

The Revolution Period (1750-1800)

Benjamin Franklin

J. Hector St. Jean de Crèvecoeur

Thomas Paine

Thomas Jefferson

- Writings not for private soul-searching but for the public
- The writers that follow help shape the American consciousness.

“What Then is an American?”

- Crèvecoeur
- “Letters from an American Farmer”
- P. 312-13

Benjamin Franklin & the American Dream

- Franklin left school at 10. Two years later, he was apprenticed to his brother James, a printer. Franklin stayed 5 years out of courtesy and then went to New York and then to Philadelphia. He was almost penniless in Philadelphia, and had been able through luck and work to make a fortune and to retire at the age of 42.

- He later devoted his time to inventing. He became a leading scientist.
- In 1757, he was elected to the Second Continental Congress.
- By 1770, he was the chief spokesman for the colonies.
- Franklin's popularity helped the colonies gain the support of France and Spain, an important factor in the victory of the American Revolution.

- *The Autobiography*
- *Poor Richard's Almanac*

Poor Richard's Almanac, 1732-57

- At twenty years of age, the will reigns; at thirty, the wit; and at forty, the judgment.
- We must indeed all hang together, or most assuredly, we shall all hang separately.
- He that lives upon hope will die fasting.
- Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterwards.
- Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that's the stuff life is made of.
- Three may keep a secret, if two of them are dead.

More aphorisms

- Fish and visitors smell in three days.
- Little strokes fell great oaks.
- Where there's marriage without love, there will be love without marriage.
- There are no gains without pains.
- God helps those who help themselves.

The Autobiography

- Theo-centered world → human-centered world
- Franklin was “deistic”: He conceived of God as a necessary cause; a creative force that had designed the cosmos and set it in motion according to rational laws, but, having done so, had withdrawn from human affairs.

The Autobiography

- Traces of the Puritan ethics: Franklin's proclivity for the self-examined life. P. 284-88.

The Autobiography

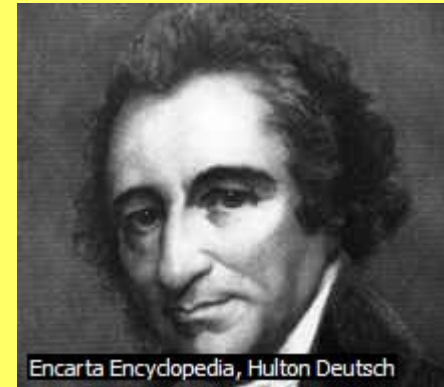
- Paragraphs that show how Franklin made himself into a success:
- Interested in Reading, p. 238
- Starting a New Life in Philadelphia, p. 246
- Learning Writing by himself, p. 239-40
- Forming the Junto Club, p. 269

Question

- Why did Franklin's words maintained in the United States nearly the status of Holy Writ for a century? Franklin's *Autobiography* teaches that whoever practices frugality, honesty, industry, and like virtues can duplicate his prestige and career. In which way is Franklin's *Autobiography* flattering to the Americans?

- Thomas Paine
- Thomas Jefferson-John Adams

Thomas Paine



During the 1770s political philosopher and writer Thomas Paine agitated for American independence from Britain. One of the most eloquent figures of the period, Paine voiced American revolutionary sentiments with his 1776 pamphlet, *Common Sense*. In the popular and inspirational pamphlet, Paine asserted that Great Britain exploited the American colonies and contributed nothing to America's well-being.

Common Sense

- Paine published his most famous work, the 50-page pamphlet, *Common Sense*, on January 10, 1776.
- In a dramatic, rhetorical style, the document asserted that



- the American colonies received no advantage from Great Britain, which was exploiting them, and that every consideration of common sense called for the colonies to become independent and establish a republican government of their own.

Common Sense

- Introduction

Read esp. the 2nd paragraph about the abuse of power and the lack of self-reflection (326)

- “That government is best which governs not at all.”--Thoreau

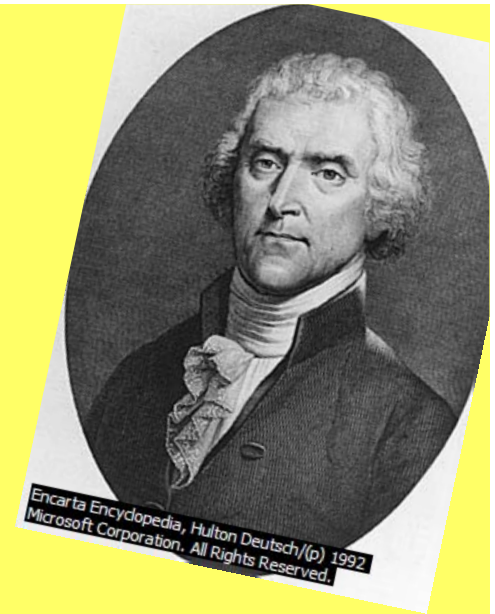
“The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind” (326).

