

The Enlightenment and the Founding of America

Majen Hammond
09/2008

The Enlightenment



The Enlightenment was an intellectual movement in Europe during the 18th century in which people began to change their views on the world and on society.



The Enlightenment grew largely out of the new methods and discoveries achieved in the Scientific Revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries.

The equatorial armillary, used for navigation on ships

Image: www.math.nus.edu.sg/.../teaching/heavenly.html

Scientific Revolution

- Led people to view the world in a different light.
- Challenged the power of the Church.
- Formed the foundation of all modern sciences.
- Is followed by the Enlightenment.

The Connection :

- The Scientific Revolution showed that nature and the universe could be explained through reason, using mathematical precision.
- So people began to believe that they could explain the workings of society and the relationships of people in terms of scientific study.

Enlightenment Principles



- Religion, tradition, and superstition limited independent thought
- Accept knowledge based on observation, logic, and reason, not on faith
- Scientific and academic thinking should be based on reasoning, not on Church

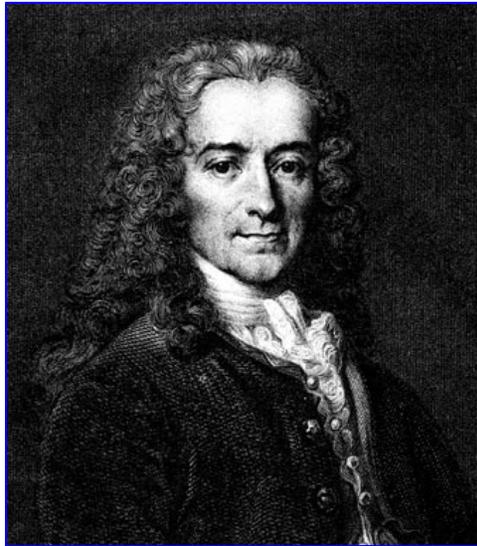
A meeting of French Enlightenment thinkers

Image. www.student.britannica.com/eb/art/print?id=86997...

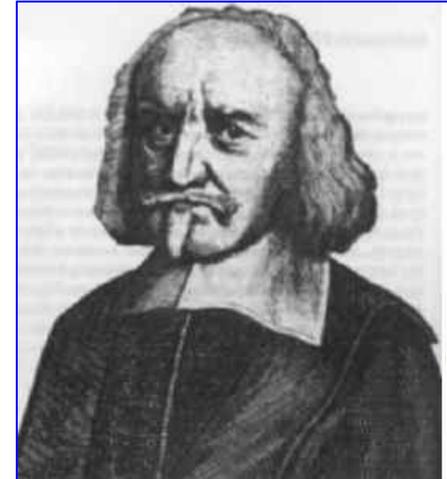
The Enlightenment

- Included a number of writers living at different times in various countries.
- Challenged old ways of thinking
- Questioned divine-right of rule
- Believed that social reforms were necessary and possible in this life, not just the next.

Voltaire - 1650 – 1722

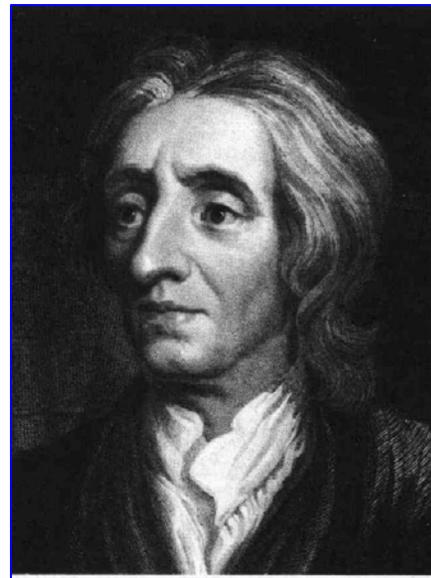
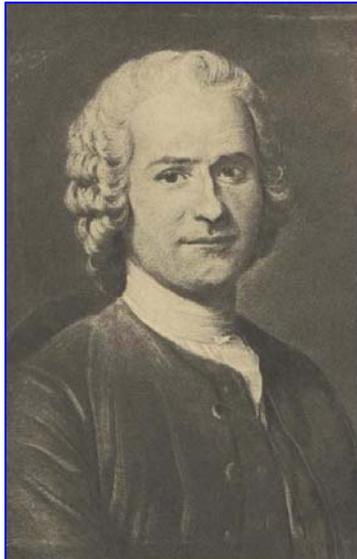


