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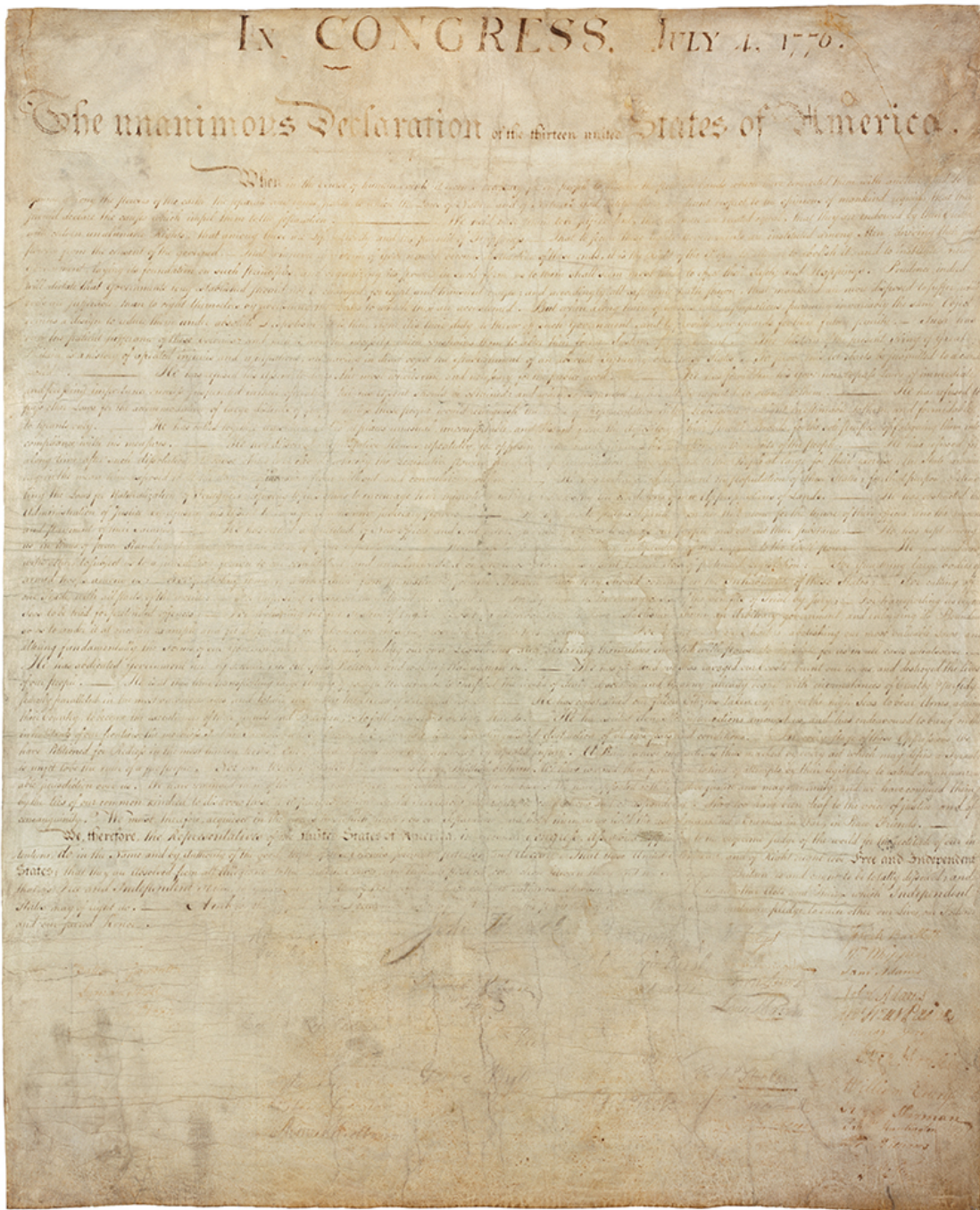
Celebrate 4th of July with us!

As the home of the original [Declaration of Independence](#), the National Archives is counting down the days until the 4th of July. Come [celebrate Independence Day](#) with us!



United States Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps perform at the National Archives in uniforms patterned after those worn by the musicians of Gen. George Washington's Continental Army.

