**Part two of this lecture deals with “Ideas behind the Revolution”**

In this, we will be looking at two major events, as well as three people. The first event is the Enlightenment, with John Locke and Thomas Paine. Secondly, we will discuss the Great Awakening, with Jonathan Edwards.

First, we’ll talk about John Locke. John Locke was an English philosopher during a time period that we call the “Enlightenment,” and he came up with the “Social Contract” theory. In this theory, society has a contract with government. In this “Social Contract,” people must obey the rules of society. In return, the government will protect its people. Locke believed that all people have ‘natural rights’ of life, liberty/freedom, and property, and that it is a government’s job to protect these rights. This ideas would be seen soon later when Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence…only Jefferson changes it to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. Anyway, Locke believed that all people are born with this natural rights, and these rights cannot be taken away. Locke also argued, and this is very important, that because of the social contract, people have a right and a responsibility to overthrow the government when it fails to protect people’s natural rights.

Think about how this applies to the colonists—they should have rights to life, liberty, and property…yet the British are constantly taxing them, allowing soldiers to come inside of their homes, and telling the colonists how to live. The colonists see this as a violation of natural rights, and therefore the government should be overthrown!

Our next guy is Thomas Paine. Thomas Paine was known for one thing in particular, and that was a pamphlet that he wrote in 1775 called Common Sense. In a clear, simple language that everyday people could understand, it listed complaints against the king and explained to the colonists why they should declare their independence from Britain. Remember, this was the central issue of the day, and divided many of the colonists. This pamphlet was read everywhere—in all thirteen colonies, in town meetings, in taverns, in church. George Washington even had all of his men read it when the war began. Among the arguments Paine makes are:

* It was absurd for an island to rule a continent.;
* America was not a "British nation"; but was composed of influences and peoples from all of Europe; and
* Britain ruled the colonies for her [own benefit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercantilism), and did not consider the best interests of the colonists in governing Britain.

In Paine’s Common Sense, he went on to create a list of complaints against the king, many of which would be used again when Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence.

Thomas Paine and John Locke were both part of a movement called the “Enlightenment.” The enlightenment was a movement that began in Europe and spread to America. During this time, people began to use reason, and the scientific method to look for answers, rather than faith. It was a time period in which traditional ideas were challenged, and people focused on human achievement rather than spiritual. While religion was still important, it became more intertwined with science, and enlightenment thinkers often rejected ideas of miracles, and supernatural forces.

Another idea occurring between the 1730s and the 1740s was the Great Awakening. This was a religious revival led by a preacher named Jonathan Edwards. Edwards noticed that many people were often going to church and partaking in ceremonies, but not living a righteous life in any other aspects. In his most famous sermon, “Sinners in the hands of an Angry God,” Edwards preached that all men are the same, rich or poor, in the eyes of God, and in order to get to heaven, one must constantly live life as stated in the Bible. God was angry because so many people on Earth were sinners. Edwards sermon became extremely popular, and people would come from miles around to hear it. To help spread the message, passionate young itinerant traveling preachers would go all over, and preach wherever they could to the public. These preachers often delivered the sermon in attics, barns, and even taverns across the colonies. This movement led to a rise in Baptist and Methodist churches as well. Finally, the movement was able to unite the colonists—they were all the same in the eyes of God, so one earthly person should not be able to control over another, as Britain was doing to the colonists.

Now, remember the First Continental Congress? They had decided to boycott British goods, form state militias, and appealed to the King to create a solution for the problems? Well, they had also decided that they would meet again in one year, and that year came in May, 1775 when the Second Continental Congress met. Again, it was in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and within a short period of their meeting, the American Revolutionary War had begun. Many of the same notable people from the First Continental Congress were there, as well as some new faces. The purpose was to debate as to whether or not the colonies should fight for independence.

Those wanting independence included: Sam Adams, whom you know from the Boston Tea Party; John Adams, the lawyer who defended the British soldiers after the Boston Massacre; Patrick Henry, who in a church in Virginia said, “Give me liberty or give me death;” Thomas Jefferson, whom we will discuss in just a minute; and Richard Henry Lee, a well known Virginian.

Among the most famous against fighting the British was Pennsylvanian John Dickinson; while he was not in favor of how the British were treating the colonies, he looked for other methods of peace instead of fighting.

In the end, the delegates at the Second Continental Congress decided to declare independence.

A committee was formed – John Adams, Ben Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson are some of the names you would be more familiar with. Of these, Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration, mainly on his own. He was inspired by fellow Virginian George Mason’s document, *Virginia Declaration of Rights*.

The Declaration has four parts – People Don’t Come Rule is how to remember it. Remember, the colonists were fighting to get rid of British rule, so “Please don’t come rule.” That stands for: Preamble, Declaration of Rights, List of Complaints, and Resolution.

The Preamble is the introduction to the document, and explains the purpose and reason why the colonists are declaring independence.

The next section, the Declaration of Rights. Now which enlightenment thinker spoke about natural rights? You got it, John Locke. Just as John Locke talked about life, liberty, and property, Thomas Jefferson included Locke’s ideas in this section. Jefferson stated, as Locke had already, that people had natural rights (of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness), and the people are bound to a social contract with the government.

The third part of the Declaration of Independence was the List of complaints. As you know, Thomas Paine made many complaints against King George in his pamphlet Common Sense. Jefferson is going to use many of Paine’s ideas here, stating that King George had violated the colonists rights; government was based off of law, not the kings desire.

The fourth and final part of the Declaration of Independence was the resolution. This stated exactly what the colonies wanted. “These United Colonies are, and of Right out to be Free and independent states.”

On July 4th, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed and adopted. Now, this small collection of colonies was going to have to attempt to defeat the greatest army in the world.