

The original documents are located in Box 66, folder “Declaration of Independence” of the John Marsh Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald R. Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 17, 1975

MEMORANDUM TO: JACK MARSH

FROM: RUSS ROURKE *R*

Jack, attached is our staffing memo on the Declaration of Independence.

My own personal view is that the document not be moved to Philadelphia, and that, as a result of the heightened interest in this question, it would be appropriate for the President to respond directly to Rizzo.

*19 Oct - Jimmy Jones advised RHR
that he would "set the paper moving"
on the Decl. of Ind. matter.*



October 1

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

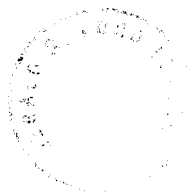
Russ --

Dr. Marrs called with the following:

"If you do not have any objections, I am going to have the Department of Archives make 250 copies of the Declaration of Independence from the original copper plate of 1823 out of their own money. If I do not hear from you saying 'halt' shortly, I will go ahead."

Thanks.

donna



SEP 17 1975 Recd 9/17 5:00
due 9/18
11:00

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

ACTION MEMORANDUM

September 17, 1975

Date: September 17, 1975

Time:

FOR ACTION: ~~Jack Marsh~~
Ted Marrs
Paul O'Neill
Max Friedersdorf
Jim Falk

FROM THE STAFF SECRETARY

DUE: Date: September 18

Time: 11:00 a.m.

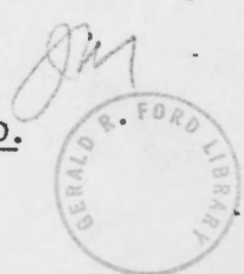
SUBJECT:

Response to a request from Mayor Rizzo in behalf of the City of Philadelphia and other groups to move the Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia for all or part of the Bicentennial period.

ACTION REQUESTED

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> For Necessary Action | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For your Recommendations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare Agenda and Brief | <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Reply |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For your Comments | <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Remarks |

I think the case against moving is clearly the best. Further that the President should not sign the letter.



PLEASE ATTACH THIS COPY TO MATERIAL SUBMITTED.

If you have any questions or if you anticipate a delay in submitting the required material, please telephone the Staff Secretary immediately.

A decision must be made in the very near future with regard to the requested temporary transfer of the Declaration of Independence from the National Archives to the City of Philadelphia for all or part of the Bicentennial period.

The attached background paper sets forth the basic problem.

Attached also is the original request to the President from Mayor Frank L. Rizzo.

The attached communication from James E. O'Neill, Acting Archivist of the United States, sets forth the basic practical difficulties inherent in the proposed move.

Your views are solicited on two basic questions:

1) Should the document be moved to Philadelphia?

Approve _____

Disapprove

2) Who should sign the letter?

President _____

Acting Archivist, at the direction
of the President

Any additional Comments you might have would be welcome.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

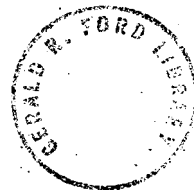
Sent 9/27
el

Get to

Ted - needs

push other

M



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

National Archives and Records Service
Washington, DC 20408

SEP 26 1975



SEP 25 1975

Honorable John O. Marsh, Jr.
Counsellor to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Marsh:

On May 5, 1975, the Administrator of General Services wrote to the President offering GSA's assistance in preparing what he believed would be a uniquely appropriate gift for the President to present to foreign heads of state to commemorate the Bicentennial. A limited number of copies of the Declaration of Independence could be taken from the copper plate prepared directly from the original document by William J. Stone in 1823 under the authorization of John Quincy Adams, then Secretary of State. Encased in handsome portfolios, these would make gifts of enduring value. The copper plate is among the records in the custody of the National Archives and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing has indicated that it could make impressions from it on heavy vellum paper for \$7 each.

In mid-June, Mr. Barry Roth made oral inquiries of the Administrator's office in regard to the possible cost of making the engravings and placing them in appropriate portfolios. We gave him the figure quoted above and reaffirmed our willingness to compose and have printed a brief essay about the Declaration to be inserted in the portfolios and to work with the Department of State in designing and producing the portfolios.

Although Mr. Roth indicated that the President was interested in the project, we have not had firm instructions to proceed. We are concerned not to have too short a lead time because we wish every detail to be carefully handled. If the President wishes to have the documents ready for presentation on July 4, 1976, we should begin work very soon.



Keep Freedom in Your Future With U.S. Savings Bonds

2

I would appreciate any assistance you can give us in obtaining authorization to proceed in this matter.

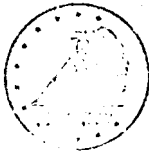
Sincerely,

James E. O'Neill

JAMES E. O'NEILL
Deputy Archivist
of the United States

Enclosures





UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20405

March 4 1975
D. E. Dink
M

ADMINISTRATOR

May 5, 1975

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The General Services Administration has developed an idea for a special commemoration of the Nation's Bicentennial involving a special gift from you to the heads of state of all the nations recognized by the United States. The gift would be a copy of the Declaration of Independence, taken from the copper plate prepared by William J. Stone in 1823, who was acting under the authorization of John Quincy Adams, then Secretary of State.

We suggest enough copies of the Stone engraving be prepared and put in presentation portfolios so that in 1976 you may present one to each foreign head of state either through the accredited diplomatic representative or directly. Since the ideas embodied in the Declaration of Independence were our gift to the cause of liberty throughout the world, your gift would be uniquely symbolic.

