

Enlightenment

Reason and Revolution

1750-1800

Social Scene

Population: 2 million

Colonies: 13

Most still feel British

Nothing west of the
Appalachians

Industrial Revolution has
not yet arrived

Land = Wealth



Social Scene

Spain to the south

France to the north

Native tribes to the west

Puritans have gone but
their influence remains

- Hard Work
- Discipline
- Frugality

We add another

- Exploitation



Social Scene

- 1754-1763: French and Indian War
 - Captures significant territory for Britain
 - Colonies don't have much money, so they grant land
 - Washington
 - 52,000 acres and 80 square miles
- All 13 colonies practice slavery
 - Tobacco, Cotton, and Plantations
 - Washington and Jefferson enslave hundreds of people

Political Scene: 1763 Royal Proclamation

- Prohibits colonists from settling west of the Appalachians
 - Limits expensive conflict with native tribes
 - Keeps the colonists close—dependent on Britain
 - Renders “western” property worthless
 - Kills any opportunity for profit
- Wealthy planters and businessmen are frustrated
 - Washington, Madison, Jefferson, and others

Political Scene: Tensions Build

- 1765: Stamp Act—first of many taxes to come
- 1770: Boston Massacre—Redcoats everywhere!
- 1773: Boston Tea Party
- 1774: First Continental Congress
 - Creates diplomatic relationship with England

Political Scene: Tensions Boil

- 1775: Lord Dunham issues a proclamation offering freedom to slaves who escape Patriot masters and join pro-British Loyalists
 - Wealthy planters are not just frustrated—they're furious
- 1775: Second Continental Congress
 - Creates a militia
- 1775: Shot heard 'round the world
 - British try to seize militia artillery at Lexington and Concord

Political Scene: Tensions Boil Over

- 1776: Thomas Paine publishes Common Sense
- 1776: Revolution begins—Declaration of Independence
- 1781: War ends—Yorktown, VA
- 1783: Revolution ends—Treaty of Paris
- 1787: Constitution
- 1789: Washington elected first President a new nation: USA

Political Scene: Rich Man's Revolt

- While “democracy” is on the minds of some, this revolt is more about keeping Britain out of their business... particularly the business of the wealthy
 - Land Exploitation—Royal Proclamation
 - Labor Exploitation—Slavery
 - Taxation without Representation
- Self-governance is the only way to achieve this

Literary Scene

- Though the Industrial Revolution has yet to reach the colonies, the developing field of science and the popularity of many European philosophers spurs a new way of thinking—an “enlightenment”
- This new interest in **reason**, **logic** and **secularism** is a reaction against the nation’s Puritan roots and creates a new kind of colonist: the civic-minded citizen

Literary Scene: Reason, Logic, Secularism

- Civic Duty
 - Public domain replaces private sphere—speeches flourish
- Civic Knowledge
 - Public newspapers and pamphlets replace private journals
- **Republicanism**
 - Gov't for and by the people
- Secularism
 - Exclusion of religion from public affairs
 - Separation of Church and State
 - Religious tolerance

Literary Scene: Reason, Logic, Secularism

- Though beginning to define itself as a culture apart from England, there is still no “American” fiction of note
- Public Writing on Civic Matters
 - The Federalist Papers
 - Articles of Confederation
 - Common Sense
- Public Debate on Civic Matters
 - **Oratory**: the art of skilled, eloquent public speaking

Literary Features

1. Celebrates reason over faith
 - *Clarity, Order, Balance*
2. Celebrates perfection
 - *Individual and Society*
3. Nature as mechanical and orderly
 - *Something to Harness*

Rhetoric and Writing: Scholarly vs Common

- Scholarly
 - Complex Syntax: arrangement of words in a sentence
 - **Allusions**: reference to something or someone outside the immediate scope of a work
 - Foreign Words and Phrases

Rhetoric and Writing: Scholarly vs Common

- Common
 - Conversational Syntax
 - **Anecdotes**: brief, often witty story of a personal event
 - **Aphorisms**: brief, witty statement expressing a general truth or lesson
 - **Idioms**: figure of speech; an expression

Speech to the Virginia Convention

- Patrick Henry (1775)
- Masterful exercise in Aristotelian persuasion
 - **Pathos:** appeal to emotions and values
 - **Logos:** appeal to logic and reason
 - **Ethos:** appeal to credibility and authority
- **Rhetorical Question:** question asked for dramatic effect that requires no answer
- **Repetition:** repeated use of any element of language
- **Parallelism:** repetition of a grammatical structure
- **Exclamation:** sudden emotional remark

Common Sense

- Thomas Paine (1776)
- Sells over 500,000 copies
- Calls for revolt, converted millions, and set out a vision of a new “democratic” society
- Masterful exercise in Aristotelian argument
- Divided into four sections
 - Origin and Design of Gov’t
 - Monarchy and Hereditary Succession
 - Present State of American Affairs
 - Present Ability of America

Declaration of Independence (1776)

“An expression of the American mind”

