

APUS HISTORY / SUPPLEMENTAL READING / UNITS 1-3 (1491 to 1800)

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You will hold councils of war whenever it seems desirable to you, to them, or to the majority of them. Whatever is agreed upon by all or by the majority in council must be observed. The councils held are to be attended by my secretary who will record what may be determined. I have given these men the appropriate commissions as members of the council of war.

All of the aforesaid you will fulfill with proper diligence and care in order that God and his majesty may be served; and this offense punished.

Stamped with the seal of my office at the pueblo of San Juan Bautista on January 11, 1599. Don Juan de Oñate. By order of the governor, Juan Gutiérrez Bocanegra, secretary.

C. The African Slave Trade

1. The Conscience of a Slave Trader (1694)*

In September 1693, the thirty-six-gun ship Hannibal, commanded by Thomas Phillips, set sail from England for West Africa, where Phillips bought slaves for sale on the West Indian sugar island of Barbados. What does Phillips's account reveal about the involvement of the Africans themselves in the slave trade? What was Phillips's own attitude toward the Africans? How could he reconcile such sentiments with the brutal business in which he was engaged?

We mark'd the 'slaves we had bought in the breast, or shoulder, with a hot iron, having the letter of the ship's name on it, the place being before anointed with a little palm oil, which caus'd but little pain, the mark being usually well in four or five days, appearing very plain and white after.

When we had purchas'd to the number of 50 or 60 we would send them aboard, there being a cappsasheir, intitled the captain of the slaves, whose care it was to secure them to the water-side, and see them all off; and if in carrying to the marine any were lost, he was bound to make them good, to us, the captain of the trunk being oblig'd to do the like, if any ran away while under his care, for after we buy them we give him charge of them till the captain of the slaves comes to carry them away: These are two officers appointed by the king for this purpose; to each of which every ship pays the value of a slave in what goods they like best for their trouble, when they have done trading; and indeed they discharg'd their duty to us very faithfully, we not having lost one slave thro' their neglect in 1300 we bought here.

There is likewise a captain of the sand, who is appointed to take care of the merchandize we have come ashore to trade with, that the negroes do not plunder them, we being often forced to leave goods a whole night on the sea shore, for want of porters to bring them up; but notwithstanding his care and authority, we often came by the loss, and could have no redress.

*Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America* (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie Institution, 1930), vol 1, pp. 402-403.

When our slaves were come to the seaside, our canoes¹ were ready to carry them off to the longboat, if the sea permitted, and she convey'd them aboard ship, where the men were all put in irons, two and two shackled together, to prevent their mutiny, or swimming ashore.

The negroes are so wilful and loth to leave their own country, that they have often leap'd out of the canoes, boat and ship, into the sea, and kept under water till they were drowned, to avoid being taken up and saved by our boats, which pursued them; they having a more dreadful apprehension of Barbadoes than we can have of hell, tho' in reality they live much better there than in their own country; but home is home, etc: we have likewise seen divers of them eaten by the sharks, of which a prodigious number kept about the ships in this place, and I have been told will follow her hence to Barbadoes, for the dead negroes that are thrown overboard in the passage. I am certain in our voyage there we did not want the sight of some every day, but that they were the same I can't affirm.

We had about 12 negroes did wilfully drown themselves, and others starv'd themselves to death; for 'tis their belief that when they die they return home to their own country and friends again.

I have been inform'd that some commanders have cut off the legs and arms of the most wilful, to terrify the rest, for they believe if they lose a member, they cannot return home again: I was advis'd by some of my officers to do the same, but I could not be perswaded to entertain the least thought of it, much less put in practice such barbarity and cruelty to poor creatures, who, excepting their want of christianity and true religion (their misfortune more than fault) are as much the works of God's hands, and no doubt as dear to him as ourselves; nor can I imagine why they should be despis'd for their colour, being what they cannot help, and the effect of the climate it has pleas'd God to appoint them. I can't think there is any intrinsick value in one colour more than another, nor that white is better than black, only we think so because we are so, and are prone to judge favourably in our own case, as well as the blacks, who in odium of the colour, say, the devil is white, and so paint him. . . .

The present king often, when ships are in a great strait for slaves, and cannot be supply'd otherwise, will sell 3 or 400 of his wives to compleat their number, but we always pay dearer for his slaves than those bought of the cappasheirs.

2. *A Slave Is Taken to Barbados (c. 1750)**

*Olauda Equiano was a remarkable African, born in 1745 in present-day Nigeria. After his capture as a boy by slave traders, he was taken to Barbados. He eventually bought his freedom and became a leading spokesperson for the cause of antislavery. His book *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African, from which the following selection is taken, was a best seller in both Europe and America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.**

¹From *Equiano's Travels: His Autobiography, The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African.*

2. Hakluyt Sees England's Salvation in America (1584)*

Richard Hakluyt, a remarkable clergyman-scholar-geographer who lies buried in Westminster Abbey, deserves high rank among the indirect founding fathers of the United States. His published collections of documents relating to early English explorations must be regarded as among the "great books" of American history for their stimulation of interest in New World colonization. (Hakluyt even gambled some of his own small fortune in the company that tried to colonize Virginia.) In one of his most widely read works, Discourse Concerning the Western Planting, published in 1584, he argued that colonizing America might provide a remedy for England's festering economic and social problems. What did he identify as the most pressing problems to be solved? In what ways did he see America providing solutions to those problems? How prophetic was he about the role the American colonies were to play in England's commerce?

It is well worth the observation to see and consider what the like voyages of discovery and planting in the East and West Indies have wrought in the kingdoms of Portugal and Spain; both which realms, being of themselves poor and barren and hardly able to sustain their inhabitants, by their discoveries have found such occasion of employment, that these many years we have not heard scarcely of any pirate of those two nations; whereas we and the French are most infamous for our outrageous, common, and daily piracies. . . . [W]e, for all the statutes that hitherto can be devised, and the sharp execution of the same in punishing idle and lazy persons, for want of sufficient occasion of honest employment, cannot deliver our commonwealth from multitudes of loiterers and idle vagabonds.

Truth it is that through our long peace and seldom sickness . . . we are grown more populous than ever heretofore; so that now there are of every art and science so many, that they can hardly live by one another, nay, rather, they are ready to eat up one another; yes, many thousands of idle persons are within this realm, which, having no way to be set on work, be either mutinous and seek alteration in the state, or at least very burdensome to the commonwealth, and often fall to pilfering and thieving and other lewdness, whereby all the prisons of the land are daily pestered and stuffed full of them, where either they pitifully pine away, or else at length are miserably hanged. . . .

Whereas if this voyage were put in execution, these petty thieves might be condemned for certain years to the western parts, especially in Newfoundland, in sawing and felling of timber for masts of ships; . . . in burning of the firs and pine trees to make pitch, tar, rosin, and soap ashes; in beating and working of hemp for cordage; and, in the more southern parts, in setting them to work in mines of gold, silver, copper, lead, and iron; in dragging for pearls and coral; in planting of sugar cane, as the Portuguese have done in Madera; in maintenance and increasing of silk worms for silk, and in dressing the same; in gathering of cotton whereof there is plenty; in tilling of the soil for grain; in dressing of vines whereof there is great abundance for wine; olives, whereof the soil is capable, for oil; trees for

*Richard Hakluyt, *Discourse Concerning the Western Planting* (1584), in Charles Deane, ed., *Documentary History of the State of Maine* (Cambridge: Press of John Wilson and Son, 1877), vol. 2, pp. 36–39.

oranges, lemons, almonds, figs, and other fruits, all which are found to grow there already; . . . in fishing, salting, and drying of ling, cod, salmon, herring; in making and gathering of honey, wax, turpentine. . . .

