

The background of the slide is a photograph of the Statue of Liberty on Liberty Island, with the New York City skyline visible in the distance under a cloudy sky. The image has a dark, blue-tinted overlay.

An Empire of Freedom & the Public Sphere

CHAPTER 4 AP US HISTORY

GIVE ME LIBERTY! BY ERIC FONER





The Right to Vote

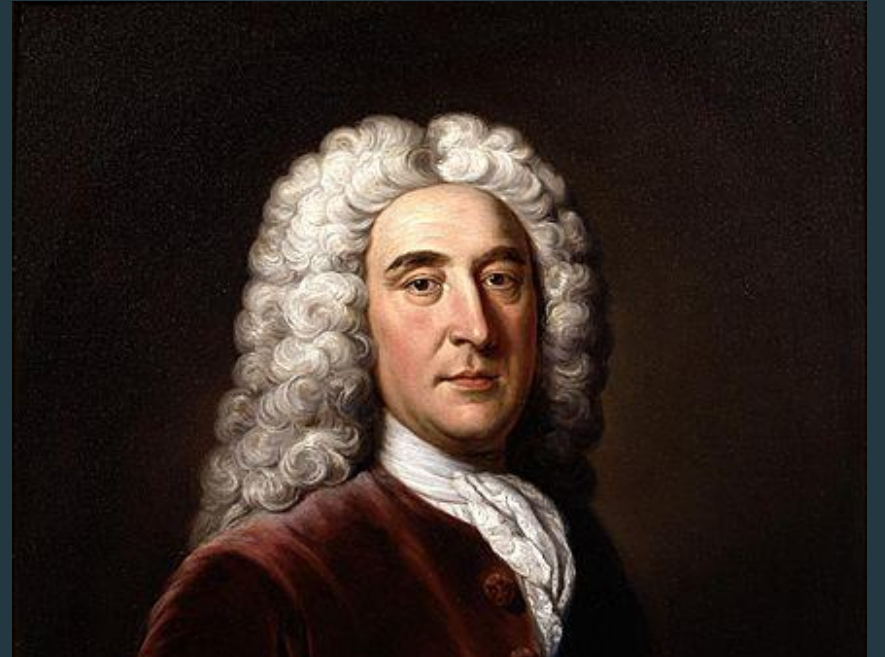
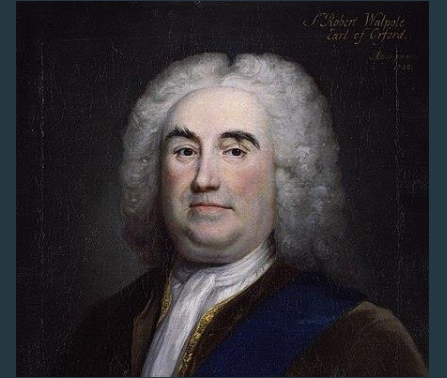


- How colonial America differ from Great Britain?
 - Political structures were more democratic
 - Suffrage requirements varied by colony – most requiring ownership of land
- Why a land ownership requirement?
 - Ensuring an economic stake in the society – and independence of judgement (not forced to vote)
 - Henry Ireton – men should be free from dependence upon another!
 - ~5% of men could vote in Great Britain in the 18th Century
- How did the property qualification differ in the colonies?
 - More people had voting rights than in Great Britain!!!
 - ~50% to ~80% of white men could vote in the colonies
 - Not all people had a voice: women & minorities were excluded

Colonial Government



- Salutary Neglect: British government policy during the 1st half of the 18th Century that allowed the American colonies considerable economic and political freedom in exchange for colonial obedience.
- Colonial assemblies gained considerable power!
 - Exerted influence over the governors and councils
 - Salaries were authorized annually (although some governors demanded pay for life)