Common Sense

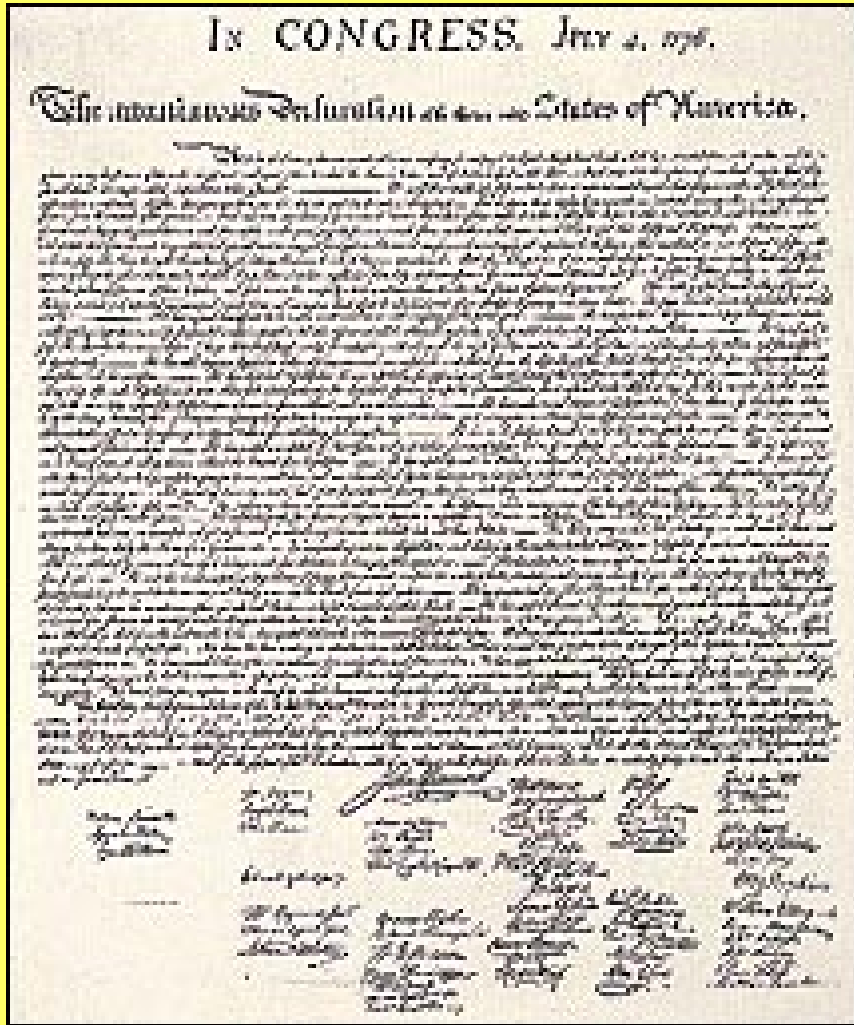
- Government of our own is our natural right (331)
- O! ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. ... O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind (332).