Besides this, such as by any kind of infirmity cannot pass the seas thither, and now are chargeable to the realm at home, by this voyage shall be made profitable members, by employing them in England in making of a thousand trifling things, which will be very good merchandise for those countries where we shall have most ample vente [sales] thereof.

And seeing the savages . . . are greatly delighted with any cap or garment made of coarse woolen cloth, their country being cold and sharp in winter, it is manifest we shall find great [demand for] our clothes . . . whereby all occupations belonging to clothing and knitting shall freshly be set on work, as cappers, knitters, clothiers, woolmen, carders, spinners, weavers, fullers, shearmen, dyers, drapers, hatters, and such like, whereby many decayed towns may be repaired.

Thought Provokers

1. How might we explain the attitudes of Renaissance-era Europeans toward the newly discovered Indians? Was the concern for Christianizing the Native Americans sincere?
2. What motivated the Spanish to colonize the Americas in the sixteenth century? On balance, was the Spanish arrival good or bad for the New World? What advantages and disadvantages did the Spanish have as colonizers?
3. Why did Europeans look to Africa for labor with which to develop the riches of the New World? To what extent did Africans themselves help to promote the slave trade?
4. What were the most valid arguments used to promote English colonization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? What relevance to the English did the example of Spain's colonizing venture in the New World have?

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Now we all found the loss of Captain Smith; yea, his greatest maligners could now curse his loss. As for corn provision and contribution from the savages, we [now] had nothing but mortal wounds, with clubs and arrows. As for our hogs, hens, goats, sheep, horses, and what lived, our commanders, officers, and savages daily consumed them. Some small proportions sometimes we tasted, till all was devoured; then swords, arms, [fowling] pieces, or anything we traded with the savages, whose cruel fingers were so often imbrued in our blood that what by their cruelty, our Governor's indiscretion, and the loss of our ships, of five hundred [persons] within six months after Captain Smith's departure there remained not past sixty men, women, and children, most miserable and poor creatures. And those were preserved for the most part by roots, herbs, acorns, walnuts, berries, now and then a little fish. They that had starch [courage] in these extremities made no small use of it; yea, [they ate] even the very skins of our horses.

Nay, so great was our famine that a savage we slew and buried, the poorer sort took him up again and ate him; and so did divers one another boiled and stewed, with roots and herbs. And one amongst the rest did kill his wife, powdered [salted] her, and had eaten part of her before it was known, for which he was executed, as he well deserved. Now whether she was better roasted, boiled, or carbonadoed [broiled], I know not; but of such a dish as powdered wife I never heard of.

This was the time which still to this day [1624] we called the starving time. It were too vile to say, and scarce to be believed, what we endured. But the occasion was our own, for want of providence, industry, and government, and not the barrenness and defect of the country, as is generally supposed. For till then in three years... we had never from England provisions sufficient for six months, though it seemed by the bills of loading sufficient was sent us, such a glutton is the sea, and such good fellows the mariners. We as little tasted of the great proportion sent us, as they of our want and miseries. Yet notwithstanding they ever overruled and ruled the business, though we endured all that is said, and chiefly lived on what this good country naturally afforded, yet had we been even in Paradise itself with these governors, it would not have been much better with us. Yet there were amongst us who, had they had the government as Captain Smith appointed but... could not maintain it, would surely have kept us from those extremities of miseries.

2. Governor William Berkeley Reports (1671)*

Sir William Berkeley, a polished Oxford graduate, courtier, and playwright, was appointed governor of Virginia in 1642, when only thirty-six years of age. Conciliatory, energetic, and courageous, he served well in his early years as both administrator and military leader. He cultivated flax, cotton, rice, and silk on his own lands, and in one year sent a gift of three hundred pounds of silk to the king. In response to specific questions from London, he prepared the able report from which the following extract is taken. From what economic and social handicaps did Virginia suffer? Which one was the most burdensome? What is significantly revealed of Berkeley's character and outlook?

*W. W. Hening, *The Statutes at Large... of Virginia...* (Richmond, VA: Samuel Pleasants, 1823), vol. 2, pp. 514-517.

12. What commodities are there of the production, growth, and manufacture of your plantation [colony]; and particularly, what materials are there already growing, or may be produced for shipping in the same?

Answer. Commodities of the growth of our country we never had any but tobacco, which in this yet is considerable, that it yields His Majesty a great revenue. But of late we have begun to make silk, and so many mulberry trees are planted, and planting, that if we had skillful men from Naples or Sicily to teach us the art of making it perfectly, in less than half an age [generation] we should make as much silk in an year as England did yearly expend three score years since. But now we hear it is grown to a greater excess, and more common and vulgar usage. Now, for shipping, we have admirable masts and very good oaks; but for iron ore I dare not say there is sufficient to keep one iron mill going for seven years. . . .

15. What number of planters, servants, and slaves; and how many parishes are there in your plantation?

Answer. We suppose, and I am very sure we do not much miscount, that there is in Virginia above forty thousand persons, men, women, and children, and of which there are two thousand black slaves, six thousand Christian servants [indentured] for a short time. The rest are born in the country or have come in to settle and seat, in bettering their condition in a growing country.

16. What number of English, Scots, or Irish have for these seven years last past come yearly to plant and inhabit within your government; as also what blacks or slaves have been brought in within the said time?

Answer. Yearly, we suppose there comes in, of servants, about fifteen hundred, of which most are English, few Scotch, and fewer Irish, and not above two or three ships of Negroes in seven years.

17. What number of people have yearly died, within your plantation and government, for these seven years last past, both whites and blacks?

Answer. All new plantations are, for an age or two, unhealthy, till they are thoroughly cleared of wood. But unless we had a particular register office for the denoting of all that died, I cannot give a particular answer to this query. Only this I can say, that there is not often unseasoned hands (as we term them) that die now, whereas heretofore not one of five escaped the first year. . . .

23. What course is taken about the instructing of the people, within your government, in the Christian religion; and what provision is there made for the paying of your ministry?

Answer. The same course that is taken in England out of towns: every man, according to his ability, instructing his children. We have forty-eight parishes, and our ministers are well paid, and by my consent should be better if they would pray oftener and preach less. But of all other commodities, so of this, the worst are sent us, and we had few that we could boast of, since the persecution in Cromwell's tyranny drove divers worthy men hither. But, I thank God, there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have these hundred years. For learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best government. God keep us from both!

that conceit of Plato's and other ancients, applauded by some of later times, that the taking away of property and bringing in community [communism] into a commonwealth would make them happy and flourishing, as if they were wiser than God. For this community (so far as it was) was found to breed much confusion and discontent and retard much employment that would have been to their benefit and comfort. For the young men that were most able and fit for labor and service did repine that they should spend their time and strength to work for other men's wives and children, without any recompense. The strong, or man of parts, had no more in division of victuals and clothes than he that was weak and not able to do a quarter the other could; this was thought injustice. The aged and graver men to be ranked and equalized in labors and victuals, clothes, etc., with the meaner and younger sort, thought it some indignity and disrespect unto them. And for men's wives to be commanded to do service for other men, as dressing their meat, washing their clothes, etc., they deemed it a kind of slavery, neither could many husbands well brook it.

