



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Independence National
Historical Park

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Independence National Historical Park

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For Immediate Release
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Independence National Historical Park Commemorates First Public Reading of the Declaration of Independence

On Wednesday, July 8th, you are invited to join the staff of Independence National Historical Park to commemorate the 233rd anniversary of the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. This free event begins at 11:45 AM with an introduction by a park ranger and will be held just behind Independence Hall. Visitors may enter through the security screening tent at 5th and Chestnut Streets or participate from beyond the security fence on the southern half of Independence Square (entering from Walnut Street). Those wishing to be on the Square should arrive by 11:00 am to ensure completion of security screening. An American Sign Language interpreter will be interpreting the event for our deaf visitors.

On July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress voted to approve the Declaration of Independence inside the Pennsylvania State House (now Independence Hall). Four days later, on July 8th, the citizens of Philadelphia were summoned to the State House Yard by the bells of the city. At 12:00 noon, Colonel John Nixon publicly read the Declaration of Independence for the first time. Following the event and continuing long into the night the bells of the city rang in celebration.

Visitors are invited to experience the sights and sounds of that dramatic day in 1776. Put on your tri- cornered hat and come prepared to cheer or jeer! Costumed National Park Service rangers will mingle with the crowds and distribute free copies of the Declaration of Independence. Following the event, both uniformed and costumed park rangers will be available for interviews and photographs. The rain location will be Congress Hall (seating limited to 150), located just next to Independence Hall.

A unit of the National Park Service, Independence National Historical Park was created by an Act of Congress on June 28, 1948. Accredited by the American Association of Museums, Independence NHP covers almost 54 acres in Philadelphia's Old City and includes Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, Congress Hall, Franklin Court, and other historic buildings associated with the founding of the United States. The park is open daily with the exception of Christmas day. A visit to Independence National Historical Park should start at the Independence Visitor Center, located at 6th and Market Streets. For more information visit the park's website, <http://www.nps.gov/inde>.

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