LCM

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE
MAY/JUNE 2026

AMERICA 250

From our collections, milestone moments in American history

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Lincoln's Original Draft Of the Gettysburg Address

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A new exhibition explores the enduring impact of the Declaration.

The Library's Jefferson Building is lit in patriotic colors to celebrate the opening of "The Two Georges: Parallel Lives in an Age of Revolution" exhibition in March 2025. ***Shawn Miller***

LCM

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE

MAY / JUNE 2026
VOL. 15 NO. 3

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The Library's mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

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■ **On the cover:** Fireworks light up the night sky over the U.S. Capitol, Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial in celebration of Independence Day in 2008. *Carol M. Highsmith Archive/Prints and Photographs Division*

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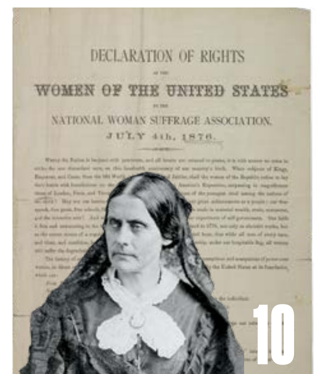
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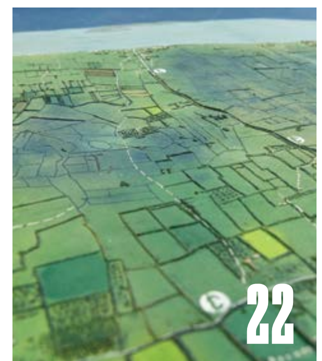

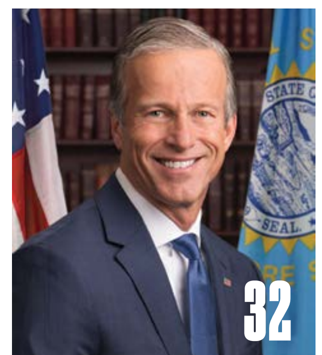

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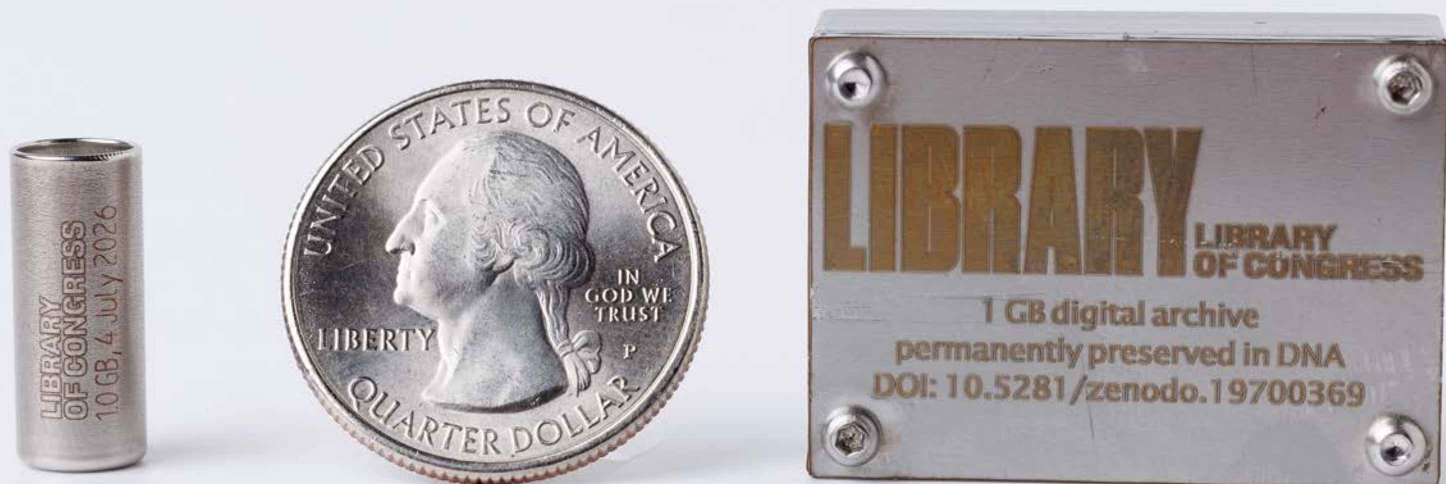

■ **The small metal pellet at left holds synthetic DNA encoded with digital copies of Library collection items.** ***Shawn Miller***

AMERICA'S TIME CAPSULE

Molecular data storage device carries digitized items from the Library's collections.

The nation's oldest federal cultural institution is using some of the newest technology to preserve digital copies of historical collection items for the next 250 years.

As part of America's 250th anniversary celebrations, the Library of Congress is making a trailblazing contribution to America's Time Capsule in Philadelphia in July: a tiny metal pellet holding synthetic DNA encoded with digital copies of items from the Library's collections.

The Library initiated a molecular data storage feasibility study in response to a request from Congress in 2024. As a result, the Library has been examining the storage capabilities of a new medium, synthetic DNA. An entirely manufactured molecule, synthetic DNA is designed to replicate the exceptional information density of nature's best storage medium: DNA itself.

Working with the University of Washington's Molecular Information Systems Lab, the Library has converted selected digital data into synthesized DNA strands encased in a metal vial about the length of a pencil eraser.

The synthetic DNA includes, among other Library collection items, digital copies of: Thomas Jefferson's rough draft of the Declaration of Independence; "The Star-Spangled Banner" lyrics written in Francis Scott Key's hand; the 1791 L'Enfant plan for Washington, D.C.; digitized 1890 Native American audio recordings in Passamaquoddy; the canvas drawing of the Blackwell's Kinfolk family tree, depicting more than 1,500 names; and the Annals of the Congress of the United States, covering congressional proceedings, including the making of the Constitution, from 1789 to 1824.

Synthetic DNA can store about nine terabytes of digital data in one cubic millimeter, approximately 1,000 to 100,000 times greater than the capacity of conventional digital storage methods like hard drives, tape drives and cloud storage. It also is highly durable, lasting thousands of years with little to no maintenance or power consumption.

The encasement includes a small chip containing decoding instructions, ensuring the synthetic DNA sequence can be reassembled into its original digital data when America's Time Capsule is opened in 2276 — 250 years from now.

LAST MEN OF THE REVOLUTION

Photos capture the last living faces of the War of Independence.

■ **Brothers Nelson and Roswell Moore made these images of Revolutionary War veterans in 1864, when all of the men were at least 100 years old.** ***Prints and Photographs Division***

The palm-sized photographs capture their weathered faces: six men with flowing silver hair and deeply etched wrinkles, clutching canes for support – the last survivors, perhaps, of the Revolutionary War.

Beginning in the early 1800s, the U.S. government established a pension system for veterans of the Revolution. As the years passed, federal budget reports showed an ever-dwindling number of them to be still alive and receiving payments.

By 1864, eight decades after the Revolution's end, only a dozen or so veterans survived. That realization sparked another: The time to record the firsthand stories of these men was *now*, before they, like their comrades, passed into history.

So, two Connecticut brothers – photographers Nelson and Roswell Moore – tracked down the known survivors, by that time down to six: William Hutchings, Daniel Waldo, Adam Link, Alexander Millener, Lemuel Cook and Samuel Downing.

The Moore brothers captured their portraits as cartes de visite, small albumen prints mounted on cards intended for wide distribution. The Moores didn't, however, record the veterans' stories. Enter Elias Brewster Hillard, a Connecticut clergyman who set out to interview the six men and publish a book recounting their wartime experiences.

The results weren't precise history. Hillard was neither journalist nor author, and the veterans he interviewed all were at least 100 years old, with fuzzy memories of long-ago exploits. Still, the publication of Hillard's book, "The Last Men of the Revolution," in 1864 made the veterans minor celebrities – boosted by the inclusion of the Moores' striking photographs.

As it turned out, the six weren't *quite* the last men of the Revolution. The publicity, as historian Don Hagist notes, drew other veterans into the public eye – one of whom, Daniel Frederick Bakeman, outlived all the others.

Today, the six veterans in those photographs live on at the Library: The Rare Book and Special Collections Division holds Hillard's book, and the cartes de visite are preserved in the Prints and Photographs Division.

–Mark Hartsell is editor of LCM.

MORE INFORMATION

Last Men of the Revolution
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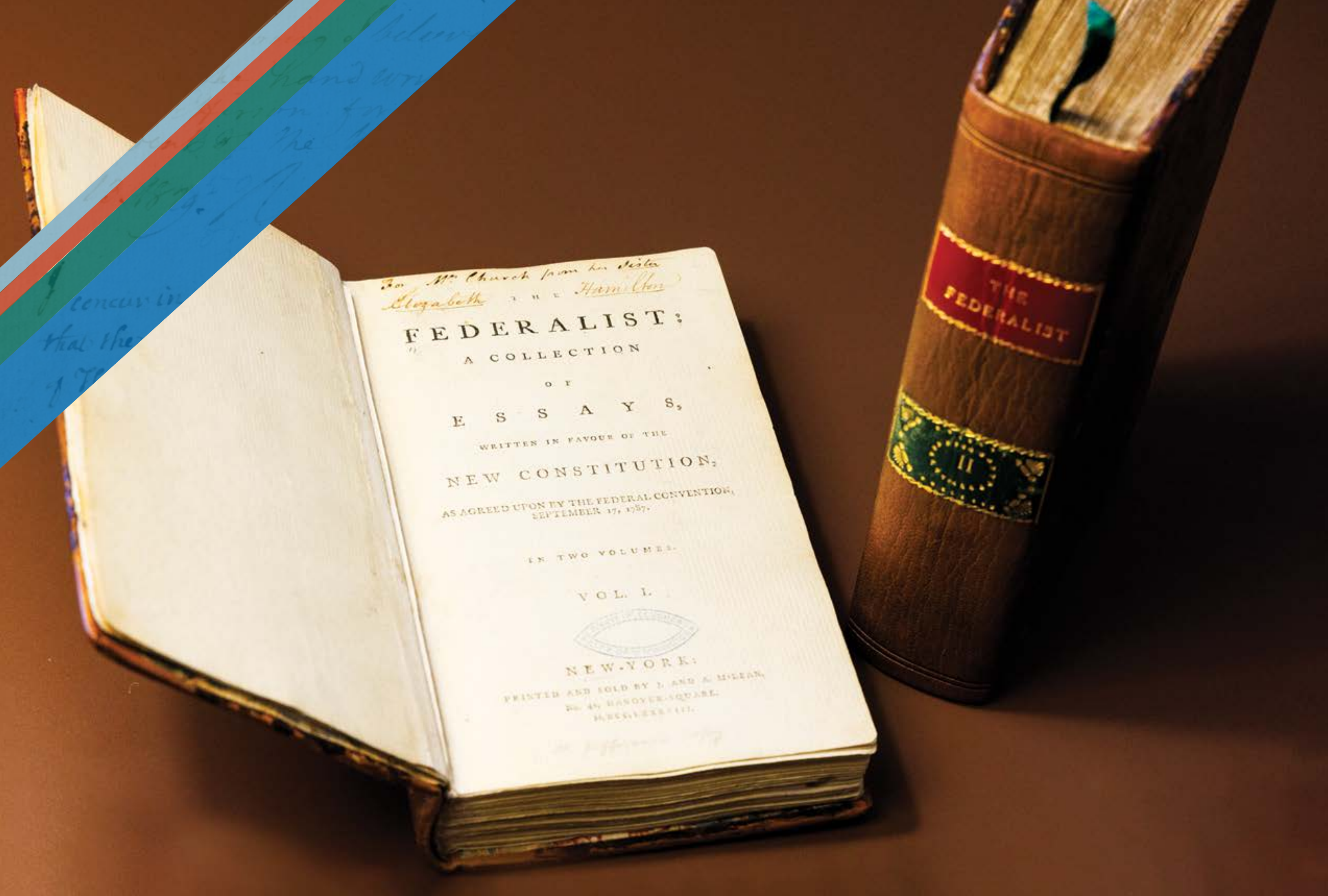


■ **Above:** Thomas Jefferson's copy of "The Federalist," inscribed at the top of the title page by Alexander Hamilton's wife, Elizabeth. ***Rare Book and Special Collections Division; photo by Shawn Miller***

Opposite: Jefferson wrote this list atop the flyleaf – his guesses at the identity of the author of each essay. ***Rare Book and Special Collections Division; photo by Shawn Miller***

THE FOUNDERS' FOOTNOTES

The Library holds Jefferson's and Madison's heavily annotated, personal copies of 'The Federalist.'

The Library has within its collections two fascinating copies of "The Federalist" with deep personal ties to three Founding Fathers.

The Federalist Papers originally were published in New York newspapers as 85 stand-alone essays advocating for the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. These foundational texts appeared under the pseudonym "Publius" but were written by an authorial tag team of Alexander Hamilton and James Madison (with John Jay contributing only five essays due to illness).

In an incredible feat of writerly productivity, Hamilton and Madison published multiple essays each week, releasing an avalanche of arguments for why the proposed Constitution would ensure the new nation's survival and prosperity.

These essays were first collected and bound together in spring 1788 in a two-volume edition titled "The Federalist: A Collection of Essays, Written in Favour of the New Constitution, as Agreed upon by the Federal Convention, September 17, 1787." Archibald McLean, the printer of the first edition, complained about the project's expanding size, saying, "When I engaged to do the work, it was to consist of twenty numbers, or at the most twenty-five." So, instead of printing one volume of 200 pages, McLean's Manhattan print shop ultimately

was burdened with producing two volumes totaling 600 pages. Plus, the book didn't sell. McLean was stuck with several hundred unsold copies.

The Library holds four copies from McLean's edition, including one originally owned by Elizabeth Hamilton, wife of Alexander Hamilton. Eliza sent her copy as a gift to her sister, Angelica Schuyler Church, then living in London with her husband. The title page is inscribed, "For Mrs. Church from her Sister Elizabeth Hamilton."

At this time, Angelica's daughter was enrolled in the same French boarding school as Thomas Jefferson's eldest daughter. During Jefferson's time in Paris as the American minister to France, he and Angelica became friends and would exchange letters for years.

They apparently also exchanged books. The library Jefferson sold to the United States for the Library of Congress in 1815 included the Schuyler sisters' copy of "The Federalist," which Angelica had gifted to Jefferson.

