

NMH Leadership Letter



Good morning All,

Independence Day! The Great Seal of the United States contains two mottoes in Latin, quotations taken from the Roman poet Virgil:

Annuit Cœptis: "Providence Has Favored Our Undertakings"

Novus Ordo Seclorum: "A new order of the ages"

But Charles Thomson, designer of the Great Seal and a Latin scholar, wrote that he was trying to symbolize by the unfinished pyramid that our undertakings are unfinished. There is work to do!

We have undertaken radical and sweeping change at NMH, and we're half way through this year. How are you doing on your objectives? Wherever you stand right now the key process to push is getting Colleagues involved in DIGs and JDIs. Before everybody gets in the swim, they have to get in the pool. The experience of most folks is that they like seeing their ideas implemented—there is creativity and motivation and a better day in that, and it prepares them for next steps.

What next steps?

At Session 5 we will be introducing Continuous Improvement tools, advanced techniques for problem solving. The climb up the mountain is about to get steeper. Leaders who have most of their people in the swim of things in terms of DIGs/JDIs shouldn't have much of a problem with this. But managers who have fallen behind and don't have their people involved are now going to be faced with a tougher task—it's pretty hard to get the work done without developed skills in our people.

The next few weeks will be critical—its kind of a last best chance to get people involved in the DIGs/JDIs at our starting level before the advanced stuff opens up. We want everyone to succeed with their objectives, and the only way that can be done is by creating a more powerful team. All aboard! Hit the gas!

If you need any assistance, ask for it. Ask the MAC, your boss, a friend. But ask. Then do. I know there are lots of problems in the way, truly I am empathetic, but the best help I can give is to tell you where to place your best bet—on the heads and hearts of NMH people. What's the alternative? Explaining at year end that you couldn't meet your objectives? Time to go back to work!

Brother Clay



What happened to the Signers of the Declaration of Independence?

It helps sometimes to put our problems in perspective. When I first read this I had the feeling that what my country and my life have asked of me pales in comparison.

Five signers were captured by the British and brutally tortured as traitors. Nine fought in the War for Independence and died from wounds or from hardships they suffered. Two lost their sons in the Continental Army. Another two had sons captured. At least a dozen of the fifty-six had their homes pillaged and burned.

What kind of men were they? Twenty-five were lawyers or jurists. Eleven were merchants. Nine were farmers or large plantation owners. One was a teacher, one a musician, and one a printer. These were men of means and education, yet they signed the Declaration of Independence, knowing full well that the penalty could be death if they were captured.

In the face of the advancing British Army, the Continental Congress fled from Philadelphia to Baltimore on December 12, 1776. It was an especially anxious time for John Hancock, the President, as his wife had just given birth to a baby girl. Due to the complications stemming from the trip to Baltimore, the child lived only a few months.

William Ellery's signing at the risk of his fortune proved only too realistic. In December 1776, during three days of British occupation of Newport, Rhode Island, Ellery's house was burned, and all his property destroyed.

Richard Stockton, a New Jersey State Supreme Court Justice, had rushed back to his estate near Princeton after signing the Declaration of Independence to find that his wife and children were living like refugees with friends. A Tory sympathizer had betrayed them who also revealed Stockton's own whereabouts. British troops pulled him from his bed one night, beat him and threw him in jail where he almost starved to death. When he was finally released, he went home to find his estate had been looted, his possessions burned, and his horses stolen. Judge Stockton had been so badly treated in prison that his health was ruined and he died before the war's end. His surviving family had to live the remainder of their lives off charity.

Carter Braxton was a wealthy planter and trader. One by one his ships were captured by the British navy. He loaned a large sum of money to the American cause; it was never paid back. He was forced to sell his plantations and mortgage his other properties to pay his debts.

Thomas McKean was so hounded by the British that he had to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Continental Congress without pay, and kept his family in hiding.



Vandals or soldiers or both looted the properties of Clymer, Hall, Harrison, Hopkinson and Livingston. Seventeen lost everything they owned.

Thomas Heyward, Jr., Edward Rutledge and Arthur Middleton, all of South Carolina, were captured by the British during the Charleston Campaign in 1780. They were kept in dungeons at the St. Augustine Prison until exchanged a year later.

At the Battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson, Jr. noted that the British General Cornwallis had taken over the family home for his headquarters. Nelson urged General George Washington to open fire on his own home. This was done, and the home was destroyed. Nelson later died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis also had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife for two months, and that and other hardships from the war so affected her health that she died only two years later.

"Honest John" Hart, a New Jersey farmer, was driven from his wife's bedside when she was near death. Their thirteen children fled for their lives. Hart's fields and his grist mill were laid waste. For over a year he eluded capture by hiding in nearby forests. He never knew where his bed would be the next night and often slept in caves.

When he finally returned home, he found that his wife had died, his children disappeared, and his farm and stock were completely destroyed. Hart himself died in 1779 without ever seeing any of his family again.

Such were the stories and sacrifices typical of those who risked everything to sign the Declaration of Independence. These men were not wild-eyed, rabble-rousing ruffians. They were soft-spoken men of means and education. They had security, but they valued liberty more. Standing tall, straight, and unwavering, they pledged:

"For the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of the Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

Are there any among us who would do likewise?

—Author Unknown

