

# America's Emerging Culture

## Chapter 3 Section 3

# America's Emerging Culture

## **Main Idea**

Enlightenment ideas and the Great Awakening brought new ways of thinking to the colonists, and a unique American culture developed.

## **Reading Focus**

- What impact did the Enlightenment have in the colonies?
- How was the Great Awakening significant?
- How did the colonies become more diverse in the 1700s?
- What was life like in colonial America?

## The Enlightenment and the American Colonies

**Enlightenment:** European movement that emphasized a search for knowledge. Also called the Age of Reason



### **The Scientific Revolution**

- Scientists began using observation and experiments to look for natural laws that governed the universe.
- Some scientists studied physical laws, while others looked for order and method in nature.



# The Enlightenment and the American Colonies

- **Enlightenment:** Age of Reason  
European movement emphasized search for knowledge
- **The Scientific Revolution**
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- Looked for laws that governed the universe
- Studied physical laws
- Looked for order and method in nature

# The Enlightenment and the American Colonies

## The Enlightenment in Europe

- Thinkers in Europe admired the new approach to science. They thought that logic and reason could also be used to improve society, law, and government.
- English philosopher John Locke said it was the duty of government to protect the citizens' natural rights: life, liberty, and property.
- French Baron de Montesquieu suggested that the powers of government be divided.
- French writer Voltaire criticized intolerance and prejudice.
- Other thinkers wanted to use new ideas to reform education, which in turn would improve society, criminal justice, and conditions for the poor.

# European Enlightenment influences American Colonies

- Logic & reason could improve:
  - Society
  - Law
  - Government
- John Locke said duty of government protect citizens' natural rights: life, liberty, and property
- French Baron de Montesquieu divide government powers
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# The Enlightenment and the American Colonies

## **The Enlightenment in America**

John Locke's writings were widely read in America. They influenced Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, among others.

- Jefferson used Locke's theories when he wrote the Declaration of Independence.
- Other American leaders used Enlightenment ideas when they drafted the United States Constitution.
- Franklin and Jefferson were also interested in science and invention, applying reason to ask questions and find answers.
- Enlightenment thinkers questioned common beliefs and deep-rooted superstitions.



# Enlightenment in American Colonies

- John Locke's writings influenced
  - Thomas Jefferson
  - Benjamin Franklin
- Jefferson used Locke's theories in the Declaration of Independence
- Used Enlightenment ideas in the Constitution
- Questioned common beliefs and deep-rooted superstitions



## The Great Awakening

- Enlightenment ideas also led some people in the colonies to question long-accepted religious beliefs, looking for rational, scientific explanations for how the universe worked.



### **Changes in religious attitudes**

- Strict groups such as the Puritans were upset by the growing tolerance for other beliefs.
- Some religious leaders worried that material values and concern for making money had displaced spiritual values. Clergy looked for new ways to bring people back to the church.



# The Great Awakening

- Led people to question religious beliefs
- looking for:
  - Rational
  - Scientific explanations for how universe worked

# Changes in religious attitudes

- Puritans upset by tolerance for other beliefs
- Material values concern for making money displaced spiritual values
- Clergy wanted to bring people back to church

# The Great Awakening

## **A revival of religion**

- Great Awakening was a religious revival movement in the colonies.
- Jonathan Edwards, Puritan minister, was one of the movement leaders, preached about the agonies that sinners would suffer if they did not repent.
- He was influenced by John Locke and Sir Isaac Newton.
- George Whitefield, British Methodist minister, preached throughout the colonies. His strong voice moved people to cry and confess their sins.

## **Results**

- Led to increase in church membership in the 1700s  
New Protestant religions grew in America: Congregational Church, Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian
- Was one of first links uniting the colonies
- Led to creation of several colleges

# The Great Awakening

## A revival of religion

- Movement in the colonies.
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- Preached repent sinners or suffer
- Influenced by John Locke and Sir Isaac Newton.
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## Results

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- Protestant religions grew
  - Congregational Church
  - Methodist
  - Baptist
  - Presbyterian
- United colonies
- Several colleges created

## The Colonies Become More Diverse

- Scots and Scots-Irish settled mainly in the middle colonies and Carolinas.
- Strict Presbyterians
- Did not like the English government
- Were ready to fight for political rights

- Religious unrest in Europe and religious tolerance in colonies attracted more people.
- German colonists (skilled farmers and artisans)
- French Huguenots (craftsmen and scientists)

- Jewish communities grew.
  - Newport
  - Philadelphia
  - New York
  - Charleston



# KEY POLITICAL THINKERS OF THE EUROPEAN ENLIGHTENMENT



**John Locke**

*Two Treatises of Government*  
(1690)

Developed a theory that government should protect citizens' natural rights, which included life, liberty, and property. Wrote that government and the people were bound by a social contract

**Baron de Montesquieu**

*The Spirit of the Laws* (1748)

Outlined theories of government, including a republican democracy in which power would be divided to avoid tyranny

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

*The Social Contract* (1762)

Argued that true democracy would require many people to share political power