ARTH. MIDDLETON.

THOS HAYWARD JR.

WM HOOPER.

JAMES WILSON.

SAM. CHASE.

GEO. CLYMER.

CHAS CARROLL.

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 a people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature & of nature's god entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them 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 certain inherent & inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying it's foundation on such principles & organising it's powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness. prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light & transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed but when a long train of abuses & usurpations, pursuing 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 & to provide new guards for their future security. such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies & such is now the necessity which constrains 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, among which appears no solitary fact to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest, all of which have 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 & pressing importance,

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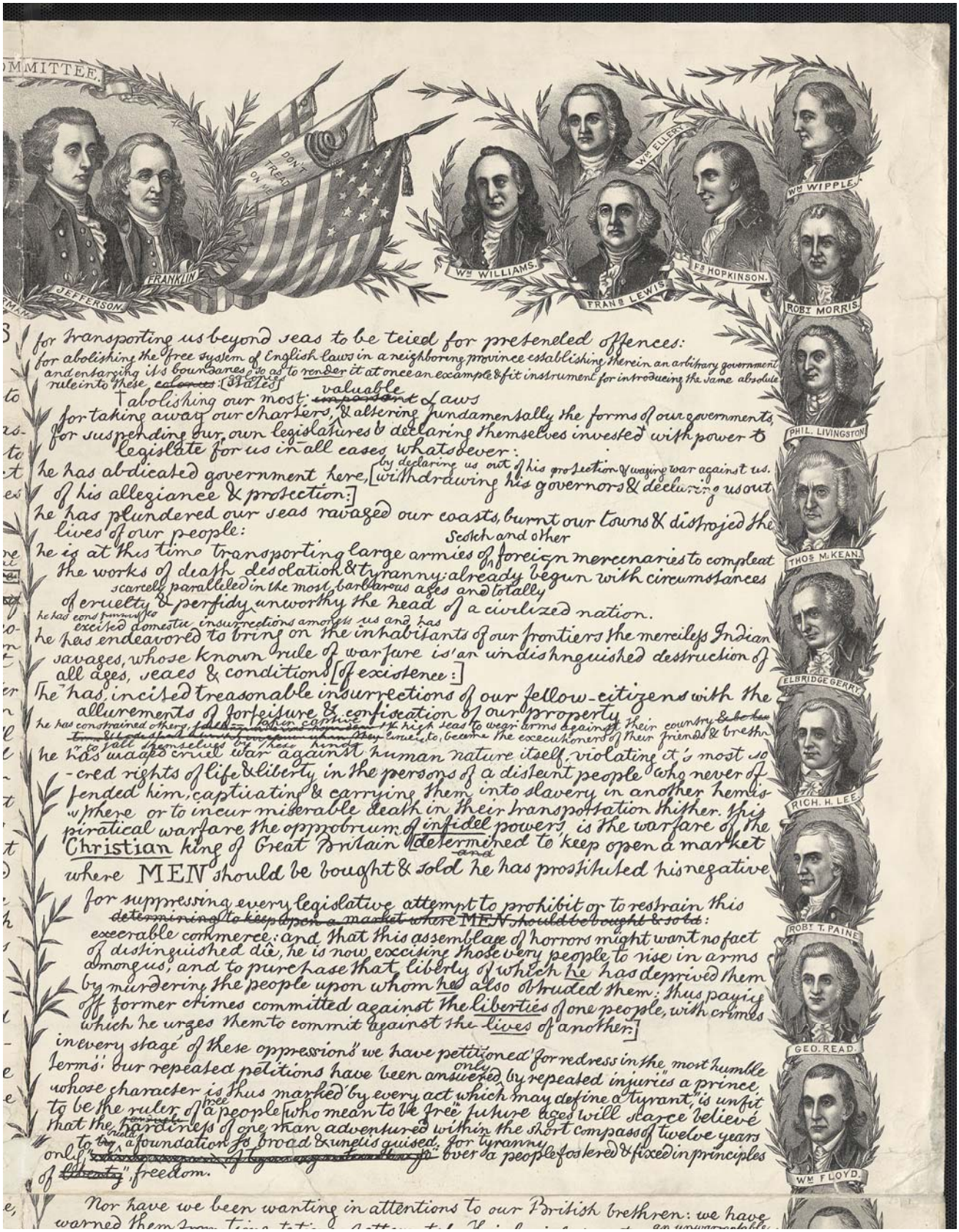

