

American Scripture



Making the Declaration of Independence

PAULINE MAIER



Alfred A. Knopf New York 1997

Writers
Couns of the Whole

Thomas Jefferson

John Adams

Roger Sherman (CA)

Robert Livingston (N.Y.)

Benjamin Franklin

"Work of not one man but
of many" p 99

George Mason

John Locke

John C. Calhoun

Sam Adams

Thomas Paine

Abel Smith (1850)

Stephens A. Douglas

Richard Henry Lee

John Hancock

George III

Jan 9, 1776
Common Sense -

French revolution failed because of
Catholic priesthood p1889

Tues July 1
3 P.M.

Why should Americans filed by deities. as if God? p205

How well read were Adams and Jefferson
Describe the two!

What was Jefferson's "Summary View" (Charges against
King George III)

What role did Richard Henry Lee play overall

Committee draft Dec of Indp - 20 minutes p97

Franklin - sick

all seemed on lot of comm.

Charges against the King - George III p108

Franklin - John Thompson, Walter Stoen p149

Why didn't John Dickinson sign the Declaration p150
John Hancock - sole signer / why sign at all?

John Paine's Common Sense published anonymously
two problems Monarchy and hereditary rule (p31)

426. Pauline Maier

American Scripture

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Aired: 8/17/97

Tape #: 76516

Jefferson's preamble to ① Virginia Constitution

George Mason's ② Declaration of Rights

③ English Declaration of Rights

early 1770's Cato's letter - All men are born free

What King George III like - Why was Jefferson
so critical of him. - ~~And he~~ Was he an "absolute
tyrant"

9 Colonies voted independence (4 New Eng states
N.J. MD. VA N.C. Georgia)

S.C. / Penn opposed
Delaware split
New York abstained

Jefferson's companion - Speaker vs. Writer

American Scripture

1st Continental Congress

2nd Cont " "

What started the Revolutionary War?

What documents in history preceded the
Declaration of Independence

King James II

King George III - Hiring German soldiers to fight
the colonists alienated everyone

BOOKNOTES
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SCRIPTURE: *Making the
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Outstanding. Maier (*The Old Revolutionaries*, 1980, etc.; History/MIT) employs superior historiography and political sensitivity to place the Declaration in its original context, and considers what it has become in the context of American political history.

By examining the "other declarations" adopted by individual colonies and towns, she identifies common components later incorporated into the Declaration—including lists of grievances and appeals to norms limiting the exercise of authority—that indicate it was an embodiment of familiar sentiments rather than a radical break with established opinion. Jefferson's role as draftsman, and especially the contributions made by other members of the drafting committee and the Continental Congress as a whole, are traced in meticulous detail. Most importantly, we are reminded that in the midst of prosecuting a war the Declaration was only one item on a crowded agenda, and not a prolonged effort to create a document for the ages. Indeed, having served its purpose, the Declaration was basically forgotten for a couple of decades after its adoption. It resurfaced in the partisan politics of the Jeffersonian party, and Lincoln subsequently shaped it into a central symbol of the mature United States. Lincoln's version of the Declaration, however, emphasized human rights as a justification for Union action *against* rebels, while downplaying its status as an instrument of revolution. When text supposedly quoting the Declaration was inscribed on the walls of the Jefferson Memorial, all traces of a challenge to governmental authority had disappeared. For Maier the "making" of the Declaration, then, has been an ongoing project rather than a historical episode. Consequently, she decries the memorialized display of the Declaration in the National Archives. It is not simply a historical watermark to be consigned to the past. Its symbolic power, she asserts, needs still to be wielded by those continuing the search for political justice and freedom.

Arguably, the best book ever written on the Declaration of Independence. (*First printing of 30,000*)