

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



The First Shots Precede Independence



- Citizens of Mass. anticipated war - formed militia units called Minutemen
 - ▣ Drilled regularly in open defiance of British
- Mass. Assembly prepared for war
- Gage sent troops to capture rebel leaders (Hancock & Adams) & weapons at Concord

Shot Heard Around the World

- British planned secret march to Concord but Paul Revere & others spread alarm
- April 19, 1775 - Redcoats clashed w/ militia at Lexington - 8 minutemen dead
- Militiamen from throughout Mass. rallied to repel the British



PAUL REVERE'S RIDE.

Colonial victory at Concord

- British moved on to Concord - clashed w/ an organized group of minutemen
- British retreated from Concord - suffer heavy losses from snipers
- Unaccustomed to “unfair” fighting
- May 1775 - Ft. Ticonderoga (NY) captured by Allen & Arnold - cannon taken to Boston for siege



Second Continental Congress

- Met in Philadelphia in May 1775
- Mass. appealed for help - delegates decide to resist British
- Formed Continental Army w/ G. Washington as leader
- Issued call to colonies to raise troops & money for war effort
- At same time sent “Olive Branch” petition to king, hoping to avert war



2nd Continental Congress cont.



- George III rejected “Olive Branch” & declared colonies in rebellion
- Sent more troops - approx. 40K sent to colonies
- Colonists pushed closer to independence - responding to British force & colonial battle victories
- Many reluctant to break away - preferred autonomy w/ ties

Reasons for Reluctance: Tories



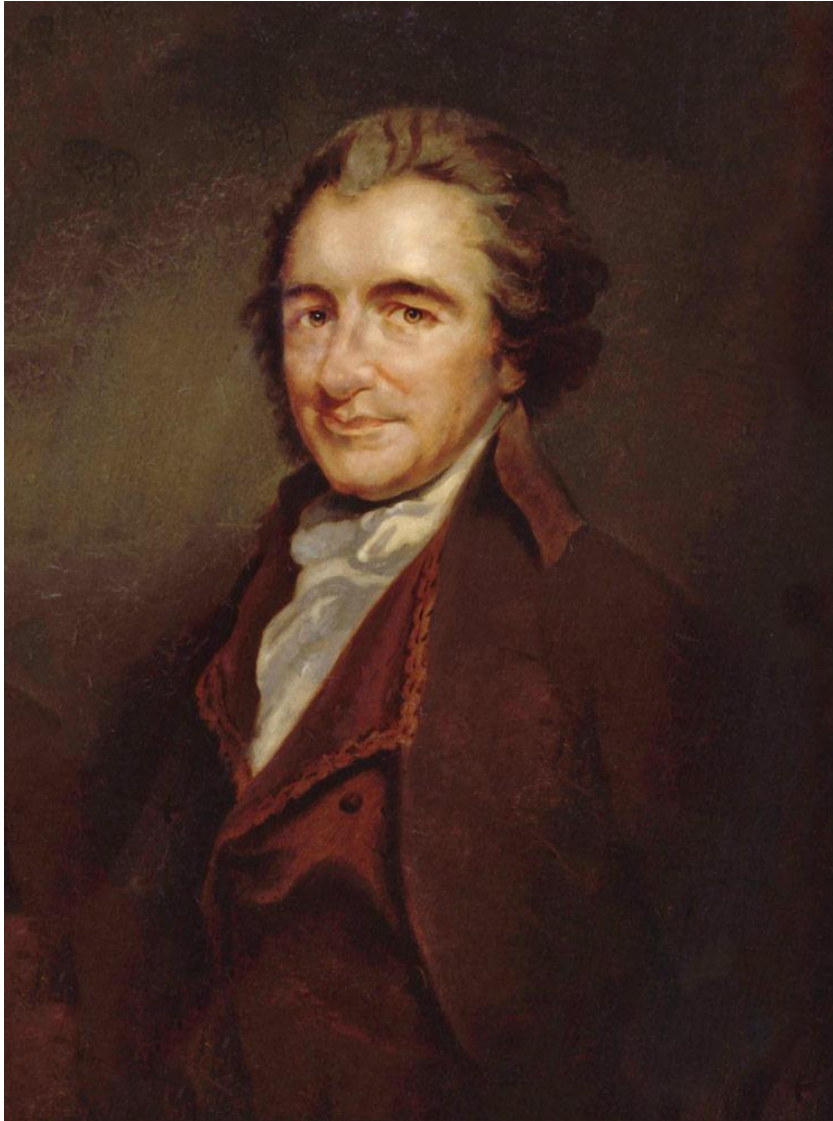
- Sentimental attachment
- Fear of anarchy & despotism
- Hope for a change in British ministry & policies
- Reluctance of merchants to give up trade privileges under British flag
- Lack of clear consensus for separation

Incentives for Separation



- ❑ British actions angered many who were “on the fence”
- ❑ Hiring of Hessian mercenaries
- ❑ Inciting Indians against settlers
- ❑ Gov. of VA Lord Dunmore’s offer of freedom to slaves who joined the British Army
- ❑ Closing of colonial ports to trade

Common Sense - January 1776



- ❑ Published by Thomas Paine
- ❑ Stated that common sense forbade a continent from being ruled by an island
- ❑ Argued that colonists were exploited by Britain & should separate from it
- ❑ Made the king out to be a villain to be hated

Common Sense

COMMON SENSE;

ADDRESSED TO THE *W. Hamilton*

INHABITANTS

OF

A M E R I C A,

On the following interesting

S U B J E C T S.