The Stone engraving, which was prepared by actually lifting off an image of the ink from the original document, gives a better idea of the original appearance of the Declaration than one sees today.

The copper plate is part of the records of the National Archives and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing assures us that they can print a limited number of copies from this plate.

GSA will be happy to have the requisite number of copies of the Declaration printed, and will compose and print a descriptive essay about the background of the Declaration to be inserted in the portfolio. We will be happy to work with the Department of State in designing and producing the entire portfolio, and also in working out other details.

If this idea meets with your approval, I will be glad to begin work immediately.

Respectfully,

Arthur F. Sampson
ARTHUR F. SAMPSON
Administrator



cc: ✓ Donald H. Rumsfeld

NEE

May 5, 1975

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The General Services Administration has developed an idea for a special commemoration of the Nation's Bicentennial involving a special gift from you to the heads of state of all the nations recognized by the United States. The gift would be a copy of the Declaration of Independence, taken from the copper plate prepared by William J. Stone in 1823, who was acting under the authorization of John Quincy Adams, then Secretary of State.

We suggest enough copies of the Stone engraving be prepared and put in presentation portfolios so that in 1976 you may present one to each foreign head of state either through the accredited diplomatic representative or directly. Since the ideas embodied in the Declaration of Independence were our gift to the cause of liberty throughout the world, your gift would be uniquely symbolic.

The Stone engraving, which was prepared by actually lifting off an image of the ink from the original document, gives a better idea of the original appearance of the Declaration than one sees today.

The copper plate is part of the records of the National Archives and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing assures us that they can print a limited number of copies from this plate.

GSA will be happy to have the requisite number of copies of the Declaration printed, and will compose and print a descriptive essay about the background of the Declaration to be inserted in the portfolio. We will be happy to work with the Department of State in designing and producing the entire portfolio, and also in working out other details.

If this idea meets with your approval, I will be glad to begin work immediately.

Respectfully,

(Signed) A. F. Sampson

ARTHUR F. SAMPSON
Administrator



DISCUSSION

Direct requests to place the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia during part or all of 1976 have been received from Mayor Rizzo, the publisher of the Philadelphia Daily News, and some citizens of the area. There are also many petitions being circulated for signature with an announcement that a million signatures are being sought.

Frank Tarbox, President of Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company and General Chairman of the Citizen's Freedom Week Committee, has offered to place the document in the fireproof, fully secured First Bank of the United States, a historic building under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service.

The National Archives is against the move on the grounds of document fragility and the need for extraordinary protection.

A recent feasibility study was made by the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, and they reported unanimity against removal.

Senator Hugh Scott has introduced legislation seeking a further feasibility study by GSA.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 29, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: RUSS ROURKE

FROM: JACK MARSH 

I want you to work on Philadelphia's request to move the Declaration of Independence to Phila. for the Bicentennial.

It is my view this should be staffed out and circulated through the system. There are two questions I have:

(1) Should the document be sent to Philadelphia?

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

(2) Who should sign the letter?

President _____ Someone else, at the direction
of the President _____

The proper staffing people would be Ted Marrs, OMB, myself, Congressional Relations, Domestic Council.

It should be pointed out in the staffing paper that there is a tremendous interest in this and legislation has been introduced by Senator Scott.



AUG 28 1975

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 27, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: JACK MARSH

FROM: TED MARRS *TM*

I think that the President probably should be apprised of the dilemma which is inherent in Mayor Rizzo's request. The desire to be responsive to the sponsors and supporters of moving the Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia for all or part of the Bicentennial period, is instinctive and is possibly politically advantageous. However, a decision to take this action would involve risk to the document itself and, therefore, to its tremendous symbolic value.

As an alternative to sending the proposed answer from the Archivist, I think that serious consideration should be given to a direct answer from the President to Rizzo saying that while he has taken an oath to protect and defend the Constitution, that he has also assumed an inherent responsibility to insure against any unnecessary risk to the Declaration of Independence. It should be noted that extraordinary measures are employed to protect and preserve that document, its fragility and its sacredness.

A draft letter from the President to Rizzo is provided as well as some background information concerning expressed interest in both sides of the question.

Of course, the approach offered as an alternate, could be signed at a level below the President in the White House.



BACKGROUND PAPER

REQUEST FOR REMOVAL OF DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE TO PHILADELPHIA DURING 1976

- ° Direct requests to place the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia during part or all of 1976 have been received from Mayor Rizzo, the publisher of the Philadelphia Daily News, and some citizens of the area. There are also many petitions being circulated for signature with an announcement that a million signatures are being sought.
- ° Frank Tarbox, President of Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company and General Chairman of the Citizen's Freedom Week Committee, has offered to place the document in the fireproof, fully secured First Bank of the United States, a historic building under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service.
- ° The National Archives is against the move on the grounds of document fragility and the need for extraordinary protection.
- ° A recent feasibility study was made by the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress and they reported unanimity against removal.
- ° Senator Hugh Scott has introduced legislation seeking a further feasibility study by GSA.



DRAFT RESPONSE FOR JAMES O'NEILL'S SIGNATURE

Dear Mayor Rizzo:

The National Archives has been asked to reply to your July 16th letter to the President.

The desire expressed by you and other Philadelphians to have the Declaration of Independence displayed in your city next year during the Bicentennial is both understandable and heartening; it is in the true Bicentennial spirit. We are sure that Americans visiting the scenes of their nation's emergence will give high priority to Philadelphia in 1976.