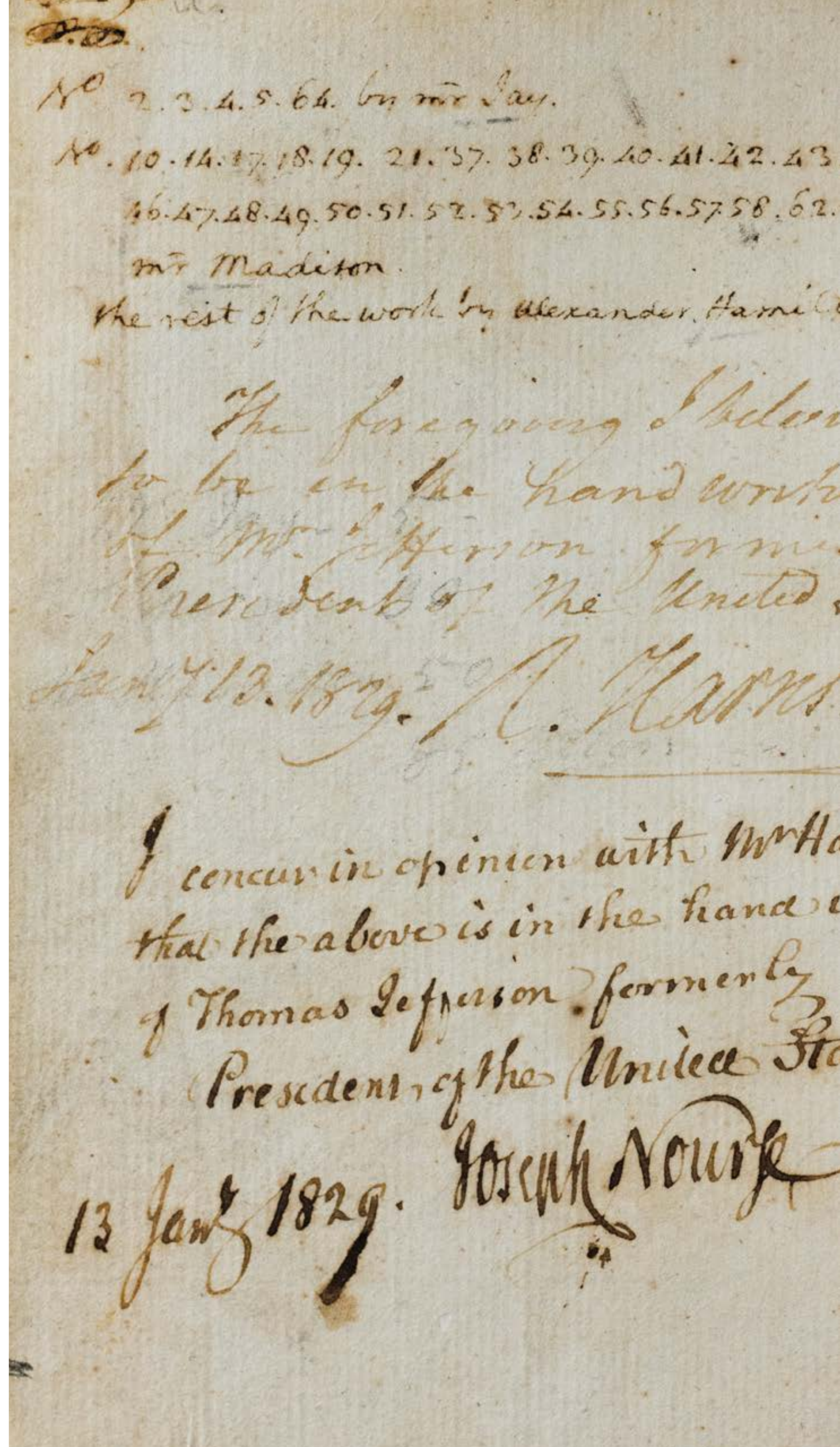
Jefferson commented that "The Federalist" was "the best commentary on the principles of government which was ever written" – high praise from the author of the Declaration of Independence.

Guessing who had written which essay was a popular parlor game in the early American political class. Within his copy, Jefferson used the front flyleaf to identify the authors for each of Publius' 85 essays. He attributed five to Jay, 30 to Madison and "the rest of the work by Alexander Hamilton."

When Hamilton died following his duel with Aaron Burr, he left behind a list of the authors for each essay. Within this list, Hamilton named himself as the author of a few essays that Madison himself claimed.

In Madison's personal copy of "The Federalist," also held by the Library, he sought to correct the record and noted in pencil the initials of each essay's author. Furthermore, Madison's copy contains his revisions for a "new edition" published in 1818.

Because McLean's 1788 first edition was produced while Madison was away serving in Virginia's state ratifying convention, his essays were published in "The Federalist" exactly as they had appeared in the newspapers. For the 1818 edition, Madison finally had the opportunity to correct errors


No 2.3.4.5.64. by mr Jay.
No. 10.14.37.18.19. 21.37. 38.39.40.41.42.43
46.47.48.49.50.51.52.53.54.55.56.57.58.62.
mr Madison.
the rest of the work by Alexander Hamil

The foregoing I believ
to be in the hand writ
of Mr Jefferson forme
President of the United
Jany 13. 1829. A. Harris

I concur in opinion with Mr Ha
that the above is in the hand
of Thomas Jefferson formerly
President of the United St
13 Jany 1829. Joseph Nourse

and polish his prose.

Madison blushed at being labeled "The Father of the Constitution," acknowledging instead "the work of many heads and many hands." Just please get right whose hands wrote what.

–Patrick Hastings is a specialist in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

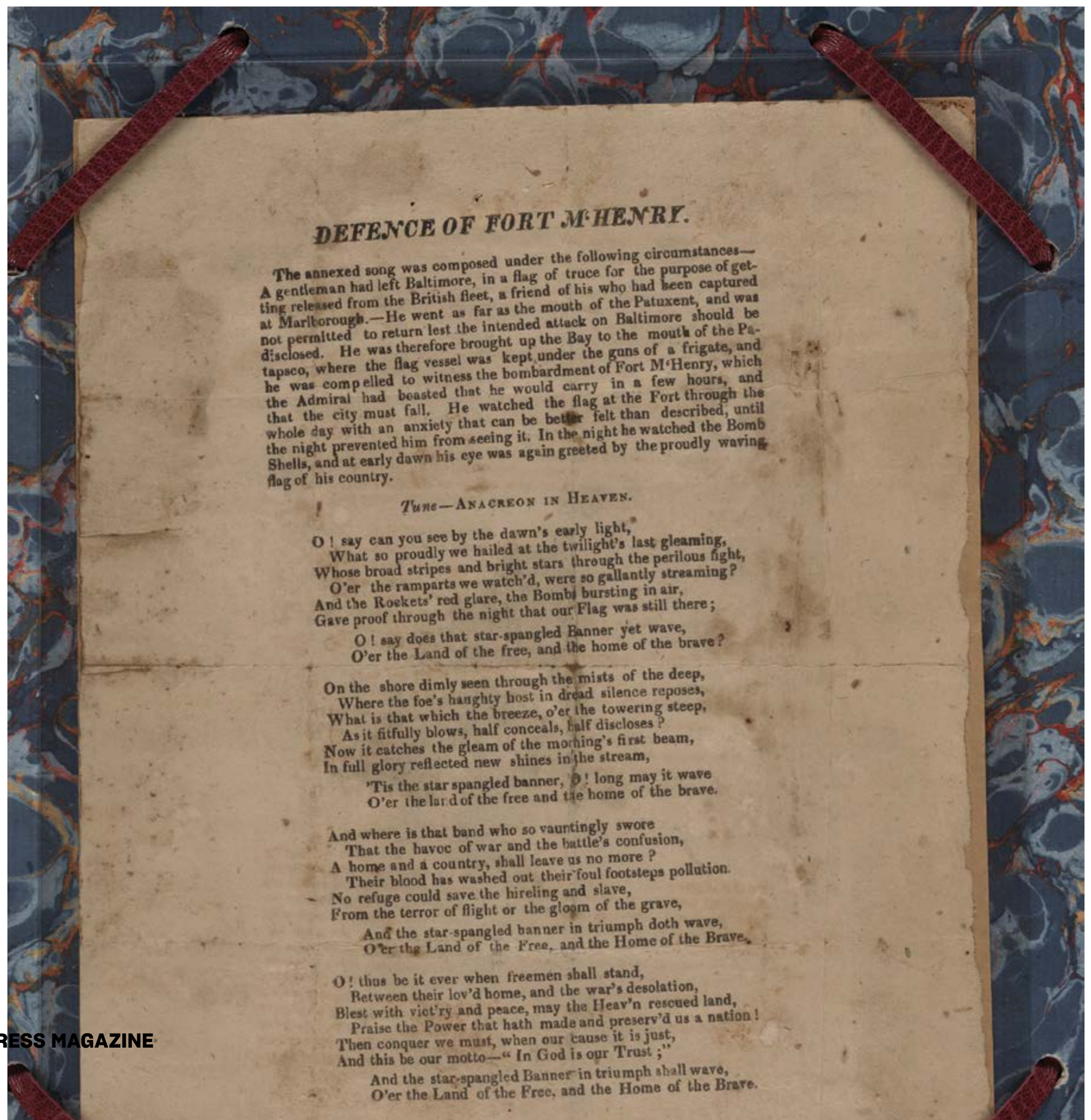
‘BY THE DAWN’S EARLY LIGHT’

Library collections chronicle the creation story of ‘The Star-Spangled Banner.’

It was September 1814, and British warships were unleashing a fierce bombardment on Fort McHenry, the American fortress guarding Baltimore Harbor. Rockets streaked across the night sky, shells burst in flashes of light, the city’s fate hung in the balance.

A few miles away, Francis Scott Key watched anxiously from a British ship, where he had gone to secure the release of a captured friend. Key feared the fort had fallen – until, by dawn’s light, he saw a large American flag still waving over McHenry’s ramparts.

Inspired, Key composed a poem, “Defence of Fort M‘Henry,” about what he’d witnessed



DEFENCE OF FORT M‘HENRY.

The annexed song was composed under the following circumstances—
A gentleman had left Baltimore, in a flag of truce for the purpose of get-
ting released from the British fleet, a friend of his who had been captured
at Marlborough.—He went as far as the mouth of the Patuxent, and was
not permitted to return lest the intended attack on Baltimore should be
disclosed. He was therefore brought up the Bay to the mouth of the Pa-
tapsco, where the flag vessel was kept under the guns of a frigate, and
he was compelled to witness the bombardment of Fort M‘Henry, which
the Admiral had boasted that he would carry in a few hours, and
that the city must fall. He watched the flag at the Fort through the
whole day with an anxiety that can be better felt than described, until
the night prevented him from seeing it. In the night he watched the Bomb
Shells, and at early dawn his eye was again greeted by the proudly waving
flag of his country.

Tune—ANACREON IN HEAVEN.

O! say can you see by the dawn’s early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight’s last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O’er the ramparts we watch’d, were so gallantly streaming?
And the Rockets’ red glare, the Bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our Flag was still there;
O! say does that star-spangled Banner yet wave,
O’er the Land of the free, and the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe’s haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o’er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning’s first beam,
In full glory reflected new shines in the stream,
’Tis the star spangled banner, O! long may it wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle’s confusion,
A home and a country, shall leave us no more?
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave,
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave,
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave,
O’er the Land of the Free, and the Home of the Brave.

O! thus be it ever when freemen shall stand,
Between their lov’d home, and the war’s desolation,
Blest with vict’ry and peace, may the Heav’n rescued land,
Praise the Power that hath made and preserv’d us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto—“In God is our Trust;”
And the star-spangled Banner in triumph shall wave,
O’er the Land of the Free, and the Home of the Brave.

■ This broadside of Francis Scott Key’s “Defence of Fort M‘Henry” – soon to be known as “The Star-Spangled Banner” – was published just days after he wrote it. Only two copies are known to exist. ***Music Division***

– with the tune of an 18th-century British song, “Anacreon in Heaven,” in mind for it. Key’s creation, when set to that music, forever after would be known by another name: “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

The Library’s Music Division today stands as the principal center for research about the national anthem, thanks in large part to the visionary work of Oscar G. Sonneck.

In 1902, Librarian of Congress Herbert Putnam hired the young, New Jersey-born musicologist to establish a music department and transform it into a world-class research center. By Sonneck’s resignation in 1917, he had elevated a collection of modest parlor songs into one of the finest, most comprehensive music libraries in the world.

In 1909, Sonneck published an influential report on patriotic songs like “The Star-Spangled Banner,” “Hail Columbia,” “America” and “Yankee Doodle.” In the following years, the Library amassed a rich archive of those airs, including hundreds of items related to the national anthem.

The Music Division holds, among many other things, the first printed lyrics and the first printed sheet music of “Anacreon”; Key’s own copy of that song; the first printed sheet music setting Key’s lyrics to “Anacreon” and bearing the title “The Star-Spangled Banner”; and a presentation copy of the lyrics handwritten by Key years later.

A standout treasure: the first printing of Key’s poem, one of only two copies known to survive.

Typeset in Baltimore by Samuel Sands and issued as a broadside just days after Key composed his poem, this printing of “Defence of Fort M‘Henry” vividly explains the circumstances of Key’s composition and, just below, notes the intended tune: “Anacreon in Heaven.” And then: one of the most memorable opening lines in music, followed by the four full verses of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” More than a century later, the copy at left was found pasted in a scrapbook, then acquired by the Library.

Another treasure: An arrangement by renowned Russian composer Igor Stravinsky. At the start of World War II, Stravinsky fled Europe for America, and he created his own heartfelt arrangement of the anthem as a gesture of thanks to his new homeland.

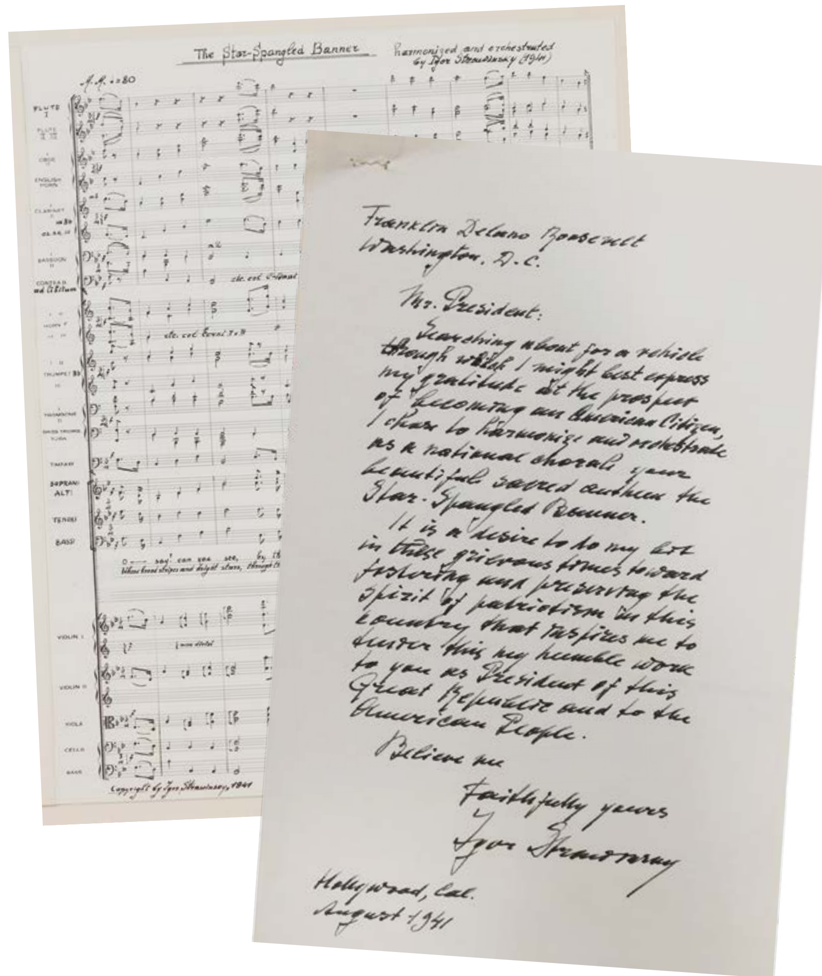
In a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941, he explained: “It is a desire to do my bit in the grievous times toward fostering and preserving the spirit of patriotism in this country that inspires me to tender this my humble work to you as President of this Great Republic and to the American People.”

Stravinsky’s stately arrangement sparked controversy before it was ever heard. A leading officer of two major music organizations contacted Roosevelt, warning against Stravinsky’s “mutilated version” of the anthem. Roosevelt ignored the plea, and the first performance was presented by the Los Angeles WPA (Works Progress Administration) Symphony and a chorus. Stravinsky and the audience joined in singing the final two verses.

In 1942, Stravinsky and the WPA gifted his draft letter and manuscript to the Library, further enriching its collection of patriotic music.

It’s a charming detail that “The Star-Spangled Banner,” in its traditional form, is the only national anthem that ends in a question mark – inviting us all to keep participating in this great American experiment of democracy.

–Loras Schissel is a senior music specialist in the Music Division.



Franklin Delano Roosevelt
Washington, D.C.

Mr. President:

Searching about for a vehicle through which I might best express my gratitude at the prospect of becoming an American Citizen, I chose to harmonize and orchestrate as a national chorale your beautiful sacred anthem the Star-Spangled Banner.

It is a desire to do my bit in these grievous times toward fostering and preserving the spirit of patriotism in this country that inspires me to tender this my humble work to you as President of this Great Republic and to the American People.

Believe me

Faithfully yours

Igor Stravinsky

Hollywood, Cal.
August 1941

Renowned composer Igor Stravinsky wrote his own arrangement of “The Star-Spangled Banner” and sent it to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, along with this letter. ***Music Division***

'FOUR SCORE AND SEVEN YEARS AGO …'

Lincoln's handwritten draft of the Gettysburg Address.