I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.

II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession.

III. Thoughts on the present State of American Affairs.

IV. Of the present Ability of America, with some miscellaneous Reflections.

Thomas Paine
Man knows no Master but creating Heaven,
Or their whom choice and common good advise.

THOMAS.

PHILADELPHIA:

Printed, and sold, by R. BELL, in Third Street.

- Written in plain style to reach wide audience
- 100K copies sold in 3 months
- Thousands convinced by Paine's pamphlet that independence was the only sensible goal

Thomas Paine
Common Sense, published in 1776.

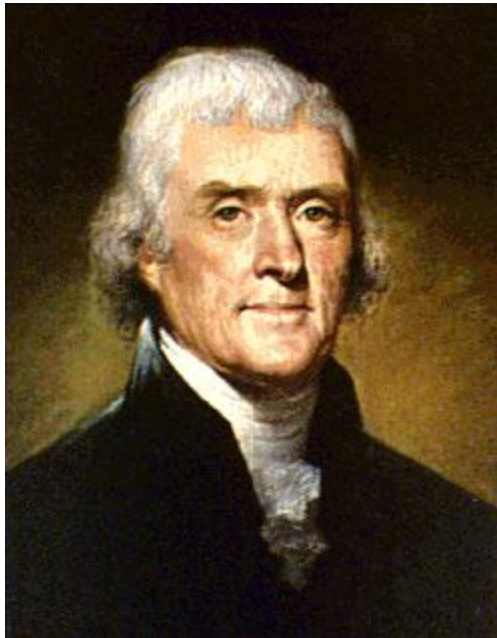
2nd Continental Congress Acts

- Began operating as a centralized govt.
 - ▣ Established inter-colonial post office
 - ▣ Sought foreign aide & recognition
 - ▣ Organized a navy & authorized attacks on British ships
 - ▣ Proclaimed colonial ports open to all but Britain

Richard Henry Lee's Resolution

- May 1776 - CC urged colonies to form their own governments
- June 7- Richard Henry Lee of VA proposed a 3-part resolution
 - to declare independence
 - to form foreign alliances
 - to prepare a plan of confederation

Preparation of the Dec. of Ind.



- June 11 - committee chosen to prepare a declaration of independence
 - ▣ Franklin, Adams, Robert Livingston (NY), Roger Sherman (CT) & Jefferson
- Jefferson authored most of it
- June 28 - draft sent to Congress
 - ▣ Amendments made, including the removal of references to slave trade
 - Est. 20 year period, after which slave trade = illegal

