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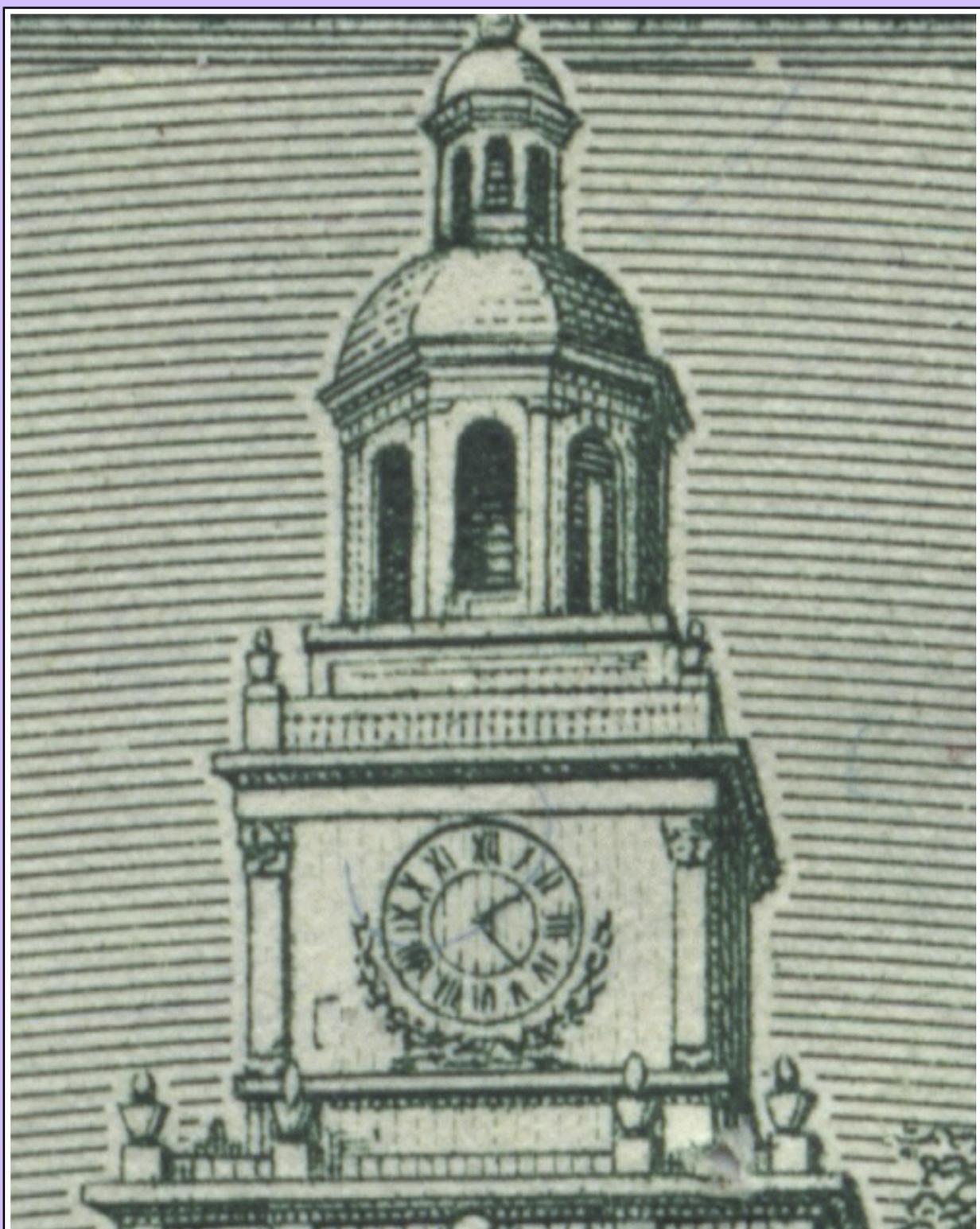
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WHAT IS THE REAL U.S. BIRTH CHART?

