A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE RIGHTS OF BRITISH AMERICA, SET FORTH IN SOME RESOLUTIONS INTENDED FOR THE INSPECTION OF THE PRESENT DELEGATES OF THE PEOPLE OF VIRGINIA, NOW IN CONVENTION.

By a NATIVE, and MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF BURGESSES.

WILLIAMSBURG: Printed by CLEMENTINARIND

By the United States in Congress assembled,

WHEREAS, it is the wish of the majority of the people of the United States, that the rights of British America should be respected, and that the present convention for the union of the several states, may be properly regulated and directed.

RESOLVED, That a committee of five shall be appointed, to draw up a plan for the union of the several states, and to present it to the convention. 

Ordered, That the same shall be printed and distributed among the members of the convention.

February 20, 1787.
CREDITS

Virginia Museum of History & Culture

Project Directors
Margaret Creech, Hailey Fenner

Project Writer
Rachel Williams

Design, Production, & Marketing
Virginia Museum of History and Culture Marketing Department, Hailey Fenner

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture’s Education team thanks the many people and departments who contributed their time to this project.

IMAGE CREDITS

All objects are from the Virginia Museum of History & Culture collections, except the following: Map, British and French Dominions in North American, 1755 (Library of Congress) and Mad Tom in a Rage (Met Museum).
INTRODUCTION

Creating A New Nation will introduce students to significant events, figures, and documents that influenced the founding of the United States of America. From the Declaration of Independence to the first attempt at self-government under the Articles of Confederation, to the eventual writing and adopting of the U.S. Constitution, this packet will explore primary sources that help tell the story of how the U.S. government was formed.

READING AND ANALYZING

This primary source packet is designed to help familiarize students with a variety of primary source material including broadsides, maps, letters, census data, political cartoons, and legal documents. When analyzing the materials, keep in mind the origin of the source - who created it? What was the purpose? Was it meant to be public or private? These questions, the material in the corresponding source packet, and the guidelines below will provide an avenue for integrating museum collections into the classroom.

BACKGROUND: Creating A New Nation

In 1776, American colonists made the bold move to declare themselves independent of British rule. However, the Declaration of Independence did more than just state America’s grievances with British policies toward colonists. It also asserted several important philosophical principles about freedom, power, and government. First, it claimed that “all men are created equal” and possess the “unalienable” rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Second, it stated that power only comes from the consent, or permission, of the people. Third, it stated that the only reason governments exist is to ensure those unalienable rights. So, if a government is no longer protecting these rights, the people have the power to alter or abolish its government. Americans were boldly stating that England had violated their rights. Therefore, they chose to abolish British rule and claimed their own independence as a separate and free nation.

However, the Declaration of Independence and the war that followed were only the beginning of the struggle for independence. If America was to no longer be under the rule of England, then who would rule? In the late 18th century, the world was ruled by kings and queens, but Americans chose to make another bold move and entrust government’s power into the hands of its citizens, (white, land owning males), instead of a monarchy. This transition did not happen easily. America’s first attempt at self-government under the Articles of Confederation proved to be riddled with problems.

Under the Articles, the states agreed to work together but each individual state retained its own power. After their experience with England, Americans were so afraid of a strong national government that they created a very weak central government that lacked the power to effectively govern a new nation.

It did not take long for American leaders to realize that changes needed to be made. When the issues within the Articles of Confederation could no longer be ignored, each state sent a group of delegates to a convention with the intent of correcting it. Soon, this group of men understood that fixing the Articles would be a long and arduous process. Instead, they decided to start over and create a new form of government. Meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania over a four-month period in the summer of 1787, fifty-five men discussed, debated, and compromised, and wrote what would become the U.S. Constitution. But the transition from the Articles of Confederation to the U.S. Constitution was not a smooth one. Americans were deeply divided about whether to accept this new governing document.

Who should have power in government? How much power should the government have? What rights should individuals be guaranteed? How should the government protect these rights? All of these were questions that had to be confronted and answered as Americans debated our national identity.
LIST OF SOURCES

Broadside, Declaration of Independence

Broadside, Articles of Confederation

Pamphlet, A summary view of the rights of British America, 1774

Postcard, Molly Pitcher

Engraving and Testimony, James Armistead Lafayette, about 1824

Map, British and French Dominions in North America, 1755*

Letter, John Jay to Thomas Jefferson, October 1786

Census Data, 1790

Virginia Declaration of Rights

The Bill of Rights

Political Cartoon, Mad Tom in a Rage**

All letters are transcribed as written. Spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors have been retained.

