

Some Items Contributing to “The Enlightenment”

In Philosophy

1637 – “I think, therefore I am.”

Discourse on Method by Rene Descartes

Skepticism challenged previously held assumptions, even those of Church & Crown.

In Science

1687 – *Laws of Motion*

Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy by Sir Isaac Newton

Natural laws govern a world of individuals, not the Church & the Crown.

In Government

1688 – “The Glorious Revolution” shut Catholicism out of England & began limiting the Crown.

1689 – “Bill of Rights” protected Englishmen from both Catholic Rome & the English Crown.

- That the pretended power of suspending the laws or the execution of laws by regal authority without consent of Parliament is illegal;
- That the pretended power of dispensing with laws or the execution of laws by regal authority, as it hath been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal;
- That the commission for erecting the late Court of Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes, and all other commissions and courts of like nature, are illegal and pernicious;
- That levying money for or to the use of the Crown by pretence of prerogative, without grant of Parliament, for longer time, or in other manner than the same is or shall be granted, is illegal;
- That it is the right of the subjects to petition the king, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal;
- That the raising or keeping a standing army within the kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with consent of Parliament, is against law;
- That the subjects which are Protestants may have arms for their defence suitable to their conditions and as allowed by law;
- That election of members of Parliament ought to be free;
- That the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament;
- That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted;
- That jurors ought to be duly impanelled and returned, and jurors which pass upon men in trials for high treason ought to be freeholders;
- That all grants and promises of fines and forfeitures of particular persons before conviction are illegal and void;
- And that for redress of all grievances, and for the amending, strengthening and preserving of the laws, Parliaments ought to be held frequently.

“The Enlightenment” of the 1600’s tended to arouse skepticism regarding the established order of things regarding both Church & Crown.

1706 – Benjamin Franklin born in Massachusetts.

1727-

1733 – The “Holy Club” was established by Charles Wesley (1707-1788), when he was student at Christ Church College in Oxford. His brother, John Wesley (1703-1791) joined in 1729 and George Whitefield (1714-1770) also became a member of this society which promoted a system of holy living that included Bible study, prayer, fasting & aiding the poor and those imprisoned. Members were derided for their “methodism.”

By rule they eat, by rule they drink,
By rule do all things but think.
Accuse the priests of loose behavior.
To get more in the laymen's favor.
Method alone must guide 'em all
When themselves "Methodists" they call.

1732 – George Washington born in Virginia.

1733 - James Oglethorpe (1696-1785) established **GEORGIA** as a place for those in English prisons (due to debts & religious non-conformity) to have a fresh start in America.

1733 – (about) 1750 - The “Great Awakening” in England & the Colonies

- Preaching by Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) at Northampton, Massachusetts, appealed to the emotions of the people (guilt & need of salvation), bringing “new light” to Colonial Christianity. [Preaching which reinforced the spiritual status quo was considered “old light.”] The impact of Edwards’ preaching reached even as far as England.
- George Whitefield’s emotion-oriented, open-air preaching in England & North America drew more listeners than buildings could hold.
- Charles Wesley wrote several thousand emotion-oriented hymns.
- John Wesley’s “Methodism” continued in England, despite of its non-conformist status.
- Jonathan Edwards preached his most famous sermon, “Sinners in the hands of an angry God” in 1741.

1735 – John Adams born in Massachusetts..

1743 – Thomas Jefferson born in Virginia.