by Gary Brand - written March 6, 2009,
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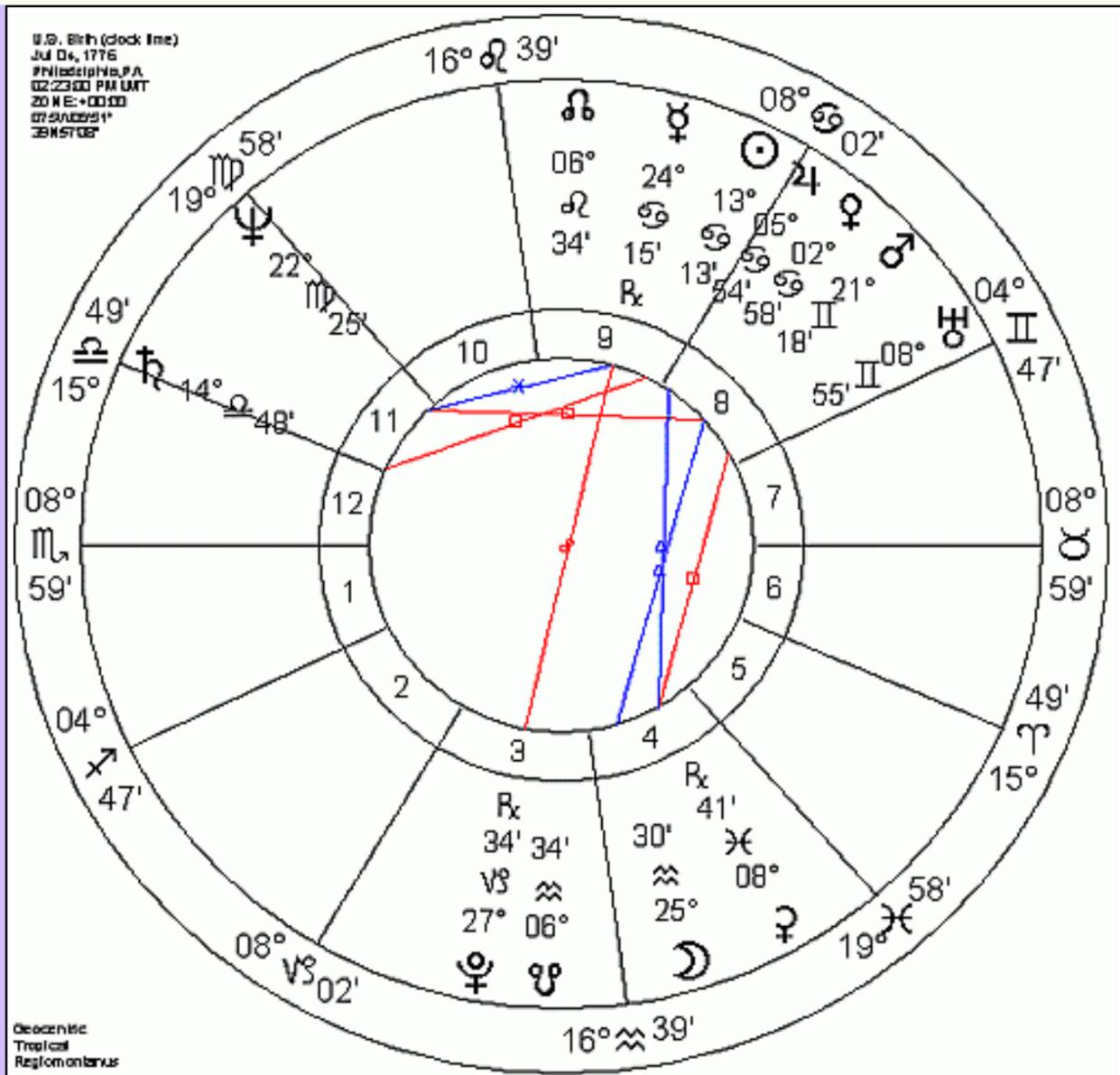
A close-up view of the clock on the Independence Hall clock tower, which is pictured on the reverse side of the present U.S. \$100 bill.

The first question to be addressed is: on what date was this nation born? This is not a simple issue, because the defining event that represents a national birth varies from one country to another and is subject to opinion.

