



## Declaration: The Nine Tumultuous Weeks When America Became Independent, May 1-July 4, 1776

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(American History) 9.5 x 6.5", hardcover, original jacket. First Edition, number line counts to 1. The rambunctious story of how America came to declare independence in Philadelphia in 1776. Fine/Fine condition.

### **Declaration: The Nine Tumultuous Weeks When America Became Independent, May 1-July 4, 1776 Details**

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## **From Reader Review Declaration: The Nine Tumultuous Weeks When America Became Independent, May 1-July 4, 1776 for online ebook**

### **patience says**

I'd give it 3 1/2 if I could. Interesting to learn more about the pivotal role Samuel Adams played in securing a vote for breaking with England in 1776. Along the way, he threw his lot in with some real radicals...those wanting to give men without property the right to vote, those who believed in the rights of Native Americans and women, and other radicals like the disreputable Green Mountain man Ethan Allen. Proto-socialists helped the founding fathers (or were some of the founding fathers) assure American independence. Bet Sarah P. doesn't know that....

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### **Lisa Lawrence says**

My tradition of reading American history around July 4th... I learned more details and viewpoints about our forefathers. The "reconciliationists" almost overcame those for independence. It was close!

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### **Lindsay says**

I had mixed feelings about this read. I really enjoy the idea behind the book: explain the ties between the restructuring of the Pennsylvania state government and the Declaration of Independence. I have read a great deal about the discussions and deliberations behind the production of the Declaration, but I knew very little about the radical overthrow of the chartered government led by John Dickinson. I am confident I am not the only person whose knowledge about that process is lacking, which is surprising because some of the key players are well remembered and widely famous for their role in bringing about the Declaration. John Adams, Samuel Adams, Thomas Paine, Benjamin Rush and Richard Henry Lee were all committed to helping transform the Pennsylvania government as a way to bring about independence for the 13 colonies. By harnessing the power (social and physical) of the common man without the vote, these men were able to throw out the existing chartered government that supported reconciliation with England and replace it with a committee and a House that endorsed independence. Removing Pennsylvania as an obstacle to independence ensured Maryland, Delaware and eventually New York's support and participation in a new united nation.

My question was if these very famous men contributed in such a major way, why didn't I know about it? Sure I have studied these men, but these particular actions escaped my notice. Truth is, they really didn't want posterity to recognize them for their involvement in the overthrow of Pennsylvania's government. Samuel Adams burned all of his letters and papers regarding the subject and instructed his colleagues to do the same. Rush and Adams quickly began to disassociate themselves from some of their more radical allies after independence was achieved. And to be fair, not without good reason. Some of their former partners went on to espouse ideas that were flat out unacceptable in the 18th century and brought down great derision on their heads. That being said, the story does live on in this book and is one I am very glad to know.

Despite my enjoyment of the topic of this book, I felt that the writing could have been better. Especially in the beginning, I felt that the writer was pandering or lowering his speech. Perhaps he was trying to reach crowds with less knowledge on the subject, but it did feel like he was a bit condescending. Additionally, the

author gave a lot of background information about each of the key players mentioned. I love this kind of information- I think it makes the people come alive and represent more than just words on a page. However, the book really wasn't long enough to have all of that information as adequately address and analyze the events from May-July, 1776. As a result, I felt that the telling of the main story suffered a bit. It could have been furthered developed and more analyzed. One final bit of criticism, and this is really more of a personal pet peeve, is that it felt like the author was trying to make the story suspenseful. I am a big believer that history, especially something as huge as the Declaration of Independence doesn't need much help. For example, at one point he said "John Dickinson went home. That turned out to be a mistake." Then he had a artistic marker and a page break. I just feel like that extra emphasis isn't really necessary.

All in all, a good topic, but poorly told.

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### **David R. says**

Hogeland offers a fascinating take on the emergence of the Declaration of Independence during nine frenetic weeks in May, June and July of 1776. He confines the action to Philadelphia, and focuses even more tightly on a handful of actors among them Samuel Adams and his allies in the Continental Congress, the reconciliationist John Dickinson of Pennsylvania, and an odd confederacy of radicals who successfully toppled Pennsylvania's charter legislature. Hogeland writes supportively of the pro-independence (and almost Marxist) "independents", but he also displays a sensitivity to Dickinson's point of view that culminates in a marvelously bittersweet conclusion to the book. David McCullough this is not, but it's a worthy addition to the study of history's to-read list.

