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Introduction

The American Revolution (1754–1781)

Before and during the French and Indian War, from about 1650 to 1763, Britain essentially left its American colonies to run themselves in an age of salutary neglect. Given relative freedom to do as they pleased, the North American settlers turned to unique forms of government to match their developing new identity as Americans. They established representative legislatures and democratic town meetings. They also enjoyed such rights as local judiciaries and trials by jury in which defendants were assumed innocent until proven guilty. American shipping, although theoretically regulated by the Navigation Act, functioned apart from the mighty British fleet for more than a hundred years. Finally, the promise of an expansive, untamed continent gave all settlers a sense of freedom and the ability to start fresh in the New World. After the French and Indian War, the age of salutary neglect was finished. Britain, wanting to replenish its drained treasury, placed a larger tax burden on America and tightened regulations in the colonies. Over the years, Americans were forbidden to circulate local printed currencies, ordered to house British troops, made to comply with restrictive shipping policies, and forced to pay unpopular taxes. Furthermore, many of those failing to comply with the new rules found themselves facing a British judge without jury. Americans were shocked and offended by what they regarded as violations of their liberties. Over time, this shock turned to indignation, which ultimately grew into desire for rebellion. In a mere twelve years—between the end of the French and Indian War in 1763 and the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1775—the colonists moved from offering nightly toasts to King George III's health to demonstrations of outright hostility toward the British Crown.

The Literate Birth of Nation

The writers of this period were the men who led the Revolution of 1775-1783, the Founding Fathers, an those men who wrote the Constitution of 1789. They were not writers of fiction. They were practical philosophers, and their most typical product was the political pamphlet. They all admired and were active in the Eurpean „Age of Reason“and the „Enlightement“. Unlike the Puritans – who thought that man was born sinful – the Enlightenment thinkers were sure that men can improve themselves. The Enlightenment thinkers were: Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Pain, ,Benjamin Franklin, John Dickinson, John Adams, Philip Fernau, John Trumbull, Thimoty Dwight, Joel Barlow, William Dunlap, Royall Tyler.

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