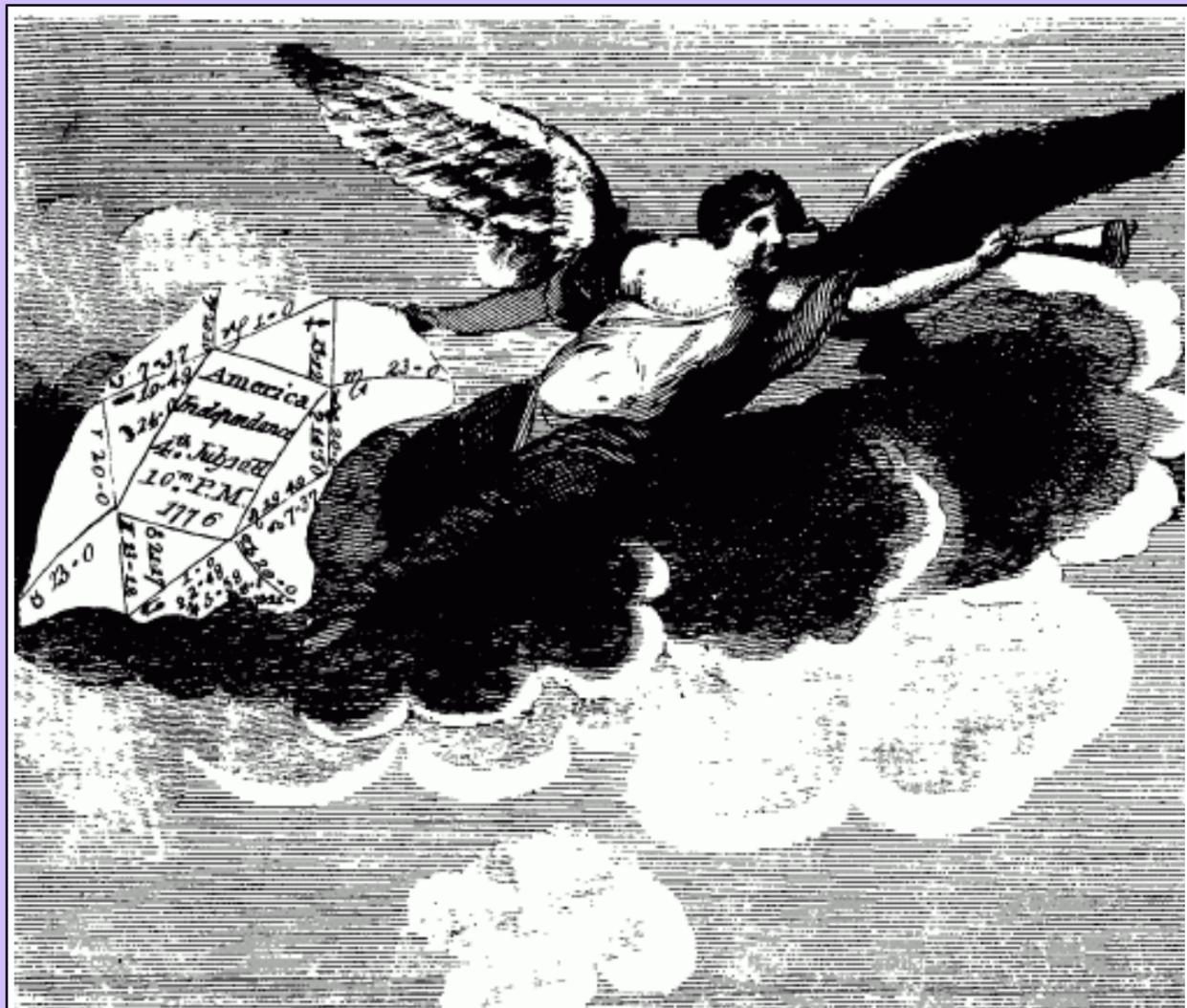
For the United States of America, the date of birth clearly seems to be July 4, 1776, despite two other reasonably good dates from which to choose. So why not choose November 15, 1777, the date that the members of the Continental Congress agreed to the "Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union," as the birth date of this nation? Or why not choose an even more significant date - March 4, 1789, the date that the U.S. Constitution became effective and George Washington was inaugurated as the first president under the Constitution?

Why has July 4, 1776 come to represent the birth date of the U.S. instead of any other date? The answer to this basic question lies in the annals of our history.

From the outset, the founding fathers and signers of the Declaration of Independence agreed that this date was the defining moment. Both John Adams, the 2nd president, and Thomas Jefferson, the 3rd president, wanted to delay their death until the anniversary of Congressional adoption of the Declaration of Independence and they both held onto life until July 4, 1826 (the 50th anniversary). In addition to adopting and signing the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress also appointed a committee to design a Great Seal for the new country. The Great Seal of the United States is further testimony to 1776 being the birth of the nation because that year (in Roman numerals) is at the base of the pyramid on the reverse side of the seal (see the back of the U.S. one dollar bill), even though the design of the Great Seal was not adopted until many years later.



The U.S. birth chart for July 4, 1776 in Philadelphia at 2:23 PM, the time on the Independence Hall clock face on the reverse of the U.S. \$100 bill (shown above). Unlike Sibly's, the above chart includes Ceres, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. Although Uranus was discovered in 1781 - before any of the volumes of his book were published - Sibly did not include it in his charts, probably because too little of its orbit was known at the time to calculate its position.



