

Thomas Jefferson Writes the Declaration of Independence

by Dane Rudhyar

The historical data presented by Mr. Rudhyar in support of the USA chart makes it well worth the serious consideration of astrologers, at least until such a time as some yet undiscovered source yields a record of the actual time when the Declaration of Independence was signed. — The Editor, 1941.

If Benjamin Franklin can be said to symbolize the mind and culture of the American Colonies before their emergence as an autonomous nation with a world-destiny; if Thomas Paine represents the potent Seed from the old world of England, blown across the ocean, to fecundate and inspire with determination and ideas the nascent United States, Thomas Jefferson is the living symbol of American democracy as an ideal embodied in fact. Fittingly therefore, his was the responsibility to formulate the ideological basis of this American democracy, and he did so in the initial paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence. American democracy as conceived by men trained in the philosophy of the 18th century is expressed in those terse sentences written by Jefferson; as, later on, the nineteenth century ideal of democracy was likewise set forth by Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address.

Thomas Jefferson was born in Shadwell, Virginia on April 13, 1743. As there is no record of the hour of birth, a **speculative birth-chart** will be presented. Jefferson's Sun was located in Aries 23°, his Moon in Sagittarius. The latter point is of great significance as it will be our claim that the true chart for the voting of the Declaration of Independence has Sagittarius 13° rising — a most befitting correlation indeed as Jefferson can be considered the "mother" (Moon) of the Declaration.

A detailed study of **Jefferson's chart** and of some of the main events of his life will be left for another article; at present we shall concentrate our attention upon the genesis and character of the momentous Declaration. We shall particularly attempt to throw light on the much discussed matter of the time of the day at which the document was accepted by Congress' vote.

Jefferson, who had been absent from the Continental Congress through the winter of 1776, returned to Philadelphia on May 14th. Three weeks later Richard Henry Lee, in the name of the Virginia delegation, submitted three resolutions. The first declared that "these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." The resolution was passed on July 2nd, which thus marks the official day when the Independence of the Colonies was accepted as a fact by the Congress. Historical logic would seem thus to have

made July 2nd the day for the celebration of Independence. However, July 4th was selected for some reason which we shall attempt to elucidate.

While the vote on Lee's Resolution of Independence was delayed for some three weeks, Congress had appointed a committee "to prepare a declaration to the effect of the said resolution" and appointed as members of the committee Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston. Jefferson, as chairman, proceeded to compose the Declaration of Independence, which was reported to Congress on June 28. On July 2nd by a vote of twelve states — ten voting unanimously, New York not voting, and Pennsylvania and Delaware casting divided ballots (three votes in the negative) — the Continental congress adopted a **resolution of Independence**.

"On the 2nd of July the resolution for independency was passed finally. Congress then resolved to take into further consideration the Declaration, and on the 3rd and 4th of July, it was debated, paragraph by paragraph. July 4th, 1776, in the evening, the Declaration was adopted . . ."— Charles S. Keyser, "The Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, Philadelphia." (p. 15)

This same information is given in "American History Told by Contemporaries" by Albert Bushnell Hart Vol. II, P. 539, quotes Jefferson:

The debates having taken up the greater part of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th days of July, were, in the evening of the last, closed; the declaration was reported by the committee, agreed to by the house and signed by every member present except Mr. Dickinson.

This last statement is however obviously erroneous in some respects. From nearly every other available source comes the fact that:

"The Declaration was not signed on July 4, 1776. The evidence as to this is overwhelming and complete. It was first published in printed form and these printed copies, or broadsides as they are called, were set up and run off from the press of John Dunlap, printer to Congress, during the night of July 4th. They were ready for distribution the next day, July 5th. The engrossing and signing appear to have been something of an afterthought. The important step was the assumption of independence; that being taken and the fact published, it was not until two weeks later, July 19th, that Congress ordered the Declaration to be engrossed and signed. This engrossing was not completed until August 2nd, and it was on that day that most of the signatures were affixed to the parchment. At least fifteen of the signers were not in Philadelphia on that date and their signatures were added at various times . . ." — John C. Fitzpatrick, "The Spirit of the Revolution; New Light from Some of the Original Sources of American History." (p. 8)

A number of other books mention the fact that the Declaration was adopted in the evening of July 4th and its original draft signed then by John Hancock as President of the Congress and by Charles Thompson as secretary. The following amusing story confirms seemingly an afternoon or late afternoon vote:

"The Convention met in a hall adjoining a livery stable and the day was hot. Jefferson's production met with sharp criticisms — at first. A phrase here and there was pulled out, a word changed, and the punctuation altered. But in the heat of the day a swarm of green livery-stable flies entered the window and began to bite the silk-stocking legs of the delegates until the blood came. Under these conditions debate became impossible; and the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration as it stood." — Wm. Eleroy Curtis, *The True Thomas Jefferson*.