B. Life in Early New England

1. John Winthrop's Concept of Liberty (1645)*

Governor John Winthrop was the most distinguished lay leader in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Cambridge educated and trained in the law, he was modest, tender, self-sacrificing, and deeply religious. After a furious quarrel broke out at Hingham over the election of a militia leader, he caused certain of the agitators to be arrested. His foes brought impeachment charges against him, but they instead were fined. After his acquittal, Winthrop delivered this famous speech to the court. It illustrates the close connection between the aristocratic lay leaders of the Bay Colony and the leading clergymen. Would the kind of liberty that Winthrop describes be regarded as liberty today?

There is a twofold liberty: natural (I mean as our nature is now corrupt) and civil or federal. The first is common to man with beasts and other creatures. By this, man, as he stands in relation to man simply, hath liberty to do what he lists. It is a liberty to evil as well as to good. This liberty is incompatible and inconsistent with authority, and cannot endure the least restraint of the most just authority. The exercise and maintaining of this liberty makes men grow more evil, and in time to be worse than brute beasts. . . .

The other kind of liberty I call civil or federal. It may also be termed moral, in reference to the covenant between God and man in the moral law, and the politic covenants and constitutions amongst men themselves. . . . Whatsoever crosseth this, is not authority, but a distemper thereof. This liberty is maintained and exercised in

*John Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1853), vol. 2, pp. 281–282.

a way of subjection to authority. It is of the same kind of liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

The woman's own choice makes such a man her husband; yet being so chosen, he is her lord, and she is to be subject to him, yet in a way of liberty, not of bondage. And a true wife accounts her subjection her honor and freedom, and would not think her condition safe and free, but in her subjection to her husband's authority.

Such is the liberty of the church under the authority of Christ, her king and husband. His yoke is so easy and sweet to her as a bride's ornaments; and if through forwardness or wantonness, etc., she shake it off at any time, she is at no rest in her spirit until she take it up again. And whether her lord smiles upon her, and embraceth her in his arms, or whether he frowns, or rebukes, or smites her, she apprehends the sweetness of his love in all, and is refreshed, supported, and instructed by every such dispensation of his authority over her. On the other side, ye know who they are that complain of this yoke and say, let us break their bands, etc., we will not have this man to rule over us.

Even so, brethren, it will be between you and your magistrates. If you stand for your natural corrupt liberties, and will do what is good in your own eyes, you will not endure the least weight of authority, but will murmur, and oppose, and be always striving to shake off that yoke. But if you will be satisfied to enjoy such civil and lawful liberties, such as Christ allows you, then will you quietly and cheerfully submit unto that authority which is set over you, in all the administrations of it, for your good. Wherein if we [magistrates] fail at any time, we hope we shall be willing (by God's assistance) to hearken to good advice from any of you, or in any other way of God. So shall your liberties be preserved, in upholding the honor and power of authority amongst you.

2. The Blue Laws of Connecticut (1672)*

Blue laws—statutes governing personal behavior—were to be found both in Europe and in the American colonies. They obviously could not be enforced with literal severity, and they generally fell into disuse after the Revolution. Connecticut's blue laws received unpleasant notoriety in the Reverend Samuel Peters's General History of Connecticut (1781), which fabricated such decrees as "No woman shall kiss her child on the Sabbath or fasting-day." But the valid laws of Connecticut, some of which are here reproduced with biblical chapter and verse, were harsh enough. How did the punishment fit the crime? Which offenses would still be regarded as criminal today?

1. If any man or woman, after legal conviction, shall have or worship any other God but the Lord God, he shall be put to death. (Deuteronomy 13.6. Exodus 22.20.)
2. If any person within this colony shall blaspheme the name of God, the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, with direct, express, presumptuous, or high-handed blasphemy, or shall curse in the like manner, he shall be put to death. (Leviticus 24.15, 16.)

*George Brinley, ed., *The Laws of Connecticut* (Hartford: printed for private distribution, 1865), pp. 9-10.

order (it being by her request) and the said Bownig [sic] to Pay Court Charges the said Jones making satisfaction for the same after his time of service is expired—

B. Bacon's Rebellion and Its Aftermath

1. Nathaniel Bacon Proclaims His Principles (1676)*

Angry former indentured servants, impoverished and resentful, crowded into the untamed Virginia backcountry as the seventeenth century wore on. Governor William Berkeley's unwillingness to protect the hardscrabble planters on the frontier against Indian attacks gave rise to ugly rumors of graft and helped spark a rebellion led by the well-born planter Nathaniel Bacon. Chiefly concerned with eradicating the Indian threat along the frontier, Bacon sought from Berkeley a commission to establish a militia. Following a dramatic showdown in Jamestown, Berkeley acquiesced, granting Bacon the commission he desired. As Bacon and his men marched off toward Indian settlements, however, Berkeley rescinded his promise and once again declared Bacon to be in rebellion. In response to this latest slight, Bacon drafted his famous "Declaration of the People," printed below. What were his main grievances against Berkeley and the seaboard elite?

1. For having, upon specious pretences of public works, raised great unjust taxes upon the commonalty for the advancement of private favorites and other sinister ends, but no visible effects in any measure adequate; for not having, during this long time of his government, in any measure advanced this hopeful colony either by fortifications, towns, or trade.

2. For having abused and rendered contemptible the magistrates of justice by advancing to places of judicature scandalous and ignorant favorites.

3. For having wronged his Majesty's prerogative and interest by assuming monopoly of the beaver trade and for having in it unjust gain betrayed and sold his Majesty's country and the lives of his loyal subjects to the barbarous heathen.

4. For having protected, favored, and emboldened the Indians against his Majesty's loyal subjects, never contriving, requiring, or appointing any due or proper means of satisfaction for their many invasions, robberies, and murders committed upon us.

5. For having, when the army of English was just upon the track of those Indians, who now in all places burn, spoil, murder and when we might with ease have destroyed them who then were in open hostility, for then having expressly countermanded and sent back our army by passing his word for the peaceable demeanor of the said Indians, who immediately prosecuted their evil intentions, committing horrid murders and robberies in all places, being protected by the said engagement and word past of him the said Sir William Berkeley, having ruined and laid desolate a great part of his majesty's country, and have now drawn themselves into such obscure and remote places and are by their success so emboldened and confirmed by their confederacy so strengthened that the cries of blood are in all

**Foundations of Colonial America: A Documentary History* by W. Keith Kavenagh, ed.

places, and the terror and consternation of the people so great, are now become not only a difficult but a very formidable enemy who might at first with ease have been destroyed.

6. And lately, when upon the loud outcries of blood, the assembly had, with all care, raised and framed an army for the preventing of further mischief and safeguard of this his Majesty's colony.

7. For having, with only the privacy of some few favorites without acquainting the people, only by the alteration of a figure, forged a commission, by we know not what hand, not only without but even against the consent of the people, for the raising and effecting civil war and destruction, which being happily and without bloodshed prevented; for having the second time attempted the same, thereby calling down our forces from the defense of the frontiers and most weakly exposed places.

8. For the prevention of civil mischief and ruin amongst ourselves while the barbarous enemy in all places did invade, murder, and spoil us, his Majesty's most faithful subjects.