The Sibly U.S. birth chart for July 4, 1776 in London at 10:10 PM ("4th July 10H 10m P.M. 1776" in the illustration) as depicted in his book entitled [A New and Complete Illustration of the Occult Sciences...](#), first published in separate volumes from 1784-1791. The chart of America's birth is shown on a scroll held in one hand by Fame and heralded by a trumpet in the other hand. This is the earliest known, published version of a birth chart for the U.S.

The most compelling evidence that July 4, 1776 is the birth date of this nation is in the form of Thomas Jefferson's notes on the debates about the Declaration of Independence, now part of "The James Madison Papers" in the Library of Congress.

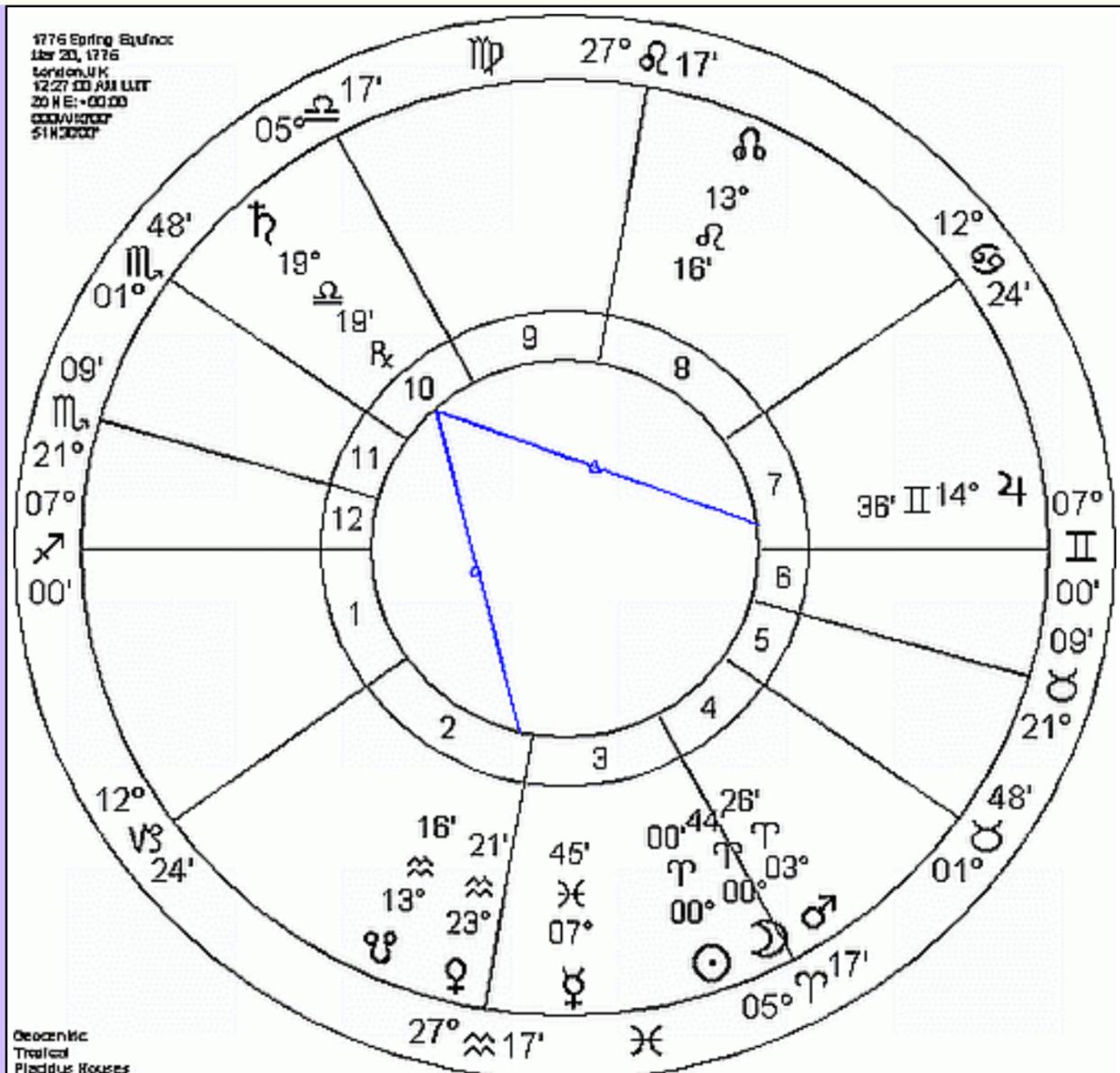
According to Jefferson, "the debates having taken up the greater parts of the 2d, 3d and 4th days of July, were, in the evening of the last [the 4th] closed; the declaration was reported by the Committee, agreed to by the House [Congress], and signed by every member except Mr. Dickinson" ([The James Madison Papers, p. 15](#)). One definition of "evening" is "chiefly Midland and Southern U.S. the time between noon and sunset, including the afternoon and twilight" ([Webster's \(1996\)](#)). Since Jefferson was a Southerner, he was most likely referring to afternoon when he used the word evening (more evidence of this is presented later).