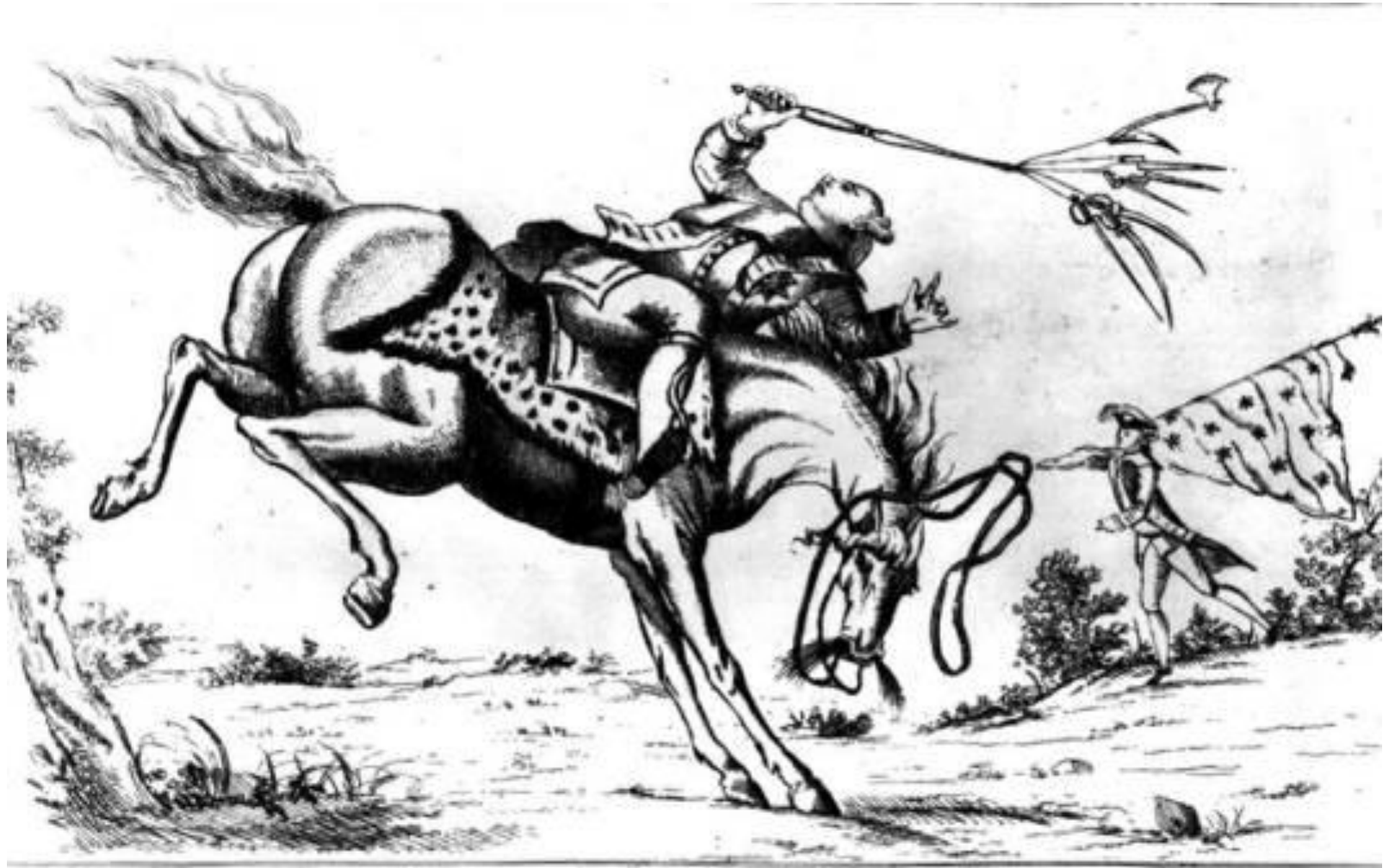
Declaration of Independence

- July 2, after prolonged debate, Lee's resolution was passed



- July 4, Declaration of Independence adopted & signed by most delegates
- Copies sent to the colonies to be read to the people

“The Horse AMERICA, throwing his Master”

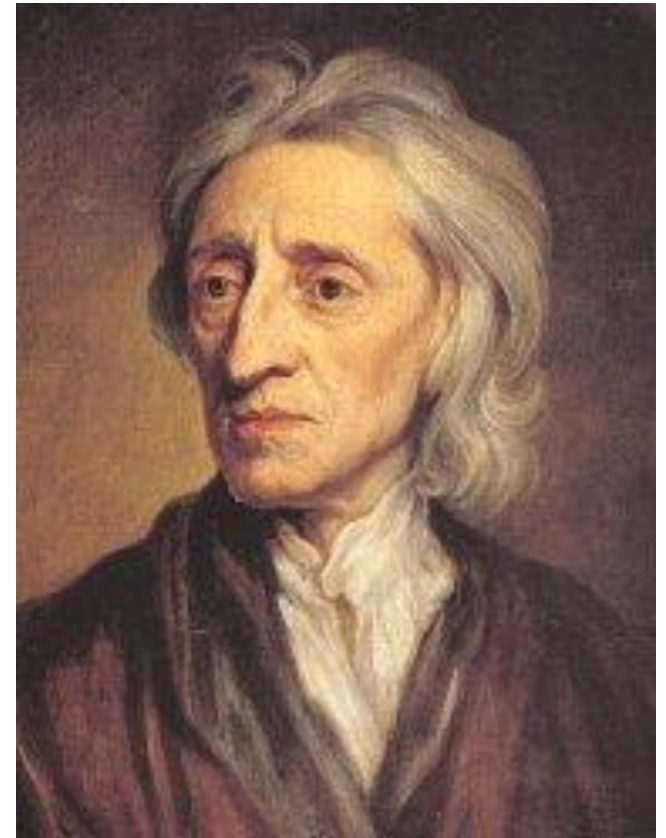


THE HORSE AMERICA, throwing his Master.

Published by J. B. Knapp, New York, 1847. White, Knight, Const., W. H. Woodruff.

Declaration of Independence

- Preamble stated a philosophy of government shaped by Enlightenment thinking (ideas from John Locke!!)
 - ▣ Recognized natural (inalienable) rights (“life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”)
 - ▣ Embraced the compact theory (consent of the governed)
 - ▣ Right of revolution against tyrannical governments



Declaration of Independence

- Contained a list of 27 grievances aimed at King George III
 - Instead of Parliament because he was sovereign under British law
- Presented as evidence & justification for separation
- Jefferson concluded by stating that the united colonies ought to be “free and independent states”

Effect of the Declaration

- Served as an announcement & explanation to the world
- Stated clear purpose, objective & justification for revolution
- Served to convince undecided to join the patriot cause
- United States of America born
- Inspired later revolutions