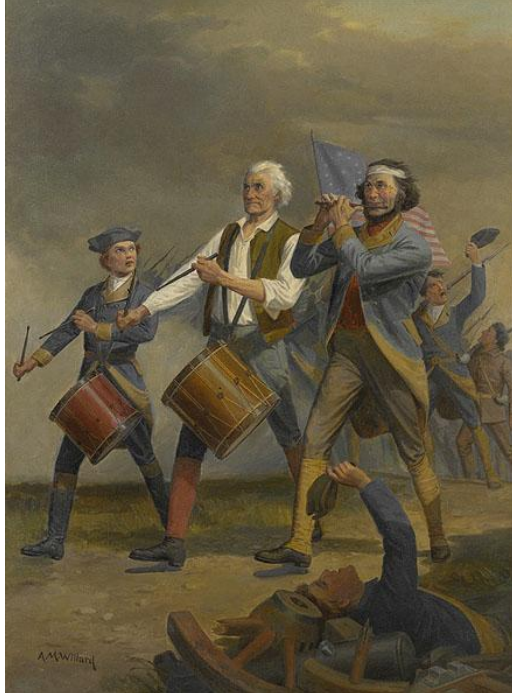


Unit 2A Part 1:
Legacy of the
American
Revolution

1



Political Revolution

- The War for Independence started a debate over government
 - **The British system balanced monarchy, aristocracy, and the common people**
 - How could the common people alone run a nation?

2

- Americans agreed that we needed a republican government, but republics were considered fragile
 - **The Roman Republic had fallen and been replaced by an Imperial system**
- **We presumed that a republic would only survive if people were good & placed the state above personal interests (does this sound realistic?)**



3



- Americans experimented at the state level
 - Almost all the states replaced colonial charters with new constitutions
- State constitutions shared many qualities later used in the national constitution
 - **The people were sovereign**
 - **Government authority was limited**
 - **Separation of powers to safeguard against abuses**
 - **Bill of rights to protect freedom of speech, trial by jury, etc.**

4

Articles of Confederation

- The Second Continental Congress ran the U.S. without a constitution until 1781
 - Maryland refused to agree to the Articles of Confederation until other states gave up their claims to western lands
 - Why?
- System of government from 1781-1789
- The Articles gave the federal government lots of responsibility...
 - Power to make treaties, borrow money, declare war



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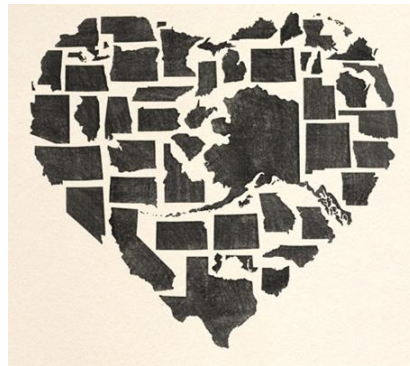
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- ...but little authority
 - After fighting Britain, states rejected a strong central government
- Power resided with the states –
 - Federal government had no courts (no judiciary)
 - No power of enforcement (no executive)
 - Could not levy taxes
 - Had to rely on state legislatures to give money



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- Amendment to the Articles required *unanimous* consent of the states
 - How likely is it that *all* states can agree on anything?



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Social Revolution

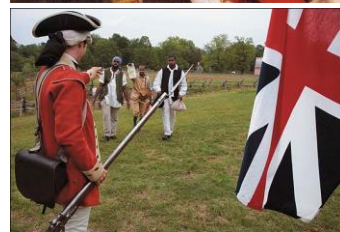
- The war provoked a renewed spirit of equality
 - Commoners had served in the army or militia
 - Property qualifications for voting tended to be lowered, but were still present
 - More proportional representation in state legislatures (frontier = coast)



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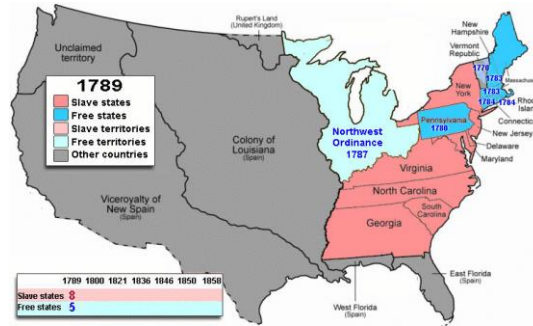
Slavery Paradox