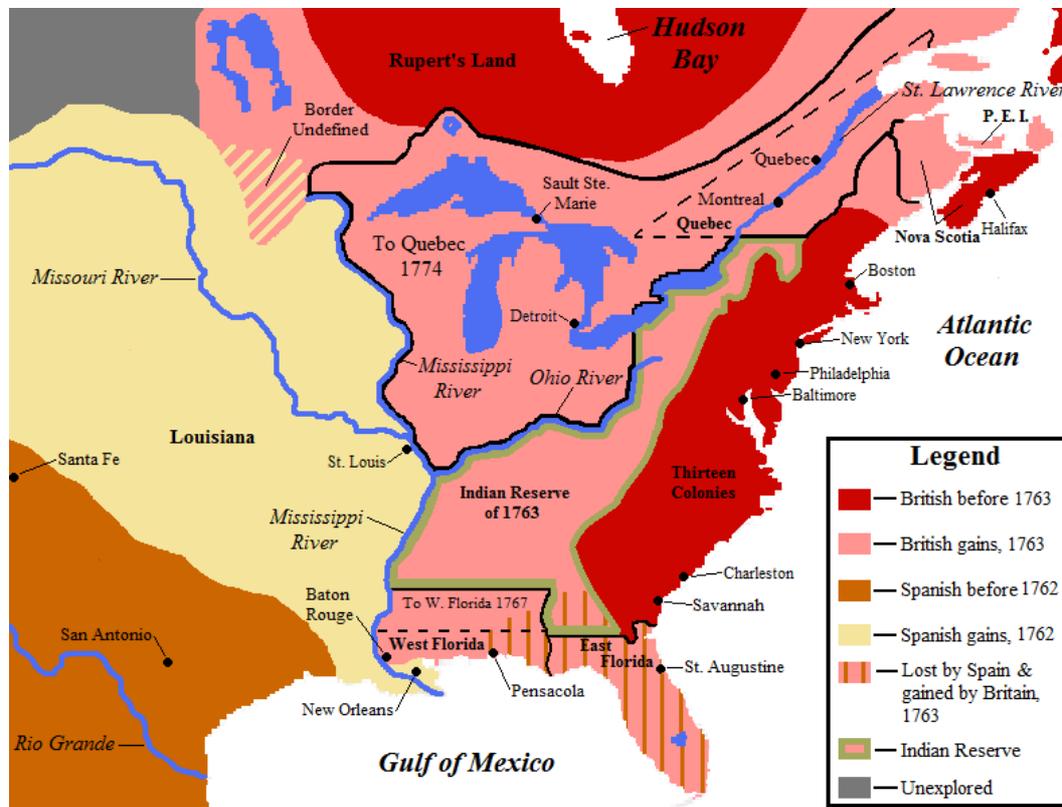
1745– John Jay born in New York City.

1751 – James Madison born in Virginia

1755 – Alexander Hamilton born in the British West Indies



CHANGES BROUGHT ON BY THE FRENCH-INDIAN WAR OF 1754-1763



The State of Colonial Faith in 1776

Church membership at this time represented about 10% of the total colonial population. (Keep in mind that “membership” was typically limited to adult free males, while the total population included women, children & slaves.)

Denominational Breakdown

Congregationalists (with 21 % of the total colonial congregations) were strongest in:
MA, CT & NH

Presbyterians (with 18 % of the total colonial congregations) were strongest in:
PA, NJ & VA

Baptists (with 15 % of the total colonial congregations) were strongest in:
VA, MA & RI

Episcopalians (with 15 % of the total colonial congregations) were strongest in:
VA, MD & CT

Quakers (with 10 % of the total colonial congregations) were strongest in:
PA, NJ & VA

German Reform (with 5 % of the total colonial congregations) was strongest in:
PA, MD & NC

Lutherans (with 5 % of the total colonial congregations) were strongest in:
PA, NY & NJ

Dutch Reform (with 4 % of the total colonial congregations) was strongest in:
NY, PA & NJ

Methodists (with 2 % of the total colonial congregations) were strongest in:
MD, NJ & VA

Roman Catholicism (with 2 % of the total colonial congregations) was strongest in:
MD, PA & DE

Moravian Brethren (with 1 % of the total colonial congregations) was strongest in:
PA, NY & NC

Separatists/Independents (with 1 % of the total colonial congregations) were strongest in:
CT & MA