On Nov. 2, 1863, Gettysburg lawyer David Wills wrote to Abraham Lincoln, officially inviting the president to attend the dedication of a new military cemetery on Nov. 19 and provide "a few appropriate remarks" at the ceremony. Despite his heavy workload, Lincoln agreed to participate. In addition to

The first page of the Gettysburg Address (right), written by Abraham Lincoln in pen on Executive Mansion stationery. He wrote the second page (top) in pencil on ordinary paper. ***Manuscript Division***

ten to the great task remaining before us— that, from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here, gave the last full measure of our notion— that we here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people by the people for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Executive Mansion,

Washington, , 186 .

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created equal"

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who died here, that the nation might live. This we may, in all propriety do. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate— we can not consecrate— we can not hallow, this ground—

honoring the fallen soldiers to be interred in this cemetery, the dedication ceremony would allow him to explain to their loved ones, and all Americans, why the cause of the union was worth fighting and dying for.

Lincoln's "few appropriate remarks" would later become famous as the Gettysburg Address and continue to resonate with people around the world.

For a document as iconic as the Gettysburg Address now is, many details about its creation and delivery have been lost to time or clouded by conflicting memories of witnesses. Lincoln began working on the address in Washington, drafting his opening lines in ink on Executive Mansion stationery. Harkening back to the Declaration of Independence 87 years earlier ("four score and seven years ago"), Lincoln noted that the Revolutionary generation had founded a new nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that 'all men are created equal.'" That nation was now being torn apart by civil war, Lincoln continued, and the question of "whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure" remained to be answered. But at that ceremony, they gathered to dedicate a burial ground honoring those who gave their lives so that the nation would survive.

Precisely when Lincoln wrote the second page of his address is not known. Perhaps it was part of an earlier draft? Perhaps he was inspired to alter the ending of his speech after touring a portion of the nearby battlefield on the morning of the ceremony?

Regardless, after penciling connecting words on the page of Executive Mansion stationery, Lincoln put pencil to a piece of ordinary writing paper to call for his audience, and all Americans, to honor those who had given their "last full measure of devotion" by dedicating themselves to completing the unfinished work of the war. He called for them to "highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Having completed his remarks, Lincoln may have folded the pages together, creating matching creases in the mismatched pieces of paper. The president then amended his address further during its delivery, invoking a higher power in "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom ..."

The Library holds two copies of the Gettysburg Address, written in Lincoln's own hand. When either is on display, visitors often linger and carefully read Lincoln's words. Why do the roughly 270 words of the Gettysburg Address continue to resonate?

Each guest has their own answer, but in addition to the beauty of Lincoln's language, his address reminds us of the ideals on which the United States was founded, the unfinished nature of the experiment and that each generation must dedicate itself anew to ensuring that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

–Michelle Krowl is a historian in the Manuscript Division.

■ **Alexander Gardner made this portrait of Lincoln on Nov. 8, 1863, 11 days before he delivered his speech at Gettysburg.** ***Prints and Photographs Division***

PAGE FROM THE PAST

A DECLARATION FOR WOMEN

From Seneca Falls to the centennial, women claimed the promise of 1776.

The Declaration of Independence inspired many American women to demand their rights.

The most famous instance is likely the nation's first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, in July 1848.

At this meeting of over 300 persons, suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton read her now-famous "Declaration of Sentiments" protesting women's inferior legal status and listing 11 resolutions for the moral, economic and political equality of women, the most radical of which demanded "the elective franchise."

Fast forward to 1876, when the nation celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence with the Centennial Exposition, a massive world's fair held in Philadelphia that drew nearly 10 million visitors for an exuberant six-month celebration of American progress and patriotism.

The fair's patriotic symbolism culminated on July 4, 1876, with a staged reading of the Declaration of Independence by a descendant of signer Richard Henry Lee, held in front of Independence Hall.

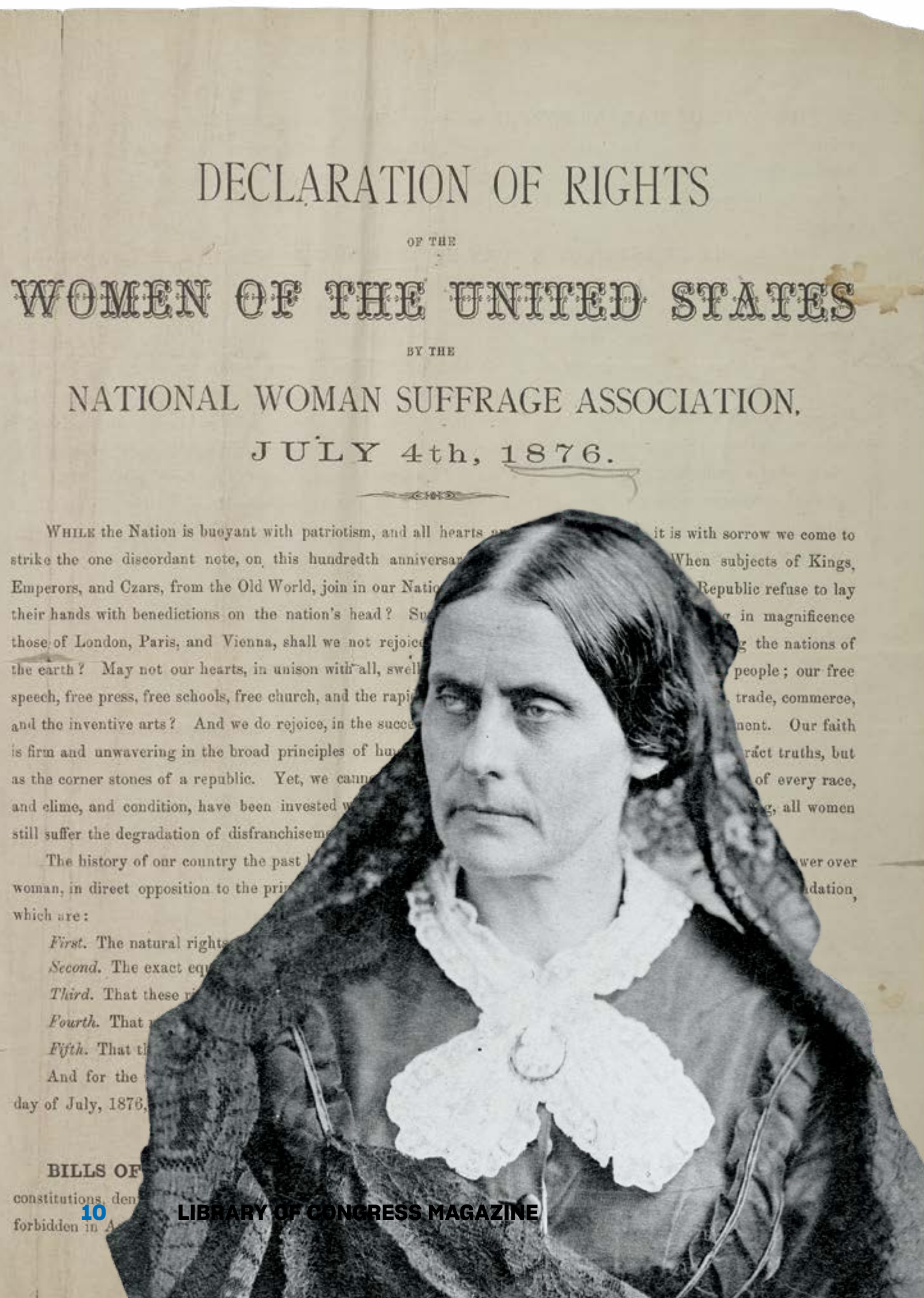
Members of the National Woman Suffrage Association, however, disrupted the event by pushing their way to the platform to give Susan B. Anthony the opportunity to present a "Declaration of Rights" for women to Thomas W. Ferry, acting vice president of the United States. Hurrying from the building, the women distributed copies of the document to the assembled body.

Safely outside, a crowd gathered, and Anthony read the women's demands, which included equality for all individuals.

Meanwhile, a stirring painting by Archibald M. Willard, titled "The Spirit of '76" (better known simply as "Yankee Doodle"), created especially for the Centennial Exposition, captured the imagination of the fair's visitors (see page 19). As they did with the stirring language of the Declaration of Independence, women's rights activists appropriated the painting's visual power for their own ends.

More than 40 years after the 1876 Centennial Exposition, the women's suffrage movement continued to take inspiration from the Declaration of Independence and Willard's painting in publications and postcards, tying the movement for women's voting rights and equality to the rights of representation sought by the nation's founding generation.

–Elizabeth A. Novara is a historian in the Manuscript Division.



DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

OF THE

WOMEN OF THE UNITED STATES

BY THE

NATIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION,

JULY 4th, 1876.

WHILE the Nation is buoyant with patriotism, and all hearts ... it is with sorrow we come to strike the one discordant note, on this hundredth anniversa... When subjects of Kings, Emperors, and Czars, from the Old World, join in our Natio... Republic refuse to lay their hands with benedictions on the nation's head? Su... in magnificence those of London, Paris, and Vienna, shall we not rejoic... the nations of the earth? May not our hearts, in unison with all, swell... people; our free speech, free press, free schools, free church, and the rapi... trade, commerce, and the inventive arts? And we do rejoice, in the succe... nent. Our faith is firm and unwavering in the broad principles of hu... ract truths, but as the corner stones of a republic. Yet, we cann... of every race, and clime, and condition, have been invested w... all women still suffer the degradation of disfranchisem...

The history of our country the past ... wer over woman, in direct opposition to the pri... dation, which are:

First. The natural right...

Second. The exact eq...

Third. That these ...

Fourth. That ...

Fifth. That t...

And for the ... day of July, 1876, ...

BILLS OF ...

constitutions, den... forbidden in A...

■ An original copy of the Declaration of Rights of the Women of the United States, passed out by Susan B. Anthony (shown below) during a centennial celebration of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia. *Manuscript Division, Prints and Photographs Division*

HOME OF LIBERTY

For decades, the Library served as guardian of the Declaration and Constitution.

In its early history, the Declaration of Independence faced multiple threats: damage from rolling and unrolling, light exposure, insects, flaking signatures, the hazards of frequent travel. Before settling in Washington, D.C., the Declaration moved with each shift of the nation's capital.

In 1921, the parchment found refuge in the Jefferson Building in response to an executive order by President Warren G. Harding:

"It is hereby ordered that [the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and other papers] be transferred from the Department of State to the possession and custody of the Library of Congress, to be there preserved and rendered accessible for historical and other legitimate uses …"

For the next three decades, successive Librarians honored that charge, first by constructing a shrine for secure display, and later, as the Library's 1952 annual report noted, by having the "courage" to support the documents' departure.

Designed by Francis H. Bacon, the marble and bronze shrine stood along the western wall of the Jefferson Building's Great Hall. President Calvin Coolidge, Secretary of State Charles Hughes and members of Congress joined Librarian Herbert Putnam at its 1924 unveiling.

The double-plated glass cases – the Declaration above, the Constitution below – contained gelatin film to mitigate the sun's harmful rays. Yet environmental concerns persisted, leading the Library's Keeper of the Collections to seek a more stable enclosure – especially for the Declaration, noticeably faded and damaged from its pre-Library handling, including, following the War of 1812, the making of "wet press" copies that lifted original ink onto damp paper.

Meanwhile, the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor sparked additional fears, prompting the move of both documents and other treasures to Fort Knox for safekeeping.

In 1944, the United States Marine Band heralded the manuscripts' return, and in 1951, President Harry S. Truman spoke at a rousing rededication of the shrine, fitted with new helium-filled cases, light filters and humidity gauges. Just a year later, however, a final, bittersweet ceremony marked the end of the Library's custody and the permanent installation of the founding documents in the National Archives' fortified Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom.

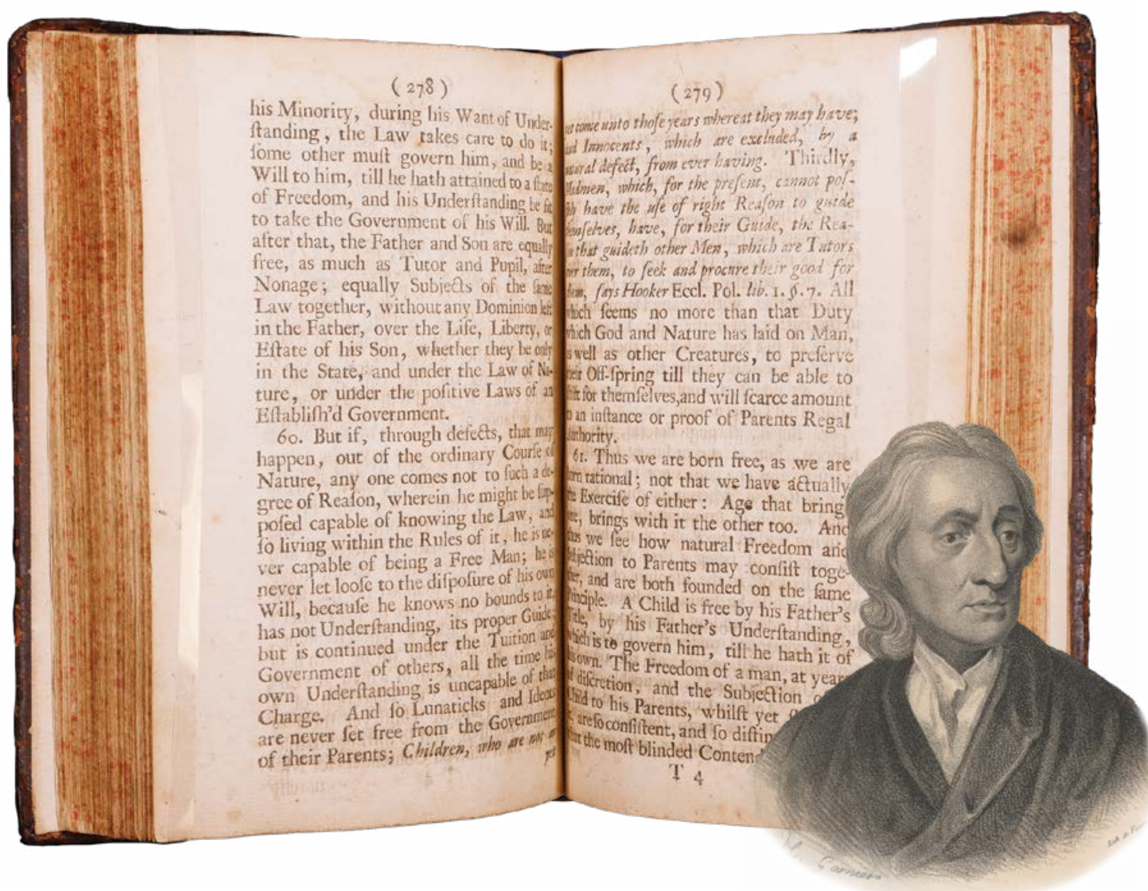
–Jane A. Hudiburg is an analyst in the Congressional Research Service.

President Calvin Coolidge (third from left) dedicates a shrine for displaying the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution in the Library's Great Hall on Feb. 28, 1924. ***Prints and Photographs Division***

‘THE DECLARATION’S PROMISE’

New exhibition explores the foundational principles of the Declaration of Independence.