More definite proof may be the apparent fact that the Declaration was "set up and run off from the press of John Dunlap, printer of the Congress, during the night of July 4th." If the Declaration had, been voted upon around 2:00 A. M. of July 4th (according to the astrological tradition) **the printer of the Congress would not have waited until the following night to set it up in type.** Even if noon July 4th had been the hour, the work would presumably have been done earlier.

Manly P. Hall, in an article published last year, claims that he made a thorough investigation of the matter at the Library of Congress and adds a number of other evidences to support an adoption of the Declaration around 5:00 P. M., July 4th. Much less historical support, on the other hand, can be adduced to prove the validity of the two other times which have also been brought forth: viz. 2:13 A. M. and noon, July 4th — though quotations have been found to suggest either of these times; quotations, however, which contain proven inaccuracies and thus may not be trustable. We might add that a 1776 ephemeris was found in 1914 by a John B. Earley in which a penciled marginal note gave the information, "July 4th, 10:10 P. M. American Independence signed." The ephemeris being then owned by an Englishman, the time would likely refer to Greenwich Time, thus 5:10 P. M. Philadelphia time.

Before we come to discuss **astrological** evidences in favor of anyone of these three charts, it should be well to add that while there are a number of excellent reasons to consider a chart of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence as the "Horoscope of the United States," many other charts have been suggested ranging from 1774 to 1789 and the adoption of the Constitution. Personally, we favored for some time a July 2nd 1776 chart; but one fact made us somewhat inclined to adopt the voting on the Declaration as perhaps more significant than the voting on the Resolution of Independence.

Both these votes were obviously closely related. In a sense they constituted one decision; but to our knowledge, it was only in the Declaration that the words, "The Representatives of the **United States of America**, in General Congress, assembled," appear: thus the **name** of the future nation. That formula was used thereafter in the "Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union between the States" which are known as the "First Constitution" adopted by Congress in 1778, but ratified by the last of the States only on March 1, 1781. In the **name** (which appears to have been suggested by Thomas Paine) lies great power indeed. These words "United States" fit in perfectly with the early Libra Midheaven of the chart which we will now discuss.

The Declaration's Chart

I believe a Libra Midheaven is most logical for the **U.S.A. Horoscope** as Libra is a symbol of human relationship, union and spiritual consciousness, and there is no doubt that the Signers of the Declaration had a spiritual vision, powerfully influenced by Masonry to which they practically all belonged. Mr. Llewelyn George (cf. *Illustrated Astrology*, August 1940) uses this argument of the fitness of Libra for U.S.A. with regard to the Ascendant of a chart

erected for noon, July 4th; but a Libra Midheaven is much more befitting than a Libra Ascendant. The Midheaven rules the public life, the government, etc., while the Ascendant symbolizes the physical appearance, the real character and individuality, the destiny of the native. Now, the federal nature of the government of the United States can be called "Libyan," but the character, physical appearance and destiny of America and representative Americans seem utterly unlike Libra's characteristics.

More conclusive still is the presence of Saturn in the Ascendant of the Libra rising chart. By no stretch of imagination can the American type be said to fit in with Saturn rising characteristics. The optimism, enthusiasm, extroverted character, buoyancy of the typical American have certainly nothing Saturnian; but these instead are all **typical Jupiterian characteristics**.

On the other hand Saturn near the Midheaven fits in with the fact that, of all forms of national government on Earth, the American alone is based on the establishment of a Constitution which operates with traditional (Saturnian) rigidity, which is nearly worshipped as a Bible, which is the (relatively) unchangeable "Law of the Land." The position of the Supreme Court, the quasi-paternal character of the Chief Executive are unique features of American Democracy — and these are typical Saturnian characteristics, as modifying influences within the federal character of the sign, Libra.