Thomas Jefferson

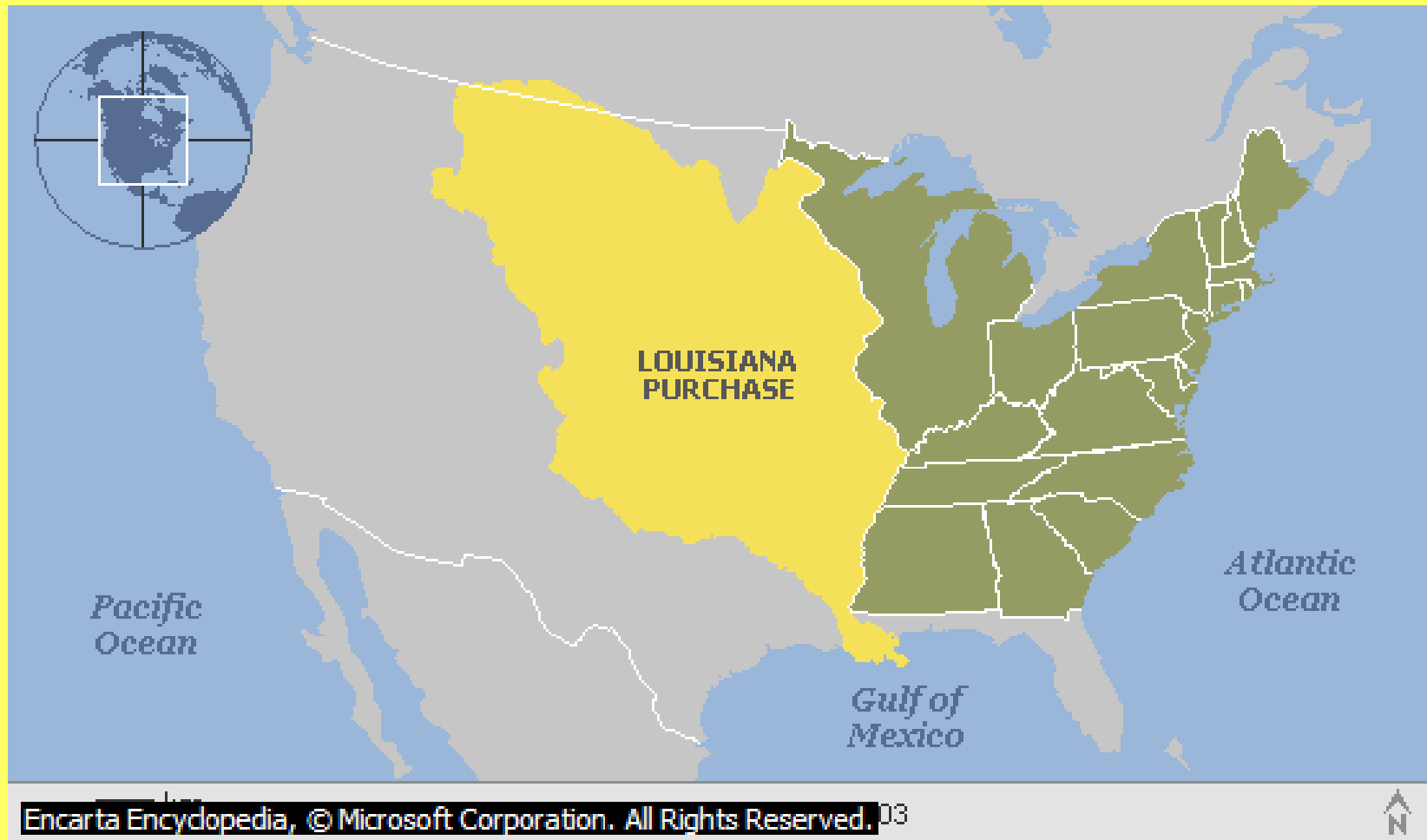
- Declaration of independence
- America's symbol of liberty
- **1787** U.S. Constitution adopted



Thomas Jefferson was the author of the Declaration of Independence, a principal leader in the American Revolution, and the third president of the United States. Jefferson is also regarded as a great political thinker and diplomat. The U.S. doubled its area in 1803 when he bought territory west of the Mississippi called the Louisiana Purchase. Recited by an actor.



The Declaration of Independence, drafted principally by Thomas Jefferson, is the document in which American colonists proclaimed their freedom from British rule. The Second Continental Congress, with representatives of the 13 British colonies in America, adopted the declaration on July 4, 1776. The document included an expression of the colonists' grievances and their reasons for declaring freedom from Britain. The declaration's eloquent rhetoric and political significance rank it as one of the great historical documents.



In 1803 United States President Thomas **Jefferson** paid Napoleon Bonaparte of France \$15 million for about 2.1 million sq km (about 800,000 sq mi) of land west of the Mississippi River. Shown here amid the present-day U.S. boundaries, the Louisiana Purchase provided growing room for the young nation.

The Declaration of Independence

- So as to justify the breaking of ties between the colonies and the mother country, Jefferson presented in this text
 - a statement of principle (the ideals of individual liberty)
 - a list of grievances against King George III,
 - and the formal announcement of independence.

p. 342 We hold these truths to be self-evident, that 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. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, having its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Terms

- American dream
- Deism

Question

- "Franklin was a shameless self-promoter with numerous achievements, almost all of which were accomplished primarily to gain himself fame and bragging rights. Moreover, he was blindly idealistic, and did not concern himself with Americans not as lucky as himself." Defend or refute this statement.