*Courtesy of the Library of Congress

**Courtesy of the Met Museum
OVERALL DISCUSSION AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

OBSERVE

1. What do you notice first?
2. Find something small but interesting.
3. What do you notice that you didn't expect? What do you notice that you can't explain?
   What do you notice now that you didn't earlier?

REFLECT

1. Where do you think this came from?
2. Why do you think somebody made this? What do you think happened when this was made?
3. Who do you think was the audience for this item?
4. What tool was used to create this?
5. Why do you think this item is important?
6. If someone made this today, what would be different?
7. What can you learn from examining this?

QUESTION

Broadsides, Declaration of Independence
VMHC Call Number: Broadsides 1776: 1

After years of what many colonists believed was an abuse of power, the Second Continental Congress decided it was time to officially declare the colonies a separate nation, independent of British rule. While a committee of five men was tasked with writing this document, Thomas Jefferson penned the first draft. In this document, Jefferson wrote what he believed to be the purpose of government, the rights of the people, and why the American colonists had a duty to separate themselves from England. Adopted and signed in July 1776, the principles of liberty and equality listed in the Declaration of Independence became the bedrock of American government. However, at the time it was written, Jefferson’s words did not yet apply to all people in America.

1. Based on your prior knowledge of this period, which groups of people do you think were excluded from the idea that “all men are created equal”?  
2. According to the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, what is the purpose of government? What can the people do if the government does not live up to that purpose?  
3. Define grievances.  
4. Choose 3 grievances from the Declaration of Independence and put them in your own words.

Broadsides, Articles of Confederation
VMHC Call Number: Broadsides 1782: 2

In June 1776, the day after the Second Continental Congress appointed the committee who wrote the Declaration of Independence, it appointed a second committee to write the Articles of Confederation. So, while colonists wrote the document that declared an end to British rule, they were also working on the creation of what would become America’s first attempt at self-government. Created in the middle of the Revolutionary War, the Articles of Confederation were written as a direct reaction to the colonists’ grievances with King George and English rule.

1. Why would colonists begin writing a new plan of government before they officially declared independence and won the war?  
2. What is a confederation? Why would the committee and the Second Continental Congress choose to create a confederation?  
3. Refer to the list of grievances you made from the Declaration of Independence. How did the Articles ensure that same problem wouldn’t occur in the new American government?
A Summary of the Rights of British America, 1774
VMHC Call Number: Rare E211 J45 1774 2d

Many have heard of the pamphlet “Common Sense” written by Thomas Paine which helped to sway the minds of many colonists towards the American cause. However, in Virginia, an additional pamphlet was printed that was equally as important in convincing many people of the injustices being inflicted by England. The pamphlet was entitled “A Summary of the Rights of British America.” This pamphlet was written before the Declaration of Independence and listed ways King George III and the British Parliament trampled on the rights of the colonists in America. For a long time, the author was anonymous, the pamphlet stating only that it was printed by Clementina Rind. Mrs. Rind took over her husband’s publishing business in Williamsburg, VA when he died in 1773. She was the first woman printer in Virginia and was the first woman to serve in Virginia’s colonial government when the House of Burgesses elected her to the post of Public Printer in 1774. Although, she would most likely have known the author of the pamphlet, there is no record that she ever shared this information with anyone before her death. It was later discovered that Thomas Jefferson was the author.

1. Why is it significant that a woman printed this important pamphlet?
2. How do you think Clementina Rind felt that she could print information about government and the war but as a woman had no political power?
3. Do you think it was common for woman to own a business in colonial Virginia? Research to see if you can find any other women who owned businesses in colonial Virginia leading up to the American Revolution.

Postcard, Molly Pitcher
VMHC Object Number: 2004.104.63

While women did not have many political rights at this time (they did not have the right to vote, could not be elected to serve in the government), they still played a role in helping America fight for independence. Many women maintained their families’ farms and businesses while their husbands fought in the War for Independence. Some women even followed their husbands to battle and served as nurses and cooks in the soldiers’ camps. One example is a woman known as Molly Pitcher. Historians are not sure if Molly was a real person or if her story is the combination of many different women. It is said that during the Battle of Monmouth, Molly brought water in a pitcher to the soldiers on the battlefield (hence the name “Pitcher”). When her husband fell due to heat stroke, Molly took over his position and fought the rest of the battle in his place.