Of this and the aforesaid articles we accuse Sir William Berkeley as guilty of each and every one of the same, and as one who has traitorously attempted, violated, and injured his Majesty's interest here by a loss of a great part of this his colony and many of his faithful loyal subjects by him betrayed and in a barbarous and shameful manner exposed to the incursions and murder of the heathen. And we do further declare these the ensuing persons in this list to have been his wicked and pernicious councillors, confederates, aiders, and assisters against the commonalty in these our civil commotions.

2. The Governor Upholds the Law (1676)*

The youthful Bacon, putting himself at the head of about a thousand men, chastised both the Indians and Berkeley's forces. He died mysteriously at the moment of victory, and his rebellion ended. The ferocity with which Berkeley executed Bacon's followers (more than twenty all told) shocked Charles II, who allegedly remarked, "That old fool has killed more people in that naked country than I have done for the murder of my father." Before the rebellion collapsed, Berkeley pleaded his own case with the people of Virginia as follows. What is the strongest argument in defense of his position? Comment critically on it.

But for all this, perhaps I have erred in things I know not of. If I have, I am so conscious of human frailty and my own defects that I will not only acknowledge them, but repent of and amend them, and not, like the rebel Bacon, persist in an error only because I have committed it. . . .

And now I will state the question betwixt me as a governor and Mr. Bacon, and say that if any enemies should invade England, any counselor, justice of peace, or other inferior officer might raise what forces they could to protect His Majesty's subjects. But I say again, if, after the King's knowledge of this invasion, any the greatest peer of England should raise forces against the King's prohibition, this would be now, and ever was in all ages and nations, accounted treason. . . .

**Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Fourth Series* (Boston, 1871), vol. 9, pp. 179-181.

The Thirteen Colonies:
Estimated Percentages of Blacks and Whites, 1740–1780

	A = Total Population			B = % of Blacks			C = % of Whites		
	1740			1760			1780		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
Maine ^a	—	—	—	—	—	—	49,133	0.93	99.07
New Hampshire	23,256	2.15	97.85	39,093	1.53	98.47	87,802	0.62	99.38
Massachusetts	151,613	2.00	98.00	222,600	2.18	97.82	268,627	1.79	98.21
Rhode Island	25,255	9.53	90.47	45,471	7.63	92.37	52,946	5.04	94.96
Connecticut	89,580	2.90	97.10	142,470	2.65	97.35	206,701	2.85	97.15
New York	63,665	14.13	85.87	117,138	13.94	86.06	210,541	10.00	90.00
New Jersey	51,373	8.50	91.50	93,813	7.00	93.00	139,627	7.49	92.51
Pennsylvania	85,637	2.40	97.60	183,703	2.40	97.60	327,305	2.40	97.60
Delaware	19,870	5.21	94.79	33,250	5.21	94.79	45,385	6.60	93.40
Maryland	116,093	20.70	79.30	162,267	30.20	69.80	245,474	32.80	67.20
Virginia	180,440	33.25	66.75	339,726	41.38	58.62	538,004	41.00	59.00
North Carolina	51,760	21.25	78.75	110,422	30.38	69.62	270,133	33.69	66.31
South Carolina	45,000	66.67	33.33	94,074	60.94	39.06	180,000	53.89	46.11
Georgia	2,021		100.00	9,578	37.36	62.64	56,071	37.15	62.85

^aMaine, of which Maine was a part until admitted to the Union as a state in 1820, did not establish a separate administrative district for Maine until the 1770s.

Source: "The Thirteen Colonies: Estimated Percentages of Blacks and Whites, 1740-1780" by R. C. Simmons from *The American Colonies: From Settlement to Independence* (Copyright © R. C. Simmons 1976).

B. The Great Awakening

I. George Whitefield Fascinates Franklin (1739)*

The frenzied religious revival that swept the colonies in the 1730s, known as the Great Awakening, featured George Whitefield as one of the Awakeners. Although he was only twenty-five years old when Benjamin Franklin heard him in Philadelphia during the second of Whitefield's seven trips to America, he had already preached with such emotional power in England that crowds would assemble at his church door before daybreak. When orthodox clergymen denied him their pulpits, he would speak in the open air, at times to crowds of twenty thousand persons. Franklin, then thirty-six years old and a hardheaded Philadelphia businessman, was skeptical. What does

*John Bigelow, ed., *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1868), pp. 251–255.

this passage from his famed autobiography, written many years later, reveal about Franklin's character and about the atmosphere of toleration in Philadelphia?

In 1739 arrived among us from Ireland the Reverend Mr. Whitefield, who had made himself remarkable there as an itinerant preacher. He was at first permitted to preach in some of our churches; but the clergy, taking a dislike to him, soon refused him their pulpits, and he was obliged to preach in the fields. The multitudes of all sects and denominations that attended his sermons were enormous, and it was a matter of speculation to me, who was one of the number, to observe the extraordinary influence of his oratory on his hearers, and how much they admired and respected him, notwithstanding his common abuse of them, by assuring them they were naturally *half beasts and half devils*. It was wonderful to see the change soon made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless or indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world were growing religious, so that one could not walk through the town in an evening without hearing psalms sung in different families of every street.

And it being found inconvenient to assemble in the open air, subject to its inclemencies, the building of a house to meet in was no sooner proposed, and persons appointed to receive contributions, but sufficient sums were soon received to procure the ground and erect the building, which was one hundred feet long and seventy broad, about the size of Westminster Hall; and the work was carried on with such spirit as to be finished in a much shorter time than could have been expected. Both house and ground were vested in trustees, expressly for the use of any preacher of any religious persuasion who might desire to say something to the people at Philadelphia; the design in building not being to accommodate any particular sect, but the inhabitants in general; so that even if the Mufti of Constantinople were to send a missionary to preach Mohammedanism to us, he would find a pulpit at his service.

Mr. Whitefield, in leaving us, went preaching all the way through the colonies to Georgia. The settlement of that province had lately been begun, but, instead of being made with hardy, industrious husbandmen, accustomed to labor, the only people fit for such an enterprise, it was with families of broken shopkeepers and other insolvent debtors, many of indolent and idle habits, taken out of the jails, who, being set down in the woods, unqualified for clearing land, and unable to endure the hardships of a new settlement, perished in numbers, leaving many helpless children unprovided for. The sight of their miserable situation inspired the benevolent heart of Mr. Whitefield with the idea of building an Orphan House there, in which they might be supported and educated. Returning northward, he preached up this charity, and made large collections, for his eloquence had a wonderful power over the hearts and purses of his hearers, of which I myself was an instance.

I did not disapprove of the design, but, as Georgia was then destitute of materials and workmen, and it was proposed to send them from Philadelphia at a great expense, I thought it would have been better to have built the house there, and brought the children to it. This I advised, but he was resolute in his first project, rejected my counsel, and I therefore refused to contribute.

I happened soon after to attend one of his sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four

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(1868),

silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded I began to soften, and concluded to give the coppers. Another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that, and determined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably that I emptied my pocket wholly into the collector's dish, gold and all.

At this sermon there was also one of our club who, being of my sentiments respecting the building in Georgia, and suspecting a collection might be intended, had, by precaution, emptied his pockets before he came from home. Towards the conclusion of the discourse, however, he felt a strong desire to give, and applied to a [Quaker] neighbor, who stood near him, to borrow some money for the purpose. The application was unfortunately to perhaps the only man in the company who had the firmness not to be affected by the preacher. His answer was, "At any other time, Friend Hopkinson, I would lend to thee freely; but not now, for thee seems to be out of thy right senses."

