

## Pass It On®...

### The Ongoing Great Experiment – America at 250.

*After two and a half Centuries, America is still going strong. Unity in diversity bring us all together in a cause for self-governance that respects the one and benefits us all.*

The year was September 17, 1787, Philadelphia, the largest city in North America. Designed by William Penn in a grid system intended to stretch all the way west to the Schuylkill River, yet all 40,000 inhabitants were crowded into a few blocks on the eastern waterfront. Unpaved roads meant dust when it was dry and a slurry of mud and horse manure when it rained. There was a volunteer fire department and whale oil lamps to light the night. Georgian homes shouldered against taverns and windows were thrown open at opposite ends of buildings to draw wind through stale rooms made muggy by humid days. Tall ships forested the waterfront with their swaying masts. Vendors cried out pushing their wares and the upper class kept perfume-soaked handkerchiefs to their noses because the stench of backyard privies and slaughterhouse waste was so pungent. Human traffic was a cauldron of artisans, aristocrats, indentured servants and laborers, the kind of people who would find a way to forge a country despite their differences.

The Pennsylvania State House, now known as Independence Hall, had been the home for four months to the early colonial delegates. The windows were kept shut in the sweltering heat to preserve secrecy. Inside, a fierce debate over the future of the nation raged, heating up the room as well as tempers. Sweat-soaked delegates stepped into the air only briefly before returning to the fray. Benjamin Franklin, the octogenarian and poster boy for political innovation was 81 years old. He was carried to and from sessions in a large chair by prisoners, a ceremonial sight for curious onlookers. The form of government this new country was about to take lay scattered around the room, scribbled on parchment and laid out on writing desks, the rough drafts of destiny.

Waiting anxiously for any bit of news was Elizabeth Willing Powel, a socialite, political thinker, and sharp-witted observer who often hosted delegates at her home. The war for American Independence

had lasted longer than most had imagined and surprised at least half the country with its result. 8 years the war dragged on. The formal peace treaty was formed in 1783. Canonizing the Constitution would take four more years. Elizabeth, like the rest of the country, was anxious for answers. When Franklin, larger than life, finally stepped out into the cool September air there was an immediate respite from the summer's heat. Elizabeth approached him, seeing that the exhausted delegates had finally crafted the last draft, she asked: "Well, Doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?" Franklin, wizened and aged, bearing more weight than the average man, made true his quick wit: "A republic, if you can keep it."

And keep it we did. For 250 years a country forged in a diversity of ideas, America has kept her promise to her people.

Freedom...[PassItOn.com](http://PassItOn.com)

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

*The Foundation for a Better Life® promotes positive values to live by and pass along to others.*

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