Jefferson was not alone in stating that the Declaration of Independence was signed by the members of Congress who were present on July 4th - Benjamin Franklin and John Adams agreed. But 20 years later (why did he wait so long?), Thomas McKean (one of the signers) cast doubt on the July 4th signing, claiming that the Declaration was not signed until later and pointing out that all signers of the parchment copy on August 2nd (the copy on display at the National Archives) were not present on July 4.

The primary argument against the signing on the 4th of July is that no such document has survived, but the *Journals of Congress*, the official public record of the Continental Congress, clearly states that on July 4th the Declaration was "engrossed and signed" and the signers were then listed ([E.C.B., p. 192](#)). It is clear from Jefferson's written account and from the *Journals of Congress* that a Declaration of Independence was not only approved but was signed by most members of Congress present that day.

That document apparently did not survive to attest to these accounts of the event, probably because it was sent to King George III of Great Britain and he likely ripped it into pieces. Remember that John Hancock said that he signed in such exaggerated handwriting so that George "could read it without his specs" (spectacles or glasses).

Given the likelihood that a Declaration of Independence was approved and signed that fateful day; given that a formal Declaration was needed to enlist the support of France; given the above events of that day and the



The 1776 spring equinox chart (Placidus houses) for London, England generated by astrology software. Note that it is for March 20th at 12:27 AM. The time was adjusted by adding seven minutes to Sibly's time to place the Sun in the first minute of Aries (00 degrees, 00 minutes) and it results in almost the same houses as his chart (shown in classical square format above). Also, the explanation under the chart above explains why March 20th, 12:20 AM was used - the equivalent of the date and time of Sibly's chart.

Sibly's book (Id., pp. 1052-1055), describe how he calculated the date and time for the chart of the U.S. that he presents. These paragraphs were not included in the articles that I wrote for *Echo* newspaper because my word allotment is limited. Although they are somewhat technical, I include them so that my readers can see how he arrived at the date and time for his chart. Sibly was a post-Renaissance astrologer, so he and/or the publishers of his book followed the Renaissance tradition of long sentences punctuated by semicolons. In a few instances, I have substituted a period for a semicolon, which made the resulting shorter sentences more readable. Except for such punctuation changes and my annotations in brackets, the following text is quoted verbatim. Some of the terminology that Sibly uses may be unfamiliar to some readers. For example, he uses the term "significator" when he refers to a planet in a chart that represents or signifies something, in this case, two countries. Often he uses the word "house" when referring to the domicile or sign that a planet rules (such usage is explained in brackets). He uses the general term "dignity" or "dignities" when referring to "essential dignities" and "accidental dignities" - a numerical system in traditional astrology of evaluating the overall strength of a planet in a chart. A planet in the sign of its exaltation is an example of an essential dignity. Conversely, there are also "essential debilities" and "accidental debilities," which detract from the overall strength of a planet or define it as weak. A planet in the sign of its detriment is an example of an essential debility and a planet combust the Sun is an example of an accidental debility. When Sibly uses the term "revolution," he means "annual revolution" and is referring to the 1776 spring equinox chart (shown on the left), not the American Revolution. By the word "affliction," he means the planet to which he refers is badly aspected, e.g. the Moon in the preceding chart is combust the Sun and conjunct Mars.

"In the vernal equinox [the 1776 spring equinox chart, shown above in classical square format as it appears in Sibly's book], we find Jupiter is lord of the ascendant, and in his detriment [in Gemini]. Mars we find in Aries, which is the ascendant of England, strong and powerful in his own house [meaning Mars is in Aries, which he rules], but under the earth [below the horizon and out of sect in a night chart - an accidental debility - by which it is weakened]. The Moon, who represents the common people, we find under affliction, being combust [within 8 degrees] of the Sun; and Mars, being combust also, foreshews [portends] that poor England, though her internal strength is great and permanent, yet she will this year [1776] be accidentally afflicted [meaning Mars combust the Sun, an accidental debility, is weakened] and depressed [substantially below the horizon]. More especially as we find Mars going to an opposition of Saturn, and Saturn uncommonly strong in the midheaven [he means in the 10th house], in his exaltation [in Libra], and beheld by [trine] the two fortunes [benevolent planets] Jupiter and Venus; and consequently superior to Mars in power and dignity [overall strength by traditional essential and accidental dignities].