2. Jonathan Edwards Paints the Horrors of Hell (1741)*

Jonathan Edwards, a New England Congregational minister, was, like George Whitefield, a Great Awakener. Tall, slender, and delicate, Edwards had a weak voice but a powerful mind. He still ranks as the greatest Protestant theologian ever produced in America. His command of the English language was exceptional, and his vision of hell, peopled with pre-damned infants and others, was horrifying. As he preached hellfire to his Enfield, Connecticut, congregation, there was a great moaning and crying: "What shall I do to be saved? Oh, I am going to hell!" Men and women groveled on the floor or lay inert on the benches. Would Edwards's famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," be equally effective today?

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked. His wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire. He is of purer eyes than to bear you in his sight; you are ten thousand times as abominable in his eyes as the most hateful, venomous serpent is in ours.

You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince, and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else that you did not go to hell the last night; that you were suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell since you have sat here in the house of God provoking his pure eye by your sinful, wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! consider the fearful danger you are in! It is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath that you are held over in the hand of that God whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of Divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder. . . .

*Jonathan Edwards, *Works* (Andover, MA: Allen, Morrill & Wardwell, 1842), vol. 2, pp. 10–11.

It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity. There will be no end to this exquisite, horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see along forever a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul. And you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages in wrestling and conflicting with this Almighty, merciless vengeance. And then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point [dot] to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite.

Oh! who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it. It is inexpressible and inconceivable: for "who knows the power of God's anger!"

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh! that you would consider it, whether you be young or old!

There is reason to think that there are many in this congregation, now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape.

If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing it would be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him!

But, alas! instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell! And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time, before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some persons that now sit here in some seats of this meeting-house, in health, and quiet and secure, should be there before tomorrow morning!

C. The Colonial Economy

1. Colonial Trade and the British Empire (1701–1770)*

Eighteenth-century British merchants established an expansive commercial network linking England's burgeoning manufacturers to the raw materials of India and the Americas, and to the lucrative markets of the European continent. The following table chronicles the Empire's growing trade. Which regions saw the greatest absolute and relative gains in trade with England? What does the table suggest about the American colonies' role in the British imperial system?

*From R. A. Johns, *Colonial Trade and International Exchange: The Transition from Autarky to International Trade*, p. 55. Copyright © 1988. Reproduced by kind permission of Continuum International Publishing Group.

D. The Shoots of Democracy

I. The Epochal Zenger Trial (1735)*

William Cosby, a botheadedly incompetent New York governor, peremptorily removed the chief justice of the colony and substituted a stooge, young James Delancey. New Yorkers of the "popular party" decided to strike back by supporting the New-York Weekly Journal, edited by John Peter Zenger, a struggling printer who had earlier come from Germany as an indentured servant. Zenger's attacks on Governor Cosby brought on a famous trial for seditious libel. The outlook seemed dark after Zenger's two attorneys were summarily disbarred. But at the crucial moment, Andrew Hamilton, an aging but eminent Philadelphia lawyer, put in a surprise appearance as defense counsel. At the outset, he seemingly gave away his case when he admitted that Zenger had published the alleged libels, but he contended that because they were true, they were not libelous. The accepted law was that a libel was a libel, regardless of its truth. In the account excerpted here, Zenger describes his defense by Hamilton and the outcome of the trial. How did Hamilton's defense contribute to the development of American democracy?

Mr. [Prosecuting] Attorney. . . . The case before the court is whether Mr. Zenger is guilty of libeling His Excellency the Governor of New York, and indeed the whole administration of the government. Mr. Hamilton has confessed the printing and publishing, and I think nothing is plainer than that the words in the information [indictment] are scandalous, and tend to sedition, and to disquiet the minds of the people of this province. And if such papers are not libels, I think it may be said there can be no such thing as a libel.

Mr. Hamilton. May it please Your Honor, I cannot agree with Mr. Attorney. For though I freely acknowledge that there are such things as libels, yet I must insist, at the same time, that what my client is charged with is not a libel. And I observed just now that Mr. Attorney, in defining a libel, made use of the words "scandalous, seditious, and tend to disquiet the people." But (whether with design or not I will not say) he omitted the word "false."

Mr. Attorney. I think I did not omit the word "false." But it has been said already that it may be a libel, notwithstanding it may be true.

Mr. Hamilton. In this I must still differ with Mr. Attorney; for I depend upon it, we are to be tried upon this information now before the court and jury, and to which we have pleaded not guilty, and by it we are charged with printing and publishing a certain false, malicious, seditious, and scandalous libel. This word "false" must have some meaning, or else how came it there? . . .

Mr. Chief Justice [Delancey]. You cannot be admitted, Mr. Hamilton, to give the truth of a libel in evidence. A libel is not to be justified; for it is nevertheless a libel that it is true [i.e., the fact that it is true makes it nonetheless a libel].

*J. P. Zenger, *Zenger's Own Story* (1736; reprint Columbia, MO: Press of the Crippled Turtle, 1954), pp. 20–41, passim.

Mr. Hamilton. I am sorry the court has so soon resolved upon that piece of law; I expected first to have been heard to the point. I have not in all my reading met with an authority that says we cannot be admitted to give the truth in evidence, upon an information for a libel.

Mr. Chief Justice. The law is clear, that you cannot justify a libel. . . .

Mr. Hamilton. I thank Your Honor. Then, gentlemen of the jury, it is to you we must now appeal, for witnesses, to the truth of the facts we have offered, and are denied the liberty to prove. And let it not seem strange that I apply myself to you in this manner. I am warranted so to do both by law and reason.

The law supposes you to be summoned out of the neighborhood where the fact [crime] is alleged to be committed; and the reason of your being taken out of the neighborhood is because you are supposed to have the best knowledge of the fact that is to be tried. And were you to find a verdict against my client, you must take upon you to say the papers referred to in the information, and which we acknowledge we printed and published, are false, scandalous, and seditious. But of this I can have no apprehension. You are citizens of New York; you are really what the law supposes you to be, honest and lawful men. And, according to my brief, the facts which we offer to prove were not committed in a corner; they are notoriously known to be true; and therefore in your justice lies our safety. And as we are denied the liberty of giving evidence to prove the truth of what we have published, I will beg leave to lay it down, as a standing rule in such cases, that the suppressing of evidence ought always to be taken for the strongest evidence; and I hope it will have that weight with you. . . .

I hope to be pardoned, sir, for my zeal upon this occasion. It is an old and wise caution that when our neighbor's house is on fire, we ought to take care of our own. For though, blessed be God, I live in a government [Pennsylvania] where liberty is well understood, and freely enjoyed, yet experience has shown us all (I'm sure it has to me) that a bad precedent in one government is soon set up for an authority in another. And therefore I cannot but think it mine, and every honest man's duty, that (while we pay all due obedience to men in authority) we ought at the same time to be upon our guard against power, wherever we apprehend that it may affect ourselves or our fellow subjects.