- How could we fight for freedom while denying it to others?
 - Many blacks in the South fought for the British (who promised them freedom)
 - In the North many fought in Patriot units



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- In the North, state constitutions emancipated their slaves
- In the South slavery remained
 - Some, such as Washington, freed their slaves voluntarily (manumission)



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Status of Women

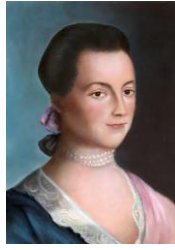
- New opportunities -- the pre-war boycotts had depended on women to succeed (homespun clothes, homemade tea, etc.)
 - During the war women supported the armies (Nurses, couriers, cooks, etc.)



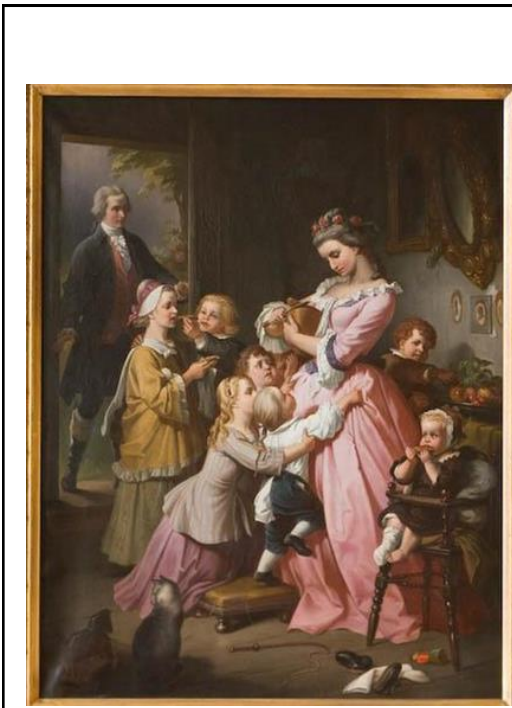
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- Revolutionary women
 - “Molly Pitcher”
 - helped fight at the Battle of Monmouth (likely folklore)
 - Abigail Adams
 - Asked her husband John Adams to “remember the ladies” after the war when forming a new government



13



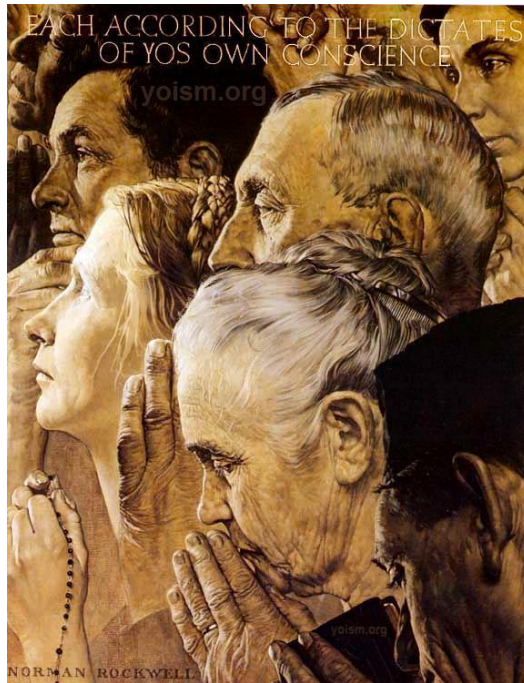
- Republican Motherhood
 - Belief that the Republic needed mothers to raise children to be virtuous and patriotic
 - Reinforced a woman’s place at home



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Freedom of Religion

- Toleration of dissent turned into full freedom in the new state constitutions
- Almost all states eliminated tax support for churches



15

New American Culture



- Independence Day quickly became a popular and important ritual, which brought together Americans of all kinds
 - **July 4 became the official holiday by accident**
 - July 2 was when Congress passed the resolution declaring independence; July 4 was when they approved the Declaration of Independence
 - However, on July 2, 1777 Congress forgot to celebrate their vote from the year before, so July 4 won by default

16

American Exceptionalism

- The belief that America is a unique nation in human history
 - Instead of sharing an ancient ethnicity like European nations, we were a nation connected by enlightenment ideals
 - Since the Puritans landed many believed Americans were a people chosen by God, and our victory seemed to confirm those beliefs
 - Now it seemed our mission now was to lead the world toward greater liberty and equality



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