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### **Sarah Wagner says**

A detailed snapshot of how thirteen colonies declared their independence from Great Britain in 1776. This relatively short book made for a nice Fourth of July read. The author is clearly more of a journalist than a historian (I really wish he had used his footnotes differently!) and is prone to utilizing a more modern vocabulary that somewhat displaces the story from the 18th century. Overall, though I enjoyed this book and learned a few unexpected things about how the Declaration of Independence came to be.

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### **Richard Labombard says**

Well researched. Engaging read. Not nearly the clean process our high school history books lead us to believe. And particularly good at depicting the distinction between the desire for freedom and equality versus the drive for independence. Worth digging into the extensive notes provided at the end of the narrative.

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### **Tom Lowe says**

Just when you think you know everything there is to know about the Declaration of Independence, along comes a book and author to set you straight. In the nine weeks that led up to the Declaration, there was a lot of turmoil and intrigue that included many famous characters such as John and Samuel Adams, Ben Franklin, Benjamin Rush and others, but also quite a few relatively obscure personalities, who still figured

prominently in the drama that led up to the audacious and brave decision to sever all ties with Britain. The author's research is very impressive. A must-read for students of Revolutionary history.

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### **Don says**

A fine account of how "Philadelphia's radicals ... Once rank outsiders, with Samuel Adams's help, overturned one of the oldest legislative bodies in the English-speaking world."

It isn't quite the story I was looking for, which is OK, but the point of the book seems to be, "You need to know more about Philadelphia politics in the 1770s to understand American Independence." OK.

Gotta say, the stuff on Declaration dissenter John Dickinson is marvelous, and some of the snippets on Sam Adams and Ben Franklin are nice nuggets. And overall, the emphasis on "pure democracy" and the Founders' fear of "anarchic" mobs was insightful (but nothing new or special).

Yet, the final chapter (Independence Days) is what this whole book could have been -- an exciting retelling of what probably happened "in the room." The pages 167-177 do a wonderful job of recreating who, what, when, why, and how this thing actually happened. I wish this had been 100 pages of the story -- rather than focusing 80 percent of the book on Pennsylvania and Dickinson. It would have been great to see a dozen pages on Edward Rutledge/South Carolina, and a dozen on Cesar Rodney/Connecticut, rather than a glossed-over paragraph or two.

Characterizing the vote in the "committee as a whole" compared to the actual final vote was the meat of this story -- and the behind-the-scenes machinations led Hogeland to use Pennsylvania as the key to all of these factors.

It's good history, buy overall leaves this narrative as less than satisfying.

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### **Shawn Mccusker says**

This book focuses on the political maneuverings of Samuel Adams and his supporters to gain control of the constitutional convention and issue the Declaration of Independence. The main focus is on Adams attempt to overthrow the charter government of Pennsylvania in favor of a new one that would appoint Pro-independence representatives. Hogeland does a good job of representing John Dickenson as his honorable foe. Well written and effective yet austere. Good depth and still less than 300 pages.

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### **Gerry Connolly says**

In Declaration William Hogeland tells the untold story at the continental congress in which Samuel and John Adams completely negated Pennsylvania's pro-reconciliation election results, isolated John Dickinson's fervent espousal of rapprochement with England and persuaded the congress to declare independence. All in nine weeks. Had they failed Great Britain would have picked the colonies off one by one.

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## Keith Parrish says

One of my favorite movies is 1776, the musical version of the events that took place in the Continental Congress from May through July 4, 1776. I've often wondered how accurate the positions taken by the characters in the film actually are. Certainly I am aware that much creative license was taken (i'm fairly certain that Edward Rutledge never spontaneously sang about the Atlantic slave trade during a Congressional session, for instance), but the idea of what occurred behind those closed doors has always been intriguing to me.

