

The Redeclaration of Independence

One of the more interesting small projects we undertook after we got in early 1976, a street front office with display windows, counter for sales of our medals and memorabilia, and a meeting room, was the Redeclaration Project.

I reasoned that if we were really true - 200 years later - to the original Declaration of Independence, today's Americans especially, would gladly sign on to that pledge.

So we set up a small stand that had a sloped writing surface at chest level in the public office space, and a continuous scroll of paper inside, which came up through a slot at the top, came down over the writing surface, and then disappeared back inside the stand, on a roller.

Then we had a letter sized copy of the Declaration of Independence on the surface, with the signatures of those 56 men who first signed it in 1776 at the bottom, to which was added ".....signed this Redeclaration of Independence as Number, on1976."

Kick Off

The idea was that everyone who stepped up to Sign were simply CONTINUING the signature of the original 56 signers ad infinitum, but thereby agreeing with it as

printed above.

To launch it with proper ceremony, we invited exactly 56 local people - Prominent names, black and white, the Oldest Person in Colorado Springs (she was 101) and the newest local baby born in 1976 - the child of a Soldier and his wife. We first lined them all up for a portrait of them (which unfortunately I cannot find right now - though it may turn up) and then, one at a time they signed the Redecclaration of Independence. And each person who signed got a printed copy of the Declaration, with their own signature block at the bottom, and took the number that was sequential on the scrolled paper roll, to put on their own copy.

And we also gave each signer a small fold over metal pin that said "I SIGNED"

Everybody who came in was invited to sign. Hundreds and finally over 2,000 signed.

It was a very successful reminder of what the Bicentennial was all about. And it made no difference whether the signer was of voting age, or was a citizen of the US. It only mattered that they agreed with that Declaration!

The Humorous Aftermath

Of course, like almost ALL event celebrations, the day

when the Party is Over, it is left to the organizers to dispose of all the decorations, emblems and keepsakes. That fell to me. I started it, no everyone just assumed I would have to end it too. Volunteers fled the scene.

It was my hope that that growing Scroll of signatures with numbers beside them could be preserved for posterity. So I first had the really fat scroll - about 10 inches thick with the 2,000 plus signatures on it, along with a copy of the 'Declaration' sheet, wrapped in waterproof plastic and sealed.

Then our Project paid for a stainless steel drum, with a sealable cover clamped down by scores of bolts, to put it in, along with lots of other Centennial-Bicentennial memorabilia. Not cheap.

And then the Pikes Peak Highway Board - made up of Colorado Springs citizens said they would be glad to transport it to the top of Pikes Peak and have it placed there as a 200 year 'Time Capsule'.

Of course they got into a wrangle with the Forest Service on the location to put it, they fussed for months, and eventually forgot all about it. I didn't. I kept the drum and scroll in my basement, then I later moved it to the Old Colorado City Historical Center's premises where it sat for 17 years. Then in 2009 - the Sesquicentennial (150) year of the 1859 founding of the original Colorado

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City, I arranged for it to be buried under the center of the 'Donor Brick Patio' outside the Center where engraved bricks with \$100 donor's names on them lie.

But of course we did that with some ceremony, first having the drum unsealed inside the Center before the day of burial, where visitors could drop in 'messages for people of '2176' - the Tricentennial of the Nation. Then I got a jeweler to etch into the stainless steel lid the message that this was not to be opened until July 4th, 2176. Then Society members gathered outside while they dropped in Old Colorado City historical memorabilia to add to what was there - until the drum was full. Then we sealed it and bolted it, buried it, and replaced the bricks above it.



So who knows whether it ever will be found again?

(when and if I can located photos of both the 1976 Redecclaration and the 2009 Ceremony I will post them here)

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And out of all this recreation of the 1859 Gold Rush Spirit, I was pulled into the Gold Hill Recycle Project

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