Saturn at the Midheaven has a traditional astrological meaning which refers to downfall after spectacular success. This however is surely not a **necessary** meaning, and it is born of a tradition mostly based on Napoleon's chart which may not even be correct. Saturn is very powerful in the tenth House and shows public ambition and a sense of public destiny. The United States have made undoubtedly a spectacular success of their 165 years of existence; and their typical over-confidence and over-optimism (which ruined Napoleon I and may destroy Hitler) **might** easily cause disaster to our democratic form of government, as formulated in the Declaration of Independence.

Another point: Grant Lewi observed and noted that squares of Sun to Saturn have been found of late in the charts of our Presidents. Such a square is found in the July 2nd and July 4th charts — and as Saturn in the tenth House represents forcibly the President, the correlation is striking. The radical configuration in the U.S.A. Horoscope tends to bring the same aspect in the chart of our Saturn-symbolized Chief Executives — perhaps more so in **this** century because the danger attendant to the Saturn-in-tenth-House-square-Sun-in-seventh-House **is now stronger than ever**, with the progressed Mars soon to hit the Midheaven.

We consider that the arc, Saturn to Midheaven, symbolizes the 13-year period elapsing between the Declaration and the official Proclamation of the Constitution, (March 4, 1789) or Washington's Inauguration (April 30, 1789). Such an arc **fundamentally** refers to a deep process of self-formation and to the assumption of individual destiny — a process often connected with a parent's death inasmuch as such a death can mean real individual emancipation. With a Constitution and a President firmly established, the beginning of the

concrete individuality of the United States was set. The U.S.A. had gained a back-bone — a Saturnian structure. More precisely still, the noble democratic **ideals** formulated in the Declaration had then become embodied in a concrete structure, the Constitution, which undoubtedly stressed conservative trends and all Saturnian factors.

The Sabian symbol for the Midheaven degree is significant: ***A new day dawns, revealing a world utterly transformed.***

The Ascendant

It has been almost axiomatic among astrologers to say that Gemini rising is typical of the people of the United States. Even outside of the historical probability such an Ascendant is incorrect, we find it inadequate on astrological reasons even though superficially the Uranus-Mars rising may tempt the astrologer's imagination. Our country began as a result of religious persecution or of the craving for adventure; its culture is still dominated by Puritanism, religious-ethical idealism, the cult of sport and of constant long journeys — all typical Sagittarian characteristics. And, as after all we are here studying the chart of the Declaration of Independence, such a document with its broad ethical-spiritual generalizations is also Sagittarian in character.

The United States, as a nation, has faced the world consistently — it does so today — with a highly moral, philosophical, dogmatic attitude. Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, Wilson, F. D. Roosevelt have stood for **abstract rights** and fought for them. The nation as an entity has shown none of the fugitive and opportunistic attitude of Gemini — especially with Uranus and Mars rising in Gemini. America is not essentially "intellectual," but rather "moral" — the old Puritan heritage. Even the features of symbolic Uncle Sam are infinitely more Sagittarian than Gemini-like.

Sagittarius and Gemini are polar opposites, thus it is easy to see that the two signs contribute to the consciousness factor (horizon line) of the United States. But the inherent factor (Ascendant) seems to me Sagittarius; while the external factor of human relationships (Descendant) is well characterized by Gemini and all the seventh House planets. If one thing is certain it is that extroversion is the typical mark of the American phenomenon. Yet back of this often amazingly exaggerated extroverted attitude of the Main Street type, one finds a peculiar mysticism, a violent ethical emotionalism, a desire to be a "law unto oneself" — which fits well not only with Sagittarius rising but with a tenth-House Saturn. As for the rising degree, its Sabian symbol is significant (***the Pyramid and the Sphinx***) for it has been occultists' claim that our country is a sort of collective reincarnation of Egypt, and we find the pyramid symbol outstanding from Mexico to New York skyscrapers.

In the **July 4th chart of the Declaration of Independence** the Moon is placed on Aquarius 28° (supposedly a zodiacal position favoring astrology!) in trine to Mars and at the entrance of the House of communications and intellectual activity. It should be all noted also that the Moon "disposes" of a planets in the chart through her rulership over Cancer and the

planets therein. This fits in well with the basic power of American womanhood, effective in financial as well as intellectual ways; also through writing letters to editors, Congress, etc. — a typically American procedure.