1. What is Molly doing in this image?
2. Was it common for women to be on a battlefield at this point in history? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think Molly decided to take over her husband’s position in the battle? How do you think her husband felt about this?
Engraving and Testimony, James Lafayette, about 1824
VMHC Object Number: 1993.215

During the Revolutionary War, enslaved Virginians often chose sides based on their own prospects for liberty. In 1781, James obtained permission from his master—William Armistead of New Kent County—to serve the patriot cause. He worked as a spy for the Marquis de Lafayette, who commanded American forces in Virginia. Pretending to be a fugitive slave, James infiltrated British camps and gathered intelligence that contributed to America’s victory at Yorktown in October 1781. After the war, he unsuccessfully petitioned the Virginia legislature for his freedom until 1784, when a testimonial from Lafayette helped secure his freedom. As a free man, James took Lafayette’s last name and farmed 40 acres in New Kent County.

During the Marquis de Lafayette’s later tour of the United States in 1824, an artist created this print with a portrait of James Lafayette and the text of the Marquis’ 1784 testimonial in support of his freedom.

1. What reason(s) does the Marquis de Lafayette state that James should have his freedom?
2. What do you think he means by “perfectly acquitted himself with some important commissions”?
3. Why do you think James was not able to successfully petition for his own freedom?

A Map of the British and French Dominions in North America, 1755
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Item Number G3300 1755 .M51

The Continental Congress adopted the Articles of Confederation on November 15, 1777. Virginia was the first state to ratify it in December 1777. Maryland, the thirteenth state to ratify the Articles, did not do so until March 1, 1781. Why did it take Maryland so long to ratify the new government? Seven states insisted their colonial charters extended their boundaries to the Mississippi River or beyond. Virginia maintained that its charter granted a claim to western land all the way to the Pacific Ocean, as well as the Northwest Territories. Maryland had no western claims and refused to ratify the Articles unless the other states ceded their western claims to the federal government. Thomas Jefferson, the governor of Virginia at the time, was able to persuade his fellow Virginians to do just that. Virginia ceded the largest amount of land.

1. Looking at the map, why would Maryland be worried about other states having claims to western land? How would states ceding those western lands benefit Maryland?
2. Compare the map from 1755 to a modern-day map of the United States. Make a list of present-day states that were included in the land Virginia claimed.
3. What were the pros and cons of Virginia ceding its claim to that much land to the American government?
Due to perceived abuses suffered under British rule, Americans hesitated to create a powerful central government. Instead, they created a weak central government that had very limited power. Under the Articles of Confederation, the central government consisted of just one branch, a Congress, in which every state had an equal vote. This Congress could make laws but had no power to enforce them within the states. It could request taxes but had no power to force states to comply. It could declare war and appoint military officers but had no power to raise an army. It could sign treaties and form alliances with other countries but had no power to compel the states to abide by them. It did not have the power to coin money and there was no national court system to settle disputes. Instead of a strong central government, it was the individual states that maintained most of the government’s power. This led to many problems within the newly formed United States of America.

1. Based on the letter you read, do you think John Jay was pleased with the new American government? How can you tell? What are some clues from the text that let you know how John Jay feels?
2. Which weakness of the government do you think most concerned John Jay? How can you tell? Why would that be the most concerning?
3. What do you think is meant by the phrase, “either the wisdom or the passions of the people will produce changes”?
4. Based on what you’ve learned about life in America under the Articles of Confederation, did the wisdom or the passions of people cause a change?

As time went on, it became increasingly clear that the Articles of Confederation were not sufficient to govern the new nation. Each state selected delegates to send to a convention to revise the Articles but delegates decided it would be better to start over and create a new governing document. Deciding what this new document would look like was no easy task. Competing interests among the states led to many heated debates. One major debate focused on the issue of representation in the legislative branch of the government. Virginia delegates created a plan that based representation on the states’ populations. In contrast, New Jersey proposed a plan that required equal representation for every state no matter the population. The delegates argued constantly and neither side was willing to give in. Eventually, Roger Sherman of Connecticut settled this debate by proposing what became known as The Great Compromise. In this plan, the legislative branch would be separated into two houses. In one house, representation would be based on population and in the other, there would be equal representation. To pass a bill into law, there needed to be the approval of both houses. After the delegates settled the question of representation, another debate arose over how to determine population. This debate revolved around the status of enslaved people, who were legally considered property instead of citizens. Slaveholding states wanted to count enslaved people as part of their population, while northern states felt only a state’s free population should be counted. Eventually another compromise was proposed, the 3/5 Compromise.
which three-fifths of a state’s enslaved population could be included as a part of the population to determine representation.