In this figure [the spring equinox chart] the planet Saturn is the significator of America, and Mars represents the people of Britain; as may very easily be seen by taking down the dignities of Saturn and Mars [calculating their strengths in traditional astrology], according to the table [of essential and accidental dignities] in page 130 of this work. That Saturn hath the superiority of power, and that Mars and Saturn are inimical [hostile] in their nature to each other, are facts too evident to be denied; and as the aspect which is about to be formed between them is a malevolent one, namely, a partile [exact] opposition, it declares the event shall be such as to cause a total and eternal separation of the two countries from each other; and that the [U.S.] congress, which is represented by Saturn in his exaltation [in Libra], supported by the benefic rays [favorable aspects] of the two fortunes [Jupiter and Venus], and since there is a remarkable reception between the two planets Saturn and Venus, i.e. Venus in the house of Saturn [meaning Venus is in Saturn's sign, Aquarius], and Saturn in the house of Venus [meaning Saturn is in Venus' sign, Libra]; supported by a propitious trine aspect of Venus and Jupiter, while Jupiter and Saturn [are trine], and Saturn and Venus [are trine], with the three preceding planets, occupy and possess the whole expanse of the heavens [these three planets form what is presently called a grand trine with each other]. Whence it is declared, that whatever is effected under this revolution of the Sun's ingress into Aries [the spring equinox chart] by the Americans, shall not only be permanent and durable, but shall be supported by those three grand pillars of state - wisdom, strength, and unanimity; which are pointed out by those three planets, agreeable to their tendency and nature, viz. [namely] Saturn, strength and durability; Jupiter, wisdom and justice; and Venus, unanimity and perseverance; and their mutual trine aspect to each other, is expressive of future perfection and harmony; so that, if we attentively contemplate the above position of the heavenly bodies [the grand trine], we shall find no point strained, to shew [show] their natural tendency towards the good fortune and success of the Americans and consequently the disappointment and prejudice of the British arms and administration.

We shall now take notice of the time in which this extraordinary revolution [the 1776 spring equinox chart] should come to its crisis, or completely take place, as pointed out by the several significators [he means Mars and Saturn] in the figure [chart]. To do this, we must equate the distance of Mars from [the exact opposition to] Saturn, they being the two principal actors in this revolution [referring to the spring equinox chart, not the American Revolution]. Their distance is taken [measured] by right ascension, according to their [celestial] latitude; because Mars, which is the significator of Great Britain, is within three degrees of the cusp of the fourth house. [Sibly then shows how he arrived at the difference in right ascension of 16 degrees and 22 minutes between the two planets].... Which arch [arc] of direction must be converted into time, by adding to it the right ascension of the Sun, as taught in the doctrine of nativities [an earlier section in his book]; by which rule we are to examine how many days the Sun takes in going that space [arc] in the ecliptic; and this being an annual revolution [spring equinox chart] with the two significators [Mars and Saturn] in common signs [this is a mistake because they are actually in cardinal signs], which denotes weeks, we must therefore allow for each day's motion of the Sun one week; by which it will appear that the crisis or effect of the opposition of Mars and Saturn came up in fifteen weeks and two days from the time the Sun came into the first scruple of the equinoctial sign Aries [which, according to his calculation, occurred at 12:20 AM on March 20th], at which time to a day the Americans declared themselves independent of the British Government and became a free state [according to his calculation, on July 4th at 10:10 PM London time]."

So Sibly, an astrologer of the period, also considered July 4th to be the birth date of the U.S. However, a fundamental question is whether or not to accept Sibly's premise that Mars is the significator of England and Saturn the significator of the U.S. and whether the birth chart of this country should rest upon this supposition. Furthermore, Sibly's chart for the U.S. is based upon the premise that the culmination (exactitude) of the Mars-Saturn opposition, portended by the spring equinox chart of that year, represents the declaration of American independence. There is also the perplexing question of why he calculated both his spring equinox and American independence charts for London instead of Philadelphia where the events that proclaimed America's independence actually took place! Both of these charts are radically different when calculated for the equivalent time in Philadelphia rather than London. If Sibly's reasoning is accepted but the time of his independence chart is adjusted to Philadelphia instead of London, then the spring equinox chart, upon which his calculation of July 4th is based, should be cast for Philadelphia as well. Another inconsistency is Sibly's use of tenses. In the first paragraph quoted from his book, he used the present and future tenses to describe the spring equinox chart and what lies ahead for England and in the second paragraph he uses the future tense, which implies that he was writing about the equinox at the time of its occurrence and before the Americans declared their independence. However, in the third paragraph quoted from his book, he used the past tense in describing when "the opposition of Mars and Saturn *came up*..." and, more importantly, "at which time to a day the Americans *declared* themselves independent." Though it is unclear whether he made his calculation before July 4th, 1776, his use of the past tense implies that it was after the fact and, if it was prophetic, why didn't he quote himself or at least point out to his reader that he had correctly predicted the event? With a Leo Moon, he presumably would have expressed some pride in making such a prediction.