for transporting us beyond seas to be teied for preteneled offences:
for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province establishing therein an arbitrary government and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example & fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these ~~colonies~~ colonies [States]
† abolishing our most ~~important~~ valuable Laws
for taking away our charters, & altering fundamentally the forms of our governments,
for suspending our own legislatures & 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 & waging war against us. withdrawing his governors & declaring us out of his allegiance & protection:]
he has plundered our seas ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns & distrojed the lives of our people:
he is at this time transporting large armies of Scotch and other foreign mercenaries to compleat the works of death desolation & tyranny: already begun with circumstances scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages and totally of cruelty & perfidy unworthy the head of a civilized nation.
he has constrained to excited domestic insurrections amongst us and has
he has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undishnguished destruction of all ages, seaes & conditions [of existence:]
he has incited treasonable insurrections of our fellow-citizens with the allurements of forfeiture & confiscation of our property
he has constrained others, ~~[illegible]~~ taken captive ~~[illegible]~~ the high seas to wear arms against their country ~~[illegible]~~ to fall themselves by these hands
he has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating it's most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. this piratical warfare the opprobrium of infidel powers is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain [determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold he has prostituted his negative
for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this ~~determining to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold~~: execrable commerce: and that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them by murdering the people upon whom he also obtruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.]
in every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injuries a prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people [who mean to be free future ages will scarce believe that the ~~[illegible]~~ hardiness of one man adventured within the short compass of twelve years only to ~~by~~ build a foundation so broad & undisguised for tyranny over a people fostered & fixed in principles of ~~liberty~~ freedom.

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren: we have warned them from time to time [illegible]

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he has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the pub-
-lic good:

he has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate & pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained, and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected ~~utterly~~ to attend to them.

he has refused to pass other laws for the accomodation of large districts of people unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them & formidable to tyrants only.

he has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, & distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures,

he has dissolved Representative houses repeatedly [& continually] for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

~~[illegible]~~, he has refused for a long ~~space of time~~ time after such dissolutions* to cause others to be elected. whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise, the state remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, & convulsions within:

he has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither; & raising the conditions of new ap-
-propriations of lands:

he has [suffered] obstructed the administration of justice [totally to cease in some of these states] by ~~[illegible]~~ refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers:

he has made [our] judges dependant on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount & payment of their salaries:

he has erected a multitude of new offices [by a self-assumed power,] & sent hi-
-ther swarms of officers to harrass our people & eat out their substance;

he has kept among us in times of peace ~~[illegible]~~ Standing armies [& ships of war] without the consent of our legislatures

he has affected to render the military independent of & superior to the civil power:

he has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions and unacknoleged by our laws giving his assent to their pretended ~~acts~~ acts of 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;

John Hancock Fran.s Lewis Rich.d Stockton Francis Lig[htfoot Lee] Carter B[raxton]
Rob.t Morris John Penn Wm. Whipple Caesar R[odney]
Benjamin Rush Wm. Paca Samuel Chase John Hart Geo. R[ead]
Benj.a Franklin Tho.s Stone Geo Taylor Geo Ross Abra Clark Tho.s
Joseph Hewes Wm. Floyd Jno Witherspoon Button Gwinnett Edward
Wm. Hooper Phil. Livingston Lyman Hall Thomas Tho.s
John Morton James Wilson Fra.s Hopkinson Geo Walton