Freedom of Expression and Its Limits



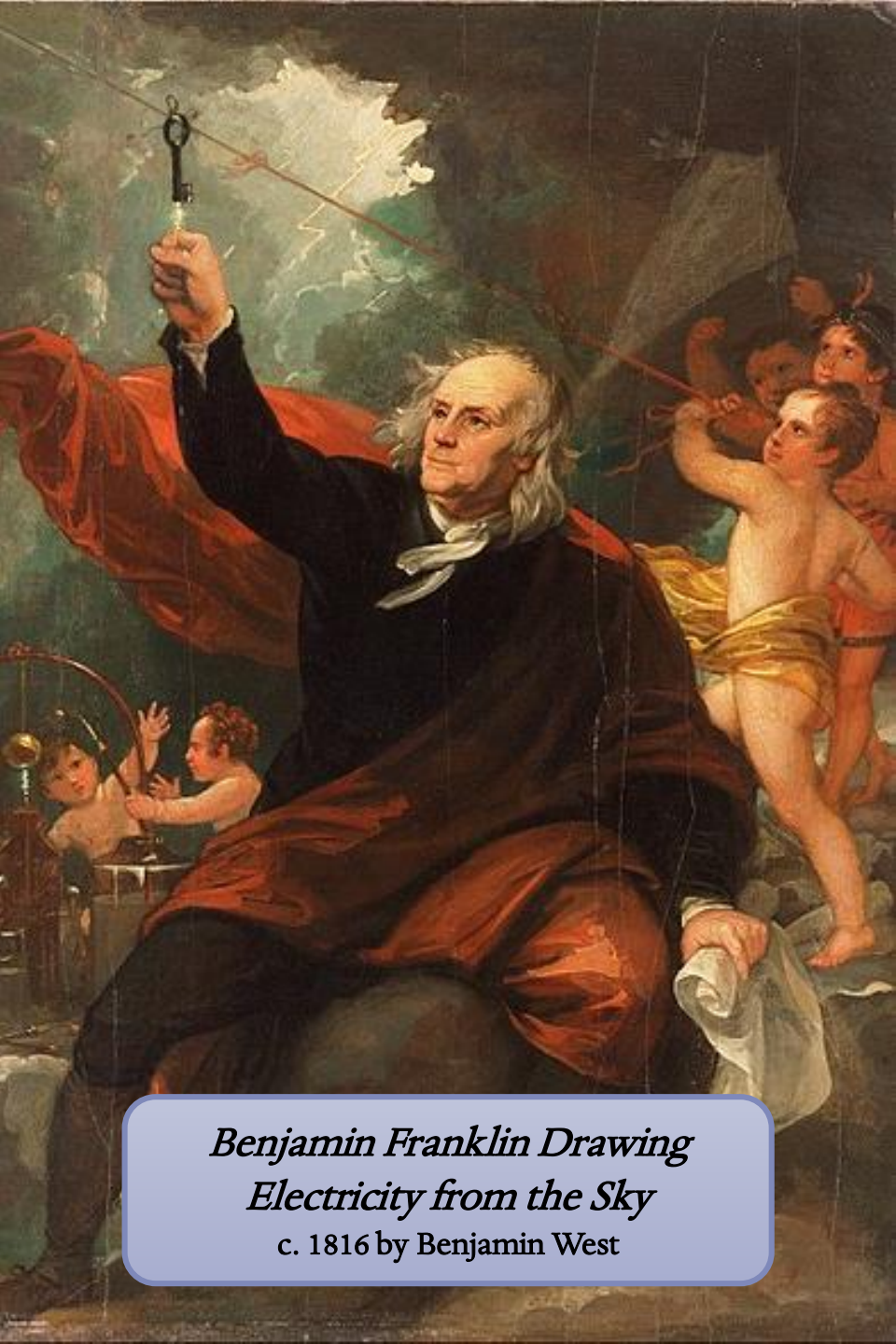
- Where does the idea of ‘freedom of speech’ arise?
 - 16th Century Parliament – the very idea of “unrestrained debate”
- Would this freedom apply to the common man? NO!
 - This was reserved for Parliament alone – effective representation of the people.
 - Those speaking out against the king could face execution.
- What about other freedoms?
 - Freedom of the press: inflammatory printed materials were illegal
 - 1695: British law requires licensing of printed works
 - Government cannot censor newspapers, books, or pamphlets BEFORE publication!
 - Authors could be prosecuted for ‘seditious libel’ of government officials.



The Trial of Zenger

- Where does the argument of Freedom of the Press begin?
 - In colonial America!
 - The people opposed prosecuting individuals for criticizing officials!
- 1735: John Peter Zenger
 - Newspaper financed by opposition to Governor William Crosby
 - Zenger published an attack on Governor Crosby: political corruption, influence peddling, & tyranny
 - Tried for seditious libel
 - Zenger's lawyer charged the jury to look at the actions of the governor before rendering a verdict!
 - Zenger was acquitted of the charge!





*Benjamin Franklin Drawing
Electricity from the Sky*
c. 1816 by Benjamin West



The American Enlightenment

- What ideas influenced American colonists in the 18th Century?
 - The Enlightenment! A French philosophical movement that spread to Britain!
 - This idea applied the scientific method to political and social life
- Best examples of the influence of the Enlightenment:
 - Benjamin Franklin: self-educated, established a newspaper, loved debate and published Poor Richard's Almanac!
 - Franklin loved experimentation for greater understanding: lightning!
- How did these ideas arrive in America?
 - The same way that goods arrived – on the ships of England!



- What attracted people to the Enlightenment?
 - The idea of reason over passionate violence
 - Remember: the Wars of Religion – reason should govern human life (according to Enlightened thought).
- Major Enlightenment influencers & Ideas:
 - Sir Isaac Newton: natural laws govern the universe
 - John Locke: religion should rest on scientific evidence
 - Arminianism: reason alone could establish the essentials of religion
 - Deism: God created the world and then withdrew – functioning according to scientific laws
- What was shunned?
 - Belief in miracles, revealed truth, and sin was seen as outdated superstitions