I am sure you are aware that during many of its 200 years, the parchment document which was signed by the delegates was subjected to excessive handling and other harsh usage which has left it fragile and faded. It began by traveling with the Continental Congress and is now in its twenty-fifth home.

In its early years it was creased and rolled. Much of the ink was removed when a "wet process" copy was taken in the 1820's. The document was displayed for much of its life under unsuitable conditions which contributed further to the deterioration of the parchment and the fading of the ink. For 35 years, for instance, it hung in sunlight on a wall opposite a window in the Patent Office here in Washington.

Better care was given to the document in this century but deterioration continued. Finally, effective measures were taken to preserve and protect the document while it neared the end of its stay



Page 2

at the Library of Congress. Expert scientific assistance was obtained from the Bureau of Standards and the result was that the Declaration of Independence in 1951 was encased in a glass and bronze case filled with inert and humidified helium and protected from light damage by a filter. (Similar treatment was accorded the Constitution and the Bill of Rights) The Declaration and the Constitution were transferred to the National Archives Building in 1952, joining the Bill of Rights which was already here. The Great Charters, at last, were installed in the exhibition hall which had been constructed for that specific purpose, as President Herbert Hoover had noted when he laid the cornerstone for the building in 1933.

Although we fully appreciate the interest of the City of Philadelphia in exhibiting the Declaration during the Bicentennial observance, a fair and responsible evaluation of the request must take the very important factors I have outlined into account. Chief among them is the well-being of this great document which the National Archives holds in trust for all Americans. We feel that any risk to it is too much risk. Consequently, we must strongly oppose moving the Declaration from its uniquely safe repository here.

Here in the National Archives, the documents can be easily seen by visitors under controlled conditions designed to prevent further deterioration and to guard against harm. Special guards protect the documents while they are on display. At night, the individual document cases, which are held on scissors jacks, are lowered into



the 50-ton vault which is 20 feet below the marble display case. This can be done quickly if there is any threat to the documents. Thus, after its many physical vicissitudes, the Declaration of Independence is in a permanent and safe home.

It is our conviction that the Declaration of Independence should not be exposed either to the dangers of transport or to those of an exhibit environment which, no matter how carefully prepared, would lack the unique safeguards of the National Archives Building. The scientists who designed the case warned that needless handling could break the delicate, soldered seal. There would be additional dangers of damage to the case and its precious document if transported from its home. The Declaration of Independence has not moved from this permanent home since it was installed here in 1952, and this, we believe, is as it should be. Our thinking is in accord with that of the Joint Congressional Committee which in 1952 directed the transfer of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution from the Library of Congress to the National Archives Building. The committee held that these documents belonged in the National Archives not only as a matter of law, but also because of the superior safety and other custodial features of the National Archives Building.

A recent feasibility study was made by the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress on the proposal to move the Declaration to Philadelphia. This study reported that it was the unanimous opinion of those consulted that the document not be removed from its present location. Senator Hugh Scott has introduced



Page 4

legislation which would require a further study by the General Services Administration. We would, of course, be very happy to cooperate in such a study.

During the weekend of July 4, 1976, the National Archives will be holding a special celebration to honor the document which proclaimed our independence as a nation. We would be most pleased to have you as an honored guest at that celebration, which we expect will be held at such time as to permit you to be in Philadelphia with the President on July 4. I hope you will accept our invitation.

Sincerely,

James E. O'Neill
Acting Archivist of the United States

Honorable Frank Rizzo
Mayor of Philadelphia
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107



DRAFT RESPONSE FOR THE PRESIDENT'S SIGNATURE

Dear Mayor Rizzo:

The desire by you and other Philadelphians to have the Declaration of Independence displayed in your city next year during the Bicentennial period, is both understandable and heartening; it is in the true Bicentennial spirit. Americans visiting the scenes of their nation's emergence will undoubtedly give high priority to Philadelphia in 1976 and, as you know, I have urged the Federal departments to give priority to Philadelphia's various Bicentennial projects.

Following receipt of your letter, I asked the National Archives to advise me of the exact condition of the document and what protective measures they are employing to preserve it. I have attached some of the information they forwarded.

As you probably know, the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress did conduct a feasibility study on the proposal. It was the unanimous opinion of those consulted that the document not be removed from its present location. Further, Senator Hugh Scott has introduced legislation which would require a further study by the General Services Administration.

When I assumed the Presidency, I took the oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. At the same time, I believe I assumed an inherent responsibility to insure against any unnecessary risk to the Declaration of Independence. Recognizing the extraordinary protection which has been considered necessary to maintain adequate security for this priceless and sacred document and in view of its fragility, I see no immediate



alternative but to maintain a position against its removal. I do this reluctantly and in the hope that you and the people of Philadelphia, in view of the above, will agree with me. Of course, should the results of other qualified studies which may evolve indicate a more positive reaction, this matter will certainly receive further consideration.

GRF



SEP 11 1975

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

9/9

To Mr. Jack Marsh's office

From Warren Rustand's Office

This was staffed to you on August 1
but we have not had your comments.

May we hear from you please.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Date: August 1, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: JACK HARSH

FROM: WARREN S. RUSTAND

SUBJECT: Frank K. Tarbox, Chairman, Freedom
Week, President, Penn Mutual Life
Insurance Company

The attached is being sent to you for your advice and recommendation.

Would you advise as soon as possible.