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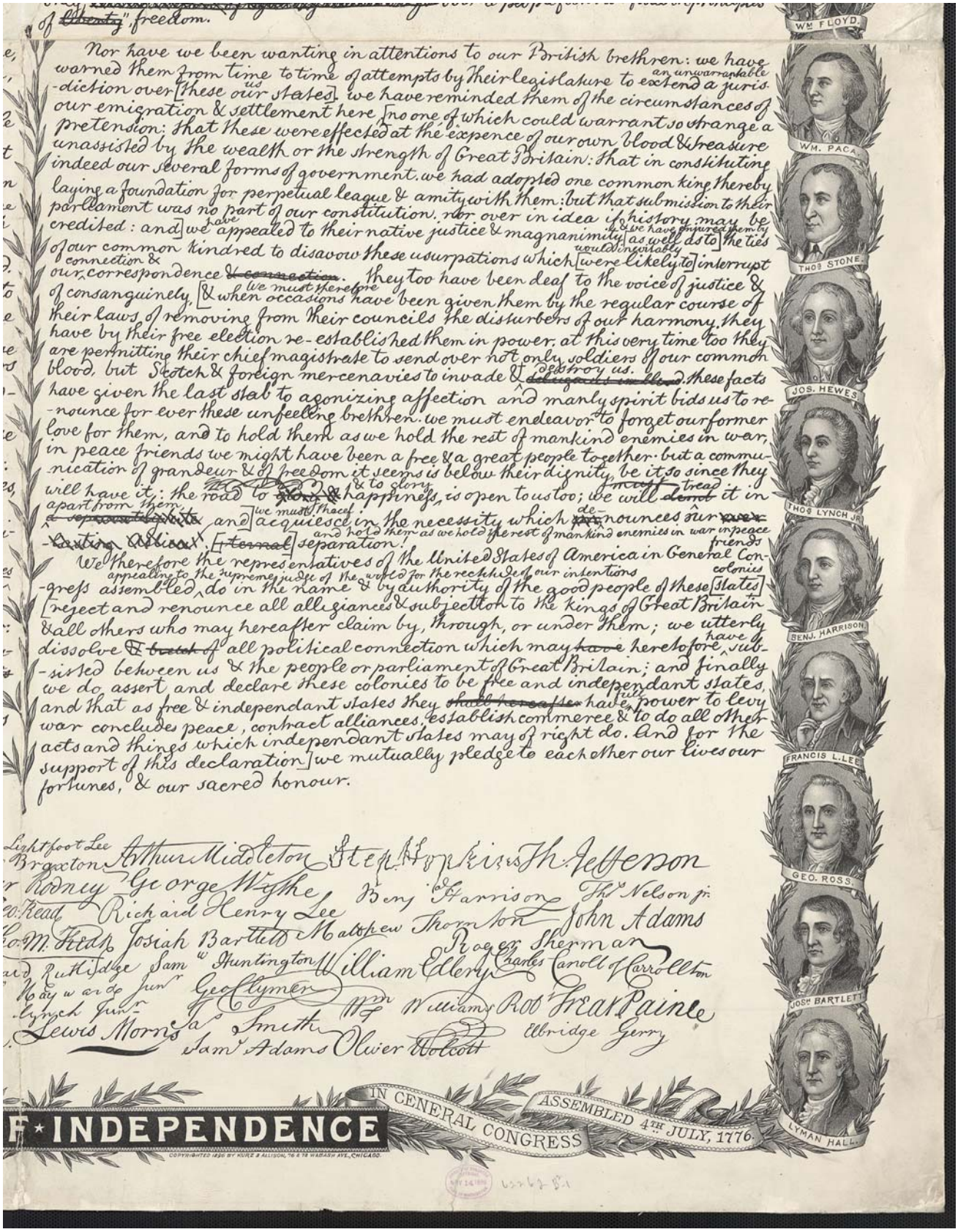

of ~~liberty~~ freedom.

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren: we have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over [these our states]. we have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration & settlement here [no one of which could warrant so strange a pretension: that these were effected at the expence of our own blood & treasure unassisted by the wealth or the strength of Great Britain: that in constituting indeed our several forms of government. we had adopted one common king thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league & amity with them: but that submission to their parliament was no part of our constitution. nor over in idea if history may be credited: and] we have appealed to their native justice & magnanimity [& we have enjured them by as well as to] the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations which [were likely to] would inevitably interrupt our connection & correspondence ~~& connection~~. they too have been deaf to the voice of justice & of consanguinely. [& when we must therefore occasions have been given them by the regular course of their laws of removing from their councils the disturbers of our harmony. they have by their free election re-established them in power. at this very time too they are permitting their chief magistrate to send over not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch & foreign mercenaries to invade & destroy us. ~~delugaus in blood~~. these facts have given the last stab to agonizing affection and manly spirit bids us to renounce for ever these unfeeling brethren. we must endeavor to forget our former love for them, and to hold them as we hold the rest of mankind enemies in war, in peace friends we might have been a free & a great people together. but a communication of grandeur & of freedom it seems is below their dignity, be it so since they will have it: the road to ~~glory~~ & to glory happiness, is open to us too; we will ~~demand~~ tread it in apart from them, ~~a separate state~~ and] we must thacef acquiesce in the necessity which ~~pro~~ denounces our ~~ever-lasting Alliance~~. [~~eternal~~] separation! and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind enemies in war in peace friends

We therefore the representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled appealing to the supreme judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions do in the name & by authority of the good people of these [states] colonies [reject and renounce all allegiances & subjection to the kings of Great Britain & all others who may hereafter claim by, through, or under them; we utterly dissolve ~~& batch of~~ all political connection which may ~~have~~ heretofore have subsisted between us & the people or parliament of Great Britain; and finally we do assert and declare these colonies to be free and independant states, and that as free & independant states they ~~shall hereafter~~ have full power to levy war concludes peace, contract alliances, establish commerce & to do all other acts and things which independant states may of right do. And for the support of this declaration] we mutually pledge to each other our lives our fortunes, & our sacred honour.

Lightfoot Lee
Braxton
Arthur Middleton
Step Hopkins
Th. Jefferson
Rodney
George Wythe
Benj Harrison
Thos Nelson jr.
Geo. Read
Richard Henry Lee
Matthew Thornton
John Adams
Geo. M. Read
Josiah Bartlett
Roger Sherman
Rutledge
Samw Huntington
William Ellery
Charles Carroll of Carrollton
Hayward Junr
Geo Clymer
Wm Williams
Robt Treat Paine
Lynch Junr
Lewis Morris
Jas Smith
Elbridge Gerry
Samr Adams
Oliver Wolcott

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