**Standard 8-2:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of the causes of the American Revolution and the beginnings of the new nation, with an emphasis on South Carolina’s role in the development of that nation.

**Enduring Understanding:**

The events surrounding the American Revolution transformed British colonists into American citizens. To understand South Carolina’s pivotal role in this process, the student will …

**8-2.3 Explain the roles of South Carolinians in the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.**

**It is essential for students to know:**

South Carolinians served as delegates to the Second Continental Congress when the Declaration of Independence was debated. These delegates were planters who represented the Lowcountry elite rather than the people of the backcountry. Thomas Lynch, Jr., Thomas Heyward Jr., Edward Rutledge and Arthur Middleton signed the document. Each of these men went on to serve in the state militia, defending the independence that they had claimed, and also served in government after the war.

The Declaration, based on the ideas of John Locke, stated the ideals of democracy including the principles of equality, the natural rights of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” the purpose of government to “secure those rights,” and the “right of the people to alter or abolish” government when natural rights are not protected by government. It then made the case that the King, not the Parliament, had violated the rights of the colonists. The litany of actions that “He” did was designed to break the bonds between the King and his loyalist subjects in the colonies and to unify the new nation against a common enemy.