Thank you.

COMMENTS:





CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

CITIZENS' FREEDOM WEEK COMMITTEE

MAYOR FRANK L. RIZZO
Honorary Chairman

FRANK K. TARBOX
General Chairman

CHARLES F. SCHALCH
Treasurer

*Coordinated in the office of the
City Representative*

1660 MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING
PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19107

MUNICIPAL 6-3676

July 28, 1975

The Honorable Gerald R. Ford
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

A group of civic leaders and prominent businessmen has been spearheading a community effort to bring back to Philadelphia for the Bicentennial summer of 1976 the original engrossed Declaration of Independence which presently is in the National Archives in Washington. You can assure the success of this effort.

There are many positive reasons for returning this priceless record of our American heritage to the City where it was drafted, adopted and signed. The Declaration belongs where it was created when we celebrate that most historic occasion of all times -- the nation's 200th anniversary of independence.

We are respectfully requesting an appointment with you at your convenience, hopefully in September. At that time a delegation of those individuals most deeply involved will present to you petitions on which a minimum of one million signatures will be recorded. These petitions represent the unified opinion of all these good people who are asking you to accord them and millions more like them a more meaningful Bicentennial experience by granting their request.

Returning the Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia will place in this city the three most important artifacts related to our cherished independence -- the Declaration of Independence, Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. With your deep sense of history, we are confident you can appreciate what an impact such a Philadelphia experience would have on all Americans, and how very grateful they would be to you for making this possible.



The Honorable Gerald R. Ford
July 28, 1975
Page Two

The Declaration of Independence would have all the protection and security it requires. It is our plan to place this document in the fireproof, fully secured First Bank of the United States, a most historic building which is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. Visitors will be directed to see the Declaration of Independence in the same meaningful fashion as they are directed to visit the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall.

We look forward to our meeting with you.

Respectfully,

Frank K. Tarbox

Frank K. Tarbox
Chairman, Freedom Week
President, Penn Mutual Life
Insurance Company

On behalf of the Coordinators and Sponsors:

Richard C. Bond
Chairman
Philadelphia '76, Inc.

Peter F. McGoldrick
President
Acme Markets

William B. Eagleson, Jr.
Chairman and President
Girard Bank

Robert Harrison
Chairman
John Wanamaker

Louis C. Fisher
Chairman
Gino's Inc.

Theodore A. Burtis
President
Sun Oil of Pennsylvania

Jerry Pomerantz
President
The Morrison Company



O'Neill, James

August 8, 1975

MEMORANDUM TO: TED MARRS
FROM: JACK MARSH

Ted, please respond to attached Warren Rustand memo from Frank Tarbox. I know you will want to include a copy of attached letter from O'Neill.

JOM:RAR:cb



*Declaration
of Independence*

AUG 6 1975

JUL 25 1975

Mr. Roif Neill
Editor
PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101

Dear Mr. Neill:

Because we have the responsibility for the Declaration of Independence, we have been asked to reply to your letter of July 8 to the President.

The desire expressed by you, and other Philadelphians, to have the Declaration of Independence on display in your city during the Bicentennial is not only understandable, but heartening. You have the true Bicentennial spirit. We are sure that Americans visiting the scenes of their Nation's emergence will give high priority to Philadelphia in 1976.

Although we appreciate the interest of Philadelphia in exhibiting the Declaration during its Bicentennial observance, there are other considerations which we must take into account. A principal concern is the physical well-being of this great document which we hold in trust for all Americans.

I am sure you are aware that during many of its 200 years, the parchment document which was signed by the delegates was subjected to harsh usage which has left it fragile and faded. It began by traveling with the Continental Congress and is now in its twenty-fifth home.

In its early years it was creased and rolled. Much of the ink was removed when a "wet process" copy was taken in the 1820's. The document was displayed for much of its life under unsuitable conditions which contributed further to the deterioration of the parchment and the fading of the ink. For 35 years, for instance, it hung in sunlight on a wall opposite a window in the Patent Office here in Washington.



Better care was given to the document in this century but deterioration continued. Finally, effective measures were taken to preserve and protect the document while it neared the end of its stay at the Library of Congress. Expert scientific assistance was obtained from the Bureau of Standards and the result was that the Declaration of Independence in 1951 was encased in a glass and bronze case filled with inert and humidified helium and protected from light damage by a filter. (Similar treatment was accorded the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.) The Declaration and the Constitution were transferred to the National Archives Building in 1952, joining the Bill of Rights which was already here. The Great Charters, at last, were installed in the exhibition hall which had been constructed for that specific purpose, as President Herbert Hoover had noted when he laid the cornerstone for the building in 1933.

Here in the National Archives the documents can be easily seen by visitors under controlled conditions designed to prevent further deterioration and to guard against harm. Special guards protect the documents while they are on display. At night, the individual document cases, which are held on scissors jacks, are lowered into the 50-ton vault which is 20 feet below the marble display case. This can be done quickly if there is any threat to the documents. Thus, after its many physical vicissitudes, the Declaration of Independence is in a permanent and safe home.

It is our conviction that the Declaration of Independence should not be exposed either to the dangers of transport or to those of an exhibit environment which, no matter how carefully prepared, would lack the unique safeguards of the National Archives Building. The scientists who designed the case warned that needless handling could break the delicate, soldered seal. There would be additional dangers of damage to the case and its precious document if transported from its home. The Declaration of Independence has not moved from this permanent home since it was installed here in 1952, and this, we believe, is as it should be. Our thinking is in accord with that of the



3.