Thomas Hobbes - 1588- 1679



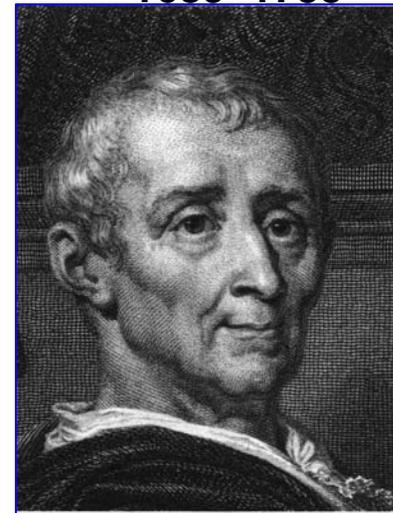
Enlightenment Thinkers

Rousseau - 1712 – 1778



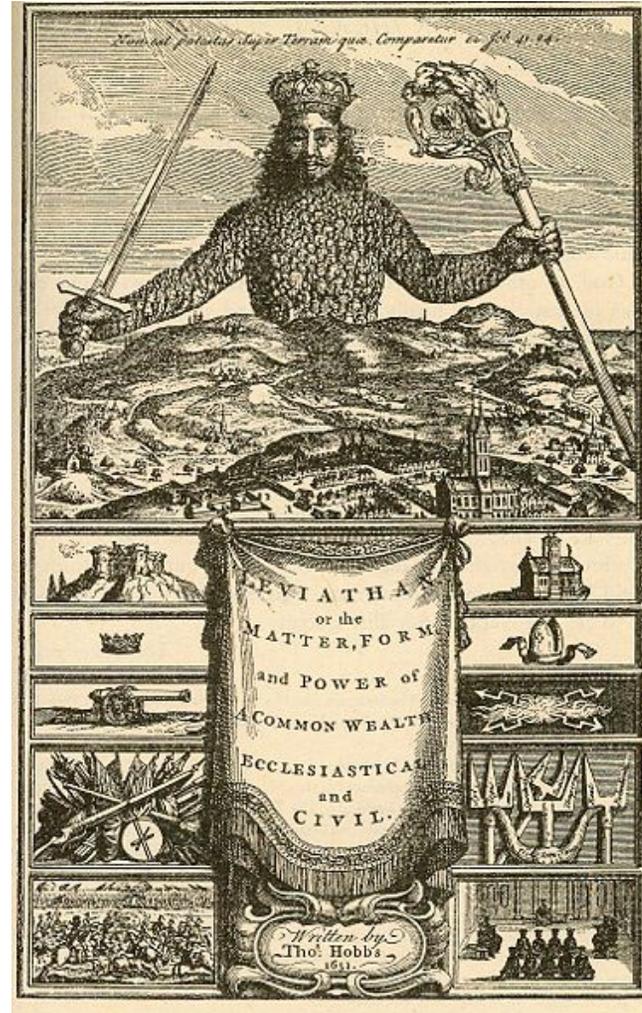
John Locke - 1632–1704

**Montesquieu
1689–1755**



Thomas Hobbs 1588- 1679

- People have a **social contract** in establishing a government.
- People get civil rights in return for having a government rule them.