BY RYAN REFT


(278)
his Minority, during his Want of Under-
ſtanding, the Law takes care to do it;
ſome other muſt govern him, and be a
Will to him, till he hath attained to a ſtate
of Freedom, and his Underſtanding be fit
to take the Government of his Will. But
after that, the Father and Son are equally
free, as much as Tutor and Pupil, after
Nonage; equally Subjects of the ſame
Law together, without any Dominion left
in the Father, over the Life, Liberty, or
Eſtate of his Son, whether they be only
in the State, and under the Law of Na-
ture, or under the poſitive Laws of an
Eſtabliſh'd Government.
60. But if, through defects, that may
happen, out of the ordinary Courſe of
Nature, any one comes not to ſuch a de-
gree of Reaſon, wherein he might be ſup-
poſed capable of knowing the Law, and
ſo living within the Rules of it, he is ne-
ver capable of being a Free Man; he is
never let looſe to the diſpoſure of his own
Will, becauſe he knows no bounds to it,
has not Underſtanding, its proper Guide;
but is continued under the Tuition and
Government of others, all the time his
own Underſtanding is uncapable of that
Charge. And ſo Lunaticks and Ideots
are never ſet free from the Government
of their Parents; *Children, who are not*

(279)
come unto thoſe years whereat they may have;
Innocents, which are excluded, by a
tural defect, from ever having. Thirdly,
Madmen, which, for the preſent, cannot poſ-
ſibly have the uſe of right Reaſon to guide
themſelves, have, for their Guide, the Rea-
that guideth other Men, which are Tutors
over them, to ſeek and procure their good for
them, ſays Hooker Eccl. Pol. *lib.* 1. §. 7. All
which ſeems no more than that Duty
which God and Nature has laid on Man,
as well as other Creatures, to preſerve
their Off-ſpring till they can be able to
ſhift for themſelves, and will ſcarce amount
to an inſtance or proof of Parents Regal
Authority.
61. Thus we are born free, as we are
born rational; not that we have actually
the Exerciſe of either: Age that bring
one, brings with it the other too. And
thus we ſee how natural Freedom and
Subjection to Parents may conſiſt toge-
ther, and are both founded on the ſame
Principle. A Child is free by his Father's
Title, by his Father's Underſtanding,
which is to govern him, till he hath it of
his own. The Freedom of a man, at year
of diſcretion, and the Subjection
Child to his Parents, whilſt yet
are ſo conſiſtent, and ſo diſtin
that the moſt blinded Conten
T 4

Following the trauma of the American Civil War, Walt Whitman published "Democratic Vistas," a tough but ultimately optimistic appraisal of America's democratic promise. In it, Whitman reminisced about the nation's founding and the echoes of the past from his youth: "The old men, I remember as a boy, were always talking of American independence. What is independence?"

Throughout the work, Whitman explores this question as well as the social and political fissures that needed to be traversed after the war. Amidst that wreckage, Whitman held firm to his belief in the United States' adherence to a democratic ideal and to the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

The Declaration gathers the political thought borne of the Enlightenment and combines it with the activism of the American revolutionaries. It emphasizes ideas such as freedom of speech and religion and equality between people. Those principles redounded in surprising ways throughout the nation's history from the 18th century to the 21st. This is the major theme of the upcoming exhibit based on the language and ideals of the document itself: "The Declaration's Promise: A Revolutionary Idea."

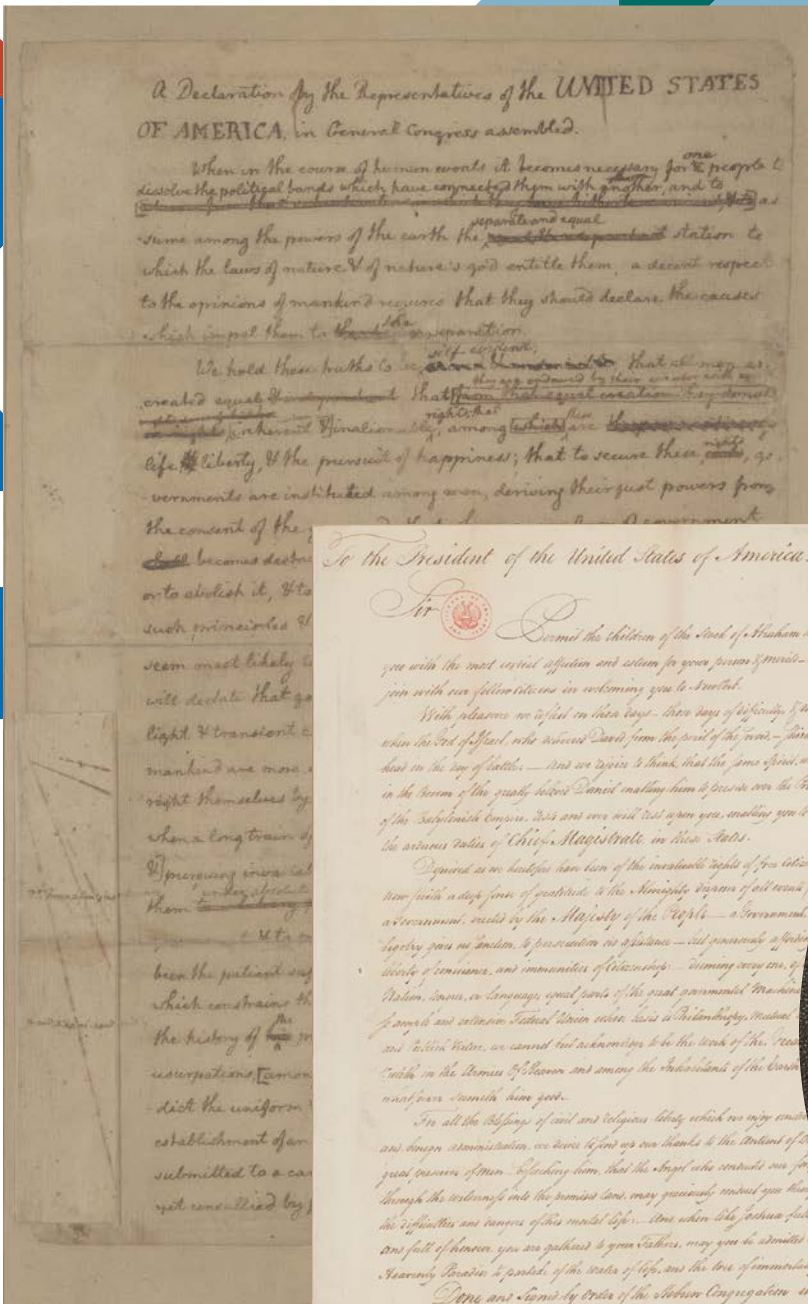
The American Revolution served as the crucible and the Declaration the deliberate expression through which British colonists transformed themselves into American citizens. The Declaration was at once within the tradition of English subjects submitting petitions of grievance toward the British crown and Parliament and without it, since it went beyond demands for reform and instead declared independence.

The new nation's government established its foundation upon John Locke's ideas regarding political legitimacy: "consent of the governed" and "unalienable" natural rights, "life, liberty," and in the American interpretation, "the pursuit of happiness" rather than "property," which had rounded out Locke's trio of liberties. Locke had borrowed, too, the idea of "pursuit of happiness" from the work of Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Burlamaqui, "Natural liberty is the right nature gives to all mankind … most convenient to their happiness," and others.

In addition to channeling Enlightenment philosophy through an American lens, some members of the Continental Congress conveyed the political ideas of their constituents and drew upon declarations passed by localities. As Danielle Allen has noted in her reading of the document, it

■ **Opposite:** **The signing of the Declaration of Independence, a lithograph by N. Currier.** ***Prints and Photographs Division***

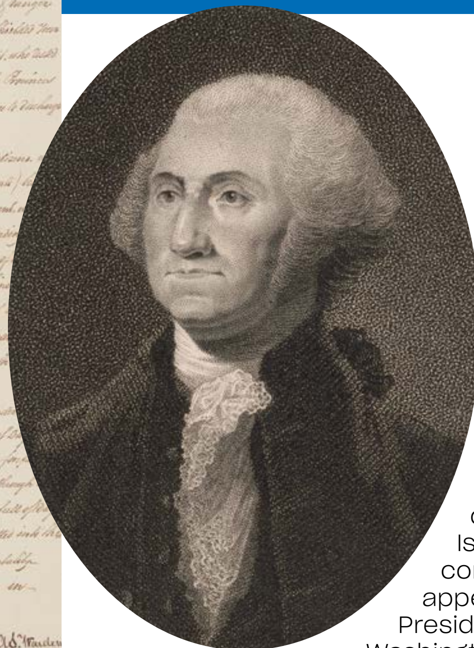
This page: **John Locke's "Two Treatises of Government" (top). Walt Whitman's writing pen.** ***Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Prints and Photographs Division; Manuscript Division***


A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in General Congress assembled.

To the President of the United States of America.

Done and Signed by Order of the Hebrew Congregation in NewPort Rhode Island August 17th 1790.

Moses Seixas



■ **From left:** Thomas Jefferson's rough draft of the Declaration of Independence; Moses Seixas' letter about religious freedom, sent to George Washington in 1790; and a portrait of Jefferson by engraver Cornelius Tiebout, made around 1797. ***Manuscript Division, Prints and Photographs Division***

took "rivers of talk for Jefferson's words to become the 'unanimous' Declaration of the colonies." Through the Declaration, the nation enacted a real political movement and the modern world's first democracy, thereby serving as a collective expression, not simply a treatise by elites.

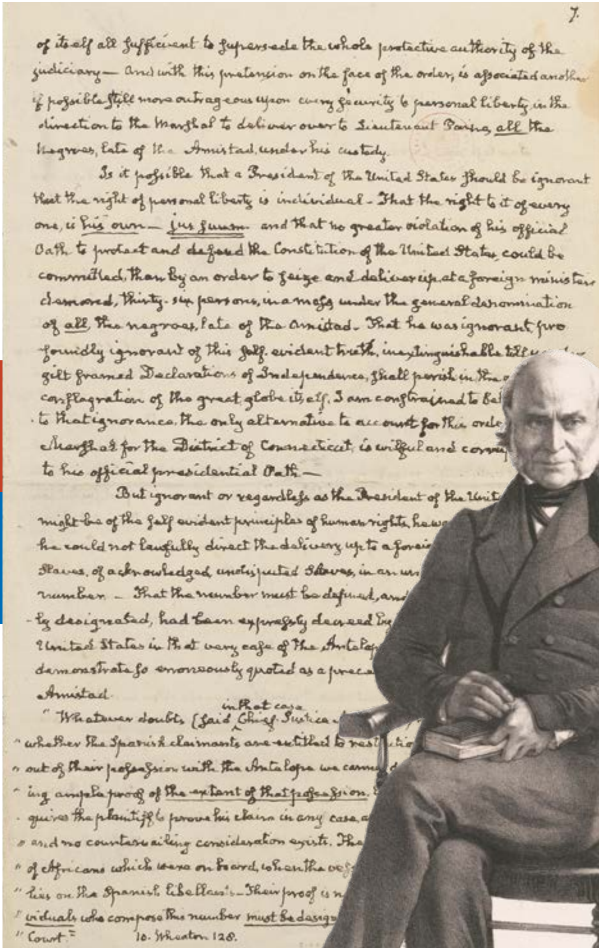
Moving from the crown's subjects to the nation's citizens, as demonstrated by Jefferson's original draft of the Declaration on display in the exhibit, marked only one aspect of the Declaration's revolutionary nature.

The idea of religious freedom permeated debates for many Americans. Moses Seixas, writing in August 1790 on behalf of his Rhode Island Hebrew congregation, appealed to President George Washington to ensure a "Government, which to bigotry gives no sanction, to persecution no assistance … ." Washington's response, that all Americans possess "liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship," furthered the nation's devotion to religious liberty, emphasizing the need to move beyond "toleration … as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights."

Jefferson's copy of the Quran and an 1830 copy of the Book of Mormon, also on display, serve as further evidence of this American tradition established by the Declaration.

Yet promises made must be promises kept; the failure to uphold such agreements leads

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal”



7.

of itself all sufficient to supersede the whole protective authority of the judiciary — And with this pretension on the face of the order, is associated another if possible still more outrageous upon every security to personal liberty, in the direction to the Marshal to deliver over to Lieutenant Paine, all the Negroes, late of the Amistad, under his custody.

Is it possible that a President of the United States should be ignorant that the right of personal liberty is individual - That the right to it of every one, is his own — jus suum — and that no greater violation of his official Oath, to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, could be committed, than by an order to seize and deliver up, at a foreign minister's demand, thirty-six persons, in a mass under the general denomination of all, the negroes, late of the Amistad - That he was ignorant pro-foundly ignorant of this self-evident truth, inextinguishable till ... gilt framed Declarations of Independence, shall perish in the ... conflagration of the great globe itself. I am constrained to bel... to that ignorance, the only alternative to account for the orde... Marshal for the District of Connecticut, is wilful and corru... to his official presidential Oath —

But ignorant or regardless as the President of the Unit... might be of the self evident principles of human rights, howe... he could not lawfully direct the delivery up to a forei... Slaves, of acknowledged undisputed Slaves, in an un... number — That the number must be defined, and ... -ly designated, had been expressly decreed by ... United States in that very case of the Antelo... demonstrate so erroneously quoted as a prece... Amistad.

“ Whatever doubts (said in that case Chief Justice ...
“ whether the Spanish claimants are entitled to restitutio...
“ out of their possession with the Antelope we canno...
“ ing ample proof of the extent of that possession. ...
“ quires the plaintiff to prove his claim in any case a...
“ and no countervailing consideration exists. The ...
“ of Africans which were on board, when the ve...
“ lies on the Spanish libellants - Their proof is n...
“ viduals who compose the number must be desig...
“ Court” 10. Wheaton 128.

to disillusion and conflict. The nation’s failure to stamp out its most obvious violation of the Declaration’s ideals, the enslavement of Africans, stands as a stark example of this tension.

In their opposition to slavery, abolitionists vigorously adopted the Declaration’s ideals. Though not a radical abolitionist, former president and then congressman John Quincy Adams also opposed slavery. His argument before the Supreme Court in the 1841 Amistad case embodies the Declaration’s importance in abolitionism.

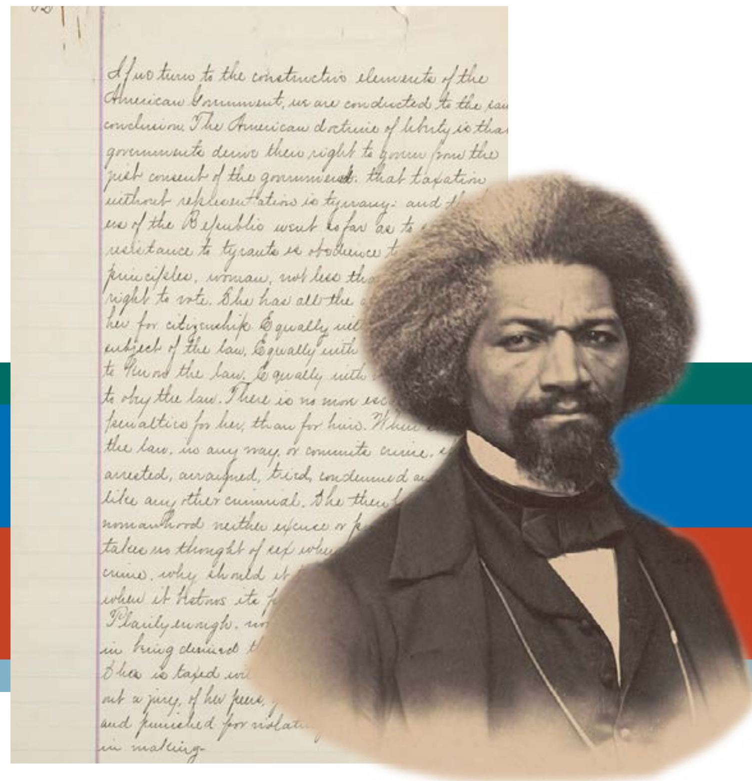
Over three dozen Mende people from what today is Sierra Leone mutinied against their Spanish enslavers aboard the ship Amistad, off the Connecticut coast. They appealed to U.S. officials for their freedom. In his oral arguments before the court, Adams wielded the document’s language and ideals as a rhetorical cudgel. He referenced the Declaration of Independence over a half dozen times and stopped at least twice to point to a copy of the Declaration displayed in the courtroom. The Declaration served as the North Star of the nation’s creed: “The moment you come, to the Declaration of Independence, that every man has a right to life and liberty, an inalienable right, this case is decided,” Adams told the court. The justices agreed, ruling 7–1 in favor of the captives.

