Pemberton House, once the home of Joseph Pemberton, a Quaker merchant, has been reconstructed and is occupied by the Army-Navy Museum.

8. Franklin Court is the site of the handsome brick home of Benjamin Franklin, who lived here while serving in the Continental Congress, the Constitutional Convention, and as President of Pennsylvania. He died here in 1790; the house was torn down about 20 years later. The court is not yet open to the public.

9. Second Bank of the United States, a fine example of Greek Revival architecture, was designed by William Strickland and built between 1819 and 1824.

10. Library Hall, built originally for the Library Company of Philadelphia in 1789-90, has been reconstructed and is occupied by the library of the American Philosophical Society. It is open to scholars.

11. Philosophical Hall. The American Philosophical Society, founded in 1743 by Franklin and the oldest learned society in America, erected this building between 1785 and 1789 and still occupies it. It is not open to the public.

12. Old City Hall, built in 1789-91 as the Philadelphia City Hall, was used by the U.S. Supreme Court from 1791 to 1800 and by the municipal government and courts during the 19th century.

13. Independence Hall was originally constructed between 1732 and 1756 as the Pennsylvania State House. Until 1799, it served as the meeting place of the provincial and state govern-

ments. The Second Continental Congress and Constitutional Convention held their sessions here. In Independence Square, then the State House Yard, the Declaration of Independence was first read publicly on July 8, 1776.

14. Congress Hall was constructed in 1787-89 as the Philadelphia County Court House. It served as the meetingplace for the Federal Congress from 1790 to 1800. During the 19th century it housed Federal and local courts.

15. Christ Church, built between 1727 and 1754, is a fine example of a colonial church. Seven signers of the Declaration of Independence (including Benjamin Franklin) are buried in the cemetery and churchyard.

16. St. Joseph's Church, established in 1733 as the first Roman Catholic church in Philadelphia, is possibly the only church in the U.S. in which Mass has been celebrated continuously for more than 200 years.

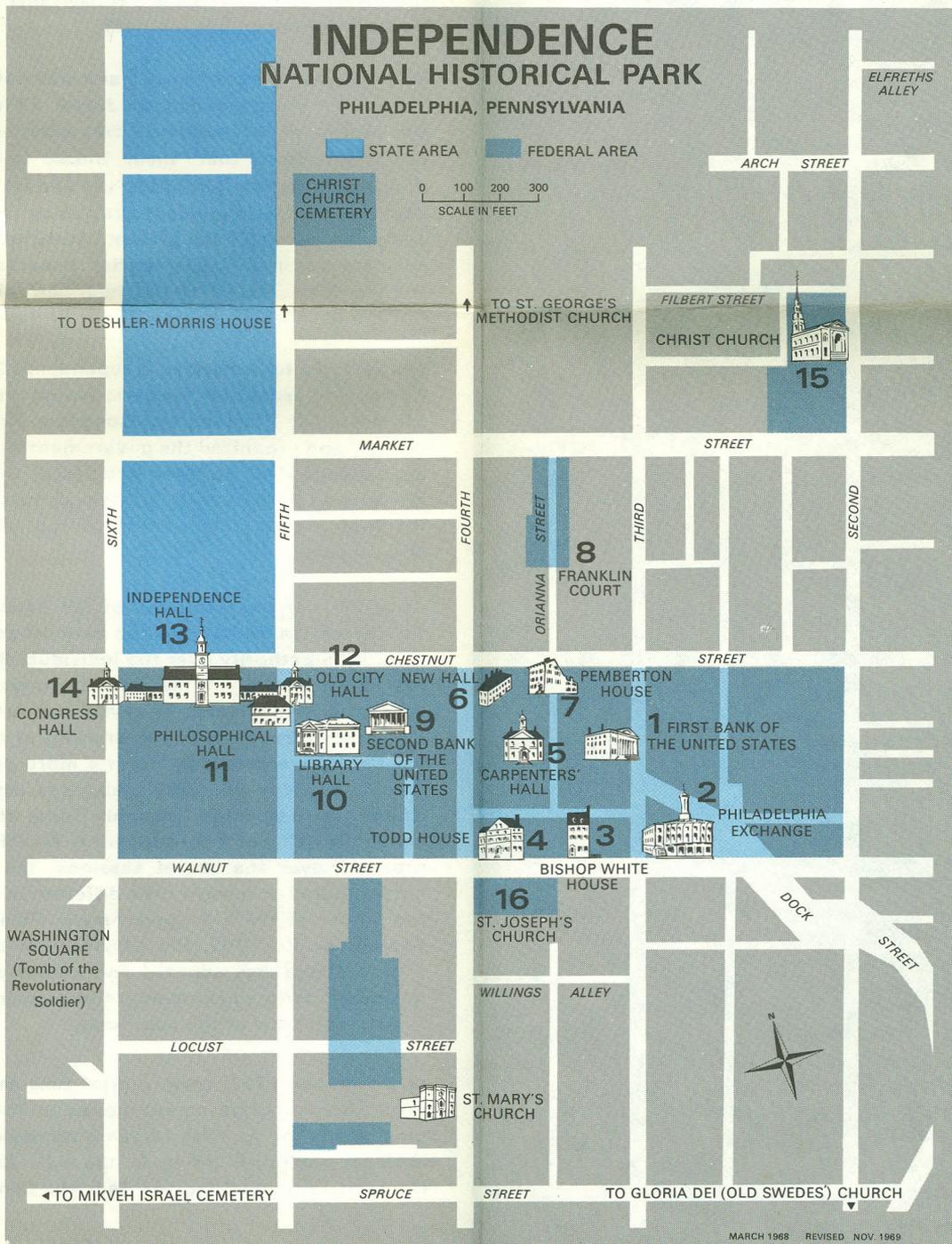
Not shown on the map are other areas of the park and a National Historic Site:

The **Deshler-Morris House**, at 5442 German-town Ave., was erected in 1772-73 and served as the home of President Washington during the summers of 1793 and 1794.

St. George's Church, 235 North Fourth St., is the oldest Methodist Church in America and, except for the winter of 1777-78, has been in constant use since 1769.

Mikveh Israel Cemetery, at Ninth and Spruce Sts., was established in 1738 and is the oldest Jewish cemetery in the city. Haym Salomon, a financier of the Revolution, is buried here.

Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church National Historic Site, at Delaware Ave. and Swanson St., was built in 1700 and is the oldest church in Philadelphia.



As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service