

CARPENTER'S HALL

Good day everyone...it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia gets such a slight mention in the history books of this day, that it is rarely mentioned even in the discussion of history teachers. And yet, the business that was transacted there led to the formation of the United States. The Hall was built sometime before 1770. It was, as you might think from its name, a meeting hall of the Carpenter's Guild. On September 5, 1774, the Continental Congress convened. Even the selection of Carpenter's Hall came as the result of variant thinking in Pennsylvania--among our people. Joseph Galloway, a famed Conservative had offered the Congress the use of the State House--later to become Independence Hall. But his tory views were known, and citizens of the city suggested the use of Carpenter's Hall. There were already two views; the conservative, that a firm statement of American rights should be issued, but all semblance of violent opposition should be avoided. The so-called radicals felt that violent means should be taken--more violent than Galloway's views. The conservatives, to quote Galloway were "men of loyal principles, and possessed of the greatest fortunes in America; the others were congregational and presbyterian republicans, or men of bankrupt fortunes, overwhelmed in debt to the British merchants". That's the way Pennsylvanians lined up in the First Continental Congress at Carpenter's Hall. Galloway and Edward

Biddle of Berks County were appointed by Congress as members of a committee to formulate a statement of the rights of the Colonists. It was strong--almost violent--Galloway opposed it--Biddle favored it. The Pennsylvania Assembly happened to be the first legislative body to meet after the dissolution of Congress in late October. In December, it ratified the actions of the Congress--it was first to do so--and it was done while Galloway was absent, under the leadership of the patriot John Dickinson. Others like George Ross, Thomas Mifflin, (to become our first Governor) Charles Humphreys and John Morton backed Biddle. Thus, when the Continental Congress ordered the formation of revolutionary councils throughout the colonies, the Pennsylvanians had already done that very thing. For the first time, many of the people out in the towns and boroughs were able to voice their ideas and aspirations, and revolution was in the making. Between Third and Fourth Street along Chestnut in Philadelphia, you can visit Carpenter's Hall still today--not as well known as Independence Hall, where liberty was proclaimed, but just as important, for there, liberty was fomented. Pennsylvanians--who did the stirring at Carpenter's Hall--they were the first in the nation--signed the Declaration later. Galloway whose views opposed independence--and even the use of Carpenter's Hall--became Tory, moved to England, and died there in 1803.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.