1. Based on the 1790 Census data, which states do you think would have been in favor of the Virginia Plan? Which would have preferred the New Jersey Plan? Why?
2. Why would some states want to include enslaved people in their population? Why would some states oppose it?
3. Based on the census data, which states would benefit the most from the 3/5 Compromise? Why?

Virginia Declaration of Rights
VMHC Call Number: JK3925 1776 May .A12

After much debate and compromise, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention drafted the U.S. Constitution, which they hoped would serve as the backbone of American Government. To become the official governing document of the U.S., the Constitution needed at least 7 of the 13 states to ratify it. However, many were not pleased with the final draft of the Constitution. This division created the first two political parties in the United States. The Federalists, who were in favor of ratifying the Constitution and the Anti-Federalists, who were opposed to its ratification. George Mason, a delegate from Virginia, was a very prominent Anti-Federalist. He was one of the few delegates who refused to sign the Constitution during the convention and became one of the most outspoken opponents of ratification in Virginia, even going so far as to publish a list of his objections to the U.S. Constitution as it was drafted. His main concern focused on the new Constitution’s lack of protections of individual rights. George Mason worked towards the protection of individual liberty his entire career. In 1776, Mason served as the main writer of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, which became a model for many of the state constitutions that followed.

1. What would be the danger in adopting a constitution that did not contain any protections of individual liberties?
2. The Virginia Declaration of Rights was written in 1776, as the American Revolution was just beginning. Make a list of five important individual liberties that George Mason included.

Bill of Rights (Facsimile No. 1 of the United States Archives, Washington, D.C.)
VMHC Call Number: Mss7:3 JK169 Un3:1

As the debate between Federalists and Anti-Federalists continued, it became clear that in order to ratify the new U.S. Constitution, another compromise would need to be made. Those in favor of the Constitution promised to add a Bill of Rights immediately after it was ratified. Without this promise, it is unclear whether the U.S. Constitution would have ever been ratified. In keeping with the promise made to Anti-Federalists, James Madison wrote twelve amendments to the Constitution that protected individual liberty. Only ten were ratified and these first ten amendments became known as the Bill of Rights. James Madison, known as the Father of the Constitution because of his role in drafting the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, modeled his amendments after George Mason’s Virginia Declaration of Rights. The Bill of Rights still play a major role in protecting individual rights today.

1. Choose three amendments from the Bill of Rights. Is a similar right found in the Virginia Declaration of Rights? Fill in the graph to show the wording of the amendment from the Bill of Rights and the section and wording from the Virginia Declaration of Rights.
2. How is the wording the same or different in the Bill of Rights and the Virginia Declaration of Rights?
3. Do you think George Mason would have been pleased with the Bill of Rights? Why or why not?

**Political Cartoon, Mad Tom in a Rage**, Anonymous, American, 19th century
Courtesy of The Met Museum, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1953

The ratification of the U.S. Constitution in 1788 did not mean the Founding Fathers had settled all their political disagreements. This political cartoon, published in 1801, shows an image of “Mad Tom” trying to pull down the Federal Government. Historians debate as to whether the “Tom” in this image is Thomas Jefferson or Thomas Paine. Both held radical ideas about the government that many considered controversial at the time this cartoon was published. Whichever “Tom” is being depicted here, the cartoon helps illustrate how political leaders continued to debate the principles of government. In fact, that debate is still ongoing in our country today, over 200 years after the ratification of the Constitution.

1. What symbols do you see in this political cartoon? What do those symbols represent?
2. What message do you think the cartoonist was trying to get across? Support your answer with specific examples from the cartoon.
3. Research Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine’s view of government. Who do you think is depicted in the cartoon and why?
Creating A New Nation
Broadside, Declaration of Independence
VMHC Call Number Broadsides 1776:1

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
In Congress, at Philadelphia, July 4th, 1776.

"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. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and幸福."