Joint Congressional Committee which in 1952 directed the transfer of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution from the Library of Congress to the National Archives Building. The committee held that these documents belonged in the National Archives not only as a matter of law but also because of the superior safety and other custodial features of the National Archives Building.

The reasons which we have cited for keeping the document in its permanent home appear to us to be compelling. In addition, it seems to us that it would be inappropriate to remove the Declaration of Independence from the Nation's capital when millions of Americans intent on observing the Bicentennial in 1976 will be coming to Washington to visit the seat of their Government. Philadelphia, with its close associations to those days when colonials banded together to win independence, will also be a "must" stop for Bicentennial visitors. But we think they should visit their Declaration of Independence in its permanent home in the National Archives Building.

Sincerely,

James E. O'Neill

JAMES E. O'NEILL
Acting Archivist
of the United States

cc: AL

Milton E. Miller ✓



AUG 5 1975

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Date: August 1, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: JACK MARSH

FROM: WARREN S. RUSTAND

SUBJECT: Frank K. Tarbox, Chairman, Freedom
Week, President, Penn Mutual Life
Insurance Company

The attached is being sent to you for your advice and recommendation.

Would you advise as soon as possible.

Thank you.

COMMENTS:





CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

CITIZENS' FREEDOM WEEK COMMITTEE

MAYOR FRANK L. RIZZO
Honorary Chairman

FRANK K. TARBOX
General Chairman

CHARLES F. SCHALCH
Treasurer

*Coordinated in the office of the
City Representative*

1660 MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING
PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19107

MUNICIPAL 6-3676

July 28, 1975

The Honorable Gerald R. Ford
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

A group of civic leaders and prominent businessmen has been spearheading a community effort to bring back to Philadelphia for the Bicentennial summer of 1976 the original engrossed Declaration of Independence which presently is in the National Archives in Washington. You can assure the success of this effort.

There are many positive reasons for returning this priceless record of our American heritage to the City where it was drafted, adopted and signed. The Declaration belongs where it was created when we celebrate that most historic occasion of all times -- the nation's 200th anniversary of independence.

We are respectfully requesting an appointment with you at your convenience, hopefully in September. At that time a delegation of those individuals most deeply involved will present to you petitions on which a minimum of one million signatures will be recorded. These petitions represent the unified opinion of all these good people who are asking you to accord them and millions more like them a more meaningful Bicentennial experience by granting their request.

Returning the Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia will place in this city the three most important artifacts related to our cherished independence -- the Declaration of Independence, Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. With your deep sense of history, we are confident you can appreciate what an impact such a Philadelphia experience would have on all Americans, and how very grateful they would be to you for making this possible.



The Honorable Gerald R. Ford
July 28, 1975
Page Two

The Declaration of Independence would have all the protection and security it requires. It is our plan to place this document in the fireproof, fully secured First Bank of the United States, a most historic building which is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. Visitors will be directed to see the Declaration of Independence in the same meaningful fashion as they are directed to visit the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall.

We look forward to our meeting with you.

Respectfully,

Frank K. Tarbox

Frank K. Tarbox
Chairman, Freedom Week
President, Penn Mutual Life
Insurance Company

On behalf of the Coordinators and Sponsors:

Richard C. Bond
Chairman
Philadelphia '76, Inc.

Peter F. McGoldrick
President
Acme Markets

William B. Eagleson, Jr.
Chairman and President
Girard Bank

Robert Harrison
Chairman
John Wanamaker

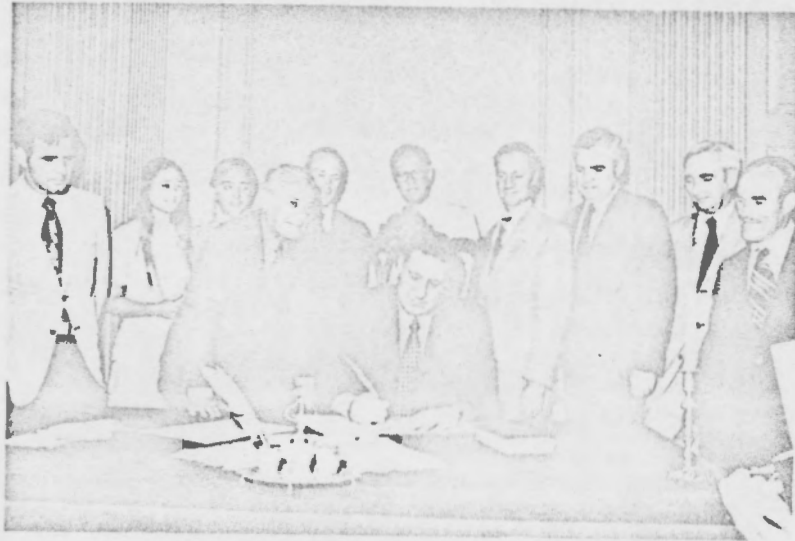
Louis C. Fisher
Chairman
Gino's Inc.

Theodore A. Burtis
President
Sun Oil of Pennsylvania

Jerry Pomerantz
President
The Morrison Company



BRING IT BACK HOME



A massive community wide campaign designed to bring the original Declaration of Independence back to Philadelphia from Washington, D.C. for the Bicentennial was launched on July 2 by Mayor Rizzo and top executives of five sponsoring firms, including Girard.

