

## the.Day -- 'Words to Remember: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness'

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This day in 1776 was an important milestone in colonial American history.

Delegates from all corners of Virginia traveled across the commonwealth to the capital city, Williamsburg, to attend a session of the general assembly.

They met to debate legislation that would become a cornerstone of American freedom, and a key blueprint for the U.S. Constitution that was approved 11 years later.

The delegates in Williamsburg approved a law written by George Mason. It was called the Virginia Declaration of Rights.

It was a law that did much to shape the freedoms that define America today.

It proclaimed that individual citizens had inherent, or basic, rights.

These included: the right to vote, the right to a jury trial, the right to freedom of the press, and the right to free exercise of religion.

Through the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the early Americans established a new relationship between citizens and government.