Sibly's method of determining a specific date for the culmination of planetary aspects foreshadowed in the "revolution for the year" (the spring equinox chart) was commonly used during the European Renaissance (and probably earlier) to predict important events during the ensuing year. However, an examination of his "doctrine of nativities," to which he referred in the above quote from his book (3rd paragraph), yielded no method for equating significators in common (mutable) signs and angular houses with a week in time for each degree of movement of the Sun in right ascension. Ivy Goldstein-Jacobson, in her book [Simplified Horary Astrology](#), includes a table for the measurement of time for an aspect between two significators in a horary chart to reach exactness (p. 70). She explains that the quality or quadruplicity (cardinal/moveable, fixed/immoveable, mutable/

common) of the sign containing a significator, combined with the type of house it occupies (angular, succedant, or cadent), yields a period of days, weeks, months, years, or longer. The *prima facie* evidence that Sibly's chart for U.S. independence is incorrect is his statement that Mars and Saturn are in "common" (mutable) signs. According to Goldstein-Jacobson's table, a significator in a cardinal sign and angular house (like Saturn and Mars in Sibly's 1776 spring equinox chart for London) results in a measurement of time in days, whereas a significator in a common sign and angular house equates to the measurement of time in weeks (which is what Sibly used). Although both Mars and Saturn are in angular houses (Mars is less than two degrees from the cusp of the 4th house, which is equivalent to it being in the 4th) in his spring equinox chart for London, the significators are in cardinal signs and angular houses so he should have used days instead of weeks, which would have resulted in the date of American independence of April 4th instead of July 4th! Ironically, when the spring equinox chart is calculated for Philadelphia instead of London, Saturn is in a very strong position on the ascendent and is made even stronger by virtue of its placement below the horizon in a night chart. Like Sibly's, this chart has Saturn in an angular house and, although Mars is in the 6th (a cadent house), by primary direction it will move into the 7th house where it will form the exact opposition to Saturn. Because the houses containing the significators at the time of the exact opposition are angular, the difference in degrees of right ascension between Saturn and Mars count as days instead of weeks for each degree of movement of the Sun in right ascension from the date of the equinox (using Sibly's reasoning), which also results in the date of U.S. independence of April 4th instead of July 4th.

If this error is not enough to persuade those who use his chart that it is invalid, there are significant discrepancies between the positions of the planets that he calculated and those generated by modern computer software. Referring to the spring equinox chart he calculated (shown above), Sibly said, "the Sun's revolutionary ingress [entrance] into the sign Aries in the year 1776, under which the independence of America was established... [was] calculated with great accuracy and precision..." (Sibly, pp. 1051-1052 (1784-1791)). However careful Sibly was in his calculations, the positions of the planets in his spring equinox chart are slightly at variance from computer-generated values based on the same time of day (in London) that he used. Although the positions of the planets in his spring equinox chart are more accurate than those used by his predecessors during the Renaissance, they are not as accurate as computer software algorithms, which are based upon precise, astronomical measurements that we have today. Even if Sibly's calculation of 10:10 PM on July 4th (in London) was correct, it was based upon positions of Mars and Saturn that are at variance from computer-generated positions for these planets of two minutes of longitude (using Sibly's time, in London, and Win*Star™ 2.05 astrological software). Furthermore, Sibly's right ascension for Saturn was accurate to the minute of arc but his right ascension for Mars was in error by almost one degree (it deviates from the computer value by 56 minutes of arc). Finally, the celestial latitudes he listed for these two planets are also at slight variance (10 minutes of arc for Saturn and one minute of arc for Mars) from computer-generated values (planetary latitude was factored into such calculations). Although these differences (except his right ascension for Mars) may not seem like crucial amounts, they are when we consider that they were all key components in the calculation whereby he arrived at the date and time of July 4th at 10:10 PM London time, and his calculation would have resulted in a different date and time if he had used modern, accurate values for Mars and Saturn.

