

Town Meeting - June 10, 1776

By June of 1776, the townspeople and many colonists in the 13 colonies were fed up with the King and the Parliament. The Second Continental Congress had convened in Philadelphia and requested that the delegates seek instructions from each colony on the issue of independence. At a town meeting right here in this Meetinghouse, the men of Sudbury voted to create a committee to draft instructions to their representative in Congress that, in case the Congress should “for the Safety of the American Colonies Declare them Independent of the Kingdom of Great Britain, they the Inhabitants of said Town will with their lives and fortunes Support them...”

The Committee, consisting of Lt. Jonathan Rice, Mr. William Rice, and Ezra Taylor, Esq., submitted the following instructions which received the support of Town Meeting.

“The present unhappy Scituation of our publick affairs by reason of the arbitrary and oppressive Measures taken against us in the american Colonies by the King and Parlement of Great Britain, and all hopes of an accommodation Seemes to be finally at an End: We therefore Instruct you to Give the Stongest Assurance that it is not only the unanemous but the hearty and Sincere Intention of your Constituants that Should the Honorable the Contenantial Congress for the Safety of these Colonies Declare them Independent of the Kingdon [sic] of Great Britain they will at the Risque of their all Support them in the Measures.”

By this vote, Sudbury let it be known that this town was firmly in support of a declaration of independence.

And, as we know, on July 4, 1776, the Declaration of

Independence was signed by the representatives to the Continental Congress.

To make sure that everyone in all the Colonies was aware of the Declaration of Independence it was ordered that a copy of the document be sent to the Ministers of each Parish of every Denomination within the State. The Ministers were required to read the Declaration after services on the first Sunday after receiving it – and a copy was to be delivered to all the Clerks of all the towns who were to record it in their books “there to remain as a perpetual Memorial thereof.”

(Throughout this presentation, the spelling is as it appeared in the original records. Spelling was flexible in the 1700's!)