I am truly very unequal to such an undertaking on many accounts. And you see I labor under the weight of many years, and am borne down with great infirmities of body. Yet old and weak as I am, I should think it my duty, if required, to go to the utmost part of the land, where my service could be of any use, in assisting to quench the flame of prosecutions upon informations, set on foot by the government, to deprive a people of the right of remonstrating (and complaining too) of the arbitrary attempts of men in power. Men who injure and oppress the people under their administration provoke them to cry out and complain; and then make that very complaint the foundation for new oppressions and prosecutions. I wish I could say there were no instances of this kind.

But to conclude. The question before the court and you, gentlemen of the jury, is not of small nor private concern. It is not the cause of a poor printer, nor of New York alone, which you are now trying. No! It may, in its consequence,

affect every freeman that lives under a British government on the main[land] of America. It is the best cause. It is the cause of liberty. And I make no doubt but your upright conduct, this day, will not only entitle you to the love and esteem of your fellow citizens; but every man who prefers freedom to a life of slavery will bless and honor you, as men who have baffled the attempt of tyranny, and, by an impartial and uncorrupt verdict, have laid a noble foundation for securing to ourselves, our posterity, and our neighbors, that to which nature and the laws of our country have given us a right—the liberty both of exposing and opposing arbitrary power (in these parts of the world, at least) by speaking and writing truth. . . .

The jury withdrew, and in a small time returned, and being asked by the clerk whether they were agreed of their verdict, and whether John Peter Zenger was guilty of printing and publishing the libels in the information mentioned, they answered by Thomas Hunt, their foreman, "Not guilty." Upon which there were three huzzas in the hall, which was crowded with people, and the next day I was discharged from my imprisonment.

[The jurors, who might have suffered fines and imprisonment, were guilty of "bad law," for at that time they had no legal alternative to finding Zenger guilty. But the trial, which was widely publicized at home and abroad, provided a setback for judicial tyranny, a partial triumph for freedom of the press, a gain for the privilege of criticizing public officials, and a boost to the ideal of liberty generally. Andrew Hamilton, in truth, was contending for the law as it should be—and as it ultimately became. Not for many years, however, did the two principles for which he argued become accepted practice in England and America: (1) the admissibility of evidence as to the truth of an alleged libel and (2) the right of the jury to judge the libelous nature of the alleged libel.]

2. Crèvecoeur Finds a Perfect Society (c. 1770)*

Crèvecoeur, the happy Frenchman dwelling on a New York farm before the Revolution (see earlier, p. 51), wrote in glowing terms of the almost classless society developing in the colonies. Can you reconcile his statements with the existence of slavery and indentured servitude, a planter aristocracy, and a tax-supported church?

He [the European traveler to America] is arrived on a new continent; a modern society offers itself to his contemplation, different from what he had hitherto seen. It is not composed, as in Europe, of great lords who possess everything, and of a herd of people who have nothing. Here are no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion, no invisible power giving to a few a very visible one; no great manufacturers employing thousands, no great refinements of luxury. The rich and the poor are not so far removed from each other as they are in Europe.

*M. G. J. de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York: Fox, Duffield & Company, 1904; reprint), pp. 49–50.

America Secedes from the Empire, 1775–1783

And if ever there was a just war since the world began, it is this in which America is now engaged. . . . We fight not to enslave, but to set a country free, and to make room upon the earth for honest men to live in.

Thomas Paine, The Crisis, 1776

Prologue: Following the bloodshed at Lexington, the colonists raised a nondescript army and put George Washington in command. The undisciplined and unreliable amateur soldiers exasperated their leader, and not until later in the war was a nucleus of several thousand trained veterans whipped into line. Meanwhile the colonists, goaded by harsh British acts, finally declared their independence in 1776. Colonists of all creeds and colors rallied to the Patriot cause, though the situation of enslaved Africans remained especially precarious (and paradoxical). The colonists kept their flickering cause alive with secret French aid until 1778, when France formed an alliance with them following the decisive American victory over General John Burgoyne at Saratoga in 1777. Spain and Holland ultimately entered the general conflict against the British. With much of the rest of Europe unfriendly, Britain found that the war had become too big to handle. Following a crushing defeat by a joint Franco-American force at Yorktown in 1781, the British decided to cut their losses and come to terms with their rebellious subjects. The final treaty was signed in 1783. Meanwhile, the emerging republic struggled to define the guiding principles of its foreign policy.

A. The Formal Break with Britain

1. Thomas Paine Talks Common Sense (1776)*

Despite the shooting at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill; despite the British burning of Falmouth (Maine) and Norfolk (Virginia); despite the king's hiring of German (Hessian) mercenaries, the American colonists professed to be fighting merely for reconciliation. But killing redcoats with one hand and waving the olive branch with the other seemed ridiculous to Thomas Paine, a thirty-nine-year-old agitator from

*Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1894), pp. 84–101, passim.

*England who had arrived in Philadelphia about a year earlier. Of humble birth, impoverished, largely self-educated, and early apprenticed to a corset maker, he was a born rebel who had failed at various undertakings. But he rocketed to fame with a forty-seven-page pamphlet published in January 1776 under the title *Common Sense*. Selling the incredible total of 120,000 copies in three months, it sharply accelerated the drift toward independence. Paine urged an immediate break, not only to secure foreign assistance but also to fulfill America's moral mandate from the world. Were his views on mercantilism, isolationism, and reconciliation reasonable? Did his arguments appeal more to passion or to logic?*

In the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense: . . .

I have heard it asserted by some that, as America has flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness, and will always have the same effect. Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert that, because a child has thrived upon milk, it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true. For I answer roundly that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power taken any notice of her. The commerce by which she hath enriched herself are the necessaries of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.

But she [England] has protected us, say some. That she hath engrossed [monopolized] us is true, and defended the continent at our expense, as well as her own, is admitted; and she would have defended Turkey from the same motive, viz. for the sake of trade and dominion. . . .

But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families; wherefore the assertion, if true, turns to her reproach. But it happens not to be true, or only partly so. . . . Europe, and not England, is the parent country of America. This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from every part of Europe. Hither have they fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster; and it is so far true of England that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home pursues their descendants still. . . .

. . . Any submission to, or dependence on, Great Britain tends directly to involve this continent in European wars and quarrels, and set us at variance with nations who would otherwise seek our friendship, and against whom we have neither anger nor complaint. As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no partial [preferential] connection with any part of it. It is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions, which she never can do while, by her dependence on Britain, she is made the makeweight in the scale of British politics. . . .

Everything that is right or reasonable pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature, cries, 'tis time to part. Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America is a strong and natural proof that the authority of the one over the other was never the design of Heaven. . . .

But if you say, you can still pass the violations over, then I ask, Hath your house been burnt? Hath your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands, and yourself the ruined and wretched survivor? If you have not, then are you not a judge of those who have. But if you have, and can still shake hands with the murderers, then are you unworthy the name of husband, father, friend, or lover; and whatever may be your rank or title in life, you have the heart of a coward, and the spirit of a sycophant. . . .

Every quiet method for peace hath been ineffectual. Our prayers have been rejected with disdain. . . . Wherefore, since nothing but blows will do, for God's sake let us come to a final separation. . . .

Small islands, not capable of protecting themselves, are the proper objects for government to take under their care. But there is something absurd in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet; and as England and America, with respect to each other, reverse the common order of nature, it is evident that they belong to different systems. England to Europe: America to itself. . . .