In summary, the shortcomings of Sibly's chart for American independence are threefold: (1) his use of common signs instead of cardinal signs for the significators Mars and Saturn, which means that his calculation of July 4th is incorrect; (2) his use of London for the location of the independence chart and the spring equinox upon which it is based; and (3) the differences between the planetary positions he used and the modern, computer-generated positions, which result in a date and time other than July 4th at 10:10 PM in London (or 5:10 PM LMT in Philadelphia). Sibly's U.S. birth chart is not only incorrectly calculated to arrive at the date of July 4th (using weeks instead of days) but it is based upon erroneous planetary positions - in celestial longitude, latitude, and right ascension and it requires that we accept his premise that the birth of the U.S. rests upon the culmination of the Mars-Saturn opposition in the 1776 London spring equinox chart! Because his chart is not based on historical events of July 4, 1776, because it is incorrectly derived, because his spring equinox chart is calculated for London instead of Philadelphia, and because the positions of the planets he calculated were inaccurate (however slight the differences seem), the chart he presents for American independence should be rejected.

If Sibly's chart is rejected, what time of day on July 4th should define the moment of U.S. independence? Astrologer Marc Penfield makes a good case for using a time of shortly after 2:00 PM but he doesn't explain how he rectified the chart to arrive at the time of 2:20 PM that he showcases in his book ([M.H.P., pp. 10-11](#)). Penfield cites: (1) Herbert Allan's statement (in his book *Patriot in Purple*) that the Declaration of Independence was reported out of committee at about 2:00 PM and was immediately ratified and then signed by John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, (2) Paul Foster Case who, in his book *The Great Seal of the United States of America*, also used a time for the birth of the nation of "shortly after 2:00 PM," and (3) the State Department's instruction to President Gerald Ford to ring the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia at 2:00 PM on the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. What irony that Ford was the one to ring the Liberty Bell on that day, since he was only president in U.S. history who was never elected! If the Declaration of Independence was reported out of committee about 2:00 PM and presented to John Hancock for his signature, and if Jefferson, Adams, and Franklin were right about the Declaration being signed thereafter, then it would have taken the members of Congress present that day some 10 to 20 minutes to sign it.

The engraving of Independence Hall on the reverse (back) of the present U.S. \$100 bill (a close-up of the clock tower is pictured at the beginning of this article) is further support for using a time of birth for the U.S. of shortly after 2:00 PM. The clock on the tower of this engraving shows a time of 2:23 and we may reasonably ask why the artist chose such an odd time. I believe that this choice was quite intentional for the following two reasons: (1) the numbers 2:23 add up to seven ($2+2+3=7$), the number of planets of antiquity and (2) of even greater significance, is the fact that the chart calculated for this time in Philadelphia results in the Sun being positioned at 13 degrees and 13 minutes of Cancer, 13 being the number of original colonies and then states! The time on the clock face was probably meant to depict 2:23 rather than 4:10, as some claim, because the position of the clock hand between the numbers four and five is too far advanced to correspond to a time of 4:10. In addition, this hand is probably the minute hand because it is slightly longer and narrower than the other hand. Thomas Jefferson wrote in his journal that July 4th was a hot, muggy day, everyone had removed or unbuttoned their shirts (a very different scene from that depicted in John Trumbull's famous painting of the event, shown above), and horseflies from a nearby livery stable were biting people, so everyone was eager to sign and leave ([M.H.P., p. 10](#)). Yet, with the most important business of the day completed, Congress did not adjourn until 4:00 PM that day (according to Herbert Allan in *Patriot in Purple*).

The engraving of Independence Hall on the back of the \$100 bill is based on a painting from the 1780s by an artist who was a friend of Ben Franklin. Not only was Franklin a Mason, but he knew astrology as well ([N.D., pp. xi-xii \(1980\)](#)) so it is a reasonable supposition that he and the other Masons who signed the Declaration of Independence (we know there were at least nine) wanted to leave an unobvious clue about the moment of the nation's birth (it had to be subtle because astrology had fallen out of favor by this time). The Masons were very much into numerology so, if they chose this time for the nation's birth, 8 degrees of Scorpio on the ascendant fits the U.S. because it symbolizes assumption of power, recognition, financial rewards, and economic expansion and growth ([F.J.&D.B., pp. 12-13 \(1984\)](#)). The Masonic interest in numerology also supports the idea that they arranged the timing of the approval and signing of the Declaration of Independence (Ben Franklin was on the committee that drafted the document) to coincide with or to conclude by 2:23 PM for the above stated reasons. Once I learned all of the above facts and how closely the time of 2:23 PM fits the historic events of that day, I began using it as the birth time of the U.S., confident that it is the most valid chart. Now begins the task of confirming this chart using transits, progressions (which Penfield has done), and primary directions at the time of major events in U.S. history.

[Reference Citations.](#)

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Good Timing and Location are Keys to Success

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