The ways Americans used the Declaration as a framework for demanding rights and liberties is explored throughout the exhibit. In addition to abolitionism, this includes the push for women’s suffrage. The two movements were in dialogue in the 19th century – many suffragists worked in the abolitionist cause sharpening their rhetorical skills and organizing principles.

In her 1861 speech “What is American Slavery?” Susan B. Anthony cites the Declaration in her demand to abolish the “peculiar institution”: “It is the depriving

Former President John Quincy Adams argued before the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of Africans aboard the Amistad. Shown here is a copy of his presentation to the court. ***Manuscript Division, Prints and Photographs Division***

citizens, of these United States, of their
inalienable right to Life, Liberty and
the pursuit of happiness. — It is
the robbing of every sixth man, woman and
child, of this glorious republic, of their God
given right to the ownership and
ontrol of their own persons, — to the
nings of their own hands & brains, —
he exercise of their own conscien
l wills, — to the possession and
yment of their own homes; —
is the sundering of what God ha
ned together, — the divorcing hus-
ds & wives, — Parents & children, —
thers & sisters; — It is the robbery
every comfort, and every possession, sacred
a child of earth, and an heir of
Heaven; — American Slavery!
It is a wholesale system of wrong and


If we turn to the constructive elements of the
American Government, we are conducted to the sa
conclusion. The American doctrine of liberty is tha
governments derive their right to govern from the
just consent of the governed: that taxation
without representation is tyranny: and th
rs of the Republic went so far as to

■ **Left:** The original draft of Susan B. Anthony's 1861 speech, "What Is American Slavery?" ***Manuscript Division, Prints and Photographs Division***

Right: In 1886, Frederick Douglass delivered this speech in support of women's suffrage. ***Manuscript Division, Prints and Photographs Division***

four Million of native-born citizens of these United States, of their inalienable right to Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Abolitionists joined the suffrage cause as well, as demonstrated by Frederick Douglass, who campaigned for women's right to the franchise and drew upon the language of the Declaration. In an 1886 speech, Douglass asserted that the "American doctrine of liberty is that governments derive their right to govern from the just consent of the governed; that taxation without representation is tyranny; and the founders of the Republic went so far as to say that resistance to tyrants is obedience to God. On these principles, woman, not less than man, has a right to vote." Drawn from Anthony's and Douglass' papers, the speeches capture the pervasive nature of the Declaration's ideals and those that sought to see them fulfilled.

Whitman also functions as a proverbial inflection and departure point in "The Declaration's Promise." Describing post-Civil War America as "canker'd," Whitman reminds readers that the American people "of their own choice" fought and died for their own idea of a more just America. President Abraham Lincoln manifested a new vision of the Declaration's promises of liberty and equality through his famous Gettysburg Address, given at the dedication of the military cemetery in Pennsylvania amidst the Civil War. The Nicolay copy of the speech also will be on view in the exhibit (see page 8).

Lincoln's oration served as philosophical inspiration, but it took the actions of abolitionists, freedmen and freedwomen, and all those who sacrificed their lives in the war to ensure a more just nation.

The Petition of Citizens of South Carolina, preserved in the Justin Morrell Papers and displayed in the exhibit, is a nearly 55-foot document signed in 1865 by over 3,000 Black South Carolinians, including many freedmen and freedwomen. They appealed to the U.S. Congress for voting rights to secure other fundamental liberties. Citing their loyalty during the war, they requested in writing that Congress not "sanction any state government which refused to grant the franchise to citizens otherwise qualified in common course of American law, without distinction of Color – Without this political privilege we will have no security for our personal rights and no means to secure the blessings of education to our children."

While Lincoln's message was transformative over time – aided by the passage of the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments – Reconstruction failed to ensure equality for African Americans. Jim Crow and Black Codes passed by Southern legislatures after Reconstruction descended upon them across the South while the North imposed

less codified but nonetheless racially discriminatory policies.

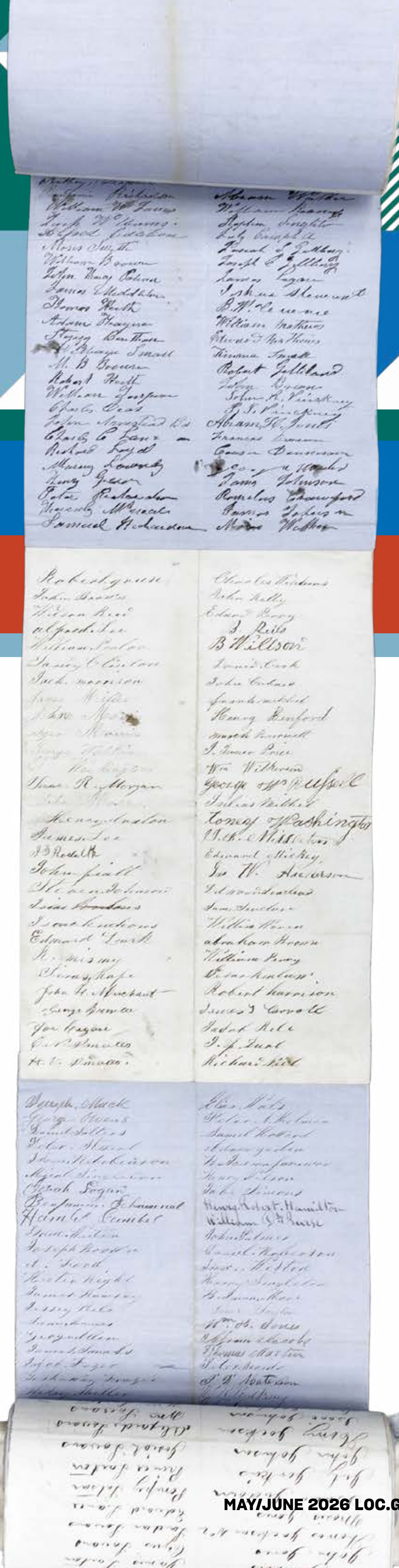
What to make of such discrepancies? Turning to Whitman again, his poem "Song of Myself" from his classic work "Leaves of Grass," unintentionally captures this tension, which he explored in greater detail in "Democratic Vistas:" "Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself. (I am large, I contain multitudes.)" The Declaration and American history, though intertwined, remain as contradictory and multitudinous as Whitman.

Although the exhibit focuses primarily on the 18th and 19th centuries, it does explore aspects of the Declaration's influence in the 20th, most notably during the Civil Rights Movement and the 1963 March on Washington. In speeches that day, John Lewis appealed to the crowd to "get into this great revolution that is sweeping this nation … until the Revolution of 1776 is complete," and Martin Luther King Jr. directly referenced the Declaration's "creed:" "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

If the 19th-century abolitionist movement raised the consciousness of women toward their promised rights, the civil rights movement inspired feminist, Native American, environmental, disability rights and LGBTQ+ activists in the 20th. For example, beginning in 1964, homophile leader Frank Kameny began holding "Reminder Day" demonstrations in Philadelphia on July 4 to remind Americans that LGBT rights were included within the Declaration's promise. Citizens, he wrote, were entitled to their own "pursuit of happiness" yet "upon pain of severe punishment by the criminal law and the harshest sanctions by society around him, the homosexual American citizen finds himself denied this 'unalienable right.'"

Kameny's demands seemed audacious at the time, perhaps even haughty to some, but today are largely acknowledged as just. The movement's demands represent the influence the Declaration has projected throughout American history. Much as Whitman celebrated "the haughty defiance of '76," at the nation's 250th anniversary, Americans still honor the Declaration's spirited promises of liberty.

—Ryan Reft is a historian in the Manuscript Division.

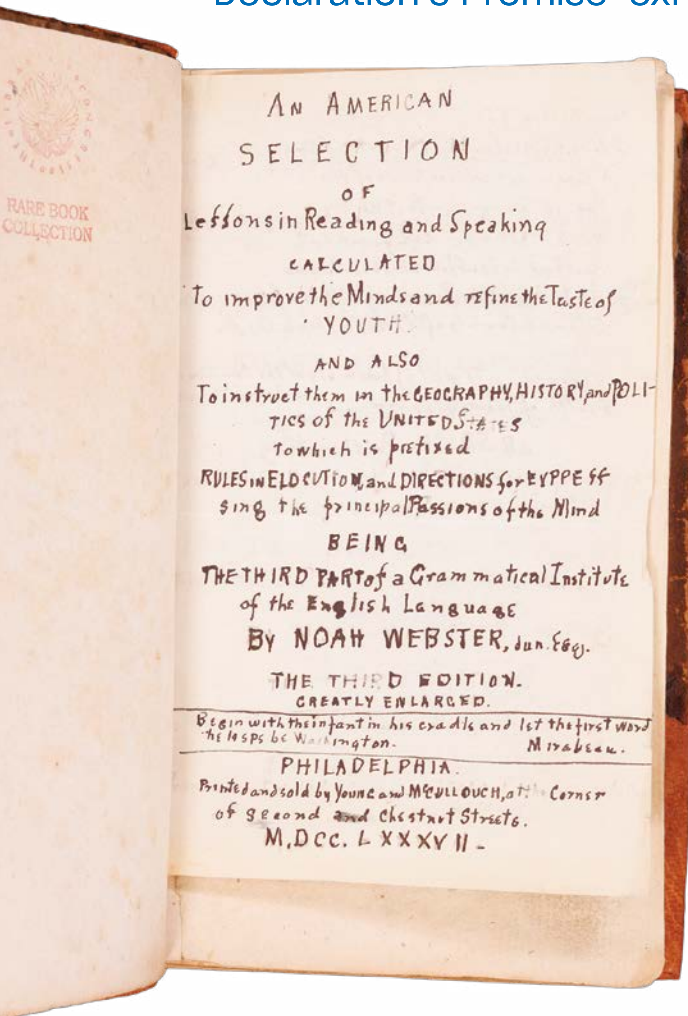


■ More than 3,000 Black South Carolinians, including many freedmen and freedwomen, signed this petition for voting rights in 1865. The petition measures nearly 55 feet long. *Manuscript Division*

CURATOR'S PICKS

FAVE FIVE

Manuscript Division historian Sherri Sheu selects favorite items from the new 'The Declaration's Promise' exhibit.


RARE BOOK COLLECTION

An American
Selection
of
Lessons in Reading and Speaking
Calculated
To improve the Minds and refine the Taste of
Youth.
And also
To instruct them in the Geography, History and Politics of the United States
to which is prefixed
Rules in Elocution, and Directions for expressing the principal Passions of the Mind
Being
The Third Part of a Grammatical Institute of the English Language
By Noah Webster, Jun. Esq.
The Third Edition.
Greatly Enlarged.
Begin with the infant in his cradle and let the first word he lisps be Washington. Mirabeau.
Philadelphia.
Printed and sold by Young and McCulloch, at the Corner of Second and Chestnut Streets.
M,DCC.LXXXVII.

NOAH WEBSTER'S LESSON BOOK

While most of us recognize Webster's name from ubiquitous dictionaries, it might surprise visitors to find out that he saw language as a way for Americans to assert their independence. Through his books, dictionaries, spellers and other educational materials, Webster promoted American spellings, grammar and pronunciations to encourage a distinctive American language.

RARE BOOK AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DIVISION

WALT WHITMAN'S GLASSES

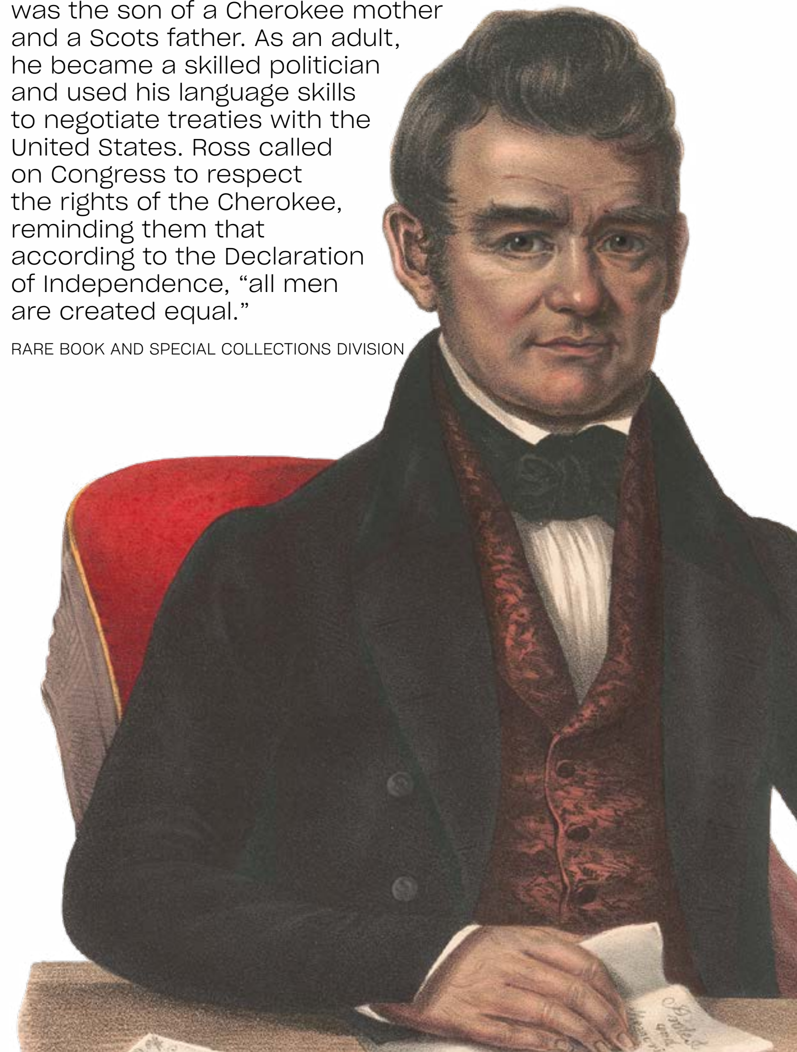
Look closely, and you'll see that one lens of this pair of glasses used by poet Walt Whitman was intentionally blurred. Scholars believe the spectacles were made to accommodate Whitman's disabilities following a stroke. Through works such as "I Hear America Singing" and "Leaves of Grass," Whitman celebrated the contributions of American workers.

MANUSCRIPT DIVISION

CHEROKEE PRINCIPAL CHIEF JOHN ROSS

Cherokee Principal Chief John Ross (ᎫᏫᏍᎫᏫ) was the son of a Cherokee mother and a Scots father. As an adult, he became a skilled politician and used his language skills to negotiate treaties with the United States. Ross called on Congress to respect the rights of the Cherokee, reminding them that according to the Declaration of Independence, "all men are created equal."

RARE BOOK AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DIVISION



'SPIRIT OF '76'

As the illustrator for the National Woman's Party, Nina Allender documented the fight for women's suffrage. Her cartoon for the Jan. 30, 1915, issue of The Suffragist shows women marching in a fife-and-drum corps with a flag labeled "Constitutional Amendment." By titling the cartoon "The Spirit of '76," Allender drew parallels between the fight for women's voting rights and the fight for independence.

PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION

HENRY 'BOX' BROWN

Americans have gone to great lengths to secure their freedom. Henry "Box" Brown earned his nickname in 1849 when he shipped himself out of slavery in Richmond inside a wooden box. It took a treacherous 27 hours before he arrived safely in Philadelphia. Brown later traveled the country making speeches against slavery – often with his shipping box in tow.

PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION

■ **Right:** Alexander Graham Bell, as he appeared at the time of the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. *Prints and Photographs Division*

Below: A bird's-eye view of the massive Centennial Exposition grounds. *Prints and Photographs Division*

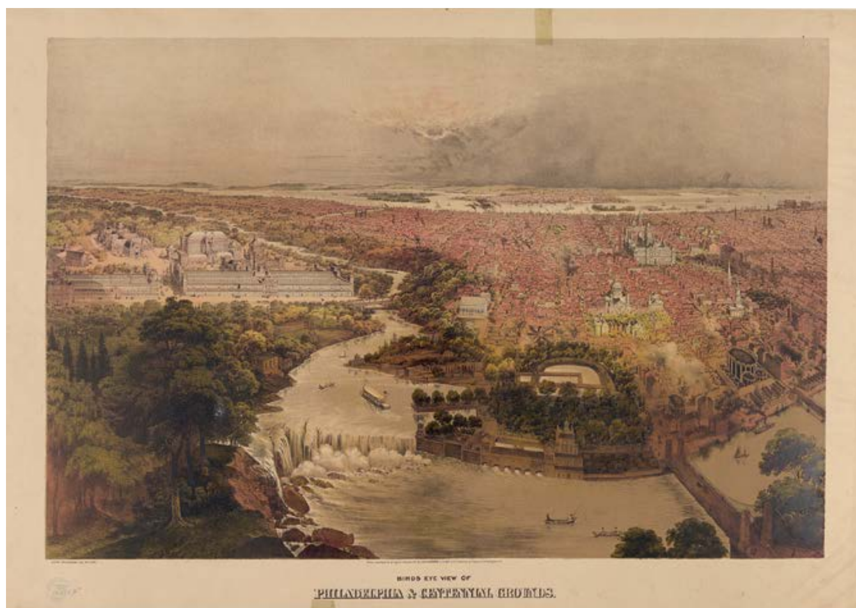
Opposite top: Machinery Hall covered 14 acres, showcasing examples of the nation's burgeoning industrial power. *Prints and Photographs Division*

Opposite bottom: Bell's sketch of his telephone – the first drawings made of his invention. *Manuscript Division*

INVENTING TELEPHONES AT THE CENTENNIAL

A very American, and messy, story of innovation and progress.

In June of 1876, two weeks before the nation's centennial, a young Alexander Graham Bell arrived in Philadelphia. He was staggered by what he saw. He had come to demonstrate his inventions at the Centennial Exposition, the first world's fair hosted on American soil, with exhibits stretched massively across more than 200 buildings in Fairmount Park. "It grows upon one," Bell wrote his soon-to-be wife, Mabel. "It is so prodigious and so wonderful … just think of having the products of all nations condensed into a few acres of buildings."



Like any of the era's world's fairs, the exhibition was a breathless celebration of progress, a spectacle of industry and commerce, art and culture. Nearly 10 million visitors attended. Those visitors may easily have passed by Bell's telephone, but the impression of the nation's burgeoning industrial power was unmistakable. On the grounds stood the colossal Machinery Hall, enclosing 14 acres of exhibits and a three-story Corliss steam engine that powered every noisy machine inside. There, according to one account, one found "fire, smoke, sweat, and labor; whirring and whizzing, banging and clanging, pounding and puffing, tinkling and jingling" and machines that produced everything from "a tooth-brush to a locomotive."

Bell's telephone barely functioned then, and even he admitted it was still in an embryonic stage. Still, his demonstration went well.

In a private showing for a small group of notables, Bell had shouted and recited and sung into the telephone from a distant room, only partially heard. At one point, after Bell asked, “Do you understand what I say,” the physicist later known as Lord Kelvin barreled toward him, announcing excitedly that he had heard the words “what I say.”

In the mythology that followed, this became a pivotal moment, the first public demonstration of a single device that broke sharply with past technology, brought forward by one brilliant inventor.

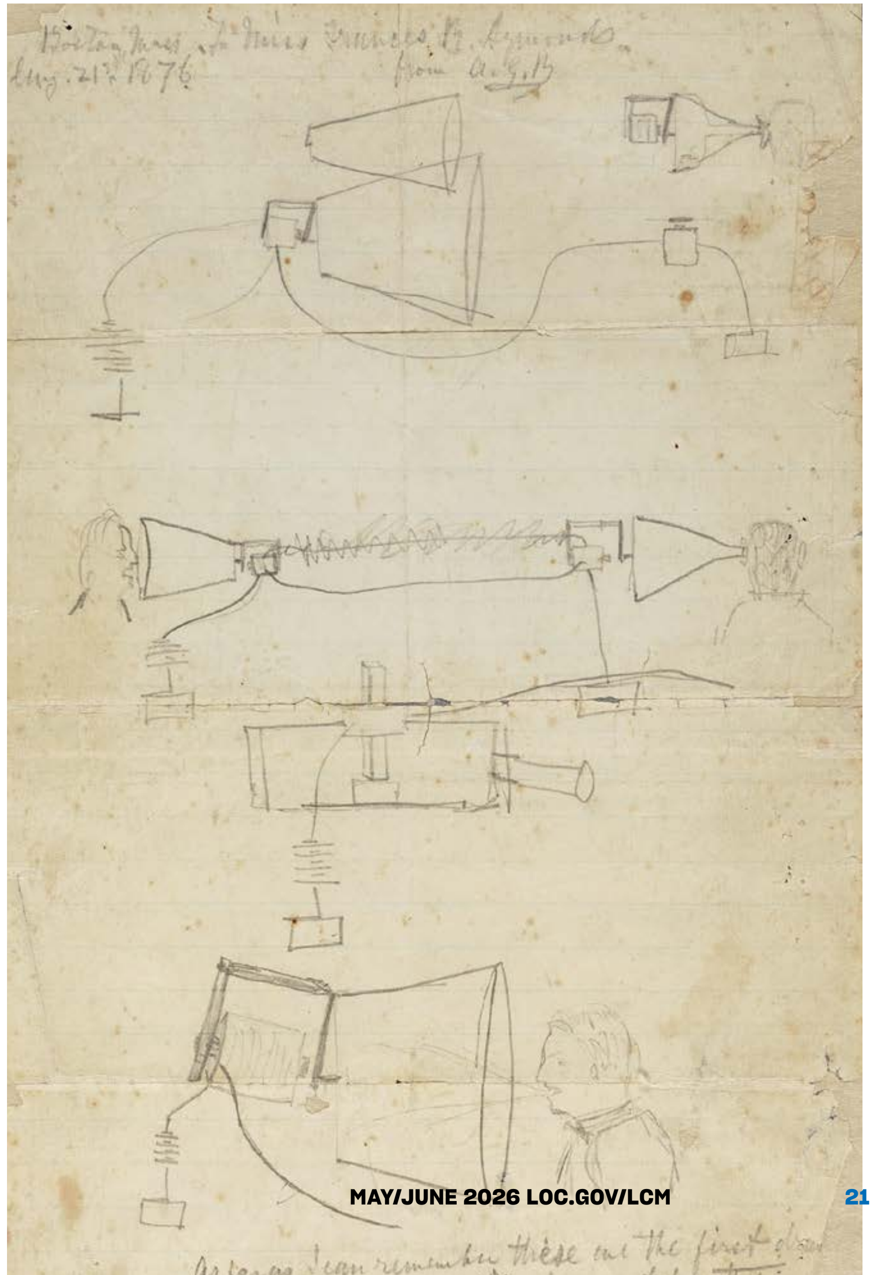
Yet real invention is seldom so straightforward. That version of the telephone’s origin is less a historical story than a legal one — a series of bold claims, made ex post facto, meant to defend a lucrative patent for Bell and his backers. “In that sense,” historian Christopher Beauchamp writes, “the invention of the telephone belongs to the lawyers.”

The real story was messier. Elisha Gray, an electrical engineer who later became Bell’s most formidable rival, was also at the exhibition that day. Earlier that year both men had alerted the U.S. Patent Office to their efforts, as Gray put it, to transmit “vocal sounds telegraphically.” But Bell and Gray were really on hand to promote their high-capacity telegraphs, not their half-formed telephones. Thomas Edison was present for the same reason. Samuel Morse’s brilliant success decades earlier had produced a telegraphic network bursting at the seams, and fragments of solutions to increase capacity buzzed through the air. In 1876, the telephone was still a side project, less urgent than enhancements to the telegraph system. But it was in the air as well, and soon Bell, Gray and Edison had all set their sights on improving it, with legal battles over credit and financial reward to come.

Americans have embraced stories of invention as points of national pride, from Franklin’s lightning rod to Morse’s telegraph, Bell’s telephone to the Wright Flyer.

The quiet thoughts of a lone inventor make for a good story, but the cacophony of invention as it more often happens, incrementally and in collaboration, is just as powerful, and just as American.

—Josh Levy is a historian in the Manuscript Division.



■ **Naval officers in Virginia used rubber-on-foam backing to make this raised relief model of Utah Beach and Normandy's hedgerow countryside.** ***Geography and Map Division***

D-DAY IN MINIATURE

3D model trained troops for the assault on Utah Beach.

The Library's Geography and Map Division holds many treasures from critically important moments in American and global history – maps that chronicle exploration, discovery, war, peace and progress.

One such map is a raised relief model created in early June 1944, showing an area largely known to the world by its World War II code name: Utah Beach.

U.S. naval officers at Camp Bradford, Virginia, produced the map – a unique three-dimensional object made of rubber-on-foam backing – mere days before the D-Day landings in Normandy, France, that helped change the course of the war toward Allied victory.

The mapmakers painstakingly compiled it from stereo photographs taken by low-flying American pilots that April and May, noting information critical for amphibious landings: tide lines, the slope of the beach, the location of hedgehogs – metal beams German forces welded together in a jack-like shape and hid underwater to tear open the hulls of landing craft coming ashore.

Once completed, the map was flown to Plymouth, England, where a young Navy intelligence officer, Lt. Charles Burwell, used it to prepare troops for the Omaha and Utah Beach landings. Burwell donated the map to the Library in 2003, and he told his story through a Veterans History Project interview available on loc.gov.

As he described in that interview, Burwell immediately had thought the map would be useful for troops to understand what they would encounter during the predawn invasion, due to its three-dimensional characteristics. He also used it to brief U.S. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower and British Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery on June 4, as final preparations for the invasion began.

Burwell participated in the planning of other amphibious assaults in Europe and Asia through the rest of the war. The Utah Beach map remained in his possession from June 6, 1944, until he donated it to the Library, where today it serves as a resource for researchers and a reminder of the monumental seaborne invasion that changed the course of history.

–Lena Mattson is a reference librarian in the Geography and Map Division.

MORE INFORMATION

Charles Burwell's story
loc.gov/item/afc2001001.34284/

A LITERARY LANDMARK

Ellison's 'Invisible Man' is a reflection on race and humanity.

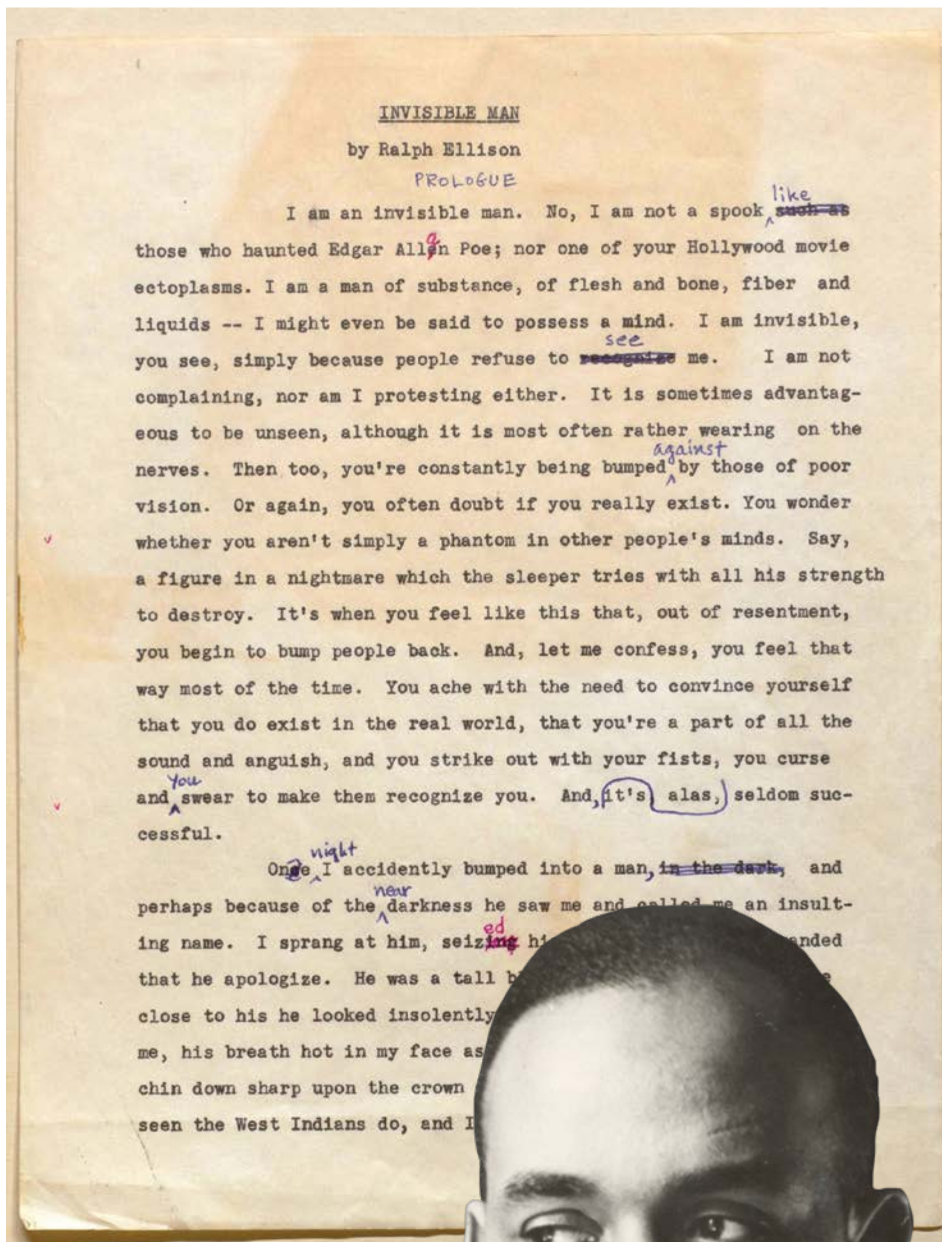
Ralph Ellison's masterpiece novel, "Invisible Man," was greeted as a sensation in both content and style when it was first published in 1952. The surreal first-person *bildungsroman* tale of a young man seeking affirmation of his identity as a Black citizen in America continues to be ranked among the best works of American literature of the 20th century. Ellison became the first African American writer awarded the National Book Award for Literature when he won the prize for the novel in 1953.

"Invisible Man" is a reflection on race and humanity in an era of Jim Crow repression and Black urban migration. It charts the challenging and often-nightmarish experiences of an unnamed narrator's physical and metaphysical travel from the American South to New York City, where he becomes deeply immersed as a witness-participant in the complex politics and cross-cultural life of Harlem. Ellison's improvisational approach to the novel's structure reflects his love of blues and jazz, and his incorporation of parody, puns and wordplay honor the richness of black humor and the vernacular tradition.

Ellison left school in Tuskegee, Alabama (where he studied music and read canonical literature in the library), to go to Manhattan in the mid-1930s. His employment as a folklorist with the Harlem Federal Writers' Project and the encouragement he received from Langston Hughes and Richard Wright laid a foundation for his creation of "Invisible Man" and his long career as an essay writer and cultural critic.

The famous opening lines of the novel's prologue ("I am an invisible man … simply because people refuse to see me") have retained their significance into current times, and Ellison continues to inspire rising writers and readers. With "Invisible Man," he opened a path that led to the Black Arts Movement of a following generation and spoke to existential and universal aspects of the human condition.

–Barbara Bair is a historian in the Manuscript Division.