No man was a warmer wisher for a reconciliation than myself before the fatal nineteenth of April, 1775 [Lexington]. But the moment the event of that day was made known, I rejected the hardened, sullen-tempered Pharaoh of England [George III] for ever; and disdain the wretch that, with the pretended title of Father of his People, can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his soul. . . .

And in order to show that reconciliation now is a dangerous doctrine, I affirm that it would be policy in the King at this time to repeal the acts, for the sake of reinstating himself in the government of the provinces; in order that *he may accomplish by craft and subtlety in the long run what he cannot do by force and violence in the short one*. Reconciliation and ruin are nearly related. . . .

You that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can you restore to us the time that is past? Can you give to prostitution its former innocence? Neither can you reconcile Britain and America. . . . There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can the lover forgive the ravisher of his mistress as the continent forgive the murders of Britain. The Almighty hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes. . . . They distinguish us from the herd of common animals. . . .

O! you that love mankind! You that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

2. Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence (1776)*

Independence could hardly be undertaken without a convincing explanation, partly in the hope of eliciting foreign sympathy and military aid. The Continental Congress

*W. C. Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress* (1906), vol. 5, pp. 510-515.

An Address to the People of the several towns in the county of *Hampshire*, now at arms.

GENTLEMEN,

We have thought proper to inform you of some of the principal causes of the late risings of the people, and also of their present movement, viz.

1st. The present expensive mode of collecting debts, which, by reason of the great scarcity of cash, will of necessity fill our gaols with unhappy debtors, and thereby a reputable body of people rendered incapable of being serviceable either to themselves or the community.

2d. The monies raised by impost and excise being appropriated to discharge the interest of governmental securities, and not the foreign debt, when these securities are not subject to taxation.

3d. A suspension of the writ of *Habeas corpus*, by which those persons who have stepped forth to assert and maintain the rights of the people, are liable to be taken and conveyed even to the most distant part of the Commonwealth, and thereby subjected to an unjust punishment.

4th. The unlimited power granted to Justices of the Peace and Sheriffs, Deputy Sheriffs, and Constables, by the Riot Act, indemnifying them to the prosecution thereof; when perhaps, wholly actuated from a principle of revenge, hatred and envy.

Furthermore, Be assured, that this body, now at arms, despise the idea of being instigated by British emissaries, which is so strenuously propagated by the enemies of our liberties: And also wish the most proper and speedy measures may be taken, to discharge both our foreign and domestic debt.

Per Order,
Daniel Gray, *Chairman of the
Committee, for the above purpose.*

2. George Washington Expresses Alarm (1786)*

The retired war hero Washington, struggling to repair his damaged fortunes at Mount Vernon, was alarmed by the inability of the Congress under the Articles of Confederation to collect taxes and regulate interstate commerce. The states, racked by the depression of 1784–1788, seemed to be going their thirteen separate ways. The worthy farmers of western Massachusetts were especially hard hit, burdened as they were with inequitable and delinquent taxes, mortgage foreclosures, and the prospect of imprisonment for debt. Hundreds of them, under the Revolutionary captain Daniel Shays, formed armed mobs in an effort to close the courts and to force the issuance of paper money. "Good God!" burst out Washington on hearing of these disorders; "who, besides a Tory, could have foreseen, or a Briton have predicted them?" He wrote despairingly as follows to John Jay, the prominent New York statesman and diplomat. What single fear seems to disturb Washington most, and why?

*J. C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *Writings of George Washington* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1938), vol. 28, pp. 502–503 (August 1, 1786).

Your sentiments, that our affairs are drawing rapidly to a crisis, accord with my own. What the event will be is also beyond the reach of my foresight. We have errors to correct; we have probably had too good an opinion of human nature in forming our Confederation. Experience has taught us that men will not adopt, and carry into execution, measures the best calculated for their own good, without the intervention of coercive power. I do not conceive we can exist long as a nation without lodging, somewhere, a power which will pervade the whole Union in as energetic a manner as the authority of the state governments extends over the several states.

To be fearful of investing Congress, constituted as that body is, with ample authorities for national purposes, appears to me the very climax of popular absurdity and madness. Could Congress exert them for the detriment of the people without injuring themselves in an equal or greater proportion? Are not their interests inseparably connected with those of their constituents? By the rotation of appointments [annual elections], must they not mingle frequently with the mass of citizens? . . .

What then is to be done? Things cannot go on in the same train forever. It is much to be feared, as you observe, that the better kind of people, being disgusted with these circumstances, will have their minds prepared for any revolution whatever. We are apt to run from one extreme to another. To anticipate and prevent disastrous contingencies would be the part of wisdom and patriotism.

What astonishing changes a few years are capable of producing! I am told that even respectable characters speak of a monarchical form of government without horror. From thinking proceeds speaking; thence to acting is often but a single step. But how irrevocable and tremendous! What a triumph for our enemies to verify their predictions! What a triumph for the advocates of despotism to find that we are incapable of governing ourselves, and that systems founded on the basis of equal liberty are merely ideal and fallacious. Would to God that wise measures may be taken in time to avert the consequences we have but too much reason to apprehend.

3. Thomas Jefferson Favors Rebellion (1787)*

Thomas Jefferson was the successor to Benjamin Franklin as American minister to France, 1785 to 1789. ("I do not replace him, sir; I am only his successor," he remarked with both wit and modesty.) As an ultraliberal and a specialist in revolution, this author of the Declaration of Independence wrote as follows about Shays's Rebellion to his Virginia neighbor, James Madison. The complete crushing of the uprising had not yet occurred. What did Jefferson regard as the most important cause of the disturbance, and what was most extreme about his judgment?

I am impatient to learn your sentiments on the late troubles in the Eastern [New England] states. So far as I have yet seen, they do not appear to threaten serious consequences. Those states have suffered by the stoppage of the channels of their commerce, which have not yet found other issues. This must render money scarce, and make the people uneasy. This uneasiness has produced acts

* P. L. Ford, ed., *Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1894), vol. 4, pp. 361-363.

with slaves, if they can be got through South Carolina and Georgia. Slavery discourages arts and manufactures. The poor despise labor when performed by slaves. They prevent the immigration of whites, who really enrich and strengthen a country. They produce the most pernicious effect on manners. Every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant. They bring the judgment of Heaven on a country. As nations cannot be rewarded or punished in the next world, they must be in this. By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, Providence punishes national sins by national calamities. He lamented that some of our Eastern [New England] brethren had, from a lust of gain, embarked in this nefarious traffic. . . . He held it essential, in every point of view, that the general government should have power to prevent the increase of slavery.

Mr. Ellsworth [of Connecticut], as he had never owned a slave, could not judge of the effects of slavery on character. He said, however, that if it was to be considered in a moral light, we ought to go further, and free those already in the country. As slaves also multiply so fast in Virginia and Maryland that it is cheaper to raise than import them, whilst in the sickly rice swamps foreign supplies are necessary, if we go no further than is urged, we shall be unjust towards South Carolina and Georgia. Let us not intermeddle. As population increases, poor laborers will be so plenty as to render slaves useless. Slavery, in time, will not be a speck in our country. . . .