The Mayor was the first of more than one million signers to petition President Ford to return the Declaration to the city where it was drafted, adopted and signed in 1776. The petition signing took place at the desk used by Thomas Jefferson in the Assembly Room at Independence Hall.

W. B. Eagleson, Jr. signed the petition for Girard, along with the Presidents or Chairmen of the Boards of Acme Markets, Gino's Restaurants, Sun Oil Company and John Wanamaker. These firms represent some one thousand business outlets at which the public can sign the petitions before August 2. You, your neighbors, friends and customers can sign the

petition at any of our branch offices.

The plan for bringing back the Declaration was conceived by the Freedom Week Committee. Jerry Pomerantz, a member of the committee and President of a sales promotion agency, is contributing the parchment petitions to be used.

Returning the Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia will mean that the three most revered symbols of American Liberty The Liberty Bell, Independence Hall and the Declaration of Independence will be here, just as in 1776. Certainly this will make the Bicentennial celebration more meaningful for residents and visitors to our city.

Should President Ford, who is expected to speak at Independence Hall on July 4, 1976, agree to return the Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia, he will be following a precedent set by President U. S. Grant who permitted the historic document to come "home" for the Centennial observance.



Some items in this folder were not digitized because it contains copyrighted materials. Please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library for access to these materials.

HARRISBURG (UPI) — The state has blocked a request by the Congress of World Unity, once billed as a keystone of Pennsylvania's Bicentennial celebration, to raise funds privately.

The Commission on Charitable Organizations said yesterday it would delay action on a request for the permit, filed by the Rev. Guy Merveille, pending an investigation.

'Declaration' Report Is Due

The Library of Congress was expected to release its findings tomorrow on the cost, security and legality of sending the Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia during the Bicentennial.

Sen. Hugh Scott (R., Pa.) requested the study following editorials by the Daily News and KYW radio asking the Declaration be brought here, a Scott aide said. Legislation already has been drawn up by Scott's office for the document's transfer should the study prove it feasible, he said.

A CAMPAIGN HAS been under way to obtain a million signatures asking President Ford to send the Declaration here. More than 200,000 have been collected.

Petitions can be signed at all Acme

Daily News - Phila - 7/24/75

Freedom Week

City of Philadelphia



1660 Municipal Services Building
Philadelphia, Pa. 19107

FRANK L. RIZZO, Mayor

HARRY R. BELINGER, City Representative

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY, JULY 2:

A massive community wide campaign designed to bring back to Philadelphia from Washington, D.C. the original engrossed Declaration of Independence for the Bicentennial of 1976, will be launched today (Wednesday, July 2) by Mayor Frank L. Rizzo and the top executives of five sponsoring firms. Ceremonies will be held at 2 p.m. in Independence Hall.

The mayor will be the first of more than one million signers to petition the President of the United States to return the Declaration of Independence to the city where it was drafted, adopted and signed in 1776. Appropriately, the petition signing will take place at the desk used by Thomas Jefferson in the Assembly Room of the shrine of American liberty.

Joining the mayor as the first of the petitioners will be Hobart G. Cawood, superintendent of Independence National Historical Park, and representatives of Acme Markets, Gino's Restaurants, Girard Bank, Sunoco and John Wanamaker. These firms represent some one thousand business outlets at which the public can sign the petitions during the month of July.

Signing for Acme Markets, Inc. will be its president Peter F. McGoldrick. Louis C. Fisher, chairman of the board will sign for Gino's, Inc.



NEWS RELEASE

William B. Eagleson, Jr., Chairman and President of Girard Bank will sign for that institution, while Theodore A. Burtis, president of Sun Oil of Pennsylvania and executive vice president of the Sun Oil Co. will represent his company. Robert Harrison, president of John Wanamaker will record his signature on the petition.

Freedom Week Chairman Frank K. Tarbox, who is president of the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Co., and Richard C. Bond, chairman of Philadelphia '76, Inc., will also be on hand to sign the petition.

The plan to bring back the Declaration to Philadelphia was conceived by the City Representative's Office for the Freedom Week Committee whose activities it coordinates. The drive will be carried on under the auspices of the Freedom Week Committee and Philadelphia '76, Inc., the city's bicentennial planning agency.

Also joining in coordinating the effort will be the Morrison Co., a sales promotion agency whose president, Jerry Pomerantz, a member of the Freedom Week Committee, is contributing the parchment petitions as a public service.

The return to Philadelphia of the Declaration of Independence, which was signed in Independence Hall, will place in Philadelphia three of the most revered symbols of American liberty--the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall and the Declaration of Independence, just as in 1776. It will make the Bicentennial celebration a tremendously meaningful experience for the millions who live in the Delaware Valley and the millions more who will visit Philadelphia for the nation's 200th anniversary.

Should President Ford, who is expected to speak at Independence Hall on July 4, 1976, agree to return the Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia, he will be following a precedent set by President Ulysses S. Grant who possessed the historic document to come "home" for the Centennial observance in 1876, when Grant spoke here on July 4.



When the Declaration of Independence is returned, it will be housed with appropriate security in The First Bank of the United States, 3rd st. between Chestnut and Walnut sts. Although the most desirable location would be Independence Hall, officials of Independence National Historical Park contend it will restore the problem of crowding which is now being resolved by moving the Liberty Bell to its own building on Independence Mall.