With Pluto and the South Node in a Capricornian House of finances the ruler of which is exalted in the tenth House, the power of trusts and banks is shown as dominating much of the political life of the nation. These financial interests were also responsible for striking out of the Declaration of Independence the anti-slavery clause probably introduced by Jefferson under Thomas Paine's influence. Had it been left there, the Civil War might have been avoided.

To astrologers who insist that Uranus rising fits so well America's restlessness it should be answered that the horizon of the chart here presented coincides with the line of Uranus' Nodes. The same coincidence has been found to give a strongly Uranian character to persons who had it in their natal charts and whose Uranus were otherwise quite weak by position. Uranus in this Declaration's chart is also close to its own North Node — a strengthening position. Uranus in the sixth House characterizes well labor agitation, the amazing importance which health problems and the cure of mental illness (Uranus in Gemini) have in American life — an emphasis entirely absent from the chart having Gemini rising.

One could mention also the fitting place of Mars just above the Descendant (ruled by a **retrograde** Mercury) in a social-national order in which divorce is a fundamental factor; how Mars, Venus, Jupiter, the Sun in the seventh House and in Cancer stress an extroverted attitude to life, a desire to "club together," an amazing desire to stress problems of human relationships, of home, of marriage, of group activities — desires typical of our American society. In the Gemini-rising chart these factors are not even hinted at, and the emphasis is on the Eastern part of the chart; while obviously the whole destiny of the United States has been conditioned by a pull **westward**, correctly represented in the chart here presented. At times when war in the Pacific hangs in the balance of fate (**written in late July 1941**) Mars in the Western seventh House may be significant; especially as the chart's progressed Mars is getting uncomfortably close to the Natal Midheaven.

Space forbids a more detailed discussion of the natal positions of the planets. In terms of transits, we find the Taurus planetary emphasis characterizing this year 1941 fittingly falling in the chart's natal House of Army and Navy, and of Labor. Uranus trined recently Neptune which is significantly placed in the House of vast adventures and diplomacy — even **food-diplomacy** (Neptune in Virgo). Neptune has just completed a cycle since 1776 — which period corresponds to **six complete cycles of the progressed Moon**. We are beginning a seventh, which means that during the next thirty years we will be sowing the seed (seventh period) of another two-century period.

To such indications of cyclic consummation and new departures we must add that an array of progressions reveal the crucial importance of the years 1939-40 for the United States. The progressed Mercury (ruler of House of war) crossed the natal Ascendant in 1939

when Hitler was perfecting war-planes after the Franco-English surrender in Munich. The progressed Sun was making then an 150° aspect to the chart's ruler, Jupiter, also in the house of war. Early in 1940 this progressed Sun was squaring Neptune in the House of foreign affairs, diplomacy, expansive enterprises — Neptune ruling the oceans. Later in the year the progressed Venus reached the natal Pluto as the government and the Army (Houses ruled by Venus) had to "appease" big business and to set up plans to integrate our national economy — an aspect which will be in force until the winter of 1942 at least.

In a few years as Mars crosses the Midheaven and Saturn the cusps of the eleventh House, far-reaching political changes are likely. The recent entrance of Mars in Libra marked our unofficial entrance into an elusive state of war. And as the progressed Sun comes to a sextile to the Moon early in 1943, new business practices (Moon rules the eighth House) and a new integration of America's system of communication and of cultural development may be expected.

Impending transits through the summer of 1942 are somewhat disturbing, particularly the near conjunction of Saturn and Uranus squared by Mars in Virgo. This of course might suggest either temporary military reversals abroad or Labor agitation. But the **basic** configuration through 1942 is the sextile of progressed Sun to natal Moon, so that whatever conflict there might be seems more like a crisis of regeneration which should profit the common people (Moon). The transits of Uranus in Gemini in previous periods have meant bloodshed and military action just because these were transits **through the House of the Army and of Labor**. Through 1941-42 such transits are made very complex because Jupiter and Saturn are also transiting through that House after making their momentous triple conjunction in the fifth House in **excellent sextile to the natal Cancer planets**.

There seems to be no cause for basic alarm, even if there are very great probabilities of actual warfare. The important thing is that a new cycle is beginning for the United States, or at least for its democratic, ideological foundations more particularly symbolized by the chart here studied. As the progressed Sun reaches Capricorn late in 1945 perhaps United States' democracy will give birth to its "Christ-child" and put into actual and complete practice, through workable forms of **organic integration**, much that had remained only high-sounding words since the days of the Declaration of Independence.