Gen. [Charles C.] Pinckney [of South Carolina] declared it to be his firm opinion that if himself and all his colleagues were to sign the Constitution, and use their personal influence, it would be of no avail towards obtaining the assent of their constituents [to a slave trade prohibition]. South Carolina and Georgia cannot do without slaves. As to Virginia, she will gain by stopping the importations. Her slaves will rise in value, and she has more than she wants. It would be unequal to require South Carolina and Georgia to confederate on such unequal terms. . . . He contended that the importation of slaves would be for the interest of the whole Union. The more slaves, the more produce to employ the carrying trade; the more consumption also; and the more of this, the more of revenue for the common treasury. He admitted it to be reasonable that slaves should be dutied like other imports; but should consider a rejection of the clause as an exclusion of South Carolina from the Union.

[The final compromise, as written into the Constitution, permitted Congress to levy a maximum duty of ten dollars a head on each slave imported. In 1808, the earliest date permitted by the framers, Congress ended all legal importation of slaves.]

C. Debating the New Constitution

1. Alexander Hamilton Scans the Future (1787)*

Alexander Hamilton of New York, though only thirty-two, was probably the most brilliant and eloquent member of the Philadelphia assemblage. But his great contribution was in engineering the call for the convention and in campaigning for the Constitution.

*H. C. Lodge, ed., *The Works of Alexander Hamilton* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904), vol. 1, pp. 420–423.

At Philadelphia, he was outvoted by his two antifederalist colleagues from New York, and his own federalist and centralist views were too extreme for the other delegates. His superlative five-hour oratorical effort championed a plan that, among other things, would have had the president and the senators holding office during good behavior, and the state governors appointed by the federal government. The scheme received one vote—his own. Hamilton evidently prepared the following memorandum shortly after the Constitution was drafted. Why would the rich be favorable to the new instrument? Why would the poor and the states' righters be unfavorable?

The new Constitution has in favor of its success these circumstances: A very great weight of influence of the persons who framed it, particularly in the universal popularity of General Washington. The good will of the commercial interest throughout the states, which will give all its efforts to the establishment of a government capable of regulating, protecting, and extending the commerce of the Union. The good will of most men of property in the several states, who wish a government of the Union able to protect them against domestic violence and the depredations which the democratic spirit is apt to make on property, and who are besides anxious for the respectability of the nation. The hopes of the creditors of the United States, that a general government, possessing the means of doing it, will pay the debt of the Union. A strong belief in the people at large of the insufficiency of the present Confederation to preserve the existence of the Union, and of the necessity of the Union to their safety and prosperity. Of course, a strong desire of a change, and a predisposition to receive well the propositions of the convention.

Against its success is to be put: The dissent of two or three important men in the convention, who will think their characters pledged to defeat the plan. The influence of many *inconsiderable* men in possession of considerable offices under the state governments, who will fear a diminution of their consequence, power, and emolument by the establishment of the general government, and who can hope for nothing there. The influence of some *considerable* men in office, possessed of talents and popularity, who, partly from the same motives, and partly from a desire of *playing a part* in a convulsion for their own aggrandizement, will oppose the quiet adoption of the new government. (Some considerable men out of office, from motives of ambition, may be disposed to act the same part.)

Add to these causes: The disinclination of the people to taxes, and of course to a strong government. The opposition of all men much in debt, who will not wish to see a government established, one object of which is to restrain the means of cheating creditors. The democratical jealousy of the people, which may be alarmed at the appearance of institutions that may seem calculated to place the power of the community in few hands, and to raise a few individuals to stations of great pre-eminence. And the influence of some foreign powers, who, from different motives, will not wish to see an energetic government established throughout the states.

In this view of the subject, it is difficult to form any judgment whether the plan will be adopted or rejected. It must be essentially matter of conjecture. The present appearances and all other circumstances considered, the probability seems to be on the side of its adoption. But the causes operating against its adoption are powerful, and there will be nothing astonishing in the contrary.

If it do not finally obtain, it is probable the discussion of the question will beget such struggles, animosities, and heats in the community that this circumstance, conspiring with the real necessity of an essential change in our present situation, will produce civil war. . . .

A reunion with Great Britain, from universal disgust at a state of commotion, is not impossible, though not much to be feared. The most plausible shape of such a business would be the establishment of a son of the present monarch [George III] in the supreme government of this country, with a family compact.

If the government be adopted, it is probable General Washington will be the President of the United States. This will ensure a wise choice of men to administer the government, and a good administration. A good administration will conciliate the confidence and affection of the people, and perhaps enable the government to acquire more consistency than the proposed Constitution seems to promise for so great a country.

2. *George Mason Is Critical (1787)**

George Mason, a wealthy Virginia planter who owned five thousand acres, had played a leading role in the Revolutionary movement. A self-taught constitutional lawyer of high repute, a dedicated advocate of states' rights, and an undying foe of slavery, he was one of the five most frequent speakers at the Philadelphia convention. Shocked by the whittling down of states' rights, he finally refused to sign the Constitution and fought it bitterly in Virginia. His chief grievance was the compromise by which the South conceded a simple majority vote in Congress on navigation laws in return for twenty more years of African slave trade, of which he disapproved anyhow. He set forth his objections in the following influential pamphlet. Which of his criticisms relate to states' rights? Which to the rights of the South? Which seem overdrawn in the light of subsequent events?

There is no Declaration [Bill] of Rights, and the laws of the general government being paramount to the laws and constitution of the several states, the declarations of rights in the separate states are no security. . . .

The Judiciary of the United States is so constructed and extended as to absorb and destroy the judiciaries of the several states; thereby rendering law as tedious, intricate, and expensive, and justice as unattainable, by a great part of the community, as in England, and enabling the rich to oppress and ruin the poor.

The President of the United States has no Constitutional Council, a thing unknown in any safe and regular government. He will therefore be unsupported by proper information and advice, and will generally be directed by minions and favorites; or he will become a tool to the Senate—or a council of state will grow out of the principal officers of the great departments; the worst and most dangerous of all ingredients for such a council in a free country. From this fatal defect has arisen the improper power of the Senate in the appointment of public officers, and the alarming dependence and connection between that branch of the legislature and the Supreme Executive.

*Kate M. Rowland, *The Life of George Mason* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1892), vol. 2, pp. 387–390.

D. Washington Retires

I. A President Bids Farewell (1796)*

Weary of body and outraged by political abuse, Washington announced his decision to retire in his Farewell Address, which he simply gave as a gratuitous "scoop" to a Philadelphia newspaper. At first a nonpartisan but now a Federalist, he had leaned heavily on Hamilton's collaboration in its composition. The bulk of the address deals with domestic difficulties, but the part relating to foreign affairs is best known. The document was clearly partisan. It served as the opening gun in the forthcoming presidential campaign of 1796 by indirectly defending Jay's Treaty and by directly alerting the public to flagrant French intrigue in the nation's capital. Many Jeffersonian Democratic-Republicans, recognizing the attack on them, condemned the document. Why was it to the advantage of America to remain aloof? Did Washington reject all alliances in all circumstances?

Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct. And can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and, at no distant period, a great nation to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. . . .

In the execution of such a plan nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others should be excluded, and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings toward all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges toward another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. . . .

The nation prompted by ill will and resentment sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject. . . .

So, likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter without adequate inducement or justification. . . .

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practice the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak toward a great and powerful nation dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

J. D. Richardson, ed., *Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (1896), vol. 1, pp. 221-223.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be *constantly* awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. . . .

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little *political* connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements [French treaty], let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none, or a very remote, relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

Why forgo the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world, so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it. For let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But in my opinion it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.

Taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand, neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preference; . . . constantly keeping in view that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character; that by such acceptance it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.