

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

June 17, 1775

AT THE peak of this
meetinghouse,
June 17, 1775,
townsmen hoisted
hand-hewn rafters,
slung home-made
hammers,
toiling to attach
a roof to a building
that would stand
two hundred years.

Sixty miles away,
as ravens fly,
battles for Breed's
and Bunker Hill raged.

Cannons, shot
across open
unbuffered fields,
were heard here,
as men labored
at their vital chore.

As they toiled,
earlier patriots died
for the higher ground,

for a notion and
a nation
that would last
two hundred years.

Shortly, in time
those builders fell
from the roof
to the battlefield.

They hammered their way
across the bloody fields of
Bennington, Saratoga,
Princeton and beyond
only there to lay down
their tools
and their lives.

So that we can meet
This splendid day,
under this precious roof
those patriots secured for us
those many years ago.

—William Schofield
July 4, 2014