In this book, William Hogeland tries to answer that question. Beginning with the election of a very anti-independence Pennsylvania legislature on May 1, he traces the events of the next 2+ months to the culmination of near unanimous vote for independence. His central question is how did events move from point A to point B.

Unfortunately, Hogeland's narrative and interpretations of events proves somewhat lacking and his characterizations of some of the key characters and events is lacking. His portrayal of John Adams as more or less a reluctant puppet of his older cousin Samuel flies in the face of everything I have ever learned about him. Benjamin Franklin is all but invisible, except when trying to curry favors in the Royal court in London. The true hero in all this turns out to be the most vocal opposition to independence, John Dickinson. Hogeland portrays him as a sincere hard-working planter who basically had his government pulled out from under him. I can't say that I know enough about Dickinson to comment on the accuracy of this, but his interpretations of other people leaves me wondering.

One pet peeve about this book - when you have footnotes that run a page and a half each, it's time to condense a bit.

I've always wanted to find a good book about this period. This might be a good jumping off point, but it is definitely not the book.

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## KJ says

Not quite what I was expecting when I read the title. Certainly, just by title alone the work is quite ambitious, as there's a lot that happens in those nine weeks before we officially declare independence. The book largely follows Philadelphia and events that occur for Pennsylvania specifically. I had hoped to read about the discussions that occurred in Congress leading up to Independence. Instead this book - not long at all - attempts to cover far too much, highlighting pieces that I feel could have been played down and offering only a sentence to things that have a last impact on this part of history. For example, most of chapter 2 is mini-biographies of the three men who met with John and Sam Adams in their "secret meeting." Their biographies did not need to be quite so long and we might more have discussed the ideologies they brought to the table and the outcome that came from that meeting. Understandably there is not much information as Sam Adams was certain to burn most of the documentation, but placing a biography of three relatively unknown men in it's place was, in my opinion, not only superfluous, but took valuable space from the book.

The book does read easily, even if it is not easy to follow the exact chronology or the point the author is trying to make. But it was a very quick read and would have been finished in a day, had it not been for work. But I am glad that I read it.

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## George Heidemark says

This book reads like a novel and it is hard to put down. It is not really about the writing of the Declaration : it is about the conditions that led to the Declaration being ratified. And boy was it a close thing. The hero of the story is Samuel Adams the radical ringleader whose machinations set up conditions that put events in play.. He is joined by his more conservative but equally driven cousin John. They are aided by the brilliant propagandist Tom Paine who presents the concept of independence in a truly digestible format in his Common Sense. Also playing a key role is a last minute revolutionary: Ben Franklin. John Dickinson opposed independence but he was an early believer in America who mounts a noble opposition to the rebel crowd. The quick character sketches and background pieces bring the 10 weeks leading up to July 1776 are excellent. The author really brings the period to life and I was sad when the book ended.

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## Lauren Albert says

I think most people, when they think of the pre-Revolutionary days, are aware of two groups--those that supported independence and those that did not. But Hogeland shows how much more complex the real story was. There were those that wanted war with England leading to independence. There were those who wanted no war and no independence--the loyalists. But there were also those who wanted war but no independence--those who wanted reconciliation and thought that the system was ideal but that it was just not being lived up to. To show even more complexity, the people who supported independence disagreed about what that meant in terms of government. Some of the revolutionaries brought in the disenfranchised (the majority who owned no land and could not vote) in order to use them for the cause and then were horrified when they demanded the vote.

While Hogeland reveals all of these complexities, he slights the debates outside of Pennsylvania. I would have liked to learn about what was going on in the states that at first refused to declare independence and then switched when they realized they were in the minority, and those who declared independence but were split amongst themselves (the majority voting for but some against). Since the book comes in at under 200 pages (without the notes), I think that some pages could have been devoted to these topics.

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## Barbara says

This account of American Independence was alright, but not spectacular. I learned some things, particularly about John Dickinson of Pennsylvania, that I did not know, but I also felt the author spent too much time centered on him, and on the government of the Pennsylvania colony. Some portions were very interesting, and other parts seemed to drag. I'm not sorry I read it, but I don't think I would choose to read it again.

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