Leviathan. www.cdhi.mala.bc.ca/jengine/theory.html

John Locke 1632–1704

- English philosopher
- New ideas about rights of people and their relationship to ruler
- Wrote that government was created for the people
- If rules did not protect the rights, then people had right to get new government
- American Revolution resulted from this idea



John Locke

Two Treatises of Government

- Government formed to protect people's natural rights.
- Government should have limited power.
- The type of government should be accepted by all citizens.
- Rejected absolute monarchy
- Government has an obligation to those it governs.
- People have the right to overthrow government if it fails its obligations or takes away natural rights (revolution).

Locke --- Natural Rights

- All people are free, equal and have “natural rights” of life, liberty, and property that rulers cannot take
- Power is in the people; not in rulers
- Influenced Thomas Jefferson—Declaration of Independence

Voltaire 1694-1778

- French philosopher
- Believed in possibility of social change and reform
- “Man is free at the instant he wants to be.”
- Tolerance, reason, freedom of religion and speech – Bill of Rights

Montesquieu 1689 – 1755

- French philosopher
- Argued that no single set of laws could apply to all people at all times
- Wrote the book –Spirit of the Laws - 1748
- Stated monarchy was not necessary if there was a better government

Separation of Power

- Montesquieu believed in idea of separation of powers and checks and balances to divide government into three branches
- Idea came from England—judicial, legislative, and executive powers
- Became the framework of the Constitution

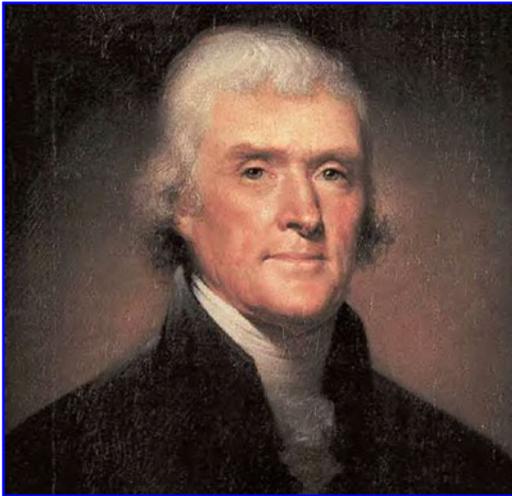
Jean Jacques Rousseau 1712 – 1778

- Political philosopher
- General will of people was the deciding factor---not the individual one
- Majority rule was the will of the people
- Social contract—between people and ruler
- If ruler ceases to protect the ruled, then they are free to choose new ruler
- Influenced Declaration of Independence

The American Enlightenment

- Based on knowledge of classical writings.
- Evolved at a time when people craved new knowledge and wisdom.
- That craving inspired people to make new developments in science, religion, and politics.
- Led to America's independence and the principles of the American Government
- Through enlightenment ideals people began to think that a ruler had to be held to higher laws .

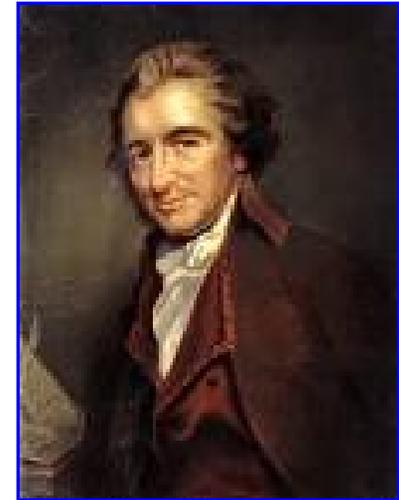
Enlightenment Thinkers of the American Revolution



Thomas Jefferson



Benjamin Franklin



Thomas Paine

“I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion.”

Letter to William Charles Jarvis. September 28, 1820.