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. For beholding Governments are the very Fountains of Liberties and幸福, so long as they are keptvanted, and so long as they are chosen by the People. Therefore, the People have a right, and a duty, to change Government, when the Governors become destructive of their safety and happiness."

"He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing our seacoasts, impairing our navigation; and, by various accomplishments, reducing a once flourishing commerce to ruins. He has)"
In Congress, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

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.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.
He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.
He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.
By the United States in Congress assembled, October 4, 1782.

WHEREAS by the articles of confederation and perpetual union, the sole and exclusive right of making peace is vested in the United States in Congress assembled; and by the treaty of alliance between his most Christian majesty and the United States, it is declared, that neither of the contracting parties shall conclude peace nor truce with Great Britain, without the consent of the other; and the ministers plenipotentiary of these United States in Europe, are vested with full power and authority, in their behalf, and in concert with their allies, to negotiate and conclude a general peace; nevertheless it appears the British court still flatters itself with the vain hope of prevailing on the United States to agree to some terms of dependence upon Great Britain, at least to a separate peace; and there is reason believe, that commissioners may be sent to America, to offer propositions of that nature to the United States, or that secret emissaries may be employed to delude and deceive: In order to extinguish ill-founded hopes, to frustrate injudicious attempts, and to manifest to the whole world the purity of the intentions, and the fixed and unalterable determination of the United States;

Resolved unanimously, That Congress are sincerely desirous of a permanent and honourable peace: that as the only means of obtaining it, they will inviolably adhere to the treaty of alliance with his most Christian majesty, and conclude neither a separate peace nor truce with Great Britain: that they will prosecute the war with vigour, until by the blessing of God on the united arms, a peace shall be happily accomplished, by which, the full and absolute sovereignty and independence of these United States having been duly assured, their rights and interests as well as those of their allies, shall be effectually provided for and secured:

That Congress will not enter into the discussion of any overtures for pacification, but in confidence and in concert with his most Christian majesty,

That to guard against all the practices and machinations of the enemy, it be, and hereby is recommended to the several states, to be vigilant and active in detaining and seizing all British emissaries and spies, that they may be brought to condign punishment: that it be enjoined on all officers of departments, charged with persons coming from the enemy, under the protection of flags of truce, to take special care, that they do not abuse their privileges, but be restrained from all intercourse with the country and inhabitants, which is not necessary for transacting the public business, on which they may be sent; and lastly it is recommended to the several states, that no subjects of his Britannic majesty, coming directly or indirectly from any part of his dominions, be admitted into any of the United States during the war.

Ordered. That the honourable the ministers plenipotentiary of France, be furnished with a copy of the above, and that copies be transmitted to the ministers of these states, at foreign courts, and that in the mean time it be published.

Ch. Carvers.

[Signature]

[Marked: 5/1771]
A SUMMARY VIEW
OF THE
RIGHTS
OF
BRITISH AMERICA.

Set forth in some
RESOLUTIONS
INTENDED FOR
The Inspection of the present Delegates
of the People of Virginia, now in Convention.

It is the indispensible duty of the supreme magistrate to
consider himself as acting for the whole community, and
obliged to support its dignity, and assign to the people,
with justice, their various rights, as he would be faithful
to the great trust reposed in him.


By a Native, and Member of the House of Burgesses.

WILLIAMSBURG, Printed by Clementina Rind.

LONDON,
Re-printed for G. Kearsly, at No. 46, near Serjeants
Inn, in Fleet Street, 1774.
Creating A New Nation
Postcard, Molly Pitcher
VMHC Object Number: 2001.104.63
I have to certify that the bearer by the name of James Armistead Lafayette has done service to me while I had the honor to command in this state. His intelligence from the enemy's camp were industriously collected and were faithfully delivered. He perfectly acquitted himself with some important commission given him and appears to me enabled to do his service. Richmond, November 25th, 1786.

Lafayette
This is to certify that the Bearer By The Name of James
has done essential services to me While I Had the Honour to
Command in this state. His Intelligences from the enemy's
Camp were industriously collected and more faithfully delivered.
He perfectly acquitted Himself with Some important Commissions
I gave him and appears to me entitled to every reward his
Situation can admit of. Done under my hand, Richmond
November 21st 1784.