The First Bank is a very historic building erected between 1795 and 1797. It is considered the oldest bank building in the United States and is presently under restoration for the Bicentennial. It will house an exhibit of the executive branch of the Federal government covering the years 1790 to 1800, when Philadelphia was the capital of the nation. It is a part of Independence National Historical Park under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service.

According to Park Superintendent Cawood, using the First Bank to house the Declaration will allow visitors to Independence Park to enjoy all the symbols of the nation's birth. Their first stop will be at the Visitors Center, 3rd and Chestnut sts. for orientation. Entering the front door of the First Bank they will view the Declaration and depart by the back exit into Carpenter's Hall Courtyard, working their way westward to Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell Pavilion.

The committee has unofficially set August 2 as the closing date of the campaign in the hopes that the minimum of the million signatures sought will have been attained on the historic date of the signing of the Declaration.



Petitions will be on prominent display for public signing at all Acme and Super Saver Markets, Gino's and Rustler Restaurants, Girard Bank Offices, Sunoco Stations and John Wanamaker stores.

#

Freedom Week

City of Philadelphia, 1900 Municipal Services Building
Philadelphia, Pa. 19107

FRANK L. RIZZO, Mayor

JERRY R. BELINGER, City Representative

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Mayor Frank L. Rizzo today formally requested The President of the United States to return the Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia for the bicentennial summer of 1976.

In a letter to President Ford, Mayor Rizzo stated that the citizens of the area have evidenced great interest in having the Declaration temporarily returned to the city where it was written, adopted and signed.

He referred to a massive community-wide campaign to bring back the Declaration of Independence which is being coordinated by the city's Freedom Week Committee and Philadelphia '76, Inc. The campaign is sponsored by Acme and Super Saver Markets, Gino's and Rustler Restaurants, Girard Bank, Sun Oil Co. and John Wanamaker, in cooperation with The Morrison Co.

Petitions for public signing have been placed at all of the merchandising outlets of the sponsoring companies. In the brief period of time since the program was launched on July 2 at Independence Hall by Mayor Rizzo some 200,000 signatures have been recorded.

The Mayor informed President Ford that a minimum of one million signatures will be directed to The White House before the summer is over.



Mayor Rizzo noted that President Grant permitted the Declaration of Independence to be sent to Philadelphia for the Centennial in 1876. He stated that Philadelphia again "would like to give this hallowed document an honored place where it could be viewed by the public complete with all the safety and protection it is now accorded in the National Archives in Washington."

Moreover, Mayor Rizzo declared, the return of the Declaration would go far to make the Bicentennial a "more meaningful and memorable experience" for millions of Americans.

Should President Ford approve the return of the Declaration of Independence, the plans are to house the document at the historic First Bank on 3rd st. between Chestnut and Walnut. It would then place in this city the three major artifacts of American independence -- the Declaration of Independence, the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall.

#

S. Kauders
MU-6-3676

7/16/75 ec
2:15



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 30, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: RUSS ROURKE

FROM: TED MARRS *TM*

Attached is a copy of the letter Jim O'Neill, Acting Archivist of the United States, sent to the Philadelphia News in reference to the requested transfer of the Declaration of Independence to that city in 1976. A copy of the memo which went to Jim Falk concerning Mayor Rizzo's letter on the same subject, and a copy of my memo to Jim Connor, Larry Speakes and Jim Falk are attached.

Thought you might want to pass this on to Jack.

JUL 30 1975

Rizzo

✓

(11)



July 25, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: JIM FALK
FROM: TED MARRS

In reference to the request of Mayor Rizzo to have the Declaration of Independence placed in Philadelphia sometime during 1976, I would heavily support this from a Bicentennial point of view. It seems most appropriate.

Obviously, having seen the protective devices - vacuum containers, climate control, etc., - which are in use at the National Archives, and recognizing its preciousness, there may be some serious problems of security and fragility or accidental damage to be carefully considered.

SEARCHED
SERIALIZED
INDEXED
FILED
FBI - PHILADELPHIA

RIZZO, FRANK L. MAYOR
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

July 22, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: JIM FALK
FROM: MILT MITLER

A similar request to that contained in the attached letter from Mayor Rizzo of Philadelphia concerning the Declaration of Independence was received from the Philadelphia Daily News. We have asked Dr. James O'Neill, Deputy Archivist of the National Archives, to reply to the newspaper directly with a copy to us.

In conversation with Dr. O'Neill, he pointed out because of the fragility of the document, the need to keep it within a protective environment under specified climatic conditions, and several other factors, it would be impractical to move it to Philadelphia.

Would you please respond to the Mayor's request direct. Should you want to contact Dr. O'Neill first, he can be reached at 963-3408.

Attachment





D

C I T Y O F P H I L A D E L P H I A

July 16, 1975

FRANK L. RIZZO
MAYOR

mailed

Honorable Gerald R. Ford,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

As Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, I respectfully request that you use your good offices to enable the Declaration of Independence to be displayed in Philadelphia during the summer of 1976.

There is great interest among the citizens of this region to have the Declaration temporarily returned to the City where it was written, adopted and signed.

During the first week in which we launched our program to bring this document home, almost 200,000 people have demonstrated their support by signing a petition directed to you.

We expect to have a minimum of one million signatures on your desk before the summer is over.

As you are aware, President Grant gave permission for the Declaration of Independence to be sent to Philadelphia for the Centennial in 1876.

Once again, we would like to give this hallowed document an honored place where it could be viewed by the public complete with all the safety and protection it is now accorded in the National Archives in Washington.