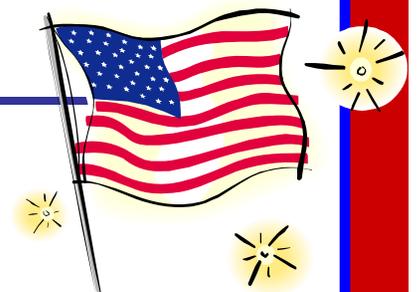
Thomas Jefferson

“He that would make his own liberty secure must guard even his enemy from oppression; for if he violates this duty he establishes a precedent that will reach to himself. “

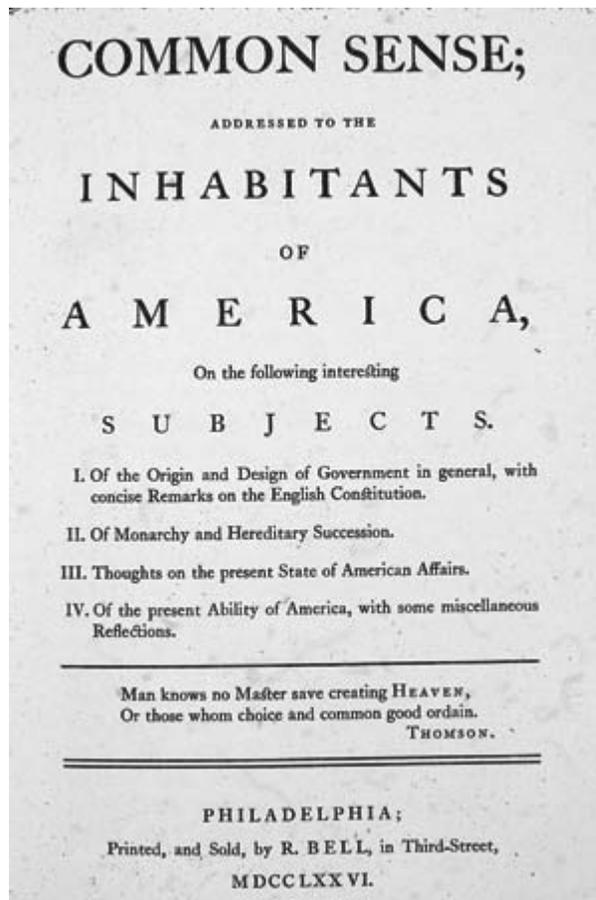
Thomas Paine, 1795

“Those who would give up Essential Liberty to purchase a little Temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety.”

The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 1755



Thomas Paine and Common Sense



- 1776 wrote Common Sense
- Urged Americans to declare independence
- Believed in Enlightenment ideas
- Challenged the idea of a king being the ruler

Enlightenment Shapes Independence

- “All men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”
- Governments derive their power and authority from “the consent of the governed”
- When any government infringes upon individual’s rights, “it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government”
- Declared the colonies to be “Free and Independent States”

Declaration of Independence

Enlightenment Shapes Government

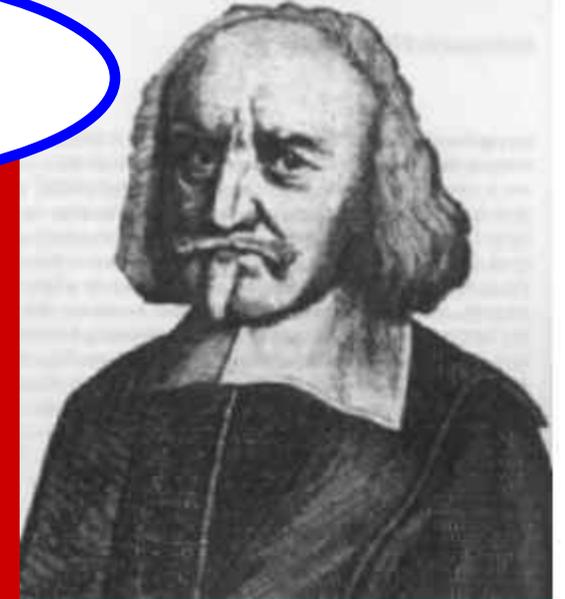
- Declaration of Independence -- sought to promise personal freedom to all citizens
- New form of government - based on the people's right to have a say
- Enlightenment philosophers shaped the making the Constitution
- Montesquieu -- the balance of power between three branches of government
- Rousseau-- the power of democracy and consent of the people were in the formation of the new government.