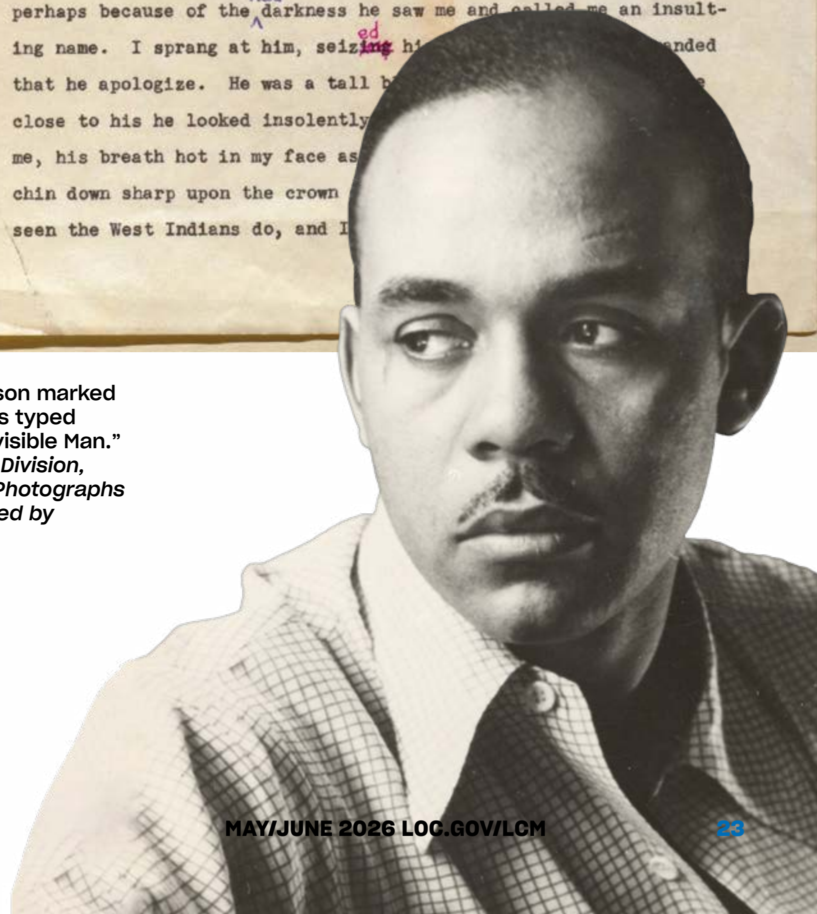
INVISIBLE MAN

by Ralph Ellison

PROLOGUE

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like ~~such as~~ those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor one of your Hollywood movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids -- I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, you see, simply because people refuse to see ~~recognize~~ me. I am not complaining, nor am I protesting either. It is sometimes advantageous to be unseen, although it is most often rather wearing on the nerves. Then too, you're constantly being bumped against by those of poor vision. Or again, you often doubt if you really exist. You wonder whether you aren't simply a phantom in other people's minds. Say, a figure in a nightmare which the sleeper tries with all his strength to destroy. It's when you feel like this that, out of resentment, you begin to bump people back. And, let me confess, you feel that way most of the time. You ache with the need to convince yourself that you do exist in the real world, that you're a part of all the sound and anguish, and you strike out with your fists, you curse and you swear to make them recognize you. And, it's alas, seldom successful.

Once night I accidently bumped into a man, ~~in the dark,~~ and perhaps because of the near darkness he saw me and called me an insulting name. I sprang at him, seized hi… …nded that he apologize. He was a tall b… close to his he looked insolently… me, his breath hot in my face as… chin down sharp upon the crown… seen the West Indians do, and I…



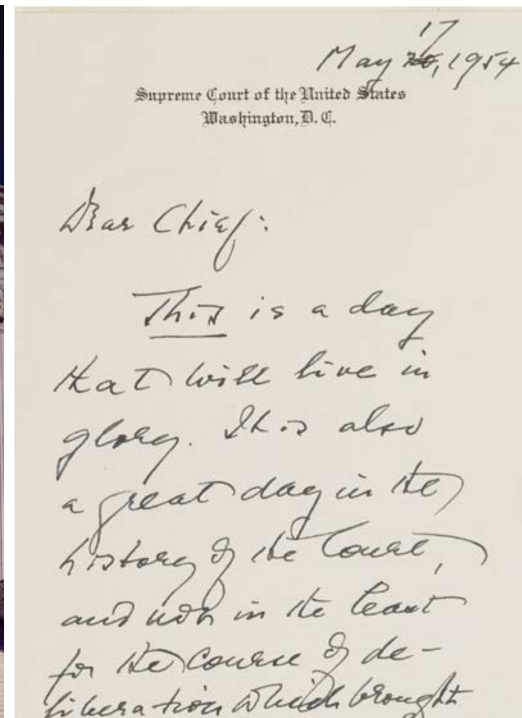
■ **Ralph Ellison marked edits on this typed draft of "Invisible Man."** ***Manuscript Division, Prints and Photographs Division. Used by permission.***

PAGE FROM THE PAST

1, 2, 4 & 10

BROWN v. BOARD OF EDUCATION. 11

ge in *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* contrary to this finding is
ected.
Ve conclude that in the field of public education the
trine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate
cational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore,
hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated
whom the actions have been brought, are, by reason
the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal
tection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth
endment. This disposition makes unnecessary any
cussion whether such segregation also violates the Due
cess Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.[12]
Because these are class actions, because of the wide
plicability of this decision, and because of the great
iety of local conditions, the formulation of decrees in
se cases presents problems of considerable complexity.
reargument, the consideration of appropriate relief
s necessarily subordinated to the primary question—
constitutionality of segregation in public education.
have now announced that such segregation is a denial
the equal protection of the laws. In order that we
y have the full assistance of the parties in formulating
rees, the cases will be restored to the docket, and the



May ~~20~~ 17, 1954

Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C.

Dear Chief:

This is a day that will live in glory. It is also a great day in the history of the Court, and not in the least for the course of deliberation which brought

Left: Chief Justice Earl Warren underlined phrases to emphasize in his reading copy of the Brown v. Board of Education opinion. *Manuscript Division*

Middle: The U.S. Supreme Court building. *Carol M. Highsmith Archive/ Prints and Photographs Division*

Right: "This is a day that will live in glory," Justice Felix Frankfurter wrote in this note to Warren. *Manuscript Division*

'A DAY THAT WILL LIVE IN GLORY'

With Brown v. Board, court ends school segregation.

The Supreme Court's ruling in Brown v. Board of Education on May 17, 1954, was one of the most momentous decisions in American history and is exhaustively documented at the Library. A unanimous court emphatically ruled that the "separate but equal" doctrine of the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court ruling – the basis for legalized segregation in the United States – was a false premise and always had been.

"We conclude that in the field of public education 'separate but equal' has no place," Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote in his opinion, underlining the last phrase in his reading copy. Then he delivered the hammer blow, underlining the entire next sentence: "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

The case, though focused on public schools, would apply to every facet of American life. No more "Colored Only" water fountains. The nation was entering a new era.

"Dear Chief: This is a day that will live in glory," Justice Felix Frankfurter wrote to Warren in a short, handwritten memo. "It is also a great day in the history of the court."

That the court had to issue another ruling the next year, saying the nation should integrate "with all deliberate speed," and yet another in 1969, after more than a decade of civil rights upheavals across the country, demanding that integration take place "immediately," showed how deeply (and violently) embedded segregation was in American society.

But back in 1954, Warren had not written in his opinion that the verdict was unanimous. It was critical that the nation understand that, he thought, so he penned it alongside the typewritten text in his reading copy, reminding him to say, "Therefore, we unanimously hold …," when reading it aloud in court to a breathless, waiting nation.

He later recalled the electricity that shot through the room: "When the word 'unanimously' was spoken, a wave of emotion swept the room; no words or intentional movement, yet a distinct emotional manifestation that defies description."

–Neely Tucker is a writer-editor in the Office of Communications.

TO THE MOON

This lunar map helped guide Apollo astronauts to a safe place to land.

For thousands of years, the moon was an object of fascination across time, space and cultures. In 1610, Galileo Galilei first turned it into an object of scientific study, pointing his telescope to the moon and revealing a rugged world of mountains, valleys, craters and ridges.

Some 350 years later, in a 1961 speech to Congress, President John F. Kennedy committed America to landing on the moon within a decade. Thus began an intense mobilization across government agencies to make it happen. Landing a man on the moon successfully was a challenge not just of technology but also of geography: Given the moon's uneven topography, choosing a good landing site was of utmost importance.

They would need a map.

The Aeronautical Chart and Information Center, then the nation's premier mapping agency for defense, mobilized for the task.

The center employed experts in photogrammetry – the process for making accurate measurements from photos – who could transform aerial images to correct distortion, account for overlap among images and produce consistent maps without ground control points. Those skills were vital to creating an accurate lunar mosaic using images taken from telescopes.

The agency's USAF Lunar Wall Mosaic: Lunar Equatorial Mosaic was produced in 1962, just one year after Kennedy's speech. Cartographers created the map, a copy of which is held by the Library's Geography and Map Division, by applying manual photogrammetric methods to telescopic photographs.

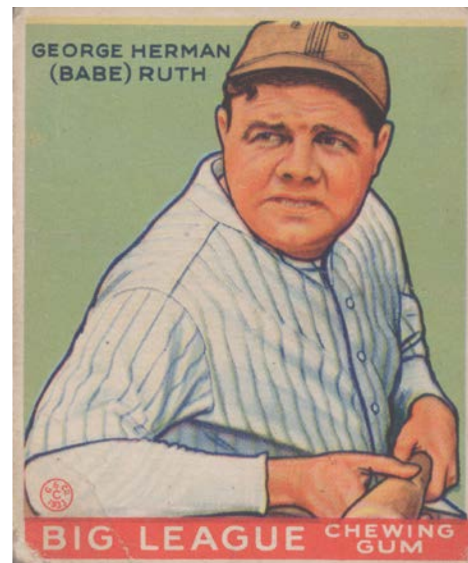
The large-format map created a foundational understanding across agencies and staffs of the moon's topographic surface, and it was utilized for early decision-making within the Apollo program. Visible on the center-right section of the map is Mare Tranquillitatis (Sea of Tranquility), the area where the Apollo 11 crew landed safely in1969.

–Meagan Snow is a geospatial data visualization librarian in the Geography and Map Division.

■ **The Lunar Wall Mosaic, a map of the moon's surface. *Geography and Map Division***

AMERICA'S MOST POWERFUL EXPORT?

From music to movies to sports, U.S. popular culture rules the globe.



■ **This page:** A Babe Ruth baseball card, published by the Goudey Gum Co. in 1933. *Prints and Photographs Division*

Opposite top: William Gottlieb's classic photos of jazz singers Ella Fitzgerald (left) and Billie Holiday. *Prints and Photographs Division*

Opposite middle left: An original lyric sketch for "Over the Rainbow" by E.Y. "Yip" Harburg, scrawled on a scrap of yellow legal paper. *Music Division*

Opposite middle right: A storyboard for "Plane Crazy," a 1928 animated short film that marked the first appearance of Mickey Mouse. *Prints and Photographs Division*

Opposite bottom: Oscar Hammerstein's lyric drafts for "My Favorite Things" from "The Sound of Music." *Music Division*

Baseball, basketball, football, blues, jazz, rock, Hollywood, Broadway, comic books – what would the planet look like without the great spewing fountain of American pop culture?

Never mind the economic, dance floor and movie theater impact of America's entertainment industry. When the Cold War came down to it, the United States had what Soviet kids wanted most: blue jeans and rock 'n' roll. Who could compete with Levi's and Elvis?

Likewise baseball, first codified in New York in 1845, was America's much beloved national pastime – but then became a cultural mainstay in nations as diverse as Castro's Cuba and post-World War II Japan.

The Library's collections preserve much of this history in multiple formats. In the early 20th century, once modern recording and film technologies took hold and broadcast and mass distribution outlets proliferated, American creativity rocketed not just from Key West to Honolulu but around the world. The global impact of American films, television, theater, music (blues, jazz, rock, rap), comic books and even fast food can't be quantified – but much of it can be catalogued.

The Library's baseball holdings are exhaustive. The National Audio-Visual Conservation Center holds millions of items documenting film, music, television and radio history, perhaps best recognized in the National Film Registry and the National Recording Registry.

The Stephen A. Geppi Collection of Comics and Graphic Arts is home to iconic editions of heroes such as Spider-Man, Wonder Woman, Batman, Superman and so many more. The Music Division holds the entire collections of titans such as George and Ira Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim, Oscar Hammerstein II and Billy Strayhorn.

But it's always the individual items that take the breath away.

The first storyboard of a Mickey Mouse cartoon, before anyone had seen anything by Walt Disney. The 1899 sheet music of Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag," sent in for copyright deposit, before "ragtime" was the name of an era or before the word "jazz" even existed. And there's Ruth Graves Wakefield's 1939 recipe for a little creation she served at her restaurant in Whitman, Massachusetts.

You, and the rest of the world, now know it as the chocolate chip cookie. Sometimes American history can be just that sweet.

–Neely Tucker

Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens,
Curling my fingers in warm woolen mittens,
Riding down hill on my big brother's bike -
These are a few of the things that I like.
Girls in white dresses with blue satin sashes,
Snowflakes that fall on my nose and eyelashes,
Icy cold water right out of a well,
unes that I hear on an old carrousel.
ght copper kettles and crisp apple strudels,
n colored ponies and schnitzel with noodles,
a river and flying a kite,
t morning and sleeping at night,

AROUND THE LIBRARY

1.

2.

3.

4.

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6.

1. The Dana Tai Soon Burgess Dance Company celebrates the choreography of Michio Itō on March 26 in the Coolidge Auditorium.

2. A Yoshino cherry tree blooms outside of the Jefferson Building on March 25.

3. Travis Thieme of Seattle looks over a large-scale map of Europe made by his great-great grandfather in the late 19th century during a visit to the Geography and Map Division on March 9.

4. Cast members of "Operation Mincemeat" look over a special collections display in the Whittall Pavilion on March 9.

5. Grammy-winning mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges performs with the Catalyst Quartet and pianist Terrence Wilson on April 1.

6. Yilian Cañizares blends her native Afro-Cuban rhythms with jazz and classical music in the Coolidge Auditorium on April 9.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHAWN MILLER

Library to Hold Latest Edition Of Book Festival in August

The Library will host the 2026 National Book Festival on Aug. 22 at the Washington Convention Center.

The 2026 festival is part of the Library's celebration of the nation's semiquincentennial, America 250: It's Your Story. The festival will feature expanded programming to celebrate the 250th anniversary and to showcase the Library's offerings beyond books to include film, music, veterans history and American folklife.

The festival is free and provides a full day of conversations with dozens of authors, poets and illustrators from a variety of genres about their latest books and book signings with each writer. The festival offers readings, giveaways, and activities for children and young adults, as well as the opportunity to purchase books from the festival's official bookseller.

Updates on plans for the National Book Festival will be shared at loc.gov/bookfest.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-26-016

Library, NPS Announce Winners of Holland Prize

The Library of Congress and the National Park Service recently announced the winners of the 2025 Leicester B. Holland Prize, an annual competition that recognizes the best single-sheet measured drawing of a historic building, site or structure prepared to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey.

The first-place award was presented to Dewey Erwin Jr., principal of Saluda Architecture, for his documentation of Roseneath Farm in Florence County, South Carolina.

Two honorable mentions also were awarded. C.J. Howard, associate professor at The Catholic University of America, was recognized for documenting the Van Ness Mausoleum in Washington, D.C. Eric Menninger of EAM Preservation LLC also was recognized for his drawing of First Missionary Baptist Church in Thomasville, Georgia.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-26-029

Sze Appointed to 2nd Term As Poet Laureate of U.S.

The Library recently appointed Arthur Sze to serve a second term as the nation's 25th poet laureate consultant in poetry for 2026-27.

Sze was named poet laureate in September 2025 and began working to expand appreciation of poetry through his focus on translating poetry originally written in languages other than English.

His newest book, "Transient Worlds: On Translating Poetry," features translations from 13 languages and provides a personal guide to poetry in translation. The book was published by Copper Canyon Press in association with the Library.

In his second term, Sze is crafting his signature project, "Words Bridging Worlds," and will embark on a U.S. tour to host public events – readings, moderated discussions and workshops focused on poetry and translation. Queens College of the City of New York is partnering with Sze to support the workshops through the college's MFA program in creative writing and literary translation.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-26-031

New Publication Traces Evolution of Kids' Books

From Puritan primers to Percy Jackson, "Tell Me a Story: Fantastic Children's Books from the Library of Congress" explores the Library's extensive children's literature collections.

