Hundreds gather for reading of the Declaration of Independence and parade at Old State

The Middlesex County Volunteers Fifes and Drums band marched past the Old State House on Wednesday, July 4, 2018.

By Andres Picon GLOBE CORRESPONDENT July 04, 2018

Hundreds of revelers gathered downtown on Wednesday morning near the Old State House to witness one of the city’s annual Independence Day traditions: a public reading of the Declaration of Independence and a short parade.
The patriotic events followed a flag-raising ceremony on the nearby City Hall Plaza.

By 9 a.m., a crowd had formed under the balcony of the Old State House, near the site of the Boston Massacre nearly 250 years ago and where the Declaration of Independence was read to Bostonians for the first time, in 1776.

“It’s a moment of history, and it’s interesting to remember what has been made in Boston,” said Myriam Hong, 27, of Paris, France. The ceremony began shortly before 10 a.m. with a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and a singing of “God Bless America,” after which the command staff of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company was introduced. Captain Charles J. McCarthy Jr., the company’s 310th captain commanding, stood on the balcony with the other two members of his command staff and prepared to read the Declaration of Independence. “The Declaration of Independence tells a story,” he said, “and today I’m going to tell you that story.”
McCarthy read the declaration in its entirety, with several attendees cheering throughout the reading and at its conclusion, when confetti cannons shot red, white, and blue ticker tape into the air above the crowd. A short parade followed, featuring the Middlesex County Volunteers Fifes and Drums marching band, dressed in traditional colonial garb.

Police presence on and around State Street was heavy, with Boston Police Commissioner William Evans at the event, but that didn’t stop attendees from enjoying the celebration.

“We used to live here, and this is a pretty cool celebration,” said Chris McLaughlin, 48, of Durham, N.C.. “It’s gotten a lot bigger over the years.”

McLaughlin attended the ceremony with his family, including his son, Henry, 7.

“There was a lot more confetti than I expected,” Henry said. “I thought the reading of the Declaration of Independence was really cool because they did it like 200 years ago and they still do it today.”
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