Enlightenment and the Rise of Democratic Ideas

- Natural Rights
- Social Contract
- Separation of Power

People in a state of nature give up their individual rights to a strong power in return for his protection, so social contract evolved out of self-interest.

John Hobbs



Social Contract



Jean-Jacques Rousseau

“In order to live in society, human beings agree to an implicit social contract, which gives them certain rights in return for giving up certain freedoms.”

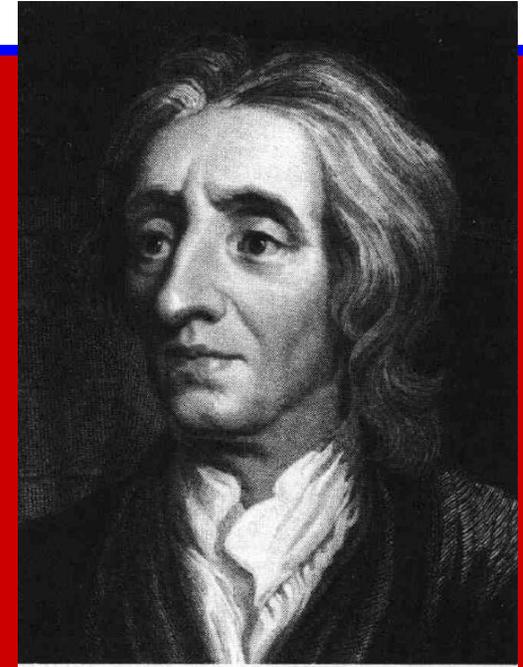
Social Contract

American Revolution

**Declaration
of
Independence**

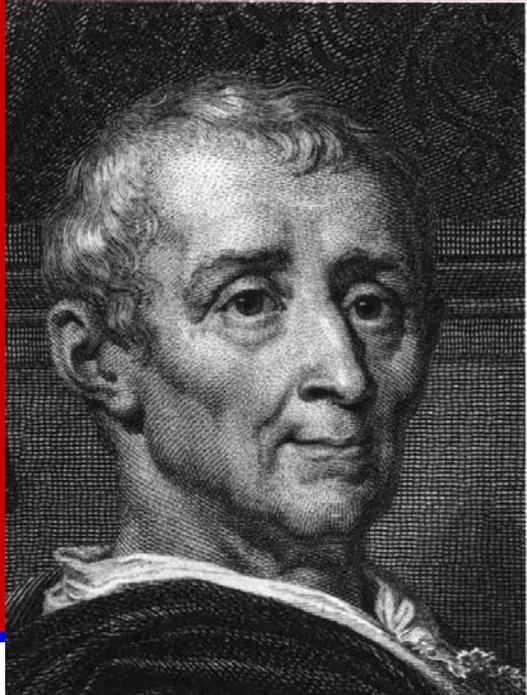
Constitution

John Locke, in his 1690 *Civil Government*, second treatise, separated the powers into an executive and a legislature.



**Separation
Of
Power**

**Checks
And
Balances**



Montesquieu, in his 1748 *Spirit of the Laws*, expanded on Locke adding a judiciary

"I may disagree with what you say, but I will defend till death your right to say it." Voltaire



Bill of Rights

Freedom of Religion

Civil Rights

Freedom of Speech

Questions

1. What is the Enlightenment?

A period of time in the 18th century when people began to change the way they felt about themselves, the role of the church, and their view of the world.

2. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are considered what?

Natural Rights

3. What Enlightenment thinkers influenced the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution?

Locke, Rousseau

Enlightenment

Hobbs	Social contract— Federalism
Locke	Government for people – Am. Revolution Natural rights- life, liberty, property — Declaration of Independence
Voltaire	Tolerance, reason, freedom of religion and speech – Bill of Rights
Montesquieu	Separation of Powers --Constitution
Rousseau	Religious Freedom -- Bill of Rights