Lafayette
Creating A New Nation
Map, A Map of the British and French Dominions in North America, 1755
Courtesy of Library of Congress, Item Number G3300 1755 .M51
New York 27th. October 1786

DR. SIR

I wrote you a few Lines by the last french Packet mentioning the Letters I had received from you, and that by another Conveyance you would receive particular and important Dispatches from me.

Those Dispatches relate to the Consular Convention; they begin with a Letter from me of the 3d. Inst. which, among other Matters, enumerates the Number of Papers annexed to it.

After those Dispatches were completed it was accidentally and seasonably discovered, that the Entry of the Scheme of the Convention in the Books of this Office was erroneous. As in forming my Report I considered this Scheme as really being what it appeared to be from that Entry, correspondent Errors naturally took place in the Report.

On making that Discovery I wrote a Letter to the President of Congress dated the 9th. Instant, a Copy of which you will find to be the last Paper which forms the Packet herewith enclosed. On that Letter Congress were pleased to direct me to take Order, which is in other Words saying, that they approve of the Opinion given in the last Paragraph of the Letter.

We learn from the Chargé des Affaires of France that a Treaty is concluded for us with Morocco. We are anxious to be ascertained of the Fact, and to receive a Copy of it, that positive and accurate Information on the subject may be published. It is long since we heard that a Treaty with Portugal was likewise concluded, but it has not yet arrived, nor are we advised of the Reasons which retard its Conveyance.

In my Opinion you and Mr. Adams should have Commissions to treat with the Emperor and some other Powers, but it so happens that more domestic Objects divert the Attention of Congress in a considerable Degree, from their Affairs abroad.

The inefficacy of our Government becomes daily more and more apparent. Our Credit and our Treasury are in a sad Situation, and it is probable that either the Wisdom or the Passions of the People will produce Changes.

A Spirit of Licentiousness has infected Massachusetts, which appears more formidable than some at first apprehended; whether similar Symptoms will soon mark a like Disease in several other States, is very problematical.

The public Papers herewith sent contain everything generally known about these Matters. A Reluctance to Taxes, an Impatience of Government, a Rage for Property, and little Regard to the Means of acquiring it, together with a Desire of Equality in all Things, seem to actuate the Mass of those who are uneasy in their Circumstances; to these may be added the Influence of ambitious Adventurers, and the Speculations of the many Characters who prefer private to public good, and of others who expect to gain more from Wrecks made by Tempests, than from the Produce of patient and honest Industry. As the Knaves and Fools of this World are forever in Alliance, it is easy to perceive how much Vigour and Wisdom a Government from its Construction and Administration should possess, in Order to repress the Evils which naturally flow from such copious Sources of Injustice and Evil.
Much I think is to be feared from the Sentiment which such a State of Things is calculated to infuse into the Minds of the rational and well intentioned. In their Eyes the Charms of Liberty will daily fade, and in seeking for Peace and Security, they will too naturally turn towards Systems in direct Opposition to those which oppress and disquiet them.

If Faction should long bear down Law and Government, Tyranny may raise its Head, or the more sober part of the People may even think of a King.

In short, my Dr. Sir; we are in a very unpleasant Situation. Changes are Necessary, but what they ought to be, what they will be, and how and when to be produced, are arduous Questions. I feel for the Cause of Liberty and for the Honor of my Countrymen who have so nobly asserted it, and who at present so abuse its Blessings. If it should not take Root in this Soil little Pains will be taken to cultivate it in any other.

This Letter will be carried to London by the Revd. Mr. Provost, who will with his own Hands deliver it to Mr. Adams with one from me, requesting him to convey to you by some trusty Hand.

I have the Honor to be with great Respect & Esteem &c.,

JOHN JAY

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Delaware</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>10,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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Note: The table above shows the population data from the 1790 U.S. Census. The data reflects the population of each state as reported in the first federal census conducted in 1790.
The following declaration was reported to the Convention by the committee appointed to prepare the same, and referred to the consideration of a committee of the whole Convention; and, in the mean time, is ordered to be printed for the perusal of the members.

A DECLARATION of RIGHTS made by the representatives of the good people of Virginia, assembled in full and free Convention; which rights do pertain to us, and our posterity, as the basis and foundation of government.

1. THAT all men are born equally free and independent, and have certain inherent natural rights, of which they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; among which are, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.

2. That all power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people; that magistrates are their trustees and servants, and at all times amenable to them.