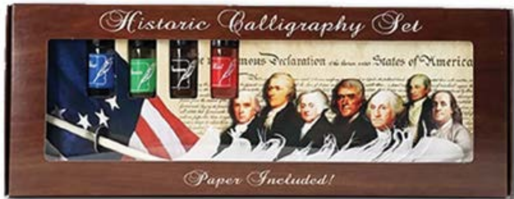
"Tell Me a Story" is the newest book in the Library's Collection Close-Up series. The book reimagines the canon of American children's literature while tracing the evolution of literary, artistic and publishing trends. It features more than 200 children's books, original artworks and manuscript pages, all created, read and sold in the United States.

Guest contributors include National Ambassador for Young People's Literature Mac Barnett and seven former national ambassadors: Kate DiCamillo, Meg Medina, Katherine Paterson, Jason Reynolds, Jon Scieszka, Jacqueline Woodson and Gene Luen Yang.

"Tell Me a Story" is available in paperback in the Library of Congress store and via booksellers everywhere.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-26-019

SHOP



Founding Fathers Calligraphy Set
Product #21509557
Price: $17.95

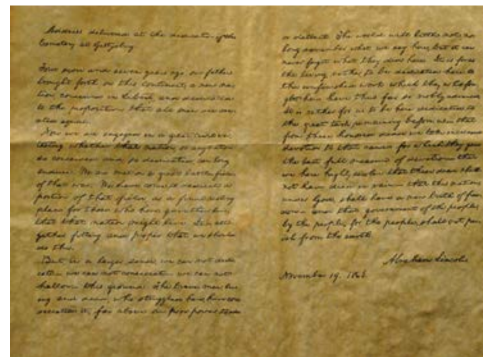
Re-create the Declaration of Independence or just practice writing with this calligraphy set. Includes parchment paper, quill and four ink bottles.

Founding Documents Coasters
Product #21505544
Price: $54.95

Marble tiles keep the documents of America's founding ready to serve. Includes the Constitution, Bill of Rights, Declaration of Independence and Civil Rights Act.

Rough Draft of Declaration
Product #21601028
Price: $5.95

This re-creation of Thomas Jefferson's rough draft of the Declaration offers wonderful insight into its creation. Two 14-by-16-inch pages.



Jefferson Bobblehead
Product #21505073
Price: $29.95

Celebrate a Founding Father with this 8-inch, hand-painted bobblehead of Thomas Jefferson. Other figures available.

Gettysburg Address
Product #21601002
Price: $3.95

Abraham Lincoln's historic speech at Gettysburg is re-created on antiqued parchment in the president's handwriting. Two 11-by-14-inch pages.

'Star-Spangled Banner'
Product #21601040
Price: $3

This reproduction of our national anthem features a scene with Francis Scott Key and the anthem's lyrics in Key's handwriting.

■ Order online: loc.gov/shop ■ Order by phone: 888.682.3557

■ **A rendering of the new "The Declaration's Promise" exhibition at the Library.** ***Exhibits Office***

SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON COLLECTIONS

'The Declaration's Promise' exhibition comes to life.

During a historic year for our nation, the Library will unveil an exhibition that invites us to think about who we are, where we've come from and where we are headed together, thanks to the generous support of The Boeing Company and The James Madison Council.

"The Declaration's Promise," opening in July in the David M. Rubenstein Treasures Gallery, will guide visitors through the ideological roots, drafting process and enduring impact of the Declaration of Independence, exploring the document's origins and the impact of its principles on American life over the last 250 years. Drawing on the Library's unparalleled collections, the installation will combine rare manuscripts and artifacts with immersive digital kiosks, interactive displays and related public programming.

The Boeing Company has had a philanthropic partnership with the Library since 2023 with their initial support of the Gershwin Prize for Popular Song. A Boeing executive also advocates for the Library through membership on the Madison Council. As a key participant in America 250, Boeing is an ideal partner for this exhibition, continuing its strong support of the nation's library. Corporate support is vital to the Library's efforts to share its unparalleled resources with people everywhere — completely free of charge.

The Madison Council, launched in 1990, is a group of civic-minded philanthropists dedicated to advancing the Library's mission. The council has been at the forefront of a myriad of educational outreach initiatives, including many state-of-the-art exhibitions that have engaged millions of Library visitors. Council Chairman David Rubenstein donated the funds needed to launch the Library's first permanent treasures gallery in 2024. In this gallery, visitors can explore rare gems from the Library's vast and varied collections. "The Declaration's Promise" will comprise the second rotation of Library treasures presented in the gallery.

It takes many hands to preserve the Library collections, and it takes even more to bring them to the American people. The Library is grateful to its philanthropic partners for their belief in its mission and for bringing this inspiring exhibition to life for all to enjoy.

LAST WORD

LEADER JOHN THUNE

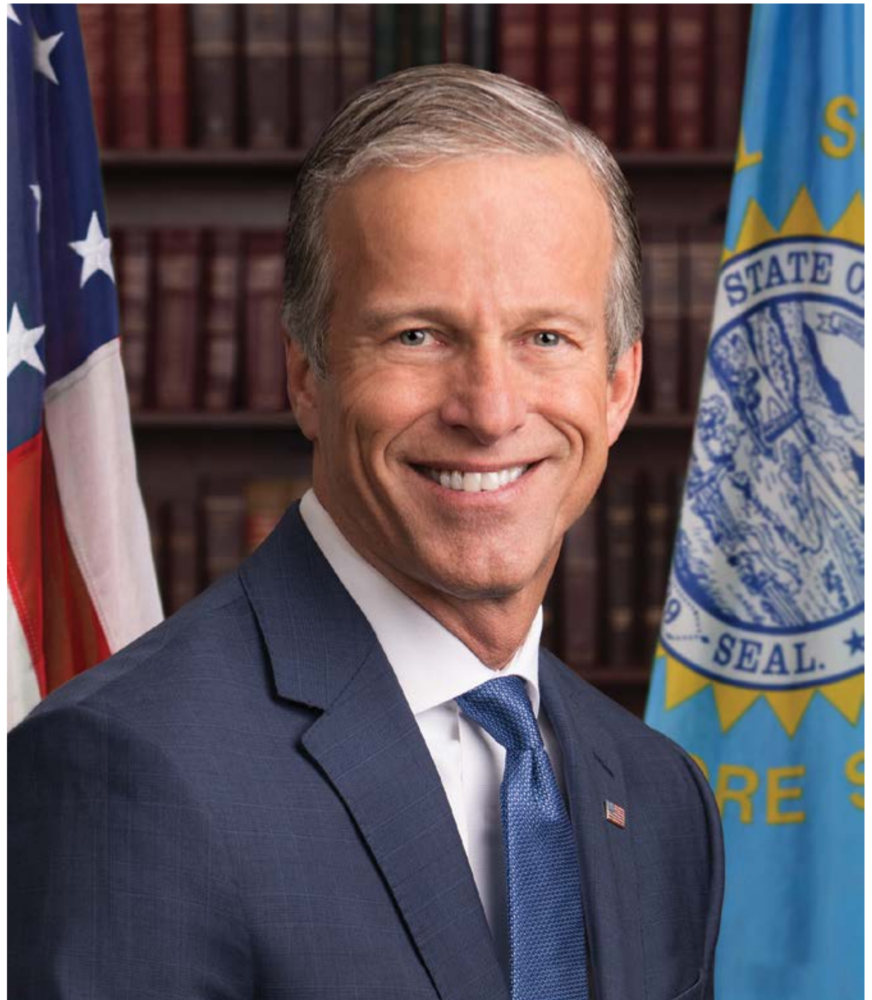
This year our nation celebrates a significant milestone, and in celebrating America's 250th birthday, we might wonder how the founding generation did it. What gave them the courage and wisdom necessary at that pivotal moment in our history? For at least part of that answer, I think we need to look only as far as the nearest bookshelf.

Those first Americans were courageous, and they were daring. They were also thinkers and readers. Abigail Adams drew from her extensive reading in letters to her husband, John, throughout the war. Benjamin Franklin is credited with founding the first lending library. And I don't need to tell any reader of this publication of the vast personal libraries amassed by Founding Fathers like Thomas Jefferson, whose collection of books is the cornerstone of the Library of Congress. Our founders were familiar with the accumulated wisdom of the past, and the great ideas of both past and present.

Books – the written word – played a key role in the founding of our country. What did George Washington do before he received his commission to lead the Continental Army? He ordered military books. Henry Knox, a bookseller by trade, read anything he could find about military strategy and put that knowledge to use from the war's early days to its finish at Yorktown. And we cannot underestimate the impact of writers like Thomas Paine and Phillis Wheatley on the patriot cause.

Then there is our founding document itself. In the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson brought together the contents of entire libraries, drawing from the greatest ideas in human history to put forward something entirely new in human history: a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

You might be considering how best to celebrate this milestone birthday for our country. Countless historic sites across the United States tell parts of our story, and this year calls for an especially grand Fourth of July celebration. But I would make another suggestion: a visit to the local library. There we can find the people and ideas that have made our country exceptional for these 250 years, and there we can draw inspiration to uphold our ideals for the next 250 years and beyond.



OFFICIAL U.S. SENATE PHOTO BY DAN RIOS

The Library of Congress is, as always, leading the way in telling that story. Through the Revolution Crossroads project, the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution are using cutting-edge technology to discover yet-untold stories of the Revolution. The Library is also compiling an oral history of America today, and initiatives like "American Stories: A Reading Road Trip" celebrate the richness of American literature from every corner of our country.

My mom was the librarian at our high school in small-town Murdo, South Dakota, and she taught us the great power of books. The Founding Fathers knew this power, too, and at that pivotal moment in our history, they mobilized the knowledge they gained from books to great ends. For us, too, the next frontier may be just the flip of a page away.

—John Thune is the Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate.

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

A DECLARATION

BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

IN GENERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

WHEN in the Courſe of human Events, it becomes neceſſary for one People to diſſolve the Political Bands which have connected ther with another, and to aſſume among the Powers of the Earth, the ſeparate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and o Nature's God entitle them, a decent Reſpect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they ſhould declare the cauſes which impel ther to the Separation.

WE hold theſe Truths to be ſelf-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certai unalienable Rights, that among theſe are Life, Liberty, and the Purſuit of Happineſs—That to ſecure theſe Rights, Governments ar inſtituted among Men, deriving their juſt Powers from the Conſent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes deſtructive of theſ Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to aboliſh it, and to inſtitute new Government, laying its Foundation on ſuch Principles, and organizin its Powers in ſuch Form, as to them ſhall ſeem moſt likely to effect their Safety and Happineſs. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long eſ tabliſhed ſhould not be changed for light and tranſient Cauſes; and accordingly all Experience hath ſhewn, that Mankind are more diſpoſed to ſuffer, whil Evils are ſufferable, than to right themſelves by aboliſhing the Forms to which they are accuſtomed. But when a long Train of Abuſes and Uſurpations, purſu ing invariably the ſame Object, evinces a Deſign to reduce them under abſolute Deſpotiſm, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off ſuch Government and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of theſe Colonies; and ſuch is now the Neceſſity which conſtrain them to alter their former Syſtems of Government. The Hiſtory of the preſent King of Great-Britain is a Hiſtory of repeated Injuries and Uſurpations, al having in direct Object the Eſtabliſhment of an abſolute Tyranny over theſe States. To prove this, let Facts be ſubmitted to a candid World.

HE has refuſed his Aſſent to Laws, the moſt wholeſome and neceſſary for the public Good.

HE has forbidden his Governors to paſs Laws of immediate and preſſing Importance, unleſs ſuſpended in their Operation till his Aſſent ſhould be obtained and when ſo ſuſpended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

HE has refuſed to paſs other Laws for the Accommodation of large Diſtricts of People, unleſs thoſe People would relinquiſh the Right of Repreſentation i the Legiſlature, a Right ineſtimable to them, and formidable to Tyrants only.

HE has called together Legiſlative Bodies at Places unuſual, uncomfortable, and diſtant from the Depoſitory of their public Records, for the ſole Purpoſe c fatiguing them into Compliance with his Meaſures.

HE has diſſolved Repreſentative Houſes repeatedly, for oppoſing with manly Firmneſs his Invaſions on the Rights of the People.

HE has refuſed for a long Time, after ſuch Diſſolutions, to cauſe others to be elected; whereby the Legiſlative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have re turned to the People at large for their exerciſe; the State remaining in the mean time expoſed to all the Dangers of Invaſion from without, and Convulſions withir

HE has endeavoured to prevent the Population of theſe States; for that Purpoſe obſtructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refuſing to paſs other to encourage their Migrations hither, and raiſing the Conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

HE has obſtructed the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, by refuſing his Aſſent to Laws for eſtabliſhing Judiciary Powers.

HE has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their Offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries.

HE has erected a Multitude of new Offices, and ſent hither Swarms of Officers to harraſs our People, and eat out their Subſtance.

HE has kept among us, in Times of Peace, Standing Armies, without the conſent of our Legiſlatures.

HE has affected to render the Military independent of and ſuperior to the Civil Power.

HE has combined with others to ſubject us to a Juriſdiction foreign to our Conſtitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Aſſent to their Acts o pretended Legiſlation:

FOR quartering large Bodies of Armed Troops among us:

FOR protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Puniſhment for any Murders which they ſhould commit on the Inhabitants of theſe States:

FOR cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World:

FOR impoſing Taxes on us without our Conſent:

FOR depriving us, in many Caſes, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury:

FOR tranſporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences:

FOR aboliſhing the free Syſtem of Engliſh Laws in a neighbouring Province, eſtabliſhing therein an arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries, ſo as to render it at once an Example and fit Inſtrument for introducing the ſame abſolute Rule into theſe Colonies:

FOR taking away our Charters, aboliſhing our moſt valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

FOR ſuſpending our own Legiſlatures, and declaring themſelves inveſted with Power to legiſlate for us in all Caſes whatſoever.

HE has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War againſt us.

HE has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coaſts, burnt our Towns, and deſtroyed the Lives of our People.

HE is, at this Time, tranſporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the Works of Death, Deſolation, and Tyranny, already begun with cir cumſtances of Cruelty and Perfidy, ſcarcely paralleled in the moſt barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.

■ George Washington's personal copy of the first printing of the Declaration of Independence, called the Dunlap Broadside. *Manuscript Division*

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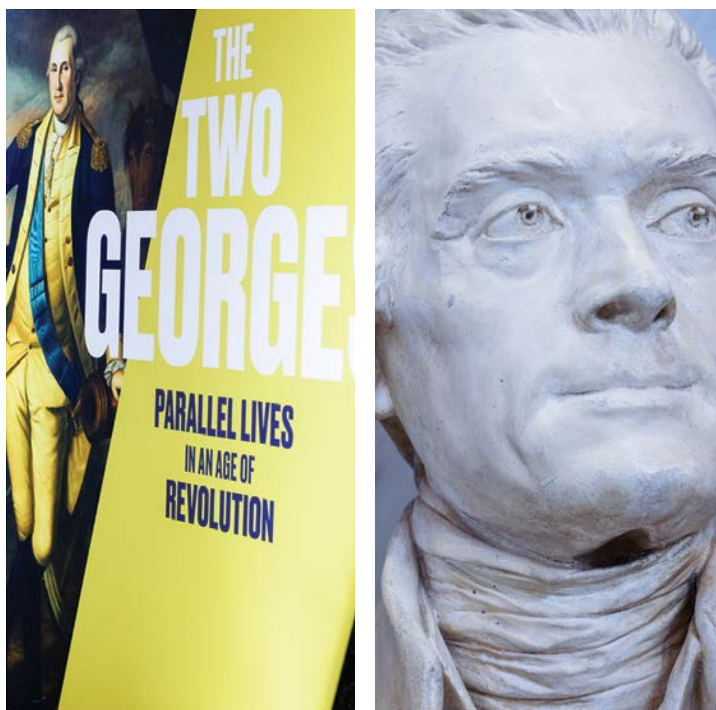

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