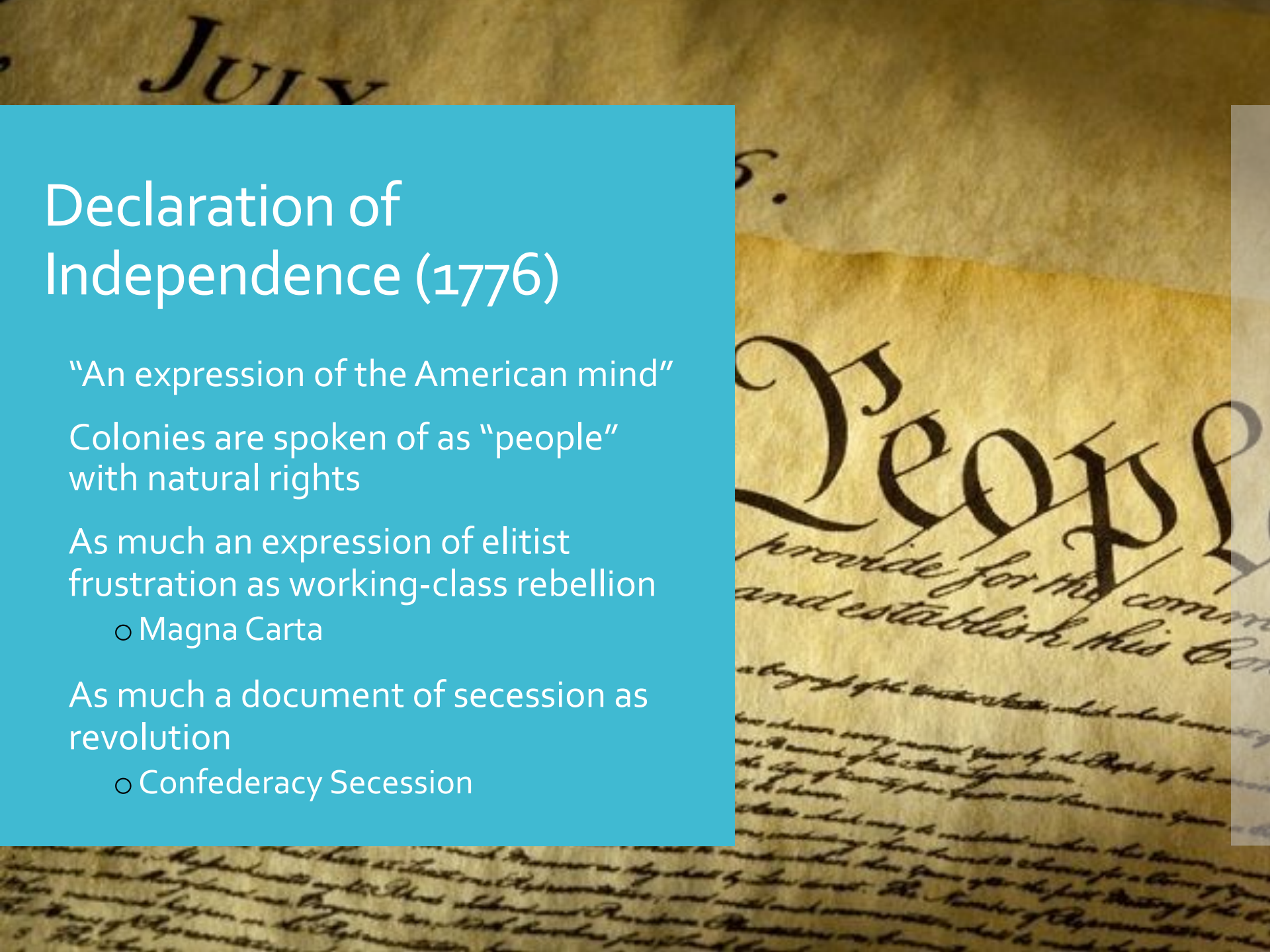
Colonies are spoken of as “people” with natural rights

As much an expression of elitist frustration as working-class rebellion

- Magna Carta

As much a document of secession as revolution

- Confederacy Secession



The background image shows a close-up of the original Declaration of Independence document. The word "People" is written in large, ornate, black calligraphic letters. Below it, the text "provide for the common and establish this Con" is visible in a smaller, cursive script. The paper is aged and yellowed, with some faint text visible in the background.

Declaration of Independence

- “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.”
 - Black Men? Women? Indigenous People?
 - White men—particularly those with land
- Ironically, the founding of American democracy comes at the expense of indigenous political systems and on the backs of enslaved human beings.

Slave Trade by the Numbers

12,000,000

- Africans transported across the Atlantic 1450-1850

1 in 5

- "Americans" enslaved

40%

- The South's population that is enslaved

60%

- South Carolina's enslaved population

3/5

- Constitutionally-ratified worth of each enslaved individual

Slave Narratives

- Autobiographical account of slavery
- Over 6,000 published in U.S. and England
- Over 200 book-length narratives
- Writers are exceptional
 - They have obtained literacy
 - Consequently, they are not always “typical”

Olaudah Equiano

1745-1797

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustvas Vassa, the African (1789)

Born in West Africa

Kidnapped at age 11

Purchased by a Virginia sea captain

Enslaved 10 years before buying freedom

Moves to England, becomes an abolitionist



A detailed black and white engraving of Benjamin Franklin's face, showing his eyes, nose, and mouth. The engraving uses fine lines and cross-hatching to create texture and shading. A teal-colored rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

Benjamin Franklin

1706-1790

Man of reason and science—printer, statesman, author, inventor—there is nothing Puritanical about him

Deist

- Belief in God based on reason not faith
- Like a watchmaker, God sets the universe in motion but doesn't interfere

Optimistic of human nature

- Held no concept of sin—only mistakes

The Autobiography

Published posthumously in 1791

Each section addresses a different audience

First section: financially driven

Final section: the most patriotic

Middle section: "13 Virtues"

While Paine's *Common Sense* outlines the civic ideal, Franklin's *Autobiography* outlines the human ideal