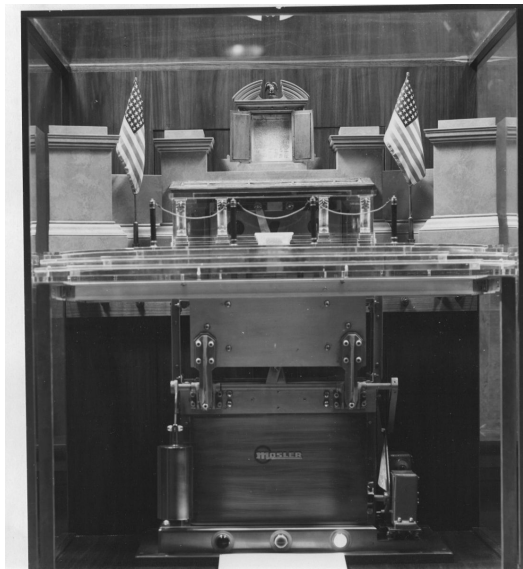
On December 13, 1952, after years of negotiation between the Archivist of the United States and the Librarian of Congress, the [Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were transferred](#) to the National Archives. Together with the Bill of Rights, which had been transferred to the Archives in 1938, the National Archives refers to these three documents collectively as the “Charters of Freedom.”



Engrossed Declaration of Independence. [National Archives Identifier 1419123](#)

Want to learn more about the condition of the Declaration of Independence? Read about the Declaration's journey in [Prologue magazine](#).

As part of the preparations for the arrival of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, the National Archives commissioned a vault from the Mosler Safe Company. At that time, roughly 70 percent of U.S. banks had Mosler safes and vaults. This vault had to be built to protect the Charters of Freedom from fire, earthquakes, and bombs.



Left: Photograph of Workers During the Installation of the Mosler Vault, 12/9/1952. [National Archives Identifier 74228105](#)

Right: Photograph of the Model of the Vault in the National Archives Building's Main Hallway, 1954 [National Archives Identifier 7873485](#)

Today visitors can see these documents on permanent display in the [Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom](#) at the National Archives in Washington, DC. The Mosler Safe no longer protects the Charters, and the Declaration of Independence no longer sits in a vertical case above the Constitution and Bill of Rights. Even the lighting has been changed to further preserve the documents.



National Archives Rotunda today

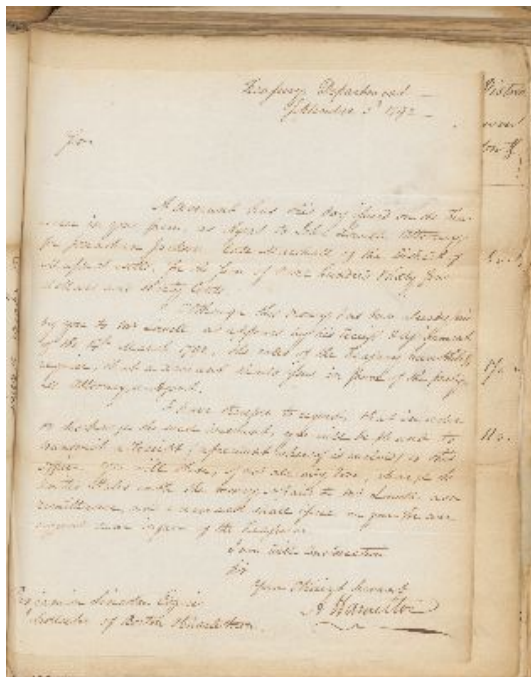
What has not changed, however, is the National Archives' commitment to safeguarding the Charters of Freedoms so visitors from around the world can see our government's founding documents. The Declaration of Independence is the cornerstone of our July 4 celebrations.

For those of you in Washington, DC this July 4, stop by Constitution Avenue at 10 a.m. for a Declaration of Independence Reading Ceremony, then head inside for family activities from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you can't come in person to Washington, DC, join our celebration through [YouTube](#), and on the [US National Archives](#) Facebook page. Or celebrate at one of our [Presidential libraries](#) around the nation.



New Citizen Archivist Mission!

You can also celebrate Independence Day by helping to unlock history! Check out our latest [tagging and transcription missions](#), including *Letters Received from the Departments of State and Treasury, 1789 - 1882*. You might even find some letters and circulars signed by "your obedient servant," Alexander Hamilton!



Letters Received from the Departments of State and Treasury, Volume 2: 1789 - 1818, page 123.

[National Archives Identifier 118747398](#)

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Get started transcribing!

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