Honorable Gerald R. Ford

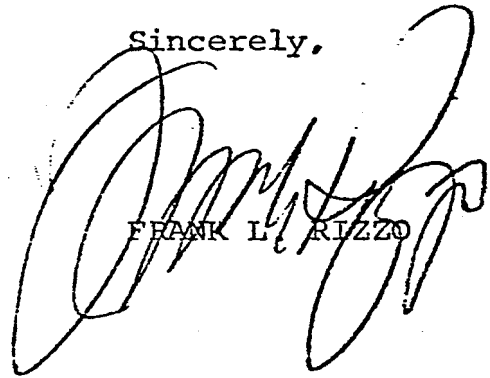
-2-

July 16, 1975

I do hope that you will lend your full support to our efforts to make the Bicentennial celebration a more meaningful and memorable experience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank L. Rizzo', is written over the typed name.

FRANK L. RIZZO

FLR:zmr

A circular stamp is located in the bottom right corner of the page. The text within the stamp is partially obscured but appears to include the date 'JUL 16 1975'.

JUL 25 1975

Mr. Rolf Neill
Editor
PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101

Dear Mr. Neill:

Because we have the responsibility for the Declaration of Independence, we have been asked to reply to your letter of July 8 to the President.

The desire expressed by you, and other Philadelphians, to have the Declaration of Independence on display in your city during the Bicentennial is not only understandable, but heartening. You have the true Bicentennial spirit. We are sure that Americans visiting the scenes of their Nation's emergence will give high priority to Philadelphia in 1976.

Although we appreciate the interest of Philadelphia in exhibiting the Declaration during its Bicentennial observance, there are other considerations which we must take into account. A principal concern is the physical well-being of this great document which we hold in trust for all Americans.

I am sure you are aware that during many of its 200 years, the parchment document which was signed by the delegates was subjected to harsh usage which has left it fragile and faded. It began by traveling with the Continental Congress and is now in its twenty-fifth home.

In its early years it was creased and rolled. Much of the ink was removed when a "wet process" copy was taken in the 1820's. The document was displayed for much of its life under unsuitable conditions which contributed further to the deterioration of the parchment and the fading of the ink. For 35 years, for instance, it hung in sunlight on a wall opposite a window in the Patent Office here in Washington.



Better care was given to the document in this century but deterioration continued. Finally, effective measures were taken to preserve and protect the document while it neared the end of its stay at the Library of Congress. Expert scientific assistance was obtained from the Bureau of Standards and the result was that the Declaration of Independence in 1951 was encased in a glass and bronze case filled with inert and humidified helium and protected from light damage by a filter. (Similar treatment was accorded the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.) The Declaration and the Constitution were transferred to the National Archives Building in 1952, joining the Bill of Rights which was already here. The Great Charters, at last, were installed in the exhibition hall which had been constructed for that specific purpose, as President Herbert Hoover had noted when he laid the cornerstone for the building in 1933.

Here in the National Archives the documents can be easily seen by visitors under controlled conditions designed to prevent further deterioration and to guard against harm. Special guards protect the documents while they are on display. At night, the individual document cases, which are held on scissors jacks, are lowered into the 50-ton vault which is 20 feet below the marble display case. This can be done quickly if there is any threat to the documents. Thus, after its many physical vicissitudes, the Declaration of Independence is in a permanent and safe home.

It is our conviction that the Declaration of Independence should not be exposed either to the dangers of transport or to those of an exhibit environment which, no matter how carefully prepared, would lack the unique safeguards of the National Archives Building. The scientists who designed the case warned that needless handling could break the delicate, soldered seal. There would be additional dangers of damage to the case and its precious document if transported from its home. The Declaration of Independence has not moved from this permanent home since it was installed here in 1952, and this, we believe, is as it should be. Our thinking is in accord with that of the



Joint Congressional Committee which in 1952 directed the transfer of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution from the Library of Congress to the National Archives Building. The committee held that these documents belonged in the National Archives not only as a matter of law but also because of the superior safety and other custodial features of the National Archives Building.

The reasons which we have cited for keeping the document in its permanent home appear to us to be compelling. In addition, it seems to us that it would be inappropriate to remove the Declaration of Independence from the Nation's capital when millions of Americans intent on observing the Bicentennial in 1976 will be coming to Washington to visit the seat of their Government. Philadelphia, with its close associations to those days when colonials banded together to win independence, will also be a "must" stop for Bicentennial visitors. But we think they should visit their Declaration of Independence in its permanent home in the National Archives Building.

Sincerely,

James E. O'Neill

JAMES E. O'NEILL
Acting Archivist
of the United States

cc: AL
Milton E. Miller ✓



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 6, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: JACK MARSH

FROM:

TED MARRS 

I have advised Jim O'Neill to proceed with a limited printing allowing one for each state and one for each visiting head of state. There will, if the plate holds out, be a printing of 250.



O'NEILL, JAMES E
DECLARATION OF
INDEPENDENCE

November 12, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. JAMES E. O'NEILL
FROM: MILTON E. MITLER

Attached is the suggested letter to be sent to Mayor Rizzo of Philadelphia relative to the removal of the Declaration of Independence from the National Archives to Philadelphia.

The matter has been reviewed here and it was decided that the letter should be signed by you and forwarded to the Mayor. Please send us a copy of the signed letter after it has been sent.

Thank you.

Attachment

MEM/sjd