3. That government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security, of the people, nation, or community, of all the various modes and forms of government that is best, which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety, and is most effectually secured against the danger of mal-administration; and that whenever any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community hath an indubitable, unalienable, and indefeasible right, to reform, alter, or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the publick weal.

4. That no man, or set of men, are entitled to exclusive or separate emoluments or privileges from the community, but in consideration of publick services; which, not being defendable, or hereditary, the idea of a man born a magistrate, a legislator, or a judge, is unnatural and absurd.

5. That the legislative and executive powers of the state should be separate and distinct from the judicative; and that the members of the two first may be restrained from oppression, by feeling and participating the burdens of the people, they should, at fixed periods, be reduced to a private station, return into that body from which they were originally taken, and the vacancies be supplied by frequent, certain, and regular elections.

6. That elections of members to serve as representatives of the people, in assembly, ought to be free; and that all men, having sufficient evidence of permanent common interest with, and attachment to, the community, have the right of suffrage.

7. That no part of a man’s property can be taken from him, or applied to publick uses, without his own consent, or that of his legal representatives; nor are the people bound by any laws but such as they have, in like manner, assented to, for their common good.
8. That all power of suspending laws, or the execution of laws, by any authority without consent of the representatives of the people, is injurious to their rights, and ought not to be exercised.
9. That laws having retrospect to crimes, and punishing offences, committed before the existence of such laws, are generally oppressive, and ought to be avoided.
10. That in all capital or criminal prosecutions, a man hath a right to demand the cause and nature of his accusation, to be confronted with the accusers or witnesses, to call for evidence in his favor, and to a speedy trial by an impartial jury of his vicinage, without whose unanimous consent he cannot be found guilty, nor can he be compelled to give evidence against himself; that no man may be deprived of his liberty except by the law of the land, or the judgment of his peers.
11. That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.
12. That warrants unsupported by evidence, whereby any officer or messenger may be commanded or required to search suspected places, or to seize any person or persons, his or their property, not particularly described, are grievous and oppressive, and ought not to be granted.
13. That in controversies respecting property, and in suits between man and man, the ancient trial by jury is preferable to any other, and ought to be held sacred.
14. That the freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotic governments.
15. That a well regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defence of a free state; that standing armies, in time of peace, should be avoided, as dangerous to liberty; and that, in all cases, the military should be under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power.
16. That the people have a right to uniform government; and therefore, that no government separate from, or independent of, the government of Virginia, ought, of right, to be erected or established within the limits thereof.
17. That no free government, or the blessing of liberty, can be preferred to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue, and by frequent recurrence to fundamental principles.
18. That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore, that all men should enjoy the fullest toleration in the exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience, unpunished and unrestrained by the magistrate, united, under colour of religion, any man disturb the peace, the happiness, or safety of society. And that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity, towards each other.
Creating A New Nation

Bill of Rights (Facsimile No. 1 of the United States Archives, Washington, D.C.)

VMHC Call Number: Mss7:3 JK169 Un3:1
Congress of the United States  
begun and held at the City of New-York, on  
Wednesday the fourth of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty nine.

THE Conventions of a number of the States, having at the time of their adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers, that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added: And as extending the ground of public confidence in the Government, will best ensure the beneficent ends of its institution.

RESOLVED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, two thirds of both Houses concurring, that the following Articles be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, as amendments to the Constitution of the United States, all, or any of which Articles, when ratified by three fourths of the said Legislatures, to be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of the said Constitution; viz.

ARTICLES in addition to, and Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America, proposed by Congress, and ratified by the Legislatures of the several States, pursuant to the fifth Article of the original Constitution.

Article the first... After the first enumeration required by the first article of the Constitution, there shall be one Representative for every thirty thousand, until the number shall amount to one hundred, after which the proportion shall be so regulated by Congress, that there shall be not less than one hundred Representatives, nor less than one Representative for every forty thousand persons, until the number of Representatives shall amount to two hundred; after which the proportion shall be so regulated by Congress, that there shall not be less than two hundred Representatives, nor more than one Representative for every fifty thousand persons.

Article the second... No law, varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect, until an election of Representatives shall have intervened.

Article the third... Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.
Article the fourth... A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Article the fifth... No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Article the sixth... The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Article the seventh... No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Article the eighth... In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.

Article the ninth... In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Article the tenth... Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.
Creating A New Nation
Political Cartoon, Mad Tom in a Rage
Courtesy of The Met Museum, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1953